

macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH

The POWER of X

In This issue...

- Flash out of the box
- Roxio Popcorn
- MacMini Guidebook
- Idiots Guide to Google
- and Much...

Much...

More!



VOLUME 3 ISSUE 9 September 2005

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Masthead

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Leland Scott
Gene Steinberg
Giles Turnbull

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

Letter From the CEO

The New School Year

For many, Summer School ended not too long ago, and here we are back into the regular school year. School is indeed all year around isn't it?

While you may have been vacationing or relaxing in the hot summer sun, we were busy collecting electronic fruits and vegetables from our Macintosh electronic garden in anticipation of another weird Apple fall and winter season.

The September issue may be a day or two late getting out the door due to mishaps we discussed in the 17th and 18th episodes in the *Mac Review Cast* at <http://www.macreviewcast.com> with Tim Verpoorten. I learned – again – the importance of backing up before hitting the *Software Update* button when downloading the latest security updates from Apple. In other words, I didn't do it and had to reconstruct a few weeks of work as Murphy's Law caught me off guard as I clicked the “sure, hit me!” button when adding the 1.1 “fix” so the 64-bit apps would work on my iMac G5. There was guarded twittering and giggling around here at my expense for a while.

And we spent some time discussing and maybe even clarifying some of the *Mac Numbers?* article in the August issue of *macCompanion* with Gene Steinberg on his August 25th episode of The Tech Night Owl at <http://www.techbroadcasting.com>.

In this issue we have a few articles either submitted, solicited or collected with permission from others you may not have heard from before as we once again look at how to put this incredible technology to work for us.

Read Team Banzai's article on Dora, the Self-mobile VW Touareg SUV that is controlled by three Mac minis, Gene Steinberg's article on the paperless High School (Empire) in Vail, Arizona, Leland Scott's counterpoint article on so-called “Inferior” iPods, Harry {doc} Babad's Tips and Tech Writing article and Ted Bade's Ivory Tower look at Apple-based news. And we have a new Columnist on board, Jonathan Hoyle, who will run a series on Cross-platform software development – “According to Hoyle” and also Dan Pourhadi's Web Browser roundup.

And we managed to read and review around 20 or so more books covering Mac OS X Tiger programming, Moodle, Rootkits, Google, eCommerce, Mapping technology on the Internet, Perl, Java, MS Word Annoyances, Portable Code and Open Source and more.

Giles Trumbull looks at DEVONThink Pro, Derek Meyer peeks at Popcorn, I poke a little at Proloquo, and we look at some training packages to pre-prepare for Macromedia's Studio 8.

Hey, don't let “education” get in the way of your learning, okay? Start out the new school year right by reading what our writers have to say in this issue of *macCompanion*.

Oh, by the way, we are running a contest for best switcher stories and it isn't limited to just non-Mac to Tiger either. We know some of you migrated from earlier Mac systems to Mac OS X

Tiger and we want to hear your stories too at feedback@maccompanion.com through the end of October.

And don't forget to click a few times on the affiliate links that help keep this magazine free to you. After all, that is what keeps the world economy flowing and *macCompanion* growing in this Apple garden.

A-“Dora”-ble Team Banzai Part 1 by Dr. John Choi with Lisa Chen

<http://team.gobanzai.com/>



It sounded like a good idea at the time...

This all started in February of last year when I came across an article in the Scientific American about a race for driverless robotic vehicles. The DARPA Grand Challenge http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DARPA_Grand_Challenge is a technology race to develop the first fully autonomous ground vehicle to be able to traverse long distances at high speed – without crashing into rocks, falling into ditches, or running into other cars. No human drivers. No remote controls.

Apparently this was a difficult enough problem that DARPA (the Defense Department agency that is responsible for funding advanced research projects such as the internet and the Saturn V rocket) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defense_Advanced_Research_Projects_Agency was willing to award \$1 million to the winner - the first vehicle that could finish a secret 150-mile desert course in less than 10 hours.

