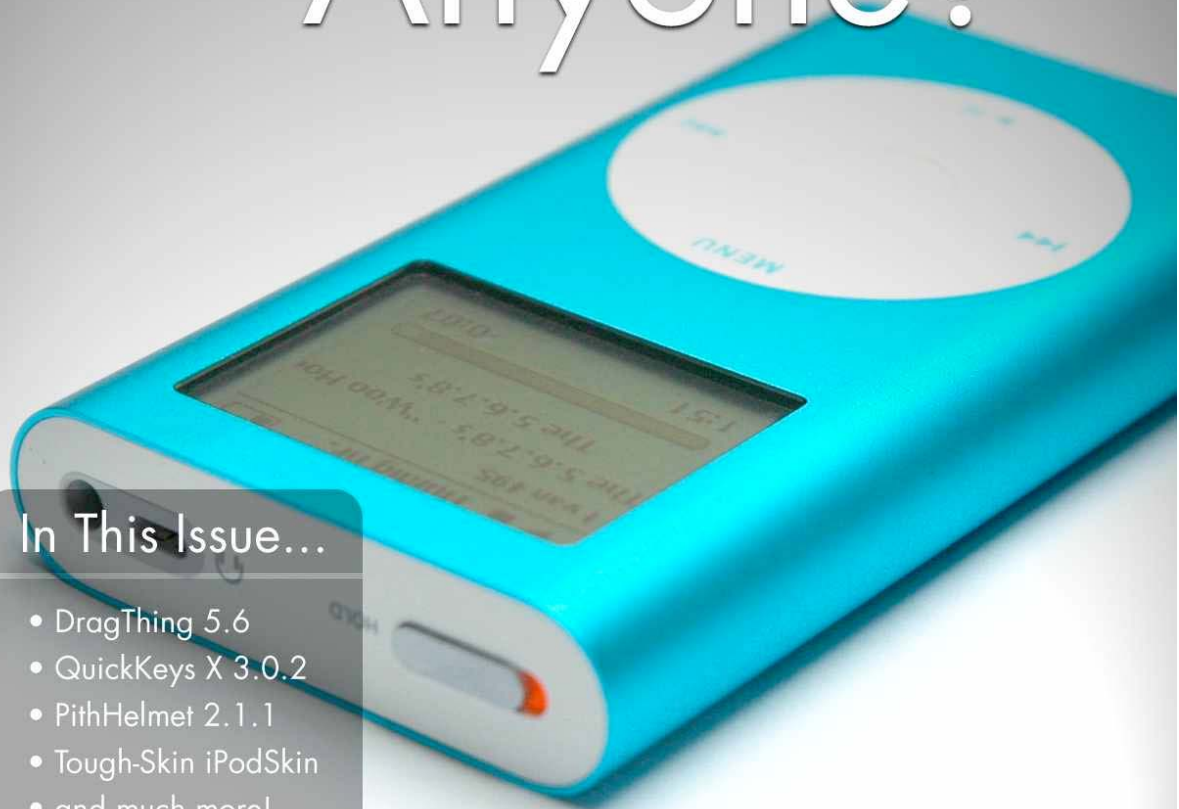


macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH

Podcasting Anyone?



In This Issue...

- DragThing 5.6
- QuickKeys X 3.0.2
- PithHelmet 2.1.1
- Tough-Skin iPodSkin
- and much more!

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 7 July 2005

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Masthead

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

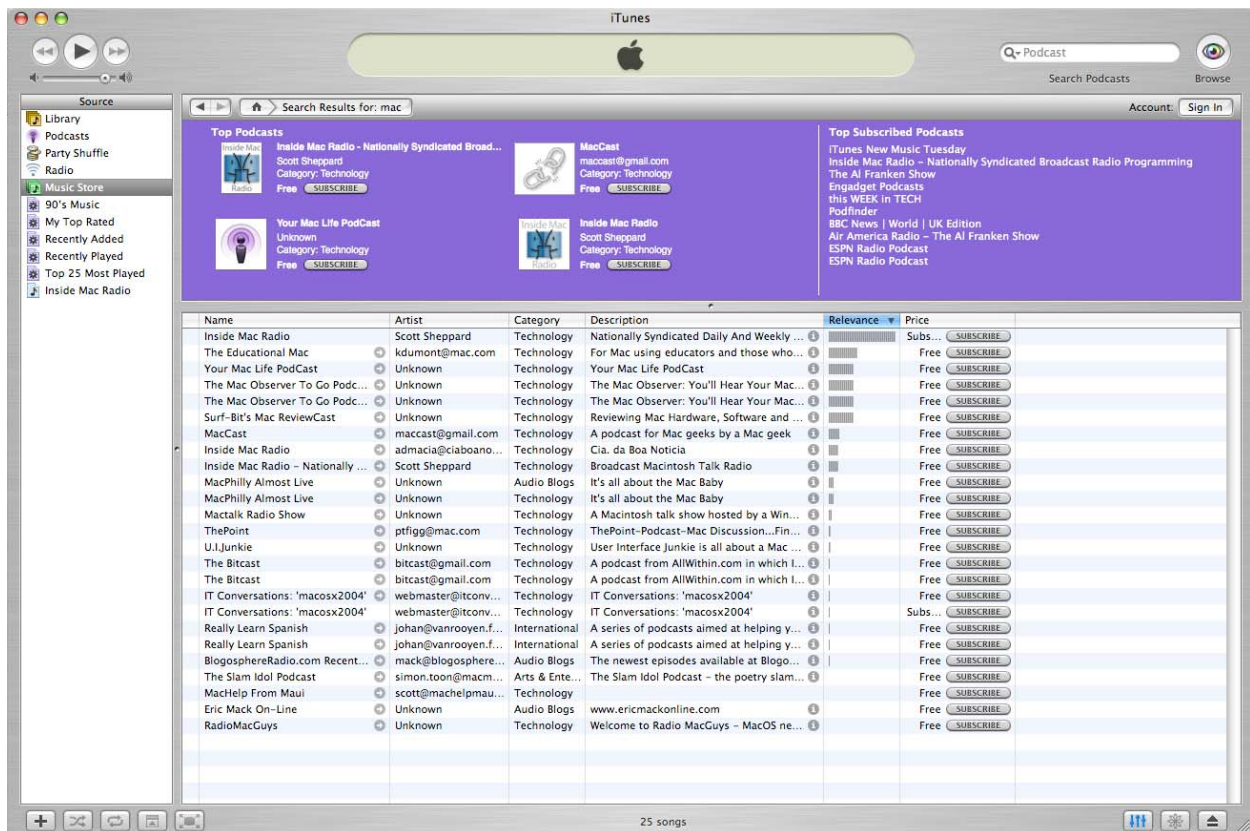
Letter From the CEO

PodCasting Marvels

Have you been noticing the VolksRadio phenomenon? PodCasting is the latest online activity where Blogs become vocalized and everyone who has a voice wants to use it. We have been working with Tim Verpoorten on his MacReviewCast starting with Episode #8. Would this have been possible without the iPod? Probably, but the iPod has become the catalyst and probably by the time you see this article, iTunes will have been tied at the hip to PodCasting. Online Radio – a cool use of bandwidth and a new revolution in free speech!

Regular “Radio” is loosing listeners. Streaming audio online is the revolution and PodCasting is taking advantage of it. Richard Giles of The Gadget Show calls PodCasting “anti-radio”.

Apple thought PodCasting was so important that it updated *iTunes* to version 4.9 so that the Podcast Directory could be included. I have seen that if I search on “mac”, I can get many Macintosh-related PodCasts. Kirk McElhearn posted his Tutorial on how to create PodCasts using iTunes 4.9: <http://www.ipodlounge.com/index.php/articles/comments/the-complete-guide-to-itunes-4.9-with-podcasts/>.



To access current ones, I need to click on the arrow button for a given subject in the *Name* column. At the moment, the *Price* column shows they are free.

Here are a few other PodCasts that I have been listening to I located prior to the PodCast Directory being accessed.

Adam – MacCast <http://www.maccast.com/category/podcast/>

Adam Curry The PodFather- – Daily Source Code <http://dailysourcecode.com/>

Raj Deut – The Mac User Show <http://macuser.thepodcastnetwork.com/>

Chuck Joiner - The MUG Center <http://www.mugcenter.com/>

DigitalBill - Wizards of Technology <http://www.wizardsoftechnology.com/>

John Fortt – Technofile <http://fortt.com/blog/2005/04/audio-edition-podcast-talk-of-video.html>

Richard Giles – The Gadget Show <http://www.thepodcastnetwork.com/gadget/>

Lance Heath – Digital Experience <http://lance.heathville.com/digitalexperience/>

Leo Laporte <http://thisweekintech.com/podcasts>

Les & Anthony from Down Under <http://www.thepdaguy.com/podcast/podcast.xml>

Rush Limbaugh – Podcast Media Center
<http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/podcastlandingpage.guest.html>

Tim Robertson - MyMac <http://www.mymac.com/userinfo.php?id=MyMac%20PodCast>

Scott Sheppard and Ken Ray - OSX FAQ – Inside Mac Radio <http://www.osxfaq.com/>

Hadley Stern – AppleMatters <http://applematters.com/index.php/section/podcast/>

Tim Verpoorten – Surf-Bits Mac ReviewCast <http://www.macreviewcast.com/>

Mike Wendland – Inside Personal Technology <http://mikesejournal.com/>

Phillip Zannini - MacPhilly Almost Live! <http://www.macphilly.com/wordpress/>

The Unofficial Apple Weblog <http://www.tuaw.com/category/podcasts/>

There are many more PodCasters here:

The latest List: <http://audio.weblogs.com/>

iPodder <http://ipodder.org/>

Podcast Directory <http://www.podcast.net/>

The Podcast Network <http://www.thepodcastnetwork.com/>

There will be an award or two given later...

PodCast Awards <http://www.podcastawards.com/>

Both Rouge Amoeba and Engadget have been getting into the PodCast process big-time and more can be found in our review of NoteTaker that also has a PodCast add-on.

PodCasting using Rouge Amoeba's Audio Hijack Pro

http://www.macompanion.com/ExpressionEngine1.2/index.php?/weblog/comments/podcasting_using_audio_hijack_pro/

Roll-Your-Own PodCast by Engadget

http://www.macompanion.com/ExpressionEngine1.2/index.php?/weblog/comments/roll_your_own_podcasts/

Justin Williams, MacZealots on iPodderX <http://maczealots.com/articles/podcasting/>

After all, we should be able to do better than The News Show with PodCasting and the next step into videostreaming, right? See <http://www.thenewsshow.tv/>. It is not a big leap to go from voice to video anymore. I have to keep pinching myself when I watch that program to remember that it is supposed to be a professional program created by the monied-media. Or maybe it is just the signs of the times for the no-more-money Information Technology environment. We can do better than that, can't we?

Get with the program!

Letter From the Editor

macCompanion, Going on Year 4 – This is Good!

We've come a long way from a start of 0 four years ago (post 9/11) to over 1 million viewers per month as folks come to read our magazine, participate in our Forum or check out our Daily Blog at <http://www.maccompanion.com>. Vendors and manufacturers have been coming to us instead of our going to them for reviews. This is good. Very good! This means that we have, through great, excellent efforts by our all-volunteer staff, who sacrifice their time and resources to give you legitimate and cogent quality content each month. This has established a trust relationship between us and the computer industry.

Now we just need to pour time into marketing and advertising to cover expenses, because publishing on the Internet as a legitimate business has costs associated with each of the technologies we use to “get the word out” about this fascinating environment we have grown to love, known as “Macintosh”. Oh, and your donations do make a huge difference too! Thank you for spreading the word.

Along with our current mode of communications from our website at <http://www.maccompanion.com>, we also have begun participating with Tim Verpoorten on his *Surf-Bits Mac ReviewCast* at <http://www.macreviewcast.com> beginning with Episode #8 as he asks us what kinds of things we are reviewing at *macCompanion* and what we think about other topics in his weekly broadcast. This has helped him move from monologue to dialogue – and that has really been good to do! Now those Mac ReviewCasts can be accessed via iTunes 4.9 in the iTunes PodCast Directory from any computer platform.

We also have included some reprints from Gene Steinberg on Apple Stocks and Wall Street from *The Mac Night Owl*, and a piece by Elizabeth Dyer on how the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation helped some private schools in the Bay area get some Macs. We also have Ted Bade's *Views from the Ivory Tower* news Leland Stone's *Musings From Mars* on how wrapped up in Microsoft's tentacles we may be.

Join us as we once again go over Books, Games, Hardware, Shareware and Software Reviews that affect the Macintosh environment.

You make it possible.

Views from the Ivory Tower by Ted Bade

Wow, what a significant announcement at the Apple WWDC (World Wide Developer's Conference). Apple is making plans to switch to Intel Chips...

I have owned an Apple of some form or another since the late 1970's and they have always had a Motorola chip of some type in them. Those of us who have been Pro Mac have been trained to think of Intel as the other half of a team of bad guys, with Microsoft by their side. I am really curious to see how Apple fans, as well as those who are not fans or even against the Macintosh platform will respond.

As an engineer, I have always wondered what the Mac OS would be like on a blazing fast Intel chip! Will it run circles around a similar machine with some version of Windows on it or will it be simply average? Also, there is the possibility of truly dual or "poly" bootable machines! Think about it, you could choose to boot natively into Windows, Linux for Intel, or Mac OS X. (That is, of course, if Steve and company don't find a way to prevent this...)

As a dedicated computer game player, I am excited about this transition. It seems to me that the major problem of moving games over to the Mac is translating the machine code. With only one chip to design for, I am guessing that converting the GUI front end of the game from Windows to Mac OS shouldn't be a major task, even for a smaller game company.

As a long time Apple user, I am cringing at the thought of converting to yet another CPU. I have gone through all the major changes, 6502 family to the more modern 65C816, to the 68k family, and finally to the PowerPC family. Each change required dropping most of the software from the previous version for better features of the newer one, although to Apple's credit, there was always some backwards compatibility.

We have only to wait until the first "MacTel" (as they are being referred to at the moment), computers ship to see how well they perform. Mac OS X is a very rich and powerful OS. It should not matter what chip it runs on as long as the chip has the power to make all the features work. It might be a good change to move to a chip company that has continued to be a CPU company and one that regularly updates their chips.

There was a lot of other interesting news from the WWDC. Let me share a few that I found most interesting.

- Mac growth was three times the PC growth in the past three quarters. While Apple isn't gaining a lot of market share, it is gaining. Yet Apple is seeing a lot more newer people getting Macs than the PC market. This is good. Hopefully those newbies that get Macs will have a good experience and continue to be Mac owners in the future.

- Sales of Tiger were good, 2 million copies of Tiger in 6 weeks (about 16% of Mac users).

A lot of people ran out and bought Tiger. This is good for Apple because it gives credibility to the value of this version. This also means there will be a lot of people out there using and talking about Tiger, which will attract more people to it. I can say that my experiences with it have been very good. I really like widgets and (more slowly) becoming accustomed to Spotlight, which I didn't like when I first used it. If you haven't upgraded to Tiger yet, you might want to consider doing it.

- Steve Jobs says that Apple wants to make the best computer for people in the future. They need a supplier of CPU chips that regularly upgrades the chips. This is why they are moving to Intel.

The move to Intel is very interesting. I expect we will see a lot of news from people that are both for and against the whole idea. One of the bad things for Apple sales at least is that there are going to be a number of people who are just about ready to buy a new Mac and will decide to wait for the Intel based machines.

I have two thoughts on this. If you are really ready to buy a new Mac, you should. This way you will avoid being an owner of the first generation of the new machines! No matter how good Apple's engineers are, we know there will be a few problems with the first generation. So if you buy a new Mac now, you will be ready for the next one once the bugs are worked out, the software has pretty much changed, and there are experienced people out there to help if needed. However, if you want to buy a MacTel Mac to be one of the first to have one, this isn't a bad idea either. (I hope I can convince my wife that I **Need** to have one, for the experience I will gain!) Apple thrives on people who love to try new technology and innovations.

- Xcode compiler allows developers to make code that works on both (Intel and PowerPC) chips.

This is a really good thing. Apple knows how to transition its customers to a new platform! No only did they help develop a compiler that will allow developers to release versions of their software that will work on both chips, but they also developed a technology that will help customers use older programs.

This technology is called Rosetta Stone. Essentially, this layer in the new MacTel machines will be able to interpret and run PowerPC code on an Intel chip in real time. Steve demonstrated this at the WWDC conference and it looked like it worked well. Of course, I am certain they were sure to run programs that ran pretty well this way. We can expect this not to work sometimes, but I am guessing it will work pretty well overall.

So if you do buy, you probably will be able to use at least some if not all of your older applications. Not to mention that you will be trying new technology.

The Wild Divine Project - I had an opportunity to get a sneak peak at the next game in the Wild Divine series. I reviewed the first "game" in this series several months ago for *macCompanion* and I was really impressed with it.

This program was designed as a relaxation tool that is fun. It is a “Myst-like” game in which you move about a beautifully rendered environment, interacting with people and solving puzzles. The sound track, music and scenery are all beautiful and designed to relax.

The relaxation aspect of this game is the through its interface, a biofeedback device that monitors your skin conductivity and heart rate. This device connects to a USB port on your Mac and to three fingers on your hand.

What makes this game unique is that it teaches the player several relaxation techniques based on breathing patterns. The player is expected to actually accomplish these techniques in order to pass through certain doors. The biofeedback machine monitors you and determines if you have accomplished the necessary actions to pass.

This whole thing might sound a bit goofy to some gamers, but let’s put it into perspective. People in our society spend a lot of time and money trying to relax. Some people turn to drugs or alcohol, others to meditation or yoga. This game tries to teach the player several useful breathing techniques which will relax and calm. I think everyone can benefit from such techniques. Both the biofeedback and breathing techniques have been used for a long time and are well researched to be beneficial.

The new version of this game, called Wisdom Quest, adds a number of newer and more difficult techniques and comes with a whole new story to follow. If you are at all familiar with the “New Age” self help and spiritual growth movement, you might have heard of Dr. Deepak Chopra, who has written a number of books on this subject. He joined the people who created the first version and added his experience and knowledge to the methods taught in this program. I know a few people who use this game as a method to relax. They keep links to favorite challenges so they can access them directly, just to breath and relax. Wisdom Quest helps with this by adding a number of places to go that are there just for the players use, not as part of the game.

Also a few of the challenges and puzzles are quite complex. In one, you need to both stabilize your heart rate then change your energy levels from relaxed to excited, in order to perform the task. This is very challenging. And for all you dedicated gamers, I challenge you to complete such a relaxation task. Running around shooting things can be difficult, but you haven’t seen difficult until you’ve tried to maintain a steady heart beat and get excited at the same time!! Graphically, the new version is even nicer than the first. The newer version uses QuickTime VR to allow you to change your viewpoint anywhere around you as you play. This makes movement a lot more intuitive and realistic. Some of the animated graphical effects I saw were astounding. Wisdom Quest promises to be both an entertaining and useful “game”. They intend to release it in September of this year. Hopefully, I will be providing *macCompanion* a full review of this program at that time.

If you think you might be interested or would just like to learn more about the Wild Diving Project, take a look at their web site: <http://www.wilddivine.com/>

Well that is all for this month. With all the changes on the horizon for us Mac users, I expect we will see all types of controversies and innovations over the next few months. And as always, keep on using your Mac ;-)

Counting Microsoft's Tentacles: Just How Tethered Are We?

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



[My wife] and I both use our home computers to do work-related tasks a great deal. Both of our shops use of the Microsoft Office applications. ... So, practically ing, because of the demands of my job, I cannot boycott oft entirely on my home computers... Basically, the only icrosoft-produced application I could actually boycott is Windows itself.

Even a dedicated Microsoft-boycotter like me has trouble avoiding contributing to Microsoft's coffers these days. On some level, I know my friend worries about supporting Microsoft products, because he uses Mozilla instead of IE, and Quicken instead of Money. But Microsoft's empire runs far deeper than just Office, Windows, Money, and Internet Explorer. (Oh, that's right... IE isn't a separate product. Sorry, I forgot that for a moment.)

Bill Gates and his gang have been focused on defending the Microsoft monopoly for so long, they've managed to gain significant shares in pretty much all technologies and market segments that might pose a threat to Windows. Since my fellow Microsoft-watch writers have been kind of quiet on this particular topic for a few years now, I thought it would be good to survey the scene afresh. Let's take a quick look at the various outposts of Windows technologies and see just how many tentacles we can find (in no particular order):

- **Handheld computers.** This product must have scared Microsoft a little for a few years in the late 1990's, when the ex-Apple folks who started Palm managed to create a market for their cool little Palm Pilot devices. I remember when suddenly one day in 1998, I became aware that a number of my Citibank colleagues were coming to meetings holding little styluses that they used to tap onto techno-cool, charcoal-colored devices, which looked, interestingly enough, like slimmed-down [Apple Newtons](#). I never succumbed to that particular cool-gadget siren, but Microsoft was worried that if enough people did, they would realize that computing is possible without Windows. It took the company way longer than I expected, but just as with Windows itself, their persistence paid off, and eventually they delivered to market a version of Windows CE for handheld computers that worked well enough to compete with the Palm OS. The last I looked, Windows CE had surpassed Palm as the majority handheld OS, and Palm is in a serious run for its life. *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* Just say "No" to any device running Windows CE. You can sync up with your office computer using a Palm just as well, and probably more reliably, too.
- **Cell phones.** For Microsoft, cell phones are potentially evil if they get powerful enough to liberate you from Windows. So a couple of years ago, the company introduced [Windows Mobile](#) and got a bunch of phone companies to manufacture Windows Phones. Microsoft certainly did a better job in naming this time around, since I don't think anyone ever really said out loud "Windows CE," whereas "Windows Mobile" kind of rolls off your tongue. And I really like the idea of a Windows Phone, don't you? *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* Seriously folks, didn't you learn your lesson with AT&T? Why let the company who has a monopoly on computer desktops gain a monopoly on cell phones too?

- **Internet Portals.** You might think the race to win the hearts and minds of potential Internet-access accounts was almost over, and that nobody actually signs up for Microsoft Network (MSN) or AOL (AOL) anymore. I mean, why do that when you can get less expensive internet service from small no-name Internet Service Providers and use Yahoo or Google, or one of any number of other sites that want to be your Internet portal? But you can bet your sweet bippy that Microsoft doesn't think it's over. I mean, they still have a lot of the market to conquer there! In case you hadn't noticed, no less a cultural icon than James Earl Jones has been seen on TV lately telling everyone how wonderful Verizon DSL wireless is. And just what's so great about it, James? Why, it comes with free MSN, don't you know! Do you notice how no one says "Microsoft Network?" It's because they figure no one knows what "MSN" stands for, and if James says it's OK, why, that's just fine with me! (Poor James Earl Jones... how the hell did he get rooked into that one?) *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* There are plenty of great internet providers. You don't need MSN any more than you needed AOL. There are more great web portals out there than you'll know what to do with. You just need someone to give you an IP address, and try to make sure Microsoft isn't standing next to them when they do.
- **Webmail.** Why do you suppose people actually use Hotmail, Microsoft's webmail service? It sure ain't because it gets great ratings or is considered the best in its category. In a [May 2005 study](#), PC Magazine rates it 4th of the four it evaluated--Google, Yahoo, Fastmail, and Hotmail. In its ongoing rating, [CNET ranks Hotmail 6th](#) of the eight it reviews (they don't include Google because it's still in beta mode). And so on. But Hotmail is one of the most pernicious outlets for Microsoft technology, and one of the best ways of tying yourself closely to Windows. *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* Stay away from Hotmail.

- **Web Shopping and Services.** This is an old story, too, but it's still an important one. Back in the 1990's, Microsoft went on a spending spree, seemingly buying up every web company that looked like it might actually make money someday. This was the time when they were busy putting Netscape out of business and making sure that everyone used Internet Explorer to browse the web. The two efforts went hand in hand, and they did get the company in a little hot water, however briefly, with the Justice Department. Knowledgeable pundits at the time raised the alarm that it looked like Microsoft was trying to control the Internet and e-Commerce. That didn't happen, but Microsoft now owns enough of the web that if you want to avoid paying up to Redmond, you need to be careful where you shop. It's dangerous, too, because as I noted earlier, tech writers no longer seem to worry about it. [As much as 5 years ago](#), this growing ubiquity of Microsoft shopping sites was being raised by numerous voices as a potential privacy concern. Since then, all of the security problems with IE and Windows generally have made Microsoft's strategy less successful than they would have liked. But still, here is a partial list of websites mostly or wholly owned by Microsoft, which may or may not share information with any or all of Microsoft's other subsidiaries. If you know of others, please feel free to add them to the list in a comment at the end of the article:
 - Expedia
 - MSN Autos (formerly Carpoint)
 - Microsoft Small Business Center (evolved from bCentral)
 - Link Exchange (now a part of Small Business Center, too)
 - MSN Groups (evolved from bCentral and Listbot)
- Microsoft is focusing its efforts on making MSN and Windows itself the portal to these different online businesses, and with the Justice Department now looking the other way, there's really nobody to stop them from slowly corralling everyone in that direction. Also key to Microsoft's strategy is to get everyone who uses their service to register for a "Passport" which, innocently enough, will let its customers carry one ID from business to business without

having to register everywhere individually. Sounds great on paper, but think for a minute about what power this gives Microsoft! You do realize how valuable customer lists are to retail businesses, right? Well, MSN is not like a big mall where you go to shop for different things from different vendors. Ultimately, it's more like a huge, virtual Walmart... a department store that will take care of all of your needs. Now, you're still wondering why this might be bad for you, aren't you? OK, then, sit back and reflect on the fact that the company that owns this mega-Walmart also owns your computer operating system, and in fact has made Windows XP so transparent that they could peruse all of your accounts in Microsoft Money if they wanted to. Take a look through this list at the other ways Microsoft has learned to "interface" with you, and if you don't see any cause for concern, you also probably believe the "historians" who claim that the Holocaust was a fraud and that Nixon was framed. In other words, you're someone who just wants to believe the best about everyone and is unwilling or unable to face reality. God bless you. *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* Use Travelocity or Yahoo or any other site for booking plane and hotel tickets. You don't need Expedia. Be careful where you shop, and avoid any place that asks you to create a [Passport](#) account.

- **Communications.** If Rupert Murdoch can own his own TV network and TV news show, Bill Gates wants one too. This way, Microsoft can be sure its own messages come across amid the din of dissenting voices (like mine). Again, I think it's amusing that we don't have Microsoft NBC... that would be just a little too blatant, wouldn't it? And so we have [MSNBC](#) instead. What's another couple of capital letters among friends? For younger and hipper folks, Microsoft also has [Slate magazine](#). How do I know that Microsoft owns Slate? The footer says it's owned by Washingtonpost.Newsweek Interactive Co. LLC. From looking at the credits/staff pages, you'd never know. But unless Slate's been sold since June 2004, a [Slate article from then](#) said so. Does anyone else find it a little scary to think that Microsoft also may own the Washington Post and Newsweek? It's beyond the scope of this article to fully untangle all of Microsoft's ownership tentacles... I think you'll see that the fairly obvious ones already add up to a pretty big empire. *Lesson for Microsoft*

boycotters: Fortunately, there are plenty of news sources around. Don't use one that has a biased view of the personal computer market, or you'll never hear about how much simpler your life could be without Windows.

- **Gaming.** Once upon a time, Sony and Nintendo had created a kingdom of great gaming machines, divided the kingdom among themselves, and everyone was happy. Well, everyone but Sega, maybe. Then Microsoft decided that since these were "computer" games, it needed to own some of the kingdom, too. Hopefully, *all* of the kingdom, truth be told. So it entered the market with the very cool-sounding "X-Box" system, which as it turns out is great for running Linux. And now Microsoft is abandoning Intel and going with IBM for the X-Box's chips, just as Apple is going the other way with its computers. What does it all mean? Who knows, except it's another great way for Microsoft to tie you in to MSN, IE, Windows, etc., by making the X-Box most useful when you've got one of those things, too. *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* I have to admit I let my son buy a used X-Box with his own money last year. It galls me having that Microsoft thing in the family room, but honestly he hardly ever uses it, and now he's talking about trading it in for one of the new Playstations or whatever they are. As a parent, I'd be embarrassed to tell you how many hours this 16-year-old spends gaming, chatting, and listening to music on his G5. I use [Macminder](#) to keep his G5 gaming under some reasonable control, but his use of the X-Box has never been an issue. And yet... I thought Macs weren't supposed to be good for computer gaming? Gee, I hate to think how much time he'd spend playing computer games if he had a machine that was any better!
- **Digital Media.** Same story, basically. Microsoft got tired of hosting video formats they didn't control on their operating system--primarily Real Technologies Real Media, Apple's QuickTime, and industry-standard MPEG. Apple was successful in moving the industry toward MPEG as the open standard for digital video, and Real had agreed to support it as well. Then in 2002, Microsoft came out with a new version of Windows Media that was totally proprietary, while being close enough to usable that it threatened to

draw users and developers away from Real and QuickTime. As Frank Casanova, Apple's QuickTime marketing director, [noted at the time](#),

"They believe they are so big that they can take away what consumers want. They believe their size and momentum can drive an entire industry in a proprietary direction with technologies built by Microsoft. That direction is very much opposite to where most of the industry is going."

And that's just digital video, which hasn't really taken off in the home-computer marketplace yet. Everyone knows the story behind digital audio, which is an ongoing saga of Apple versus Microsoft. Will the David with his handy iPod and industry standard AAC format win? Or will the goliath Microsoft force yet another proprietary "standard" down David's throat, ensuring an ongoing revenue stream for its shareholders? *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* Even if you are stuck with a Windows computer, use QuickTime for video and iTunes for audio. I don't say that only to keep you from getting sucked into Microsoft's proprietary formats, but also because they are honestly the very best applications in their class. If you haven't seen what [QuickTime 7](#) can do with high definition video over the Internet, you're missing out on something really revolutionary. And, [as I've pointed out before](#), the real power behind the iPod is the powerful [iTunes application](#) for managing your digital music collection. Best of all, both are free, and both rely on open, industry-standard formats. And for heaven's sake, stay way from online music services like Rhapsody or Napster that only support Microsoft's proprietary audio format and thus completely shut out non-Windows platforms. If you really want to have a new monthly bill for something and covet a music subscription service, please be patient. I'm sure Apple will come out with one soon. In the meantime, remember that you can listen for free to 30-second snippets of any of the 1.5 million songs in the iTunes music store. ([Check out this article to read my full rant on this subject.](#))

- **Collaboration Technologies.** Peer-to-peer clients have really mushroomed in the last 5-6 years as an alternative to the web browser for publishing information, downloading content, and communicating. These things are based on the noble notion that you shouldn't have to run everything through some big central server in order to get anything done. Very democratic... very progressive... and potentially very liberating. Just look at instant messaging, which was the first big "win" for peer-to-peer. It's

hugely successful, and still dominated (to Redmond's chagrin) by AOL's software. AOL doesn't make money from the software, but you can bet they do from advertising and tie-ins. Next up was file-sharing, with Napster showing the world what could be done, as well as how NOT to do it if you wanted to avoid copyright lawsuits. The post-Napster peer-to-peer clients avoid Napster's fate by taking a central server (which Napster used for user logins, basically) out of the picture, and letting the software find other users and their files all by themselves. Gnutella, Limewire, Acquisition, and some Windows-only thing called Kazaa have been hugely successful in recent years as a way of distributing digital media, primarily music. On another level--and in a market segment that still hasn't really taken off--is a software package called Groove. When I first read about Groove in the late 1990's, I thought it sounded so cool. Groove was to be a product that would let people collaborate on documents, share screens, chat, and all the rest of it without requiring a central server to host it all. It was being developed by Ray Ozzie, whose previous claim to fame was Lotus Notes, and therefore a guy who clearly knew something about collaboration tools. One big difference between Groove and the other peer-to-peer platforms is that it was specifically designed as a business application, rather than as a consumer app. Only one problem: Groove was for Microsoft Windows only. After its release in late 2000, many folks in the industry kept hoping they would expand the platform to run on non-Windows desktops, but it never happened. Finally, some guys in England figured out a way to let Mac users Groove with their Windows peers (for a fee). And then the hammer struck. Even though Microsoft had been trying to build useful collaboration tools into Microsoft Office, it apparently decided Groove was ripe for the pickings and went and bought the whole company. First they merely invested in Groove (2001), and then earlier this year they absorbed the company outright. Gone. Like that. Like Vermeer (Front Page), Visio, Hotmail, WebTV, LinkExchange, Connectix (Virtual PC), and many others. So now it's Microsoft Groove. Do you think they'll ever open up the game to other players now? Fat chance. Remember, the whole object of Redmond's strategy is to protect and strengthen their Windows/Office monopoly. Not that there aren't [other peer-to-peer](#)

[collaboration tools](#) on the market, and some that are cross platform as well as ones that are Mac-only. But Groove has a huge head start in a fledgling market, and stands a good chance of becoming the Microsoft Word of the next generation office place. It's worth writing a few more words on this point. Do you know how, in the game of Monopoly, the time finally comes when one of the players has so much money there's just no stopping him (or her)? It's because, that's the endgame of monopolistic behavior. Microsoft has such a huge, undeserved revenue stream from its original DOS and Windows monopoly, that the point is coming when they can literally buy whatever they want, and stop whomever they want. If they choose to let you continue playing in the game, they can do that too. But get too annoying, and watch out! The only good thing that seems to have come from the antitrust trial in the U.S. is that it's made Microsoft more circumspect about buying and investing in other companies. Unfortunately, a glance at [Microsoft's investments and acquisitions list](#) suggests it may have been too late, since they'd already gone on an unbelievable spending spree during 1995-2001, probably in anticipation of such an outcome. *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* As nice as it may seem, avoid Groove. Try one of the many [other peer-to-peer collaboration tools](#) out there, or use a technology like Wiki instead. For OS X specifically, Apple's "[Bonjour](#)" (used to be called "Rendezvous" until a lawsuit intervened) zero-configuration networking is ideal for collaborative work, and there are a number of [new, innovative Mac OS X products](#) coming out to support it. Another recent addition to the field is [Near-Time Flow](#), which appears to be defining a wholly new class of desktop application.

