macCompanion

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Letter from the CEO

Ringing in the New Year

From Bob Dylan http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/times.html we get the song, *The Times, They Are a Changin'* with the lyrics;

1) Come gather 'round people
  Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you
Is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.

2) Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who
That it's namin'.
For the loser now
Will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'

3) Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside
And it is ragin'.
It'll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'.

4) Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is
Rapidly agin'.
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'.

5) The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is
Rapidly fadin'.
And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are a-changin'

Verse Two applies to us here at *macCompanion* and our relationship with Apple and the Macintosh, but pay attention to the signs of the times (earthquakes, floods, famines, wars, etc.) and the Mayan Calendar End of Times slated for 2012 and the study done by John Major Jenkins at http://www.levity.com/eschaton/Why2012.html since November 2003 has come and gone pretty much nullifies the study at http://www.experiencefestival.com/a/Harmonic_Concordance/id/1931.

Then there is the dying concept of Darbyism and renewed awareness in the studies associated with Eschatology such as can be found at http://www.whyprophets.com/prophets/1830_millennium.htm and http://www.angelfire.com/ga/kevgram/afterlife.html.

Why bother with such stuff? The Macintosh has been instrumental in bringing forth translations and studies from obscurity of the *Dead Sea Scrolls* http://home.flash.net/~hoselton/deadsea/deadsea2.htm and http://byubroadcasting.org/deadsea/ to everyone and not just some select "scholars", http://farmsoldsite.farmsresearch.com/multimedia/index.php?cat=DSS [Listen to the QuickTime video or listen to the audio feed], *Qumran* http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/deadsea.scrolls.exhibit/Library/library.html and the *Nag Hammadi* texts http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl.html. This stuff in many ways gets even more exciting than SG1 http://www.scifi.com/stargate/, or the movie *National Treasure* http://disney.go.com/disneypictures/nationaltreasure/splash.html because this isn't science fiction. These documents and their translations are real! And the Mac had a part in getting them to us. See http://terje.bergersen.net/linksgeneral.htm. May you desire for knowledge and not let education get in the way of learning.

Meanwhile, as we learn what was hidden and has since been re-revealed and is yet to be revealed, we must do what we can to reduce suffering and elevate mankind throughout the world. We posted many of those assistance and donation links in our Blog under the Category of "Off-Topic" in the aftermath of the Tsunami of Sumatra. Please do what you can to help the survivors. I'm sure if you missed helping here there will be more opportunities soon elsewhere.

Yeah, the times they are a changin' and we have to be open-minded, and learn to adapt. 2005 has already started out being a very interesting new year, don't you think?

Please take time to drop by our *macCompanion* Bazaar and drop off a donation on our website if you feel we are also making a difference in your life for the better at http://www.maccompanion.com.

Letter From the Editor

Living in Interesting Times

Welcome to the first issue of *macCompanion* in the year 2005. We've been rather preoccupied with world events and illness, while waiting with baited breath for MacWorld Expo San Francisco.

While prepping for this new year, we have not been sitting by idly by. Rather, we have made a large January issue full of many book reviews along with a few game, hardware, shareware and software reviews that you might want to read prior to MacWorld SF.

We dedicate this issue to all those tireless heroes and heroines who have labored diligently to ease suffering and in helping all around the Indian Ocean who have had their world turned upside down and inside out from recent global effects. Our prayers reach heavenward on your behalf and outwards towards you with care and giving in times of trouble and turmoil.

May we all have peace and calm as we work through "interesting times".

Views from the Ivory Tower by Ted Bade

As I am writing this, I am enjoying the last days of December, one holiday past and another on the immediate horizon. Beyond that, I am looking, with anticipation, to the MacWorld event in January. As always, I expect Mr. Jobs to demonstrate some new Mac or at least an upgraded one, announce and probably demonstrate the next version of Mac OS X (code named tiger), and then there is the "mystery" device.

If you have been listening to Apple related news on the Internet, you probably heard a few juicy rumors. Apple even went as far as suing some people concerning the release of certain bits of information. When I read about this release of information, I had to laugh. This "accidental" or "illegal" release of information concerning a new innovation from Apple is somewhat the regular event. The sarcastic part of me wonders if the leaks were actually orchestrated as part of a PR campaign. ;-)

But Mac lovers thrive on this type of media blitz. We enjoy hearing rumors and secrets, and "code Names" are so popular, some people know the code name and not the real name of some items! Never the less, fit is fun to try to figure out what the fantastic engineers at Cupertino are up to next! What will be this mystery device? A cellphone with an iPod built it? A lower cost iPod? An iPod Photo with a large screen? An intelligent vacuum cleaner? (No, wait, the people at iRobot already made that one ;-)).

Whatever the planned announcements, you can be sure that Apple fans throughout the known universe will be discussing them next month. They might be completely "wowed" by them and surely some people will be complaining that it should have been done another way. But no matter how we feel, all Mac fans are looking forward to whatever comes from the Keynote speech in January.

I will be sure to share my opinion of these events in the next edition of this article. I won't be attending, but I definitely will be watching the Keynote on QuickTime.

People are curious about Apple online - A study done in November analyzed the number of unique visitors to various computer manufacturer web stores. Believe it or not, Apple Store got the largest number of unique hits! Internet Reader online reported in an article [http://www.internetretailer.com/dailyNews.asp?id=13476] that Apple got 4.9 million, while Dell the next closest had 2.7 million, Hewlett Packard Co. with 2 million, Gateway Inc. with 479,000, IBM, 332,000, and eMachines, 299,000.

Interesting statistics. Perhaps Apple doesn't sell the most computers, but people are looking! That has got to be a good thing. If more people look, more and more people might decide to buy. Apple can probably thank the December issue of Consumer Reports for some of the interest. However, I am sure some of the traffic was from those of us who just visit the store whenever Apple offers anything new! I know I was part of that statistic ;-).

Computer of the year - Recently the Washington Times posted an article By Mark Kellner in which he chooses the iMac G5 as the "Computer of the year" http://www.washingtontimes.com/technology/20041129-095029-5359r.htm. Among other nice comments he says that the iMac G5 is: "great achievement that should deliver sterling performance for years." Of course, he rates an eMachine copy computer as a close runner up. Read the article to get the details.

Apple Financials - yet another view - It seems like there are as many financial authorities as there are people to read them. One article of this genre that caught my attention was one posted on the Forbes online site http://www.forbes.com/markets/2004/12/07/1207automarketscan05.html. The message in this article is that Apple's installed base is set to grow again. Among other interesting predictions, this article proposes that Apple's market share might grow again for the first time in a while. They are anticipating 10% growth in Apple sales versus an industry standard prediction of 9%, which means, they expect Apple's share to increase.

Very interesting. Let us hope this is more then a prediction and that it becomes fact! While this is only a statistical prediction, it is a lot nicer to hear this type of prediction rather then those like the company is failing, it is "beleaguered" and so forth. However, I truly hope that these positive type of statements have a lot more effect on Apple and Apple sales then those negative ones! But, as we have come to know, Apple plugs along without apparent regard to what the "experts" predict.

iPods - a required item for class? - This sounds like something I would dream up ;-). But, honest, I didn't. The NY Times reports that the Brearley School, a private school for girls on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, recently made the iPod a required item for language classes! The school is making the iPods available for purchase at the Education discount price or they can be rented from the school. What is interesting here (more then the fact that they

are using iPods) is how the school is applying this technology. Using a microphone, the students can dictate to the iPod and then listen afterwards to see how they did. They can also listen to and translate a recorded track. The school is finding the "Wow" factor of using an item like the iPod is a real hook and draws the student's interest. Although the article I read didn't mention the ability of the new iPods to slow down audio files, I imagine that this feature would be useful to a beginner in learning a language, as would the being able to speed up the speech to improve one's ability to deal with fast talkers! The article is definitely worth reading, but you need to complete a free registration to the NY Times web site http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/09/technology/circuits/09ipod.htm.

While you might think this is just an isolated incident, don't forget that Duke University gave iPods to incoming freshmen this past semester. And there are more such cases. There is enough interest for using iPods in education that Apple UK has dedicated a place on the web that discusses how iPods are being used in the education industry. http://www.apple.com/uk/education/ipod/. Yes the iPod has been used to help with learning music, geography, history, and more. Who would have thought that a device designed simply for personal entertainment would have an effect in the halls of education? A marvelous little device, this iPod ;-)

Once again the virus issue - Walter S. Mossberg (a writer for the Wall Street Journal) maintains a website called Personal Technology http://ptech.wsj.com. In a recent column, he looks back at the time since he began his personal technology column in 1991. The article discusses the problems faced by the PC world with respect to malicious software http://ptech.wsj.com/archive/ptech-20041209.html. In this article he speaks out, complaining that Microsoft doesn't put enough effort into making computers safe. He also makes the following statement:

> "Meanwhile, the company's historic rival, Apple Computer, has been making giant strides in ease of use. The Macintosh, with its OS X operating system, is rock solid. It is elegant, and -- when you do a feature-by-feature price comparison with Windows competitors -- it's surprisingly affordable."

His statements about Apple and the Macintosh continue in a good light. He points our a few very nice things about what makes the Mac OS a better system, such as the lack of viruses, the ability to read and write in PDF format, that Apple upgrades its OS more often (the implication being more upgrades means less bugs and less security holes), and that Apple focuses on consumers and small businesses.
With all this positive press, one wonders how long it will take for the community at large to start moving back toward Mac. Let us hope that Apple continues to focus on the consumers, perhaps they will be the company to put the P(ersonal) back into PC!

A New "Gx" chip? - CNET online recently published an article concerning the next edition of IBM's power CPU. This article http://news.com.com/Next+IBM-Apple+chip+getting+high-end+feature/2100-1006_3-5499954.html has some interesting things to say about this new chip. First of all, it probably will be used in servers, like Apple's Xserve. Secondly, that this chip is this new chip will have a added technology that allows it to run multiple operating systems. For the geeks, the concept of doing this is called "virtualization".

This sounds like another boost for the Xserve and possibly for Apple. A new chip always means more power and new and interesting products. Personally, I like the idea of being able to run multiple operating systems. This has always intrigued me. While this gives a lot of choice to the consumer, it makes for a lot of competition for the companies. Competition is always a good thing.

While I doubt this chip will be seen on the PC market line, the article does say that IBM is trying to get the virtualization concept into all of its "Power" line chips. If this occurs, who knows what third party developers might do with it in the future!

Happy new Year to all our dedicated *macCompanion* readers. I truly hope that our various rants, reviews, and articles have been of value to you and that you continue to read our words throughout the next year. I hope 2005 will be as exciting a year in the world of technology as 2004 was!

doc_Babad's Shareware Toys and Tips

Five Great Software Tools for Panther Users

by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham

An introduction to my new column

Since I am a great lover of quality shareware and an avid collector of tips about both my Mac OS and the software I regularly use, I have done a number of reviews and columns about such things, which have either been nested in my 3Rs column or scattered helter-skelter in *macCompanion*. But the 3Rs column was never designed to be a home for mini-reviews and tidbits, so read on! Oh, I almost forgot! Unless otherwise noted, the software I review in this column deserves 4.5 or 5.0 macCs.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 MB DDR SDRAM running under Macintosh OS X 10.3.7.

###

Deep Notes 1.2.1 – A notepad utility that uses an outliner metaphor

Developer — Amar Sagoo
Contact — mailto:asagoo@gmx.net
http://homepage.mac.com/asagoo/deepnotes/index.html
Freeware
File Size 650 KB

Deep Notes is a simple, easy to learn and use, hierarchical note pad. More accurately, it is a notepad using an outline form interface. You can use it to outline ideas, make "to do" lists, or for whatever else might need jotting down in a list, structured or not.
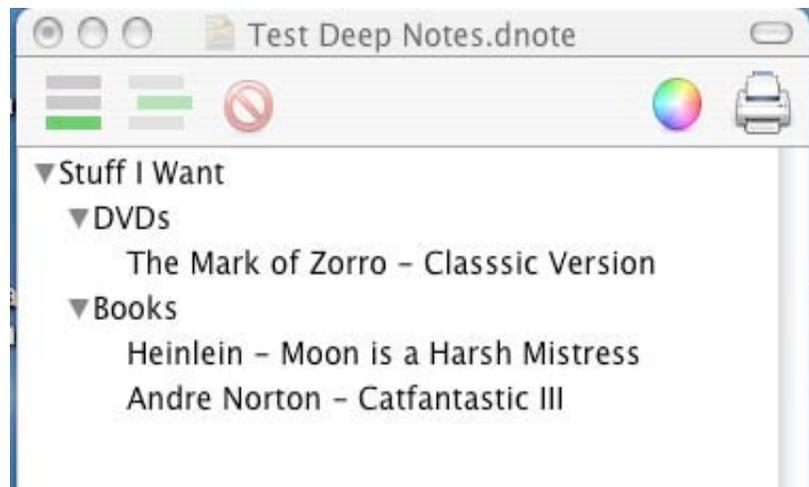
Its keyboard shortcuts are designed to let you edit, navigate, and control your outlined list of notes without taking your hands off the keyboard, so you don't have to interrupt your creative flow to get on with typing!

The software appears to use the built-in spell checker that the OS provides, since it did not flag some technical terms I had added to Apple's spell checker. Alas, it has no live spell-as-you-type preference feature, which I really like but

many of you hate. Deep Notes' help feature is clearly written and provides information to allow a new, inexperienced user who doesn't like trial and error to figure out how the relatively straightforward features work.

I recommend this package to those of you who want a simple, no bells and whistles, and exceptionally easy to use checklist and note taker.

For those of you who have complex multiple subjects with multilayer hierarchies note taking needs, I still recommend iNotepad 2.1.2 (MacCompanion November 2004]).

<p style="text-align:center">###</p>

iCan 3.0.5 — A customizable trashcan for OS X desktops for those who still miss the one in OS 9.

Developer — David Lloyd
Publisher — Kanzu Software
Contact — mailto:info@kanzu.com
http://www.kanzu.com/index.html
Shareware $10.00 USD
File Size 4.8 MB

Introduction
I am ambivalent about what design alternative for an alternate trashcan enhancement I prefer as an alternative to the limited capabilities of Apple's trashcan. My most serious complaint about Apple's trashcan implementation is that even in Panther OS 10.3.7, emptying the trash does not yet provide me information about the size of the trashcan's contents, a security feature I value.

The two obvious choices for dealing developing a trash can alternative are for a developer to adding a floating trashcan to the bottom right hand corner of the desktop window (shades of pre-OS X), or by adding a trashcan icon to the finder menu bar to access alternate deleting behavior. When Apple replaced the pre Mac OS X operating system, they made it impossible for a developer to lock a trashcan to the desktop where it used to belong, therefore the trashcan must float over whatever file the Finder puts in that position. The functions that a properly implemented task can must make easily available are:
- Allowing for information about the size of the files that need to be deleted, protecting against deleting something you dumped accidentally.
- A user choice of doing a normal delete, which just erases the directory information about a trashed item not the item(s) itself.
- Providing a user choice to secure-erase a file, writing over the deleted files with random "0 and 1" characters to make recovering that file impossible.
- Finally, a means for erasing stubborn files, the old command-option-T shortcut.
Some of these are available under the d=finder menubar or by using klutzy keyboard shortcuts.

When I first started checking trashcan enhancers, the software I downloaded forced me to an either-or decision. Now, having explored Kanzu Software's *iCan*, I can now have my cake and eat it! You, if you prefer implement, a floating desktop trashcan and even customize it. Such a floating trashcan is close enough to the one in my dock to seem superfluous. As noted earlier my icon filled desktop is strewn with document, critical application alias' and some document or folder is always underneath the floating trashcan—ugly! But *iCan* has rich preferences that allow me to have the enhanced trashcan functionality to appear only in my Finder menu bar. (Of course, I've made the software a startup item.)

iCan Overview
It's interactive - it appears empty when it's empty, and full when it's full, just like the one in OS 9. You can drag to it, unmount disks with it, click it to open the trash folder, and it responds to the Finder's command-delete. Choose any style of trashcan graphic by customizing it with your choice of its included iCan themes. If you wish to make your

own themes, it's easy, according to its publisher, and instructions to do so are provided by the vendor. iCan version 3.0.x is fully compatible with OS X 10.3 (Panther).

Features
The software is feature-rich. Its individual features set control within the software's preference panes, a few of which I illustrate below. iCan includes options to force-empty the trash and delete locked items, as does the Jaguar OS. But iCan makes it easier to use them in Panther. It also includes a secure-delete option, which overwrites deleted items. The delete modes can be accessed from its menu or by using user-defined keyboard shortcuts. These features are easier to implement and use than those provided by the operating system.
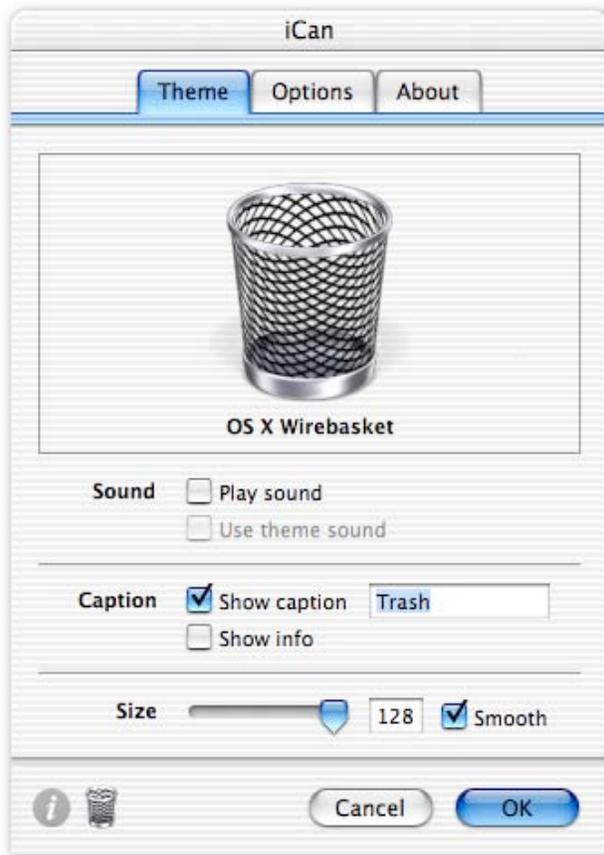
Choices, It's Great to Have Choices   **It's all in the Preferences**
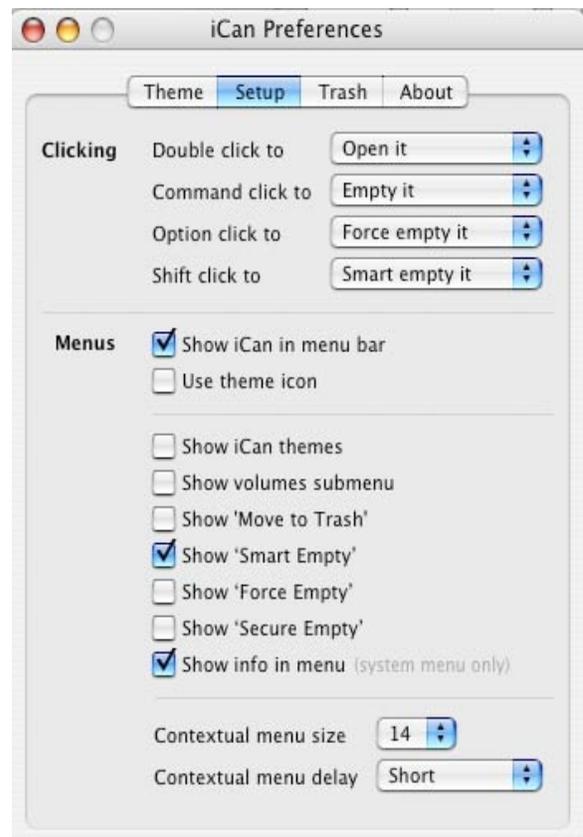
The software is fully customizable by using the developer provided trash themes, but a traditional wire wastepaper basket theme works just fine for me. Themes can contain sounds for deleting and emptying the trash, a feature I always turn off. You can set the desktop trash icon to any size from 32 to 128 pixels and customize the trashcan caption, all of which makes for fun eye-candy.

Other options include force-delete, dragging locked items to the trash, and overwriting deleted items. You assign a command-click, option-click, or double click on the trash to perform tasks like emptying the trash, force-delete, etc. You can also selectively delete items from individual disks, and the trash's caption can show its size and item count.

Note: Folks who upgrade from the Jaguar- to the Panther-compatible *iCan* version should note that Version 3.0 uses a new theme format based on PNG files instead of ICN files. This means that older style themes are not compatible with this version. However, iCan Theme Studio, available from the vendor's web site, can be used to easily convert you original, in Jaguar, favorites to the new format.

This is another great piece of software that I can whole-heartedly recommend.

##

TinkerTool 3.3b — You can easily tune the sometimes hidden additional preference settings that Apple has built into Mac OS X

Developer — Marcel Bresink of MBS Software
Contact — mailto:osxinfo@bresink.com
http://www.bresink.com/osx/TinkerTool.html
Release Date — December 10, 2004.
File Size 632 MB

Overview
TinkerTool is an application that gives you access to additional preference settings Apple has built into Mac OS X. This allows users to activate hidden features in the operating system, and, in some of the applications, delivered with the system. TinkerTool makes sure that preference changes affect only the current user. You don't need administrative privileges to use the tool. Note: Although this is a beta version, the software is completely stable.

Marcel Bresink's protective design of the program's operating mode will never change any component of the operating system. As a result, the integrity of your system is never put at risk, and there will be no negative effects when installing future system updates or when you change you mind about a feature you implement. My nemesis was adding a command to the finder menu [Command-Q] that shut the finder off. I was left with a icon-less menu-less desktop that I could not force quit [Command-Option-Escape] and so had to shutdown and then reboot my computer by using power button on my computer.

My favorite feature is the ability to again use double up-down scroll arrows at both the top and bottom of all windows, a shareware patch I used in Macintosh OS 9.x and earlier.

An Unsolicited Testimonial
TinkerTool and scrollbar arrows — "How anyone can do work without having both the up and the down scroll bar arrows at both ends of the scroll bar beats the heck out of me. Arrows showing at both ends of the scroll bar isn't a new feature in Panther; in fact, the situation is the same as it was in previous versions of Mac OS X: the setting for displaying the scroll bar arrows exists, but is not exposed to public view. You can access it by using TinkerTool; download the latest version from http://www.bresink.de/osx/TinkerTool.html TinkerTool does some other cool things as well, but I find this particular bit of functionality to be indispensable." Excerpted from Matt Neuburg in Take Control of Customizing Panther, a part of the book review of almost the same name found in this issue.

More Information
Because TinkerTool gives you access to features already built into Mac OS X, its feature set varies greatly between different operating system versions. Please refer to the complete table feature sets at http://www.bresink.com/osx/TinkerTool.html for information about version differences associated with the software. All preference settings changed by TinkerTool can be reset to Apple's defaults, or to the state that existed before using the tool. No dangerous background processes are used for TinkerTool's operation.
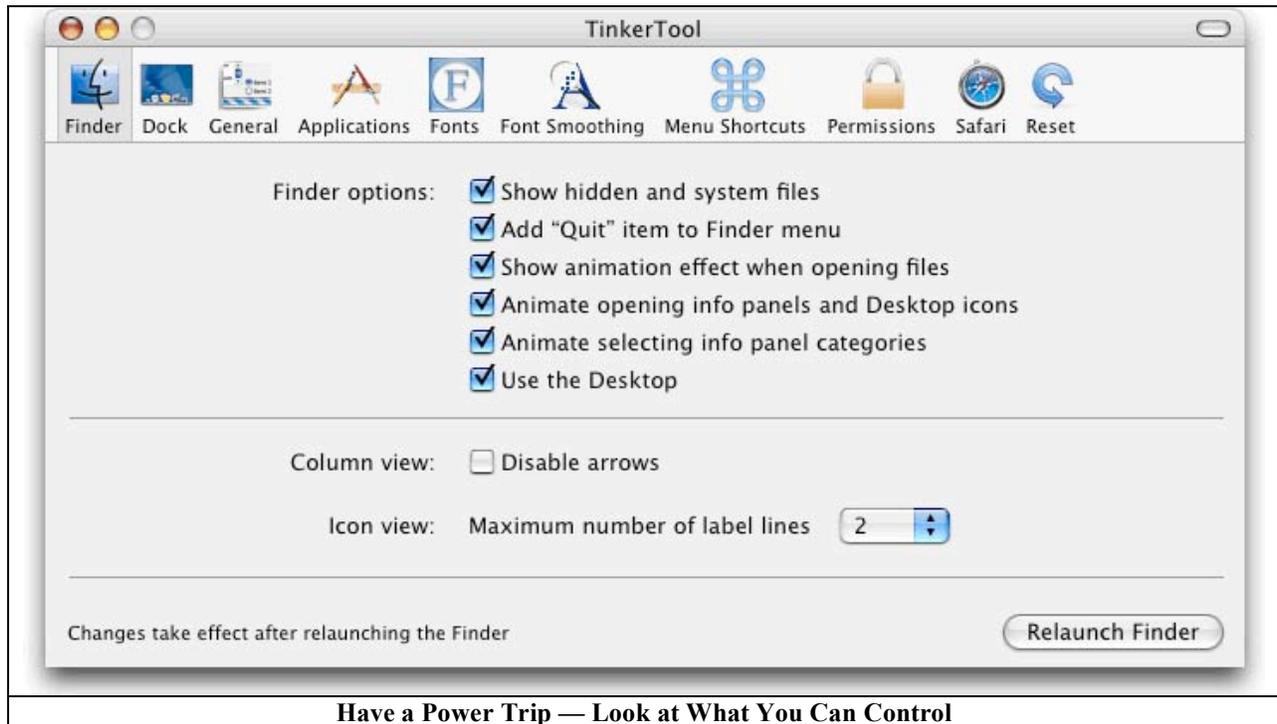
Have a Power Trip — Look at What You Can Control

Just to provide you with a taste of what kinds of customization you can accomplish with TinkerTool, I listed a few of its features that appealed to me:

- Place both scroll arrow buttons of any scroll bar at both ends of the bar. Yea! A thousand times hooray!
- Prevent the Finder from displaying the "empty trash" warning.
- Enable the Finder to show hidden and system files – I found this to be eye clutter.
- Enable the "Quit" menu item of the Finder – Now, if only I could figure out how to change this from command-Q to Command Option-Q to avoid keyboard misses. Alas, the new command does not show up in the Preferences > Keyboard and Mouse > Keyboard Shortcuts pane.
- Disable the display of arrows in the Finder's column view.
- Disable Finder icons in column view. – Neat, but I avoid column view like the plague.
- Let the Dock mark the foreground application with a blue arrow. – Spacey!
- Put the Dock in the top screen position – Might be interesting as long as it is above all the application toolbars. I use four lines of customized toolbars in MS Word, my principal productivity application.
- Disable the default application for playing audio disks – I do prefer Roxio's Toast and this can be done from iTunes Preferences windows.
- Set the file format for the creation of Desktop screenshots – Sounds interesting, but I've not yet tried it.
- Set the number of visible entries and maximum number in the main history menu of Safari.

As an addition information source, the developers have posted an excellent FAQ on their website.

###

Tofu 1.1.2 — An alternative way to scroll though hard to read documents

Developer — Amar Sagoo
Contact — mailto:asagoo@gmx.net
http://homepage.mac.com/asagoo/tofu/index.html
Freeware
Files Size 544 KB

I discovered Tofu by reading Dan Frakes article "Mac Gems" in the July 2004 *Macworld* magazine. Dan noted in a review of TextEdit that "you may find that reading long documents on screen is a bit fatiguing." He recommended *Tofu* as an alternative and so I downloaded and played with it. Although I don't use every time I read a long document, I love it!

Developer Amar Sagoo's theory is that reading text in columns, as in a newspaper, is much easier on the eyes. His free Tofu 1.0.1, http://homepage.mac.com/asagoo/, aims to prove that point by allowing you to read documents— text, RTF, the text portion of HTML documents, and (in Panther) Microsoft Word documents—in column format. And, unlike columnar PDF documents, which force you to scroll up and down to read, Tofu's columns are only as long as the current window, so you scroll left and right instead. (Tofu lets you choose your preferred column width and margins.)

I checked it out and agree with the description found on Mac Update that "Tofu is... different. It is a novel application to address the common problem that people don't like reading text on the screen. Why is that anyway? I believe, noted Amar Sagoo, that there are two main reasons: line width and visual instability. Text is usually very wide on the screen, which makes going from the end of one line to the beginning of the next difficult. That's why newspapers have narrow columns: It makes them faster to read.