When no one came even close to finishing the course that year and DARPA announced they would hold another race the following year, we were intrigued. And when DARPA announced they were doubling the prize money and making the course more difficult by adding tank traps, we were sold.

We started with a brand new 2004 Volkswagen Touareg SUV <http://www.vw.com/touareg/>. Added on a high resolution GPS system <http://www.gpsworld.com/gpsworld/>, multiple scanning laser sensors <http://www.lidar.com/links.htm>, and array of robotic actuators http://www.imshome.com/mdrive34_mdi.html. We wrote custom software for a trio of Apple Mac mini's to manage and control everything. And we named her 'Dora'.

We chose the Mac mini for its compact form factor, low energy consumption, and high computing power. Having identical units allowed us to easily swap out and exchange individual units during the development phase. The compact form factor also made it easy to mount it securely, which is important as we drive over rocks and through ditches.

We decided to use multiple computers so that we could distribute the computational load onto specialized pre-processing units. The ‘Navigator’ computer is primarily responsible for processing the serial stream from GPS and LIDAR sensors and transmitting summary information to the others. The ‘Tactician’ computer is responsible for determining the best course of travel using the sensory information and the pre-programmed route map. Once a course of action is determined, it is transmitted to the ‘Driver’ computer that is responsible for managing the vehicle control actuators and monitoring the internal dynamics.

For everything to work properly we had to choose the best of the best for Dora. Apple's Mac OS X is technologically the most advanced and feature-rich operating system available today. At its core is a robust, mature, and ultra-efficient micro-kernel Mach UNIX system that runs some of the world's largest super-computing clusters. But all that power doesn't buy you much if you can't access it easily. And that's one of the things Apple does best; they understand how to design elegant interfaces to let regular people not just access the technology, but to let them easily integrate the technology into their normal routines.

This technology race is not just about throwing together the most expensive or complex equipment, it's more about how to design a manageable system to handle and leverage all that equipment. We took this design concept one step further and determined that creating an extremely user-friendly interface was critical for the development and testing phases. For this we developed a new process that we call ‘cooperative driving’. This mode allows for an interactive driving experience where the human operator can issue voice commands to the computer such as “turn right ahead” or “slow down here”. The computer will then execute the command or respond appropriately with information such as “lane not available for turning” or “cannot slow down here because of approaching traffic”.

While the ‘fully autonomous’ mode may be very useful for industrial and military operations, we feel that the ‘cooperative driving’ mode has significant applications for consumer use. Such a system may soon help make driving safer by anticipating dangers and aiding disabled or distracted drivers.

After nine months of many late nights and long weekends, we've had numerous opportunities to ask ourselves: is this all worth it?

I guess we'll find out on October 8th.

More

http://team.gobanzai.com/media/pr_08302005.htm

The Team:

<http://team.gobanzai.com/team/>

Tech:

<http://team.gobanzai.com/tech/>

Video:

http://team.gobanzai.com/media/with_offroad/video1.htm

Get the Team Banzai Widget <http://team.gobanzai.com/widget> to keep up-to-date.

[According to Hoyle...](#)

[Cross-Platform Software Development from a Macintosh Perspective, Part I by Jonathan Hoyle](#)

"We'd love to do a Macintosh version of this product, but we can't justify the cost. By the way, we need you to finish that Windows version right away."

Sound familiar? Most Macintosh software developers will hear these words at some time or another during their career...usually far too often. So here's the dilemma: the costs for producing a software package on the Macintosh is nearly the same as producing one for Windows. However, whereas Windows commands a 90+% marketshare, the Macintosh is only in single digits. Even if a Mac developer could somehow double, triple or even quadruple his productivity level, the ratio of expected sales per development dollar will always remain significantly lower on the Macintosh than on Windows. Corporate bean-counters want the biggest bang for their buck, and they need a compelling argument to justify that bang. What's a software engineer to do?