- **Financial software.** Oh, how badly Microsoft wanted to buy Intuit back in 1995. That would have been so much easier than having to develop their own product, Money, into something truly competitive. Fortunately, the Justice Department intervened, and that wasn't allowed to happen. (A lot of idiots at the time thought Justice was wrong on that, by the way... Take a look at [this incredibly wrong-headed analysis](#) as an example.) Still, Microsoft has proceeded to try to take over the financial software market, first by

sheer dominance of the Windows platform, and second by purchasing Great Plains in 2001, a company that makes accounting software to compete with Intuit's QuickBooks. Is Intuit doomed, like so many others who refused to play nice with Bill? Certainly, they haven't helped themselves win friends among Mac users by continually releasing sloppy software that doesn't match the functionality of its Windows versions. But at least they do make a Mac version, and are in the best position to prevent Microsoft from taking over the financial software business. Frankly, I can't understand why any intelligent person would use Microsoft Money. Come on... only a total idiot would take such a risk. You'd have to truly believe Microsoft is this nice, big, warm-and-fuzzy corporation that loves you as much as their commercials say they do. Good old nerdy-looking Bill Gates would never take advantage of having a direct line into your home computer running Windows, which his company designed, which has all of your personal financial information stored in a special file format, which they also designed. Would he? *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* Whatever you do, don't use Microsoft Money. I know modern life would be impossible without personal finance software, but just hold your nose and use Quicken instead. *Warning to Intuit:* I keep watching the market for a Mac product that's better than Quicken. But since every Mac I've ever bought, starting in 1996, came with a current release of Quicken for free, I can't complain too much. :-)) Still, Intuit needs to move a little faster if they want to stay ahead of Microsoft Money in this market. And don't take your Mac customers for granted.

- **Gaming software.** The gaming market is divided into game console play (where you use your TV, typically), and computer gaming. It's pretty easy to identify games designed by Microsoft for the X-Box, but not quite so easy to know when the game you want to buy was made by Microsoft or not. Did you know that Microsoft makes all of the following computer games? Of course, none of them is available for the Mac:
 - The Lost Chapters
 - Zoo Tycoon
 - Rise of Nations

- Age of Mythology
- Flight Simulator
- Freelancer
- Impossible Creatures
- RalliSport Challenge
- MechWarrior
- Combat Flight Simulator
- Dungeon Siege
- Bicycle Board, Card, and Casino Games
- Racing Madness
- Age of Empires
- MechCommander
- Train Simulator

You see, Bill wants to be with you always. At work, at home, in the car, while shopping, at the theater... Well, I think Microsoft is out of DreamWorks finally, so it's safe to watch Steven Spielberg again. :) *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* Avoid the above titles.

- **Other Desktop Software.** Just in case you didn't know, here's a list of some other software titles Microsoft owns:
 - Encarta
 - Picture It!
 - Digital Image Pro
 - Front Page
 - Streets and Trips
 - Microsoft Project
 - Microsoft Publisher

Lesson for Microsoft boycotters: Just avoid these, too.

- **Server Software.** You'd think that anyone in web publishing and web

application development would know by now to avoid Windows as a server platform, but there are so many essentially lazy guys with Microsoft Developer Certification out there that unless their clients are actually savvy about it, they will fill the world up with Microsoft server solutions. Unless you've been sleeping for the last 4 years and are just now waking up, the reason to avoid Windows as a server platform is that it's incredibly prone to attack by both viruses and hackers. And although Windows has grown more reliable, it's still not as bulletproof as Unix platforms, like Mac OS X or Linux.

So what do these Microsoft Certified Nuts build with the tools they get from the Microsoft developer network? They'll build using:

- o .NET architecture
- o Windows Server 2003 (web server)
- o SQL Server (database)
- o Active Server Pages (ASP)
- o Visual Studio

They will also speak mystically of the virtues of Microsoft server products with names like:

- o Live Communication Server
- o Project Server
- o SharePoint Portal Server
- o Live Meeting
- o Office Online
- o Content Management Server
- o Active Directory

Notice how some of these products have such generic names that customers will get the impression that there are no other products in the category. I mean, why buy "Vignette" or "InterWoven" when you can just buy "Content Management Server"? Besides, whoever heard of Vignette or Interwoven? Another vital product in this category is email. Microsoft sells something called "Exchange," which you connect to with software called "Outlook." A great many people now use this software in corporate America, but there are still some who use competing products

from Lotus (Notes) and Novell (Groupwise). At the very least, even if your company uses Exchange for its mail server, make sure they support IMAP and/or POP accounts, so you can connect using email clients other than Outlook. There really are much better and easier-to-use email clients than Outlook these days. The good news is that the Windows security nightmare of the last few years has dramatically slowed the penetration of Windows into the data center, so Microsoft isn't close to achieving the monopoly there that they have on the desktop. But that doesn't mean they won't stop trying. *Lesson for Microsoft boycotters:* If you manage an IT staff, steer them away from Windows-specific technologies as far as possible. Where I work, we finally killed off the last Windows NT box this year and completed migration of all of our Cold Fusion applications to Unix. Now we don't have to worry so much about the penetration testing the auditors do every year. If you're hiring a company to build you a web application, don't let them get away with selling you a Windows-server solution. You'll be far better served going with one of the many fine java application servers, or with the open-source LAMP (Linux/Apache/MySQL/PHP) platform. Also remember that the AMP part of LAMP runs great on any platform, including Mac OS X. That's the architecture I'm personally most familiar with as a programmer.

So, this is a pretty extensive collection of tentacles, don't you agree? And I haven't even included the software that makes up the company's bread-and-butter product: Microsoft Office. It's hard to say no to Microsoft Word, Excel, and Powerpoint, especially if your employer makes you use them. But there are a large number of Office-compatible products out there nowadays. And I'll have more to say about these packages in an upcoming article. If I've left something out that you know of, by all means add a note as a comment to this article. I'm sure there are many tentacles I don't even know exist.

The bottom line is: Microsoft is everywhere in our lives in a way that no other company in history has ever been. And no other company in history has been so privy to all of our personal information--such as the amazing amount of stuff we now store on our personal computers in the form of files, emails, web browsing history, web cookies, software, photos, home movies, financial data, etc--while also

being our retailer, our travel agent, our car salesman, our consierge, our therapist, etc. It's just silly to let this happen to you.

There are alternatives for most of these product lines at the moment, but that doesn't mean there always will be. So for now, when you have a good alternative to a Microsoft product, take it. Don't let the winner of this particular monopoly game put all the rest of the players in the poor house. In fact, there's a reason why in the real world monopolists need to be controlled by the government: The nature of capitalism is such that all games would end like Monopoly if monopolists were allowed to continue growing unchecked. Gaining a monopoly in the first place is also a hard thing to do in a healthy capitalist economy, because competition ensures that no one company can get that big. Microsoft's monopoly of the computer desktop is a historical fluke, but one that Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer have played hard (and, I would argue, unethically) to win and to maintain.

It may strike you as just bad science fiction to imagine it could ever happen, but if our government fails to reign in a company like Microsoft, that company could very well end up owning all the others. As in the game of Monopoly, there would be only one winner. Which means that everyone else would be losers.

The Dangerous Power Of Wall Street Analysts

<http://www.macradio.com/thursday/nightowl/> and <http://www.macnightowl.com/>

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Imagine if you will that you were a well-known maker of personal computers and consumer electronics gear. You have a perennial problem of building enough product to meet the demand, and customers sometimes have to wait weeks or months to get what they want. Unless they decide to go elsewhere, of course, which isn't something you'd want.

Well, after working real hard, you finally manage to get production in sync with demand, so your loyal user base can get almost immediate delivery on anything they want from your product repertoire. That's something to be envied, right, an achievement that will, if anything, maximize your potential income.

Of course, if you're a Wall Street analyst, this turn of events is something that must be bad. Maybe the demand for your wares is no longer as high as it used to be, and you're poised for a sales slump. The competitors biting at your heels are making progress, and you'll no longer be basking in the sun of huge sales growth and high profits. Maybe your stockholders should sell their shares and look elsewhere for reliable sources of investment income.

Understand that the demand hasn't changed one bit. If anything your sales are actually increasing, but you are able to ship enough product to keep up with the demand. However, Wall Street's wrong-headed conclusions cause your stock to tank big time. You see, they haven't a clue what your sales really are, although a few simple surveys might give them a clue. Of course, since you sell a lot of your products direct, through your own sales outlets and online, those analysts really won't know what's truly happening until you deliver your quarterly financial report.

But that won't stop them from making guesses. Yes, obviously this is Apple's present situation. If you believe some of those published reports, the iPod is losing its luster, even though there isn't any real evidence of that. Nor is there any evidence that those subscription music services are yet making much, if any, impact on the dominance of the iTunes Music Store. As to personal computers, it appears that Apple's sales growth exceeded that of the PC industry big time, and that market share actually increased in May.

Of course, that's poised to change when this month's figures are tallied, right? Aren't most Mac users sitting on the sidelines waiting for those new models with Intel processors, as if that's the holy grail of PC performance? I guess we'll know the truth in a few weeks, so it's best to simply assume the worst.

Now it is true that I've read surveys that some Mac users actually do intend to wait a year or two to buy new computers, because they must have Intel Inside, as if that is something they've long craved for. I suppose those of you who feel that way believe that a Mac with a PowerPC processor is a lame duck, and that it will magically stop working when the transition to Intel is complete, or software publishers will quickly abandon the old architecture.

Talk about self-fulfilling prophecies. Be careful what you wish for, and all that stuff.

Now let me assure all of you that there is no time bomb embedded in your Mac. On the other hand, you can bet that the computer you buy today, regardless of the processor it contains, will be supplanted by a better, faster model in the not-too-distant future. In fact, that applies to a host of product categories. While you may not see much difference in toaster ovens or microwaves year after year, you can bet that the high definition TV you bring home now will be supplanted by something with a bigger, brighter, sharper picture next year or the year after. Why buy a TV at all, since the manufacturers are already testing something better in their development labs?

A new car? Don't be ridiculous. The 2006 models are just weeks away. In fact, some cars and trucks with 2006 model year designations are out now, so you can get one leg up on your neighbor. After all, you wouldn't want to buy that old fashioned 2005 motor vehicle, because the gas tank will lock up real tight once its replacement is in the showrooms. Got a hybrid in your sights? Well, why bother. Isn't the auto industry switching to hydrogen powered vehicles in another decade or so? Sure you can afford to wait. Just keep the old jalopy running a little longer. Maybe it needs a new transmission or an engine rebuild, maybe the repairs will cost more than the monthly payments on a new or "certified preowned" vehicle, but you have to keep it running no matter what. If you replace it now, you'll just be buying something that will eventually be obsolete.

Obsolete? Yes, you can't have any of that. Oh, and by the way, run, don't walk from any dealership that can promise you immediate delivery of the exact vehicle you want, the one that has the color and options you lust after. It's not supposed to be available now. You're supposed to plunk down a deposit and wait six months for the manufacturer to get around to building what you want. Isn't that the way it's supposed to be?

Now I could go on, and make this scenario more and more ridiculous by the moment, but I think you get the picture. Oh, and by the way, Wall Street will be delivering more and more estimates of Apple's financials for the current quarter real soon now. And, as usual, they'll be wrong. But I have a solution. I understand a local novelty store has a big sale on crystal balls and the analysts ought get them real quick before they're sold out and replaced by next year's model.

Envision Schools By Elizabeth Dyer

Permission to reprint by way of Janet Mobley, Editor: North Coast Mac Users Group, CA
<http://www.ncmug.org>

Starting in 2003, Envision Schools opened Marin School of Arts and Technology (MSAT) in the Novato Unified School District, a charter school; they wanted to be surrounded by technology, reflecting the new computer age. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, they received over \$1 million to start their first school, purchasing a class size of eMacs, Powerbooks, Digital Cameras and Video cameras.

After their first year of MSAT, Envision went to San Francisco to open their second school in 2004, City Arts & Technology (CAT).

At that time I was in 8th grade, applying for high schools throughout San Francisco, both private and public. A classmate applied and was accepted to CAT, and was telling me about it and that it will be highly technological and was funded by Bill Gates. He also had mentioned that they will be using Macs instead of PCs, which excited me because I was not a PC user; we used Macs at my school, St. Stephen's, and I have an iMac at home.

Once I heard about it, I told my mom about it and she got an application and sent it in for me. A few weeks later I received news that I was wait-listed for CAT, yet I was high on the waiting list at number thirteen.

I was not expecting to be accepted by CAT, so I was making plans to go to Mercy High School, which I was not too pleased about since I would have to be wearing uniforms and it was an all girls Catholic school.

Over the summer my mom would occasionally check in with CAT to see if I had moved up or down on the waiting list, and toward the end of the summer, we received a note that I had dropped to number sixteen on the wait list and my hopes of attending that school were diminished.

The beginning of the school year came and Catholic schools start one week before public or charter schools did, so I began attending Mercy. Mercy had slowly grown on me after a week but I still was not enthusiastic about the school, and after a week a CAT official called my home.

He said I was accepted after only one day of being opened, so the next day I went to see if I wanted to go to the school. We pulled up in the front of the school building, which was next door to a church, and had been a bankrupt Catholic Elementary school. I walked in and noticed how small it was in comparison to all the other high schools I had seen, but it was only in its first year and had only one class, the freshman class, consisting of 110 students.

I went to the first class of my day, the Language Arts class, and going to the classroom, I remember noticing the Digital Media class and how awesome it looked. I took special note of the brand new computers as I walked by.

After my first day there I agreed to attend CAT, making new friends and beginning to enjoy my classes and teachers.

Now, almost one school year has passed and it is the beginning of the fourth quarter at City Arts & Technology High School. Over the course of this eventful year, we have had press conferences with Cantonese News, appeared on KRON 4 news, had appeared in articles in The Examiner and The San Francisco Chronicle, had Mayor Gavin Newsom visit the school, and had been one of the few schools in the state to receive a \$14 million grant from the government to go towards anything at our school. The school plans to use the grant toward building a new school building for CAT. All this press has been brought to us for one main thing, the technology. CAT is the most highly technological school in San Francisco.

During the course of this year in our Digital Media class we have done work with Adobe Photoshop 2.0. It was used in the beginning of the year for introduction to the Adobe Suite, which we used to make Andy Warhol imitations, and fake images. We used Adobe Illustrator CS in the middle of the year as well as Adobe Photoshop CS, an advanced form of what we were doing in Adobe Photoshop 2.0. We used Photoshop CS to make flyers for school activities, covers for essays in other classes, and to create a mathematical game board as a project for math class. Our yearbook committee is using InDesign CS. During our third quarter we also developed personal Websites using Adobe GoLive CS, which we had just finished. We are now learning about our video cameras and are going to make a movie for our fourth quarter project.

CAT is going into its second year for the 2005-06 year and MSAT is going into its third year. Both will eventually become full four-year high schools, and I will be proud to be in CAT's first graduating class.

Envision schools are opening a new school in San Francisco next year, called Metropolitan Arts & Technology High School (Metro), and may open another in Oakland for the 2006 school year.

Links

City Arts & Technology: <http://cats1.es-cat.org/>

Envision Schools: <http://www.envisionschools.org/index.php>

[**Editor:** Thanks to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for high-teching these schools with Macs!]

Books

802.11 Wireless Networks: The Definitive Guide , 2nd Edition Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Matthew S. Gast

<http://www.trapezenetworks.com/homepage.html>

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/692>

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com>

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/802dot112/index.html>

Released: April 2005

\$45 USD, \$63 CND, £32 GBP, €41 Euro

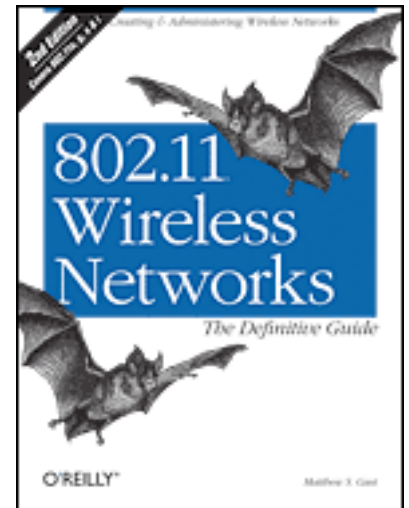
Pages: 656

ISBN: 0596100523

Requirements: A desire to “go mobile”.

Strengths: Demystifies the acronyms.

Weaknesses: None found.



802.11 Wireless Networks: The Definitive Guide 2nd Edition by Matthew S Gast is a 2nd edition that adds 802.11a, g, n and i to the mix of Wireless. I used to separate the 802.11 series of IEEE Specifications from the others by noting that the 11s after the 802 looked like antennas.

While Mathew S. Gast currently works at Trapeze Networks, he also spent years digging ever deeper into the esoterica of Wireless networking across all platforms and has become a de facto expert on the topic.

The 2nd Edition of the book was written 3 years after the first one came out and covers areas previously unknown or even perhaps unimagined in the area of wireless networking. I especially thought that the information regarding uppercase vs. lowercase IEEE designations was handy. (Uppercase specifications like 802.1X are standalones, while 802.11g is a subset of the mother specification.)

Security issues were lacking in the previous edition and so there book was beefed up considerably with information such as Service Set Identity (SSID) issues that result when a manufacturer thinks it is cute to hide it rather than using 802.1X as a security solution. Mathew is somehow able to separate FCC politics and manufacturer market-cornering efforts from the technical aspects of wireless technologies. Yet at the same time he does a magnificent

job presenting material about how 802.11 is used on various platforms. For example, Chapter 18 covers 802.11 on the Macintosh, while Chapter 19 covers it on Linux.

See how to separate spaghetti specs from the alphabet soup of wireless technology acronyms and read about them in an excellent book that could be used as college course material, yet is easy enough to read that you don't need a Doctorate in Computer Science to figure it out.

There are 26 chapters discussing MAC fundamentals (not Macintosh fundamentals, but rather Medium Access Controls), Framing, Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEOP), Authentication with 802.1X, Secure networks with Temporal Key Integration Protocol(TKIP) and Counter Mode (CCMP) and Robust Security Network (RSN) Operations, Management, Contention-Free Services, Physical Layer overview, Frequency-Hopping(FH) and Gaussian Frequency Shift Keying (GFSK), Direct Sequencing and Complementary Code Keying, Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing (OFDM), Extended-Rate PHY (ERP), looking at 802.11n, hardware considerations with Windows, Macintosh and Linux, Access Points, Logical and Security architectures, Site Planning and Management, Network Analysis, Performance Tuning and finally, Conclusions and Predictions.

If you want to drink deeply of the Wonderful World of Wireless Kool-aid, this book is not just a great book to start, but to end with. After all, it really is a "Definitive Guide", working with real world scenarios.

Assembling Panoramic Photos: A Designer's Notebook Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Bertrand Bodin, Arnaud Frich, Albert Lemoine, Christophe Noel, Sacha Popovic, Peet Simard, Laurent Thion and Gilles Vidal

Translated from French by William Rodarmor
O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com>

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/assemblingadn>

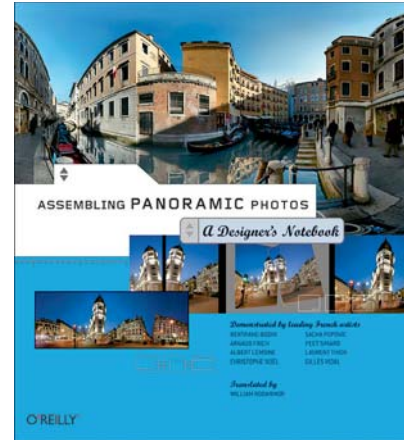
Released: June 2005

\$20 USD, \$28 CND, £13 GBP, €17 Euro

Pages: 96

ISBN: 0596009755

Requirements: Digital Cameras.



Strengths: Shows some of the best techniques for capturing panoramic digital imaging. More! More!

Weaknesses: None found.



Are they authors, artists or professional photographers? *Assembling Panoramic Photos: A Designer's Notebook* leans heavily to the artistic notion. Those listed above as “authors” have been kind enough to provide their notes, equipment lists, and techniques in a way-to-thin super-glossy way-cool “Notebook”.

I don't know how much was lost in translation, but William Rodarmor did a great job grabbing the essence and pulling in the panoramic techniques from 8 great European photographers. Some examples are 360-degree images. All provide which computer platform, software and cameras they used to show these award-winning photographs.

This is a How-To book. Learn from the masters as they coax the best out of Photoshop, QuickTime VR, PanaVue, ImageAssembler 3ds max 5, iView Media Pro, Debarrelizer, Panotools, BEdit and CubicConverter. There are 8 projects, and afterwards there are short bios including weblinks for each of the photo-artists. The front and back inside covers not only show the finished photos, but also shows which page each of them begin their setups.

Watch how each photo-artist steps through stages as we are shown how they produce marvelous eye-candy.

Encore! Encore!

Database in Depth: Relational Theory for Practitioners Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: C.J. Date

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2136>

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com>

Booksite:

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/pcannoy2/index.html>

Released: May 2005

\$30 USD, \$42 CND, £21 GBP, €26 Euro

Pages: 240

ISBN: 0596100124

Requirements: You have to be neck-deep in database programming to enjoy/understand this book.



Strengths: Challenges our “knowledge of what is”, is.

Weaknesses: I know more now than I did before, but realize there is so much more I don’t know.



Database in Depth: Relational Theory for Practitioners by C.J. Date is a book covering his understanding of Database Theory put into practice. Up front, he pretty much says that SQL is substandard and also has no good use for Nulls and he goes deeply into the whys and wherefores. The book almost seems to be built bass-akwards with the last chapter (80) and summary, “What is a Relational Model? With two appendices on, “A Little Bit of Logic” and “Suggestions For Further Reading”. If you are not a professional databaser, don’t get this book. On the other hand, If you are a database coder, this book will keep you busy rethinking your priorities as C.J. Date challenges our knowledge of “how things are” with his “how thing should be”.

Think of everything as a Type, and understand Tuples, Relations, Relational Variables, Relational Algebra Integrity Constraints and Database Design Theory. The meat is in Chapter 7 on Database Design theory as it discusses functional Dependencies, normalization and orthogonality.

What I learned is that SQL is pretty much the Emperors’ New Clothes.

Each chapter is textbook-like including exercises at the end, so this looks and acts like a University-level textbook. And I bet that is intentional. I struggled getting through this book. It is deep. And DBAs (Database Administrators) probably eat drink and sleep this stuff, but I don't.

That said, C.J. Date makes the concepts and principles of database design and coding very understandable, but he speaks to those who are already "in the know".

Essential Mac OS X Panther Server Administration: Integrating Mac OS X Server into Heterogeneous Networks Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Michael Bartosh

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1268>

<http://www.4am-media.com/>

Ryan Faas

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2165>

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com>

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/macxserver>

Released: May 2005

\$50 USD, \$70 CND, £35.50 GBP, €43 Euro

Pages: 848

ISBN: 0596006357

Requirements: Maybe a cross-platform network. And being a SysAdmin helps. Not for beginners.

Strengths: Comes from the UNIX-perspective.

Weaknesses: Does have various typos throughout the book.



Essential Mac OS X Panther Server Administration: Integrating Mac OS X Server into Heterogeneous Networks by Michael Bartosh and Ryan Faas is a comprehensive book on all things server-related regarding Mac OS X coming from the inherent strength of Unix.

The book is divided up into 7 parts; Server Installation and Management, Directory, IP, File, Security and Internet Services and Client Management and stretch across 29 chapters. And there is an Appendix on Directory Services.

If you are into managing servers, in a heterogeneous environment (mixed platforms), than this book will take the mystery out of integrating Mac Servers into the “rest of the world”. So what is the downside? This is Panther-based and not Tiger-based, however, since it is all UNIX, that should not stop you from getting this book.

We provided the link under Michael Bartosh’s name for the website that is dedicated to this book for more information and updates. I’m guessing strongly that there will be an update covering Tiger because Tiger Server has a few enhancements:

<http://developer.apple.com/server/tigerserver.html>

So I consider this Panther Server Administration as a baseline book for anyone remotely interested in enterprise-level server management – and the WinTel Sysadmin excuse of, “it won’t work” will no longer be acceptable - or tolerated.

At 848 pages, this book isn’t just “Essential”, it is “Comprehensive” due to its indepth detail. Now there is no excuse either for not going to an Xserve environment.

In a word? Meticulous.

Chapter 27 gets into managing Windows clients with 17 pages of information and also discusses what parts of the Windows environment works and what doesn’t under Panther. Chapter 29 is an and-on chapter that rounds out the book by discussing Apple remote Desktop, which is not part of Mac OS X Server, but obviously is a part of any Enterprise-level Apple Sysadmin’s job.

Find out more from Mary Norbury-Glaser’s excellent detailed summary: <http://slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=05/06/15/2047253> and additional comments to her review are relatively good and intelligently written. Now that the foundation is in place, we need to get the roof on with Tiger before we get to the MacTel environment.

Now if Apple would only get MS Exchange to work under Mac OS X Server...

Images of CAD: The Art of Computer-Aided Design Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Editors: Sue Collins, Alexandra Duffy, Linda Carmody and Michelle Dougal

Nemetschek North America
7150 Riverwood Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
410-290-5114

Fax: 410-290-8050

sales@nemetschek.net

<http://www.nemetschek.net>

Booksite:

https://secure.nemetschek.net/vw11/images_of_cad.php

Released: March 2005

\$50 USD; to order, call 877-202-8199

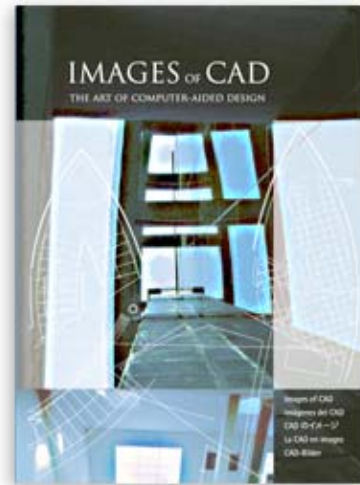
Pages: 200

ISBN: 097029820X

Requirements: Vectorworks CAD software to appreciate the book.

Strengths: Shows off the best CAD work as Art.

Weaknesses: None found.



Images of CAD: The Art of Computer-Aided Design is a collaboration of around 96 CAD operator renderings and samples from 23 different countries from around the world.

Commentary on the drawings is written in both English and the native creator's own language (at least 11 languages). The book is also personally signed by Richard Diehl, CEO of Nemetschek North America.

Drawings are beautifully created and faithfully reproduced from 2D, wireframe, renderings and photographs intended as a large coffee-table book presenting some of the best of the best in the "Art" of Computer-aided Design using the cross-platform CAD package, Vectorworks.

CAD as presented by these folks is really an art form all unto itself and the best works rightfully should be museum pieces. As Richard Diehl wrote in his foreward, what did we build and what did we value in our generation? Now you can learn what the folks at Nemetschek think is

important in work represented in CAD and discussed in Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, Swiss and Tanzanian.

I might add that VectorWorks projects for the most part, are skillfully and efficiently done on Macs.

InfoSec Career Hacking: Sell Your Skillz, Not Your Soul: A Technical Guide to Landing (and Keeping) a Job in the Information Security Field Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Aaron W. Bayles

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2105>

Chris Hurley

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1381>

Johnny Long

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1918>

Ed Brindley

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2106>

Chris Klaus

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Fax: 781-681-3585

<http://www.syngress.com>

<http://www.syngress.com/catalog/?pid=3280>

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/1597490113/>

Released: February 2005

\$40 USD, \$56 CND £23 GBP €34 Euro

Pages: 472

ISBN: 1597490113

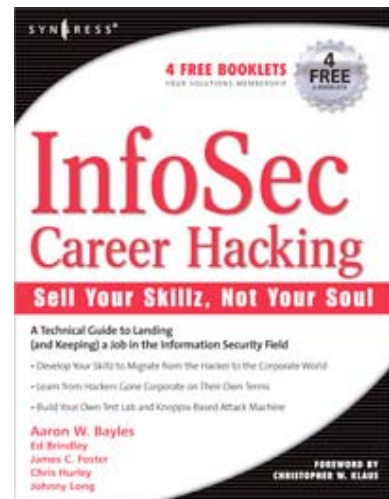
For those looking for a job in INFOSEC.

Strengths: Goes soup-to-nuts on the way from target to gaining and keeping an INFOSEC position.

Weaknesses: None found.

InfoSec Career Hacking: Sell Your Skillz, Not Your Soul: A Technical Guide to Landing (and Keeping) a Job in the Information Security Field by Aaron W. Bayles, Chris Hurley, Johnny Long, Ed Brindley and Chris Klaus (Forward), as you can tell by the title, adds a touch of humor to the sobering spy vs. spy career path process for INFOSEC.

There are hard skills (hacking code, building databases, Sysadmin work) and soft skills (documentation, planning, management and people interaction at a professional level) required for this kind of job (Mission Impossible Music may begin) and if you think you are up to it, do not



have a criminal record, have not flamed anyone online, have been actively involved in giving presentations, articles or volunteer work you may possibly be valuable enough to be considered for a job in the unforgiving job of network security at the Enterprise level or in government circles. Go in as a security engineer, migrate to becoming an analyst, then work your way up to being a security architect. Your mission, if you decide to take it, is to run the gauntlet required to nail the job.

There are 3 Parts to the book; Recon/Assessment, Technical Skills and On the Job. And this is accomplished in 12 Chapters with no Appendices. The first part discusses what INFOSEC is, what kinds of jobs are available, what kinds of skill sets are required, finding where the jobs are, what kinds of certifications and training may be needed, Resumé-writing, interviewing and analyzing offers. Part 2 presents the 14 or so laws that exist regarding network security, establishing an attack lab and targeting systems, disclosing vulnerabilities and classes of attacks. Part 3 covers hacking (should be cracking) systems, networks and project management, working within the system to do remediation, putting out fires without getting burned with Incident Responses (IR) and going for the money, where consultants can extort exorbitant hourly fees for hundreds of dollars per hour doing audits and hardening systems.

Each chapter ends with the usual Syngress format of Checklists, Summaries, Solutions Fast track, Links to Sites and Frequently Asked Questions. I love the format. I love the book. I even love the occasional humor that shows these guys are comfortable in their environment.

INFOSEC is the new legitimate area where good intelligent folks need to be to protect systems from the bad-nasties. This book shows a clear path on how to get there and stay there.