"So why not just take a normal window and make it narrower, scrolling down as you need? Well, there are usually a lot of lines in a text, and all look more or less the same, so if they move past your eyes vertically, they are difficult to keep track of. The text doesn't feel stable, and you get lost easily. In Tofu, text is arranged in columns, and each column is only as high as your window. So lines are nice and narrow, they don't move about vertically, plus your text is now in easy-to-digest chunks. You just scroll from column to column horizontally, and feel more in control. Tofu also includes some other useful features to make reading easier for you. You can jump to any point in your text by simply typing some letters near it (without choosing any command first). There's a "View In Columns" service so you can, for example, grab some text from a web page. And it lets you use your voice to navigate text, so you can literally sit back and read."

Final Report 18-04.rtf

the system's features, and the extra work required to implement a multi-document framework didn't seem feasible. I therefore chose to allow only one project, or connection, to be open within the application at any one time.

3.2 Implementation Notes

Internally, the system has modular support for different database drivers. However, the list of supported drivers is hard-coded into the system. Ideally, I would like to allow the user to add JDBC drivers for any database through a simple graphical user interface, or even by just placing them in a certain location on their computer. This feature was not implemented due to lack of time.

Taking this idea further, one could allow support for plug-ins. A plug-in would consist of a JDBC driver, as well as any other code that could enable product-specific features, work around known bugs or non-standard behaviour.

MySQL was initially used as the main database for development and demonstration, but proved unsuitable for some of the application's main features. MySQL does not store integrity constraints like foreign keys, which are required to visualise relationships between tables. Another free database server, PostgreSQL, was chosen as a replacement. Support for MySQL was left in place to be able to demonstrate the general database independence of the system.

Originally, Microsoft Windows was partly used for development and was planned to be used for the

project demonstration. However, the choice of PostgreSQL introduced difficulties with using Windows. It requires installation of a UNIX emulator, which was not a practical solution for development on the department's lab computers. I therefore switched to Apple Macintosh as the sole development and demonstration platform.

There is a known bug in the JDBC driver for PostgreSQL. When retrieving information about relationships between tables, not all relationships are returned, and the format of the result is not consistent with the JDBC specification. I therefore had to adapt a method for retrieving relationships to work around this problem, and it would fail with other databases whose drivers function correctly.

This is a case where an intelligent plug-in architecture would prove useful. It could make such problems transparent to the developer by working around them within the code of the plug-in.

In the SQL specification, there is no concept of a "database" as an entity that contains tables, and therefore no syntax for creating such a database on a server. Consequently, the JDBC framework doesn't support creating databases. This application therefore assumes that a database already exists on a server, which the user can then connect to to define its contents.

Again, plug-ins could encapsulate the required product-specific commands for creating a database on a certain type of server.

In the Java Standard Edition 1.3.1, no general framework

for storing an application'
to use Macintosh-specifi
settings to the user's "Pref
was implemented using
that the program would
computers other than Ma
be able to read and store s

4 Database Struct

One of the basic ways in
user understand the struc
visual representation. In
functionality offered and h

4.1 Functionality

The structure view gives
contents and structure. E
object on the screen, listi
primary key. The user can
an infinite, scrollable pane
them to create their own,
which makes sense to the
further details about its fie
side of the screen. Only
view, that is, no stored SQ

The structure view help
of the database and the n
relationships between
represented by arrows p
fields of one table to the
databases can usually st
keys, which is used

Other Features — The software comes with an excellent help file that eases the way for new *Tofu* users. Amar Sagoo also provides a well thought out and easy to understand getting started file, the first item in the help file, as well as speech recognitions for those who use that feature. Using the software is as simple as doing your ABCs after graduating high school. "There are several ways you can choose the text to view in Tofu. It can either be contained in a document, for example an RTF or plain text document, or can come from another application, such as your Internet browser." To view a document in Tofu, do one of the following:

- Drag and drop the document onto the Tofu icon in the Finder or in the Dock.
- Drag and drop the document onto a Tofu window.
- In Tofu, choose File > Open and locate the document in the dialog shown.

What more can I say? I tried out the software and found it to be so different that at first I was put off with its Torah-like scrolling properties, but it does read left to right. But after a short learning curve, its mine, all mine, to use!. Now if it would only work with PDF files, I'd be ecstatic.

###

Yellow Button 2.1.9 — A Document Launcher for OS X

Developer: Rich Love at Carnation Software
Contact — mailto:richlove@carnationsoftware.com
http://www.yellowbutton.com
Shareware $20 USD
File Size: 1.4 MB

Overview

Organize your programs, files, and folders in an expandable dock. Instead of cluttering your OS X Dock with icons that get smaller and smaller, drag your favorite files and folders to Yellow Button. They will always be there when you need them. In addition to being a time saver, it's easy to use and helped me to unclutter Apple's Dock.

I have been long frustrated by the limitations of Apple's Dock, and since switching to Mac OS X, have tried to find a tool that served me as well as Action Utilities' Go Mac. My Dock, about a centimeter in height, extends to the edges of my 22" monitor, when I temporarily park working documents in it. My space runneth over. To enhance access to my most frequently used folders, documents, and applications, I've checked out a dozen or so shareware "dock" or "launch" tools over the last two years, but have kept very few. I now use the Fruit Menu haxie by Unsanity, a finder hack that recreates the old Apple menu – a great place for storing aliases to things you want to get to fast. But revitalizing my Apple Menu Bar did not completely satisfy me, so I've kept on looking. In a senior moment, I don't remember where I read about this software, perhaps in MacAddict. Needless to say, after testing it for a day or three, it's a keeper.

The developer notes that this is the "Other Dock for OS X... Run programs, access folders, and documents from a single window. Quickly access your icons in one intuitive place every time you need them. And you can always count on the icon being right where you place it (unlike the OS X Dock where icons move around and change size constantly). In addition to being a time saver, its easy to use and pleasantly habit forming. Organize your programs, files, and folders in an easy to use, expandable window. Store nearly 600 programs, files, and folders in the window. Click the 'Yellow Button' and your window is available in the Dock for retrieval at any time. Or just keep it open on your screen to easily click and jump to any file, folder, or program you have in the window."

As I used the software, I gradually switched items from my cluttered Dock to Yellow Button, allowing me to enlarge the size of my Dock icons, an asset when working late with a bad case of tired eyes. In addition to giving us easy to use software features, Rich Love is a gem among developers. He responded promptly to Email, which gave me greater insight on adding troublesome applications like Safari to Yellow Button, and promptly provided answers to other questions I posed during my first initial post-midnight test of this fine product. I was particularly pleased to be able to both hover the mouse over an icon on the Yellow Button dock to see the file name and hold the command key down while hovering to see the full path name. The former is important, since few Macintosh users take the trouble create or adopt custom icons for their important file folders. So finding out the name of the generic folder image in Yellow Button is a real help.

Rich and I dialogued about the possibility of his adding a preference to allow adding Yellow Button to the Finder Menu Bar. This is a personal bias since I prefer moving my mouse up the screen to the menu bar rather than dragging to down to the dock.

For a more image-rich view of Yellow Button's features, check out the mini-review at MacAddict at http://www.yellowbutton.com/MacAddict_YB_Pick.html.

Feature

TheRecipeManager 1.1 Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Developer: Larry Barcot
TheDataManager, Inc.
26907 Country Meadow Lane
Kennewick, WA 99338
mailto:sales@TheRecipeManager.com
http://www.therecipemanager.com/
$40 USD http://www.therecipemanager.com/ordernow.shtml
Overview: http://www.therecipemanager.com/overview.shtml
Features: http://www.therecipemanager.com/features.shtml
FAQs: http://www.therecipemanager.com/FAQs.shtml
Released: November 2004
Requirements: Currently, Mac OS X 10.2.x or later or WinTel system.
Distributor: ExtremeMac
http://www.xtrememac.com/software/index.shtml

Strengths: Appealing, easy to use, easy to read, nicely formatted and very nice looking interface, fields and informational layout with a Mac OS X-based interface. Sorting and finding is a very extensive feature as well as other parts of the application. There are 300 recipes that can be instantly used. There are 400 other recipe files on the CD. You can create and store your own recipes. Very reasonably priced. There is a software FAQ help menu on the toolbar. TheRecipeManager (TRM) was selected Macworld best of show by *MacObserver*. Cross-platform.

Weaknesses: There are no manuals yet.

I love to travel, find new foods, try out new recipes and make my own. Whether you collect other recipes or make your own recipes, it's all about food. If you like food like I do, you want to keep track of your favorites as well for now and in the future. Knowing about your favorites is part of the process to keep in touch with all those favorite foods that you might like to cook for yourself and your family, or send to relatives, friends and others. Most recipe fanatics keep their recipes on cards, in folders and other means. This system works for most people, but what if you want to do more than just arranging your favorites? What if you want to use your recipes for storing, sorting finding and searching and possibility printing and sharing with others? Many people found a computer could help, but no Mac OS X commercial, shareware and freeware recipe collection programs cropped up.

In the days of the Apple IIE and later in the Macintosh pre-Mac OS X days, I wrote recipes into text files. Keeping track of scraps of recipes on paper and from newspaper was not conducive to keeping tracks of your favorites. The real advantage of titling your recipes, writing instructions and cross-referencing was to find the ones you want when you wanted.

But what happens if you already have recipes written with text files or have imported recipes from other websites? I really needed and wanted to be able to cross-reference recipes that fit under different categories too. A collection did not do what others and I wanted.

HyperCard™ and Macintosh® programs became available in the 1980's. In the 90's, I began to use a really nice Mac cooking program called MasterCook™ [**Editor:** Still available for WinTel boxen]. It really did have everything I wanted for collecting and storing my recipes. MasterCook had a nice sorting option to search for different type of recipes from different categories. I liked this option and this was the most useful to me along with the storage capabilities on the hard drive. The only bad thing was that the Mac version could not easily import text file recipes. In fact it was near impossible while the PC version of the software did a better job. However as the luster of MasterCook waned, the company did not make enough money and decided to cease existence [**Editor:** At least for the Mac.]. There were no upgrades for the Macintosh, which exiled the program to only running on classic and no hope of running with the new platform Mac OS X™. Possibly another program might surface to take the place of MasterCook. There were quite a few shareware and freeware programs, but I was still looking for an easier, better option. Good recipe programs using Mac OS X began to arrive. One for Mac OS X that some others and I eagerly waited for was the new TheRecipeManager 1.1 (TRM).

This new version of TheRecipeManager was created in the latter part of 2004. I hoped it would have all of the many options MasterCook had. I wondered if there was a way to import MasterCook and text files into TRM and save less work and be better in the long run. I mean, why start over when you have some valuable recipes already in your possession? When TRM arrived with a conversion file option of MasterCook files, I wondered if it might be the Mac OS X program to take me and others to this next level of recipe collecting. I really wanted to find out whether to stay and import my recipes into MasterCook and work with the Mac OS X-based TRM that possibly could be better for the future. So I began to work with the software.

The Macintosh OS X TRM program only works for Mac OS X and not classic. TRM requires Mac OS X 10.2 or later, 64 MB RAM (128 recommended). Furthermore the software requires at least 30 MB of disk space on your hard drive so it does not take up a lot of room. There are over 300 recipes included with the TRM (400 in other files on the CD), so you can start your recipe adventure without having to program in your own recipe.
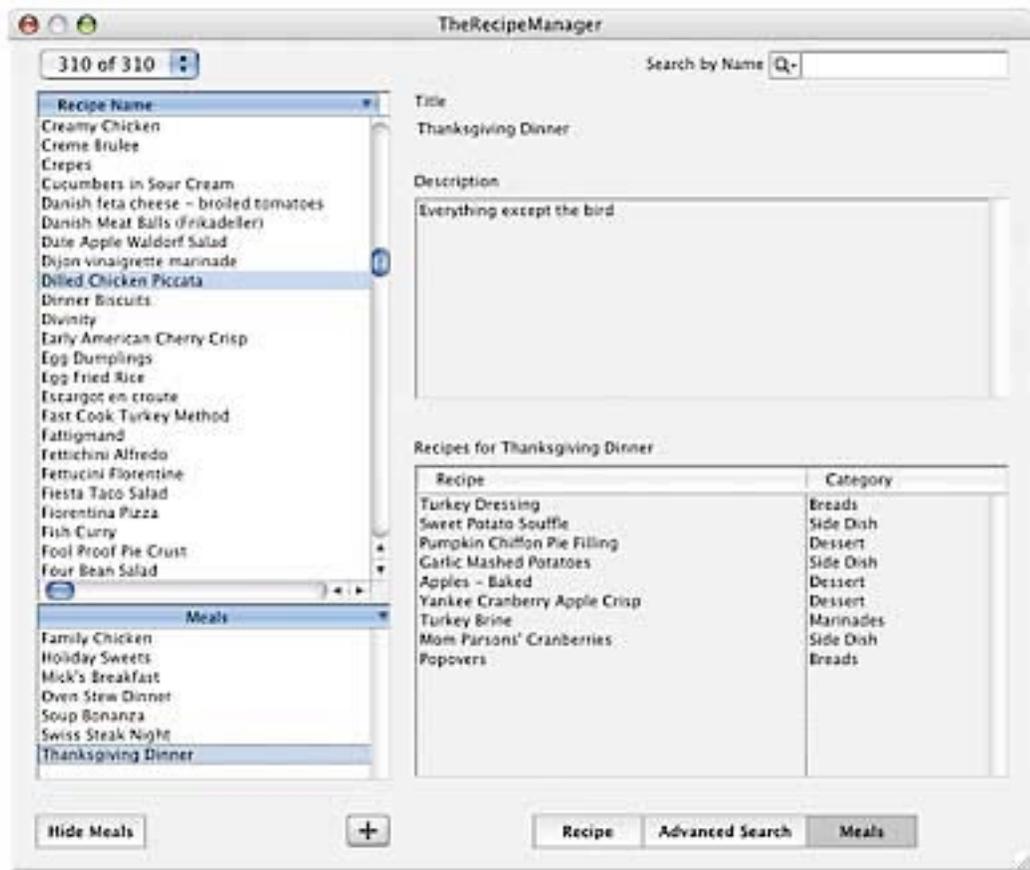

After the clean looking and well laid out interface launches, the recipe name appears on the left. Two tabbed windows are at the right to view more information about each recipe. The five tabs at the top easily highlight the

functions (recipe, ingredients, staging, variations and nutrition). The lower sets have tabs for other information (photo, instructions, background, serves/time and classification). TRM is clean and easy to read, so that was a good start.

The classification listing near the top shows categories, and once clicked, indicates which recipes could be classified. Normally cross category identification and sorting could be most difficult to work with if you have your recipes in a book, on cards or laying somewhere in your collection file. However this software makes sorting and finding what you want a pleasure instead of a chore.

The software, I feel, really showed its flexibility when using sort and search field areas. The pull down windows within the *Category, Type* and *Origin* area help provide even more versatility for finding and searching. Ingredients oriented information (only six maximums each separated by space) can be inserted into the *Category* to help your advanced searching and make more effective if that are what you needed. The right windows also allow searching for recipes that have all or any of the following ingredients, categories or more that makes for searching even more flexible. This classification mode is one that I enjoyed using quite extensively, as it is a tool that you can really learn to love. Cross identification searches in one or more categories; can be used to find many recipes, foods, items or other many possibilities. Locating a recipe that is searchable both Thai and meat, could be accomplished by clicking upon the *Advanced Search* command that was right next to *Recipe*. That worked well but was there a means to add your own categories I wondered?
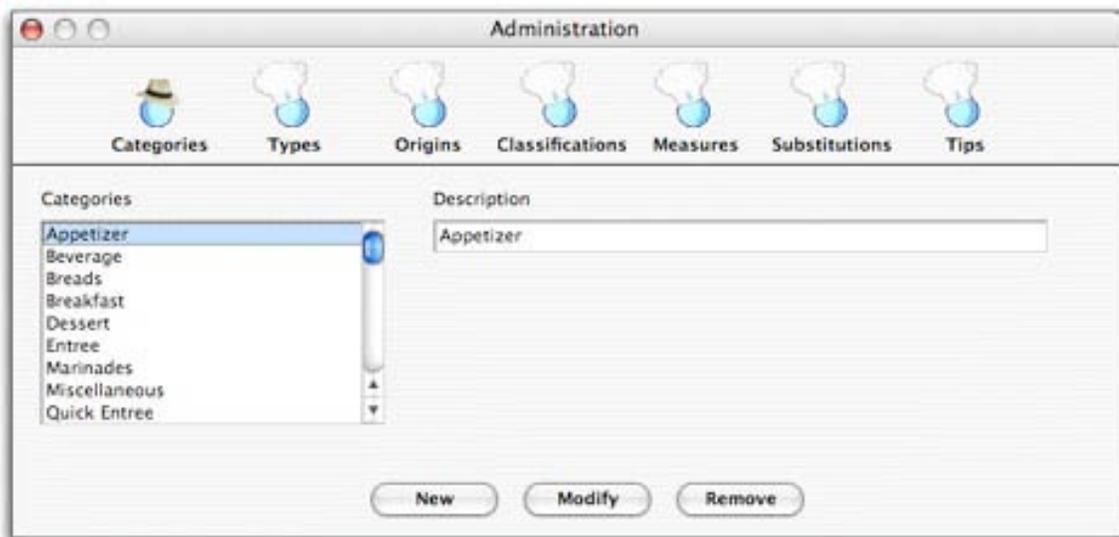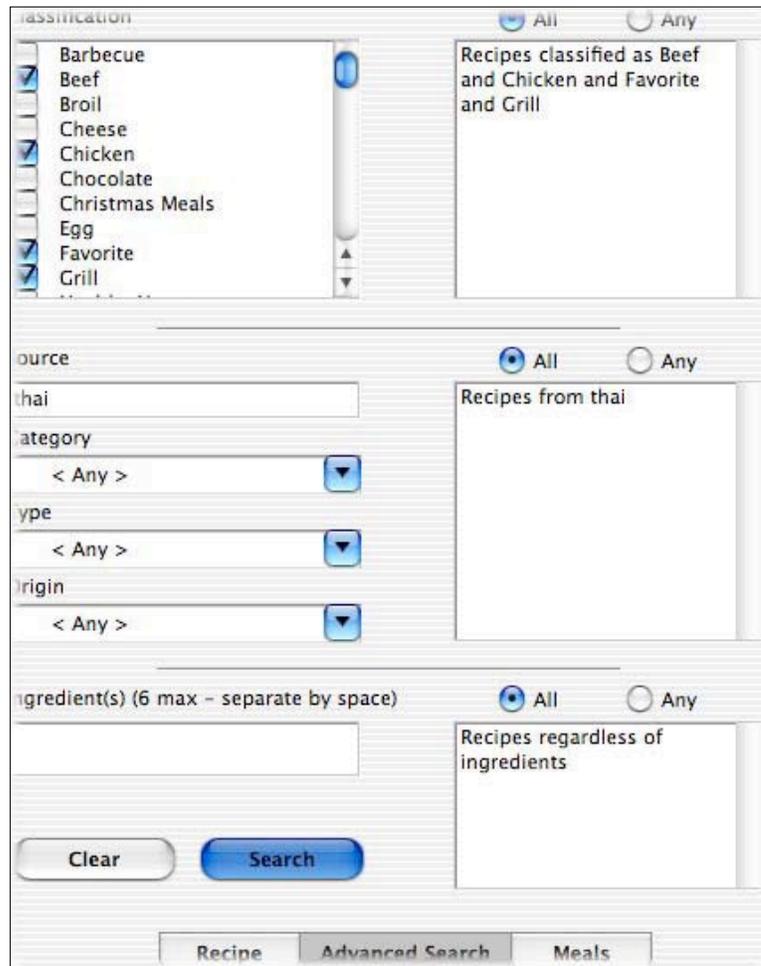
I did not see this function in *Preferences*. *Administration* can be found by clicking (in the toolbar) *View* and then *Administration*. Here are seven areas to add, modify or remove for your pleasure of creating your own categories. So this software really adds to your recipe finding and storing versatility. More specific searching can be accomplished if different categories are added within the recipes you create or even added to the ones that imported.
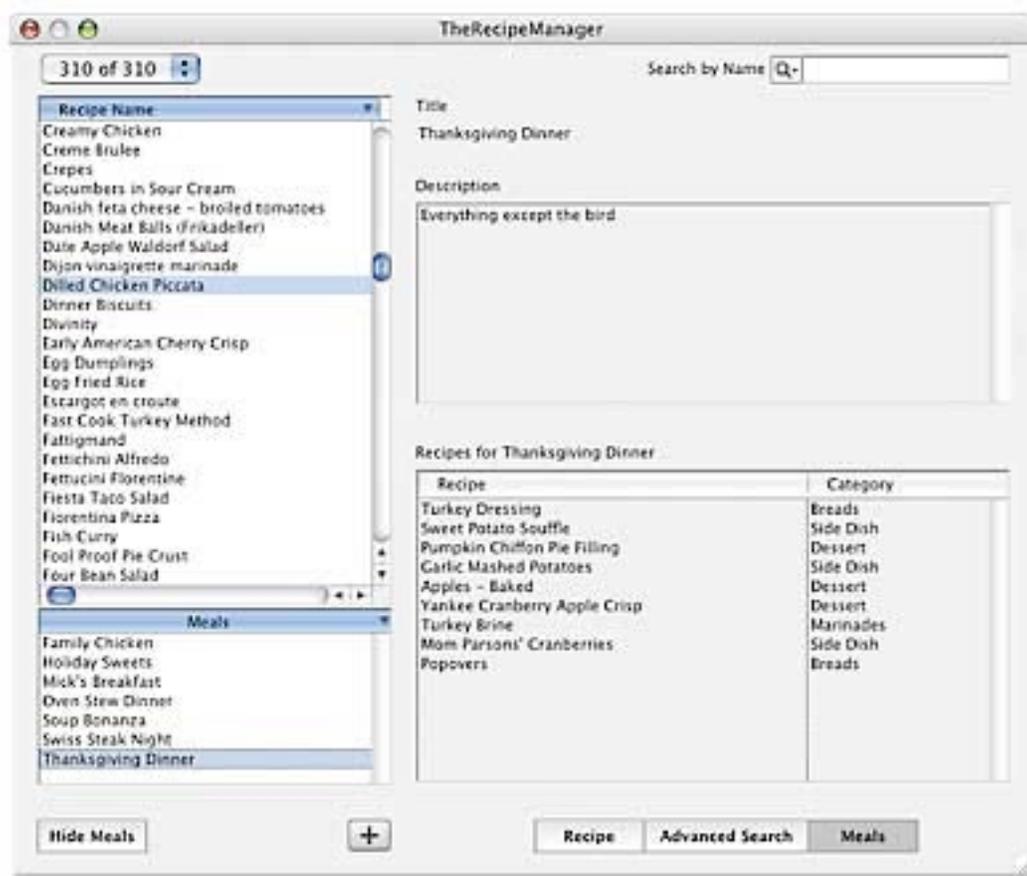
Creating meals are helpful and the Meals button, to the right of the *Advanced Search* icon, helps as well. The title for the meal shows at the top, the description below and the category as the recipe for the meal are displayed. A new recipe can be created as well by clicking on the plus icon in the lower left. (Canceling brings you back to the previous window).

The shopping list and menus to use for your relatives or company, is all possible for bigger dinners and parties. Clicking and dragging recipes to create whole meals if desired is easy to do. There is a kitchen helper that allows the finding of information about cooking temperature, cooking tips, measurements, converting to scale up or down and substituting items. Pictures of recipes appear in some of the recipes as well. Printing is a breeze and large print helps to see some of the ingredients and instructions if needed. The larger print can even be used with your desktop to view farther from your kitchen counter if you don't want to print out the file. But importing, exporting, file searching and sorting were my main objective compared to these assets.

An added advantage of the TRM software was the advertised ability to be able to convert and import recipes that used other recipe files created with other recipe programs such as MasterCook, Cooking Light etc. Of course this was something I wanted to try. The big question still missing for me about this software was this: How well could TRM import and export recipe made by different programs?

TRM can use MasterCook, CookingLight™ and other files produced by other additional recipe programs that work with the TRM program if these are already formatted in the proper manner. In fact, there are even MasterCook files on websites that can be imported and swapped and used. However my MasterCook files I had could not be imported into TRM. Something was wrong, but I finally found some answers to this mystery!

The MasterCook files for the Mac appear in a Macintosh oriented format that TRM can't be converted directly. MasterCook however allowed the files to be converted into another format as a more universal file format called ".mxp files" which the program also allows for. I found that after finding the desired cookbook file in *MasterCook on your Macintosh* was highlighted, one could select the bold-faced *All Recipes* line at the top of the list. Then using Command-A to "Select All" would select all the recipes. Clicking the *Export Recipes...* in the *File* menu, I entered the name for the *saved export file's name* and choose the folder to save these files within. Then finally choosing either the *Mac format* or the *MXP/Universal format* radio button (either will work) and clicking the *Export* button finished the exercise. So there was a means to exports from MasterCook to TRM. It just takes a little work, but it is worth it if you want to transfer and use recipes made by other recipe programs.

However my main concern was to finalize much of my recipe collection that was in text file format. The dozens of text files I had acquired that were some of my favorites for several years were the ones I really wanted to import into TRM so I could sort, identify and find them as I wanted. So I began the process of testing the conversion of text files to TRM format.

A pure text file that needs to work with TRM, uses a format using 30 fields. I wanted to import and then be able to use the text files so that could search and find the recipes with data I had. I really did not care about information that must be copied into all of the different fields to be formatted the exactly the way TRM had for each and every recipe. I was hoping to be able to use the database like functions to sort and find recipes as I did with MasterCook. I already had, in my possession, a series of text files that I had collected over the years, of my favorite recipes that I was hoping to utilize with TRM. Was there a fairly efficient but manageable way that I could use my text file recipes could work with all the tools of TRM?

```
TheRecipeManager Template.txt (Converted)

* Exported from TheRecipeManager *

[name of your recipe - 50 chars max]

Source:   [source - 50 chars max]
Origin:   [origin - 50 chars max]
Category: [category - 20 max]
Type:     [type - 20 char max]
Classifications: [Classification] <tab> [Classification2 etc] <tab> [25 chars max]

Description: [menu description - 500 chars max]

Qty     Measure     Ingredient
--------------------------------------------
1 <tab> [cup] <tab> [something]

Instructions: [instructions - 10000 chars max]

Staging:
Qty     Period   Task
--------------------------------------------
1 <tab> [hour] <tab> [what to do then]

Variations: [variations - 5000 chars max]

Background: [background - 5000 chars max]

Serves: [#]
Prep Time: [15 chars max]
Cook Time: [15 chars max]
Total Time: [15 chars max]

Calories: [#]
Cholesterol: [#] mg
Fat: [#] g
```

Text files are more difficult, as these have to be formatted for the TRM file system. But what about text files and recipes taken from websites and other sources? A recipe with TRM (or many other recipe programs) will not be imported correctly unless formatted correctly. I found that the TRM API language format could be used to import recipes made with FileMaker Pro files. TRM supports a "proprietary format" which means it sets the data into a format that is similar to FileMaker Pro. To ready the recipe for import, there is a quite a lot of copy-and-pasting that one must do in the fields. This I found would be quite tedious would test my patience to no end. It was not my idea of efficiently transcribing my recipes into a better format. I did find a way to make this operation less tedious and work with TRM. The template shows you how the recipes need to be formatted for import into TRM. It must be formatted with the layout that uses 30 fields (actually you don't have to insert information in each field – you just have to have this scheme of the format used. However I found an even easier way.

The easier way was to convert my recipe text files but not to insert into all the formatted areas. First I clicked on Recipe and then the *New* command to open a series of blank areas on the program recipe template. Opening my AOL browser (you can open a recipe text file with your word processor, Appleworks or another browser) and clicking on my recipe (using *Command–A* for all) made the information ready to copy into the clipboard. Then clicking and switching into the description field in the TRM program window, I pasted (*Command- V*) the recipe information. Then clicking on the categories and the Type meal areas, made the file ready for sorting and searching. It is not the best but it did work. All this would take a little time (well a few hours at least for me as I have a few hundred recipes I would want to convert to TRM format) but at least I had a way to convert the files to TRM for sorting and finding as well for more flexibility. But if time is what you have, this is a way to do it and save time.

I wanted to have an overview of this program beyond MasterCook so I could compare TRM to even greater extent. I looked at several Mac OS X recipe programs besides TRM. Some are work in progress, don't have the flexibility and most of the tools that TRM possesses in this review. TRM is missing a spellchecker that is not necessarily

needed by many. The FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) and a new PDF help booklet which will be added soon could help use the program to even greater degree. Overall I can say that both the layout and the versatility of TRM are well done and fairly easy to use even without the FAQ and the coming PDF file.