One practical solution is the use of a cross-platform framework. For almost the same engineering costs, a single code-base can then be used to create both Macintosh and Windows applications. In recent years, a large number of platform independent approaches have become available for the Macintosh developer to use:

There are full-featured application frameworks, such as Qt, wxWidgets and CPLAT.

There are entire cross-platform development environments, such as Java and REALbasic.

Unfortunately, there are many "solutions" with varying support for the Macintosh, and many give you a "lowest common denominator" look and feel.

Over these next series of articles, we will examine various cross-platform approaches from a Macintosh perspective. We look particularly at the ability of a given approach to give the Mac OS X user the appropriate user experience, while still being able to cross-compile for Windows.

Cross-platform frameworks have been in existence for a number of years. Before proceeding to examine the modern frameworks available today, let's look at a selection of some of the more popular frameworks of the past. Seeing how and why some of these past attempts have failed can be helpful in choosing a modern framework.

Visual C++ Macintosh Cross-Compiler

One of the earliest entries into cross-platform development was, surprisingly, from Microsoft with their Visual C++ Macintosh Cross-Compiler. This product was an add-on to their standard Visual C++ compiler, allowing you to take applications written for MFC (Microsoft Foundation Classes) and cross-compile them for the Macintosh. Unfortunately, there were a number of drawbacks to this approach, not the least of which was that it was Windows NT-hosted. This means that a Windows PC was needed to create Macintosh applications. As you might suspect,

this was not a very popular aspect for Mac developers. Secondly, it was outrageously expensive, retailing at \$1,999 for the add-on alone (which does not include the \$495 Visual C++ compiler itself). Finally, it created notoriously slow and clunky applications. The most well-known example was Microsoft Word 6.0, which many Mac users remember. In retrospect, it is not surprising that Microsoft would offer a development tool that was slow, expensive and Windows-only. As you might expect, the Macintosh development community never took this product very seriously, and the product was cancelled after only a couple of years. By 1996, Microsoft slashed the price to \$199 to clear out remaining inventory, and Microsoft has not offered a Mac development tool since.

Mac2Win

Essentially, Mac2Win is a port of the original Mac OS API to Windows. By adding the Mac2Win libraries with your project, your application can be compiled and run on Windows. The appeal of this for the Macintosh developer was that he could develop his project in the standard Mac Toolbox and compile for Windows without a large rewrite. Unfortunately, only about 80% of the System 7 Toolbox was ported. And of the functions that were supported, many behaved differently on Windows than on the Mac, requiring extensive debugging. Mac2Win was an expensive, royalty-based product, well outside the price range of the small developer. However, many well-known Macintosh applications got their initial Windows ports via Mac2Win, including Claris Works, Macromedia Director, 4th Dimension and Metrowerks CodeWarrior.

PowerPlant for Windows

Metrowerks, the company that made CodeWarrior, the dominant Macintosh development environment for over a decade, already came free with an object-oriented Mac-only framework called PowerPlant. In 2001, Metrowerks announced a Windows version of PowerPlant; unfortunately, it too was crippled by corporate greed. Instead of releasing it free, Metrowerks decided to charge for this Windows version. Metrowerks chose a price point that priced themselves out of the market. At first launch, PowerPlant for Windows cost anywhere from \$20,000 to \$50,000. By early 2003, Metrowerks dropped the price to \$15,000 plus 1% of the total product sales above \$1.5 million, capping at a maximum of \$150,000. Clearly not for the faint of heart. This price structure strangled any hope of survival for this product. Although some large companies (like Adobe) were able to afford it, the development community at large was simply not interested in such outrageously priced offerings. Due to lack of sales, PowerPlant for Windows was withdrawn from the market in early 2004.