Mac OS X Tiger for Unix Geeks: Demystifying the Geekier Side of Mac OS X Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Brian Jepson

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/125>

<http://www.jepstone.net/index.cgi>

Ernest E. Rothman

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/953>

<http://homepage.mac.com/samchops/>

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com>

Booksite:

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

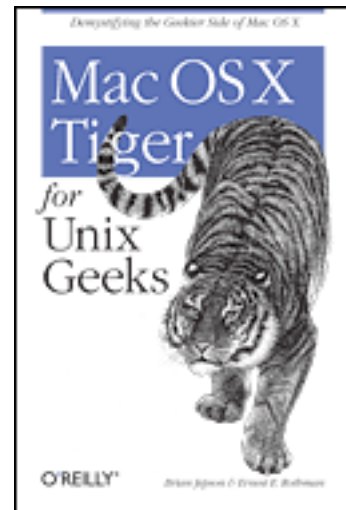
Released: June 2005

\$35 USD, \$49 CND, £25 GBP, €30 Euro

Pages: 416

ISBN: 0596009127

Requirements: Unix-knowledge from other platforms.



Strengths: Approaches Mac OS X Tiger from the Command-line perspective.

Weaknesses: None found.

Mac OS X Tiger for Unix Geeks: Demystifying the Geekier Side of Mac OS X by Brian Jepson and Ernest E. Rothman is a command-line approach for those who grew up in a UNIX environment and are moving to Mac OS X Tiger.

Why was the book written? Because Apple treats UNIX uniquely and UNIX-based types (real Geeks) need a roadmap that can take them through unfamiliar territory.

I love the analogy created by O'Reilly; "For a UNIX developer, approaching Tiger from the Mac side is a bit like learning Russian by reading the Russian side of a Russian-English dictionary". How apt!

If you don't know Grep, don't go here. If you know Linux, or were nursed on other Unices, than you want this book.

There are 5 parts to the book; Getting Around, Building Applications, Working With Packages, Serving and System Management and Appendixes. The Appendixes cover the Mac OS X GUI

Primer and Unix Development Tools. And these are spread across 19 Chapters plus the two Appendixes.

Why get this book if you are already using Mac OS X Tiger with all that GUI-goodness? Because you can learn how to use Spotlight from the command line, inspect file attributes, learn about network file transfer apps like Netatalk, Unison, Samba and Howl, discover the BootX loader (creates the Apple startup logo), understand how Mac OS X uses Directory Services and works with NetInfo, maybe even learn a thing or two about CUPS (printing) and Gimp-Print, X Windows and X11 or Virtual Network Computing (VNC), do 3D modeling with Blender (we reviewed in *macCompanion* last year), understand Exposé a little better along with Virtual Desktops and Screens, learn something about the various Secure Shell programs and all the Text services and NeoOffice, mix and match other operating systems, (BeOS, Linux, NetBSD), run Mac OS X on a PC with PearPC (yes Mac OS X and not Mac OS 7.x), compare VPC7 to QEMU and that is just in Part 1.

Something I have hesitated to learn very well is compiling source code. Well, Section 2 takes the mystery out of it.

Part 3 gets into Fink, Darwin Ports and creating and installing packages and Part 4 shows how to use Mac OS X as a server (see the other book review *on Mac OS X Panther Server Administration*), system management tools, free databases (SQLite, MySQL, PostgreSQL) and Perl and Python.

So what are you waiting for? Become a SuperMacGeek by using this book. It really does a great job demystifying the FreeBSD/Darwin side of Mac OS X.

Mac OS X Maximum Security: A Hacker's Guide to Protecting Your Mac OS X Workstation and Server Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: John Ray

<http://www.sampublishing.com/authors/bio.asp?a=7846f3f0-daf0-4011-8636-a43c5e458a0b>

Dr William Ray

<http://www.sampublishing.com/authors/bio.asp?a=8c9e008e-6927-492e-a071-e9ab454203d4>

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

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800 East 96th St.

Indianapolis, IN 46240

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<http://www.sampublishing.com/index.asp?r1=1>

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[8&g=&catid=itbooks.opsys.macos&s=1&b=1&f=1&t=1&c=1&u=1&r=&o=1&n=1&d=1&p=1&a=0](http://safari.sampublishing.com/?x=1&mode=toc&sortKey=title&sortOrder=asc&view=&xmlid=0-672-32381-8&g=&catid=itbooks.opsys.macos&s=1&b=1&f=1&t=1&c=1&u=1&r=&o=1&n=1&d=1&p=1&a=0)

Released: May 13, 2003

\$45 USD

Pages: 768

ISBN: 0672323818

Requirements: Some UNIX knowledge.

Strengths: One of the best Security books on Mac OS X.

Weaknesses: It is 2 years old.

Mac OS X Maximum Security: A Hacker's Guide to Protecting Your Mac OS X Workstation and Server by John Ray and Dr. William C. Ray is a book that generally discusses security and adds Mac OS X after discussing issues related to other platforms, mostly from the strength of UNIX. It puts Mac OS X into security perspective and I refer to it in my *Mac OS X Tiger Safety and Security* tutorial I prepared for Winn Schwartau.

SAMS felt this book was so good that they put much of it online. John Ray and Dr. Richard C Ray also added the *Mac OS X Unleashed* website that has more information.



The book discusses attacks and how they work and how to stop them. It also presents a history of malware that occurred in Mac OS 8 and 9 and versions of UNIX and Linux. It also covers Email web and filesharing, user admin and resource management.

The book has 5 parts; Mac OS X Security Basics: Learning to Think Secure; Vulnerabilities and Exposure: How Things Don't Work, and Why; Specific Mac OS X Resources and How to Secure Them: Security Tips, Trick, and Recipes; and Prevention, Detection, and Reaction to Attacks: Health Care and Checkups for your Machine and 3 Appendices containing a Glossary, Security Resources and Secure Web Development.

Even though the book is 2 years old, the way it is written keeps much of it from becoming outdated because it discusses what is "out there" and provides cautions as to what to look for to help harden both Mac OS X workstations and Mac OS X servers.

It also goes into detail about Rendezvous (now known as Bonjour), Apple Remote Desktop, NetInfo. It also covers firewalls, alarm systems, logs and disaster planning and recovery, but doesn't have anything about AirPort security. Remember when it was written, how many pages it has and how long it takes to print books.

The first part tends to be a little long-winded, but I don't mind. I would rather learn than have information glossed over.

What is obvious from the start is that Apple put security first when they built Mac OS X. What sets this book apart is that not only does it discuss counter-measures, it also discusses how to circumvent counter-measures.

Also presented at length are all the general and specialty security and other software tools for the Mac OSX environment. Most chapters end with Other Resources full of links.

I first read this book online and just had to get a hard-copy.

PC ANNOYANCES: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things About Your Personal Computer, Windows, and more Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

O'REILLY
computer books • conferences • online publishing

Author: Steve Bass

mailto: kvetch@pcworld.com

http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1294

O'Reilly

http://www.oreilly.com

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/pcannoy2/index.html>

Released: March 2005

\$20 USD, \$28 CND, £13 GBP, €17 Euro

Pages: 256

ISBN: 0596008821

Requirements: A WinTel unit.

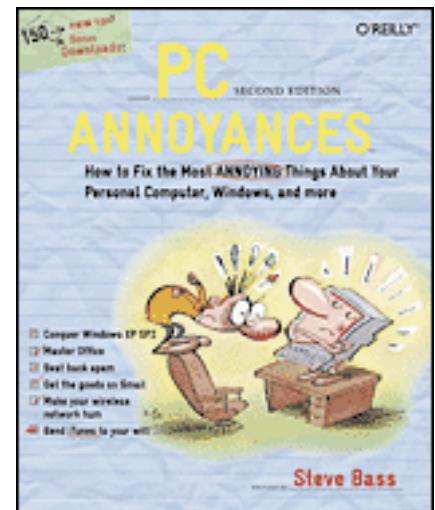
100 Downloads:

http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/pcannoy2/annoyance_download.html

Strengths: Looks at the weirdness of the MS OS and even provides workarounds.

Weaknesses:

None, unless you factor in the OS it is designed to help resolve.



PC ANNOYANCES: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things About Your Personal Computer, Windows, and more by Steve Bass is an updated humorously quirky book devoted to resolving all the niggling little things (gripes and gremlins) you are sure are your fault, when in fact, they are just part of the Operating System Everyone Loves to Hate – Windows XP. I guess our review back in February of the 2003 edition was heard and not only 50 more pages were added, but the Downloads webpage has been overhauled too!

One of the book's still annoying features is that Steve Bass loves snipURL.com, where the real URLs are short-handed, so you don't need to copy and paste those long website addresses into your browser. Then again, it may take a while to get the "real" native web address for each link. This is still a great jokebook for the Mac-faithful. Instead of feeling the WinTel pain, they can tickle their funny bone reading the antics and gymnastics needed to make a WinTel 'puter perform.

Steve Bass has been through the PC school of hard knocks and through his research, has found a therapeutic way in which to vent his frustrations by attacking pet peeves not only with fixes, but with humor.

The book is still divided into seven sections on general Email, Outlook And Outlook Express 5 and 6, AOL, Eudora, Hotmail and now Gmail; Windows and Service Pack 2; Browsing, Google and Instant Messaging; Microsoft Office - Word; Excel; PowerPoint; Outlook And Outlook Express (not duplicated in Outlook Express 5 and 6); Windows Explorer; Music, Video, and now iTunes, Windows Media Player and QuickTime, CD and now DVD and finishing up with Hardware annoyances.

Each chapter has a set of Annoyances (what the issue is) – and Fixes (what can be done about it). The book is liberally sprinkled with those special computer cartoon clipart pieces from <http://www.clipart.com>.

How high is your computer-based pain threshold? Don't fall prey to Computer Rage. We hate seeing technology being maltreated just because it sends you to the psychiatrist. There are an additional 120 new fixes to the WinTel pain game.

And yes, this is the kind of book that will make folks think twice about using a Wintel system when they can go merrily on their way getting a Mac instead. Oh wait, there is a *Mac Annoyances* book somewhere too... <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/macannoy/index.html>

The Art of Project Management Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Scott Berkun

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2099>

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com>

Booksite:

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

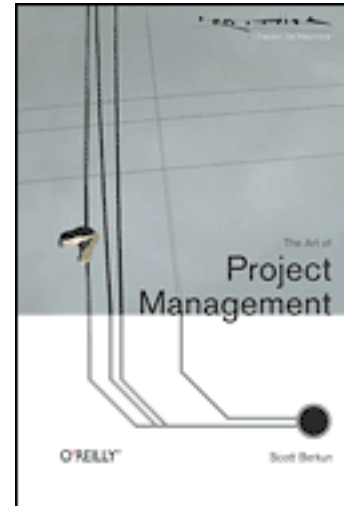
Released: March 2005

\$40 USD, \$56 CND, £28.50 GBP, €34 Euro

Pages: 512

ISBN: 0596007868

Requirements: A desire to get project done.



Strengths:

Weaknesses:



The Art of Project Management by Scott Berkun brings the art and soul of project management by taking into account the human relationships and “soft” sides associated with bringing projects from tenuous beginnings to healthy conclusions.

Scott Berkun walks the walk instead of just talking the talk with identifying leadership skills necessary to not only grab people’s attention, but motivate them to want to excel. We will forgive his stink at Microsoft, since that is where he spent a good portion of his time learning the ropes. This book isn’t really a formula book that is designed to kill insomnia, rather it is intended to help us with a sprinkle of humor and wit to help us with lessons learned.

The book is divided into 3 parts; Plans, Skills and Management. I really loved the sections on the truth about schedules and how to figure out what to do. Since I did a lot of Spec-writing, I also reminisced about the years I too handled the politics of writing good specifications. However, I should have read the sections on communications and relationships and what to do when things go wrong when I did multi-million dollar project management for a living. I would have lasted much longer and not worn out other people so quickly as we brought those projects in ahead of schedule and under budget. I also liked the sections on how to make things happen with middle and endgame strategies. I don’t have much of an ego anymore so the power and politics chapter at the end was helpful but something I try to avoid anymore.

TI think what makes this book special is that Scott Berkun takes real life scenarios and puts them to pen in a way that isn't preachy, but makes us feel not only empathy, but that we root for the project management team. Since I am in a software development environment, I really think the processes discussed hit home for me. Much of what is learned is cross-discipline but begins from the view of the software development environment and maybe that is why this book is an O'Reilly book. It speaks to the right audience.

This isn't so much a "how-to" book, but a "why" kind of book. If you find yourself in a project management situation and say, "why me?", you can start here and learn what can be done without getting burned out in the process.



Authors: Daniel J. Barrett

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/426>

Richard E. Silverman

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/552> Robert G.

Byrnes

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1159>

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com>

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/sshtdg2/index.html>

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

Released: May 2005, Second Edition

\$40 USD, \$56 CND, £28.50 GBP, €36 Euro

Pages: 672

ISBN: 0596008953

Requirements: Some knowledge of Internet and Network security.

Strengths: Cross-platform.

Weaknesses: None found.



SSH, The Secure Shell: The Definitive Guide, 2nd Edition by Daniel J. Barrett, Richard E. Silverman and Robert G. Byrnes is a detailed deep book on the Secure Shell. If you are not into secure remote logins, encrypted sessions or using public-key cryptography, move on.

This is the “everything you ever wanted to know about security, but were afraid to ask” book. Okay, just about anyway. Would you believe everything about SSH-2 too? The intent is that with SSH, you can use the Internet to get around with out being “seen”. And it doesn’t matter which platform you are using either. SSH has a piece for securing every OS.

Chapter 15 covers in about 5 pages everything about OpenSSH and how it is used on the Mac. In Chapter 13,m there is a one-liner about Mac OS X and how it comes with OpenSSH installed with Mac SFTP available if needed. Predictably, other chapters are much more long-winded about how SSH is implemented on other systems.

I particularly enjoyed the Friedrich von Schiller quote in Chapter 3; “Against stupidity, even the Gods struggle in vain”. I go the book because I had been told that using SSH made servers vulnerable to attack. Now I know that is bunk as long as it is implemented correctly – and the “right” server is used. I think I do not need to worry any longer after having gone through this book about what platform I have. I would be really worried about other platforms however. I

can't believe how many programs are needed to make a competing platform "secure". And this book could be used to justify switching from one of those in a heartbeat. Come on, 5 pages out of 672 for Mac OS X? You do the math.

Ship It!: A Practical Guide to Successful Software Projects Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Jared Richardson, William Gwaltney Jr.

Pragmatic Programmers, LLC
P.O. Box 293325
Lewisville
TX 75029-3325
Or
9650 Strickland Road, Suite 103-255
Raleigh
NC 27615
1-800-699-PROG (800-699-7764)
sales@pragmaticprogrammer.com
pragprog@pragmaticprogrammer.com
<http://www.pragmaticprogrammer.com>

Booksite:

<http://www.pragmaticprogrammer.com/titles/prj/index.html>

Released: June 2005

\$30 USD, \$42 CND

Pages: 200

ISBN: 097451407

Requirements: A desire to get software applications shipped.
For anyone involved in computer programming and shipping product.

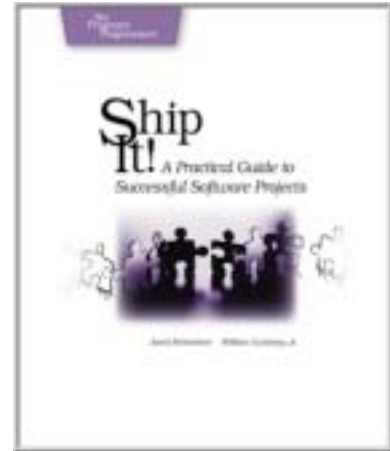
Strengths: It lives up to its title.

Weaknesses: Some really minor typos.

Ship It!: A Practical Guide to Successful Software Projects by Jared Richardson and William Gwaltney Jr teaches the fine art of getting software out the door and into the hands of customers. Being in a company that was just acquired by a better-monied company because the “complete rewrite” essentially was done by them already, puts this book into extremely sharp focus for me.

If the processes that have been captured by Jared Richardson and William Gwalney Jr. are followed, quality, nearly-bug-free software packages can get out into the public venue quickly.

I especially enjoyed this very readable book in the last chapter (5) discussing “Common Problems and How to Fix Them”, but there are also 8 Appendices listing a Tip summary, source code management, scripting tools, Continuous Integration (CI) systems, issue tracking software, development methodologies, testing frameworks and a suggested reading list.



The Tip Summary is a compilation of the tips listed throughout the book. A nice map for shipping product graphs how to build a great product in Chapter 1, while a tools and infrastructure map is provided in Chapter 2. If you have read some of the other books published by The Pragmatic Programmers, there is little overlap, but this book is the icing on the cake.

In a word: Solid!

Much like the Mac, this book “just works”, because it takes the best from lessons learned from team leaders and team players and takes the mystery out of the project management processes as applied to Software Development.

Ship It! is a surprisingly quick read and if you are in the software development food chain, this book pays for itself in a matter of hours.

Spring Into Technical Writing for Engineers and Scientists Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Barry J. Rosenberg

<http://www.awprofessional.com/authors/bio.asp?a=d1719319-8b49-48ea-b86d-75dc86a41ae8>

Addison-Wesley

<http://www.awprofessional.com/springinto/>

Booksite: <http://www.awprofessional.com/title/0131498630>

Released: May 14, 2005

Pages: 352

\$30 US, \$42 CND, £22 GBP, €26 Euro

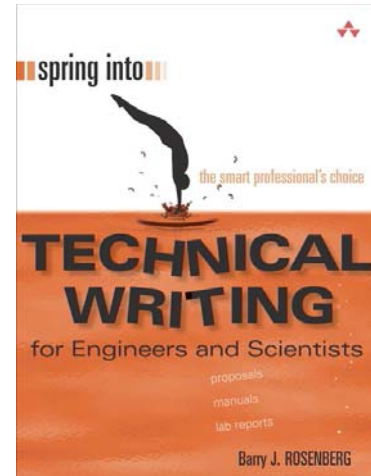
ISBN: 0131498630

For those who wish to write more clearly about what they know.

Not for those who wish to obfuscate information.

Strengths: Well written treatise on communicating clearly.

Weaknesses: Darn it, only one swear word found in the whole book! (That is a good thing.)



Spring Into Technical Writing for Engineers and Scientists by Barry J. Rosenberg is an interesting read. It “Springs Into” technical writing from the Engineering and Scientific perspective.

Will this book turn you into a professional writer? No, time and experience do that, but it will help you do a better job creating specifications, manuals, proposals, lab reports, technical presentations, developing web content.

There are 20 chapters in 4 sections covering planning, general writing principles, handling graphics and learning a few professional secrets, writing manuals, websites, proposals, internal planning documents, lab reports, PowerPoint presentations and Email and finishes up with the editing and documentation process, fonts and typography and punctuation.

The whole point of writing is supposed to revolve around effective communication. Barry Rosenberg takes that concept and builds on it by focusing on the target audience and writing to their level of understanding. He even gets into cultural differences and sensitivity on an international basis.

Since I put together Release Notes and have asked my particular audience about how they can better convey software changes to efforts by programmers, I saw a need and got the book to try and fill it. I found I have to be able to not only understand the software, but read between the lines and translate geekspeak to joe-sixpack understanding. By reading this book, I think I may have at least got a little better at doing the job I’m paid to do as a technical writer.

I found only one cussword, but that was understandably in the PowerPoint chapter. I especially liked Barry Rosenberg's sense of humor with his strike-throughs in the Editing and the Documentation process chapter where he writes what he really means, strikes it out and makes it politically correct.

For a book on technical writing, I give Barry J. Rosenberg a 5 for this book. He takes the mundane, dreary world of technical writing and lets the sunshine break through the storm clouds of ineffective communications and helps us provide documentation that doesn't exude cognitive dissonance, but rather the ability to produce real, almost soothing, poetic understanding.

Games

Close Combat: First To Fight Reviewed by Derek Meier



Macsoft/Destineer

13755 1st Ave North, Suite 500

Plymouth, MN 55441

support@macsoftgames.com

<http://www.macsoftgames.com>

\$40 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X v10.2.8 or greater, 256MB RAM 32MB video card(ATI Radeon 7500/Nvidia GeForce2MX or better, 2.5 GB hard disk space, DVD drive, Broadband connection(cable or dsl) for online play.

Test System: Mac mini, Mac OS X 10.4.1, 1GB RAM, 32MB 9200 ATI Radeon, 80GB Hard Disk, Superdrive, Cable Broadband connection.

Strengths: Low graphic requirements with great quality, excellent replayabilty, realistic military combat, great sound and atmospheric music also a great AI. Simultaneous release on all platforms.



Weaknesses: None found really. An excellent wargame.

Close Combat: First To Fight (FTF) is the latest in the Close Combat series that began with *Close Combat* which covers the Normandy Campaign in World War II. Originally the series started by Microsoft goes from World War II to today's modern combat. The series has quite a following with a total of 7 games with the name Close Combat. The eighth game *Close Combat: First To Fight* is a First Person Squad based First person shooter from Destineer. One of the first games I have seen released around the same time as the Windows and Xbox version having been used to see Mac releases around the time the Windows version hits the bargain bin. It's something I really enjoy seeing.

GAMEPLAY

Leading your team of four into hostile combat in the street of Beirut. Your team relies on each other to provide coverage from all directions. There is no “army of one” here unlike other first



person shooters. Keeping you team alive is the key to winning. The tactics used by the team members are managed by the game’s excellent AI. You issue commands to your fire team from a radial menu. The enemy AI gets better as you select higher levels of difficulty from Recruit to Marine to Gunny then to Simulation. They will try to flank you and move positions. If they can’t get a good shot, they will also run for cover. You will use the system developed and used by the Marine Corps called RTFA (Ready Team Fire Assist). RTFA has basically the goal to provide

360 degree coverage. You don’t have to micro-manage the team, which is nice because it would severely detract from the game. Also, you never fight alone in FTF. You will be able to call in support from snipers, mortar support as well as air support. A few things to remember to win; don’t die, don’t let more than two of your fire team members get killed, don’t shoot your team members or civilians and don’t kill surrendering opposing forces. Have any of these occur and you will lose the game. The After Action Reports (AAR) are very informative and give you a good idea on how you performed.

The multiplayer aspect of First to Fight is a really fun experience using GameSpy. You can play users on other platforms. Two methods of play are available; Multiplayer Cooperative and Fire Team Arena. In Cooperative, 4 players join a team taking part on the single player missions. Fire Team Arena or FTA allows you to get up to eight players four in each time in a death-match arena trying to frag each other until all players have reached their max lives or times runs out.

GRAPHICS

The Graphics in First to Fight are very impressive. And it does not take the latest and greatest to run the game itself. Even on my Mac mini, it performed quite well without sacrificing the graphics quality even with the paltry 32MB 9200 ATI Radeon video. The Marines and the enemy soldiers are nicely detailed. When you take out the enemy, their death feats are nicely rendered and realistic looking.



SOUND & MUSIC:

The sound is done very well. Guns sound realistic and give you an immersive effect of being really there getting shot at. The voices in the game are pretty decent as well. The music in the game fits in well with the environment and gives it a more realistic effect.

VERDICT:

Close Combat: First to Fight is an exceptional squad-based First Person Shooter. Having been helped be created by actual members of the Marine Corps I am sure has brought a lot to the games realism, so a big thank-you to them, wherever they are. The enemy AI is great and gets smarter at higher difficulty level. The graphics quality is undemanding, while still being very good on the eyes. The sound and music bring added realism to the game. Multiplayer is fun and gives it some great replayability. *First to Fight* would be a welcome addition to any wargamers arsenal. So move out soldier and grab yourself a copy!

Postal 2: Share The Pain Reviewed by Derek Meier



Running With Scissors
4729 E. Sunrise Drive #409
Tucson, AZ 85718

info@gopostal.com

<http://www.gopostal.com/> Caution: The website has unmoderated commentary.

\$20 USD

Requirements:

Mac OS X 10.2.8

Minimum: 700MHZ G3, 256 MB RAM; 2 GB HD space; 32 MB Radeon or GeForce 2.

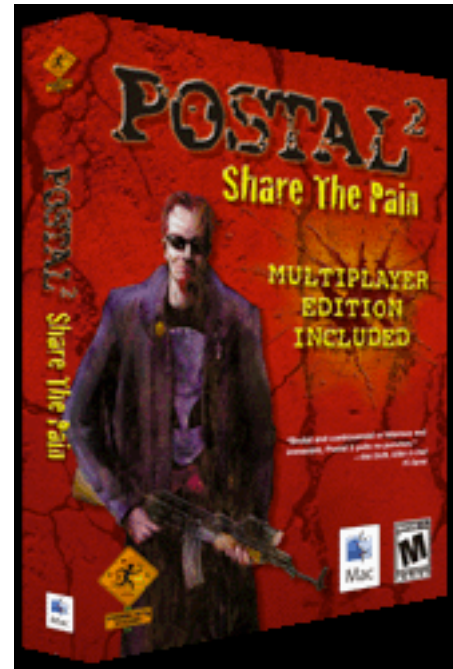
Recommended: 1GHZ G4 or higher; 512MB RAM; 2 GB HD space; 65MB Radeon 9000 or GeForce 3.

Strengths: Fun too play, funny, lots of gore and violence, and fun “inappropriate stuff”. Low system requirements.

Weaknesses: Dated graphics engine. Real Postal Babe not included. (Okay, not really a game weakness maybe a personal one.)

[Editor: You may want to skip this review if you are sensitive to acts of uncivilized graphic violent activity like I am.]

I am not a big fan of censorship and censoring games to me is just plain wrong. Everyone should have the right to play what they want and should not have others tell them what they can and can't play. **[Editor: This is Derek's opinion, so be patient. Most of the rest of us do not agree. In fact, many of us *strongly* disagree...Why tempt the devil?]**



Caution: R-Rated for extreme violence and crude, uncivilized graphics.



Running With Scissors has put out such a game that I am sure most politicians will say is too violent and the content is inappropriate heck it's even banned in New Zealand for being a danger to public health and ruled it illegal. C'mon it's a game. Get real. If you have a problem with the content. don't play it or do not buy it for your kids. Simple as that. If you're over 18 and a legal adult, my view is play what you want without someone dictating what you can play. I am over 18 and and it's my right to play Postal 2!



If you like South Park with it's wacky political satire and you like games with lots of excessive violence, than Postal 2 is your game. You play Postal Dude, who apparently works for Running With Scissors. One day after leaving home from your screaming witch of a wife to pick up a paycheck, you find out your fired. Soon after you are fired, a mob of gun-wielding anti-violent game parents come rushing into the offices of Running with Scissors. I love the political satire in this game. Also going into the public library in the game and the tree-hugging hippies are protesting the death of trees. After returning a late book, you find yourself in a blazing fire started by the tree hugging activists wanting to set an example that books kill trees. You have to fight your way out of the blaze and kill the gun-toting activists. Even Gary Coleman makes an appearance in the game, but watch out, because he sure packs a punch.

GAMEPLAY

Gameplay in Postal 2 consists of little mediocre missions such as picking up a paycheck, milk or getting Gary Colemans autograph.



These missions turn into something more, because they seem to land you in a heap of trouble involving someone trying to kill you. The controls in the game are standard for a first-person shooter and are customizable so use my standard keys for a first person shooter. One of the big things that separate it from a first-person shooter, which is a bit gross, is the ability to urinate on your opponent causing them to vomit uncontrollably and you can also use this

“ability” to extinguish yourself when you catch on fire. There are a variety of standard weapons available to you one interesting combination is the shotgun when you pick up a stray cat and mount it to the shotgun from its rear.

Along with single-player, multiplayer is available in Snatch, Grab, Deathmatch and Team Deathmatch. My favorite hands down is Snatch, where you play a variant of capture the flag. Instead of the flag, you capture one of the hot Postal Babes. It's nice to share the pain with other players online. Fast and fun it's just as fun as the single-player mode.

GRAPHICS



Postal 2's graphics are based on an older version of the Unreal engine. It looks dated, but still performs quite well. Not up to par with today's shooters like Doom 3 or a new version of Unreal. The animations are fun, particularly the effect of urinating on someone or the scene where you get a nice shot of their head flying off after you hit them with a shovel.

SOUND & MUSIC

One of the best parts of the game are the quips from your main character. His quips and attitude remind me of *Ash from the Evil Dead* series which coincidentally is about as violent and bloody as Postal 2. The other sound effects in Postal 2 are so-so.

VERDICT

Postal 2: Share The Pain is pure and simple violent fun. It does not have the latest and greatest in graphics, but it's easy to learn and you will get a kick out of playing it. Multiplayer keeps the game's replayability factor up as well. If you are a prude [Editor: Many of us are!] and don't like games with lots of gore and unnecessary violence then stay away from this game. Stay far away and definitely keep your kids out of it too. But if you don't take this stuff seriously and can enjoy it for the simple fun game it is, definitely buy it. C'mon man do it for the Postal Babe's!

Hardware

RadTech BT510 Bluetooth Mouse Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves



RadTech
1917 Fernwood Trail Drive, Suite 01
St. Louis, MO 63031-7432
314-972-7623
Fax: 530-654-5792
info@radtech.us
<http://www.radtech.us>

Product link:

<http://www.radtech.us/Products/BT510.aspx>

\$60 USD

Dimensions: 93.5mm long x 58mm wide x 33.3mm high

Weight: 81 grams with batteries

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.8 or higher, built-in Bluetooth antenna or USB dongle

The macC rating: 3/5



Strengths: Three buttons & scroll-wheel; backup USB power cable; electronically reversible left/right buttons; lightweight, nice appearance; reasonable battery life.

Weaknesses: Scroll button too sensitive; tracking speed unpredictable; battery life can't be monitored via software or hardware.

In the September 2004 issue, I wrote a very favorable review of the RadTech BT500 Bluetooth mini mouse, so I was certainly interested when they announced the BT510 model.

While the BT500 is a mini-sized wireless mouse, the BT510 is a slightly larger, mid-size mouse. Due to that increased size, it uses two AA batteries instead of AAA batteries. That results in increased battery life, a valuable asset in the world of wireless mice. Using the mouse 6-8 hours a day, one pair of batteries lasted a few weeks.

In addition, the BT510 comes with a backup USB power cable. When the batteries run out, you can attach one end of the cable to the mouse and the other end to your Mac's USB port to continue supplying power to it. This is a handy feature, especially since there is no way to measure the amount of battery life remaining.

The other unique feature of the BT510 is that its left and right buttons are reversible, useful for left-handed Mac users. Reversing them is simple and does not require any software. Also, no software needs to be installed to map the scroll-wheel button to Exposé or Dashboard actions. Setting the buttons to do anything else requires a shareware driver.

Unfortunately, the BT510 is inferior to the BT500 in a few key areas. First, the tracking is unpredictable. Despite setting the tracking speed in System Preferences, sometimes the cursor would careen across the screen and other times it would move slowly, even though my movement remained the same.

Additionally, it was sometimes incredibly difficult to wake the mouse from sleep, which it enters pretty quickly to help conserve battery life. Sometimes it would wake up quickly, other times it would require turning the mouse on and off.

Finally, the scroll-button is too sensitive. I had mapped it to Dashboard activation. Often when scrolling a web page, e-mail or Finder window, Dashboard would activate.

The BT510 Bluetooth mouse is stylish (the white version matches Apple's consumer line of hardware), is comparatively priced to Apple's measly one-button wireless mouse, has good battery life, and some unique features. But due to its other issues, I would only recommend it if you find the BT500 model too small for comfort.

Update: From John Grzeskowiak at RadTech;

"The gain in battery life is due to a new BT transceiver chip.

And we're working to find out why some are having cursor instabilities with the 510 - we plan to release a button-mapping driver soon which will be able to slow the acceleration curve and prevent this condition which seems to affect about 20% of the folks using this mouse with a Mac."

[**Editor:** Expect great things from RadTech.]

iPod shuffle Accessories Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



XtremeMac

15751 SW 41 Street, #100
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33331
954-385-9877
Fax: 954-385-9320
866-392-9800

sales@xtrememac.com

<http://www.xtrememac.com>

Product site:

http://www.xtrememac.com/shopby/ipodtype/ipod_shuffle.shtml

Released: May 12, 2005

AirPlay FM \$50 USD; Audio Kit \$50 USD; Audio Splitter \$13 USD; Auxiliary Audio Cable \$13 USD; Bumperz \$20 USD for 3; Car Charger, \$25 USD; Cassette Deck Adapter \$20 USD; Home Stereo Cable, \$13 USD; Shieldz \$20 USD for 3; SportWrap \$30 USD; SuperClip \$15 USD; SuperHook \$20 USD; TuffWraps \$25 USD for 3.