Most people are working more and more with their Macintosh computers and Mac OS X and Mac OS X-based software. If you are happy with one like MasterCook or another non-Mac OS X-based program, you can still use it and might be happy with it. However, the future is with Mac OS X. Any program that is being made will work outright with Mac OS X and should be also improved and will have additional features in the future as well.

A good recipe program using Mac OS X has been a need for several years. Of course, you can still use your older Mac OS 9 programs, but now TRM has a means to convert your older files. Many other Mac OS X recipe programs are a work-in-progress or do not have the added versatility. TRM seems to be ahead of the recipe software Mac OS X-based game right now. TRM could be the one to serve your multifaceted needs from the past, while also allowing for most of your needs now and for the foreseeable future.

[Editor: FYI – TRM has been developed to have the same look and feel for the WinTel world as it is for the Mac and a User Guide is also being developed – expect to see it in January. The developer has said that he is creating TRM to be a lifestyle type of package more than a computer-based recipe manager application. Right now, TRM is also being sold in all Apple stores. Oh, and we gave them a 5 because of their excellent tech support, even over a holiday(!), where they helped figure out what was causing the Mastercook file format issue Eric was having.]

Book Reviews

Build Your Own Database Driven Website using PHP & MySQL: A Practical Step-by-Step Guide 3rd Edition Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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http://www.sitepoint.com
Booksite: http://www.sitepoint.com/books/phpmysql1/
Released: October 2004
Pages: 364
$40 USD, $58 CND, £28 UK, €32
ISBN: 0975240218
Requirements: PHP and SQL access on a server.
For PHP 5 & MySQL Beginners.
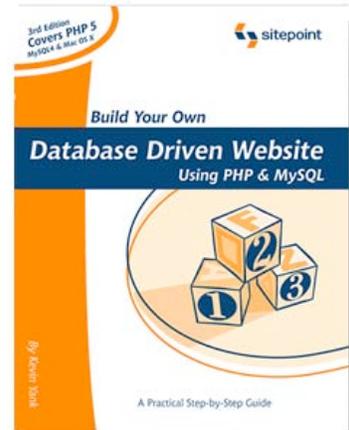
Strengths: Shows how to install and configure PHP and MySQL cross-platform.

Weaknesses: The SQL approach presented is subject to SQL injection attacks – be careful!

Build Your Own Database Driven Website using PHP & MySQL: A Practical Step-by-Step Guide 3rd Edition by Kevin Yank is a beginner's step-by-step guide on how to start creating a web-based database using PHP 5 and MySQL. I wanted to learn how because we have a database that needs to be more interactive than it currently is and I figured this book would help us get there.

Kevin Yank does a marvelous job patiently teaching us how to install and configure both PHP 5 and MySQL as we organize dynamic web pages and put together a viable content management system.

The part on Relational Databases Management Systems is very basic and is a good place to start, but then abdicates to http://www.datamodel.org/ for more information. Since I have taken college courses on Database Management and still have those books, I found Kevin's approach refreshing.

Kevin Yank's excellent teaching technique sets up the foundation stone by stone and then grouts everything solidly together later in the book.

The only real issue that needs to be dealt with is in providing better security by not using string concatenation.

That said, what in the book? It consists of 12 chapters (13 if we include the preface). These are installing PHP and MySQL on WinTel, Linux and Macintosh platforms, getting started with MySQL and PHP, publishing MySQL data on the web, relational database design, content management systems, formatting and submissions, MySQL administration, advanced SQL queries, handling binary data, cookies and sessions in PHP and finally, structured PHP programming. There are also 4 Appendices as references to MySQL syntax, functions and column types and PHP functions for working with MySQL. And yes, I did mark a lot of the pages since we are using MySQL now as the database for our macCompanion Blog through ExpressionEngine at http://www.maccompanion.com/ExpressionEngine1.2/.

Now it is your turn. If you want to begin at the beginning, why not start here to learn PHP and MySQL?

The Cult of Mac Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham

NO STARCH PRESS

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$40 USD, $56 CND,
Pages: 280
ISBN: 1886411832
Audience: All Macintosh addicts and users
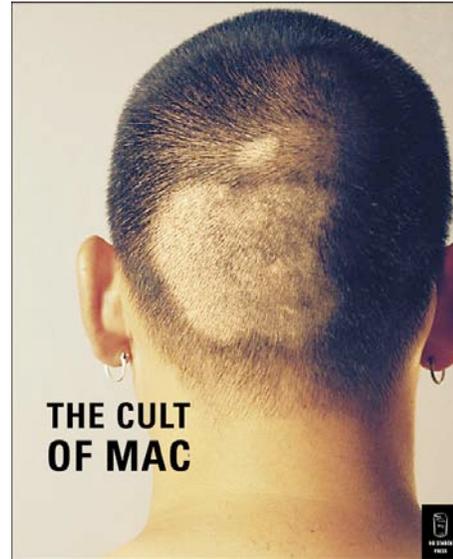
Strengths: The Cult of Mac is a beautiful hard cover book with a dust jacket that projects its attitude. It has color pages throughout, and the text is clean, crisp, and easy to read. The book is first and foremost a testament to the loyalty of the Macintosh community. It is a book of homage, not of scholarship, consolidating the author's column in Wired Magazine.

Weaknesses: Chapter 2, Macs and the Counter Culture, and parts of Chapter 4, Mac Tattoos and Haircuts, may offend those for whom sex, tattoos, sharp satire, fetishist haircuts, and more arcane curiosa may be too weird or explicit for their taste … but it's a reportable part of the cultism that laid the foundation for and unites the Macintosh community. So skip through the pieces that turn you off. Heck, this book doesn't even rate a restricted PG-13 rating —it's PG all the way. After all, you can always read the next section or chapter, or even wait until no one is looking and go back and read what you skipped. [Editor- Some wording is R-rated.]

Book Overview — The Cult of Mac is an eclectic, at times humorous, photograph filled collection of Apple Macintosh history, gossip, and half-serious insights about things Macintosh. To my delight, it ignores techno-geek details, the author choosing instead to concentrate on Mac culture and the passions and devotion that Macintosh users often feel about their computer system.

-
  - **Hey, Watch Out! You Wintel Users**

Introduction

I was hooked on the book from its introductory pages and was disappointed when I had to put it down to get on with my life — you know, sleep, eat, and get on with other responsibilities. I have reviewed other Macintosh culture-related books as well as books telling the stories of the major players in "Mac-land". Such reviews included my favorite evangelizing tool, *Macintosh…The Naked Truth*, by Scott Kelby, New Riders Press [*macCompanion*, December 2003], and the elegant library table tale *Inside the Publishing Revolution: The Adobe Story*, by Pamela Pfiffner, Adobe Press, [*MacNUT*, 2002]. I am delighted to add *The Cult of Mac* to my list of "go back and reread a chapter" books which hither to were limited to gems by Scott Kelby and Robin Williams. In this review, rather than write one more testimonial to this excellent book, I've chosen to weave my comments together with what others have written, synthesizing a whole which is more insightful than I could have produced alone.

There are three ways to get into *Cult of the Mac*: Flip to a page, catch a photo or three, and start to browse –-- read what grabs you! Do the table of contents thing and dive right in at the section or chapter that pushes your button; or just plain take the time to read it, slowly savoring what amuses you and zipping though what doesn't catch your fancy. (As you readers know, that's the way I enjoy most books.) If I had to start reading again, I would read Chapter 1, Techno Fetishism; Ch 6, Mac Evangelism; and then Chapter 17, What Makes Mac Fans So Loyal? I would then recommend dancing your way though the rest of the book in a more linear fashion, which, as a stolid reviewer, I did not do.

The Book Itself

This book is all about "What makes Mac fans so loyal? The answer, of course, depends upon who you ask: Marketers say it's the brand; psychologists say it's a social relationship; and Apple loyalists say it's the merits of the machine, its friendliness, its simplicity. But some common themes emerge: community, the alternative to Microsoft, and the brand that connotes nonconformity, liberty, and creativity. Mac users are not merely an ad hoc group of people who happen to use the same kind of computer. They represent a distinct subculture, with its own rituals, traditions, and mindset." [Review in the Northern Vermont MUG — http://www.sover.net/~nvmug/index.html]

This computer has" the largest and most fervent subculture in computing. … *The Cult of Mac* takes you inside the world of the Mac addict and provides an in-depth introduction to Macintosh fans who have their own subculture, with clearly defined obsessions and rites of passage." "No other computer inspires devotion like a Mac." "If you want to know what's happening in the Apple underground, talk to Leander Kahney." Source: Eric Hellweg, CNN Columnist.

The book is eye-catching — rich with pictures and a clever layout, with relatively sparse text. This is not a serious history of the development of the Macintosh. Other books have covered that, but who cares. The book rarely gets deep into technical or niche issues. It's all about a phenomenon and culture that envelops the mystique and the almost evangelical proselytizing fervor the Macintosh triggers in most of its users, despite denials to the contrary. The book is rich in eye-candy: Its big glossy pages are full of photos and graphic elements that enhance the tales it tells. As noted by Tim E Robertson [http://www.mymac.com/showarticle.php?id=1840], "This is a wonderful book to look at and read. Many of the stories are captivating, and made me want to look up more information online on the people he writes about in the book." I wholeheartedly agree!

The book is divided into 5 sections: Macintosh Madness, Gatherings of the Clan, Incessant Tinkerers, Hoarders and Recyclers, and New Frontiers. Each one includes smaller articles and essays on most things Macintosh and Apple, taken for the most part from Kahney's columns for "Wired". As noted above, Chapters 1, 6, and 17 were my

favorites. Since I don't iPod, I found Chapter 16 the least interesting. Also, for pure quirkiness about our community, check out Chapters 2 and Chapter 4.

Fantasy Designs -I wonder why Apple legal wrote to have this design quashed?

Mac Love Figure – A Pin-Up

"Each heavily illustrated chapter and section details the quirky, unique, and even dark underside of the Macintosh computer users. Kahney's account is exhaustive, chronicling the tribute Mac users pay to the company and the platform. Kahney includes a look at the psycho-sexual attachment, the soft porn product tributes, box collectors, tattooist, Mac bongs, and other oddball and offbeat ways Macintosh users honor their favorite computer platform." [Amazon Reviewer – J. Tabor]

Minor discomforts— The book's print was too small and often too grey for these tired, almost seventy-year old eyes. It slowed my reading to less than half of my usual speed. Oh, another minor gripe, the book was too large to comfortably read in bed.

Now don't get me wrong – I really did and do enjoy this book. Hey, 4.5 macC's isn't peanuts. As noted above, I got sucked in it. After all, I do have a severe case of both Mac love and Mac addiction. (Hey, I'm still stuck in my peer reviewer mode, a habit that doesn't die after being practiced for 40 years, so I'm obligated by my conscience or conditioning to gripe a little.)

Although the book has a rich and detailed index devoted to the people and sub-theme subjects in the book, its treatment of associated web links was less than perfect. I would have preferred greater attention to identifying the links to more of the subjects/citations included in the book, saving me the trouble of doing Google searches.

In Closing
I, as did R. LeFebvre of Anchorage Alaska - a self styled Mac geek, really enjoyed the calligraphically oriented essay style of the final chapter, entitled, "What Makes Mac Fans So Loyal?" Rich in calligraphy-style headers and in words we can respond to, it is a Macintosh lover's soliloquy, poetic and passionate. It's all about why we all are compulsive about our Macs, and the company that makes them. I was warmed by captions such as:

"Apple represents creativity and individuality; Microsoft represents business and conformity. Apple is the underdog, Microsoft the big predatory monopoly."
"People say they are a Buddhist or a Catholic. We say we are Mac users, and that means we have the same values."

As Eric Hellweg, CNN columnist noted, " Whether you're a casual observer, a mild Mac fan, or a hardcore member of the cult, join journalist and loyal Mac user Leander Kahney as he exposes all sides of Mac fanaticism, from the innocuous to the insane." At times I became impatient with the 'slowness' of the story telling pace and at other times with some of stories and personal reminiscing I found uninteresting. Too much, my mind screamed! This always occurred just before I was forced, at day's end, to stop reading and crash. But the next morning, over a cup of coffee, there I was again, enjoying the reading of it. And, after all,… one man's trash is… So, I am pleased to award The Cult of Mac 4.5 macCs

Warning: This a large book worthy of the coffee table in your living or family room. Its unique cover art will stand out among your books on Picasso, Degas, cats, horses, or … making it easy for your guests to spot. It's too large to pocket, but never the less expect repeated requests to (permanently) borrow it.
Although Christmas will be over by the time you read this review, buy it to give to a Mac friend, to bring a new year's joy to your Mac-using friends.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Leander Kahney is a journalist who covers Apple and the Mac community for *Wired News*. Before joining Wired, he was a senior writer at now defunct *MacWEEK*. He has written for numerous publications, including *Wired Magazine, Scientific American*, and the *London Guardian*.

Degunking™ your Email, SPAM, and Viruses Reviewed by Robert Pritchett
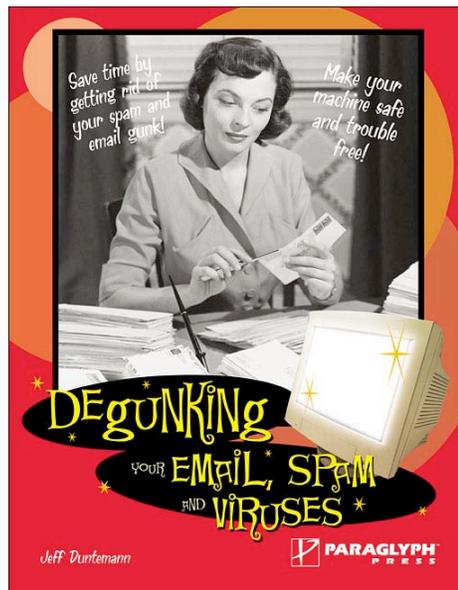
Strengths: Walks through ways to alleviate the pain associated with using WinTel machines.

Weaknesses: None found.

Degunking Your Email, Spam, and Viruses by Jeff Duntemann focuses on managing Email to delete and avoid gunk (unwanted sticky stuff or electronic clutter that clogs systems). Like other Degunking series books, this one has a 12-step program, 15, and 30, 1-hour, 3-hour to half-day degunking regimens listed for Email and Malware along with 20 task for degunking WinTel machines.

Jeff Duntemann accomplishes this effort over the course of 16 chapters with the first 6 discussing Email issues and the remaining covering SPAM, protecting your system against viruses, trojans, worms, adware, spyware browser bugaboos, hoaxes, phishing and even the Nigerian 419 scams. He goes to great lengths explaining what they are and what to do about them.

What I enjoyed most was his handling of routers and PC Defense conditions he named DefCon 1 through DefCon 4 and bypassing Microsoft OS completely to do backups when the system has to be reformatted when it becomes impossible to kill the gremlins and save the data files using Linux with a "LiveCD" prior to "Burning Down the House" – reinstalling the OS.

The sections on Spam and what to do about it are also revealing. See the other books reviewed this month on SPAM. This one shows what to do about it – including having 3 Email addresses with one as a throwaway.

If you have a Mac instead, this book will help you appreciate what WinTel folks have to go through in order to keep their machines relatively healthy. If you haven't felt their pain by the end of the book, you have no empathy whatsoever. We reviewed *Degunking Your Mac* by Joli Ballew (2004) earlier. Maybe by comparing the two books to those who use WinTel boxes, they will want to migrate to a less maintenance-intensive system.

If you have the misfortune of using a WinTel box, than this book will assist in identifying the causes of what I call "the case of the slows".

On the SPAM front, Jeff Duntemann gives high praise to the Bayesian filtering processes. For the WinTel environment there are no quick fixes and Jeff shows some long-term strategies on how to deal with the deck that Microsoft dealt. Think of this book as a how-to-manage tool. And that is the point isn't it? How to manage

maintaining your WinTel box so it doesn't get gunked up?

I already have someone in our office that I believe can learn a lot from this book. I doubt she will be offended if I give it to her. She might even thank me. She always says she never has time to clean up her systems. Now she has a choice of not only how, but also when.

And yes, there are links to applications and alternatives that can help improve the process. If you deal with Wintel boxen, this book will help manage them, at least as far as vulnerabilities go that are external to the OS.

Excel 2003 Programming: A Developer's Notebook Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Jeff Webb
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1827
O'Reilly & Associates
1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol CA 95472
800-294-4747
Fax: 800-997-9901
order@oreilly.com
http://www.oreilly.com/
**Booksite:** http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/exceladn/
Released: August 23, 2004
Pages: 312
$30 USD, $44 CND, £21 UK, €27
ISBN: 0596007671
Requirements: Visual Basic, Excel 2003.
For Intermediate to Advanced programmers that use VBA.
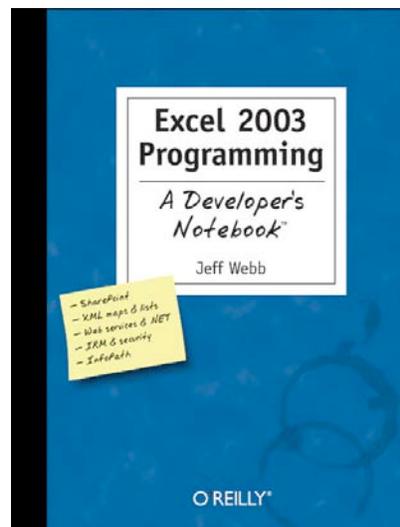
Strengths: An O'Reilly book. A Developers Book. A Problem-Solving Book.

Weaknesses: None Found.

Excel 2003 Programming: A Developer's Notebook by Jeff Webb looks at Excel™ from the view of someone who appreciates teamwork and Visual Basic™ with an eye towards the future of XML. It is intended to be a problem-solving book for programmers.

For the Mac user, Virtual PC™ 7 (VPC7) no doubt will be needed along with Visual Basic (VB) and connectivity to the Internet, a working knowledge of XML, Excel Macro-making, and the Microsoft Office System so InfoPath™ (XML access product) and SharePoint™ (data sharing service) can be used.

This is a lab book designed to show solutions to problems. It also opens up how Excel works behind the scenes and gives ample code samples with XP Pro™-based screenshots to show where to go to get work done. If a smattering of knowledge has been obtained in knowing how to navigate and code with Excel, .NET, XML or VB or even Web Services, than it will be amplified here. Want to learn how Excel can interoperate with Amazon and Google?

This is not a theory book. It is a practical application book with plenty of links to dig deeper. The O'Reilly Booksite listed above has samples to download in .zip format.

The book is divided up into 7 chapters covering kickstarting and sharing Lists, XML, SharePoint, Web Services, Security and .Net and InfoPath, really working with XML, gathering web data, programming with .Net, digging deeply into security with Information Rights Management (IRM) and distributing Macros and working with InfoPath Forms.

There are lots of task-oriented examples and explanations sprinkled with humor. There are no coffee-stains on any of these lab-book-like pages.

If you need to code in Excel or make it jump through hoops, this is a great place to learn – in the O'Reilly Developers Notebook Laboratory Environment.

Excel 2003 Personal Trainer Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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computer books • conferences • online publishing

Editors: Tatiana Apandi Diaz, Nathan Torkington
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1977
http://www.customguide.com
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800-294-4747
Fax: 800-997-9901
order@oreilly.com
http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/excelpt/index.html
Released: November 2004
Pages: 482
$30 USD, $44 CND, £21 UK, €27 with CD.
ISBN: 0596008538
Requirements: Excel.
Novice level for Excel - Computer Basics 101.

★★★★⯪

Strengths: Provides basic instruction on using Excel.

Weaknesses: Training CD is Windows-only.

Excel 2003 Personal Trainer by Custom Guide, Inc. is a basic, non-technical instruction guide on how to use Windows XP. Why review it in a Mac-centric magazine? If you are an expert in using Excel and consider yourself a Super Hero already, than move on to the next review.

Excel Personal Trainer is one of many of the Microsoft-specific training courses available from Custom Guide, Inc. The whole professional set costs $3,500 USD.

Okay, here we go. There are 13 chapters. Fundamentals introduces the new features in Excel™ and later chapters cover editing and formatting worksheets, creating and working with charts, managing workbooks, handling functions and formulas, working with lists, automating tasks with macros, interoperating with Word, using Excel on the Internet, learning how to deal with data analysis and PivotTables, running what-if analysis hiding, displaying an displaying toolbars, sending faxes, creating autofill lists, passwording, merging and revising a workbook, sharing and tracking changes and learning how to do detection and repair.

This book in the Personal Trainer series gets a little more sophisticated much more quickly but each chapter follows the Custom Guide format of Objectives, Prerequisites, lots of Quick references and whitespace interspersed with lots of illustrations, then finishing up with Summaries, Quizzes, Homework and Answers to Quizzes

In this particular case, if you have mastered everything here, you are indeed a Super hero, especially if you can turn around and help others successfully with answers garnered here. For best use, go to the quizzes and if you can answer them , then move on. Many of the questions are of the type, "pick the one answer that isn't true", so you have to read all of the options to pick the correct one and they aren't as easy as you would expect after reading either Windows XP or PowerPoint 2003 Personal Trainer books.

The CD is Windows-only, but if you have Excel on the Mac, the Excel files open up for each lesson anyway on a Mac. I think the most interesting part is on PivotTables.

If you want to be come a Super Hero in Excel, this book will be very helpful. At least you can point out what the answers should be when folks ask questions about Excel.

iBook Fan Book : Smart and Beautiful to Boot Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Derrick Story,
 http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/54
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1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol CA 95472
800-294-4747
Fax: 800-997-9901
order@oreilly.com
http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/ibkfanbk/index.html
Released: November 2004
Pages: 128
$15 USD, $22 CND, £10 UK, €14
ISBN: 0596008619
Requirements: An iBook – or desire to get one.
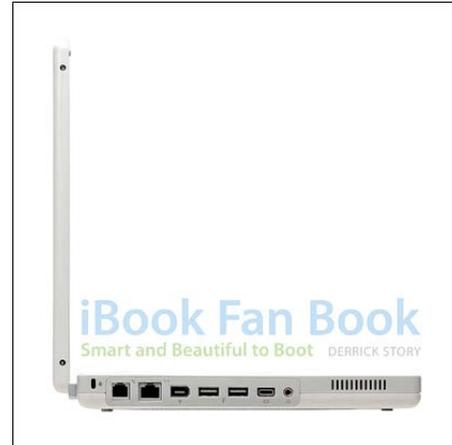
Strengths: All about what you didn't know in using an iBook.

Weaknesses: One big typo – (keyboard upside down).

iBook Fan Book : Smart and Beautiful to Boot by Derrick Story is a quick read on working with, and developing a relationship with, the iBook®.

There are 5 short chapters (6 if you include the introduction) covering highlights, cases, keyboard and screen protectors, cleaners, system prefs that matter, Internet access, managing the Address Book, learning something about iCal and Stickies, iPhoto , digital music, iMovies, USB wireless, memory and a few items for serious road warriors.

Maybe you were lucky enough during the holy-days to get one of these as a stocking stuffer, after all, it is a pocketbook. What I enjoyed most about this book were the links to 3rd-party offerings that enhance the iBook experience.

The only "gotcha" I found – and why the book didn't get a 5 – is the graphic on page iii is upside down.

If you are interested in getting a bullet-proof (literally) portable, why not learn a little more about it before you grab one? And if you have one already, why not get this book to learn about what you may not already know?

iPod & iTunes HACKS: Tips & Tools for Ripping, Mixing and Burning Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Hadley Stern, http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1
http://www.hadleystern.com/
And around 26 contributors!
O'Reilly & Associates
1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol CA 95472
800-294-4747
Fax: 800-997-9901
order@oreilly.com
http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/ipodtuneshks/index.html
Released: October 2004
Pages: 456
$25 USD, $37 CND, £17.50 UK, €20
ISBN: 0596007787
Requirements: Any iPod and a copy of iTunes. Some electronics knowledge. Some AppleScripting and Unix knowledge.
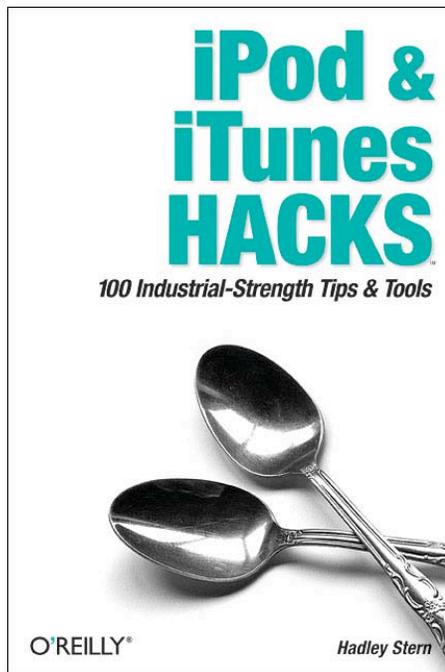
Strengths: Way cool in-depth hacks for both iPod and iTunes.

Weaknesses: None Found.

iPod & iTunes HACKS: Tips & Tools for Ripping, Mixing and Burning by Hadley Stern and 26 other contributors is really a "way cool" book on hacking both iPods and iTunes.

This book is intended for those who are comfortable experimenting and exploring with either the iPod or iTunes - or for those who would like to.

In true Hack series fashion, there are 100 hacks in the book, but they are split 50-50.

The iPod section consists of 3 chapters on the differing iPods some non-iPod hardware to interface with and iPod software. I really liked the materials lists, electronic schematics and other "true hacks" that are presented in this section. There are plenty of illustrations and some hacks go into great detail. Whether DJing, broadcasting, using the iPod as a universal remote, integrating the iPod into your vehicle (even if it isn't a Beemer"), dictaphoning or jukeboxing, it is all here with links and, of course, hacking the hacks. The non-iPod hardware presents interoperability between the iPod and Palms, mobile phones, AirPorting TiVoing and even building either a MacMP3 AAC Server or a Linux Music server. The software chapter gets into troubleshooting, writing games, books and web pages, streaming audio, phoning and interoperating with .Net and Linux.

The iTunes section also consists of 3 chapters on iTunes. Chapter 4 discusses keyboard shortcutting, ID3 tag cleaning, bulk-ripping, Konfabing, Javaing, Perling, skinning, Ogging and Metadatiaing. Chapter 5 digs into AppleScripting iTunes and the last chapter takes us beyond iTunes into accessing it via Unix, streaming over the Web, converting record collections and even creating an Audiobook.

All the links listed in many of the hacks are worth the price of the book and so is the information about the contributors in the first part of the book.

One hack I've got to try is the local broadcasting one where I can shut down the obnoxious boombox-rocking vehicle next to mine by broadcasting over their radio soothing music through my iPod, at least while we are at a stoplight together.

If you want to take the iPod and or iTunes to the next level, get this book.

PAYPAL HACKS: 100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Shannon Sofield
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1799
Dave Nielsen
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1836
Dave Burchell
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1901
And 23 Contributors
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800-294-4747
Fax: 800-997-9901
order@oreilly.com
http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/payhks/
Released: September 2004
Pages: 368
$25 USD, $37 CND, £17.50 UK, €23
ISBN: 0596007515
Requirements: A PayPal account, preferably a merchant account – and a credit card.
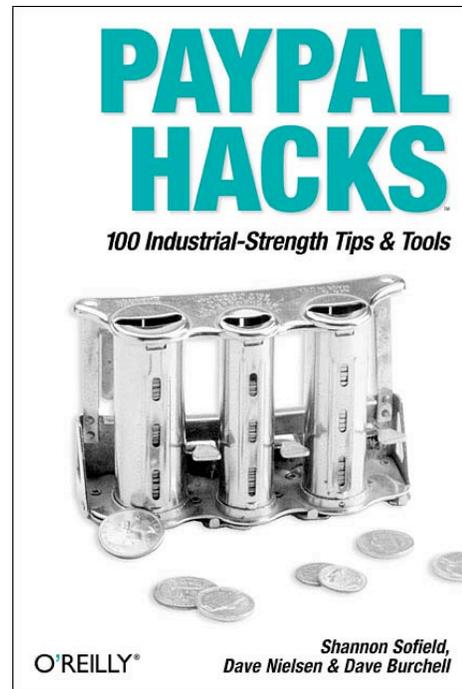
Strengths: Shows many ways in which a PayPal account can pay for itself – and then some.

Weaknesses: Somewhat WinTel-centric.