Yellow Box for Windows

One other cross-platform initiative that should be mentioned was introduced by Apple Computer itself. At the 1997 Worldwide Developer's Conference, Apple announced a plan for a new operating system called Rhapsody. To run natively in Rhapsody, Mac applications would have to be re-written in to *Yellow Box* API, an updated version of NeXT's Open Step API. In exchange for this rewriting, Yellow Box applications can be easily recompiled for both Windows and Macintosh. Unlike Visual C++, Mac2Win or PowerPlant, creating YellowBox applications was free with no royalties. Unfortunately, there was a cost at the other end: the user, not the developer. Each Windows user would have to pay \$249 for the Yellow Box libraries needed to run such applications (Mac users received it as part of Rhapsody). For the shareware writer, it was unreasonable to assume that a Windows user would pay such a sum just to run his application. The following year, the flawed Rhapsody plan was replaced by Mac OS X and Yellow Box was redeployed as the Mac OS X-only Cocoa API.

Where We Are Today

The flawed attempts of the past appear have one trait in common; they are expensive...extremely expensive. Today, with the availability of free and low cost development tools for most programming languages on virtually any platform, these old approaches are almost laughable from a modern viewpoint. For the C++ user, CPLAT costs a mere \$50 flat with no royalties. Many other frameworks (e.g. wxWidgets) are fully open source and free. Even the expensive Qt offers an open source license option. Java developers can download Eclipse at no charge, and Basic programmers can purchase REALbasic for as little as \$49 per platform. The world is truly your oyster if you are a cross-platform programmer in 2005.

In exchange for this large quantity of solutions, there is a catch; not all of these solutions produce quality results. SourceForge.net, the place where open source projects go to die, is filled with partially supported and incomplete cross-platform frameworks. Which of these will remain viable when Apple switches to Intel next year? If there is a bug in the framework, how timely can I expect a fix? Will I be able to create applications which look like native Mac OS X apps and native Windows apps? Tune in next time as we explore the answers to these exciting questions!

Coming Up Next: Part II: **Qt**

<http://www.jonhoyle.com/resume/>

<http://www.adhocconference.com/cgi-bin/blosxom.cgi/Speakers/#Hoyle>

Core Musings

Web Browser Roundup, Part 1 by Dan Pourhadi

Reprinted with permission

Show of hands: How many of you Macites use Safari, Apple's Web browser, to surf the vast network of cookie recipes and rebate deals known as the Internet? I'd say a good 90% of you are quite comfortable with its slick brushed-metal interface and its speedy rendering of picture-full pages, as well as its tabbed-browsing and darned-good pop-up blocking. (The other 10% is probably stuck in OS 9, using Netscape or Internet Explorer -- my heart goes out to you fine, unfortunate folks.)

After polling some of my friends and random strangers by the bus-stop, I was alarmed to see that so many people use Safari, but have so little experience with other, more mature browsers (sans IE).

Cue the collaborative gasp: "What? There are other browsers? Nahhh."

Oh contraire, friends, there are several other browsers -- several other good browsers -- that deserve a pat on the back and a free lunch at Portillo's. Let's take a look at 'em, shall we?

Firefox

Firefox is the open-source Web browser that's getting' a whole lotta press these days as being the #1 alternative to Internet Explorer -- at least on Windows. See, them Windows folks are having problems with Bad People doing Bad Things to their computers, all because of Microsoft's policy allowing (encouraging, demanding) its programmers to drink on the job. (Disclaimer to Microsoft lawyers: Joke! Ha! Ha)

Because IE is so susceptible to viruses and hackers -- (I once wrote that using IE is kinda like leaving your door unlocked and opened widely with a sign that says, "Steal Things") -- everyone with half a brain and a desire to help -- or at least a reluctance to harm -- others is adamantly promoting the use of Firefox instead.