Requirements: iPod shuffle.

Strengths: All from one company. All Apple iPod shuffle accessories.

Weaknesses: Some items still need some work.



XtremeMac has gone to the extreme by offering nearly every add-on, attachment or accessory imaginable for the iPod shuffle. They have competition, so I linked to a number of other reviews done at iPod Lounge because, frankly, they do a darned good job with their reviews and I'm impressed. But I'm also impressed with XtremeMac taking the time to send the whole set to us without us asking for them. This is an Xtremely good sign that *macCompanion* is being recognized as a legitimate venue for exposure to products. Up front, thanks XtremeMac for thinking of us!

XtremeMac decided to go all-iPod in April after 3.5 years in the Mac business. But they have some stiff competition from a few other manufacturers that make comparable products for comparable prices, so you might want to go over to the iPod Lounge and do some comparison-shopping.

“XtremeMac CEO Gary Bart explained to iPodlounge why he elected to sell off the Mac peripheral business. “As a company we have been operating under the premise that it makes greater economic sense for XtremeMac to build iPod accessories versus pro products, consequently, the pro products have not seen continued advances and improvements from a product development standpoint,” Bart said. “This short-changes the pro customers and is not in keeping with the level of dedication and support we like provide.”

Bart said the move also allows XtremeMac to dedicate its efforts to bringing out the best iPod add-ons possible. “We believe a dedicated focus, company wide, sends a clear message to our employees, customers, media, Apple and others that our product line supports our goal of being the number one iPod accessory manufacturer,” he said.”

I hope they really mean that. Apparently there are some gotchas associated with the AirPlay FM Transmitter and the Audio Splitter. Apple’s *Made for iPod* sticker doesn’t necessarily mean the products are better than the competition, but it does apparently mean that the consumer pays more for the privilege.

We get conflicting reports about the *AirPlay FM Transmitter*. The device has limited FM range from 88.1 to 107.9. and the device gives off high-pitched noises, which our daughters can hear. And to transmit, you need to find space that isn’t already taken. If the transmitter were to go below 88.1, say 87.9, then there wouldn’t be a conflict. There are 3 memory positions and the – and + buttons let you travel up and down the limited FM scale. And the point of having a transmitter? To give off the content in your iPod shuffle to others. The other drawback? It only works with the car adapter. The high-pitched background noise is coming from interference from the car’s radio system. Some filtering needs to be added to this device to make it perform better.



Is \$50 worth making your shuffle into a noisy radio station? Oh, and it also charges the shuffle battery. And the LCD display is backlit. And it has a 90-day guaranty.

For \$25 USD less, you can get the Car Charger sans FM transmitter to charge the battery in the shuffle and lets you play the shuffle at the same time. It is the same charger as on the AirPlay FM transmitter and it checks for power faults in the car electronic circuitry and has a use to protect it from overloads. It has a lifetime warranty.

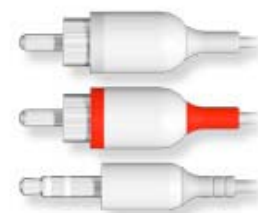
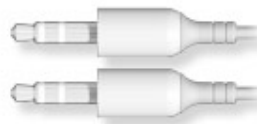


If you don't want the AirPlay FM transmitter, there is the *iPod Audio Kit* for the same price as the AirPlay. The Kit contains the Car Charger, the Audio Splitter, the Auxiliary Audio Cable, the Home Stereo Cable and the Cassette Adapter, so this offers the best bang for the buck. What's missing? The 2nd Earbud. The Cassette Adapter has similar gold contacts as the iPod Cassette Adapter except that the connector is a 90-degree angle adapter instead of straight-through. That is a good thing and I'm surprised their pic doesn't show it. The Kit has a lifetime warranty.

The Audio Splitter isn't the same unit as the Professional Audio Splitter, but is the same price if bought separately. iPod Lounge reports that the one they got didn't seat properly. It does have a lifetime warranty, so if you have one that has issues, have them honor it.



Moving on to the cables, the Auxiliary Audio Cable is an External Speaker Cable, pure and simple. And no, this is not the one with the gold contacts. The Home Stereo Cable is used to tap into the RCA jacks of a stereo system.



And that's it for the Kit.

Next, let's look at the hangers. There are two right now, the SuperClip and the SuperHook. My first take on the Super Clip is that it was designed to attach to a tie. They are marketing it for straps or belts, waistbands or shirts. Me? I still think it looks like a giant tie-clip. It is ribbed with rubber pads to keep the shuffle from slipping. Just don't use it with Bumperz, Shieldz or TuffWrapz. And it too has a Lifetime Warranty.



The SuperHook is a little more substantial than the SuperClip and costs \$5 USD more. And it can be used with any of the Bumperz, Shieldsz or TufWrapz. It's a \$20 USD caribeenner. (Note: Caribeeners cost a lot less at Sports shops). But if you like the style and want the shuffle secure, than you will want one of these. So go take it for a climb.

Or you can get the \$30 USD SportWrap and strap the shuffle to your upper arm. And no, that pic is not of a rubberized tapeworm. It is a breathable fabric-covered neoprene. There is plenty of Velcro to strap to a large muscular arm and way too much to wrap it to a petite wrist. There are four colors; black, blue, red and yellow. We got the blue one. And the strap to the side is not for pencils, pens or other devices. It is intended to store the earbuds. This one looks and feels better than competing products.



Now take a look at the shuffle-protectors.

I don't know about you, but I get confused with the choices, but our youngest daughter, who got the shuffle for her birthday, likes to accessorize, so these things obviously have a teen-market in mind. The Bumperz come in 14 silicone colors and come in packs of 5 for \$20 USD. They have no but do have a back to keep the Bumperz intact. Feminine, Neon or Masculine 5-color packs.



Not practical, just fun. Intended for use with the Apple Lanyard.

Shieldz takes us up a notch and are half-shell translucent plastic cases with no back. Since they are all-plastic, how can they? Again, these are intended for show. The shuffle snaps into place. It can be used with the SuperHook. There are three 3-packs for \$20 USD each and should not really be considered a protective case. They are pure glitz for show-offs. I personally like the green one.



The TuffWrapz are the sturdiest of the bunch. They not only come in \$25 USD 3-packs, but each one has three non-slip silicon rubber pieces for the top, middle and bottom of each shuffle.. Think of the TuffWrapz as tougher rubber Bumperz. TuffWrapz have ridges for a better grip and give off smells. Again these things appeal to folks who want to colorize their shuffles and add some sense of security from physical damage. And I'd personally go for the cobalt blue.



So there you have it, XtremeMac electronics, attachments and protectors for the Apple iPod shuffle. Some things need some more work, others are excellent, but overall, the prices are just a bit higher overall than the competition probably to cover the fee Apple gets for the "Made for iPod" sticker.

Other Reviews: <http://ipodlounge.com/index.php/reviews/comments/xtrememac-airplay-fm-transmitter-for-ipod-shuffle/>
<http://ipodlounge.com/index.php/reviews/comments/xtrememac-audio-splitter-for-ipod-shuffle/>
<http://ipodlounge.com/index.php/reviews/comments/xtrememac-bumperz-ipod/>
<http://ipodlounge.com/index.php/reviews/comments/xtrememac-ipod-cassette-adapter-ipod/>
<http://ipodlounge.com/index.php/reviews/comments/xtrememac-shieldz-ipod/>
<http://ipodlounge.com/index.php/reviews/comments/xtrememac-superclip-ipod/>
<http://ipodlounge.com/index.php/reviews/comments/xtrememac-superhook-ipod/>
<http://ipodlounge.com/index.php/reviews/comments/xtrememac-tuffwrapz-ipod/>

iGuy (a fun and interesting iPod case) Reviewed by Ted Bade



Speck Products
227 Forest Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94301
1-650-463-8914

info@speckproducts.com

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

Product Link: <http://www.speckproducts.com/iguy-ds.html>

\$35 USD

Requirements: Must own a 4G iPod.

MacCompanion rating: 4.5

Strengths: This thing is a real hoot! It a fun iPod case.

Weaknesses: Not the best or most protective iPod case, but then I don't think it is supposed to be ;-).



Hi MoM!

The iGuy is one of those things that just puts a smile on your face. Essentially, it is a protective case for the current generations of iPods (4G). It is reminiscent of Gumby, a cartoon character of the 60's. (You **do** know Gumby, don't you?). Unlike Gumby, the iGuy is white-like and iPod and fat enough to stick an iPod into.

When I first heard about the iGuy, I just had to laugh. What a terrific idea! But then I have always been a little crazy. I have a handful of figurines, stuffed bears, and other things around my study that often find themselves posed as if they were getting into things. It's all for fun, to relieve stress, and make lighter this all too serious world of ours. The iGuy adds to this dimension of light-hearted playfulness.

The iGuy is a soft plastic case, with arms and legs. The bottom quarter of the case part splits vertically to allow you to insert an iPod. This opening also allows you to mount your iPod on its dock while it is still wearing the iGuy suit. Appropriately, this lower section has been molded to resemble a petite human butt, so when your iPod sits on the dock, the iGuy is really sitting ;-)



Everybody Loves iGuy...

A harder clear plastic cover on the front lets you see the iPod display while protecting it, and there is a circular opening that allows access to the iPod controls, as well as a slot on the top to access the lock and output connector.



Bear, can I have your fish?

The iGuy is a terrific lot of fun! Bring it with you to work,. You can pose him in a number of different ways while still using the iPod. He is bound to make you laugh (or at least smile). My wife got her hands on the iGuy, and from the pictures included in this article, you can see the types of “trouble” he has managed to get into.

It is fun, but how easy it is to use as a case and how well does it work? I can only give a moderate score on how easy the iGuy is to use. We have a larger iPod Photo; getting the iPod into the iGuy wasn't a problem, but getting it out was. The soft rubber-like plastic of the case sticks to the iPod like vinyl seats to your hot sweaty legs! I thought for a moment that the iPod would never get out of the iGuy without some surgery. But it eventually came out.



Anybody who makes great music is welcome at parties, tea or otherwise . . .

Access to the lock button was difficult, although not impossible. This is because the plastic material is thick enough that getting my thicker finger into the slot was a challenge. However, the material gives easily, so it wasn't impossible.

I also found the hard clear plastic cover for the iPod display doesn't like to stay in its slot in the soft plastic case when there is no iPod in it. Once the iPod is in the case, things are tight enough that this isn't an issue anymore. A hard plastic insert is included with the iGuy to provide a bit of rigidity to it. This insert, when flipped the correct way, adds filler for smaller iPods. I found that this piece of plastic didn't want to stay where I put, and kept moving about until I got the iPod firmly seated. The instruction sheet that comes with the iGuy was pretty vague. (I still don't think I understand what the arrows and caution icon mean!)

As with other cases that are made of soft rubber-like plastic, this case can get dirty pretty quickly. However, it cleans well with a little soapy water and a cloth. (Removing the iPod first, of course). It does protect the surface of the iPod and adds a layer of cushioning plastic over it. It would be nice if the iGuy came in different colors. Green comes to mind, although I imagine there might be some copyright issues if they made a green one. But other colors would be nice. Don't buy the iGuy as a case. His legs and arms will fight you when trying to place it in a pocket or purse. It isn't the type of case you would want to take on a run or a long walk (although I suppose you could handcuff him to your belt or strap him on like a papoose. Buy the iGuy because it is fun, because you will get a laugh, because it may change your iPod from an entertainment machine to a desktop friend, or because you want to express yourself.

The iGuy is really cool. It might not be the best iPod case out there, and it is definitely bulkier than most (not something you are going to put in your pocket without a battle). But it is a lot of fun and will add a little humor and class to a normally dull environment. I recommend it to anyone who wants to have a little fun with their iPod, while providing some protection. Definitely take a look at one them.



iLugger II Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



LTA Projects
5515 Keller Rd.

Cookeville, TN38506
877-897-5158

luggagebag@charter.net

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

<http://www.luggerbags.com>

Product Site: <http://www.luggerbags.com/G5.htm>

Released: iLugger II, June 2005

\$119 USD (Black, Gray) or \$129 USD (Blue, Orange Two-toner)

http://www.luggerbags.com/order_page.htm

Video:

<http://homepage.mac.com/ltaprojects/iMovieTheater5.html>

Strengths: The only known transportation device designed for the iMac G5 and Apple LCD Display.

Weaknesses: None found.

The first iLuggers were shown at MacWorld SF in January. The iLugger II is indeed rev 2 of this unique iMag G5 transporter created by Steve Garner because he wanted to take his machine from home to office and back without a lot of hassle and possible danger of the screen being damaged. Folks who got their shipping box and handle were taking theirs around in the cardboard box because it had a handle (I did too!), but the box was a 2-part contraption and the bottom could not be expected to stay together with the tab A into slot B configuration for very long, unless you wanted to cash in on Apple Care. (No! Don't do that to your machine!!) Necessity is the mother of invention, so Steve Garner made something he would like instead of mothering his iMac while moving it and discovered that indeed, others had the same idea, but he had the know-how and the wherewithall to make the prototype. iLugger II is now a "Made in China" product that has a better screen protector and padded shoulder straps.



Do you remember the University checkout bags for the earlier Apple products? This one is considerably nicer in both looks, feel and function. Now you too can have your PowerUser “portable G5” without fear of ruining the LCD screen.

Maybe as an accessory, they could add a small lighter-than air bag to help heft it? If there is a market for it, I’m sure LTA Projects can build and distribute it, since they also make airships and balloons in Cookeville, Tennessee. They made iLugger II so it could be used as a carryon walkon for flights. You don’t want to trust baggage handling with your iMac G5 do you?

The bag expands to 19 X 20 X 6.5 inches and has an inner liner to keep the screen from getting scratched, a 1” thick foam rubber pad, back and bottom 5/8” impact foam and a hard plastic shield between denier cordura nylon fabric and foam for further protection. And there are two 1” foam padded inside pockets on either side for keyboards, mice, cords, etc. They are tied together with a Velcro strap intended for the 17” screen. Undo the Velcro for the 20” screen.

Colors for the 2-tone iLugger II are orange and blue for the upper color. LTA Projects will do custom colors for \$160 USD. I ended up with the orange one.

If you are into lugging your iMac G5 around, for safety’s sake, make sure it is “in the bag”.



Radtech, LLC
4352 Rider Trail North
Earth City, Mo 63045
1-314-209-9993
Fax:1-530-654-5792
info@radtech.us
<http://www.radtech.us>

Product site: <http://www.radtech.us/Products/NeoCase.aspx>

Released: June 2005

\$30 USD

Requirements: iBook or PowerBook.

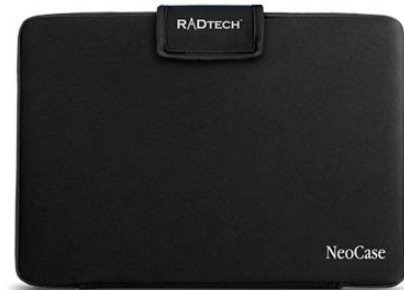
Strengths: Well designed, lightweight, waterproof, can use standalone or use as a sleeve.

Weakness: No additional storage when used standalone for power cord.

Reviewed with 14" iBook

The NeoCase won't allow you to dodge bullets like "The One" but it will provide some protection from water and protection from bumps or bruises. Made from 3 millimeters of high-density, edge reinforced water repellent Neoprene material. Neoprene in case you did not know according to the Wikipedia is the trade name for a family of synthetic rubbers based on polychloroprene. It is used in a wide variety of environments, such as in wetsuits, electrical insulation, car fan belts; and due to its chemical inertness, in industrial applications such as gaskets, hoses, and corrosion-resistant coatings.

The NeoCase is very stylish and nicely designed. It comes with two handles so you can use it as a minimal carrying case, no extra room for power cords, accessories or anything besides your 'book. Or you can use it as an added protective sleeve for your 'book to put it into your laptop bag. The zippers are made so they never come in contact with their cargo preventing unsightly scratches. Also there are straps to hold your 'book in as well you can use your 'book while it is in. Although I am too much of a chicken to test how this affect's temperature I will just take their word on it.



All in all this case is sleek, lightweight and stylish. I don't know if I would use it standalone since there is no other storage besides the 'book itself. Being waterproof is an extra plus any road warrior can appreciate. The design of the zippers that prevent it from making contact is great as well. A little added protection for your 'book can go a long way. So if you don't already have a sleeve or want to just carry your 'book solo, you may want to look at Radtech's NeoCase, the case with the cool name.



Internal flanging prevents zipper from contacting notebook.

St



Tough-Skin iPodSkin Mini Reviewed by George Riggs



Speck Products
227 Forest Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94301
1-650-463-8914

info@speckproducts.com
<http://www.speckproducts.com/>

Product Link:

<http://www.speckproducts.com/mini-toughskin-pre.html>

\$35 USD

Requirements: Must own a 4 or 6 GB
[Editor: Dynaflex] Mini iPod.

MacCompanion rating: 4



Strengths: Durable Dynaflex cover.

Weaknesses: Plastic screen and clickwheel covers scratch easily. Clickwheel cover should be reversed 180 degrees with hinge above and not below in next rev.

I was asked to test this (iPod case) I do not know anything about the company and am not partial in any way.

I think that the overall make is nice and friendly to use. It is made of a nice rubber or something [Editor: Dynaflex], so it still does not slide and is good in your car on your dashboard. I use my iPod every day and most of the day I also use it in my car in the AUX plug in all the time, and I also use it when and I am at work or when I am lying in bed.



It is a very durable product. The Swivel belt clip is also nice. It never falls off like a lot of other cases I have used, or they break easily. Not this one. It is strong and works well and I think the over all design is nice.

The downfall to the Tough-Skin Mini iPodcase is that there are 2 nice plastic pieces that go over the main screen and also over the clickwheel circle. They seemed nice at first, but like I said, I use mine *all* the time, so I found them to not be as helpful or protective as they look personally. One really nice feature is if you do not want them on, you can remove them very easy. The circle one has a little hinge it sets on but I found it popping open. So, like I said, I opted not to use them and I *still* think it is a great product and overall, a nice, friendly design. I am going to keep on using mine, since I know it will last and is tough. I hope too see more out there. I could even sell them I like them so much. You have to believe in your product, and I do.

[Editor: George's wife also sells special Swaravski crystal bead-laden devices:
[http://www.crystalizeimage.com/.](http://www.crystalizeimage.com/)]

ZoomTel V3 VoIP Gateway Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Zoom Technologies Inc.

207 South Street

Boston, MA 02111

617-423-1072

Fax: 617-423-3923

<http://www.zoom.com>

http://www.zoom.com/products/voip_products.html

http://www.zoom.com/products/voip_global_village.html

<http://www.globalvillage.com/faqs.html>

Released: November 2004

\$100 USD

Requirements: Phone set.



Comes with: CD with multi-platform instructions. Global Village phone service. Phone, Ethernet and USB cables and power supply.

Strengths: Cross-platform. Integrates with both POTs and the Internet for phone use. Excellent audio.

Weaknesses: No 800 or Fax number capabilities.

Model 5567 was tested with an iMac G5 and Mac OS X 10.4.1 Tiger.

Other reviews: http://www.voipuser.org/review_9.html

http://reviews.cnet.com/Zoom_Global_Village/4505-9238_7-31214935-2.html?tag=glance

The *ZoomTel V3 VoIP Gateway* by Zoom is a multiuse device that works with either an ADSL or Cable modem as a 4-port switching hub, router and firewall that also has phone-jack ports for VoIP Gateway functionality.

We have previously reviewed Vonage, but this time we take a look at one of Zoom’s products that integrates with Global Village VoIP capabilities. It gets by the 911 issues by allowing a phone set to use either the regular PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) or the Internet.

The Global Village phone service can be obtained via <http://www.globalvillage.com> and it comes free as part of the purchase of the Zoom unit. You cannot use Global Village services without a ZoomTel device. The MAC address has to be entered on the Global Village site. Calls can be done to and from just about anywhere on the planet and there are calling plans to access regular phones through the Internet and a US phone number can be called from any other phone in the world for \$4 USD per month chosen from 39 states. My own area code is not on their list yet. For an extra \$5 per month an “inbound call from anywhere” number can be set up, however, since my area code is not listed, I cannot use that service for local calls. And more than one number can be created as well.

It also uses Teleport functions for 411 and 911 calls. Zoom says they are in compliance with the FCC order of May 19 regarding 911 call fo rcoalaccess. See Terms of Service for Global Village and 911 access:



Light	Description
PWR	Lights when the V3 is plugged into a power source.
LINK	Lights when the V3 is connected to its broadband WAN connection device.
DATA	Blinks when data is being transferred through the broadband line.
USB	Lights when the USB port of the V3 is plugged into a powered-up computer's USB port.
LAN 1-4	Lights when a LAN port of the V3 is plugged into the Ethernet port of a powered-up device.
VoIP	Lights when a Voice over IP call is taking place.

<https://secure.globalvillage.com/tos.php>. For the free dialplan, including using Jeff Pulver’s FreeWorldDialup system, check this out: <https://secure.globalvillage.com/dialplan.php>.

- 1393xxxxx to reach a FreeWorldDialup subscriber (e.g. 139355555 to reach FWD:55555)
- 1747xxxxxxx to reach a SIPPHONE subscriber
- 1478xxxxxxx to reach an iptel.org subscriber
- 1333xxxxxxx to reach an IConnectHere subscriber
- 1700xxxxxxx to reach an IAXTEL subscriber

I can call out to other Global Village, FreeWorld Dialup, SIP, iptel.org, iCONNECCTHERE and IAXTEL subscribers if I know who they are. Incoming calls that are not answered get rerouted to VoiceMail and if you click on the Email attachments option, than the Voicemail message gets attached to Email and sent to your Email address. For switching between IP calls and POTS (Plain Old Telephone) calls, the # key is used before the VoIP light turns on in the VoIP Gateway.

And if I want to set up the VoIP Gateway so it is VoIP-only, I can do that too. But then there are some functions it doesn't do, such as an 800-number, a fax number, etc. like I can get with Vonage.

Since we suffered a Cable system power outage last night, I understand the issues regarding live 911 on a landline compared to being completely "VoIPed". When the 'Net is down, there is no dialtone on a "netified" phone.

The router does allow for 253 connections, even though there are 4 ports for switching to other devices. STUN is used for use behind NAT (Network Address Translation) for the VoIP terminal. Can it handle IPv6? Apparently, yes, according to my Mac OS X 10.4.1 Tiger Network Configuration.

Gateway Specifications		Voice over IP Analog Telephone Adapter Specifications	
Router Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Static routing • RIP V2, RIP V1 • DNS Proxy • Port Forwarding • DHCP (Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol) server and client • NAT (Network Address Translation) • NATP (Network Address and Port Translation) • Simultaneous USB and Ethernet operation 	Analog Voice Port	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type: Loop-start FXS interface • DTMF tone detection/generation
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPI (Stateful Packet Inspection) Firewall • Protection from DOS (Denial of Service) Attacks • User authentication for PPP • PAP (Password Authentication Protocol) • CHAP (Challenge Authentication Protocol) • Password protected system management 	Offhook Detection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V.21/V.25 Modem/fax tone detection • Ring occurs for incoming VoIP and POTS calls • Ring generation with 5 Ringer Equivalents - supports more than 5 typical telephones
Ethernet Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEEE 802.3 compliant • Four 10/100 Mbps auto-sensing RJ-45 LAN ports • One 10/100 Mbps auto-sensing RJ-45 WAN port 	Call Control VoIP Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIP (RFC 3261) • Digest Authentication using MD5 • Record-Route Headers • Distinct SIP Proxy separate from SIP Domain/Realm
USB Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliant with USB Specification, Revision 1.1 • Full-speed USB (12 Mbps) 	Voice Compression Codecs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G.729A, G.711 A-Law, G.711 U-Law
Status Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine indicators - power, link, data, USB, four LAN port connection indicators & VoIP 	Line-echo Cancellation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G.165, G.168 compliant • 8 to 128 msec configurable echo length • Nonlinear echo suppression
HTML Graphic User Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Password protected access • Menu-selected firmware upgrade • WAN and LAN side connection statistics • Configuration of static routes and routing table • Configuration of NAT/NAPT 	Voice Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice activity detection (VAD) • Comfort noise generation (CNG) • Dynamic jitter buffer (adaptive) • Packet Loss Concealment • Bell 202 and V.23 Caller ID • Quality of Service (QoS) provides priority for RTP (voice audio) traffic sent through the router • STUN support for voice traffic
Warranty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years 	PSTN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ-11 line port allows connection to Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) • If connected, calls will automatically route to the dial-up network when power is lost • Allows emergency dialing through services like 911 or 112
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 x 14.6 x 3.2 cm; 7.50 x 5.75 x 1.25 inches 		
Regulatory Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CE, UL, C-UL, FCC Part 15B, FCC Part 68, CS-03 		

Shareware

DragThing 5.6 Reviewed by Dr Eric Flescher

Developer: James Thomson james.t@kagi.com
<http://www.tla-systems.co.uk/>

Product Link:

<http://www.dragthing.com/english/download.html>

Glasgow, Scotland, G41 5LJ United Kingdom,
a desktop management utility for the Mac
\$20 USD shareware



DragThing 5.6 is a **free** upgrade for registered users of DragThing 5. Otherwise, it costs \$12 for registered users of DragThing 2 and 4, and \$29 for new users. Five and ten-packs are also available at \$99 and \$149 respectively. DragThing 5.5 requires Mac OS X 10.2 or later, 10.3 or later be recommended.

Strengths: Extremely versatile and flexible. The author continually updates various versions of the software (for OSX Tiger, OSX, OS9 and other versions) and has improved the product year after year. Updates and this shareware product are very reasonable and in some case free. DragThing has more options and is more flexible then the Apple dock. You can try it out (shareware) before you decide to buy. Software is at a great price and well worth the cost. Several versions depending on your OS system software. Constantly updated and improved to be made even better.



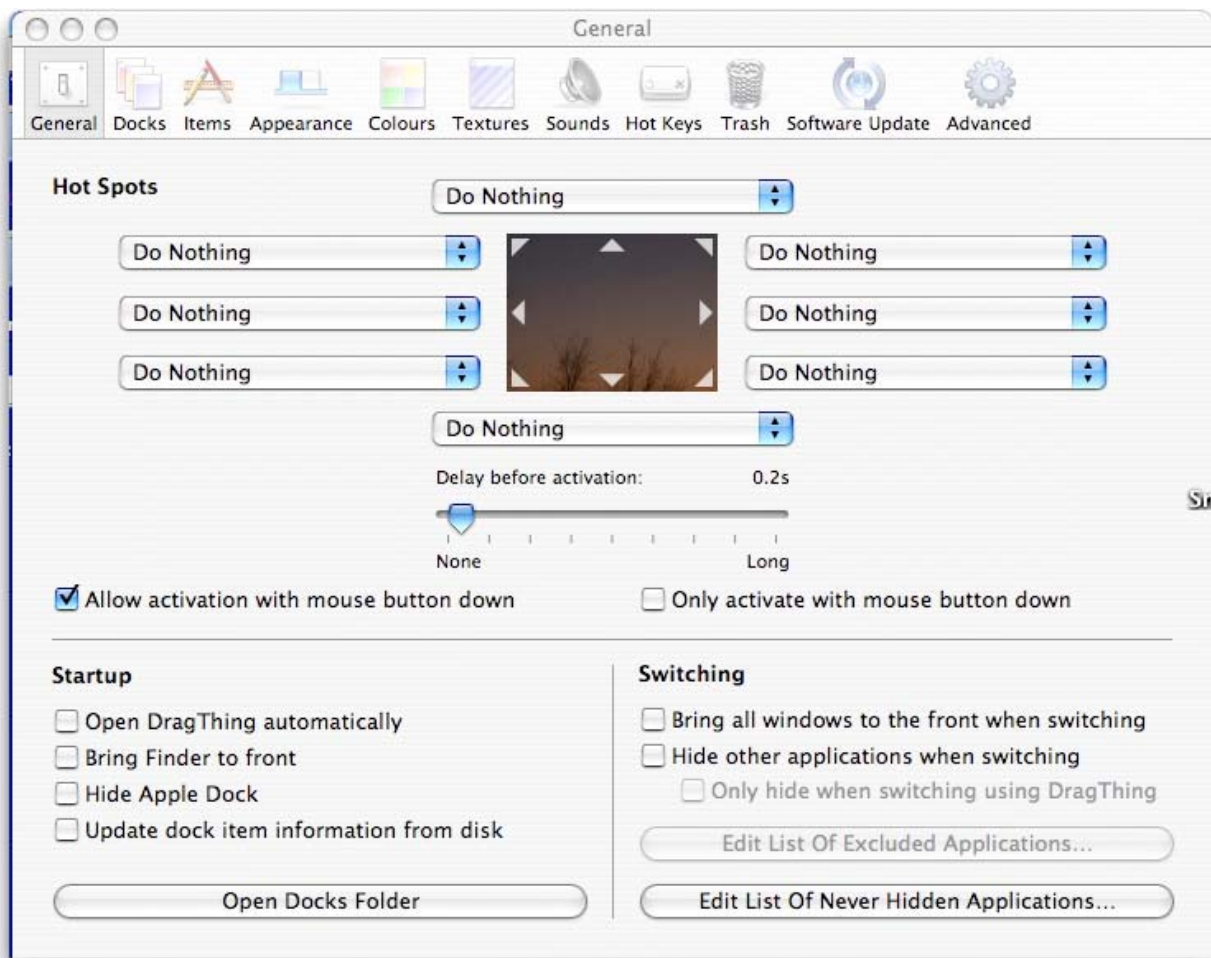
Weaknesses: May take a little while to learn all the facets (as described in the review) but for the most part, very easy to understand and use.

If you are a Macintosh user, you perform tasks that are repetitious. Writing and working on documents, tracking them, accessing a variety of software and applications of all types, using the internet, are tasks most users do almost daily. Finding and accessing a new file or application, as well as accessing your Applications folder or on your hard drive is also done over and over again. Soon the desktop may be littered with files, alias folders. The question is how can you manage your access of these files and applications? Many want to know of a better and easier way to manage their computer desktop.