PAYPAL HACKS: 100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools by Shannon Sofield, Dave Nielsen, Dave Burchell and 23 Contributors, is basically a *PayPal: The Missing Manual* kind of book.

If you run a website as a for-profit environment and you want to smooth out the income-process, than why not get a merchant account at PayPal? Since time is money for an Ecommerce site, make it easy on yourself by adding a PayPal button so you can accept currencies worldwide with this premier global financial service.

PAYPAL HACKS delves much more deeply into many tips and tools – and techniques on how best to utilize your time and efforts collecting revenues online. The book is rather WinTel-centric since it provides code samples in ActionScript, .ASP, C#, JavaScript, .NET, VBScript, etc. It also uses some C++, HTML and PERL and shows code for the PayPal API. And it covers security issues using OpenSSL as well.

The book follows the Hacks Series formats by providing warnings and helps along the way and this one also includes a thermometer graphic by each hack to show its level of difficulty. Links in many places show were on the PayPal website to find code and scripts to help in implementing the 100 hacks printed in this book.

Now even if you don't have a merchant account, this book helps reduce the frustration even I had navigating their website.

Beyond that, I discovered how to reduce transaction costs and fees associated with both sending and receiving funds, how to use the Mastercard Debit card from PayPal, how to use Dreamweaver® to interface with PayPal, how to hack-proof payment buttons, how to resolve account issues and even how to include a PayPal button in Email and even minimizing costs associated with chargebacks. Oh, and if we had items to sell on macCompanion, and we

intend to eventually), there is even code on how to use PayPal's own shopping cart technology.

I also found much that I needed to know regarding subscriptions, donations and affiliate processes and how to protect myself while doing eBay activities.

Probably the most important section I found that was important to me was in the chapter on Instant Payment Notification (IPN) and Payment Data Transfer (PDT), two more processes we can implement.

The book is divided up into 8 chapters on getting started with PayPal, making payments, selling, payment buttons, utilizing storefronts and shopping carts, managing subscriptions, the magic of IPN and PDT and finally, a whole chapter dedicated to the PayPal API.

Needless to say, I marked a lot of pages in this book and if you do any kind of Ecommerce - or plan to - you will want to get a copy of this book to guide you through the process of safely and securely possibly making money online.

The Photoshop Elements 3 Book for Digital Photographers (Voices That Matter) Reviewed
by Dr. Eric Flescher

Peachpit
Essential books for the creative community

Author: Scott Kelby
http://www.scottkelby.com/books.html
New Riders Press/Peachpit
1249 Eighth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
Booksite: http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321269055
Released: October 11, 2004
Pages: 456
$35 USD
ISBN: 0321269055

★★★★★
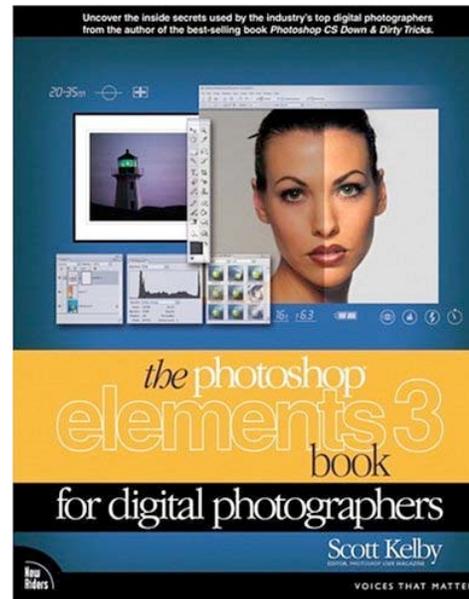
Strengths: Extremely well designed and illustrated, very easy to read, yet comprehensive. The book is a tutorial, graphic editor information source and useful guide for the use of *Photoshop Elements 3* or even *Photoshop*. Chapter tasks include very intuitively written activities and information for photographers.

Weaknesses: There are no arrows to highlight some of the illustrations in the screenshots, so you might have to search for what the author is saying sometimes. No Macintosh version of the software is included with the book. Previous versions were for both Mac and PC. Photoshop Elements 3 for the PC is missing part of PSE3. However this is not a total calamity and Macintosh users can work around with the Mac versions quite easily through adapting using the Mac keyboard commands (that substitute for the PC commands).

There are many computer books that include tutorials, information how to use the software and that relate to using and enhancing software for a variety of graphic tasks. Few books however combine all of these factors together into a readable book that is comprehensive, readable and help you learn the software to accomplish and create special graphics endeavors. *Photoshop Elements 3 for Digital Photographers* by Scott Kelby is one of those remarkably well done books that meets all these needs and gives you a lot of "bang for your buck" for now and in the future.

If you have a digital camera, *Photoshop Elements 3* (or PhotoShop CS Mac or PC.) and want to learn about using the digital effect tasks within the book, this book is for you. It is a modified version of the author's best-selling book *Photoshop for Digital Photographers*. The author, Scott Kelby, is the Editor in Chief and cofounder of *Photoshop User Magazine* and Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP). He is also the editor in chief and cofounder of *Photoshop User Magazine* and other books and Editor of National Association of Photoshop professionals

This version is particularly directed to the *Photoshop Elements 3* users and the beginner in mind. This version can also be used with Mac and PC users. However the screenshots and the keyboard commands utilize the PC commands and toolbars because *Photoshop Elements 3* (PE3) is missing some features that *Photoshop CS* versions do not have. Previous versions of Photoshop Elements were for Macintosh and PC. However *Photoshop Elements 3* book focuses upon the PC version as the Mac version does not have the Photo Manager (to keep costs done supposedly for the Mac version of the software and since iPhoto™ can be used for much the same purpose). Because of this, the book is written with the keyboard commands in PC language. For Mac users who want to use this book and PCE3 elements you need to use the keyboard commands instead of the PC which is not all together difficult. The author includes information and "work-arounds" that allow you to figure how to complete the effects with these different tools.

This 456-page book has thirteen chapters. Each chapter has a nice, quirky name to highlight what is the main object of the chapter. The book is well illustrated, has colorful screenshots and includes a lot of white space, which makes the book most readable. Each page includes the number of the chapter and the title of the chapter at the top and this is a nice touch when finding your tasks in chapters at your fingertips. This is most helpful because the author says that this book can be used to "jump around" and discover what you want to know in any order you wish. This works if you don't want to go in order.

This book is specifically for *Photoshop Elements 3* users although you can use Photoshop as a work around. It is designed with the beginning *Photoshop Elements 3* and graphic user in mind. Originally the book was designed for *Photoshop* users and much the same format has been used specifically for integrated of the less powerful but quite capable *Photoshop Elements 3* user. Most novice and possible intermediate users will not need the advanced capabilities of *Photoshop* but can do very well with the PS elements 3. The author highlights in this book what can be done to solve a lot of problems and make your graphic adventures possible with computers.

As the page Xviii says, this book focuses on the users of images made with digital cameras. In fact, (P.105) included information about images that can be downloaded from the website to use as you can use your own and to work with the exercises in the book. The titles of each section have cute names that correspond with the set of tasks in each useful chapter.

Chapter 1, Mastering Browser, begins the process of learning how to use the tools to affect the results you want to produce. Chapter 2, Managing Photos, involves importing photos, previewing, sorting, finding and comparing, reducing clutter Chapter 3, Cream of the Crop delivers insights into making your images the best that you can make them.

The next chapter works with color and other ways to work with the images. Chapter 4, Big Fixx deals with removing and fixing areas of images, remove red eye and opening up raw images.
Chapter 5, Color Me Badd, helps with photo quick fixes, drop and drip, color corrections and adjusting flesh tones

Chapters also work with ways to adjust image features in different ways. Chapter 6, the Mask, allows the user to work with selecting the areas and shapes, softening edges, making selections by using the brushes. Chapter 7, Head Games, focuses upon removing blemishes, dark areas, coloring hair, whitening eyes, enhancing eyebrows and eyelashes. Chapter 8, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, cleverly includes the slimming and trimming of photos.

The next chapters also work with different types of scenery. Chapter 9 shows the replacing of sky; creating photos and montages, creating backdrops and getting a Polaroid look with your images.

One of the nice tasks in this chapter is creating montages. Looking at this section, I had an idea. This would be a good way to practice remaking a logo of one my websites while using a number of pictures. I had the idea; I had the images now I had some better techniques. Following the directions, I imported my images and placed these pictures in the appropriate parts of the background picture. I modified the montage to include the title. The outcome came out much better then expected and now lies at the top of my website's top main part of the website page.

The last chapters take you even further with useful tips. Chapter 10, Get Back, exercises, include repairing images, coloring Black and White photos , removing specks, dust, scratches, repairing rips and tears. Chapter 11 includes working with enhancing sharpening techniques, luminosity and edges. Chapter 12, deals with working with watermarks (to warn for copyright infringement for example) and placing photos on web and getting sites your photos. Chapter 13, Create or Die, develops your knowledge of
Making slide shows photo albums, cards, or postcards, calendars, photo websites and creating video CD to show on your DVDs

There are many interesting and well-done opportunities for improving and enhancing your graphic-editing prowess. The author command of the software and integrating with the well-done lessons. These employ very useful tasks that can be used to create graphic solutions for a host of possibilities for novice, intermediate and even advanced users who want some variety with their graphic creations.

Whether you have *Photoshop Elements 3* or *Photoshop*, this book can be used in many ways. The book is part tutorial, part resource and really is an all around great information source that goes beyond just learning how to use the software. I recommend this book for improving your digital photographic needs and graphic skills. I think you will find this book a nice addition to your computer and graphic library for a long time to come. Try it for now and for the future, for your graphic pleasure and insight into making better images from your digital photographic efforts.

PowerPoint 2003 Personal Trainer Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Editors: Tatiana Apandi Diaz, Nathan Torkington
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1977
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http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/powerpointpt/index.html
Released: November 2004
Pages: 332
$30 USD, $44 CND, £21 UK, €27 with CD.
ISBN: 0596008554
Requirements: PowerPoint 2003 (WinTel systems) (MS Office 2004).
Novice level for PowerPoint - Computer Basics 101.
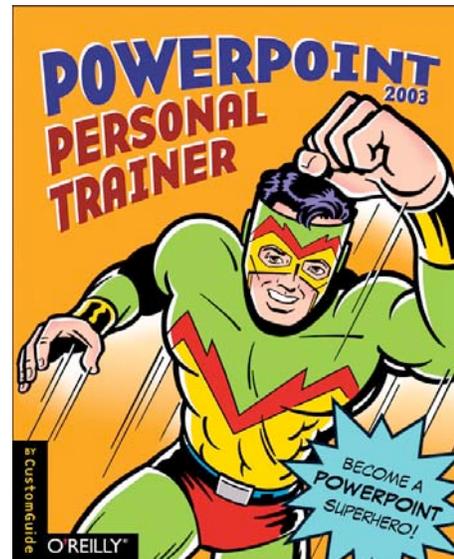
Strengths: Provides basic instruction on using the PowerPoint 2003

Weaknesses: Training CD is Windows-only, but examples and lesson materials are accessible on a Mac with Microsoft Office 2004.

PowerPoint 2003 Personal Trainer by Custom Guide, Inc. is a basic, non-technical instruction guide on how to use PowerPoint 2003. If you are an expert in using PowerPoint 2003 and consider yourself a Super Hero already, than move on to the next review.

PowerPoint 2003 Personal Trainer is one of many of the Microsoft-specific training courses available from Custom Guide, Inc. The whole professional set costs $3,500 USD.

This book steps through Fundamentals all the way to Advanced Topics through 10 chapters. For Macintosh environments that use Microsoft Office 2004, some of what is here may not be pertinent, but after all, it is a basic "get started" book and many Mac folks probably have purchased a copy of Keynote™ anyway.

What's in the book? Fundamentals discusses PowerPoint 2003 features and moves on to editing, formatting, drawings, working with graphics, tables, WordArt and graphs and org charts. Then it moves into delivering a presentation, working with multimedia, Word, excel and web-based presentations. Finally the last chapter deals with hiding, displaying and moving toolbars, sending faxes, adding comments, finding files and recording, editing and playing macros.

This book too follows the Custom Guide format of starting out each chapter with Objectives and Prerequisites, using plenty of Quick References in the text, interspersed with lots of white space and illustrations, a Lesson review, Quiz, Homework and Quiz Answers. Again, if you can answer the Quizzes, move on. If not, go back and read the chapters. Along with the book there is a Windows-centric CD, but I found that I could jus t click on the PowerPoint lesson samples and they opened for me since I'm running Microsoft Office™ 2004 now (updated from Office:mac). If you are using a WinTel box to learn PowerPoint, the CD runs a simulation of PowerPoint for the lessons.

For those who use Macs and are not running Keynote and have Office 2004, this is a good place to start learning how to use PowerPoint.

Practical VoIP Using VOCAL Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Luang Dang, http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/912
Cullen Jennings, http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/913
David G. Kelly, http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/914
http://www.vovida.org
O'Reilly & Associates
1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol CA 95472
800-294-4747
Fax: 800-997-9901
order@oreilly.com
http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/voip/index.html
Released: July 2004
Pages: 512
$45 USD, $70 CND, £32 UK, €59
ISBN: 0596000782
Requirements: C++, Java, VPC7 or WinTel box, Linux, desire to take telephony o
the box.
Intermediate to Advanced.

Strengths: Provides Open Source VoIP coding information.

Weaknesses: Not Mac-oriented.
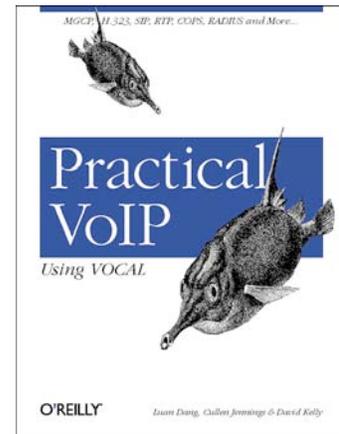
Practical VoIP Using VOCAL by Luang Dang, Cullen Jennings and David G. Kelly takes us into the realm of doing Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) even after Vovida (VOice, VIdeo, DAta) Networks, makers of VOCAL (the Vovida Open Communication Application Library) was absorbed by Cisco Systems in 2000.

The book teaches us how to use the VOCAL open source code to create a usable phone system for handling call control, routing, media, policy, billing and provisioning for 1-unit systems up to well over 100,000 units.

Why is Cisco letting this happen? They want everyone to accept VoIP so they can sell more systems, of course. And by making the code "open", they get to have feedback from developers who can find issues and resolve them by providing their findings via vovida.org Forums. It's a win-win situation.

Cisco wants us to think outside the box of telephony and provide value-added features unheard of in the telephony industry. Computers can add so much more to the limited Phone-think mentality and this is possible using such protocols as
SIP (Session Initiation Protocol), SDP (Session Description Protocol) and RTP (Real-time Transport Protocol) for call control and media, TRIP (Telephony Routing over IP), DNS SRV and ENUM for routing, MGCP (Media Gateway Control Protocol) and H.323 for call control and translation into SIP, COPS (Common Open Policy Service), OSP (Open Settlement Protocol) and RSVP (Reservation Protocol) for policy and Quality of Service, RADIUS (Remote Authentication Dial In User Service) for interfacing with billing servers and SNMP (Simple Network Management Protocol). If all those acronyms don't turn you off, than you may enjoy reading this book and rolling up your electronic sleeves to dive into playing with Voice over IP.

Let me warn you, AT&T is now offering Services over IP, replacing VoIP and a host of other "over IP" technologies.
Now back to the book: there are 19 chapters covering what VOCAL is and what it can do, creating a Home system, an internal trial system, provisioning users and servers, configuring system parameters and dial plans, learning SIP

and other protocols, getting familiar with the Vovida SIP stack, base code, user agents, learning about the Marshal Server, Redirect Server, CPL (Call Processor Language) Feature Server, the Unified Voice Mail Server, the MGCP Translator, the H.323 translator, System monitoring with SNMP, quality service, billing and provisioning. There are also two Appendices covering SIP User interface configuration and a short list on testing tools.

Even though I have a Computer telephony engineering certificate and this book brought back a flood of memories, I was a bit put off by the fact that Mac OS X gets short shrift. You would think that a worldwide system that prides itself on "5-9s" uptime (up 99.9999% of the time) would lend itself to a platform that also stays up most of the time. The Vovida website shows only a few entries by folks who experimented with Darwinizing VOCAL back in 2002. I don't think they may have been too successful.

Anyway, this book opens up and provides a background to VoIP and shows us why VoIP is still a $1 trillion business being taken over by the TelCos.

Programmer's Ultimate Security DeskRef **Reviewed by Robert Pritchett**

SYNGRESS

IT BOOKS AND CERTIFICATION SOFTWARE

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For programmers that want to be careful with code.

Strengths: Shows risks or security flaws for 13 programming languages.

Weaknesses: Missing Java and Visual Basic.
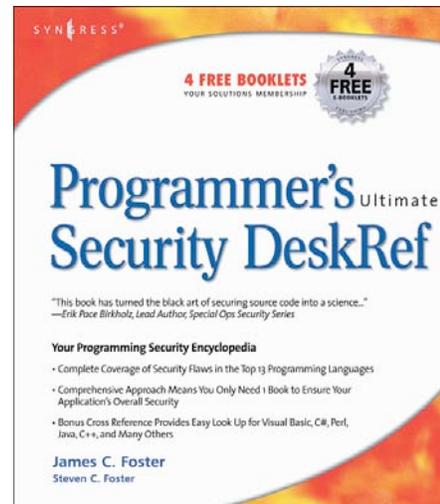
Programmer's Ultimate Security DeskRef by James C Foster, Steven C Foster is a book that is short on dialogue and long on listing flaws in 13 programming languages.

Most programmers have never been taught to code for security. Syngress saw a need and filled it with a book that acts as the "one source" that acts as a Programming Security Encyclopedia – and maybe that is what it should have been titled.

The languages are: ASP, C, C++, C#, ColdFusion, Javascript, Jscript, Lisp, Perl, PHP, Python, VBA, and Vscript. Program responsibly by learning which function or method's purpose is by looking at its prototype, summary, description and risk. Some also have additional links for digging deeper and an impact statement of low, medium or high and some have cross-references. With this information at our fingertips we can now perhaps feel a little more at ease knowing that we are aware of the risk level of those calls or methods we use in our applications.

Noticeably absent are Java and Visual Basic (if we ignore VBA). Exploit examples would have been nice. Maybe next time? Or on a website link for the book?

Real World Web Services Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/realwws/index.html
**Released:** October 2004
Pages: 222
$30 USD, $44 CND, £21 UK, €27
ISBN: 059600642X
Requirements: Java.
For the Java Journeyman.
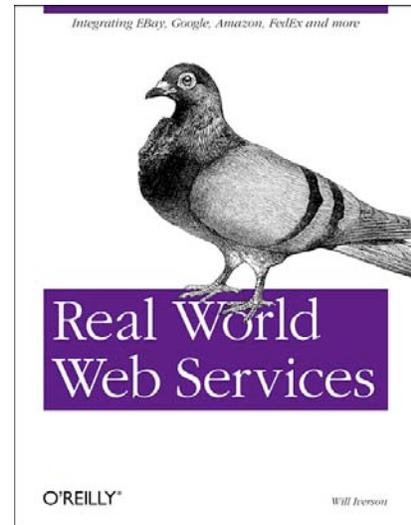
Strengths: An O'Reilly book.

Weaknesses: None Found.

Real World Web Services by Will Iverson quickly explains what Web Services are – and are not, then jumps into practical Java coding working APIs (Application Interfaces) with PayPal, Amazon, Google, eBay, FedEx, InterFAX, and CDDB (Music CD database). Will Iverson is a master dancer as he waltzes through what web services (WS) are and how to make them meet your needs.

If you want to see code, it is here. See how the successful businesses have integrated eCommerce and then emulate and integrate them into your own creations through Java and a few other programming languages.

This is not a beginners book. Be familiar with object-oriented development, adding libraries to class paths, know when to use TCP/IP and when not, and know JSP-based web application development. That's all! Then this book becomes valuable.

Will Iverson obviously is comfortable in his element and he knows how to both Geek and Mac-speak and apparently feels very comfortable in a cross-platform environment.

There are 8 web service projects spread through 12 chapters. Well, okay, that's not entirely true. 4 chapters deal with the web service evolution and web service foundations (HTTP) and RPC) and tools and future directions. The other 8 are practical success stories on gathering data, auctioning, shipping, billing, faxing, RSS feeding and news aggregating, building a CD catalog and presenting up-to-date news, posting LiveJournals and blogging.

I paid particular attention to the RSS feed and news aggregator stuff.

These are real world applications using real web services. Simple, really. Easy when someone like Will Iverson shows the way.

REVOLUTION in The Valley: The Insanely Great Story of How The Mac Was Made
Reviewed by Robert Pritchett and Dr. Eric Flescher

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http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2001
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Fax: 800-997-9901
order@oreilly.com
http://www.oreilly.com/
**Booksite:** http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/revolution/index.html
Released: December 2004
Pages: 320
$25 USD, $37 CND, £17 UK, €70
ISBN: 0596007191
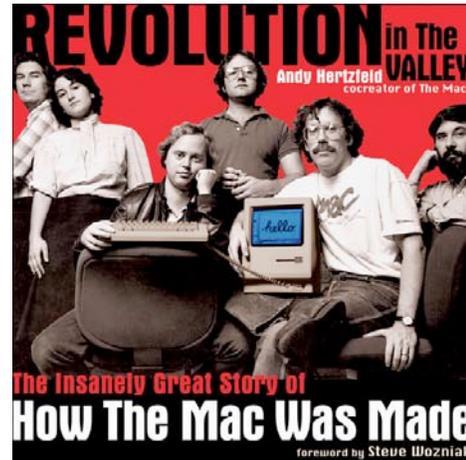
Strengths: First-person narratives of the early days of the Macintosh platform from the core team.

Weaknesses: Some strong language.

REVOLUTION in The Valley The Insanely Great Story of How The Mac Was Made by Andy Hertzfeld is a compilation of first-person experiences seemingly gleaned mostly from the chronicalized folklore.org site along with a few pictures and notes of graph-paper on the history of the beginnings of Macdom. If you are looking for an exposé on Apple, go elsewhere. And if you are from the Wintel camp, this book may not be of interest to you at all-except for one blunt thing – basically WinTel systems are using the OS originated on the Mac and you can find out how and why here.

If you are a frequenter of the website, than you have read most of these accounts already and the book covers Andy Hertfeld's days as co-creator of the Mac until Steve Job's departure from Apple Corporation as the professional managers took over, then mismanaged and strangled it nearly to death until Steve Jobs came back as the proverbial white knight to rescue it from oblivion.

The handwriting on the graph-paper in may parts of the book shows much of the pre-planning that went on to get the Mac from mind to factory floor. The stories show the thinking and brilliance behind the various innovations that made the Mac OS and the machine and system as good as they both have become. I don't see any self-aggrandizement expressed here. In fact I see a lot of understatement instead, and a lot of "fill in the blanks" history that makes this, along with pictures, a coffee-table keeper.

I just want to know if Mac OS X would be shrunk down to machine-language code so it too could be run in what used to be precious chip memory. This book helps us understand that the Mac OS used to run in, what, 128K? Maybe instead of putting "-2000 lines of code" as "weekly progress" instead of how many lines of code were created (must be a Microsoft-mentality kind of thing to show progress as how many lines of code were produced). Then again, perhaps Apple is listening because Mac Os X 10.3.7 sure runs faster now than earlier Mac OS X versions did.

I learned how the *Command* key came into being, how the font names were changed and how the boot "beep" was created and I loved the information on the electronic machinations to trick the system to perform beyond design.. And of course, so much was written about how certain things got hidden from Steve Jobs so work could continue

(i.e. the Sony floppy disc drive episode).

As I look at the history being made by the software company I am currently with, I wish someone were making screenshot histories as Bill Atkinson did with the Macintosh User Interface evolution. I don't think we will ever need to play subterfuge, as the Apple Mac team did, with the demo to Microsoft with the prototype being run with the Lisa umbilically connected behind a wall in order to run the Mac.

Then there is the history of how the "Desk Ornaments" came into being by Bud Tribble and Bill Andy Hertzfeld or the way the calculator became Steve-approved by Chris Espinosa, how business cards got creative titles, how the game "Alice" became "Through the Looking Glass", how Caroline Rose became the technical writer, how Burrell Smith created 5 different Macintoshes, how Susan Kare created icons and how the pirate flag came to be. Andy discusses how the Thunderscan and Switcher (later the MultiFinder and Finder) were developed. There are even some "blunders" that are discussed and the reorganization that ended an era in 1985.

A whole team of really great minds helped bring the Mac to fruition. There are 88 cross-referenced stories that are divided up into 4 parts of the book. It covers stuff missed or glossed over in other "Apple History" books and I'm really happy Andy Hertzfeld was able to pull this together. It provides "the rest of the story" and brought home some memories of Macs past covering 1979 through 1985.

If you are one of the few "Mac-heads", you will want this book, probably just for the pictures. I'm keeping it for the company history. I think it is a real keeper and if you are an Apple history buff, you will want this one too.

Dr. Eric Flescher's Review:

In 1981, I bought a Pulitzer prize winning and bestseller book, by Tracy Kidder, *The Soul of A New Machine* that chronicled the complex account of the making of a recent new computer and the engineers who built it. More importantly it was a book about the people at work throughout the whole gripping process. It was difficult to put down this most interesting book. The inside accounts which encompassed the skills, ingenuity and driving force by these creative people and their passion and perseverance to complete the device made for a most interesting and pleasurable reading. Little did I know, this whole process was being repeated, in many ways, with the rise of the Macintosh and personal computers, starting in August 1979 a few years before The Soul book.

As a Macintosh user since the Apple IIE years, I can say I am passionate about the computers. But when the book *The Insanely Great Story of How the Mac was Made* arrived in the mail one day, I had a chance to learn in a step-by-step fashion, the creation and rise of the Mac through the engineers who created the machines. As I began to read I felt the same spirit for this new book as I did for *The Soul of A New Machine*. But this was different. This story was about person computers and a quest to change our lives while utilizing these devices.

The 291-page book is literally a walk through a time-warp of the technological events that transpired with the development of the person computer and then the graphical user interface (GUI). This handsomely crafted book, lavishly designed, has the signatures of the Macintosh team on the inside cover. Besides the insightful reading, the book includes first time-published photos of the people and the team of engineers, sketches of the original computer plans during development of the software and hardware. The original first hand accounts and notes that start with August, 1979, help show the developments, by the talented team of engineers who serve explain, in visual detail, the process, how the Macintosh was created from the initial stages on inception to completion on it's opening day.

Steve Wozniak provides the forward introduction. He says the Mac team helped to transform the technological world. Hertzfeld working on the Apple II in 1979. A team pioneered by Steve Jobs is creating a new computer. Hertzfeld works his way on to that team, which along the way includes seventeen others. A variety of people go and come to work with the hardware and software needed to forge the success of the machine.

Along the way there are examples of passion, insight, creativity and perseverance that were and still are, the driving force in the development of the Macintosh and technological inventions. Examples of the development of desk top accessories, fonts, disc drives, control panels, icons, Mac interface and software abound throughout the chapters. Interesting thoughts as (P. 70) "make a mess to clean it up" and in the process sometimes is the only way (to possible learn and go beyond the initial process).

Despite hardware forging ahead, software becomes more and more important because software applied what the computers could do. Third-party software also developed and becomes increasingly important. Bill Gates was introduced as working with the software team. He enters the story (P. 53) as someone who "did not know how to listen very well." Later on in a scrupulous showdown, Gates, more or less, shows the power of the software beyond the hardware by telling Jobs that the GUI, which Microsoft was now using, was not really stealing. Microsoft started with Jobs seeing the Xerox GUI and that Windows was just trying to emulate the same idea with software.

There is information about the famous 1984 Mac commercial during the Super Bowl, the growth of the Apple empire, looming deadlines and more. The competitive nature of the business shows. Microsoft ships Windows in the fall of 1985 (p. 192) and then looses on a technicality, which is said to be a milestone in Apple losing a certain amount of the graphic user interface battle. Scully arrives from Pepsi to work with Apple in (P. 194) in 1984. Later when the Apple sales have their first quarterly loss in May 1985 Scully heads the company with Jobs taking the Chairman post. Then being further demoted, Jobs looses his job.

In the end of the book, Hershfeld credits the "the father of Macintosh" as Steve Jobs. This takes the book full circle. The vision, passion excellence and strength of will is the "tour de force " ,Steven Jobs who willed the development of the Macintosh ends in this book as no longer part of Apple. But that is not the only part of the realization that come about by reading this insightful book.