Firefox on the Mac may not be the bastion of secure browsing as it on Windows, but only because the Mac is just as secure as-is. What Firefox does offer, however, is expandability that, when the two browsers are placed side-by-side, causes doctors to mistake Safari as a tuberculosed lung. Firefox enables users to install a wide array of plug-ins that can make the browser dance on its head while effortlessly juggling motor saws and flaming breadsticks. For example, a plug-in called miniT enables you to reorder the position of your browser tabs; AdBlock removes those flashy punch-the-monkey ads right from web pages; ForecastFox provides access to a one-click weather forecast right in the browser toolbar. The list goes on

Firefox also supports various “themes,” so if you’re a closet artist and you’re looking for a way to express your buried anguish and suppressed teen angst, you can customize your browser’s appearance to best represent that emotional distress. Or if you just, you know, get bored with Firefox’s default theme, and you’re easily impressed by shiny colors and glowy buttons. Whatever floats your boat.

You can download Firefox for free from <http://www.getfirefox.com>.

Camino

I hesitated to add this one. There was a time when Camino was the bee’s knees, the cat’s pajamas the eel’s ankle, and the skunk’s stripe -- but since Safari made its debut and Firefox stole the spotlight, Camino has been slowly losing its already-isolated importance in the Mac world. However, I came to realize that if I didn’t mention it, I’d be e-mailed bombed by every Mac Fanatic who has been a Camino fan for so long but doesn’t have the will -- or the power -- to let go; so I figured I’d save us all a little headache and put it in for old time’s sake.

Camino is the proficient (but sadly under-loved) son of the Mozilla Foundation; the B-student brother of the straight-A, Heisman-winning Firefox. Camino has basically one strength that Firefox and Mozilla lack: it’s made by a Mac developer solely for the Mac community. There is no Windows or Linux port, and that gives the developer the rare opportunity of tinkering with Mac OS X-specific features, allowing him to optimize it in ways that Firefox can only dream of. (The supposed effect of that, of course, is better performance.)

Unfortunately, that’s all Camino really has going for it. Those who stick with it seem to do so because of an unexplainable loyalty to the platform: it was around before Safari, and it touted superior features that Safari later adopted. But the gap has closed, and Safari has caught up -- and passed -- Camino in terms of features and, from my experience, speed and performance.

Camino is free from <http://www.caminobrowser.org>.

OmniWeb

I beat my brain for hours trying to think of a suitable analogy for OmniWeb, but the best I could come up with was along the lines of, “OmniWeb is as great as the thing that’s so great. You know...the thing.”

While that may not be thoroughly descriptive, it certainly makes the point. OmniWeb is the Toyota Prius of Web browsers; it has so many features, it makes the newspaper seem lackluster. The Omni Group took the basic, boring-ol’ concept of a Web browser and refined it to a point of unprecedented superiority, adding functionality up the ying-yang. OmniWeb has a suite of features that take Internet surfing to the next level of Awesomeness, expanding the concept of browsing beyond “Type address, hit enter, click link.”

Take, for example, their dazzling implementation of the famed tabbed-browsing. In other browsers like Firefox and Safari, “tabs” are just that: tabs under the address bar above the page contents. In OmniWeb, however, tabs are actually thumbnail images of the page itself, conveniently placed in a drawer on the side of the browser window. As if that isn’t enough to

convince you of the divinely-blessed nature of OmniWeb, consider what you can do with the tabs: If you have multiple windows open, you can actually drag tabs between the various windows. You can also take one window and place it in the tab drawer of another, or take a tab and separate it into its own window -- features that Safari users resort to dubbing as “witchcraft” so as to stifle off embarrassment.

Want more? Well how about a nifty aspect of OmniWeb called “Workspaces,” which “enables you to save browsing instances -- what pages are open, what tabs are open, and even the browser window’s position and size -- so they can be loaded later with a single click.” Not useful, you say? Well you’re wrong. Workspaces are great for people who visit a wide array of related Web sites at once, eliminating the need for them to manually open the pages (in the way they prefer) each and every time they’re interested in viewing them. A bonus to this is a feature called “Auto-save while browsing,” which remembers the characteristics of your browser as you surf the Internet and immediately loads it after you quit and reopen OmniWeb -- so, for example, if your browser somehow crashes, relaunching it will return you to the state you were in right before the crash, saving you the headache of having to find the pages all over again.