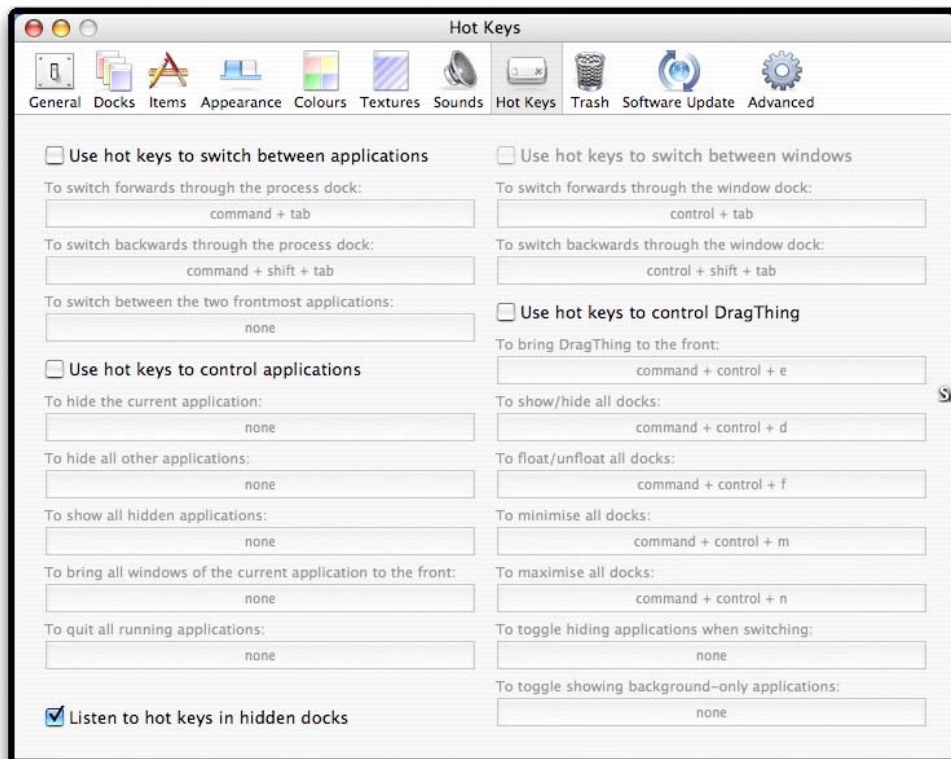
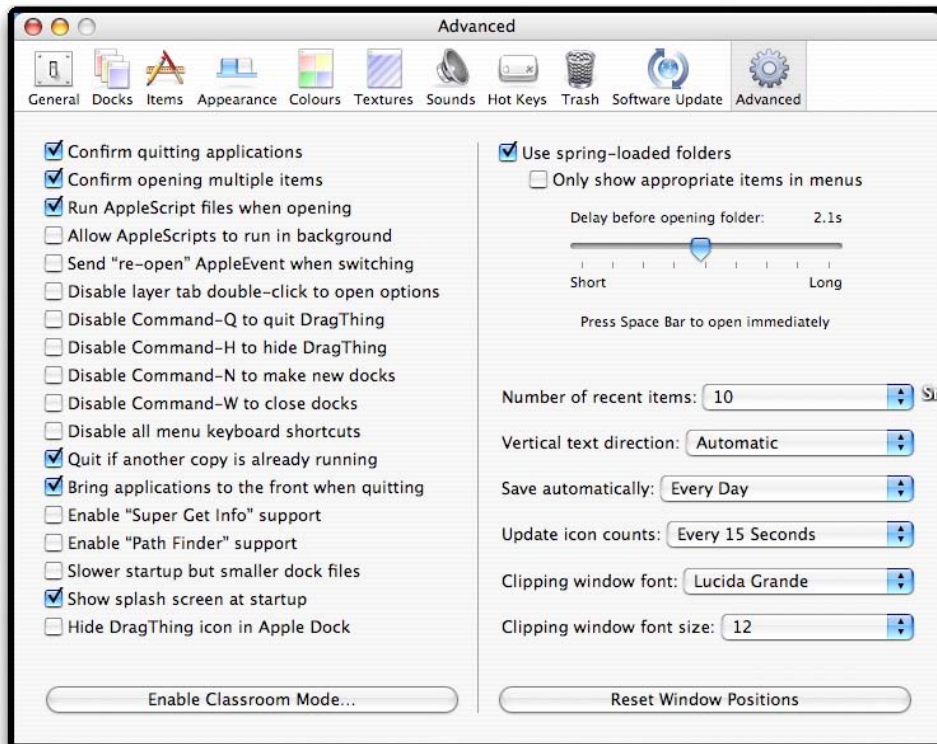
With Mac OS 9, placing aliases of files in the Apple Menu was an operation that I used to satisfy some of these goals. But there is a limit to how many alias items you can store there, without creating some startup complications. When Mac OS X came along, the handy dock solved some of these problems but I still wanted more flexibility. Yes alias can be placed on the Mac OS X

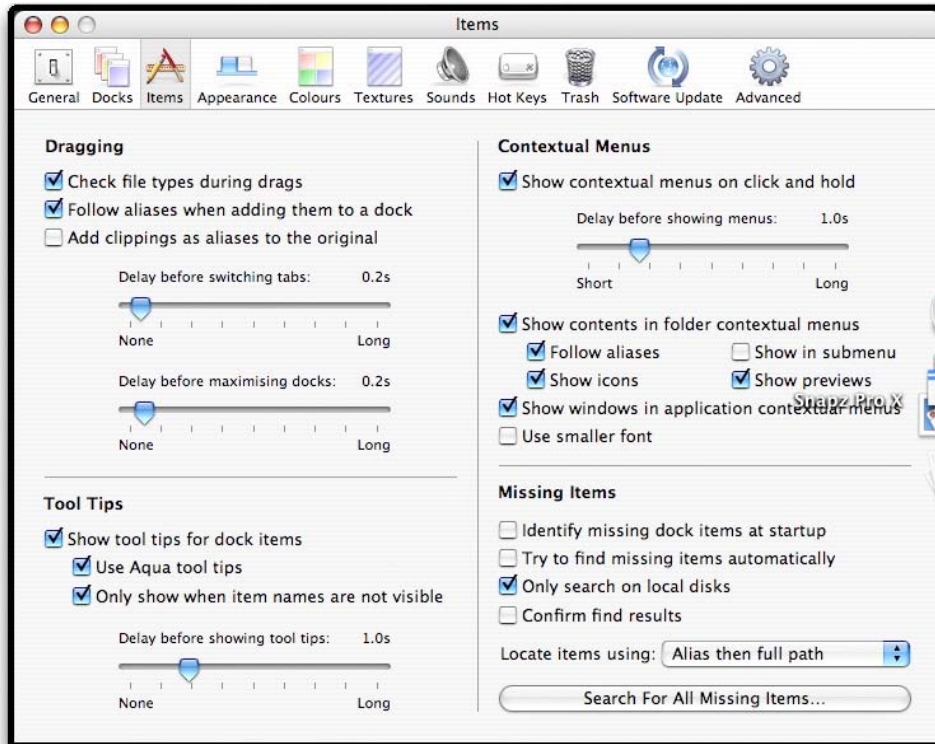
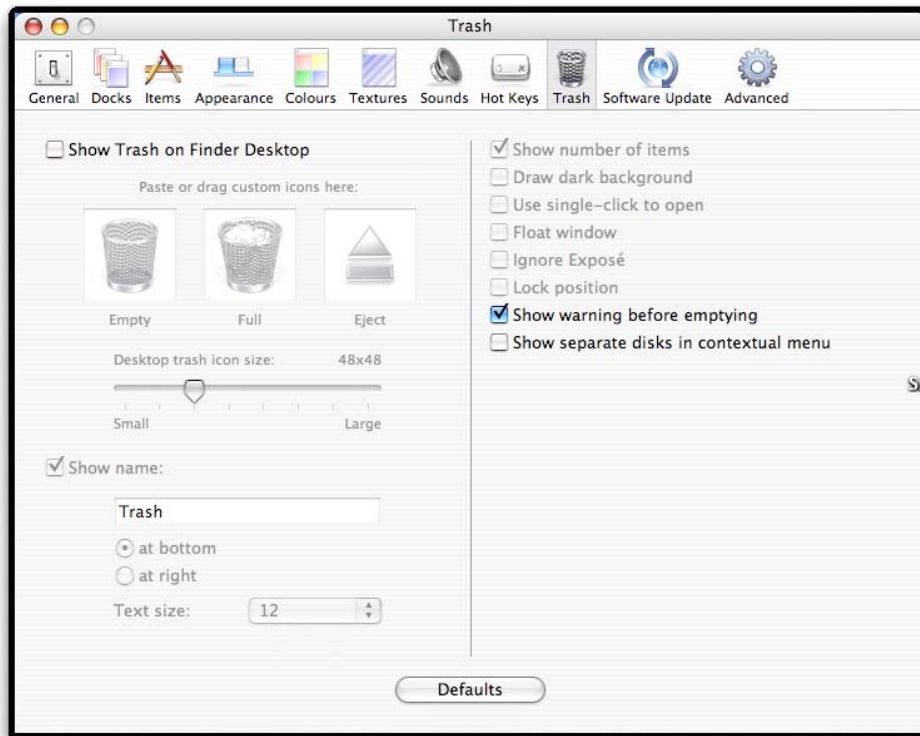
desktop but it gets messy. My search and wishes were answered when I uncovered the award winning Dragthing program that can solve many of your management problems and more.

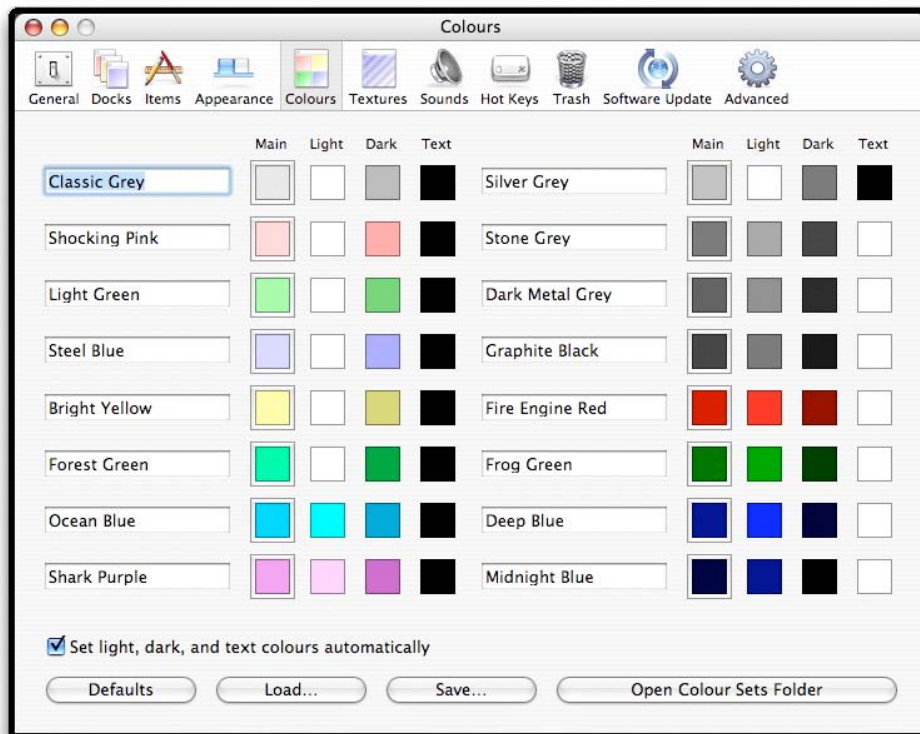
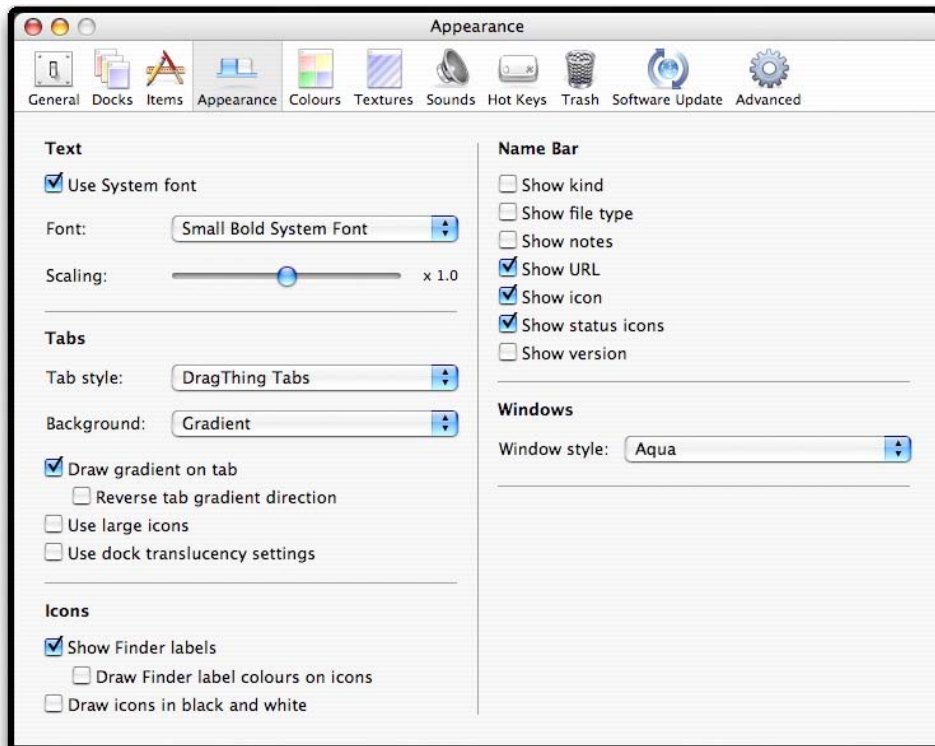
Older versions of this popular shareware Dragthing (versions have been around since its inception 10 years ago!), can be used on most Macintosh computers (PowerPC and older Macs and requires system 7.5.5 or above). Version 2.9 requires Mac OS 7.5.5 or later, but does not work on Mac OS X. The OSX version I first tried, version 4.6.1, required Mac OS X 10.1.5 or later, or any version of Mac OS 9 with CarbonLib 1.6 installed. (It is best to have virtual memory turned on and the program requires the Internet configuration file). I really liked version 4.6 and found it invaluable with all my computer tasks. So I was curious to find out about improvements that 5.5.1 newer versions would have to offer. I was not disappointed.

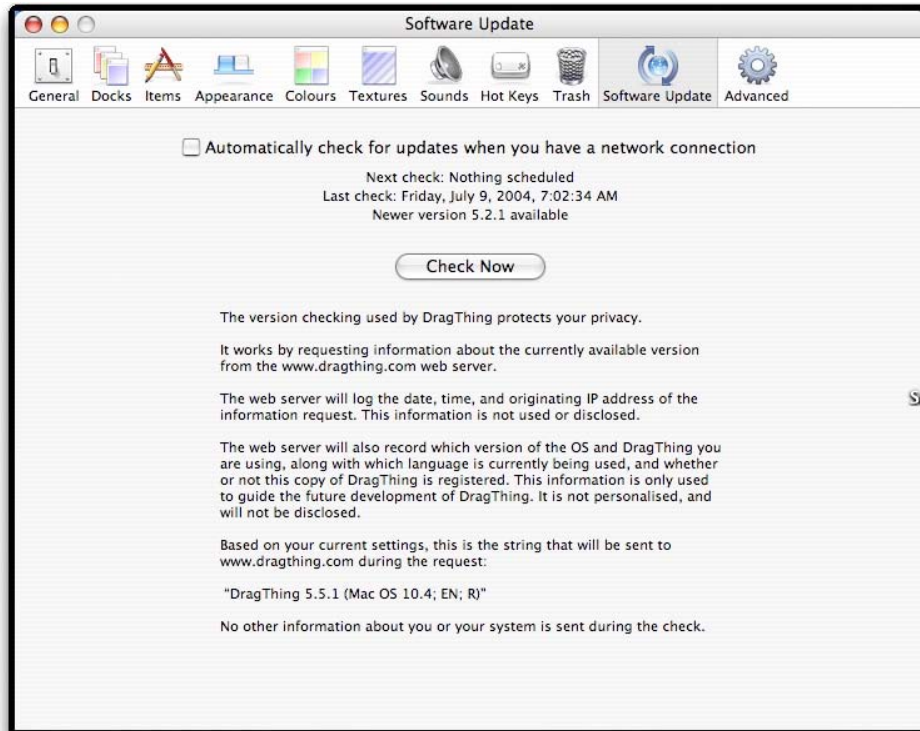
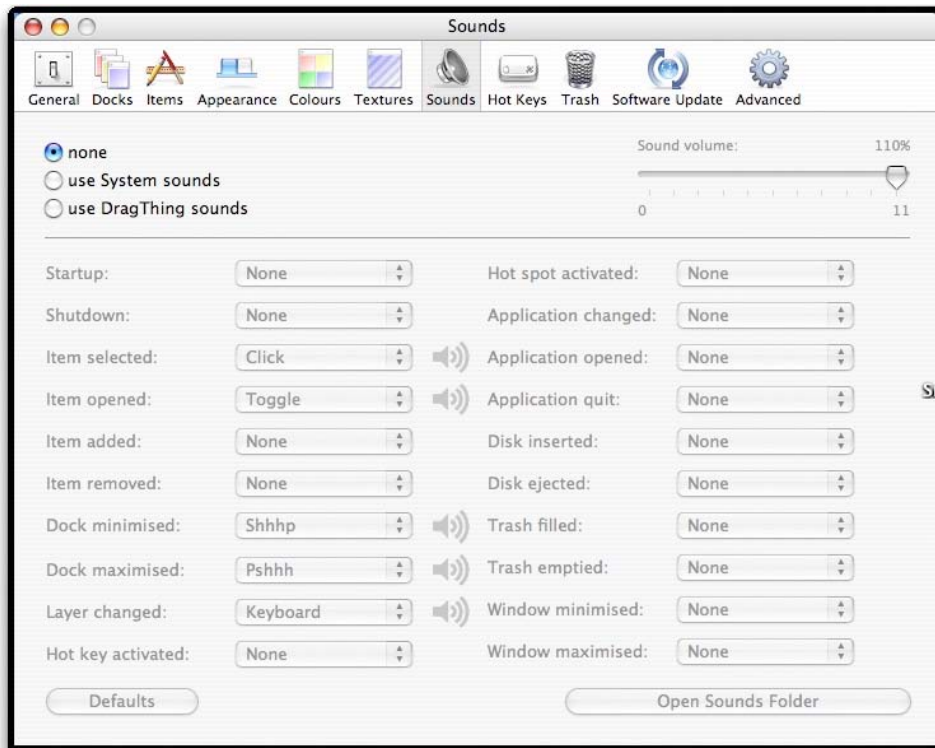


In the DragThing docks, I found the Preferences panel. Once opened by clicking on the Preferences under the Dragthing icon on the left in the toolbar I found additional options.

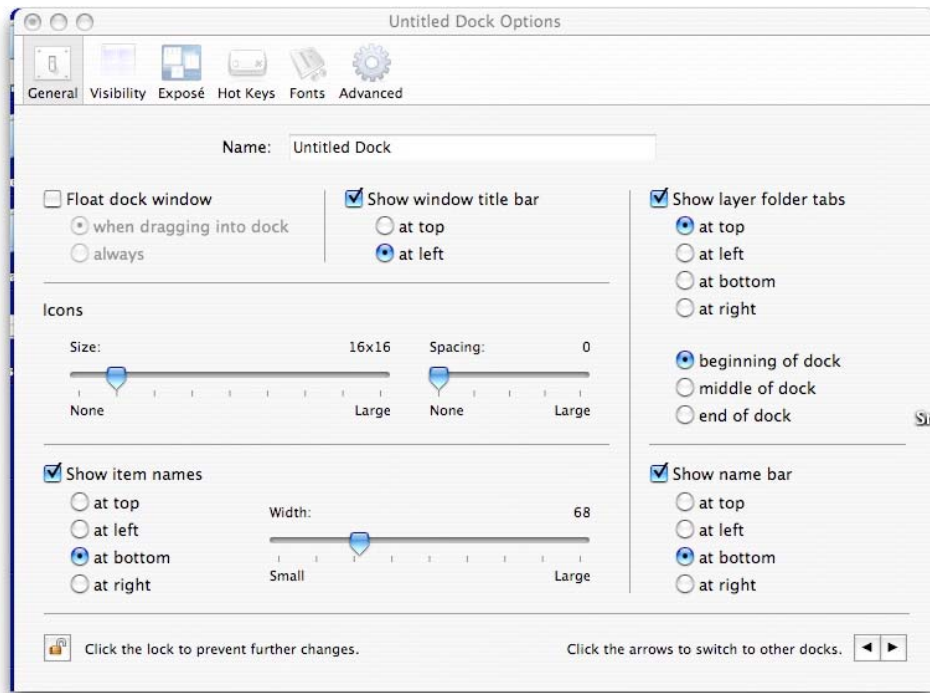






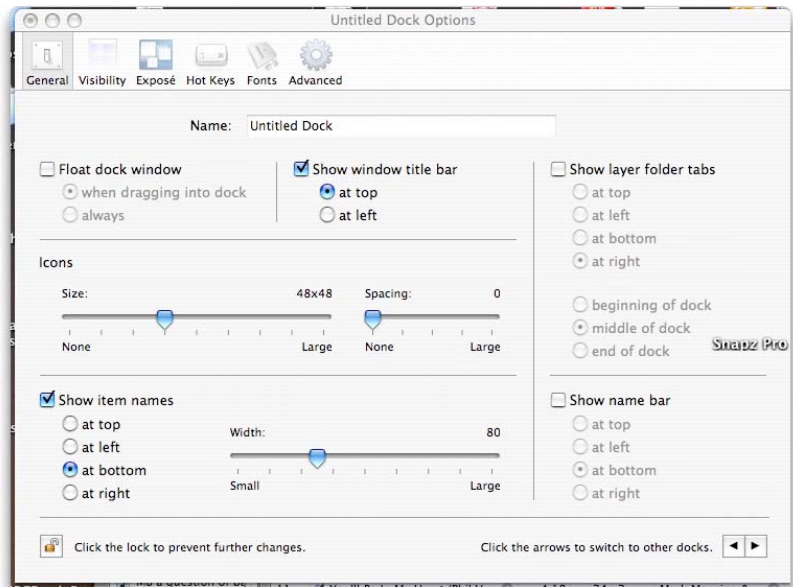
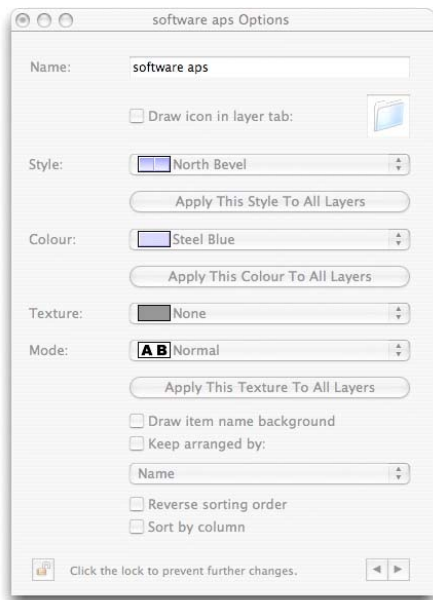


Use of Hotspots (places to initiate loading and starting of applications), switching applications and what to do on startup, are all possibilities for changing your options, depending on your desires.

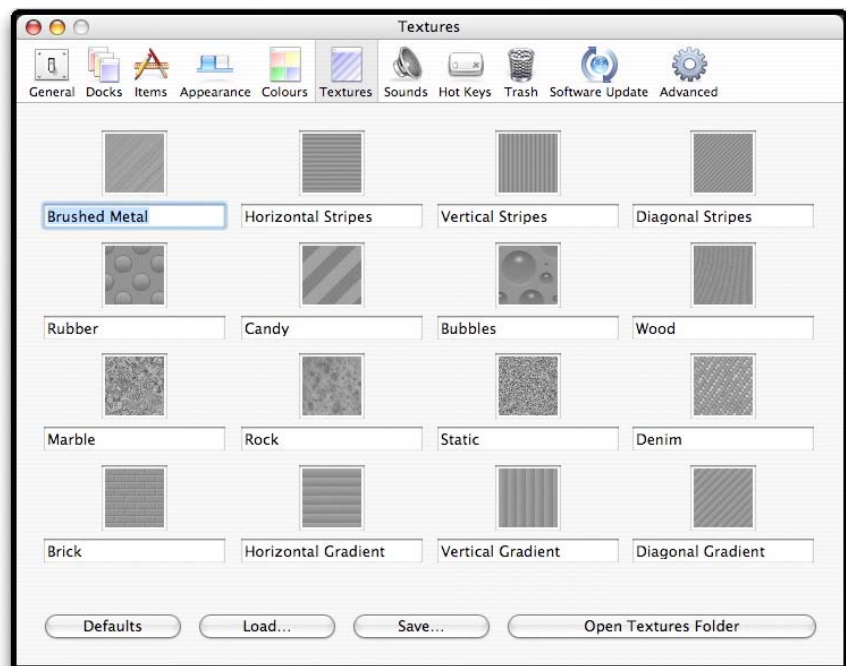


A Dragthing command toolbar adds a new feature to the Finder toolbar when the software is installed and launched. By clicking *New dock*, the dock possibilities spring up on the screen. Docks can be positioned on the bottom, left, right or top of the screen depending upon your aesthetic motives. You can position these docks by dragging or positioning. Mine were placed on the bottom and on the left.

Dragthing makes a "dock" as an area to classify and store aliases for files, discs, servers, URLs, bookmarks or other items you would like to frequently access. The dock floats on top of the desktop and can be placed and dragged around, anywhere on the desktop. It can be stretched horizontally or vertically, depending on your preferences as well. These storage areas called "docks," pop up when you want to assign a new dock.



“Tabs” which look like the top part of manila folders that you use in your file cabinets, are called “Layers.” Different colors can be assigned to each layer and it is best to add a name for each layer (software, current work or whatever you want) that identifies what it is. The name then appears to the side of the layers, like a series of mini file folders. When you click on each tab, the contents expose themselves. But there is much you can do with the docks and the layers that can make you more productive, efficient and much more.





Double-clicking on one of the layers then pops up the layer editor, which then shows the flexibility to make your layers and docks even nicer. By clicking on a tab, you can change the color of that tab area and/or name it so that each area can be identified and located. To customize each tab/layer area, you can first stretch the dock by clicking on the side. Using the arrows that appear to slide left or right, then it is possible to enlarge in width and even uncover even more tabs to use in the dock area.

To store what you want to launch in your Dock and layer-tabs, first open the hard drive icon on your desktop. Pointing your mouse on an icon, like Photoshop, for example, is what you do first and then by clicking and holding down the mouse, you drag the icon over to the tab that you would like to store it. When you touch the tab you want, a series of squared blank areas appear under the main tab-layer and this is where you can place your alias-type icons. If you have assigned a certain color to the tapped layer area, the series of squares will show the same color which will differentiate this layer from the other colored tabbed -layers. A small symbol of your software, folder or whatever you choose appears in one of those square partitions. To launch any of these application- utilities, you just double click on the icon, for example, in this case, your Photoshop. It launches and then you can work with it. Of course, you can always launch another application by clicking on the dock.

Versatility is a very special feature of Dragthing. Some uses are: (1) Using the internet configuration, you can select a text file containing html and DragThing will extract the URLs from the file and place in a dock square with their titles which allows for use of the bookmarks that you have and store them in another way' (2) being able to configure DragThing in several languages (English, French, Italian, Germany, Japanese) with appropriate help menus with documentation in these languages); (3) special icons from iconfactory or other symbols can be imported and used in the squares within the layers to identify the items (or use just words or have both); (4) Also another window dock you are using pops up so you can switch between the programs used. This expands as you use different software programs launched within the dock or from your hard drive; (5) Docks can be exported or imported and stored.

If you update documents after launching with Drag thing, you still need to save those items to the desktop or hard drive or where ever they are stored. Hiding and showing the docks on command or by clicking on certain part of the screen that you designate, as a "clickable show area" is also possible. There are options to customize the item, layer or dock options and can alter the preferences to meet you needs. You can use small or large icons and/or names to represent what you put in the docks depending on your preferences. You can also arrange the dock tabbed areas by name, last modified date or other ways and customize your use of the program by using the preference menu.

If you are updating Dragthing or starting out, there are new improvements. This is the biggest update to DragThing since version 5.0 was released over a year ago. Notable changes include: (1) Full support for spring-loaded folders; (2) You can now drag items from the Finder over a folder in a DragThing dock, wait or press the space bar, and then continue dragging into subfolders or to applications in that folder; (3) Dragging attachments or clippings into folders is supported too; (4) There are cool visual effects when switching between layers including fades, zooms, spins, and wipes; (5) A new restricted "Classroom Mode" designed for using DragThing in a lab, classroom, or home environment, which connects a server to many computers, is improved. With this enabled, you can't change any docks or settings - or even quit DragThing. This can be done without the administrator password; (6) Special educational site license pricing is also available for this purpose); (7) Another special mode hides Dragthing's icon in the Apple Dock, and turns DragThing into a background-only application that blends in with the OS and can't be switched to, hidden or accidentally quit; (8) Now Dragthing allows the use of Editable text clippings. You can now use DragThing to store small notes, or edit existing clippings you have in your docks. Each version is a new improvement and makes Dragthing even more improved.

Dragthing is one of my top five-application/ utilities. It is shareware so you can download it and try it out first. If you like it, buy it as you then obtain updates, assistance and additional information. The price is extremely reasonable for the power and what the utility does. I have used it for several years and it keeps getting better and better. It is exceptionally flexible to use. Your uses of Dragthing can expand with your imagination, experience and how you would like to utilize your computer and its tasks.

You will find Dragthing is invaluable for helping become more efficient and working with your Macintosh and accomplishing a variety of daily tasks. Your desktop will also look like a beautiful place and a neater place instead of a jumbled mess of icons, folders and much more. But most of all, Dragthing allows you to click and open numerous folders, files, accessories, applications much more quickly and by using one or more stroke/ clicks. Try Dragthing. It is not only most useful and easy to utilize, it will expand your ability to work with the Apple Dock. Like many users and myself, you will wonder how you managed without it.

The Introduction to *doc_Babad's Software and Shareware Reviews*

Five Great Software Tools for you and yours. Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham



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

This month I continue sharing my software shareware finds with you.

As is usual, I continue to pursue my interest in utilitarian software and shareware esoterica and when something on the Internet catches my fancy, I provide you with a few eclectic tidbits.

Remember, there is no rhyme or reason for my choices other than what appears interesting, amusing, or heavens forbid, useful

Note, I do a quick several hours long test run, at the very least, on each of the shareware items I review in this column, and may at time contact the developer when things don't work as I believe they should. Such shareware review is never as complete as the multipage individual in-depth reviews of the more complex software products I do for macC.

When reviewing commercial software products, most of which are more feature rich than their shareware counterparts, I spend 2-3 days working with the product. I always take the time to read manuals, users guides and help files. Sometimes I read such material before I test the product, but usually it's after I get just a bit stuck.

Indeed, for software and shareware reviews, where I agree with the developers' description and other comments, stripped of all adjectives, I unabashedly use them in this column. If not, you'll read about it, loud and clear! [Aren't mixed metaphors wonderful?]

Apimac Note Pad 1.6.6 — An easy to use notepad for collecting text information.

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Apimac Note Pad 1.6.6

Developer: Apimac

support@apimac.com

<http://www.apimac.com/np/index.html>

Shareware: US \$19.95, Single User; Site License \$29.95

Requirements: Macintosh, Power Mac, iBook, PowerBook, eMac, iMac and Mac mini. Also available for Classic Mac OS 7–9.x

Version 1.6.6 requires Mac OS X 10.2 or later. There is no available information about Tiger compatibility. Size 2.7 MB



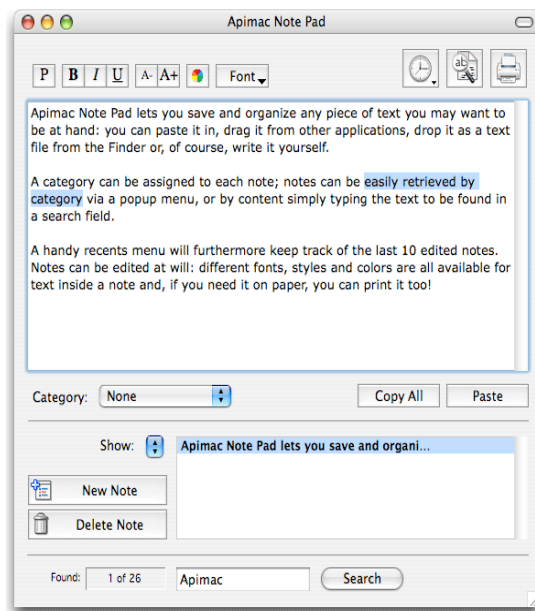
Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.3.9.

Apimac Note Pad is a shareware application that lets you save and organize any piece of text you may want to be easily accessible. You can paste text into it, by dragging it from other applications, drop it into the application as a text file from the Finder or write often-used boilerplate yourself. My initial use of the product was cataloging the contact headers for all the different personal email contact information footers. With one limitation, this allowed me to no longer need to switch to access a baker's half-dozen pieces of stationary in Eudora when wanting to send mail associated with my consulting business, macCompanion, or the other civic and professional organization for which I volunteer.

In addition, you can assign each note to a standard (defined by its developer) or a user-named category. This added feature allows users to retrieve notes on a category-basis using a popup menu. Users can search note contents via a find function from within the application. For completeness, you can assign a password to your notes or hide your notes folder.