Actually in the introduction (page xiv), the book says a very prophetic statement that I only happened to read after I read the entire book. In many ways this encompasses the whole technological process throughout the book. This page says "the Macintosh became very successful, although not quite in the way we imagined. Twenty years later the user interface, which Apple first noticed by Xerox and then pioneered through Apple, is used by hundreds of millions, although most experience it through a non-Apple platform." This essentially meant, that I had said many times, that software is more important then hardware. Ironically Hershfeld also says " computers are still not easy to use and there is a long way to go. "

While the story in the book ends in 1985, a six year span from the beginning, the book can be read now in 2005, twenty years from the last date in the book. The accounts in the book, as Steve Wozniak, one of the cofounders of the Apple explains, " is a short window of time when incredibly important things get invented that shape the lives of humans for hundreds of years." This book is a fascinating adventure during this period. It is a great reading for all Macintosh readers and possibly for non-Macintosh users. It is more about the people who willed the technology forward instead being about another computer book. Much has transpired since 1985 as well, and perhaps even more that transpired will be written about. Only time and technological development through the efforts of software and hardware engineers will tell how technology will evolve in the future through the efforts of creative minds.

SELINUX: NSA's Open Source Security Enhanced Linux Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/selinux/index.html
Released: October 2004
Pages: 254
$40 USD, $58 CND, £28.50 UK, €36
ISBN: 0596007167
Prerequisites: A computer system that can run Linux® and knowledge on how to modify Linux kernels.
Dig Deeper: http://www.nsa.gov/selinux
http://www.nsa.gov/selinux/info/list.cfm?MenuID=41.1.1.9
For advanced geeks or for those wanting to learn about system security.
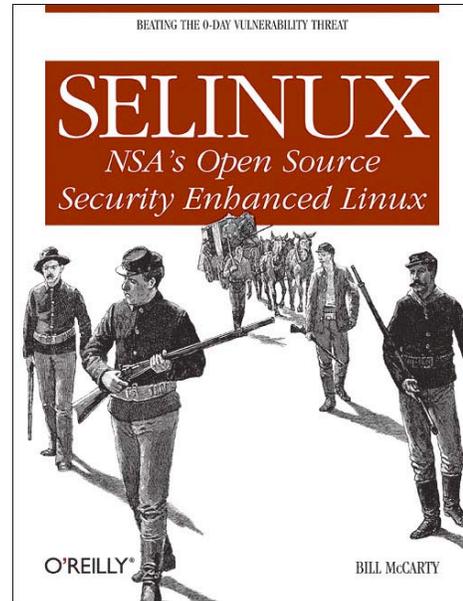
Strengths: A Linux addition with an eye on security.

Weaknesses: Lots of "gotchas" to get it installed.

SELINUX: NSA's Open Source Security Enhanced Linux by Bill McCarty is a Geek's book about an NSA-approved operating system security model that happens to based on the Linux platform. As noted above, in order to take advantage of SELinux, an existing system needs to be running Linux and you need to know how to compile a kernel. With that, are you still interested in learning how to protect your company's assets from infiltration?

Why are we reviewing it here? Well, let me tell you. Let's say you are running either Linux directly (say, Yellow Dog Linux for example) or one of the other Linux distributions in VirtualPC-mode. Wouldn't you want to be using a Linux OS that was the most secure? I thought so. And if you have any geek-blood in you, the curiosity to see if it will work at all in place of or under Mac OS X probably is nagging at you. After all, SELinux is Open Source and I'm sure you will want to play with it – especially if you are exploring security policies.

For further background, I added the link for downloading SELinux, but at the same place there is an FAQ worth reading as well and these two link should also be of interest: http://www.cs.utah.edu/flux/dtos/ and http://www.cs.utah.edu/flux/fluke/html/flask.html.

Here are a few quotes gleaned from the FAQs from the NSA link:

> "The architecture provides fine-grained controls over many kernel abstractions and services that are not controlled by other systems. Some of the distinctive characteristics of the Security-enhanced Linux system are:
> - Clean Separation of Policy from Enforcement
> - Well-Defined Policy Interfaces
> - Independent of Specific Policies and Policy Languages
> - Independent of Specific Security Label Formats and Contents
> - Individual Labels and Controls for Kernel Objects and Services
> - Caching of Access Decisions for Efficiency

- Support for Policy Changes
- Controls over Process Initialization and Inheritance and Program Execution
- Controls over File Systems, Directories, Files, and Open File Descriptions
- Controls over Sockets, Messages, and Network Interfaces
- Controls over Use of "Capabilities

The Information Assurance Research Group of the National Security Agency is responsible for carrying out the research and advanced development of technologies needed to enable NSA to provide the solutions, products, and services to achieve Information Assurance for information infrastructures critical to U.S. National Security interests.

Creating a viable secure operating system remains a critical research problem. Our goal is the creation of an efficient architecture that provides requisite support for security, executes programs in a way that is largely transparent to the user, and is attractive to vendors. We believe an essential step in attaining this goal is to show how mandatory access controls can be successfully integrated into a mainstream operating system."

The key to success is customization, because apparently the system is not off-the-shelf yet and you have no choice but to "customize'. Bill McCarty does a great job presenting a step-by-step process in implementing the fundamentals of SELinux, To master the application, a lot of time and effort will be needed – and the package is under constant modification.

Remember, SELinux is not Linux per se, rather, it is a security extension *to* Linux and apparently works with many of the well-known Linux distributions such as Debian, Fedora, Gentoo, Red Hat Enterprise Linux, and SUSE. I haven't tired it with Yellow Dog Linux yet.

So what makes SELinux so special? It "implements classic strong-security measures such as role-based access controls, mandatory access controls, and fine-grained transitions and privilege escalation following the principle of least privilege. It compensates for the inevitable buffer overflows and other weaknesses in applications by isolating them and preventing flaws in one application from spreading to others." As you probably know by now and if you have been frequenting our macCompanion Blog at http://www.maccompanion.com and search the Security category, you will see the reference to Linux being the most cracked system over the past year – even ahead of Windows. Why? Because installations have not been administered with proper diligence. With SELinux, they can be. Well, that is the goal anyway.

So what is in the book? Nine chapters cover SELinux history and features, the security model, installation and configuration, tuning, monitoring and troubleshooting, policy structure, access control model and railroad diagramming, the type-enforcement model, constraints, context-related and flask-related declarations, customization and domain access. Along with those areas, the Appendices cover Security Object Classes, Operations, Macros General Types and Type Attributes.

What I discovered is that configuration per distribution is different per distribution,. I also learned that SELinux is no where near maturity and is why there are issues related to booting, login, program execution, Daemon issues and X server issues and when using KDE, several graphical applications won't work properly and GNOME is recommended. Bill McCarty introduced railroad diagramming where I had a flashback about English grammar sentence structure diagramming. And this is telling too: "The SELinux source policy is a sophisticated software system. It includes dozens of object classes, scores of defined permissions, more than 1,000 type transitions, thousands of object instances and tens of thousands of access-vector rules…So customizing the SELinux policy is akin to performing software maintenance on a program consisting of tens of thousands of non-comment source lines." Ouch!

At the end of the book, Bill McCarty, assuming we want to pursue this further, strongly suggests that we maintain at least one system dedicated to testing SELinux policies and releases, study the TE (Type-Enforcement) files associated with programs and applications, review postings on the Email lists and experiment by creating new policies and observing the results. If you live in the real world, you will not have time to mess around, but if you are in Academia, this might very well become a Masters or Doctoral thesis activity for improving security, at least for the Linux environment. The chapters on the security model and railroad diagramming may be of special interest.

I'm so relieved to know that Mac OS X® apparently is in a better position and I relish the fact that Apple keeps the security updates coming. A caveat is that the Intelligence Agency that has released this to the public also inspired the book "The Puzzle Palace". Here is a link to one of its chapters: http://jya.com/pp08.htm.

If you want to make time for dinking around with Linux and wish to make it as secure as possible, please get this book – especially if you are in charge of maintaining a Linux environment. If you want to study security models, check out the links above and in the book. And if you are into studying railroad diagramming, Bill McCarty does a great job educating us on the process.

Small Websites, Great Results: The Blueprint for Creating Websites That Really Work
Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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http://www.paraglyphpress.com
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Distributor: O'Reilly Media
For those who want to repurpose their websites.
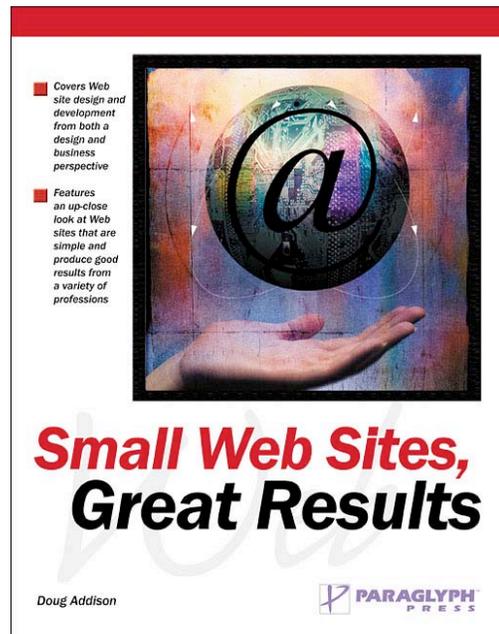
Strengths: Design insights for the non-technical approach.

Weaknesses: None Found.

Small Websites, Great Results: The Blueprint for Creating Websites That Really Work by Doug Addison touches reality in a way that is refreshing as he states boldly that he is tired of seeing boilerplate site design with tired old clip-art graphics. Than after he has pretty much skewered the "professional bloated" sites, he manages to show how to replace those with focused, yet effective websites.

Doug Addison comes across as someone who is very comfortable in his element as he has grown professionally and has become a specialist in redesigning websites. He has managed to pull of this feat through 15 chapters on building small, what makes a great small site, creating a focus, using the right design and navigation format, providing tips and techniques to content and functionality, web marketing, turning visitors into customers, getting what is needed from a web designer, keeping sites up-to-date, what to do when the site has been outgrown, and examples of small sites from trades, specialty products, artists, writers, performers and restaurants.

There is no final summary but each of the chapters on small sites for "x" follows the format of answering the call, home page helper, site walkthrough with what is liked and what could be changed, Killer apps and the Word is Out, checklists and summaries.

Oh, yes, I marked quite a few pages and hope to implement a few of the ideas on our site soon on presenting clean, simple design from the point of view of a visitor to the site and not the gee-wiz geekiness of a programmer.

I struggled to see the sample details on the websites shown but the purpose was to grasp the idea and not the sharp detail of the sites used as examples. Yes, the philosophy espoused is one of accomplishing more with less fluff taking a holistic approach to web design.

Interested in not wasting any more time and resources on bloated websites and in making what is there now more effective and productive? Learn how to tame out-of-control sites by rethinking how they are now and where they need to go from here. Quality outweighs quantity any time.

Hum, perhaps this book just follows the KISS principle and shows us how to sidestep the mistakes of the past.

SMART HOME HACKS: Tips & tools for Automating Your House Reviewed by Robert Pritchett
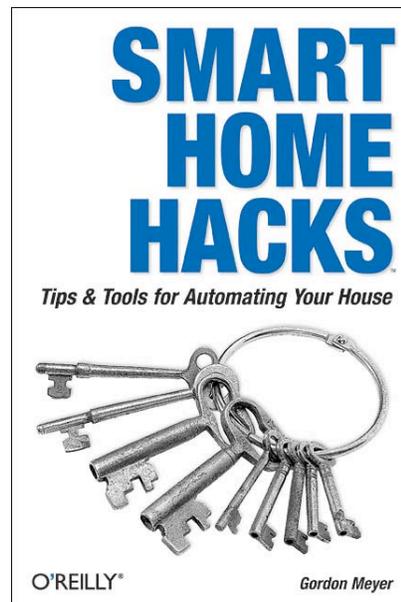
Strengths: An excellent book on "George Jetsoning" a home. Cross platform.

Weaknesses: None Found.

Smart Home Hacks: Tips & tools for Automating Your House by Gordon Meyer is a fun book to read as far as I'm concerned. I have posted a number of the "Smart Home" websites and added one or two affiliates to our website long before this book came out. There's lots of neat "how-tos" working with gear from the likes of http://www.cocoontech.com, http://www.hometoys.com, http://www.HomeDeer.com, http://www.perceptiveautomation.com, http://www.shed.com, http://www.smarthome.com and http://www.X10.com. Gordon had a lot of help form many like-minded folks. There are about 28 contributors listed in the front of the book, many of whom do most of their work on Macs. A few do work with Linux and Wintel boxen, but obviously the majority are Mac-based and the thrill and joy shows as they reveal their efforts in 100 hacks.

The book is divided up into 7 Chapters organized and sectioned off into parts of the home. The first apart deals with X10 technologies and providers like XTension, Indigo and HomeSeer. Then hacks are organized into Office, Kitchen and Bath (and you have to see the heated toilet seat! What a hoot!). Also there are Bedroom, Garage and Yard, Security and Advanced Techniques including hooking up a hamster to generate a nightlight. I won't spoil the fun as to what happened to the hamster except that a cat was involved. Hilarious!

It is incredibly obvious that those who use Macs have the most fun using and experimenting with their systems. Here are tips and techniques anyone can do. Not many of them take much money to accomplish and many will meet "SAF" – Spousal Approval Factor rating. Many are "low tech", but that doesn't keep them from having a "wow" quotient. All are very doable now. All very cool.

Learn from those who have been there already and then learn how they go further by "hacking the hack" for many of these neat projects.

Now we all can become like the electrical engineer that took care of George Jetson's home. This book puts play back into tech.

S*PAM Kings: The Real Story Behind the High-Rolling Hucksters PUSHING PORN, PILLS and @*#?% Enlargements Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Brian McWilliams
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1876
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**Booksite:** http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/spamkings/index.html
Released: October 2004
Pages: 128
$23 USD, $34 CND, £16 UK, €21
ISBN: 0596007329
Book Blog: http://spamkings.oreilly.com/
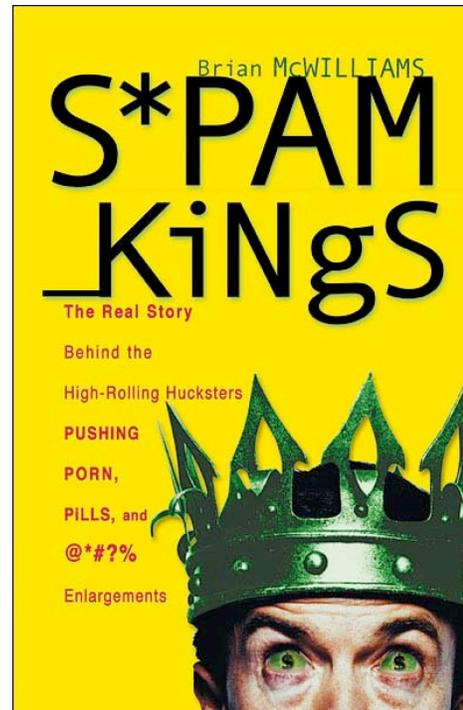
Strengths: Catalogs the history of certain Spamvertizers and their on-going demise.

Weaknesses: R-rated language using F__ and S__. Not for young, innocent eyes.

*S*PAM Kings: The Real Story Behind the High-Rolling Hucksters PUSHING PORN, PILLS and @*#?% Enlargements* by Brian McWilliams is a rollicking romp through SPAMdom and relishes in the eventual demise of certain notorious individuals who made their living off the hucksterism of others, and have made Email almost impossible to use.

Brian McWilliams does a superb job as an investigative journalist in bringing this book to light as he investigates both sides in the "tell-all" book between SPAMsters and Anti-SPAM advocates. It revolves mostly around the lives of two individuals; a Dave Hawke (neo-Nazi turned SPAMster and still at large) and Shiksaa (http://www.chickenboner.com), the Anti-SPAM proponent who has spent years trying to "turn" SPAMmers away from their wicked ways towards legitimacy. Along the way we meet various other individuals who switch sides, some who are brought out of obscurity (outed) and their sins being shouted from the housetops, and in such places as http://www.spews.org (Spam Prevention Early Warning System), http://www.spamhaus.com (and Rokso – the Register of Known Spamming Operations, SBL – Spamhaus Black List and XBL – Exploits Black List) and http://www.netscum.net.

 O the Pro-SPAM side, there are such places as http://www.specialham.com and http://www.cybercreek.com that receive some special recognition from the book. And of course, there is the Book Blog that O'Reilly has kindly posted (shown above) to keep us abreast of current activities in the on-going battle for cleaning up bandwidth and not giving away hard-earned money to "dream-fulfillers".

There are a few more news sites referred to in the book, such as NANAE (news.admin.net-abuse.email), where many of the soap-opera activities have been gleaned. Brian McWilliams takes very little literary license with the

subjects in the book because truth is stranger than fiction. This book is going to become the basis of a movie. I just feel it! Or maybe it will fill a few CSI episodes.

The book could have used some censorship what with all the cussing and swearing used on occasion, but the 11-chapter book does have an epilogue worth reading as well as a glossary and some great endnotes. I learned about Golden Mallet awards (for outstanding lifetime achievements in SPAM-fighting arts), Chickenboners (trailer-trash SPAMmers surrounded by empty fried chicken buckets and beer cans), Joe-jobs (Email attacks tarnishing 3rd-party reputations online), LARTs (Looser Attitude Readjustment Tool – the mallet for alerting ISPs to hosted SPAMmers), sock puppets (secondary screen names used to defend actions), mainsleaze (mainstream companies foisting SPAM) and affiliates (SPAMmers who are Sponsored).

The book discusses parallel paths between a few of the bad guys and good guys in this battle of good vs. evil. It chronicles a few of the rulings against SPAMmers in court and how they ended up there as Spamvertizers costing billions of dollars per year in wasted efforts and lost productivity worldwide. The main case study is about Davis Wolfgang Hawke – an immoralist who is still in hiding and a fugitive of justice. It also present the cyber-vigilante lifestyle of those known as "antis" who search out and find the perps to help bring them to justice.

This book doesn't get too deep into the technicaleeze provided by the other Anti-SPAM book I reviewed (Inside the SPAM Cartel), but it does discuss harvesting tools, forged Email headers, bulletproof hosting and open relays, the SPAMmer- Cracker coalition and zombie issues and the fallacy of CAN-SPAM legislation.

In the Epilogue it also talks about some technical promises in the near future such as TEOS (Trusted Email Open Standard) and corporate legal efforts to minimize the impact. After all, SPAM accounts for over 1 trillion dollars in anti-SPAM software and hardware as well as network management efforts to curb this plague on society. The best way to stop SPAM? People just have to stop buying SPAMerized products (stupidity) so those who are going after the low-hanging moneytree fruit (greed) will have to get a ladder and go elsewhere to ply their trade for PORN, PILLS< Real Estate loans, Insurance and body-part enlargements. The reason the book has an Epilogue is because the stories are on-going. I bet there will be a sequel.

I would have easily given the book a 5 rating except for the fact that the book is rife with swearing. If O'Reilly had edited those words out like it did with eh cover page title, it would have gotten that coveted 5. SPAMmers do tend to bring out the worst behavior in people, but readers can read without being verbally offended. I will continue to lobby for civility.

Meanwhile, while they are all still very much alive and real, find out who the members are on opposing teams in this electronic warfare. Brian McWilliams has done some excellent sleuthing!

Inside the SPAM Cartel: Trade Secrets From the Dark Side Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

For anyone wanting to "know the enemy" of "Spackers".

Strengths: Shows how SPAMmers and Hackers use Email to do their deeds.

Weaknesses: Some bad language and objectionable content.
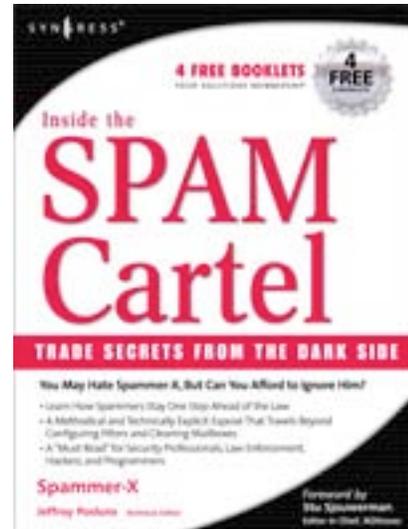
Inside the SPAM Cartel: Trade Secrets From the Dark Side by Spammer-X. You have to wonder about a book written by an alias. Apparently he was interviewed on KUSP by the guys at http://geekspeak.org/ - or they interviewed someone impersonating him. The author wrote that the personage created in the book was a hodgepodge of personalities all wrapped up into one. He protects himself from the wrath of al mankind by not revealing who he really is or when asked in public what he does, dodges the ball so as not to catch flack. Any wonder? Just go to our website and in the Blog look under Security for all the links related to SPAM. Trouble with a capital T. But when the book is finished, you will have a pretty good idea how SPAMmers get into Email systems and how they can even take over network devices to do their nefarious unlawful work.

And a new word is coined: Spackers. Those are sophisticated crackers who are also SPAMmers or vice-versa. Because I deal with these folks on a daily basis anymore, since CAN-SPAM legitimized them, I bookmarked a lot of places in this book. Be warned however, that much of what is written is not for innocent eyes. Obviously the dark side of humanity is prevalent and Spammer-X makes no bones about the fact that much of SPAM originated on issues of sexual gratification and hedonism – and continues to be a main source of income for the bad guys – and gals.

The book was written from the viewpoint of a "sin-verguenza" (Spanish for an unrepentant person "without shame") who reveals pretty much every trick in the book on how to compromise Email and get past just about all efforts to halt, stop or filter SPAM. He freely admits that he stole Email lists, traded them with other SPAMmers for a fee and made lots of money at it.

We get a pretty good idea of the modus operandi and the type of character a SPAMmer is, to do this kind of work for a living. I found it interesting that even though this person broke into corporations and stole Email lists, used other systems to use a temp-stations for sending Email until black-listed and sent advertising propaganda to millions

of would-be customers, that he drew the line when it came to identity theft. And he sold actual goods, instead of participating in Phishing or Scamming. He had some scruples, but not many. He found that selling to the prurient interests of others was easy money.

He manages to walk us through the underworld of SPAMmers and Crackers and shows that he trusts other SPAMmers more than he does corporations that shaft salespeople for their hard-earned cash who front for them by making certain claims so they don't have to pay out to those who successfully sold their products.

Yes, as a first edition, there were a few typos and yes, some of the book is somewhat rough, but this is the first book that does lay everything out in black and white and does provide links for further reading along the way.

There are 16 chapters covering how SPAMmers think, how SPAM works and how it is sent. It also discusses why a valid email address is more valuable than a Social Security Number or bank account ID. Also covered is how an Email message is created so it is read and how SPAMmers get paid, how SPAM gets past filters, what works and what doesn't. The last part of the book discusses laws, the perfect piece of SPAM, what SPAM really costs (as far as Spammer-X is concerned) and his thoughts on SPAM statistics, the future of SPAM, FAQs about SPAM and he closes with some reflections on the topic. Appendix A shows how SPAM is conjoined in battle with Microsoft Exchange and Outlook.

The overall attitude is that SPAM is just another way for sales folks to advertise their wares. SPAMming is just a numbers game. What he glosses over is the untold wasted hours spent by practically everyone in deleting unwanted mail and in some cases, the overwhelming "in your face" sexually explicit garbage that floats through networks from the outside and literally craps up systems with trojans, viruses and worms as attachments in non-Mac environments. He low-balls and pooh-poohs the annual cost estimates presented by others. They are high, he is low and the truth is somewhere in between. His attitude is that they just have to hit the delete button if they want to get rid of it. Not.

The issue is that we get flooded with obscenity to the point that after awhile we become desensitized to it and our caring humanity and sensibilities are dulled as a result. I think the term is "dehumanized", and all that, because a few people are in for the quick kill and the fast buck. That factor has to be considered, along with the daily drag on productivity as we fight email attachments that screw up our machines.

At work I get constantly beat up with SPAM that carries network nasties with them through our protected environment. With recent updates to software and operating systems, it has slowed down a bit.

We lost our IT manager in the process of reducing the inflow of garbage into our systems. He tended to cop a "who cares, why fight it" attitude. So SPAM does have unforeseen consequences this book does not address.

"*You may hate spam and think all spammers are evil, but listen to my story and see why I do this and more importantly, HOW.*" I listened, I learned. I still think it is a stain on humanity, and it has made life worse than when Sodom and Gomorrah were living, breathing communities. Unfortunately, to stop it, one must know how it is created and spread. With that information, we can now intelligently slow it down to the point that it is no longer a lucrative means of making a living.

Vulnerabilities can be identified and closed on websites that use forms that can be misappropriated and redirected. Google-searches can be disabled to make it less likely a Cracker or Spammer can "get in".

I do not find it the least bit surprising that Spackers have come into being. Email systems are not too difficult to exploit. This book will show how it is done, so you can know how to put a stop to it and stop giving Spackers a golden platter of information to line their pockets with ill-gotten gains.

Maybe he could have linked to this site: http://www.ugotspam.com or this http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/07/23/spam_poetry_compendium/.

SQL IN A NUTSHELL: A Desktop Quick Reference, 2nd Edition Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Kevin E Kline
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/160
Daniel Kline
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/665
Brand Hunt
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Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/sqlnut2/
**Released:** September 27, 2004
Pages: 710
$45 USD, $66 CND, £32 UK, €41
ISBN: 0596004818
Requirements: An SQL server environment.
For SQL database consultants and administrators. Advanced.
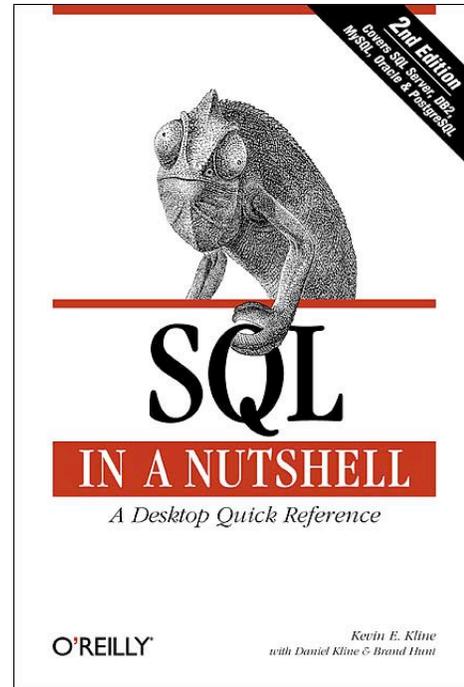
Strengths: The 2nd Edition has a lot of SQL meat and is cross-Platform and includes Open Source MySQL and PostgresSQL.

Weaknesses: Both the Statement and Functions sections need to show the command or function either in the margin or at the top of the page for easier look-up.

SQL IN A NUTSHELL: A Desktop Quick Reference, 2nd Edition by Kevin E Kline, Dr. Daniel Kline and Brand Hunt is a reference guide to the Structured Query Language (SQL), and its dialects.

The 1st Edition was about 224 pages in length and a lot has happened since then, ergo, the 2nd edition. This one covers nearly 400 pages more of material for the SQL dialects of db2, Oracle, MySQL, PostgresSQL and SQL Server with Sybase given its own chapter in the Appendix.

The first two chapters discuss SQL history, implementation and foundation concepts for the SQL2003 standard, while the third covers SQL Statement Commands and is the meat of this book. Each command in that section follows a format of the Statement, SQL2003 Syntax, Keywords, Rules at a Glance (statement overview), Programming Tips and Gotchas for each of the dialects and perhaps possible Platform Differences and a cross-reference as "See Also". Each statement also has examples to illustrate its purpose.

The next chapter is on Functions discussing parameters and descriptions for those functions and is about a 3rd as thick as the Statements chapter.

Next up is the chapter on Database Programming and discusses Application Programming Interface (API) as ADO.NET from Microsoft and the Java Database Connectivity (JDBC) from Sun Microsystems.

After the Appendix on Sybase there is a final one on Shared and Platform-Specific Keywords.

The book is intended to be used by SQL programmers, analysts, and database administrators. I got it because we are currently using MySQL with our website at http://www.maccompanion.com. In the process I discovered that MySQL doesn't comply with all 12 of Dr. E. F. Codd's 12 Principles of Relational Databases.

If you are a DBA (Database Administrator) or have to deal with database management, this book will help you by showing both statements and functions in a readable format as you manage databases.