OmniWeb has a boatload of other ingenious features: Web site-specific preferences, Web form-enhancers, an advanced and customizable search box, the ability to highlight a link by typing its first few letters, sophisticated bookmark and history management, a cure for cancer, cheap gasoline, and a waffle iron that IHOP would be jealous of.

OmniWeb, unlike most other Mac browsers, isn’t free -- but it’s one of the few in the world worth paying for. You can purchase it for \$30 from <http://www.omnigroup.com>.

Dan Pourhadi is a freelance technology writer from the Chicago suburbs. Aside from writing for Passages, he has contributed to MacAddict Magazine and writes a weekly column for Macteens.com. He maintains a fitfully-updated, though semi-interesting blog at <http://www.pourhadi.com>.

He said he would do some more next time with Opera, Shirii, etc.

Regards,
Dan Pourhadi



MacNight Owl

I Have Seen the Future of Education: The iBook by Gene Steinberg

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

The news that a relatively small Arizona school system ditched textbooks in favor of iBooks may seem a curiosity, but when you actually get to look at the system in action, you come away incredibly impressed.

On Wednesday, I made a 140-mile trip to Empire High School in Vail, Arizona to see the fledgling system first-hand, and to say I came away impressed is an understatement. Within a complex of buildings that's dusty from new construction lies one of the first educational systems to truly embrace the possibilities of the 21st century.

First, let me repeat what many of you know from the published reports. Every student at Empire gets an iBook that contains all their lesson materials, plus copies of Microsoft Office. There are no printed textbooks. They can take the iBooks home with them, and, of course, their parents are responsible for its care, although a low-cost insurance program helps reduce the costs in case the laptop is smashed to smithereens.

Unlike traditional textbooks, which are designed by committee and are often outdated, the Vail school system is regularly updating its instructional materials at Empire High School to take advantage of new technologies and information. Except for the presence of iBooks on each desk, including the teacher, classrooms like amazingly conventional. Network connections are all wireless, and there are 157 wireless access points located at strategic locations to keep signal strength high. There are also areas outside where students can congregate and compute. The network is managed by a handful of Apple Xserves.

System management is less complicated than it may seem at first glance. The IT people, headed by Matt Federoff, the Director of Technology, create custom user environments for students on disk images that are deployed on every iBook. Students are limited in their access to software, system features and, of course the Internet. They cannot, for example, install their own software, nor can they run AIM or iChat to goof off during class.

Despite being on the cutting edge, the staff also seemed conventional. I was taken on the "cook's tour" by Federoff, and was granted interviews with the school principal, Cindy Lee, a teacher, a

pair of students, and one of Federoff's assistants. The students impressed me as bright, articulate, and my overall impression was one of quiet efficiency. The students I interviewed, by the way, had Windows PCs at home, and this was apparently their first exposure to the Mac OS. No, they haven't committed to become switchers; at least not yet.

In all, the system has nearly 2,000 Macs around the district. Empire has 350 students, and that number is expected to double by next year. As you might expect, homework, from submission to grading, is handled online.

As you might expect, there have been minor bumps along the way. Despite the perception that most of today's high schoolers have mastered most basic computer skills, teachers had to spend the early weeks training some in basic file management and organizing techniques. The network, by the way, is configured to automatically back up a student's work, so in the event of a system break down, very little is lost.

Typical of Macs, system problems have been few. Some of the iBooks had to be "re-imaged," meaning that their drives had to be erased and a new copy of the drive data had to be installed. The process reportedly takes a little over 12 minutes, and is a fairly trivial operation. In fact, I didn't get the impression that the small IT staff was particularly overworked chasing down problems, unlike what you find in a typical Windows environment.