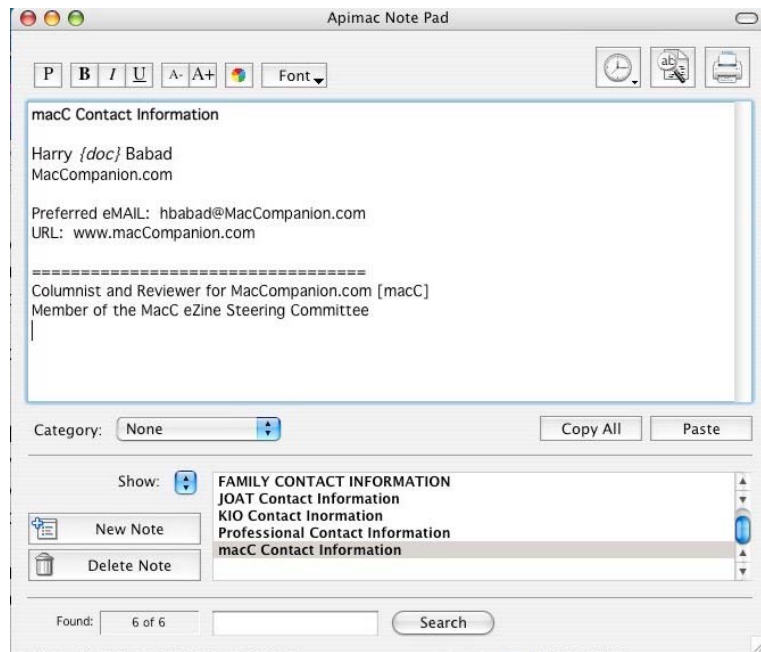
The software has a handy *recents* menu that keeps track of the last 10 notes you've edited. Notes can be edited in a variety of ways to clarify or expand upon their contents. Note text styling enables you to use a



variety of fonts, font styles and colors making your written copy more interesting looking. If you need you note(s) on paper, you can print them too!

Several aspects of the interface irritated me...

- First, I couldn't independent of the first line of the note, change the name of a note to make it more easily identifiable. The note name was the entire contents of first line, like it or not. A real drag when I wanted to add the role information to the note title, without adding it to the pasted note contents itself.
- Second, the lack of ability to justify part of a note annoyed me. For my contact information list, I want that information pasted as right-Justified text and the 'business descriptor to be center justified. Such features are beyond the scope of the product.
- Third, nothing either on the Apimac web page or in the readme file discusses the existence of a preferences pane, shame... shame.
- Fourth, other than by trial and error, I could not find out where the software stores it notes. This is needed for data backup purposes. It's in my Users > Library > Preferences > Notepad folder



If a few of these were dealt with in the next update, this product would rate more highly.

Despite my gripes, I am reviewer ain't I, the software does what it promises in an intuitive manner. No, it's not perfect, but it is pretty good. It's an easy to use product that has an intuitive interface. Although I prefer to have a few select software items stored in my finder menu bar, placing the software icon into make dock made it just a click away.

As an experienced reviewer of checklist and notepad software I had no trouble leaning to work with the product but a less experienced user deserves at least a short manual or access to a help file. For a twenty-dollar license fee, a bit of available help, just in case, is something a user deserves. After walking of my irritations with the product, I recommend it to those users for whom my specific concerns don't mater. **3.5 macCs**

DockExtender 3.1.3 – A flexible and powerful way to expand your Dock's utility. Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham

DockExtender 3.1.3

Developer: CodeTek Studios, Inc

<mailto:support@codetek.com>

<http://www.codetek.com/dockextender/>

Shareware: \$20 [USD]

Released Mar 02, 2004

Size: 1.2 MB

Uninstaller provided



Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later; Tiger ready

Audience: All user levels



This software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under Macintosh OS X 10.3.9.

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Introduction — We all use dozens of applications for both work and play. Many of us routinely work with hundreds of documents stashed in a multitude of folders. It's a no-brainer that we want quick and easy access to them, *all of them*. DockExtender [DE] is a software tool that can meet your needs for quick access to your applications, documents, and projects. In my macC review last month of dockDoublor X 1.1, I noted that you could, in a few minutes, simply double the number of docks installed. With DockExtender 3.1.3, you can to configure up to ten tuned docks, focusing on you computing needs. DE works by adding up to ten buttons, which are a menu-oriented popup interface to Apple's standard dock. Each of these 'dockings' is in effect a separate dock.

DockExtender is designed to help you organize and access all of your files using a simple, compact interface. With it, you can minimize Dock clutter by creating DockExtender Menus, called "docklings" by its developers that occupy spaces in your present dock. Now, with a few minutes work, you can transfer the items that create dock clutter to your docklings and still have room for other links you had no space for with Apple's present Panther Dock implementation.

These menus can contain lists of programs, project folders, or individual documents, such as custom phone lists or your stationery. They are completely configurable and allow the use a hierarchy of nested folders, and they can be changed as your needs change. Such flexibility enhances the clean look of your Dock and improves its speed. DockExtender provides a way to significantly enhance your Dock's contents without succumbing to microscopic icons. By using DockExtender, you can organize all of your applications and documents into as



many as ten different menu sets, all one mouse click or keystroke away.

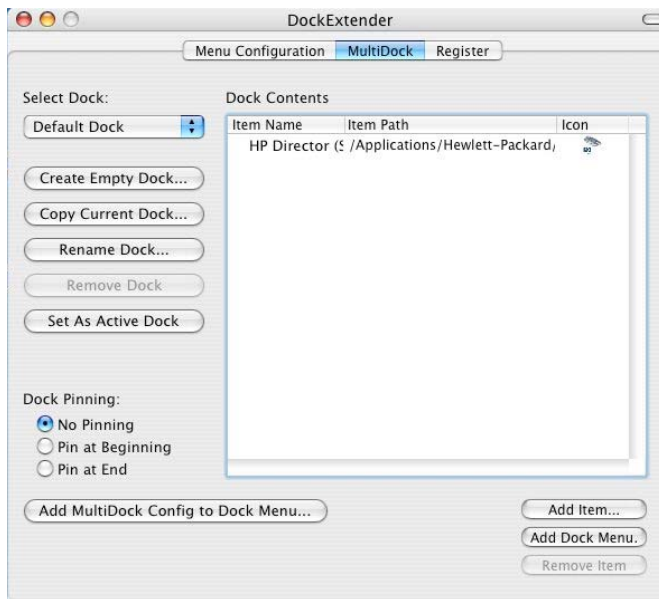
According to its publisher, you have complete control over DockExtender docklings; their content and organization are completely up to you. That is true, but configuring DockExtender took me about 2 hours. I had to resort to a trial and error method to figure out how to customize my new docks. The problem was that when I opened the application, my existing dock with all of its crowded 80-item dock contents vanished. I had lost the original Dock, which was my intended reference point for rearranging my work into multiple docklings. [No, I hadn't captured its image as a screen shot.] My first shock occurred when my 80-item default (Mac OS X) Dock disappeared after installing DockExtender. Good news, bad news— by creating 5 new docklings from scratch, all identified by custom icons as well as text names; my dock-life truly became less cluttered. The process even enabled me to do some 'spring cleaning' trashing links (aliases) to applications and folders I no longer used.

The well-written and illustrated 19-page user's guide might have somewhat eased my pain. With 20-20 hindsight, it would not have, since I was configuring my dockling collection in a manner different from that illustrated in the user's *guide* [e.g., {a} *Harry's OS X Dock*, {b} *Household Related*, {c} *Cooking and More*, {d} *Computer Related*, and, last but not least, {e} *Professional Activities*.] My dockling organizational approach worked and the results of time spent personalizing and extending my Dock's capabilities was well worth the effort.

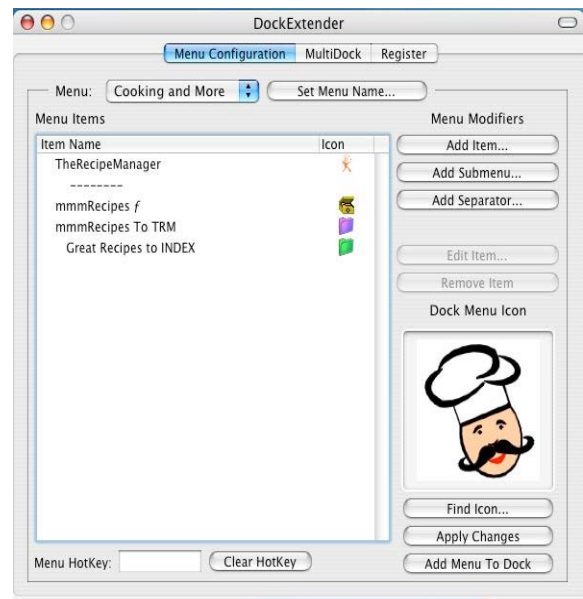
I agree with the developer that since you can flexibly and completely control the contents of every new dockling, you're free to organize each menu to make it work best for you. This is true whether you use the organizing elements illustrated in the user guide or create one better suited to your needs.

You can organize each dockling's menus into separate submenus; add labeled separators to break up groups of applications, files, or folders; or just load the contents of an individual project folder into a DockExtender menu. The developer claims that DockExtender gives you the fastest access to all of your applications and documents. Fastest, I'm not sure about. However, the interface is easy to use, and accessing what I've 'docked' into its menus is as fast as I need it to be.

It's Totally Customizable — You configure the software by way of the System Preferences application added to your other user preference settings. You have the ability to switch between multiple Dock configurations as you work. Using the DockExtender preference pane, you can set up your Dock configurations without having to modify your current Dock. Add a *MultiDock* configuration submenu to any DockExtender menu, and swap Docks whenever you want.



DockExtender Preferences Window



Menu Configuration Window

Configuration is made easy — Setting up your DockExtender menus is a snap. Drag files or folders into the DockExtender Preference Pane, add submenus and separators, and you're all set. Changes are immediately available in all your menus as soon as you exit System Preferences. If you want to change the order of items later, just drag them to their new location in the menu or into an existing or new submenu.

I also liked the ability to install and, at times, create, custom icons to enhance the visual impact of my menus and Docks, I used *iconCompo 3.2* for creating custom icons [March 2005 macC.]

Product Features

Create up to 10 custom menus with as many items, submenus, and separators as you want.

Launch applications, run AppleScripts, open web pages or documents, mount AppleShare drives, and more from any DockExtender menu.

Access menus from the Dock, Menu Bar, or via a custom hotkey.

Use a hotkey shortcut to open a menu, then navigate the menu from the keyboard

Access the current contents of an individual folder from a submenu.

Create multiple custom Dock configurations and switch between them from any DockExtender menu.

Choose your own icon for each DockExtender menu in the Dock.

Unlock the hidden Dock "pinning" feature and put your Dock at either end of your screen.

A Few Gripes —

I found one glitch in the software that almost lowered this software to below 4.0 macC's: Having installed five docklings, all with customized icons, the software lost one of the customized icons and defaulted to the generic DockExtender icon. I worked on resetting my custom icons five times, but no matter what I tried, within a few minutes one of my five custom dock icons faded. Yes, one 'menu' icon always got kyboshed. HUMBUG! Neither restarting the dock nor restarting my computer rescued the missing custom icon.



In one instance, the transfigured generic docklings contents become hash. However, restarting the Dock restored the generic icon's contents. I chose not to further test this dockling content restoration feature, having exceeded my time limit for testing the product.



Therefore, I contacted Bill Goldstein, Pres/CEO of CodeTek Studios, and shared the problem with him. Bill replied that unfortunately, a few users of DockExtender (Jaguar and Panther) have also reported my problem, but the glitch was not a problem for most uses of the software. Bill suggested that I work with fewer docklings and when I limited myself to only three, I had no problems. Bill also noted that a few users encountered comparable problems when using DockExtender under Mac OS X 10.4, Tiger. The developers are working on the problem and I am eagerly awaiting the next update.

According to Bill, there are two applications that are known to break the DockExtender docklings: Snapz Pro X will restart the SystemUIServer process when it starts up, which breaks all of the docklings that you have in your Dock (not just those in DockExtender). Basically, the docklings lose their reference to SystemUIServer and the messages from the Dock don't call their associated functions. (Bill mentioned that the Mac OS X SystemUIServer is the process that starts up and handles all of the docklings in your Dock.)

The solution for Snapz Pro is to change the default screen capture key from command-shift-3 to something else. Alternatively, put the "Restart Dock" DockExtender command ("Add Item..." button, "DockExtender Command" tab, select "Restart Dock" from the drop-down list) into a hotkey menu or the Menu Bar Tool and select this after a restart/reboot/login.) The problem with SystemUIServer is the only other conflict that Bill shared.

I have no idea what SystemUIServer does, so if I have such a beast, I'll await the update that solves the problem. Bill Goldstein commented that he would keep me informed so that I can inform my readers. Since my dialogue with Bill convinced me that the problem I'd had is not universal, I'm suggesting that you try out the software. It is one of the best examples of Dock extender software I've come across.

Summary — I found, as the publisher promised, that I could create multiple customized Dock menu configurations and switch between them from my DockExtender menu. For me, initially, the hard part was figuring out what to populate them with. A scratch pad is a wonderful tool for helping you figure out what goes where. If you are a purist, use an outline tool.

Despite my problems with the software, I found the benefits significantly outweighed the risks. The product's interface is intuitive. Adding Dock diversity by using customized popup

menus is a great way to make a large number of items available to me in a small amount of space. Including the initial *five* and now *three* well-filled DockExtender docklings, I reduced my Dock contents from 80 icons to a mere 40. The resulting menus' contents were easy to select from and eliminated my affair with microscopic dock icons.

I had no problems contacting the developer and sharing a complete description of my disappearing dockling icon problem, and I promised Bill that I would work with his programmers to test any fixes to the random glitch.

Meanwhile, what worked, worked extremely well, so despite Murphy and my personal gremlin, I'm not dropping my rating below 4.0 macCs.

PithHelmet 2.1.1 — An ad-blocking plugin for Safari Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham

PithHelmet

Developer: Mike Solomon of Wikir

mas63@cornell.edu

<http://culater.net/software/PithHelmet/PithHelmet.php>

Shareware: \$10 [USD] File Size: 300 KB.

Requirements:

PithHelmet 2.5.1 (10.4 only)

PithHelmet 2.4.2 (10.3.9 only)

PithHelmet 2.3.3 (Mac OS X up to 10.3.8)

Audience: All Safari users



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The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.3.9.

Introduction

PithHelmet is a wonderful way to filter the content of web pages I view, and its use almost completely obliterated the distractions that frustrate my Internet browsing. The PithHelmet installer adds some basic but powerful filtering ability to Apple's Safari browser. It has other features that I describe below, but its main virtue is getting rid of the unwanted invasion of my privacy whenever I search for information on the World Wide Web.

Safari must be turned off when you install PithHelmet. Once you've installed the PithHelmet files, restart Safari. When Safari is running, your menubar will contain the PithHelmet Icon. Go ahead! Try browsing a few sites; you should see markedly fewer advertisements.

Mike Solomon, its developer, likes to recommend using cnn.com or msn.com as examples. Although I did not do a before and after PithHelmet check, I am an avid collector of recipes on both on Food Network, Epicurious and the Gourmet Magazine websites so in addition to cnn.com, I checked these out. Although not all of the annoyances on these sites were excised, many, many were! I rechecked for *grilled asparagus* recipes on Google and did my usual search for the few recipes of interest. Wonder of wonders, I did not get a single advertisement during either a food network search or my Google search. Luck or great software? I wish I'd kept track of the individual distractions — with 20–20 hindsight, a before and after count would have quantified my positive experiences with the product. (What else do you expect from a scientist?) I then checked out The Economist Magazine's website. Hurray, there were no ads hidden behind my main search window; banner ads were completely squashed; and no

flashing attention getters or manic animated distracters interrupted my surfing or more focused searches.



The Software Itself

PithHelmet is an extended site preferences and ad blocking plugin for Apple's Safari browser. The basic purpose of the plugin is to empower you, the user, to view the web as you like. You can block ad images, Flash, Shockwave, or horrible midi loops - the world is your oyster. PithHelmet is just a series of hacks on top of Apple's WebKit framework, but it seems to work rather effectively. Due to the manner in which PithHelmet blocks ad content, most types of advertising content can be caught in the filter - this includes images, JavaScript, css, text, iframes, popups, and popunders. (Now, I'm not sure what each of these terms means, but based on my tests almost all the distractions were gone! Dead gone!)

The software is designed to be flexible — If some desirable content is accidentally caught by the Block rules (a false positive), you can specifically allow content via an Allow rule. The method is similar to adding a Block rule: simply add the rule and under the filter tab select "Allow" instead of "Block". Allow rules are applied only after a Block rule has been matched.

Which Version Should I Use? — Mike Solomon

acknowledges that there are now 3 different releases to match the 3 different variations of Safari, which may be confusing to potential users. Mike says try to follow the notes near the download links. Also, the PithHelmet Version Check utility allows you to get updates to the appropriate version, thought you might want to run it twice, since there are a couple of back-to-back updates for older versions.



Adding Third Party Functionality to PithHelmet — With PithHelmet you have the opportunity to create and add your own rules. Check out the developer's website for such details — they fall far outside of the scope of this review. The developer also recently added the PithHelmet Rule Exchange [<http://culater.net/wiki/moin.cgi/PithHelmetRuleExchange%5D>] so users can request and share other programmers' custom scripts for selected sites. Mike notes that there isn't much there right now, a mere 16 items, but he hopes there will be more to come soon.

The Available Tech Talk — There is a great deal of interesting sounding information on Mike Solomon's website, much of which I don't understand. Things like the detailed listing of items on the PithHelmet *Explanations* page escape me. Templates are another subject I don't understand. They are discussed in detail on the developer's site, but that description sparked no understanding since I'm not a developer or programmer. I guess I do not have a need to know!

A sample (in blue) of stuff I don't understand — PithHelmet is a plugin for [SIMBL](#). This keeps PithHelmet from unintentionally interfering with other applications, such as the screen saver. PithHelmet is distributed as a [metapackage](#) and installed by Apple's Installer.app. The PithHelmet.mpkg file will automatically update or install the latest version of [SIMBL](#) and the PithHelmet plugin.

All of the technical detail does not matter to the average user! The software is easily installed and works, except for rare exceptions, in the background. As noted earlier you can selectively either reload an unfiltered page or unblock filtered content. As my testing showed, it nuked all the annoyances I routinely encounter when I do Internet searches.

Newbie Help Needed

This simple-minded reviewer found he didn't understand how to add the new filters. There are extra filters identified on Mike's website that I would like to download and install, but I can't figure out how. Mike, most of your product's users are neither knowledgeable about nor interested in the underlying technical details that make this product such a great addition to my Safari browser. We just want to benefit from its filtering to get rid of the crud that at times overwhelms our Internet experiences.

For them (and me, too), a simple ReadMe file that answers the day-to-day essential questions is needed. (E.g., how do I clear blocked cookies, how to unblock a website, deal with PithHelmet filtering out some needed 'information'. You know, create a non-technical dummies guide to PithHelmet. We'll all be grateful.

[FLASH, Newbie Help Provided.](#) — After I completed my draft review, I sent a copy to Mike Solomon, the software's developer. Less than 24 hours later, I received the following message. *I've added a small section to the PithHelmet site entitled "Survival Guide." See if that helps.*

<http://culater.net/wiki/moin.cgi/PithHelmetSurvivalGuide>

The guide begins — *It's been increasingly clear to me that I've been remiss in providing sufficient documentation for PithHelmet, so here is the survival guide. Hopefully, this will get you up to speed with minimal difficulty and allow you to take full advantage of PithHelmet's extensive functionality. PithHelmet is shipped to work "out of the box," but occasionally it can make a mistake. Luckily, there are ways to let you minimize any potential inconvenience.*

The guide discusses:

Reload an Unfiltered Link	Turn Off PithHelmet for a While	How do I unblock a particular web site?
Deal with Login/Cookie Problems	I Screwed Up My Rules	How do I install the extra filters listed on Bill's website – The answer was on the PithHelmet Rule Exchange Page.

This guide well for me, but I believe there should eventually be something available like *PithHelmet for Dummies*; something a bit simpler for the hoards of you who will rush out and license PithHelmet after reading my review.

Conclusions

PithHelmet is a wonderful way to filter the content of web pages I view. Its use almost completely obliterated all of the myriad distractions that continually frustrate my Internet browsing. The software's basic purpose, which it does extraordinarily well, is to filter *out* advertisements.

Try PithHelmet. If necessary, read the survival guide. If you don't want to bother, that's okay too. If a web page doesn't work the way you expected it to, you can always read the guide at that time. Check the product out. Do a few before and after tests. Buy a license by registering at the Kagi website (I don't do PayPal). Gents and ladies — support this fine piece of shareware. Who knows what useful software will next spring from Mike Solomon's fertile mind?

In closing, if anyone tries to take PithHelmet off of my computer, I will likely threaten him or her with bodily harm! Better yet, make the stare at banner adds, and blinking action figures for at least a dozen hours. I like PithHelmet and especially enjoy the visual silence when browsing — it was deafening!

I rate this product **4.5 macCs**.

shadowClipboard 2.0.4 – Extra clipboards available at your beck and call. Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham



shadowClipboard 2.0.4

Developer: StupidFish23

eMail: sales@stupidfish23.com

Website: <http://www.stupidfish23.com/>



Shareware: Single user license \$10 [USD] – Allows no clipboard sharing.

Group user license \$25.00. A five-day use to try feature in advanced mode makes it easy o get to know the product's full features.



Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later. Size 1.2 MB

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Have you ever wanted to be able to copy text from multiple web pages and then paste them all into the document you are working on? Wouldn't it be great to do so without always having to switch between applications after each copy and paste operation? Although I make extensive use of MS Word's clipboard feature, it is limited to use within the MS Office suite. To achieve your multi-clipboard needs, check out *shadowClipboard*. As an aside, I'm a long satisfied user of StupidFish23's *shadowGoogle*, so I thought I'd give this other product a try... I'm glad I did. It's an excellent solution for anyone, like me, who does lots of copying and pasting of text and images.

Product Description

shadowClipboard is a clipboard enhancer that remembers a user-definable number of items copied to the clipboard. It manages multiple clipboards in a convenient, unobtrusive way. *shadowClipboard* gives you access to files, pages of texts, images, PDF documents, and all other data you have copied a few minutes ago or a week ago. A choice of two interfaces (simple or advanced) lets you choose how to paste your clipped items into your documents. It's straightforward: copy something to the clipboard (Command C) while you working and *shadowClipboard* stores it for you. There are, of course, limits: 15 clippings are available in simple mode and a large number defined by you in advanced mode. Yes, yes, you can easily clear out the junk whenever you want to, getting rid of useless captures.

The power of *shadowClipboard* lies in its simplicity and straightforwardness. From an access perspective, rather than placing it into one of my multiple docks, I can access it from the Finder menu bar of OS X. It's next to the other items I've placed there beside my Menu Bar clock.

shadowClipboard offers two interfaces. Advanced Mode is the default mode, one that offers users a list of copied items with a user-definable number of clipping slots and a resizable preview section. Simple Mode provides a simpler interface that supports up to 15 clipboards, maximum. The simple mode interface uses a translucent floating

pane reminiscent of the Mac OS X application switcher. The pane provides you with a thumbnail image of the items you've captured. In simple mode *shadowClipboard*, you can not only paste selected clips, but also paste formatted text as plain text. It's true even when the selections are copied from MS Word or FileMaker Pro. You can remove clippings from your accumulations collection by accessing the preferences, removing all clipboards, and quitting. This is easily achieved thanks to the intuitive buttons on the Simple Mode overlay pane. Enough, the rest of this short review will deal with and illustrate the basic features of advanced mode, they are all I presently need.

Since *shadowClipboard* works in the background, it's available whenever you want to use it. To my delight, *shadowClipboard* needs absolutely no configuring to run, but it has plenty of user customizable features available in its preference pane. I'm using the software in Advanced Mode, but using only a few of those advanced features—for now, that's all I need. It's nice to know the extra features listed below are available should my needs expand. You can read more about the capabilities of both the Simple Mode and the Advanced Mode features on the developer's website or in its clearly written, nine-page PDF manual.

With *shadowClipboard* you can

- keep and browse images, text, files, and anything else you have copied to the pasteboard in the past
- preview your stored clipboards in advanced mode
- easily access all copied items through the status item or fully customizable key combos
- use the Append Copy feature to append copied items to the pasteboard's contents, rather than replacing it
- filter pasteboard types, allowing you to skip images or text to reduce memory and disk usage
- use the great sheet mode or switch to window mode if you prefer to move the window around
- share your clipboards with other *shadowClipboard* users on your local network or between users of the same Mac
- paste text as-is or as plain, unformatted text
- drag and drop clipboards you might need in the future to the Stored Clipboards

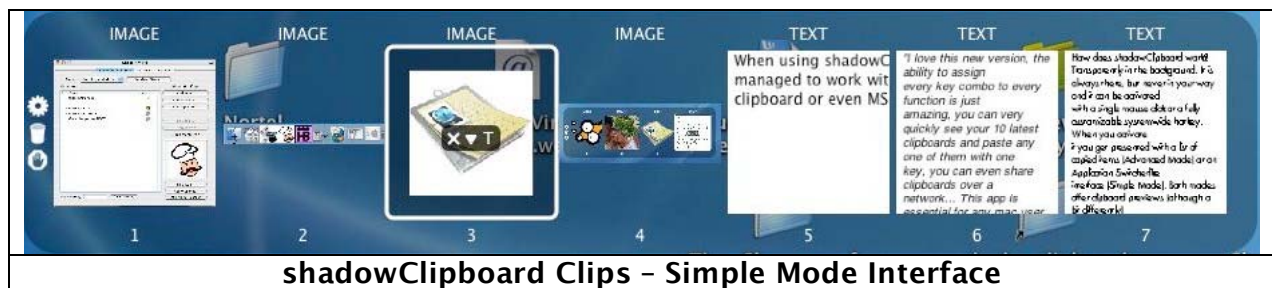
How does *shadowClipboard* Work?

Copy what you want [command-C] in the course of your work. When you need to use copied materials in a document, just reach up to the Menu Bar and click the software's icon. It is always there, but never in your way. It can be activated with a single mouse click or, if you'd like, with a fully customizable system-wide hotkey. When you activate the software, you are presented with a list of copied items (Advanced Mode) or an *Application Switcher*-like interface (Simple Mode). Both modes offer clipboard previews from which you can decide which item to paste. You can select the item using your mouse or arrow keys (Advanced Mode) or the tab key (Simple Mode). Paste a selected clipboard by pressing the Enter (Return) key, by clicking (Simple Mode) or double-clicking (Advanced Mode) on the desired item. *shadowClipboard* will automatically hide itself and paste the selected clipboard to the last location of your cursor. Additionally, *shadowClipboard* places the selected item on the system clipboard, so if you have to

paste a clipboard multiple times, you can simply do so using the system-wide Command-V shortcut.

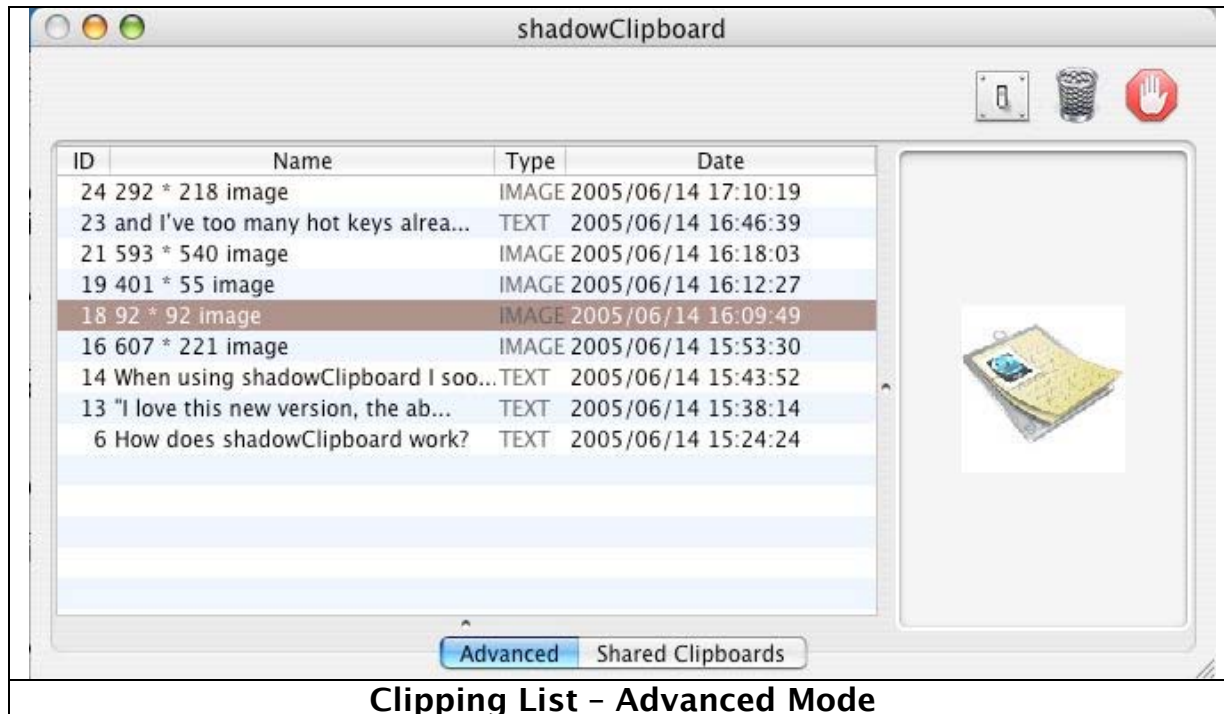
It's Not Rocket Science

Simple Mode uses a Classic Mac OS Application Switcher-like interface to display copied items in 128 x 128 boxes on a rounded, transparent background. Previews are always visible for as many as 15 boxes containing your images, files, and copied text. The first nine clipboards are easily viewed on the clippings pane, and the rest are accessed using your keyboard. Simple Mode even displays the format for each individual clipping, be it an image, a file, or text using labels above the captured information. Individual clipboard contents are easily pasted, removed or converted and pasted as plain text. Simple Mode can display only a maximum of 15 clipboards at a time and lacks more sophisticated features such stored clipboards, clipboard sharing, or scrollable previews found in Advanced Mode. Simple Mode is perfect for the casual user who needs access to only a few copied clipboards. For my needs, after a quick check, I defaulted back to Advanced Mode.



Advanced Mode uses a combined List and Preview display to present the user with a list of past clipboards. Selecting a clipboard entry will preview it in the Preview pane. The Preview pane is a multipurpose pane that can display scaled images, file and folder icons, and scrollable text content. Select a clipboard to preview by clicking on the desired item or use the up and down arrow keys to navigate to the clipboard entry. Advanced Mode features more metadata about clipboards content; e.g., the copy ID, a customizable clipboard name, the clipboard type, the time the clipboard was copied, and the number of times the given clipboard was pasted.

Advanced Mode also offers *Stored Clipboards*, an archive feature I have not tested. I've illustrated an image so saved in the graphics I provided. The number of available stored clipboards is a virtually unlimited. In addition, the contents of the clippings (the developer calls them slots) that are stored have a special feature. More recently copied items never replace them. Storing a clipboard is as easy as dragging and dropping it from the Current Clipboards list to the Stored Clipboards list.



Clipping List – Advanced Mode

The current clipboards can display as many clipboards as you defined in the preferences. Remember, save the clipping if you want to keep it. (Now, where have I heard this advice before?) Once the user-selected preferred number of clippings is exceeded, the first copied item gets dropped off the list and the newly copied one takes its place. The developers note that Advanced Mode allows a high number of clipboards to be used. Setting this number too high might, however, affect system performance.

Advanced Mode even offers Clipboard Sharing (Group user licenses only) that allows you to share your clipboards with other *shadowClipboard* users on your local network or with other users on your computer. According to its developer, Advanced Mode is the perfect solution for the power user and offers great versatility and is fully customizable. The publisher's recommendation isn't completely accurate. I love using the software in the advanced mode because I find its interface is easier for me to use, and who wants to be limited to 15 clippings? That does not belie its fully customizable versatility. However, since I'm not on a network, I don't need the extra capability. But you might — its there if you need it.

I have several changes I would welcome in the next version of this otherwise fine product. First, in Advanced Mode, I wish there were a way to zoom the image to get a better look at its contents. If this feature is available, I could not find that information in the manual. Second, there are too many terms in the manual that I did not understand. These, to mention a few, include Choosing Sheet or Windowed Mode, Snapping to Borders (Windowed Mode), and Using Appended Copy. Illustrations of these terms would be helpful.