Take Control of Panther, Volume 1 Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham

Authors: Adam Engst, Tonya Engst, Glenn Fleishman, Joe Kissell, Kirk McElhearn, and Matt Neuburg
Peachpit Press
http://www.peachpit.com/index.asp
Released: September 13, 2004
$30 USD, $43 CND, £23 UK, €24
Pages: 280
ISBN: 0321287649
Audience: Anyone who wants to learn a bit more about Panther – from soup to nuts! Take control of upgrading, customizing, user accounts, or sharing files — It's a full meal deal!
Adam Engst's site: http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol
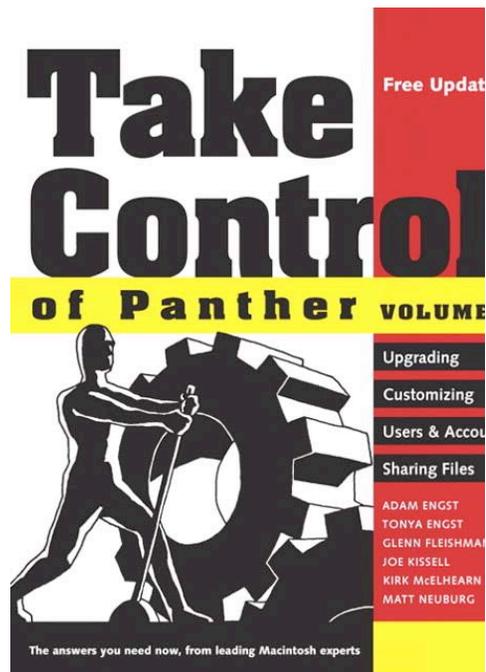
Strengths: Crisp and well-illustrated narratives complete with notes and an occasional warning. Free updates (as PDF downloads) of the booklets in this book become available as Apple updates Panther. This is a book to own both before and after you install Panther.

Weaknesses: I would have loved an additional index that contained the links for all of the software and widgets discussed in the book. But I easily found the links on the free booklet updates web page.

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The Publisher's Book Overview

"If two heads are better than one, then six heads are better still--at least that's what you'll find in this tightly focused volume written by leading Mac luminaries and aimed at readers just like yourself: intermediate to advanced Mac users who aren't afraid to tinker around a bit to get the most out of the Panther operating systems. Using full-color screen shots, step-by-step instructions, and straightforward explanations, this task-based guide promises to help you customize the operating system to fit your needs. Organized into four major section-- "Upgrading to Panther," "Customizing Panther," "Users and Accounts in Panther," and Sharing Files in Panther"--this volume provides all the technical help and troubleshooting tips you need to ensure a smooth and speedy upgrade without any corresponding loss in productivity. In short order you'll learn how to customize Finder windows, create user accounts, take advantage of the new sidebar, and more." – Peachpit Press

More on the Book Itself

This book is really a collection of books on the subjects noted above. But because I am holding a bound volume in my hand, I shall call them "booklets", each of which is subdivided into sections. On the TidBITS website they are called eBooks, but a rose by any other name… No matter what one calls these parts, this is a great book and a wonderful way for authors to keep subjects updated, despite the continual change that affects both our Mac OS and the software we use on it.

Upgrading — The major focus of this booklet is showing you, the potential victim of a poorly thought out upgrade, how to avoid the 'slings and arrows' of outrageous and unprepared "new toy syndrome"-provoked haste. It not only walks you though the steps and alternative options that Apple provides in the installation process; but more than that, Joe Kissell clearly and fearlessly shows you how to prepare for safe...err... upgrading.

I have been using Macintosh OS X (initially Jaguar and now Panther) from the time I read that Apple's initially released versions had been debugged, and was fortunate to have my OS 9.5 system upgraded by a Macintosh professional. Otherwise, based on reading Booklet 1, "Upgrading," I am certain that an attack of gremlins would have wiped me out. As I read Joe Kissell's narratives, Take Control of Upgrading to Panther, I almost succumbed to a retrospective anxiety attack — thank g_d for the thoughtfulness of friends!

Customizing — In this booklet Matt Neuburg lays out how to customize Panther. Although other Panther-focused reference books I own and use provide details on customizing various aspects of the Panther interface, they have not served me as a guide, only as diffuse information sources. None of them have led me to stop what I was reading and start customizing. Neuburg's focused and clearly written (with one exception) narratives had me interrupting my review to tweak my already personalized OS. Sections such as Customizing: Finder Windows, the Font Palette and Menu, Restore (or Install) Third-Party Utilities, Set Up Internet Helper Applications, Choose Your Function Key Behavior, and Keyboard Shortcuts and Services were among the sections of this 50 page book-in-a-book that grabbed me.

Of course, within a month of having my friend install Panther, I had blithely customized my OS with tools I discovered that Apple provides and some favored haxies (OS hacks) downloaded from the Unsanity web site [http://www.unsanity.com/news]. Although some of my customizing was of the try it-I don't like it-try again type, I did no permanent damage to my OS, and my errors were reversible. Despite my experiences, and the fact that I had studiously read several books about Panther, I got hooked on Take Control of Customizing Panther. Indeed, I used it as a tutorial to reach the second highest goal in a Macintosh junkie's life: customizing the OS interface and personalizing one's software. So I went back and not only tuned up original customizations I've not been happy with, but also used the information Matt provided to make my OS even more doc_Babad friendly. I especially enjoyed the section on Customizing Safari (page 104), and downloaded Safari Enhancer [http://www.lordofthecows.com/safari_enhancer.php]. Perhaps next week I'll try customizing my new toy, the Firefox browser [http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/]. (By the way, the highest goal in a Mac junkie's life is to find and play with the cornucopia of interesting stuff available on the MacUpdate download site or others like it!)

I did have a bit of trouble understanding Matt's section on Customizing Finder Windows (pages 74-80), so I downloaded the appropriate booklet update. Based on reader feedback, Matt Neuburg had added and uploaded, in a new booklet revision, additional detail on how to force all Finder windows to do your bidding and always look the way you want them to.
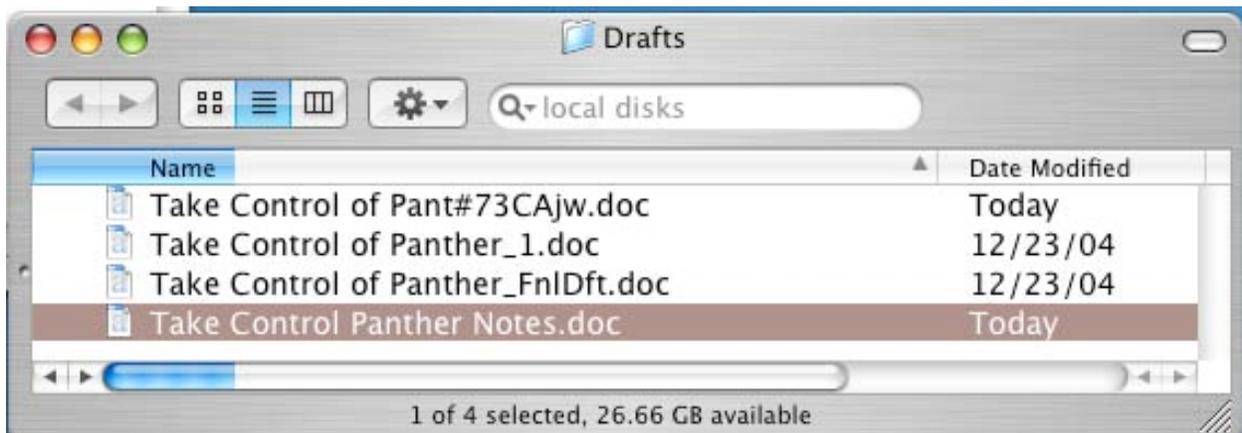
How I want my default windows to look! Always!

Users & Accounts — Since I am the sole user of my home office computer, I did not expect to find much of use in Kirk McElhearn's booklet. But I've read other books and articles by Kirk, so I was ready to check it out, and, much to my delight, the booklet was full of useful information. Certainly, the act of establishing a second administrator account to boot from in case of emergency makes good sense, so I did it. As the author notes on page 129, for a single-user Mac you need to establish a standard (working) account, an account used for trouble shooting, and, if desired, a guest account for folks to whom you'd rather not give access to your whole hard disk. Since setting up accounts, or for that matter, deleting them, needs to be done carefully, it serves me as a fine future reference. I found the section on managing startup items (both Apple's and the third party applications you can add) especially

interesting. There is an online update for this booklet, as well as for the remaining booklets of the book. Although I've downloaded the updated booklet, I did not take time to check it out. Presently, I have no urgent need for the information associated with Users & Accounts, after-all there's only my Mac and me.

Sharing Files — The books ends with an excellent discussion by Glenn Fleishman on the do's and don'ts of file sharing across a network. (File sharing is also discussed in Users and Accounts.) Glenn introduces this booklet by commenting "I help you identify the right computer setup for exchanging files among users in your situation, with a particular emphasis on users working on networked computers. I focus on Mac OS X 10.3 Panther as the hub of these activities, but the principles are the same on all platforms, and many specifics are identical or quite similar in Mac OS X 10.2 Jaguar." Now as a two-computer household, I don't share files over a network, wireless or hard-wired, so the discussions in this booklet were of passing interest. The only exception is that my grandson's computer can access both the printers in my office and my broadband Internet connection. I did, however, note that this booklet, like the others, was clearly written. This is good, because I will sooner or later have a need to learn how to share files.

The Index — I'm afraid I could think of no subject that I could not locate in the hard copy by using its 13-page index. On the other hand, by downloading the update, I had full access to Acrobat Standard's Find feature.

Thoughts about the Take Control eBook Project — From my perspective as a compulsive book reviewer, published tomes averaging about 900 pages in length make great reference material. Until significantly outdated, they always sit next to my computer and are used whenever I don't get it. In addition, I reach for them whenever someone asks me for help about something I've not bothered to learn.

As an aside, the Take Control series adds to the overall usefulness of other publishers' more comprehensive (encyclopedic) books that can't be as easily updated. The free updates made available as eBooks by their authors are something impossible for hard copy publishers to achieve. Less obviously, I can use a relevant take Control Booklet to augment my information in the other books that I use for reference.

In addition to providing free updates, the Take Control concept of series integration and cross editing amongst authors benefits readers in a less obvious way. Tanya and Adam Engst, editors-in-chief of this series, provide series continuity and assure overall individual booklet quality. By passing the draft booklets among the other series authors for feedback, the authors and editors collectively assure that overlapping topics within any given set of booklets are treated in an integrated fashion. The latter serves to protect subject clarity and maintain discussion completeness. Such editor guided teamwork serves to further enrich the individual authors' already excellent manuscripts.

(Now, Adam and Tanya, can't I have an Adobe Photoshop Elements 3.0 Take Control series? Please? I haven't yet been able to get comfortable with any book I own on learning PhotoShop Elements — It's software I really need to learn to use.

Errata and Wishes
As noted in my introduction, a software link index would have been a boon to those who want to use third party tools for customizing the Panther interface. This omission is not serious, since you can find most of the software mentioned in the book at popular download sites, if you know its name. For tools that are less widely available, Matt provides (in the customizing booklet) some links that can be either typed or accessed by double-clicking in the PDF download. Picky-picky Harry!

I also would have liked an image associated with 'setting global keyboard shortcuts' on page 97. The symbols for use in keyboard shortcuts in Table 1, page 89, are not identical to the symbols in Figure 9, page 99. This could confuse readers when they try to configure a keyboard shortcut, since the symbols differ in the two pages I've cited.

In Closing

This book is part of an ongoing effort by the authors at Peachpit Press to handle the inevitable obsolescence of the otherwise excellent books they write. Quoting from the Take Control web page http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/:

> "It's time for you to Take Control with our highly practical, tightly focused electronic books! Written by leading Macintosh authors, edited by TidBITS, and delivered to your electronic doorstep within moments of "going to press," the best-selling Take Control eBooks provide just the technical help you need with topics…" such as those in this book.

I'd like to see more publishers adopt the eBook update concept, though it will not stop me from collecting and browsing though reference books. But for learning about a focused aspect of an operating system, this is the way to go! 5.0 macCs

PS: Check out David Weeks' review of this book at http://www.mymac.com/showarticle.php?id=1841. David is a fine columnist/reviewer for MyMac.com

Windows XP Annoyances for Geeks, 2nd Edition Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Editor: David A. Karp
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**Booksite:** http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/winxpannoy2/index.html
Released: November 2004
Pages: 637
$35 USD, $51 CND, £25 UK, €32
ISBN: 0596008767
Requirements: Running Windows XP with Service Pack 2.
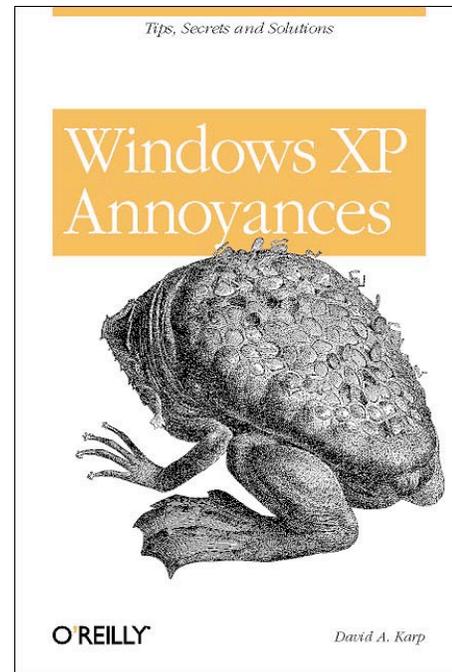
Strengths: Gets deep into Registries and provides workarounds.

Weaknesses: None found.

Windows XP Annoyances for Geeks, 2nd Edition by David A. Karp begins by saying this isn't a Microsoft –bashing book, but rather is intended as a way to own the problems and resolve them yourself using the tips, secrets and solutions necessary to overcome the angst associated with using Microsoft's Windows XP™. "Control Your Machine Before It Controls You" is the tagline offered by O'Reilly. Or as David Karp wrote, "To put it simply, an annoyance is a problem to be solved".

This is the 2nd edition of the book, the first having been printed back in October 2002. The female Surinam toad on the front cover is so apt! Would a hundred or so fully developed baby toads coming out of your back feel like XP? Is that annoyance similar to what it takes to even *use* XP? Eew!

In the Preface, the tone is set with a few quotes I grabbed; "Hide as much information as possible from the user, even at the expense of usability." "…if Microsoft ever released the perfect product, nobody would upgrade ever again!" "However, if we lump together the crash-a-day tendency of Windows, the irritating little animations, the clutter on the desktop, the lack of decent documentation, and the fact that performance rarely meets expectations, and call them all annoyances, we assume the burden of solving our own problems." David Karp then goes to great pains to let us know that this is not a Microsoft-bashing book. It is a solutions and workaround book.

I'm sure you are asking why I am reviewing this book in a Mac-centric magazine? Well, no doubt, you noticed that we have been using Office 2004 Professional™ with Virtual PC 7™. VPC7 has the Microsoft operating system currently being supported by Microsoft (and will be "the one" until the Longhorn OS is castrated from bull to steer and then released to the public "in a few more years"). We have to know how to use the product wisely in order to help folks migrate, transfer or otherwise use the Macintosh platform so we can show we have some credibility in knowing what we are talking about when we can present them with a "better way" of doing their work effectively. We have to "walk in their moccasins" – and boy, can those worn moccasins use some Dr. Scholls™ gelin' footpads!

Those of us that have been using Microsoft XP have been long-suffering and incredibly patient with some long-standing issues that have never, ever been resolved directly by Microsoft. David A Karp with his website, *Annoyances*, has been providing workarounds for years. This book addresses issues related to Service Pack 2. Ironic, isn't it, that Microsoft released Service Pack 2 to resolve a myriad of vulnerabilities and other issues, but didn't resolve basic "in-your-face" operating system issues, and in the process gave us a whole new host of "gotchas"?

Many Macintosh™ or Linux users abhor and dread using the "OS from hell" and rightly so, but so many folks have to deal with the deck they've been handed, marked as it is by the Microsoft dealers, because they don't know any better or cannot find viable options as we have with moving to Macs. Unfortunately, we can't seem to get away from XP, because so many applications are "Windows-only", ergo, VPC7 and XP. However, David Karp doesn't carp too much about the downside of XP, but rather finds ways to resolve the issues that have nagged us, lo these many years.

Windows XP Annoyances for Geeks is a tweaker's book. Geeks are tweakers, so this book focuses on how to tweak the heck out of XP. There are many references and links to 3rd-party solutions to Microsoft-created problems - and some are even free!

I honestly have tried over the years to try and get work done using Windows XP and the emphasis has been on the word "try". It is a challenge and it can be incredibly frustrating working on documents just to have them either inadvertently disappear or hose up "just 'cuz". Unhosing them is where I find this book to be of immense value.

What David does in 10 chapters, is walk us through migrating from earlier Microsoft OSes to XP, coping with Explorer (not Internet Explorer), handling files and folders, cleaning up Windows shortcuts (it really takes 9 attempts to finally get the return arrow to disappear from a shortcut?), digging around in the Registry (most valuable information!), tinkering techniques on cleaning up Desktops and taming recent documents, dealing with file types and learning how to turn off certain functions, maximizing performance by – you guessed it – turning off even more functions (i.e., animation and display effects), hard drive care and feeding, and a thick chapter on troubleshooting software, hardware and device-specific issues. He than provides some interesting print regarding networking and going wireless before discussing user accounts and administration, scripting and automation and finally, a whole chapter on the time-honored fall-back to DOS commands and prompt integration. (When in doubt, go back to DOS commands to fix stuff.) There are also 4 Appendices covering Setting Locator, BIOS settings, TCP/IP ports and Class ODs of system objects.

And yes, scattered throughout the book are fixes and issues relating to Service Pack 2 functionality for things like firewalls, popup blockers and a Windows Security Center that gives the façade (and false hope) of security.

Are you ready to reduce your feelings of angst and frustration regarding XP? Step inside this book to see unvarnished quirks and behaviors revealed, and realize it isn't "just you" or your WinTel-based system having issues with the OS. At least now you can see how to work around the issues.

Windows XP Personal Trainer Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Editors: Tatiana Apandi Diaz, Nathan Torkington
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1977
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http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/winxppt/index.html
**Released:** November 2004
Pages: 480
$30 USD, $44 CND, £21 UK, €27 with CD.
ISBN: 0596008627
Requirements: Windows XP installed.
Novice level for Win XP - Computer Basics 101.
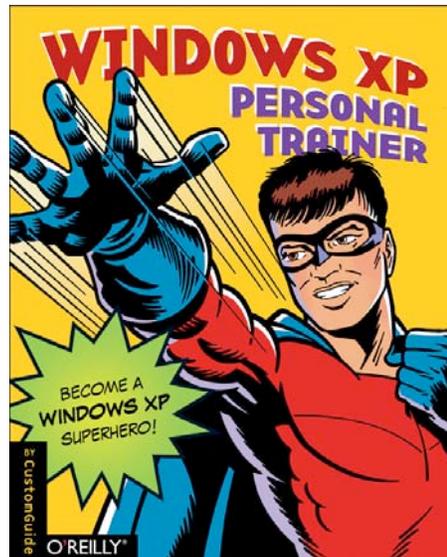
Strengths: Provides basic instruction on using the Windows XP Operating System.

Weaknesses: Some typos. Training CD is Windows-only.

Windows XP Personal Trainer by Custom Guide, Inc. is a basic, non-technical instruction guide on how to use Windows XP. Why review it in a Mac-centric magazine? The reason is because we use Windows® XP Pro with Virtual PC™ 7 so we can implement some Windows-only applications (like Macromedia's Flash Paper 2 linking features, running Personal Ancestral File, viewing LDS Media Software, etc.). If you are an expert in using WinXP and consider yourself a Super Hero already, than move on to the next review.

Windows XP Personal Trainer is one of many of the Microsoft-specific training courses available from Custom Guide, Inc. The whole professional set costs $3,500 USD.

Each of the 13 chapters is broken into Objectives, Prerequisites, lots of white space around Quick References in the body of the text, plenty of pictures, a Lesson Summary, Quiz, Homework and Quiz Answers. This book is about as basic as it gets and if you have been using XP Pro for any length of time, you will probably breeze right through this book. It is intended for newbies. I suggest going to the Quiz Section and if you can answer the questions successfully, move on.

The chapters consists of Fundamentals such as starting, logging using the mouse and keyboard, working with a window to minimize, maximize, switching, tiling and cascading, using menus, toolbars, working with text, files and folders, customizing the taskbar, desktop and the windows panel options, learning about Wordpad, Notepad, Calculator, Sound recorder, Paint, playing games and the character map. Once that is under your belt, there is a chapter on working with pictures and multimedia such as transferring digital photos from a digital camera to the computer, learning Windows Media Player, playing, copying and burning CDs and listening to Internet radio stations, changing skins and playing DVDs. Then there is a chapter on optimizing and maintaining a PC including how to ad/ remove software, install printers and change settings, shutting down frozen programs, adding new hardware updating and restoring the computer, using the Device Manager and formatting a disk, Next, there is a whole chapter on how to use the Internet and Email, before getting into later chapters on passwording, logging on and handling user accounts, networking and sharing files and printers and specifying security options. Finally the last chapter deals with setting up and troubleshooting Ethernet and wireless networks.

The themes for these Training Series books suggest that we can become Super Heroes to our office environments if we master these basics. If you come from the Macintosh environment, you begin to realize just how similar some functionality is between both Operating Systems, but find the elegance of Mac OS X outshines the extra keystroke processes found in XP Pro. (To understand the competition, you need to walk in their moccasins for a while. It is a quality trait known as "empathy".)

Having been in Tech Support for many, many years, I found that this book indeed fills a need, because I have had to discover and answer many of the topics addressed in this book. Yes, the PC environment really does need something like this. But knowing this stuff doesn't really put us in Super Hero class does it? Only if someone in the office is suffering through using XP PRO and needs to get work done and has to stop and ask for directions – and you know the answers. I know I've asked many of them over the years, but I don't mind sounding like a duffus, especially if it helps me get past computer-based obstacles. Now we have an easy-to-read map on how to "get there". And some of the answer options in question section show the folks at Custom Guide have a sense of humor as they try and put a sense of fun into learning.

Is the book perfect? No, it is a first printing and I've submitted a couple of owey's I found to the Errata page on O'Reilly. Perhaps the most important one is that the Chapter 11 Homework and Answers to Quiz page is missing. And that is why this book didn't get a 5.

There is no Super Hero costume in the back of the book, but there is a Windows-only interactive training CD. If you are interested in getting back to basics on WinTel boxen using Win XP or plan to use VPC7 with Win XP, and do not have any idea how XP works, get this book.

Wireless Hacking: Projects for Wi-Fi Enthusiasts Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

SYNGRESS
IT BOOKS AND CERTIFICATION SOFTWARE

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http://www.oreilly.com
For folks who want to network wirelessly.

Strengths: Contains the latest regarding Wi-Fi installations.

Weaknesses: Some photos are vewey, vewey fuzzy.
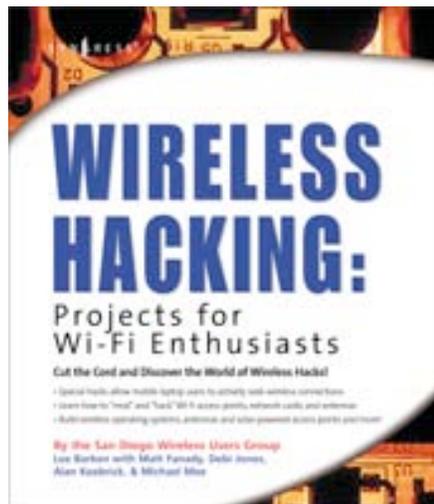
Wireless Hacking: Projects for Wi-Fi Enthusiasts is a book that has been organized by the SoCalFreeNet.org Wireless Users Group. It consists of a few wireless hardware, software and antennae and outdoor enclosure projects. This is not a book on wireless cracking, but rather on wireless hacking or how to get a community wireless network up and running in as few inexpensive steps as possible.

Think of the SoCalFreeNet.org team members as shade-tree, do-it-yourself ham-radio club refugees and you'll get the picture! Yes, we are talking taking ham radio up a notch. They are a bunch of been-there, done-thats who know what the pitfalls and pratfalls are in putting a wireless network together. What we have here is a wireless how-to book, par excelance. And they even have had some experience with Macs.

The book is divided up into 4 parts and 12 chapters that cover; Intro, Hacking, Software, Antennas and Outdoor Enclosures and an Appendix on wireless 802.11 hacks. The overview is one of the best I've seen and the teams combined experience and knowledge shows as they discuss the differences and similarities between the 802.1 alphabet soup of wireless standards.

The title of the book may be somewhat of a misnomer, but they take the broader meaning away from the proprietary term Wi-Fi, and give it a broad brushstroke as they show how to bring a diverse community together . See, the TelCos and cable companies stepped away from these wireless community-based projects, because they saw no profit in it. The SoCalFreeNet team better be careful, because they just may make these networks viable enough that the TelCos and cable companies may want to do more than just provide backbone services!

What I found to whet my appetite was a large helping of Access Point (AP) information with general focus on Linksys, Soekris and Proxim equipment along with AP Web-based enabling software like M0n0wall and Linux software (Pebble) along with Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) options as well as commercial options like Sputnick, Sveasoft and MikroTik.

They even dip into mesh networking, antenna functionality and how bets to make homebrew outdoor enclosures once the National Electronics Manufacturers Association (NEMA) box is chosen for anchoring antenna masts and electronics. The last chapter is a real treat in that it discusses solar-powered access points and repeaters.

The Appendix gets into the capacitors and connectors to hack some electronics together for card mods. And ends with more resources such as other user groups, articles, products and tools to pull a community wireless network together in record time.

I enjoyed the book because I was involved in a possible startup project that never really took off locally. Probably a good thing, since neither the TelCos nor the cable companies want to pursue it now that a combination of low-cost electronics and Linux-based solutions are available to accomplish the task. This low-cost solution was not envisioned then. Now it is a reality.

WORD HACKS: Tips & Tools for Taming Your Text Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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http://www.oreilly.com/
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/wordhks/
**Released:** November 2004
Pages: 372
$25 USD, $37 CND, £17.50 UK, €23
ISBN: 0596004931
Requirements: Microsoft Word 2003 and a real good working knowledge of the application. Maybe some knowledge of creating macros will help too.
Intermediate – Advanced.
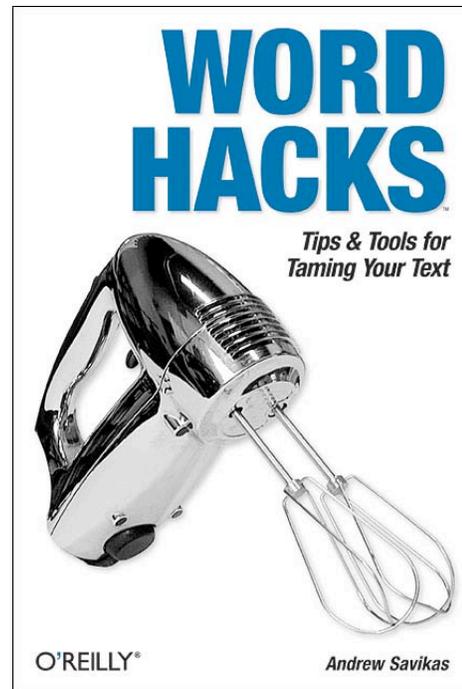
Strengths: Presents macro fixes for Word annoyances.

Weaknesses: WinTel-centric.

WORD HACKS: Tips & Tools for Taming Your Text by Andrew Savikas and 15 other Contributors shows how to resolve issues found in Microsoft Word® 2003. That means a lot of this book is Windows-centric since we now have Office 2004 for the Mac – but that doesn't mean a lot of what is printed in this book isn't transferable.

Word Hacks is intended for folks who want to dig deeper. By definition, hacks for Word have to be macros, if you use a Wintel machine. For the Mac®, AppleScripting will work, but Microsoft does permit macroization on the Mac for its own application – and many of the macros listed do work with the Mac.

This is a code book, and the code-sample macros can be downloaded in a .zip file from the Booksite listed above.

Now you too can "look behind the curtain" of Word and figure out fixes or instead of reinventing the wheel, look here to see if the solution has already been presented. I heavily bookmarked this book because it covers a lot of areas I deal with daily; document bloat, search and replace, importing, exporting, tables and comments and new ones, like using Google® internally to a Word doc when doing research.