I would also like to have the Advanced Mode window display a header at the top listings that identified those items as *current clipboards* and the lower part of the window entitled *stored clipboards*. The present main window format in Advanced Mode, unlike the rest of the interface, is not intuitive. Finally, 'slots' is an alien term to most users. Since clipboards store *clippings* (e.g., text or graphics), the definition of the term 'slots' needs to be included in the user manual.

When using *shadowClipboard* I soon started to wonder how I ever managed to work with the rather limiting option of Mac OS X's single clipboard or even MS Word's clipboard feature. Try it, you'll like it — I did and I'm going to keep on using the product. This is a great tool worthy of **4.5 macCs**.

Sidekick 1.2 for AppleWorks - A Mac OS X menu bar item for AppleWorks 6
Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Sidekick 1.2 for AppleWorks 6

Developer: Dale M Gillard; DMG Software
<http://www.geocities.com/dmgsoftware/feedback.html>
<http://www.geocities.com/dmgsoftware/>



Shareware: \$10 [USD]

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.8 or newer.
AppleWorks 6.2.4 or newer (North American English, International English, or French versions)

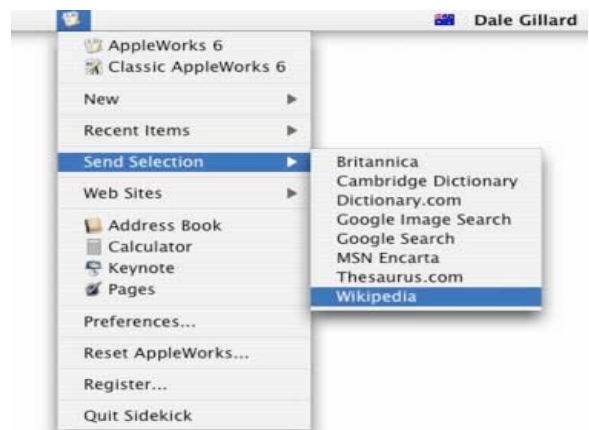


The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.3.9.

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Because I'm an information junkie, I subscribe to the AppleWorks Journal (AppleWorks Users Group - www.AWUG.org) and read with delight the myriad ways their 15,000 members use this rich and venerable piece of software. Therefore, when Dale Gillard, the software's developer, contacted me, I decided to give the product a try. Dale had read my shareware columns in macC and thought I'd do a fair job in reviewing Sidekick. After installing Sidekick, a Mac OS X menu bar item that supports AppleWorks 6, I did find that the software makes AppleWorks easier to use. Although the developer suggests the product will enhance my productivity, my limited use of AppleWorks prevented me from making that determination.

After the simple installation process is complete, with but a mouse click, you can quickly access many of AppleWorks features from that single point on the menu bar. Thus, you can eliminate having to search through the Finder to get to frequently used documents or to access Sidekick's other rich features. For example, you can create new documents or open recent documents. You can also search websites from within AppleWorks or quickly start OS X companion programs. Other features include easy access to your ten most recently used AppleWorks 6 documents.



Sidekick's *Send Selection* feature allows you to send highlighted text in a word processing document to a website and use it as the basis of an online search. You can Search Google, online dictionaries, or an online thesaurus from within a word processing document. The English copy of Sidekick can send highlighted text to the following websites:

Britannica.com (Encyclopedia Britannica)	Cambridge International Dictionary (UK and US English)
Thesaurus.com	Google Search
Dictionary.com	Google Image Search
Wikipedia (a collaborative, free content encyclopedia)	MSN Encarta [Dictionary, Atlas, and Encyclopedia...]

The ReadMe file noted that for example, to find out about the history of AppleWorks, first highlight "AppleWorks" in a word processing document and then choose the Send Selection > Wikipedia menu. This will launch your default web browser and search for "AppleWorks" at <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>. Note that the Send Selection feature cannot use text highlighted within a text frame such as those in the draw module.

For those of you who use them, you can quickly launch, from Sidekick, Mac OS X companion applications including Apple's address book, and calculator. The ReadMe file says I can also access KeyCaps, but it is not part of Panther. However, Dale noted that you could quickly launch Apple iWork programs, Pages, and Keynote (if installed), by selecting their icons from Sidekick's menu. Since I've not succumbed to iWorks, I could not test this feature.

The software's ReadMe file serves as a manual for the product. Although I figured out most of Sidekick's features without reading the file, it's there for those who need such help. Additionally, the DMG website makes available a number of AppleScripts that further enhance this fine product.

If you have Classic versions of AppleWorks 6 or AppleWorks 5 installed on your hard disk, you can start them up as needed. This attribute perplexes me since I've always chosen to convert my older AppleWorks documents to my latest OS X-compatible version. However, since I didn't understand this feature of the well-designed software, I'll choose to ignore it.

One wish for the road

If I had to ask for an addition to the software's capability, I would like to have a way of listing the templates and form letters I use, not as recently used items, but as favorites.

Conclusions

Although I'm not a heavy user of AppleWorks, I found that Sidekick not only met, but exceeded, my expectations gained by reading its description on the DMG website. (My main use for AppleWorks is the creation of CD labels and jewel case booklets using templates I've downloaded.) Be that as it may, if you use AppleWorks, you'll wonder how you could have gotten along without Sidekick. Since it uses less than 400 KB of hard disk space and sits demurely in my Apple Menu Bar, it's a for sure keeper. If you are an AppleWorks user, I whole-heartedly recommend this product — **4.5 macC's**

Software

LeadingProject 1.3.6 Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Computer Systems Odessa
2A Chkalova Street
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info@cs-odessa.com.ua

<http://www.leadingproject.com/en/main.php>

<http://www.leadingproject.com/en/products/project/main.php>

<http://www.leadingproject.com/en/download/project/trial.php>

<http://www.leadingproject.com/en/download/project/update.php>

<http://www.leadingproject.com/en/products/project/screenshots.php>

Released: June 10, 2005

\$200 USD Electronic, \$250 USD Boxed.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later or WinTel 2000/NT/XP.

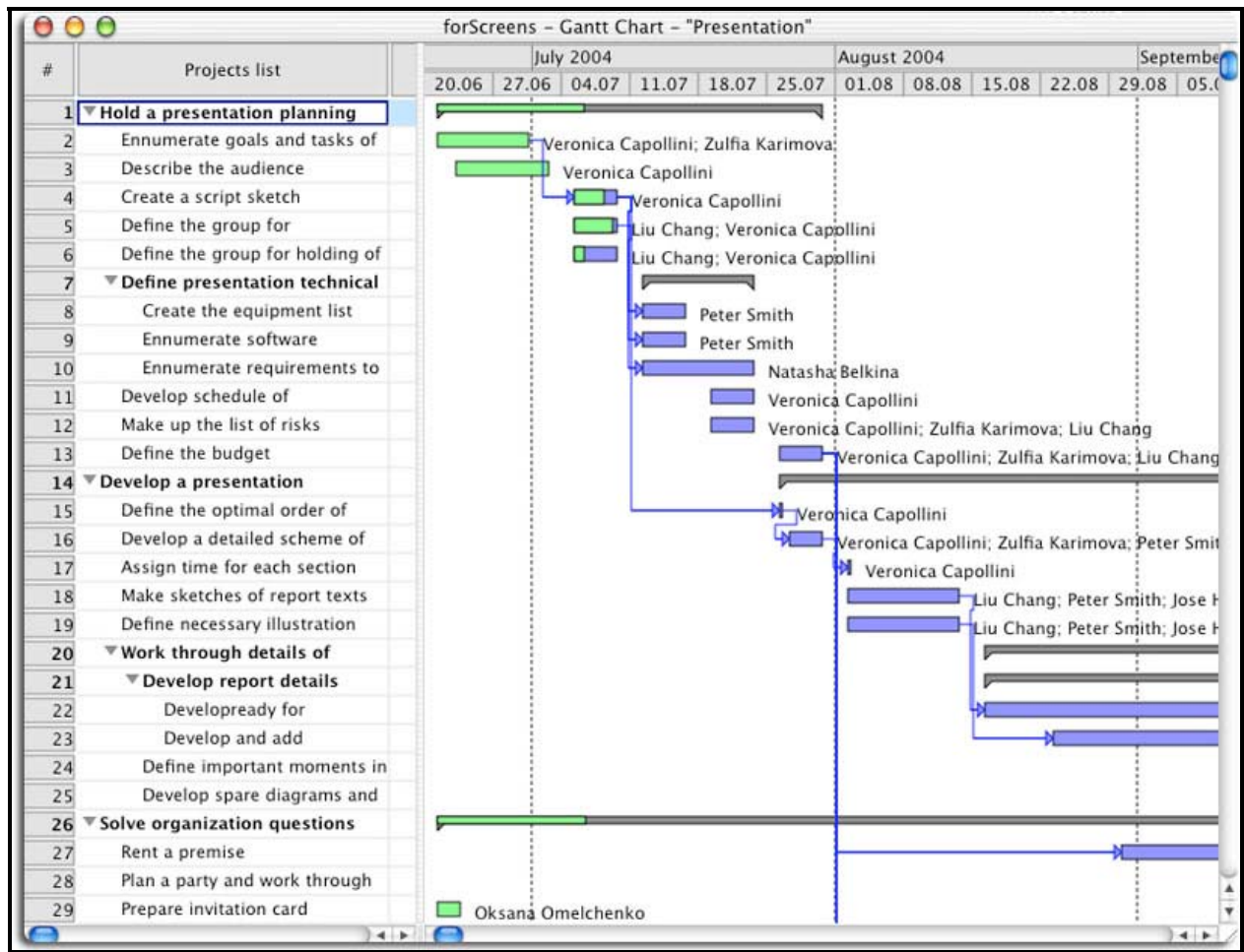
Strengths: It works as an MS Project act-alike.

Weaknesses: It doesn't have it all.

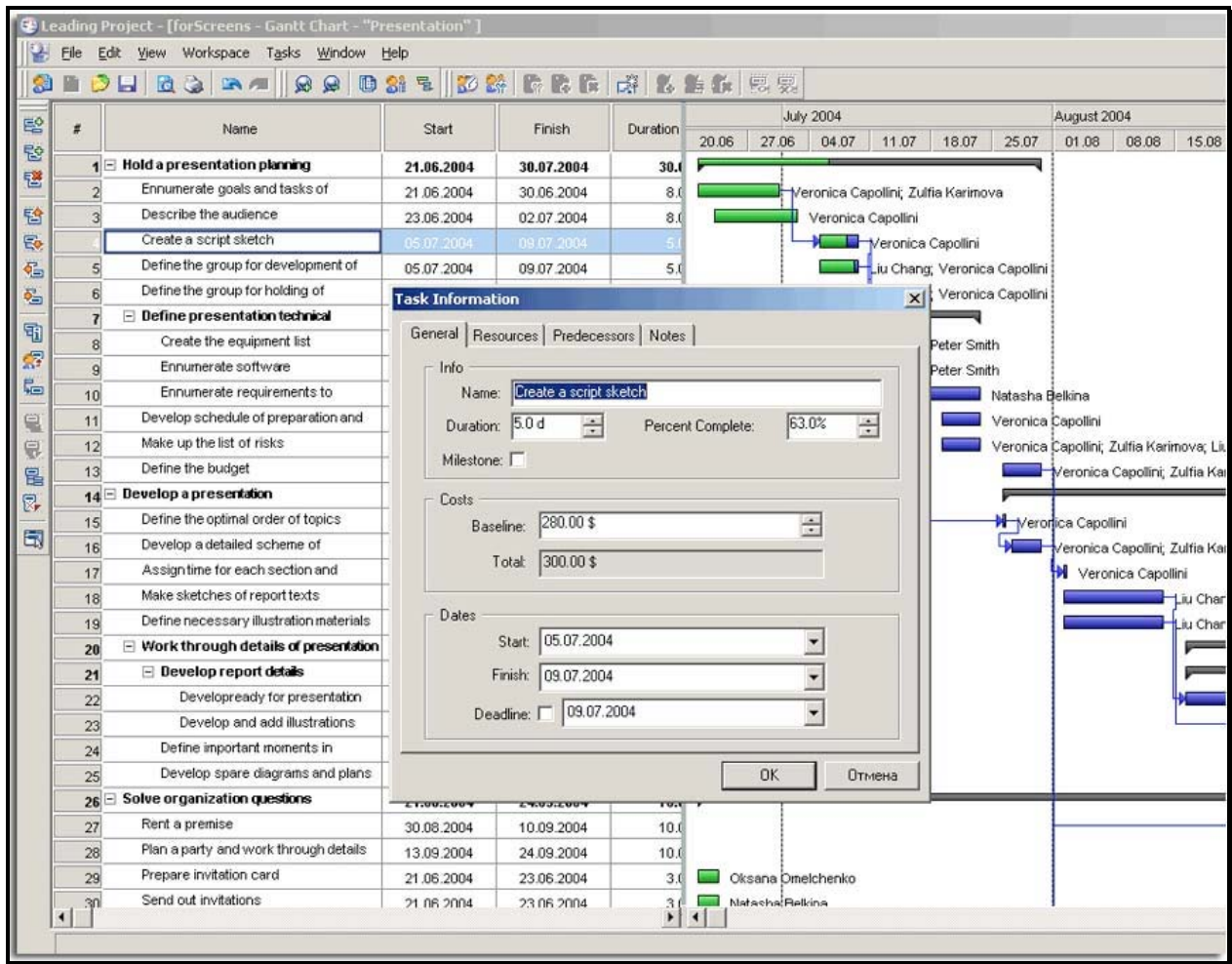
Want to be an efficient Project Manager running multiple projects?

LeadingProject is the follow-on replacement of ConceptDraw Project. The main feature is that it can handle multiple projects at the same time that use a shared Global Resource List. And projects can be nested with dependencies and synchronization between them.





If you dig Gantt charts, then you will love this program, but it also sets up Project Calendars and can publish project reports to the Internet. And since there isn't an MS version of Projects for Windows for the Mac, CS Odessa made this function available for the Mac; it can import MS Project files and provides for MS Project XML. It also imports ConceptDraw MINDMAP (brainstorming) files as well. Tasks are limited only by the amount of memory you have in your machine. And it is cross-platform.



Probably the best function is the *Who Does What When*. You can identify *quickly Overallocated Resources* and do something about them before they become a real issue by reallocating loads or assignments. Now we can plan, control and track real work.

The screenshot shows the 'forScreens - Resources' window with a table of resources and a 'Resource' dialog box. The table lists resources with their names, types, and costs. The dialog box shows details for Oksana Omelchenko, including her name, type (Worker), cost (20.00 \$/Day), and email (omelchenko@cso.com).

#	Name	Type	Cost	E-Mail
1	Veronica Capollini	Worker	60.00 \$/Day	
2	Zulfia Karimova	Worker	50.00 \$/Day	
3	Liu Chang	Worker	20.00 \$/Day	
4	Peter Smith	Worker	20.00 \$/Day	
5	Jose Hernandez	Worker	20.00 \$/Day	
6	Jorge Gonzalez	Worker	20.00 \$/Day	
7	Natasha Belkina	Worker	20.00 \$/Day	
8	Oksana Omelchenko	Worker	20.00 \$/Day	
9	equipment	Material	120.00 \$	
10	transport	Material	10.00 \$	
11	food	Material	50.00 \$	
12	Steve Peterson	Worker	40.00 \$/Day	
13	Ahmad Khalib	Worker	30.00 \$/Day	
14	team of builders	Worker	100.00 \$/Day	

The 'Resource' dialog box shows the following details for Oksana Omelchenko:

- Name: Oksana Omelchenko
- Type: Worker
- Cost: 20.00 \$ / Day
- E-Mail: omelchenko@cso.com
- Note: Designer

The screenshot shows the 'forScreens - Projects' window with a table of projects and two Gantt charts. The table lists projects with their names, start and finish dates, and companies. The Gantt charts show the project schedules for 'Presentation' and 'Moving to New Office'.

#	Name	Start Date	Finish Date	Company
1	Presentation	6/20/04	10/15/04	CSO
2	Moving to New Office	1/4/04	4/9/04	CSO

The Gantt charts show the project schedules for 'Presentation' and 'Moving to New Office'. The 'Presentation' chart shows tasks such as 'Hold a presentation', 'Enumerate goals', 'Describe the audience', 'Create a script', 'Define the group', 'Define presentation', 'Create the equipment', 'Enumerate software', 'Enumerate requirements', 'Develop schedule', 'Make up the list of requirements', 'Define the budget', 'Develop a presentation', 'Define the optimal cost', 'Develop a detailed schedule', 'Assign time for each task', 'Make sketches of requirements', 'Define necessary illustrations', 'Work through details', 'Develop report', 'Develop and approve', 'Define important tasks', and 'Develop spare diagrams'. The 'Moving to New Office' chart shows tasks such as 'Planning to move', 'Make list of key requirements', 'Make list of necessary items', 'Make a sketch project', 'Consider cost and time', 'Consider cost of furniture', 'Get necessary permits', 'Define budget', 'New office preparation', 'Preparation for move', 'Order new phone', 'Develop project', 'Hire reconstruction', 'Begin reconstruction', 'Enumerate requirements', 'Make orders for furniture', 'Order furniture', 'Order equipment', 'Order telephone', 'Order print materials', 'Order keys', and 'Order alert and signs'.

Product managers can use the comprehensive product development Gantt chart to oversee manufacturing cycle phases. Marketing managers can keep marketing campaigns traceable and accountable. Information technology managers can effectively handle complex projects that entail planning and implementation stages. Administrative managers can use it for office moves and human resource activities.

After having spend a few years generating project scenarios using MS Project for Windows, I'm happy to see a cross-platform app that takes much of the best and ports it.

The downside? There are other alternatives that are not as expensive.

NoteTaker 1.9.8 Reviewed by Robert Pritchett and by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham



AquaMinds Software Corporation
P.O. Box 60369
Palo Alto, CA 94306
FAX: (650) 745-3291
mailto:info@aquaminds.com

<http://www.aquaminds.com>

Blog: <http://www.aquaminds.com/blog/index.html>

Download: <http://www.aquaminds.com/downloads.jsp> and there is a 30-day demo.

FAQs: <http://www.aquaminds.com/faq.jsp>

Specifications: <http://www.aquaminds.com/specifications.jsp>

Tutorials: <http://www.aquaminds.com/learningcenter.jsp>

Released: 1.9.8; June 20, 2005

\$70 USD; Academic License, \$40 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.8 or later. Integrates with Tiger.

Scott Love Interview:

<http://www.applelinks.com/warpcore/mar03/wc-80.shtml>

Strengths: Built for integration with Tiger functions, Automator, Dashboard, Spotlight and VoiceOver.

Weaknesses: None found.

For: Serious, but not necessarily highly technical, individuals who compulsively take notes.

This software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under Mac OS X 10.3.9 and an iMac G5 1.8 GHz system with 1 GB RAM running Mac OS X 10.4.1 Tiger.

We are going to do something different here. Harry {doc} Babad reviewed this product using Mac OS X 10.3.9 Jaguar (Harry gave it a rating of 4.5), while Robert Pritchett reviewed it using Mac OS X 10.4.1 Tiger (he gave the product a rating of 5). Robert's comments are in Times New Roman type, while Harry's is in Lucida Grande. Now have fun reading our pseudo 3rd-person style tit-for-tat article:

Ever fall in love with a software application? NoteTaker probably is one you will enjoy as much as I have lately. It is based on providing services embedded in an outline format that captures



audio, and also Email and hyperlinks that can be displayed or played. Video feeds also can be included, such as QuickTime. This is interconnectivity par excellence!

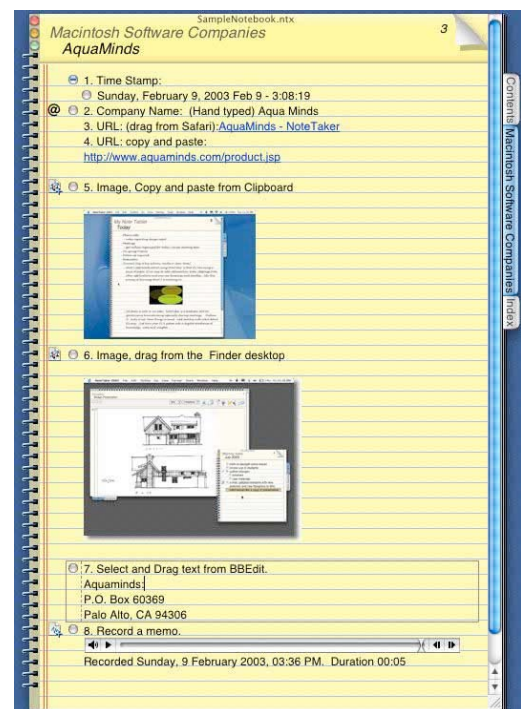
As many of our readers are aware, Harry has had a thing about notepads, checklists, and, at times, software to create outlines. Most of the products he reported on are either shareware or freeware. NoteTaker is an exception: it is a fully developed and well-maintained commercial product.

While surfing the MacUpdate site, Harry found the publisher's description of NoteTaker enticing and this review is the result. NoteTaker is a Mac OS X product for managing personal notes, website URLs, lists, document outlines, projects, and information of any type that can be stored on a computer. At its most basic level, NoteTaker is a personal note and idea organizer. You can make a list, collect and catalog a graphics collection, organize an outline, or jot down an idea. It's that simple.

NoteTaker, according to AquaMinds, had been developed primarily for people who work with ideas and information. Although the product's interface is almost straightforward, learning to use its rich features takes a bit more time. Harry found the manual and Help files extremely useful in learning how to use the software, since he was somewhat confused by all of its feature and alternative note capture options. Nevertheless, Harry's results, when he'd conquered a bit of a learning curve, were both useful and attractive. Unlike other products on which he has reported, Harry is certain that continuing to learn its features will be well worth his time. Harry says he is not an optimal user of the product, since he has neither installed Tiger nor does he post material to the Web, but its other features were just what he needed to take control of his compulsive note taking.

Installation, as is the case for all well written Macintosh OS X products, was a simple as dragging and dropping the application to my applications folder.

NoteTaker's interface incorporates a visually rich "spiral notebook with tab sections" metaphor. It can be used to take notes, manage project plans, create screen slide presentations, drag or clip information from other applications (or use NoteTaker Services), index and search previously created notebooks, publish and share information, add voice memos, and more. Some users (like me) will simply use one tab accompanied by a long list of outlined details. Others will organize entire projects and research journals containing many sections and many pages within those sections, allowing for a more ordered separation of information. It makes no difference how you decide to organize and use NoteTaker; it's designed to be flexible, yet moderately easy to use. AquaMinds claims it's like having an infinite



supply of cross-linkable electronic paper on your Mac OS X desktop.

From the information Harry learned when testing this product, he agrees with the publisher's assessment that NoteTaker's uses are limited only by your imagination. From managing the daily to-do list information to sharing a project team binder across the Internet, NoteTaker can become the software you will use daily to capture your ideas and to collect tidbits of information.

Software Features

At its most basic level, NoteTaker is a personal note and idea organizer. NoteTaker allows you to import, capture, drag, or cut and paste many different kinds of data and place it in an attractive, searchable, indexable, interactive notebook. With NoteTaker, you can make a list, organize an outline, or jot down an idea. It's that simple.

Harry's information collecting and retrieval needs continue to grow both more complex and more diverse, so he had only two alternatives; To fulfill NoteTaker's ability for organizing and storing information, he could have created a database in FileMaker Pro to store all of his notes. However, this would have required that he accommodate dealing with the various formats in which characterized his accumulated information. [E.g., Text, graphics, hyperlinks, PDF and web links and email addresses.] Alternatively, he could find a robust product capable of handling my information and run with it; thus his testing of NoteTaker.

Harry's initial approach to reviewing this product was to transfer the contents of his iNotePad 2.2 [Vojou Software — macC November 2004 Issue] data file to NoteTaker to determine whether he could create a more flexible and useful collection of notes. His present compilation of notes ranges in diversity from the kinds of focus specified below, mostly stored as folders of notes, as well a few unclassifiable individual notes, such as the main hits from searching the Internet search for topics as diverse as yard water features or small oriental cabinets.

Books and Music	Chemistry Related	Computer Associated
Consulting Files	Crafts and Hobbies	Food Related
Home & Family Related	Macintosh Odds and Ends	Professional Societies
Promises – Promises	Volunteer Activities	Widget Information

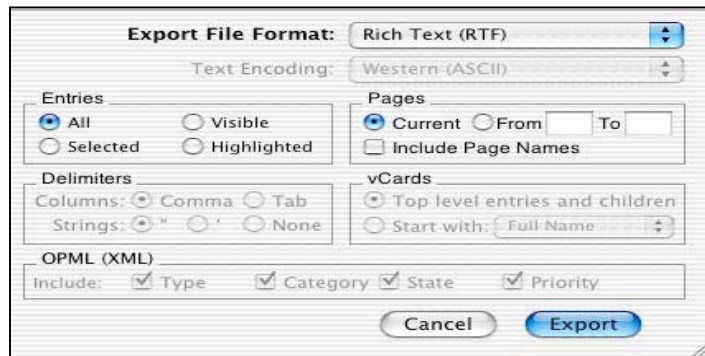
Alas, after much testing of various ways to export from iNotePad and to import to NoteTaker, Harry decided to start from scratch using his iNotePad database as a source of content. It wasn't that he could not perform the data transfer, but rather there were such significant differences in the ways the programs handled data, that starting over was easier to do. Therefore, he created a multiple page notebook and captured what he still needed by traditional cut and paste methods. It was a bit tedious, but it beat the results of his dyslexic two-finger typing. Of course, he changed categories and subcategories (outline levels) to accommodate today's needs.

Although each notebook that you create can contain audio (including voice notes), images, URLs, and anything else you want to capture and categorize, Harry needed only web and email links to augment his text files. He has not yet completely mastered the software's ability to organize notebooks and their contents, but he will.

Harry confesses that has not started to scratch the surface of the product's ability to organize data. Based on examples he downloaded from the developer's website, He noted that he could divide a notebook's contents into sections (e.g., chapters) with tabs, and categorize and prioritize individual notebook items.

One attribute of this product Harry found instantly useful was its ability to create live links. Specifically, he was delighted to learn when he stored a URL, he could browse the website directly from within NoteTaker, because both email and web links are active, as are hyperlinks to other documents on your hard drive or server. NoteTaker's web browser isn't as full-featured as Safari or Firefox, but it serves well for taking a quick look at the contents of a given URL. Since NoteTaker uses Apple's WebKit, web pages in NoteTaker look very much like they do in Safari.

Although Harry attempted to work with the software's import features, he still has not mastered them. The export features, however, were simple to use, and he was able to re-export his iNotePad files as RTF copy.



AquaMind's website includes scripts that support or access with many of our commonly used Macintosh OS X applications (e.g., Apple's Finder, Address book, iCal, iPod, iSight, iTunes, Mail, MS Entourage, Safari, web searches, and for enhancing the interface in NoteTaker itself.) The latter are available at <http://www.aquaminds.com/scripts.jsp>.

Harry found, as promised, that he could create references (links) to external files (those not embedded in my notes), which work even if a target file is moved. Actually, that's what inadvertently happened the first time Harry tried to import his iNotePad files into the folder they were stored. Information about your captured clippings will identify the clipping's origin; (e.g., clipping text from a web browser identifies the source by application and URL.)

Dan Gilmore on AquaMind's NoteTaker

Harry is in full agreement with a 2003 review of an earlier version of NoteTaker entitled *Organizing with NoteTaker*, found in Dan Gilmore's eJournal at <http://weblog.siliconvalley.com/column/dangillmor/archives/000856.shtml#000856/>

Dan noted that; my bias toward software increasingly goes like this: If it's not blatantly obvious in its user interaction, forget it. Occasionally, however, I run into something that appears sufficiently powerful to be worth the extra effort. One such product may well be NoteTaker from AquaMinds, a small Silicon Valley software startup that reminds me of the days when the joy of innovation was so strong here. It runs on Mac OS X only, a rarity in these times.

The idea is that you take everything -- text, pictures, Web pages, audio files, PDFs, whatever -- and pour it all into a database, where you organize outlines and archive everything. NoteTaker automatically indexes the text as you enter it; that will come in handy later on. I especially like the Web clipping system, which uses OS X Services in a smart way.

One thing is obvious, after spending a day with it: I haven't begun to get very deep into this tool, and there's a serious learning curve to get the most from it. However, after spending some time with NoteTaker, I've tentatively decided to use the software to help organize a book I'm writing, and probably everything else, too. [Me too, despite having worked for two days testing the software after extensive review of its user guide.]

Since Harry also only had a day or three to work with the product, he downloaded some of the examples of completed notepads from the developer's site. He was particularly interested in the *NotePad_Example* that almost approximated with his iNotePad conversion. *The Simple To Do List Pad*, and *MyCollegeNotebook* were also 'templates' for which he could find an immediate use, with modification. *WebScrapBook* was of no immediate interest to him, but it allowed him to visualize its use should he need it, since it was, in essence, a tutorial.

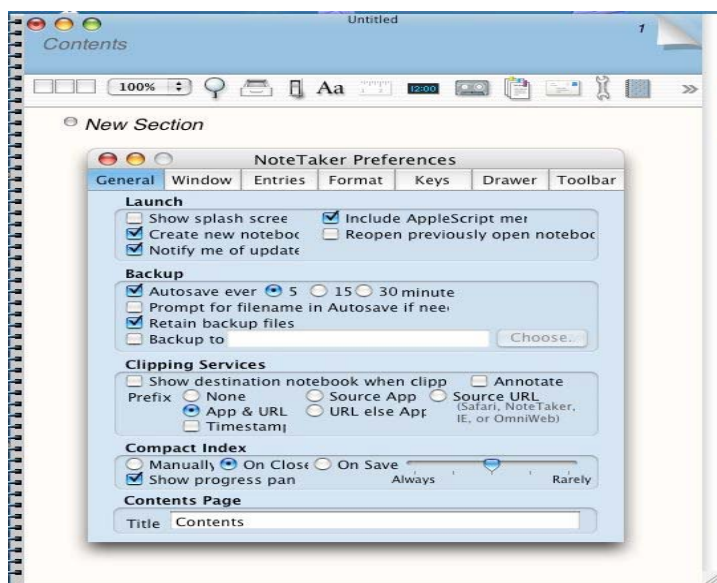
Checking out these examples enhanced Harry's perceptions of what can be done with the product. Is he there yet? No. However, the examples provided visual insight to some of the many uses of this product. He is motivated to learn more.

Bugs and Glitches

During Harry's use of the product to create compendia of notes that varied from to-do items to contact information, he found no glitches.

Harry was a bit troubled by the fact that he could not expand the preferences window to allow him to read its contents.

He had some difficulty in learning how to add new pages to a section, and difficulty trashing unwanted section or pages, materials he had messed up. With the help of the 134-page manual, he learned what he needed, despite his initial failures by trial and error.



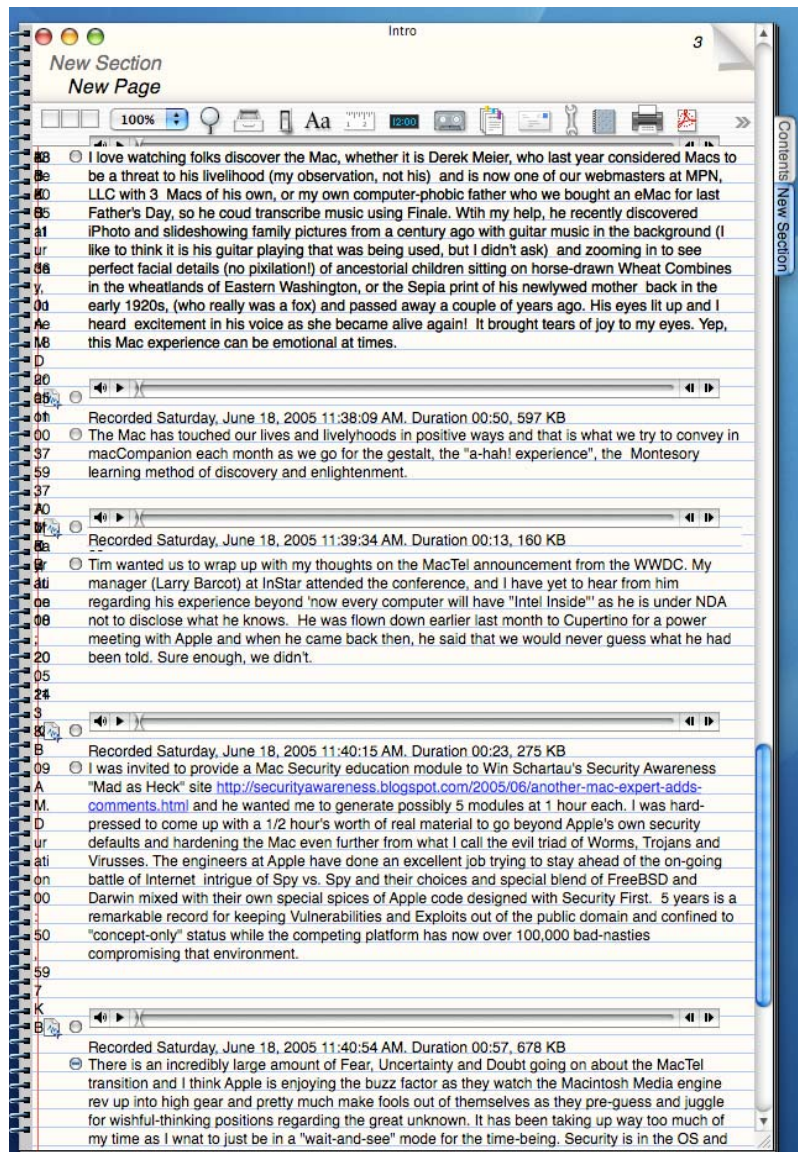
Conclusions

In previous macC articles and reviews, Harry recommended several excellent shareware products to keep and organize notes and create to-do lists. Comparing these products, some of which have become 'keepers', to NoteTaker is like comparing text edit to MS Word. This product needs a little book *larning*, but even at a beginner's understanding level, this is a powerful information collection and organizing tool. You can get started using the product the first time you boot it.

If Harry added up the shareware fees for the items he uses whose individual functions are but a small subset of those provided by NoteTaker, the \$70 cost comes close to what he has previously spent on products that are more limited.

In short, NoteTaker applications are limited only by your needs, or, better yet, by your imagination. From managing the daily to-do list to sharing a project team binder across the Internet, NoteTaker can become the software of your everyday lifestyle. Use it to:

- Communicate ideas.
- Organize personal information. Keep a project journal. Use NoteTaker to capture (brainstorming) your thoughts on electronic paper. Then reorder them, and capture appropriate images or references to support them. When you're finished, add details, work the notebook's design to make them both readable and attractive, and capture them in your own 'project' notebook. NoteTaker is software you should consider using every single day.



That wraps up the version 1.9.6 review. Now we go on to the 1.9.8 review in Mac OS X 10.4.1 Tiger:

NoteTaker came out over 2 years ago, but the 1.9.8 version takes Tiger's strengths and magnifies them.

Robert was reading a Blog about how a person had been using NoteTaker to add audio to his Keynote presentation, so he went looking, found it and immediately asked to review it. He was working on his *Mac OS X Tiger Safety and Security* module for Win Schwartau's Security Awareness training area and he remembers watching a PowerPoint presentation that had audio. He figured this would be a piece of cake with Keynote 2 and by grabbing the audio from NoteTaker, He found it to be very easy as he could export to iTunes and then import those audio clips into Keynote 2.

This is an example showing some of the notes partly used to do the dialogue in the *MacReviewCast* PodCast with Tim Verpoorten of Surf-Bits fame (episode #8).

AquaMinds also has produced three Widgets that work with NoteTaker for searching and research; *ClusterSearch*, *MedSearch* and *MegaSearch* found on the Widgets page at Apple:

<http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/dashboard/>

Kevin Sheridan reviewed *MegaSearch* here:

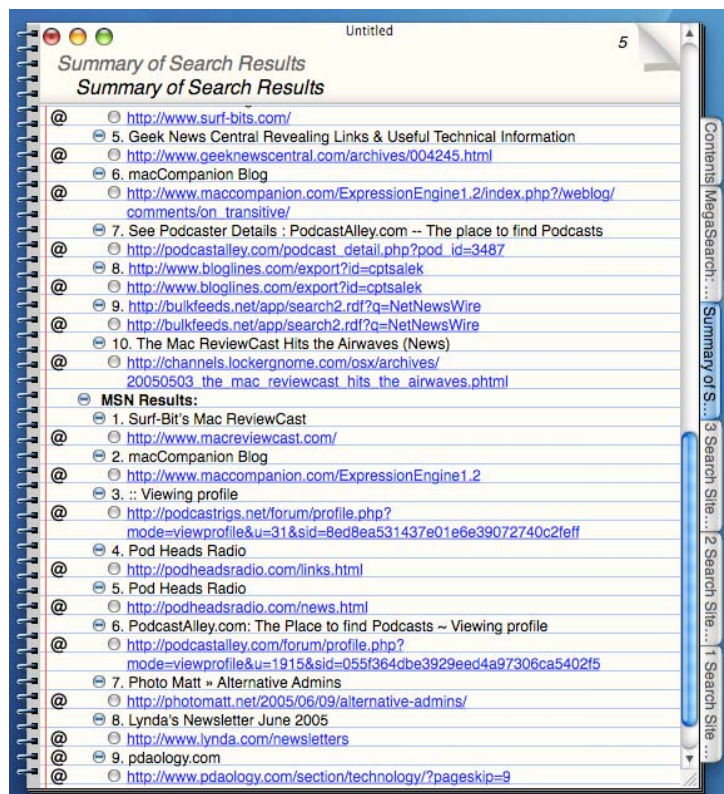
http://culturehack.typepad.com/notetakerblogging/2005/03/plays_well_with.html#more

Now how about the *ClusterSearch* and *Medsearch* Widgets? Robert bets they work just as well as the *MegaSearch* Widget does.

Robert typed in "MacReviewCast" in *MegaSearch*. It ran the search, did a table of contents, optimized the list and gave him this:

Do a search on "Widgets" and watch the fun begin!

"ClusterSearch Dashboard Widget This widget takes a search query, posts it to Clusty and collects the results in a NoteTaker notebook. [Click Here](#) to download the NoteTaker ClusterSearch Widget for Tiger. 376 Kb .ZIP file. **New! May**



20, 2005

Medical Research Dashboard Widget This widget takes a search query, posts it to Clusty and the National Library of Medicine and collects the results in a NoteTaker notebook. [Click Here](#) to download the NoteTaker Medical Research Widget for Tiger. 382 Kb .ZIP file. **New! May 24, 2005**

MegaSearch Dashboard Widget This widget takes a search query, posts it to Google, Teoma, Yahoo!, and MSN, and collects the results in a NoteTaker notebook. [Click Here](#) to download the NoteTaker MegaSearch Widget for Tiger. 403 Kb .ZIP file. **Updated May 20, 2005**

This version of NoteTaker supports Automator, Dashboard, Spotlight and VoiceOver. As you can see above, it does a pretty good job of notebooking results and this is going to be one of my tools for doing research from now on. It takes the tedium out of searching online and lets me work in multimedia mode while it does information processing in the background. All Robert can do is kick himself for not having known about this application earlier. What a time saver!

Robert has still got to learn to master the XHTML and CSS export functions. He says he needs to learn a little bit more about the NTML export function too. The export function takes NoteTaker results that can be posted into a Blog or web-publishing tool. Sweet!

This also works with the latest Java J2SE 5.0 with NoteTaker plugins. Oh, and don't forget that it is fully operational with about 50 AppleScript commands. It also saves Web results and they are fully interactive.

Robert sure can see why Scott Love loves NoteTaker. He created it. In a word, "Elegant".

If you want to get the Developer SDK, you can from the AquaMinds website. It is about a 900MB download at <http://www.aquaminds.com/developer.jsp>.

Yes, this is productivity software. You can work along, add your notes, reorganize them. Add links, audio, video and post online. Is this cool or what? Find out for yourself by downloading the 30-day trial version. Robert is sure you will be sold as soon as you see it work. This app is way up on his "this is cool!" scale.

QuicKeys X3.0.2 for Mac OS X Reviewed by: Dr. Eric Flescher



Startly Technologies, LLC
P. O. Box 65580
West Des Moines,
Iowa, 50265, U.S.A.
515-221-1801
800-523-7638 or 515-221-1801 (9 AM - 5 PM CST M-F)
Fax: 515-221-1806

Contact: <http://www.quickeys.com/company/contact.html>
<http://www.quickeys.com>

Pricing: \$100 for a single user.

An upgrade from QuicKeys X2 is \$30.

- Upgrade from QuicKeys X version 2.x for \$30
- Upgrade from QuicKeys X version 1.5.x for \$40
- Upgrade from QuicKeys X version 1.0.x for \$50
- New copies are \$100 per user, discounts are available on multi-user packs
- Registered users of QuicKeys Classic or QuicKeys for Windows can purchase QuicKeys X3 at a discounted migration price of \$70.

Windows and Macintosh

Strengths: Extremely versatile and flexible. Many “bugs’ fixed from V2. There are enhanced triggers and operations, which make the program even better. Software is easy to install. Former trigger/ macros subscopes, from your earlier versions that you are upgrading from, are preserved so that you do not lose your “triggers and other operations.” Enhanced less complicated visual interface. Many of the visual operations are shown more easily with the opening interface. Company continues to update and improve QuicKeys while listening to the subscribers. Various price structures for the newest to various other versions of the software are possible as well, which makes it easy to upgrade



according to your earlier versions.

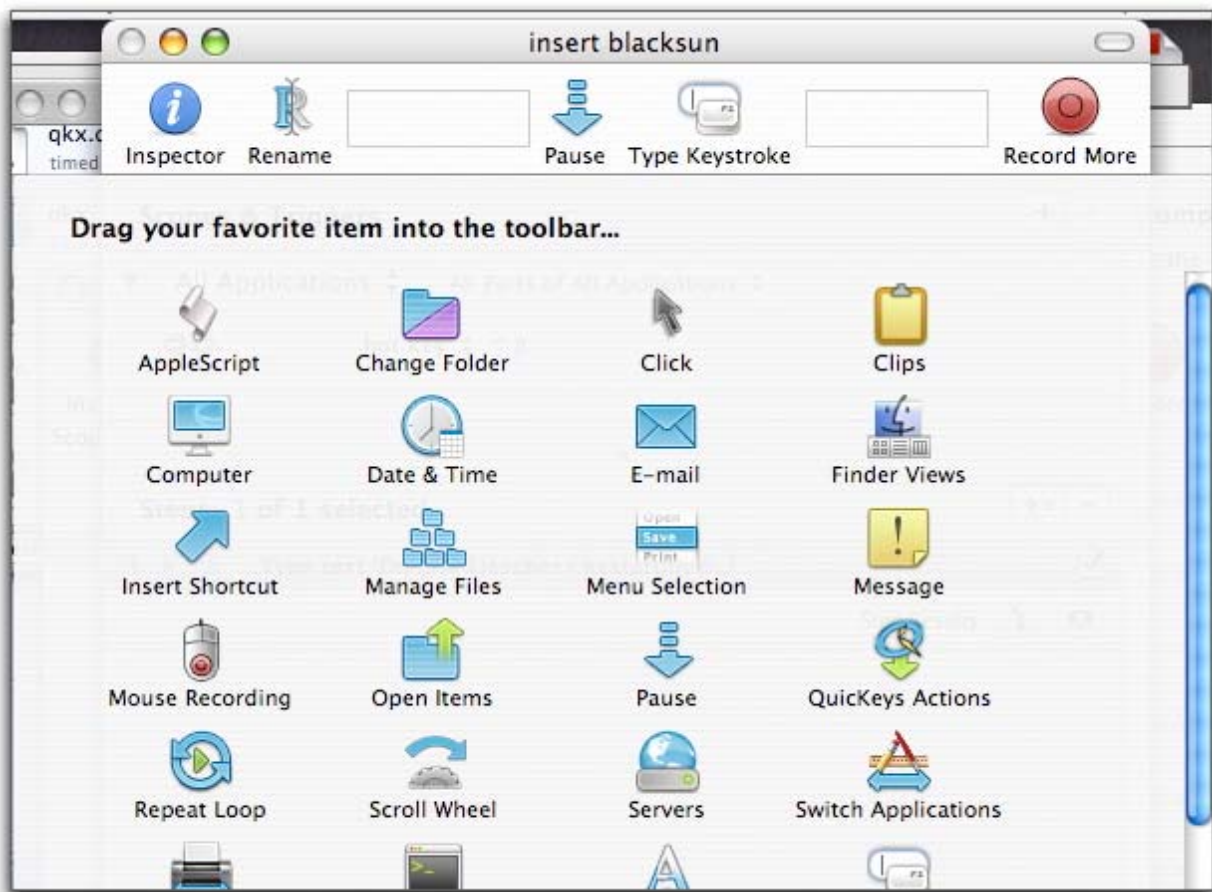
Weaknesses: May take a little while to learn how to use if you are new to the software. However this version is much easier to use initially than V 2. Some other third party software keeps QuicKeys from working sometimes which is a little disconcerting but not overly so.

If you use your computer often, you usually repeat the same type, set of keys, commands or other functions, over and over again. There may be certain words, phrases, keycodes or special information, website addresses that you repeatedly type into your word processing, documents, or email and/or using software. Wouldn't it be great if a piece of software allowed you to find, produce and replay many of these repetitious tasks when you need them? Try a macro program. So what is a macro program anyway?

Macro programs are mini-programs that you type to actively engage a task through the use of one or more strokes. I started using another macro program with OS system 9, to help with the repetitious operations that I needed to do daily. But when OSX came along and this macro program was not supported, I had to search for an alternative.

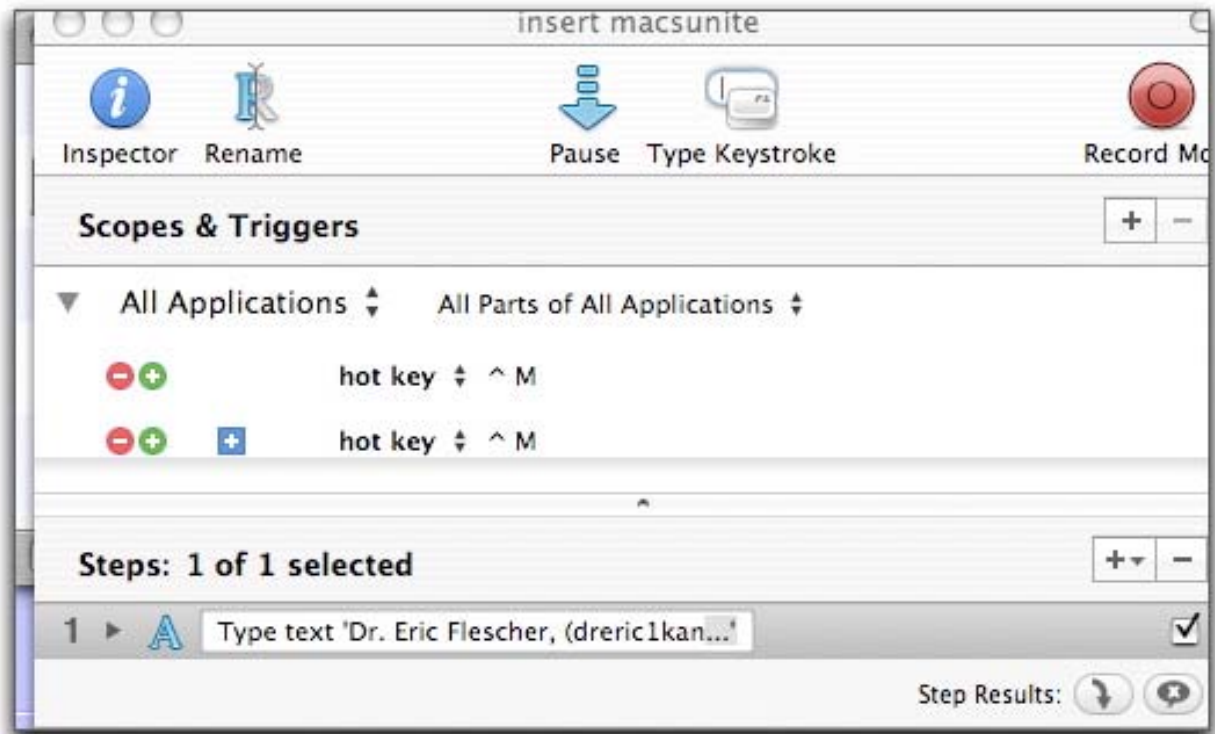
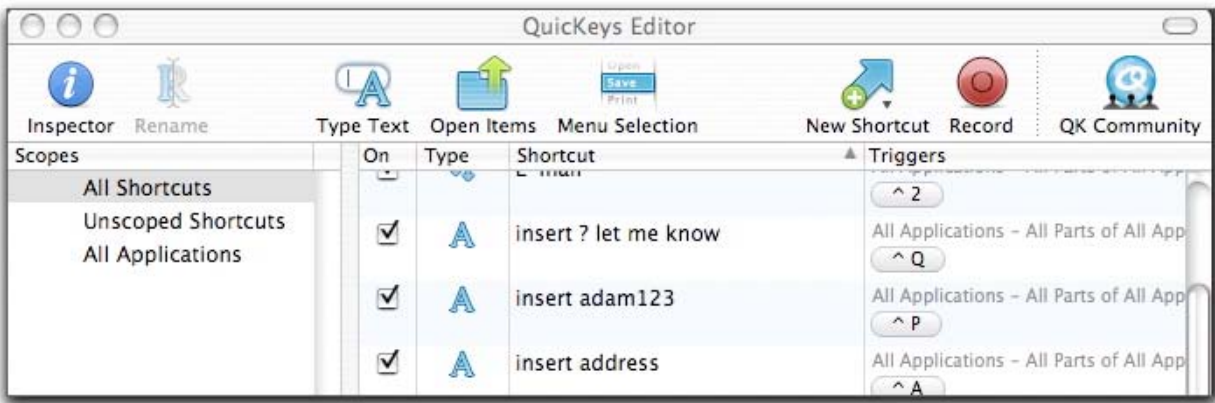
Finding, QuicKeys X2, I grew to love it. I found it relatively easy to use was very versatile and allowed me to complete repeated actions, which saved me much time. QuicKeys X2 for OSX helped in so many ways that I wondered what I ever did without it. Version 2 had its quirks but was fairly easy to use. However when I heard QuicKeys X3 was now available (since then 3.0.1 update), I was eager to try it out and see about any improvements. And there is a bunch.

QuicKeys X3, is now made for Mac OS X 10.4 and is now Tiger ready. This new version has a number of new features that made the macros even more flexible, manageable and easier to use the version X2. Immediately upon looking at the interface, some of the improvements were readily apparent and interesting as well.



Once installed, the interface opens up initially when clicking the Q. In the toolbar there are several options. Clicking on QuickKeys word on the left several options pop up in the pulldown menu: About QK, preferences, check for updates, provide feedback, hide QK, hide others, show all, quit QK.

Then to the right on the toolbar are multitudes of options that are at your fingertips are possible. The possibilities in the pulldown menus on the toolbar include: File (new, save, import, export, page set up, print); Edit (undo and redo); View (hide editor, customize toolbar); Create (start recording shortcuts, files, (use operations for) Internet, Network, QuickKeys Scripting, System; Text, and User Action); Shortcut (Play, Turn on, Shortcut debugging, Edit steps (of operations) and Turn shortcuts off; Toolbar (New, Edit, Delete); Window (Zoom, Minimize, Q editor, Toolbar show inspector, variables, equation tester, Bring all to front; and Help.

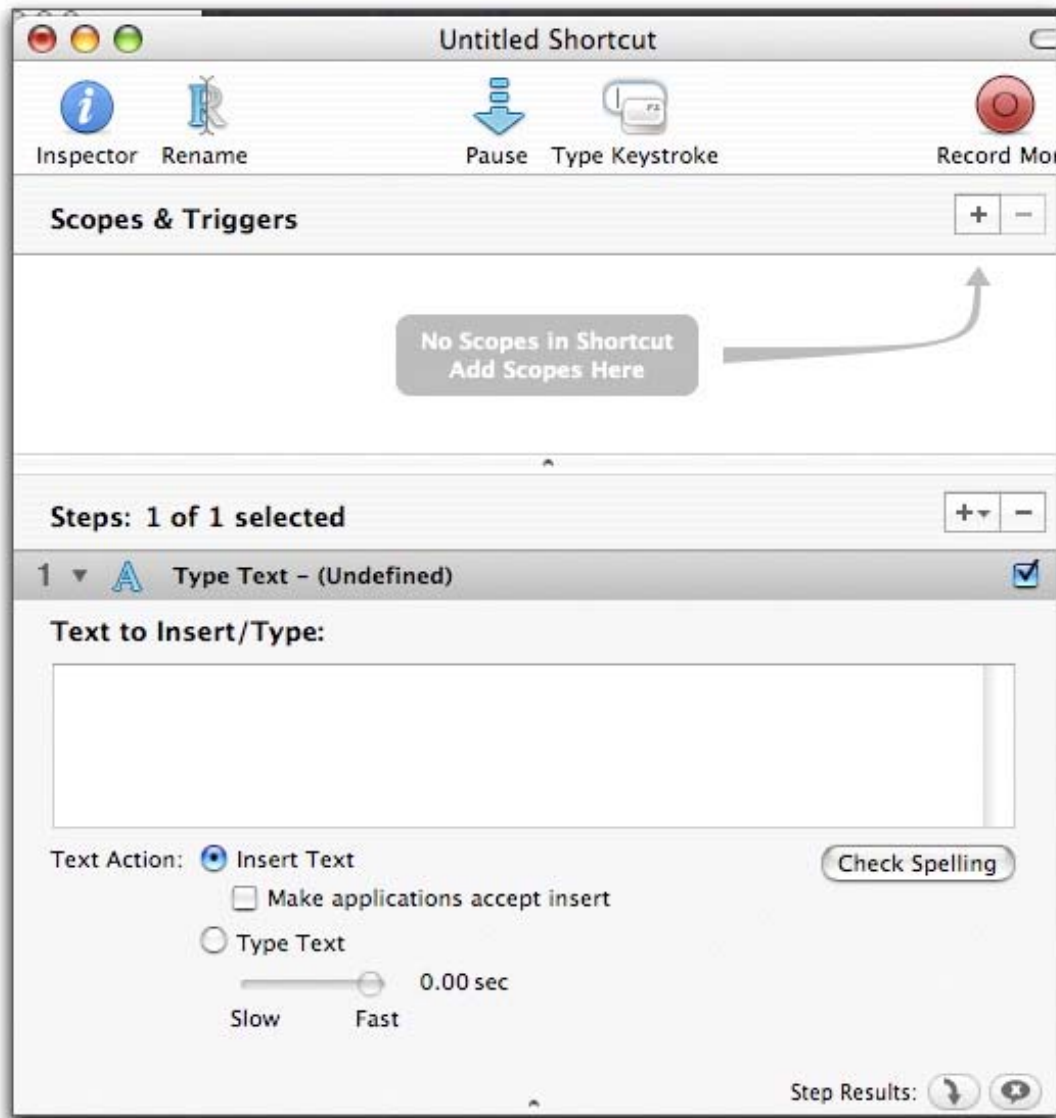


The user interface has been changed and is even better. The editor is more visually pleasing and appealing and yes, easier to use. It is easier to locate many parts of the Editor and is less confusing, although it really was not all that bad in version 2.

Up comes a pulldown menu: QuicKeys, turning triggers off, subscopes, toolbars, edit toolbars, pause playback, stop playback, stop recording me, cancel recording me. The triggers, the keys that can be set to “trigger” the various actions at your command, are much easier to use. The display is more easily seen as it is all laid out for you. New Speech, Time Range, Application Event and Device Shortcut Triggers are also improved.

The new visual looks provide an all-in-one way to inspect the key parts of this macro program. Less clicking and better visual looking editor makes this version of the program, even handier to use. Logic and Variables give greater power and control to sequences. Improved Recording and recording hints make shortcut creation even easier. There is a better look-and-feel of the whole set-ups.

This version was easy to install. I was afraid that I would lose my “old” trigger commands if I installed version 3.0.2. There was nothing I found that said what to do until I contacted the company. I found out that the older triggers are preserved and integrated automatically upon installation. I was happy about that, as I did not have to start all over crafting new commands.

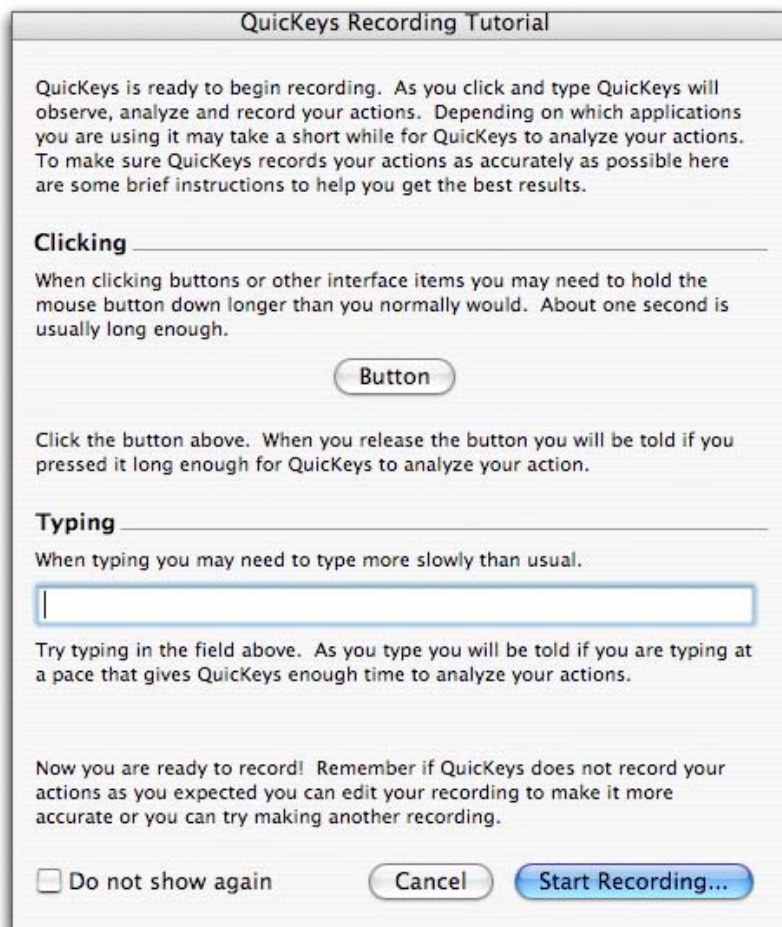


In the editor, you create your shortcuts and save them. Of course you can delete the ones you don't want or modify them or use the many possibilities in the toolbar options.

A host of new operations has been made to the latest update of Version 3.0.2. There are added Devices window for controlling which devices QuicKeys will use for triggers and recordings. Users can now control the devices used by QuicKeys instead of QuicKeys using all devices presents (example?). This helps address several issues with USB devices which are attached to the computer. There is an added feature to Manage Files actions to "not wait for an action to be complete." Fixed issue where QuicKeys would not see some application switches. Problems were fixed where the QuicKeys menu could not be clicked if QuicKeys is a Startup Item. Fixed also is an issue where some shortcut steps could not be reliably selected by clicking. A new improvement changes how QuicKeys waits for modifiers to be released when playing certain shortcuts. Several Variables issues are corrected.

Numerous other improvements and updates include the following. Subscopes, a series of operations, allow you to have even more shortcuts for each application. For example, an advantage of Subscopes let you use the same "hot key" to do different things in different places in an application. But there is more.

There's also a Password Vault for typing... passwords. If you want QuicKeys to type any passwords for you can select from a number of actions. Password Vault uses a secure text field and on disk encryption to protect your passwords. Speech triggers lets automate your Macintosh by playing shortcuts using only your voice. Device are more multifaceted by allowing triggers let you play shortcuts using your mouse buttons or any other HID (Human Interface Device) compliant peripherals you are using. Expanded Wait actions and Check For actions. These actions let you put extremely powerful logic into your



shortcuts. Text Tools lets you re-format and strip formatting from blocks of text. Public shortcuts let you subscribe to shortcuts on a server. Great for offices where lots of people need the same shortcuts. Shortcuts can now be placed on the Dock or in any other toolbar application. Variables! For the technically minded of you, QuicKeys now has variables and equations. Store data in as many variables as you need, use those variables in shortcuts, and even write equations to calculate whatever you want.

QuicKeys now sees more application switches. The QuicKeys menu can now be clicked if QuicKeys is in Startup Item. Some shortcut steps can now be more reliably selected by clicking. Modifiers now change how QuicKeys will wait for modifiers to be released when playing certain shortcuts. There is no longer a crash that would occur in Use Variable shortcuts if the variable had been deleted. Fixed a display issue in Variable actions when a variable had been deleted. Also an issue with Text Tools where the "leave changed text on clipboard" option now works. Subscope issues of the All Applications scope now work better. Fixed crash that could occur when closing a shortcut window when certain types of steps were in a particular order. The division operator now works on the Clipboard variable in equations.

Sometimes Third party software that "hacks" or modifies Mac OS X system behavior may interfere with and/or crashes QuicKeys or just makes it "not go." The following QuicKeys related issues are due to limitations in Mac OS X. If you include QuicKeys in your Startup Items list, it is recommended that you place QuicKeys last in the list. In some instances if QuicKeys is not the last item, other startup items may not launch properly. Command-Space and Command-Option-Space should not be used to trigger shortcuts. More information about updates to the manual, QuicKeys known issues and Mac OS X known issues can be found in the QuicKeys Help available from the.

Once I was able to overcome some of the visual and command peculiarities of version 2, I found the program helped me tremendously with the OSX interface, email, my websites and much more. The creators of the program have really done a nice job to improve their product and it seems that they listen carefully about how to improve their product with each version to make it even better. And such is the case for this version 3. The refined visual look-and-feel of the interface along with the added flexibility and versatility makes this program and this version even a more pleasure to use. The software company has does it's best to fix and update known errors and parts of the program that did not work as well.

I rate this program as a best buy for its flexibility and much more. I recommend this application for anyone who wants to increase their speed and efficiency in accomplishing repetitious tasks and much more. And those with different types of Macintosh or operating system version, there is a version for you as well as the OSX version. With constant upgrades, which make later versions better, the company is doing its best to make QuicKeys better. You can update almost any version if you have an older version as I did and you won't lose your library of triggers as I mentioned early. QuicKeys 3.0.2 and this OSX Tiger computability will let you use more of

your time for the precious computer work and will make you a more efficient computer user. Without it, “times-a-wasting” as they say. Let QuicKeys 3.0.2 (or other version depending on your needs) help you use your time more wisely and be more productive. It is a program that I will keep on using now and in the future and I think it will be one you will use for a long time as well.

Update

We have just announced the release of QuicKeys X3 version 3.1, a major update to our automation software for Mac OS X. This update, free to registered users of QuicKeys X version 3.0 or later, includes numerous improvements and new features that make QuicKeys more versatile and powerful than ever.

QuicKeys X 3.1 New Features

- Automator workflows can now be incorporated into QuicKeys shortcuts as stand-alone items or part of a larger QuicKeys sequence. Trigger your workflows with QuicKeys' wide variety of timed, hot key, and voice triggers.
- SoftKeys makes it simple to launch your shortcuts in an easy to organize way. SoftKeys displays a translucent toolbar with up to ten shortcuts in slots numbered 1 through 0, corresponding to the number keys across your keyboard. Just create a SoftKeys palette, drop your shortcuts in slots 1 through 0 and trigger them with those same numerical keys.
- A new option for the Open Items action lets you quickly open a predetermined document or an item selected in the Finder with the application you specify rather than the default.
- An Action Palette has been added to the QuicKeys Editor to provide quick, searchable access to all shortcut types for even easier shortcut creation.
- Plus many other updates and improvements which are detailed in the Read Me file.

This update, which requires Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later, can be downloaded from our web site at: <http://www.startly.com/download/update-qkx.html>

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