I wrote that you need at least Word 2003, but much of what is written also covers earlier versions, i.e., Word, 2000, Word 2002.
There is some neat stuff here like how to get rid of the Clippits, how to handle styles, footnoting tables, changing how hyperlinks look as a style, disabling overtype permanently, deleting all comments and bookmarks in a document, controlling Word startup, cleaning out "Char" styles, deleting list templates and learning how to bounce back and forth between Word and XML And for the WinTel crowd, how to PDF files without owning Adobe Acrobat®.

A lot of things listed apparently also require VBA, so maybe there will be a *Word Hacks for Macs* sometime soon. Meanwhile, there is a lot of interesting, revealing stuff found here and yes, a lot of it is possible to cross-platform.

The hundred hacks are divided up amongst 10 chapters covering tweaking the interface and the workspace, formatting, printing and table hacks, power tool edits, working with templates and outlines, housekeeping (a great chapter on troubleshooting and workarounds), hacking macros, working with forms and fields, Word hacks using Emacs, with Vbacs, Python, Perl and Ruby and finally, interacting with XML and XSLT and Google. I found the last two chapters especially intriguing regarding interoperability with Open Source languages and XML.

If your livelihood depends on using Word in the WinTel environment, and you are allowed to use macros without them somehow getting compromised by malware, this book will pay for itself in no time.

Write Great Code Volume 1: Understanding the Machine Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

NO STARCH PRESS

For Programmer wannabees who may already have an appreciation for Assembly language.
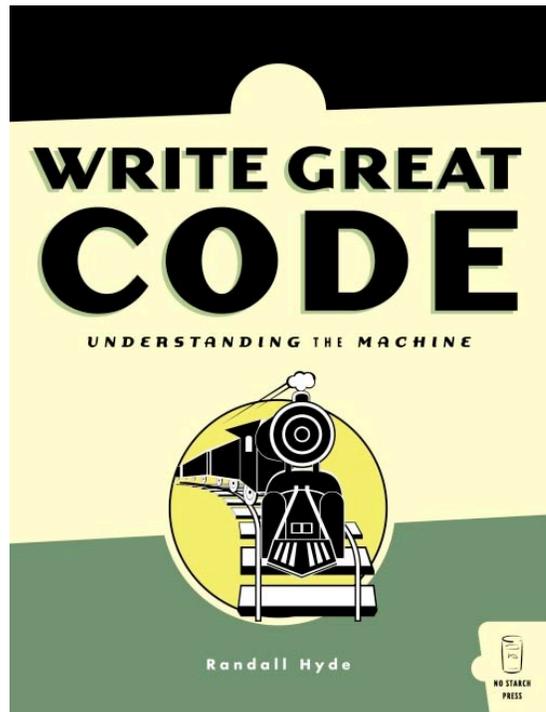
Strengths: Back-to-basics, no-nonsense foundation book on mathematics, computer logic and "machine organization".

Weaknesses: None Found.

Write Great Code Volume 1: Understanding the Machine by Randall Hyde is the first of a series on writing great code. It assumes we know at least one high-level programming language and prefers that we learn Assembly language and *The Art of Assembly Language* (Randall Hyde's earlier book also published by No Starch Press) may indeed be a prerequisite to enjoying this book.

Write Great Code Volume 1 reads like a math book, but at the machine level. To be fair, it really fills in machine organization details so we can know the overhead "cost" associated with coding. Be the machine, think like the machine and learn hoe to produce fast programs by optimizing the CPU and I/O. "Great code is efficient code." But we have to know how language abstractions map to hardware.

The devil is in the details and Randal Hyde really digs deeply into the details through 12 chapters on what we need to know, numeric representations, binary arithmetic and bit operations, floating–point and character representation, memory organization and access, composite data types and memory objects, Boolean logic and Digital Design, CPU and Instruction Set architecture, memory architecture and organization and finally, Input and Output. Right before the ASCII Character Set Appendix, there is a 2-page intro to the 2nd book on thinking Low-level and writing high-level. As far as I know it hasn't been published yet.

This book is not a quick read by any stretch of the imagination. It fills in the blanks nicely and really could be part of a Computer Science degree required reading set, once al the other 3 yet-to-be published volumes are in place.

If you have the inkling or itch to be a professional programmer, it would behoove you to get this book. It will either fascinate you or turn you off. It contains the stuff we used to learn decades ago and master craftsman-level programmers with decades of experience under their belts know this stuff because they were disciplined in knowing

that machine memory takes resources and way back when, RAM was prohibitively expensive, so programmers had to code conservatively. This book provides the rationale behind that reasoning.

Now with software companies being taken to task for buggy, bloated and insecure code, maybe it is time to go back to basics and relearn what coders "used to know". The Write Great Code series is a great place to start and is a great review for many of us that "grew up knowing" this stuff – because we had to. For oldsters, this is s trip down memory lane and for newbies, this will be a revelation as to what the "man behind the curtain" is doing, instead of expecting the high-level language compiler to do all the work and do the janitorial cleanup that is required to write great code.

The CPU Architecture chapter doesn't get into manufacturer-specifics as I expected, and this is the approach Randal Hyde takes throughout the book. He gets into excruciating detail on machine organization, but manages to keep generic. And he manages to sneak in illustrations every once in a while just to help keep things interesting.

Is Assembly Language knowledge required to appreciate this book? No, but it helps. Knowing at least one higher-level language is also a major plus.

Once this book is read, you will have a greater understanding and appreciation for code that is written efficiently – and you may just know enough to do that yourself. At least you will have a great start at the art of crafting efficient software.

XML HACKS: 100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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computer books • conferences • online publishing

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Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/xmlhks/index.html
Released: July 27,2004
Pages: 460
$25 USD, $37 CND, £17.50 UK, €23
ISBN: 0596007116
Requirements: Some knowledge of XML.
Intermediate to Advanced. Geek-worthy.
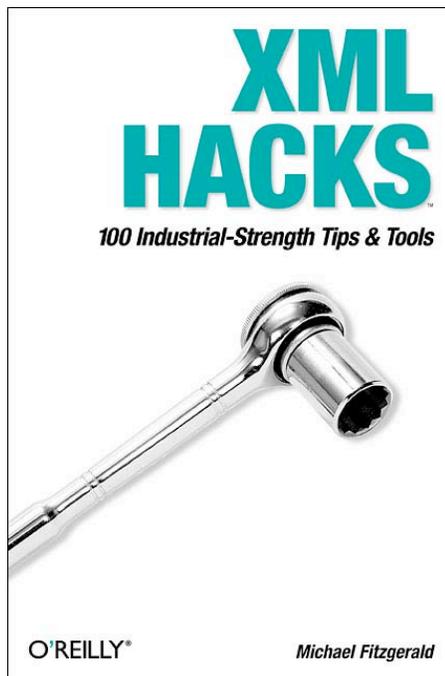
Strengths: Discusses XML and how to work with it very well.

Weaknesses: None Found.

XML HACKS: 100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools by Michael Fitzgerald and 18 other contributors have created a book intended for those comfortable with XML already. This is not a beginner's book, by any means! If you depend on ubiquitous (used everywhere) XML (Extensible Markup Language) as an IT (Information Technology) consultant, then this book will be of estimable worth, but you already need to have a background in DTDs, SOAP, schemas and maybe some Open Office thrown in as well.

This book is designed to help us resolve issues and fix problems associated with such things as Electronic Data Exchange (EDI), Voicemail systems, wireless and even web services.

There are 7 chapters; Looking At XML Documents; Creating XML Documents; Transforming XML Documents; XML Vocabularies; Defining XML Vocabularies with Schema Language; RSS and Atom; Advanced XML Hacks that cover 100 tips and techniques and I spent much of my time going over conversions from Microsoft Office to XML and the chapter on RSS and Atom as we improve readability and timeliness of our website at http://www.maccompanion.com.

Scattered through the book are references to XSLT for processing documents as well as how to interact with SQL databases. If you are in an environment that requires "enterprise level software" to run, than you will not want to pick up this book because it refers to no less than 35 different utilities as well as references to other books needed to accomplish certain tasks.

Tap into the power of XML – and maybe have some fun doing it. It never hurts to be able to "show off" Internet skills and there are 100 ways to do it here.

Game Reviews

Republic: The Revolution **Reviewed By Derek Meier**

Feral Interactive
mailto:info@feral.co.uk
http://www.feralinteractive.com
$55 USD
Requirements: Minimum; Mac OS X 10.2.x or later; 1 GHZ processor; 32 MB VRAM 3D Video Card; 1.35 GB Hard Disk space;
Mouse. Recommended; Mac OS X 10.3,1.6 GHZ; 64 MB SDRAM; 3D Video Card; 1.5GB Hard Disk space; Mouse.
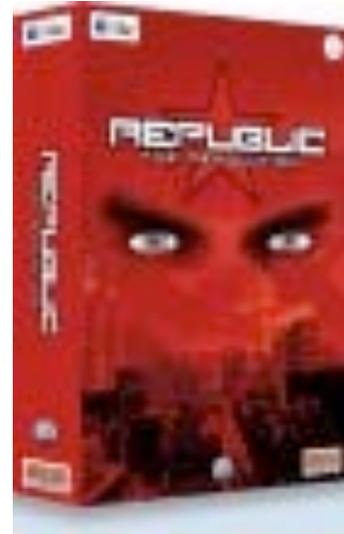
Strengths: Original Concept Strategy Game, Different ways to win.

Weaknesses: Very High system requirements for game type, Can be difficult to learn, May be unappealing for most gamers.

Take power by any means necessary. That is the ultimate goal of *Republic: The Revolution*. The setting is after the fall of the Soviet Union in Novistrana. Republic is a turned based political strategy game by Elixir Studios, Zonic Studios and published by Feral Interactive.

You start the game filling out a questionnaire. What you answer on the questionnaire determining your characteristics. You then set about choosing allies to assist you in your campaign. The characters you recruit start with some basic actions they can perform like spying, canvassing and scouting. These skills increase with experience, as do the skills you start out with. When experience is gained you can distribute the points to whichever skills you wish. Gameplay is slow because characters can only do a set number of actions per day and they have a specific amount of force, influence and wealth resources available. Competing against you in the game are other factions with ultimately the same goal. Your screen areas consist of a 3D overview or a board map of the city. I preferred using the board map of the city due to the slowdown with the 3D view on my PowerBook®. Using your recruits, you canvass the city and turn it's citizens to your political goal using the special abilities of your recruits.

GRAPHICS
As with most strategy games, the graphics are not really spectacular. Having a 3D viewpoint of the areas can be impressive. Unfortunately even though having a system a little higher than the minimum requirements made it very choppy and unusable in my gameplay. I preferred play with the flat board that did not tax my system resources.

SOUND AND MUSIC
Typically the sound and music in strategy games are not revolutionary. And Republic follows that stereotype well. The music in Republic is catchy and fits the game theme quite well. Voices in the game are in Russian (At least they sound Russian) and sound good.

VERDICT

While Republic has an original concept. The game is tedious and can be somewhat boring. I was really looking forward to trying out Republic based on its premise. If the hardware requirements were not so high using the 3D view they would add a lot to the game. Unfortunately all it added for me was a lag. I found myself using the time acceleration frequently just to get the game rolling before I lost interest. If you are a hardcore strategy gamer into politics this might possibly interest you. But for me, I will stick to *The Political Machine* by Stardock for the WinTel platform, which offers a more polished gameplay and an exciting political strategy game alternative.

Hardware Reviews

FriendlyNet® FR1104-G Cable/DSL 802.11g Wireless Firewall Router & 4-port Switch
Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Asanté Technologies, Inc.
821 Fox Lane
San Jose, CA 95131 USA
408-435-8388
http://www.asante.com
$117 USD
Product link:
http://www.asante.com/products/routers/FR1104-G/index.html
Contains: FriendlyNET FR1104-G Firewall Router with integrated 4-port switch; Power module; CD-ROM; 10/100 Ethernet cable (5 feet or 1.5 meters); Quick Start Guide and User's Guide.
Requirements: Mac OS 8, 9 or Mac OS X; Windows 95/98/Me, NT/2000/XP or Xbox; 10/100 Fast Ethernet or 802.11b/g adapter; Internet Explorer (v5 and later), Netscape (v5 and later), Safari (v1 and later).

Strengths: 802.11g complaint. WEP security. Cross-platform.

Weaknesses: Runs warm (no fan). Firmware defective.

My FriendlyNet® F1004AL indicator lights stopped blinking. The power supply was good and when I took the 802.11b wireless router apart I could not find any fuses anywhere, so I asked for the next-gen Router to review, which Asanté sent me – the FriendlyNET® FR1104-G. This one runs 802.11g and has better security features.

First, let's go over the specifications, than I will discuss why I gave the FR1104-G a rating of 4.

Looking at the router from the rear, the following connectors are available.

Port	Function	Description
5 VDC	Power Input	Plug in the Asanté FR1104 external **power module** rated at 5 VDC, 1.5 A (minimum).
1 through 4	LAN Ports	Plug in a cable from your **computer** to one of these ports. 10/100BaseT Fast Ethernet (RJ-45 connector). Auto-Uplink™ supports any standard or "crossover" cable. These computers are on your local area network (LAN).
Internet	Internet	Plug in a cable from your **cable/DSL modem** to this port. 10/100BaseT Fast Ethernet (RJ-45 connector). Auto-Uplink™ supports any standard or "crossover" cable. Sometimes this port is also called the wide area network (WAN).
Wireless	Antenna	Replaceable **antenna** (RP-SMA connector). Computers wirelessly connected to the router are known as the wireless LAN (WLAN).

Like the earlier model, this one also has the 4x10/100 Mbps Fast Ethernet with Auto-Uplink (100BaseTX, 10BaseT. The browser-based IP link uses a configuration wizard that steps through a couple of basic settings. The firmware can be upgraded via a browser or Windows® application. Supported WAN Types are Dynamic IP address (default), static IP, PPPoE, PPPTP and dynamic for Road Runner/Telstra BigPond. Dynamic DNS supports DYNDNS, TZO and DHS. Network Address Translation (NAT) supports both static and dynamic routing (RIP 1/2) tables. If a VPN (Virtual Private Network) is used, there is a VPN pass through for IPSec, PPTP and L2TP.

The microprocessor is a 32-bit embedded RISC chip with an integrated 8KB cache.

For router management, there are either Wake-on-LAN (WOL) management or SNMP (v1 and 2c). Security settings can be set to record all intrusion attempts and activities into on-screen log, syslog and Email alert. The firewall schedule can be set to handle inbound/outbound packet filter, domain filters and keyword/URL blocking. MAC Address Control can be set to provide access for different users and assign IP address to a specific MAC address. The router can also be set up to discard pings from the WAN, provide denial of service protection, ping a device, DMZ, virtual servers and time server. It runs network protocols for TCP/IP and CSMA/CA with ACK. Ports are open only on demand.

For the wireless side, it operates at 54 Mbps (IEEE 802.11g), 22 Mbps (TI 802.11b+) and 11 Mbps (IEEE 802.11b) win an Antenna that operates at 4 dBm that can be upgraded (uses RP-SMA connector). The Wireless Settings are created to provide basic network ID (SSID), channel, 64-bit and 128-bit WEP encryption, 256-bit WEP encryption, hide SSID and WPA (with RADIUS server or pre-shared 64/128-bit key). The frequency covers 2.412-2.497 GHZ ISM frequency band, with channels running as USA and Canada (1-11), Europe (1-11), Japan (1-11), Spain (10-11), France (10-11) using 802.11b: CCK (11, 5.5 Mbps), DQSP (2 Mbps) and DBPSX (1 Mbps); 802.11g: OFDM (54 Mbps). The coverage for 802.11b: indoor up to 50 meters at 11 Mbps; outdoor up to 130 M at 11Mbps; 802.11g: Indoor up to 20 M at 54 Mbps; outdoor up to 50 meters at 54 Mbps. And the router complies with FCC Class B and CE Mark.

The router interoperates with Microsoft's Universal Plug-and-Play (UPnP), MSN Messenger and NetMeeting, Apple's QuickTime; AppleTalk, messaging applications for H.323, AOL Instant Messenger, ICQ and mIRC, and with a user-definable application-sensing tunnel. It can also work with RealPlayer, PC-to-Phone, Dialpad, Quake, Battle.net, Half-Life and Star Craft Unreal Tournament.

The dimensions for the box are; (W x H) 7.9 x 5.9 x 1.7 inches (201 x 151 x 44 mm). It weighs 1.1 pounds (0.5 Kg) and uses 5 VDC (external power module included) and an operating temperature of 32ºto 104º F (0º to 40º C) with relative humidity being 10% to 90% non-condensing.

Status Indicators show Power, Status, Speed, Link/Activity (per port), Internet and Wireless.

The FriendlyNET router provides color-coded indicators to show the status of various functions.

- **Reset.** To restore the router to factory default settings, hold the recessed reset button for about 5 seconds. The Status LED should flash 5 times. Release the button.

LED	Function	Description
Internet	Internet Link/Activity	On when properly linked to a cable/DSL modem. Blinks with activity.
	Internet 100 Mbps	On when connected at 100 Mbps; off at 10 Mbps.
1 through 4	LAN Link/Activity	On when properly linked to a local computer. Blinks with activity.
	LAN 100 Mbps	On when connected at 100 Mbps; off at 10 Mbps.
Status	System Status	Blinks during power-on self-test and reset.
Wireless	Wireless Activity	Blinks with activity.
Power	Power	System is powered on.

There is 24-hour support via the Internet and FTP and maintenance releases are free for download. The 2-year warranty covers defects in manufacturing and workmanship and also provides Email and telephone support.

I received my unit Monday, December 27, 2004 and promptly hooked it up. Much to my chagrin, the system configuration showed April 1st and I had to set the system date/time to current mode off the computer, because the unit could not find the Internet. I changed the password from the default *admin.* The unit had a firmware version of 1.1. When I tried to get to the Cable Modem through the router it keep telling me that it couldn't do it. I fussed over it for about 5 hours, including a call to the Cable Company and had a delightful conversation with the tech who supported Macs there, to verify what I already suspected - I had a defective router. Defective cables? No. Defective ports? Maybe. Lights blinked and synched between the router and the cable modem. All lights turned on when hooking up devices to the ports. I went to the Asanté website to get into the Support area for this router. Boy, were there a lot of issues that needed to be resolved there! This was not going to be good. Then the Support area went down for maintenance. I looked at the tech schedule, Just my luck, they had the 27th off for a 4-day weekend with Email response only. So what was I to do? I could wait another day…

Well earlier, I had discovered that the firmware had issues and a lot of boxes were being returned, but the hardware was in good shape. And there was a beta version beyond the 1.1 that was installed. I updated. Shut down, restart everything, No joy. Trying to get to the IP address for managing the router through the browser kept timing out. So I went to the Mac OS X Network utility to ping the Ethernet port on the computer, the router and the cable modem. I could get through the router to the Internet port but it would go no further. Connecting the computer directly to the cable modem, I could get everywhere. Disconnecting the Mac OS X firewall made no difference when I figured it was possibly blocking ports. Reset that to protect my computer again. Was the Mac OS X 10.3.7 suspect? No. Was the Cable modem suspect? No. Cables? No. Power supplies? No. I reconfigured the router, shut everything down, and restarted. Every single time I tried to reboot the router it would come back and tell me the IP address for it was not accessible. I turned off power to everything and following the cable company tech's procedure that was; start the cable modem first, then the router, then the computer as the light stabilized on each device. Still no joy.

Okay, I did what I could and it was time to take this issue to a higher authority – so I prayed for guidance. After doing so, the thought immediately came to me that I should go to the Asanté website and download the earliest version of the firmware and use it – which was version 1.0. Access to the support area was back up, so I did – and

sure enough, the firmware swap worked. I clocked 5 hours from start to finish – and this should have been plug and play, not literally plug and pray!

Now mind you, the earlier router – FR1004AL – came with a hard-copy manual. The new router came with a CD with the documentation on it as a PDF – which I found to be helpful and enlightening but didn't address the issues so many others and I were having.

With that said, I come to the end of this tale. Asanté needs to continue working on the firmware so the promised security features will work nicely with the 802.11g protocol properly. I'm looking forward to the 2.0 firmware release. I hope this unit will last a while. And yes, it is warm to the touch.

If you want to step into using a router with wireless capability, check the Asanté website for firmware 2.0 for this unit before buying one. I got it because of the 256-bit encryption. One of these days, I'm going to be able to use it for that purpose. Right now, it does what I need it to do as both a router and as a switch.

Pilot Mouse **Reviewed by Derek Meier**

Kensington Technology Group
2000 Alameda de las Pulgas
Second Floor
San Mateo, Ca 94403-1289
(650)-572-2700
Fax: (650)572-9675
http://www.kensington.com
Product Site:
http://kensington.custhelp.com/cgi-
bin/kensington.cfg/php/enduser/ask.php?p_cat_lvl1=8
$70 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X with Bluetooth support.

Strengths: Software Battery monitoring, Customizable with Mouse
responsive, nicely designed. 5-year warranty.

Weaknesses: No on/off button.

The Pilot Mouse by Kensington is a blue and grey 2 button Bluetooth scroll wheel mouse compatible with Windows and Mac OS X. It includes a manual and 2 AA batteries. It is nicely contoured and has rubberized grips on both sides of the mouse and a scroll wheel. The mouse itself is larger than some of my wired mice and is large compared to most of the Bluetooth mice I have reviewed. The mouse has an aesthetically pleasing design with a circular glass window at the top with Kensington written on it and has a nice hand fitting shape. It also comes with an extraordinary 5 year warranty.

Setting up the Pilot Mouse is easy with the Mac OS X Bluetooth setup wizard as with other Bluetooth Mice. Using the easily accessible discover button on the bottom of the mouse, I was off and running within a minute. Most other Bluetooth mice do not have the option of Mac OS X mouse button programming software, but the with Pilot Mouse you can download Mouseworks from their web site. With MouseWorks you can set the mouse to do horizontal scrolling, program the mouse buttons and scroll wheel, click speed and mouse acceleration.

Using the Pilot Mouse was very enjoyable. It was really responsive and precise. Although being bigger than some of my wired mice, it still fit nicely in my hand and the rubberized grips on both sides ensured there would be no slippage while still being quite comfortable. The mouse goes to sleep in about 20 minutes of inactivity. You can wake the mouse by clicking a mouse button and it just takes a moment or two to wake up. A nice feature would be to maybe have the sleep mode timer to be customizable to extend the time or be able to shorten it to your needs. Also the MouseWorks software warns you when your batteries are getting low. The only other Bluetooth mouse I have seen that has this feature is Apple's own Bluetooth mouse. A downside is there is no on/off button, unlike other Bluetooth mice.

All in all, the Kensington Pilot is a fine Bluetooth mouse. It is very responsive and precise. It has battery monitoring included in the software. The mouse customizable within the Mouse Works software. And the five-year warranty rounds out the package nicely. I would recommend anyone looking for a wireless Bluetooth Mouse to consider the Pilot Mouse by Kensington.

Software Reviews

Microsoft® Office:mac 2004 Professional Edition – Word Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

mactopia

Microsoft Corporation
1-800-426-9400
http://www.microsoft.com/mac/
Product Site:
http://www.microsoft.com/mac/products/office2004/office2004.aspx?pid=office2004
$500 USD (Professional Edition with Virtual PC 7 XP Pro [see the other review]); $400 Standard Edition; $240 Upgrade; $150 Teacher/Student Edition. If purchased individually – Word, Excel, PowerPoint are each $230 or $110 Upgrade.
30-day Demo:
http://www.microsoft.com/mac/default.aspx?pid=office2004td
Requirements: G3, G4, or G5 Macintosh computer; Mac OS X 10.2.8 or later; 512MB RAM; 450MB of free hard-disk space; Full 630 MB for full drag-and-drop install; CD-ROM drive, 1024x768 with thousands of colors; Mouse.
Experience needed: Previous experience with Microsoft Office very beneficial, but not required.
**Reviewed with:** G3 iMac Series D with 256 MB RAM.

Strengths: Added Notebook Layout, Audio Notes, redesigned Toolbars and improved Smart Buttons. New Page Layout view.

Weaknesses: Track Changes and Comments need some rethinking and retweaking. No support for Mac OS X Services.

This review will cover Word™ as provided in *Office:mac 2004 Professional*. Another review of Virtual PC™ 7 is also in this issue of *macCompanion*. And we will hold off on doing reviews of Excel™ and PowerPoint™ along with Entourage™ until the February issue. Perhaps we should not do that, but Microsoft does offer each piece separately, except for Entourage™. (We use Word to build each issue of *macCompanion*.)
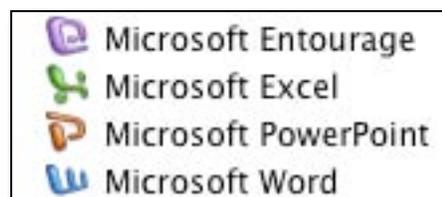
First off, you will notice the Elfish look and attention to detail to the Microsoft Office 2004 icons. They appear very similar to the ones found in *Office:mac v.X.* don't they? The 4 pieces of Office 2004 are integrated with each other – at least from this perspective – and the main difference between the Standard Edition and the Professional Edition apparently is the Virtual PC 7 module.

If you have been using Word for any great length of time, this version pops up with a compatibility report as a warning that there may be issues porting to WinTel boxen or when sending to others who are still using older versions of Word for the Mac. Pieces affected are the Audio Notes, and a few other Office 2004-specific features that don't cross over.

Office 2004 also has a Project Center designed to pull resources together (located in Entourage), similar in scope to what HP did through their printer driver technology, but have long since dropped. Instead of giving us *Project for Windows*, this essentially becomes a slimmed down version for Macs as it consolidates Email, contact information, files and deadlines associated with a given project. And MSN Messenger also interoperates with it. I'd rather see *Project for Macs* come back. If you want to use the Project Center, you will have to enable Entourage. Entourage has new appeal, but that will be discussed next month. Ditto with PowerPoint and Excel.

This version of Word has scrapbooking capabilities for searching through text, objects and images to be used later for documentation.

Probably the most interesting part of Office 2004 is that there is a Notebook function (*Audio Notes*) for recording audio activities (requires a Mic) and then adding them to notes. It appears that Microsoft's Macintosh Business Unit took Apple's User Interface guidelines to heart and applied them to the Notebook function. Transferring a Word document to *Notebook Layout,* for whatever reason, looses formatting.

 Reference tools have been updated to combine dictionaries, thesaurus, Encarta Encyclopedia and MSN Internet search through Safari™ to do lookups and find synonyms as well as do research.

Track changes has been modified to handle collaboration and identify contributors to a given document or project, but I tend t shy away from it – until I learned how to resolve a few things with *Word Hacks* (also reviewed in this issue of *macCompanion*).

And Apple Ink™ is also supported, so graphic tablet entries (handwriting and hand drawings) are accepted.

A *Navigation Pane* icon has been included for shortcutting around in large documents and *Smart Buttons* (a little contextual menu clipboard) are intended to reduce mousing around with either preferences or the menu bars.

A nice touch is the temporary blue underline that shows up when typing a word when Autocorrecting is enabled and is intended to reduce the frustration associated with autoformatting. It is another contextual menu-driven feature and it is quick, so you have to react quickly before it disappears if you want to use the drop-down menu.

The *Formatting Palette* includes an *Add Objects* pane such as movies or photos and tabs access Autotext entries including calendars and checklists. And a *Styles* pane is another way of getting to the Style dialog box.

Track Changes has been modified to include a *Markup* and a *Show* menu on the *Reviewing Pane*. This is an area that the programmers are going to need to re-evaluate. Right now it is still a bit cumbersome.

Well, did you find anything compelling or "to die for" here worth getting just Word 2004? Probably not, but combined with the other parts of Office 2004, this is an evolutionary upgrade and not a revolutionary one. The "smart move" is to get the full-meal-deal (Office 2004) and not just go for the appetizers (buying the modules separately), especially if you are using Office 2001.

Microsoft® Office:mac 2004 Professional Edition - Virtual PC® for Mac version 7 by Ted Bade, Eddie Hargreaves and Derek Meier

mactopia

Microsoft Corporation
1-800-426-9400
http://www.microsoft.com/mac/
Product Site:
http://www.microsoft.com/mac/products/virtualpc/virtualpc.aspx?pid=virtualpc
$250 USD (with XP professional or Windows 2000), $220 (with XP home). $130 (with no OS), $100 upgrade from VPC5 and up.
Requirements: G3, G4, or G5 Macintosh computer; Mac OS X 10.2.8 or later; 512MB RAM; 3GB of free hard-disk space; A 700 MHz processor, minimum.
Note: A G5 Macintosh requires Mac OS 10.3.x to run VirtualPC7.
Note: Microsoft does not support Processor upgrade and/or accelerator cards for use with Virtual PC.
Experience needed: Intermediate. Some experience using Windows or whatever OS you decide to use this with.
Reviewed with: G5 1.8GHz, 1 GB RAM, ATI 9600 Pro video; 1.8GHz G5 iMac with 512MB of RAM; iBook, 1GB RAM.

Strengths: Handles graphics very well. Peppy on my system. Easy installation included while installing Windows XP® Professional. Excellent integration to Mac OS® X interface.

Weaknesses: Emulation is always slower then hardware. No support provided for use with operating systems other than what MS recommends.

VirtualPC®7 (VPC7) is a viable option for Mac® users who need to run certain Window-only (Pentium-like chip based), applications. While emulation will never be as fast as actual hardware, this version performs well, and, unlike actual WinTel hardware, integrates very nicely with the Mac OS X environment. This version is the first that works on the Macintosh G5 machine, and takes advantage of this speedy chip's abilities.

I tested VPC7 using my G5/1.8 single processor Macintosh®. This setup has 1G of RAM and an ATI 9600 Pro video card, both which I feel contribute to how well VPC runs, as does the other enhancements of the G5 Mac such as the fast serial ATA drive.

The installation process went very well. I was a bit spooked by the warning that told me that the installation might take from 15 minutes to **2 hours**! My actual time was around 18 minutes. I was also a bit surprised that VPC comes on 3 CDs, rather then on DVD. However, there just might be a Macintosh out there somewhere without a DVD reader that also has enough power to use VPC 7...

This version comes ready to install Windows XP Pro on a virtual machine. You can still create a virtual machine and install other version of Windows or other such operating systems on them. According to the instructions, VPC7 supports only XP Professional, XP Home Edition, and Windows 2000. If you have an install CD for an earlier system, it might not work. However, the instructions also discuss the method of installing an OS that is on floppy disks! I didn't try this myself, but it leads one to believe that support means Microsoft will help you if you have a problem, rather than the OS just not working.

While the Macintosh system requirements are hefty, they are less then that of some current Macintosh games! However, as with any processor-intensive applications, the more power one has, the better it will operate. I was impressed with how well VPC7 performed on my G5, compared to my experience with previous versions I have had running. I wouldn't run out and buy the latest PC game to play on it, but I wouldn't hesitate to buy and run any

number of other applications.

Virtual PC Windows XP Professional

Set Program Access and Defaults
Windows Catalog
Windows Update
Programs ▶
Documents ▶
Settings ▶
Search
Help
Run...
Shut Down...

Accessories ▶
Broderbund Home Products ▶
Games ▶
Meade ▶
Startup ▶
Internet Explorer
MSN
Outlook Express
Remote Assistance
Windows Media Player
Windows Messenger
Windows Movie Maker

Freecell
Hearts
Internet Backgammon
Internet Checkers
Internet Hearts
Internet Reversi
Internet Spades
Minesweeper
Pinball
Solitaire
Spider Solitaire

The operation of VPC7 is elegant, from the sharp icon that it has, to the interesting shutdown icon animation, to how it integrates with Apple's Dock. It is really designed like a well-behaved Mac OS X application! Sure, while you are within the confines of Windows, you will be affected by the interface rules that exist in that world, but getting to that point is a very Mac-like experience.

Scary as it might seem, VPC 7 installs an icon in the Mac's dock that looks like the Windows XP start menu icon. It is pretty cool. This application works like the Window's XP start menu. Click on it and a menu appears with the same stuff your XP start menu has. Then choose the application that you would like to run inside of Windows and VPC 7 boots into the virtual image and runs the application. As you install different applications onto your virtual machine, the start menu application changes to include them. Very elegant. Although I might hate to admit it, I have to admit this interface is a bit more elegant then Apple's own interface into Mac OS 9 (Classic).

I did have a little problem with the Mac dock when using the Windows menu. I keep my Dock hidden in the space below the screen and it pops up only {most of the time}, when I want to see it. When I use the Windows menu, the dock sticks up until I move the mouse over it again. I've seen this odd behavior before but never so consistently with one application.
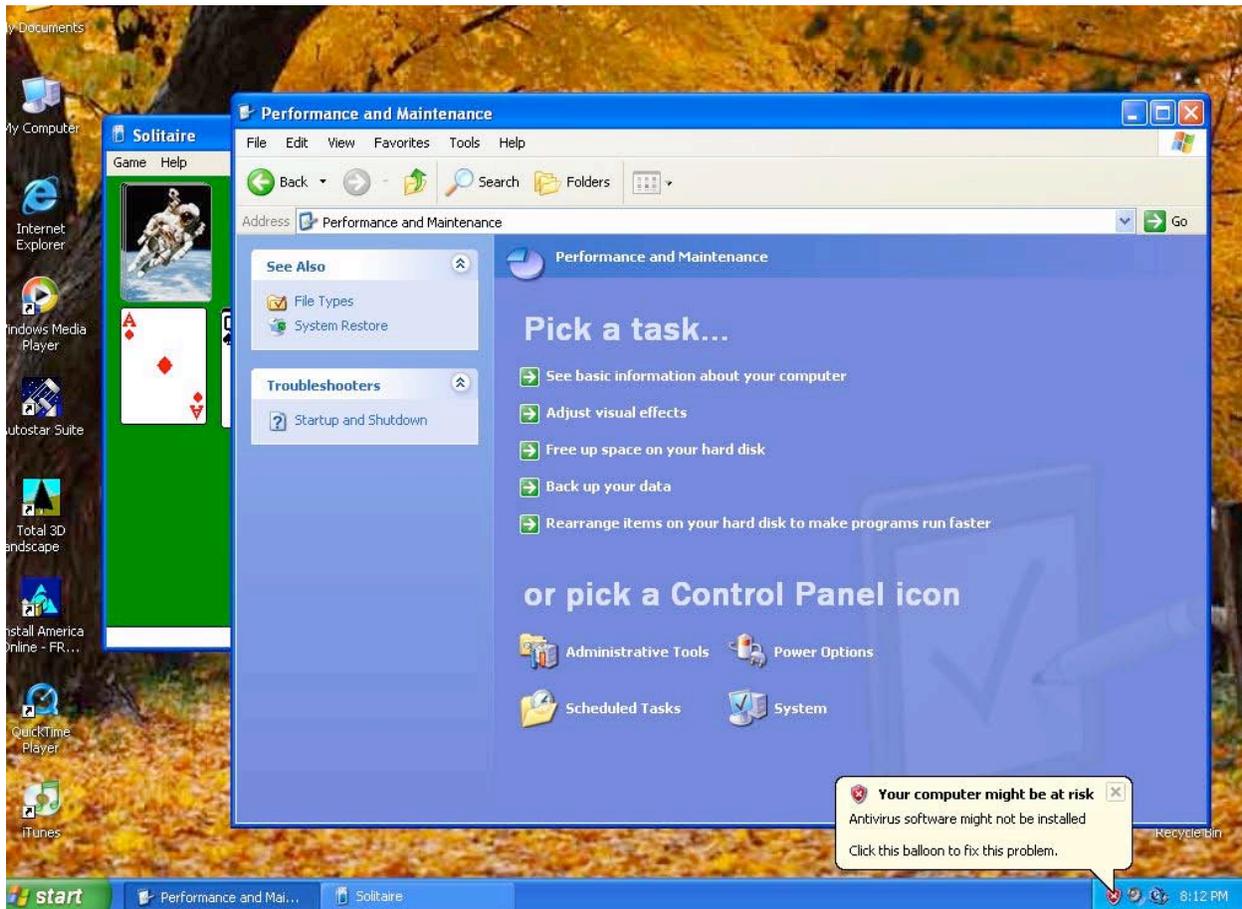
Then it's welcome to the world of cruel and malicious software. (No, not viruses, all those other Windows-only applications that one has to run!) One of the first things that my version of XP began talking to me about was the fact that my computer is at risk. I don't have a virus program installed. It must be a terrible life to live, constantly in fear of the next malicious piece of software. Since I don't plan to do anything important with this virtual machine, I decided not to heed the warnings. However, if you plan to use VPC7 for anything important, get some protection and back up often. [**Editor:** Yes, you will need anti-virus software for the PC-side of your Mac – based on past experiences – but relatively safe if not using Windows-based Email and having macros turned off.]

Using VPC7 on my system was nice. It responded well, and generally performed as I would expect a computer to perform. There are only a few pieces of software that I really want to run that are Windows-only. One of these was a piece of software for controlling my telescope. It installed and ran quite well. I did see a problem with the graphics. When I panned across the sky, instead of the stars moving, the graphics kind of blurred into lines, which reformed into the sky when I stopped moving. I also played with a home landscape design program whose major problem was that it thought the hard drive was too close to being full (see the discussion below on using the VPC7 engine).

I also had a lot of fun running the applications included with Windows. I was happy to see the 3D pinball game played as well on my Mac in emulation as it does on my Panasonic laptop at work! Using the Internet, although a potentially dangerous thing on a Windows machine, also worked well.

I had a real hoot trying to get a copy of iTunes from the Apple site. MSIE (Microsoft Internet Explorer) tried to convince me that the Apple site was bad! First it alerted me that I was getting cookies, then it actually blocked my download request. As a matter of fact, it blocked further downloads from the Apple site! Finally it let me get the software, but then reminded me that it wasn't safe and did I really want to install this software? Finally, after a bit of sputtering, it actually let me install it! (Naughty, naughty Bill ;-) There was even a way to check the relative security risk of this software. I hadn't realized how bad living in the WinTel world has become (or is this a marketing ploy to keep Window people from using iTunes?).

While I was writing the past paragraph, I have been installing the Windows version of iTunes on my VPC! I can actually see the installation process taking place in the window just behind my word processor. I am also listening to the Mac version of iTunes. A real test for how well VPC does in the background! It did well! Again, kudos to the Mac Business Unit. Now I am listening to the Windows version of iTunes (an internet radio station), as I write this. No real problem, except a skip once when I was flipping between applications.
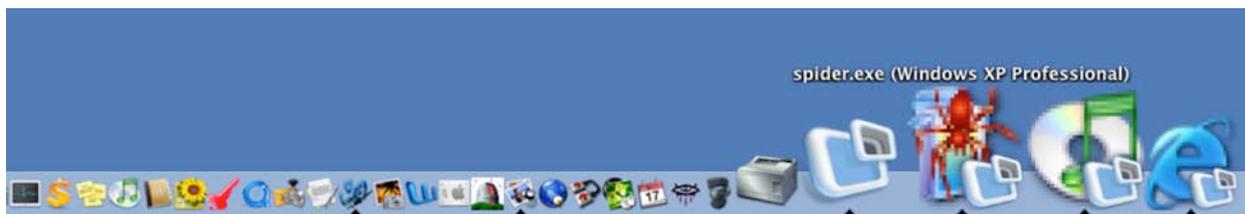
Another nice feature of VPC7 is that Windows applications show up on the Dock! So as I am writing this, if I want to change from this writing application to one of the Windows applications I am running, I just use the Dock in the same way I would if changing to another Mac OS or even Mac Classic application. The icons might be of poor quality, but they are useful.

To manipulate the hardware setup of your virtual machine, VPC7 provides a number of controls. These controls remain hidden, unless you press the proper key. Controls are provided to affect many aspects of your virtual machine.

Working with the VPC7 virtual machine is an easy task. First of all, the hard drive size is dynamic. That is, it grows (but doesn't shrink) as you add programs to your virtual machine. This is neat, since you don't have to try to decide how much space you may need in the future and tie that space up unused until then. You can also make a disk image of a specific size. The Landscaping program I was using was obviously having a problem with the Dynamic hard drive feature.

A potential disaster using VPC on any machine has to do with RAM. You need to tell VPC7 how much RAM it can use. As with any computer, the more RAM it has, the better it performs. Both Windows and the Mac OS use the hard drive as virtual RAM, when needed. If you don't give your virtual machine enough RAM, it will use the hard drive as virtual RAM, which can slow things down! If you tell your virtual machine to use too much of your Mac's RAM and the Mac finds that it doesn't have enough physical RAM to run VPC, it will use virtual RAM, which will slow things down. Your best bet is to install tons of RAM into your Mac, and use the activity monitor to see how much free physical RAM your Mac has during normal operating conditions, then assign most of that to your virtual machine!

Activity Monitor

Export Quit Process Inspect Filter Show

All Processes

Process ID	Process Name	User	▼ % CPU	# Threads	Real Memory	Virtual Memory
525	Virtual PC	ted	42.90	12	352.76 MB	538.63 MB
427	Safari	ted	4.40	17	66.72 MB	433.76 MB
537	iTunes	ted	3.90	8	28.70 MB	199.49 MB
547	Activity Monit	ted	2.40	3	21.09 MB	157.99 MB
329	StartTiVoDesk	root	0.40	16	11.47 MB	223.65 MB
548	pmTool	root	0.40	1	3.08 MB	27.09 MB
0	kernel_task	root	0.40	41	78.42 MB	1.00 GB
322	automount	root	0.00	3	1.23 MB	29.06 MB
119	netinfod	root	0.00	1	404.00 KB	27.02 MB
343	DTDaemon	root	0.00	1	140.00 KB	26.74 MB
318	rpc.lockd	root	0.00	1	144.00 KB	17.70 MB
339	DirectoryServi	root	0.00	2	1.21 MB	31.51 MB
275	loginwindow	ted	0.00	5	7.39 MB	139.38 MB
385	FaxServer	ted	0.00	4	3.67 MB	136.37 MB
364	httpd	www	0.00	1	320.00 KB	28.29 MB
521	Nisus Writer E	ted	0.00	8	51.76 MB	206.43 MB
124	dynamic_page	root	0.00	1	132.00 KB	17.66 MB

CPU   System Memory   Disk Activity   Disk Usage   Network

Wired: 441.20 MB   Free: 11.66 MB
Active: 335.65 MB   VM size: 6.12 GB
Inactive: 235.49 MB   Page ins/outs: 30075/1608
Used: 1,012.34

1,024.00 MB

VPC7 makes use of your Mac's connection to the Internet. This version did an excellent job of this. After the installation, the connection worked flawlessly. Printing with VPC7 has always been a chore; finding and installing drivers and convincing the virtual machine to access the printer rarely worked well. This version of VPC lets you access the printers that are connected to your Mac. All I had to do was select one of my two printers and the print job went to it with no problems. Microsoft PR calls it zero configuration printing. If this works as well on other Mac Systems, printing problems will be a thing of the past.

When you quit VPC7 and haven't shut down Windows, VPC7 automatically "sleeps" the virtual machine (or whatever Win-PC people call it). So that next time you want to use the virtual machine, you don't have to boot Windows, just restore the virtual machine. The sleeping process takes place in the background, although while it is happening VPC7's icon on the Dock plays an animation of Mac OS X's shutting down symbol, Cute.

From my perspective, Virtual PC7 is a terrific program. It is well engineered and includes the elegance one expects from a well-behaved Mac OS X program. While I am sure there are some things it won't do well, it seemed to perform all my tests satisfactorily! I have to admit, I was one of the people who was afraid that Microsoft would kill VPC when they bought it. However it appears to me that instead of killing it, they significantly refined it! Everyone knows that Microsoft's applications work so well because Microsoft software engineers have access to all the Window's secrets. I believe that Microsoft has made use of this in VPC version 7.

If you need to run windows applications that aren't extremely processor intensive, VPC7 is a very good way to go. I highly recommend it, especially if you are using a G5 PowerMac.

Eddie Hargreaves wrote," I tested Virtual PC 7 on a 1.8GHz G5 iMac with 512MB of RAM and it was quite usable. Windows XP has a lot of visual overhead that can slow down operations. In previous releases, Connectix provided a

list of Windows settings changes that could increase the speed. Microsoft doesn't provide that list, but the changes can still be made and speed things up. Most of these involved turning down/off the unnecessary visual effects.

I mainly checked Web sites I've built in IE6 and also used Hemera's Photo-Objects application. I wanted to play some DVD-ROM content on commercial DVD movies, but was largely unsuccessful. Microsoft states this up front, but it's worth repeating, because I hear the question a lot: **You cannot play PC games with Virtual PC**. The built-in games like *Solitaire* and *Mine Sweeper* work fine, but forget about *Unreal Tournament* or *Flight Simulator*."

Derek Meier said he purchased VPC7 and bought extra RAM for his wife's system (1.2GHz iBook, 1.25 GB RAM). VPC7 ran pathetically slow, so a faster bus and using the latest CPU follow typical Microsoft modus operandi requirements – minimum requirements just don't cut it. Derek also purchased a copy of Win XP Pro for his spare PC and will use Remote Desktop on his wife's iBook so she can do her Visual Basic homework on the PC. The claim is that it will be 10 times faster using Remote Desktop than running VPC7. Since they are using a 100MB Local Area Network (and wireless too) the latency should be negligible. See
http://www.microsoft.com/mac/otherproducts/otherproducts.aspx?pid=remotedesktopclient.

[**Editor:** And just forget about running VPC7 on anything slower than 700 MHz. No, don't even think it. Heck, even Dell is selling $500 computers now! We've reached what Steve Jobs said 3 years ago – commodity computing.]

Training Reviews

learning macromedia dreamweaver mx 2004 Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Instructor: Garo Green
Lynda.com, Inc.
PO Box 789
Ojai, CA 93024
888-335-9632
mailto: info@lynda.com
http://www.lynda.com
Released: January 2004
$100 USD with 2 CDs, or as part of a 4-set bundle of $400 USD, 10-hours training.
http://store.lynda.com/store/comersus_viewitem.asp?idproduct=330
Product site: http://www.lynda.com/products/videos/dw04cd/
Requirements: Mac G3, OS 8.6 or later, 16X CD-ROM drive, 64 MB RAM, QuickTime™ 6 or WinTel, Pentium II, PC Soundcard/speakers. And Dreamweaver MX 2004.
Dig Deeper:
http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/productinfo/tutorials/gettingstarted/
For beginning Dreamweaverists.
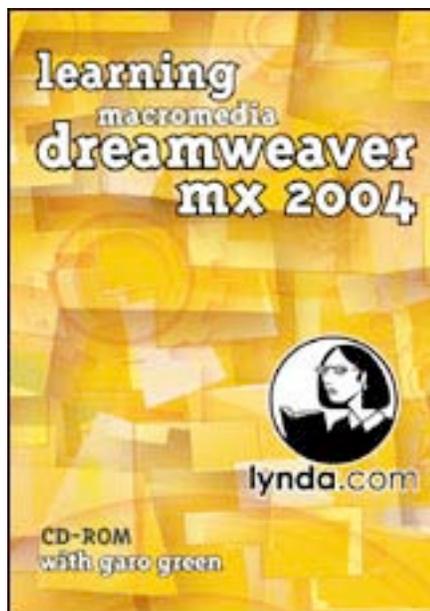
Strengths: Great cross-platform QuickTime-based instructions on Dreamweaver. Excellent navigation features.

Weaknesses: None found.

learning macromedia dreamweaver mx 2004 by Garo Green is a 2-CD set of around 8 hours per CD of training for folks who would like to begin at the beginning with Macromedia's Dreamweaver™ MX 2004. This is a basic "get-to-know-the-product" video set, but it touches everything and Garo Green is an excellent instructor. We were privileged enough to be able to get the bundle set and this seemed to be the logical one of the four to start.

This series is a self-paced set that is intended to digest in bit-sized pieces. Here a little, there a little, and sneak in time to grab a quick Macromedia snack, then get back to work.

We've been learning Macromedia Dreamweaver and this 2-CD set is a great way to learn it! Garo Green takes us step-by-step through the interface, site control and basic site discipline, linking and typography, working with tables, layout and Cascading Style Sheets and that is all on the first CD. The 2nd CD begins with frames, rollovers, XHTML and forms, than digs into behaviors, Fireworks integration, automation, templates and library items, Accessibility (for the physically challenged), inserting media objects and finally ending up with getting up online.

Garo Green has been there, done that, and obviously knows his way both around Dreamweaver and with cleaning up websites. And he also obviously enjoys what he is doing because it shows in his presentations. He is also comfortable going back and forth between platforms, whether WinTel or Macs. He shows what is different and what

is the same and his humor also sprinkles fun into the presentations. Would you expect anything less from the Director of Publications at lybda.com?

I'm very impressed with this training CD collection and I think you will be too.

learning apple keynote Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Instructress: Tanya Staples
Lynda.com, Inc.
PO Box 789
Ojai, CA 93024
888-335-9632
mailto: info@lynda.com
http://www.lynda.com
Released: October 2004
$50 USD with 2 CDs, 8-hours training.
Product site:
http://movielibrary.lynda.com/html/modPage.asp?ID=111
ISBN: 1596710063

Requirements: Mac G3, OS 8.6 or later, 16X CD-ROM drive, 128 MB RAM, 1024x768-bit video; QuickTime™ 6 or WinTel, Pentium II, 128MB RAM; 1024x768 24-bit video; PC Soundcard/speakers. For beginning Applekeynoters.
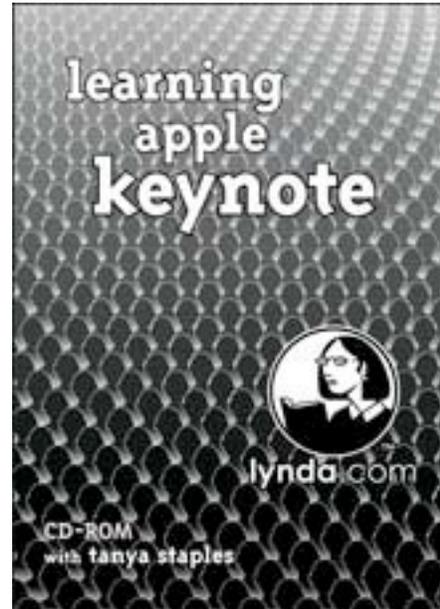
Strengths: Great cross-platform QuickTime™-based instructions on Apple's Keynote™ application. Excellent navigation features.

Weaknesses: None found.

learning apple keynote by Tanya Staples feels like a quick walkthrough of Apple's Keynote™ application. There are 2 CDs that have Tanya's Canadian–accented voice nicely helping us see all the features that come with Keynote as well as how to best utilize them.

There are 10 chapters covering the interface, creating and organizing presentations, working with text, graphics, music, movies, tables and carts and creating slide transitions and object builds. The last two chapters teach printing and exporting presentations as PDFs, PowerPoint presentations and QuickTime movies and creating our own themes and master slides.

If you need to get up to speed quickly with Keynote, get this training set. Oh and please check out the website. You can get all of the training videos 24x7 for only $25 USD per month online.

MuchoSpanish Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Instructors: Dan Fenner, Aixa Marquez
MuchoSpanish.com
64-34 102 Street
Apt. 1W
Rego Park, NY 11374
1-646-515-8170
mailto:info@muchospanish.com
http://www.muchospanish.com
Released: November 10, 2004
$60 USD with 3-CD set. http://www.muchospanish.com/buy.html
Requirements: Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X; G3 500 MHz or higher; 128 MB RAM; QuickTime 6 – and a mouse. WinTel 98, 2000 (ME), XP; Pentium 2; 600 MHz or higher; 128 MB RAM, QuickTime 6 – and a mouse.
Screenshots: http://www.muchospanish.com/preview.html
For English-speakers interested in an introduction to Español.

Strengths: Plug-and-play CD set that starts off teaching how to pronounce Spanish and ends with full stories in Español.

Weaknesses: CD navigation could be improved, lack of documentation (go to the website) and could use a lot more content.

MuchoSpanish is a 3-CD set created by Aixa Marquez and Dan Fenner and is intended for English-speaking young-adults and older to learn Spanish pronunciation and a few sentences with limited vocabulary. By the time you get through the 3rd CD, you will have been introduced to present, past and future tenses and other grammatical indulgences in the art of language structure. Learning Spanish is how I finally learned English.

This set would be considered a supplemental learning tool to a classroom situation for instructors. It is light on grammatical theory but touches lightly on all the usual gender/verb tense, general rules and some exceptions. The native accent is decidedly South American and instead of all the different characters having different voices in the stories, when clicking on their names at the bottom of the screen, they all have a very pleasant female voice (no doubt, Aixa's) that speaks slowly enough for beginners to understand.

The wording appears in Spanish with English translation below. Subjects covered deal with real-life family situations and culture. So what is learned? A Latin-American accent with some South American vocabulary. There are even references to Don Francisco's *Sabado Gigante* program from Florida.
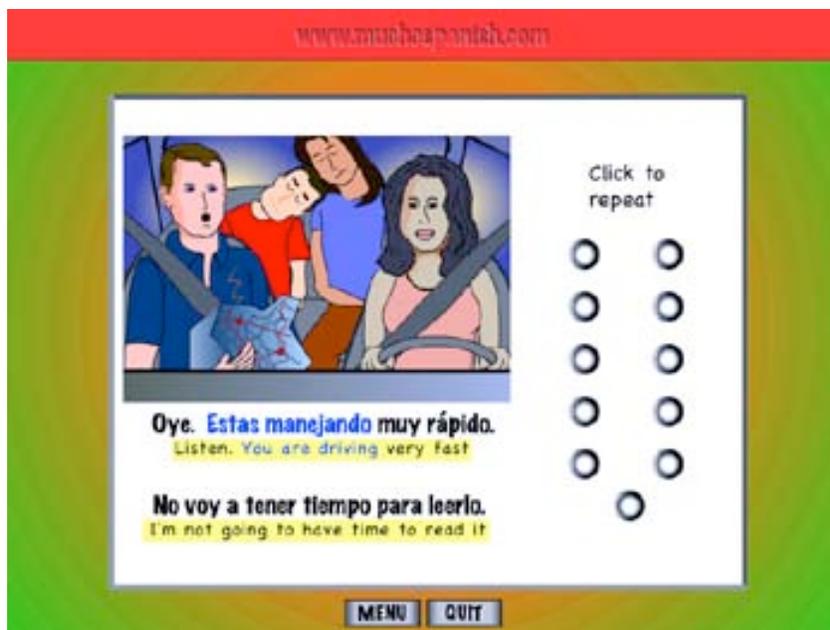
On the last CD there is a whole section for the English-speaking instructor to apparently speak to Spanish-speaking parents about their students. You will probably learn more from the dialogue here than in the other sections of the CDs.

The first CD has 3 parts: the first presents a pronunciation guide and 3 lessons on the use of familiar and formal usage of Vosotros and Usted, some nouns and articles and adjectives and a dialog about El Edificio (building). The 2nd part shows present tense, irregular present, cardinal numbers, telling time, ordinal numbers a dialog about The date and adapting to a new culture (the US). And the 3rd part gets into prepositions a dialog about El Apartamento (apartment), forming questions with a dialog, Hispanic television, and special uses of the verb *haber*.

The 2nd CD is designed to cover "intermediate" Spanish and it too has 3 parts. The first discusses adverbs, possessive pronouns, demonstratives adjectives, comparatives, superlatives and object pronouns. The 2nd part covers such things as looks, sounds and seems good, in need of, need to, and have to, negatives, saying no, a dialog about El Mercado (marketplace) and a cultural insight about food (Latin America styles). And finally, the 3rd part covers *gustar* (to like), past tense, irregular past a dialog on past tense and *ser* and *estar* (two kinds of is – and not what President Clinton was referring to).

The 3rd CD gets into more "advanced" Spanish with 3 parts. The first presents future and irregular future tense along with a dialog and other dialogs on clothing for at trip, weather forecasting and driving. The 2nd part presents past imperfect and a dialogue, *acabar*, reflexives and a dialogue, present participles and a dialogue. And the last part discusses *dejar*, imperfect, *conocer/saber* (the two "to knows"), past and present perfect with a dialogue on perfect tense and finally a culture piece on the family left behind.

The part for teachers who need to communicate in Español with Latin-American parents covers such topics as supplies, work habits, classroom behavior, math, reading and calling home.
The radio buttons seen above with no labels are connected to speech sections so when clicked they repeat part of the presentation. The set looks like a family therapy project by Dan and Aixa, (who both watch macCompanion closely each month as we go to press).

I wish the navigation was a little better and we could here more voices when listening to the male native dialogue (I hear Aixa's voice for the other guys listed in the lessons). And those radio buttons for the dialogues could use some text. I know it is supposed to be intuitive, but it isn't readily apparent. Could I have done much better? Probably not. I hope there is an update, because there is a lot of potential here for expansion.

If you are an instructor that needs to communicate with Spanish-speaking parents, here is a good place to start (disc 3). If you are a student and need to do a cram course in learning Spanish grammar, you can begin here.
 There are about 60 lessons in the 3- CD set.

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.

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

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