Clearly the world is watching. In addition to the media, Federoff said that he had been contacted by school systems around the world about the Vail district's experiment in state-of-the-art education. He even receives calls from such PC makers as Dell and Gateway, but their conversations focus largely on selling boxes, not on enhancing the system's educational tools. In contrast, Apple's sales representative concentrates on the great things you can do with its computers.

So far, the project has been in operation for about a month, and everything, to quote the cliché, just works. If you want to learn more about this pioneering school system, and other examples of Apple's "[1 to 1 Learning](http://www.apple.com/education/onetoone/)" initiative, check out Apple's education site. You also can hear many of the interviews I conducted during my visit on this week's (August 25) episode of [The Tech Night Owl LIVE](http://nightowl.purestatic.com/site/archive.htm) (<http://nightowl.purestatic.com/site/archive.htm>).

Musings From Mars

iPod Declared Inferior by Computer Expert by Leland Scott

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

"Like zillions of others, I've got an iPod. But, unlike every other mammal on the planet, I don't think it's all that great. Frankly, I don't get it. What's the big deal? I've had MP3 players before and I think they're terrific, but the iPod, frankly, is inferior to all of them. It's just a hard disk with a Play button..."

Jim Turley (jturley@cmp.com), editor in chief of Embedded Systems Programming, a sister publication of EE Times. [Full article, such as it is, [here](#).]

It wasn't too long ago that stupid reviews like this one had me worried that once again consumers were going to be corralled away from superior technology and toward the inferior solutions so favored by Microsoft and its band of brothers. After all, during its first few years, the iPod was so daringly different from the much cheaper flash-RAM mp3 players that dominated the market that it wasn't at all obvious it would achieve the success and market dominion it has today.



The whole concept of a hard-disk-based mp3 player is one that Apple pioneered, and until last year, most Windows-only technology pundits were convinced that Apple could never succeed against the steady onslaught of would-be imitators that were built to promote Microsoft's proprietary media solutions. My, weren't they surprised! Apple wouldn't have won if they had stopped innovating and let the iPod stand still, but that didn't happen. (See John Gruber's prescient August 2004 article "[Why 2004 Won't Be Like 1984](#).") And now the competition is running out of steam, looking more and more like sweaty, limping sprinters trying in vain to catch up to the race leader who never seems to tire.

There are folks like the idiot Turley (quoted above) who simply can't understand what happened.

- Didn't people want an FM radio player built into their iPod? (No. That's a stupid idea.)
- Didn't they want to be able to do voice recordings? (Well, yes, but not at the expense of a more complicated user interface. The iPod's extensible architecture lets you add this functionality if you want it.)
- Don't they want video on little tiny screens? (Maybe, but it's not a top priority.)
- Don't they want to be able to choose what software they use to manage music on their iPods? (Why? iTunes is so amazing that no other mp3 jukebox software even compares. Besides, do you really think that people who buy Windows-only mp3 players use anything but Microsoft Media Player? Ha!)
- Don't they want to be able to use online shopping services other than the iTunes music store? (Apparently not... Apple's iTunes music store pioneered the new form of shopping and remains the best in the business.)

➤ How about a camera with your mp3 player? (These guys just don't get it, do they?)

Turley's "opinion" can be taken as an insult against the 20 million iPod fans, if you care what Turley thinks. But frankly, it's a huge compliment to the buying public that they were able to see past the cheap manufacturing, inferior user interfaces, unnecessarily complicated functionality, and typical-Windows-multistep interaction with their computers to realize that Apple was offering something far superior. The public also somehow managed to see past the FUD (fear, uncertainty, and doubt) spread so hysterically by Microsoft and its manufacturers about Apple's music format. It makes me very proud to think that so many people (many of them Windows users) didn't buy into the lies about AAC and iTunes, and realize that Apple's audio format is the truly open one (after all, it's *not* Apple's format... it's an industry standard) that's capable of being used in any way imaginable. Microsoft is the company with a proprietary format that must be licensed from a single company (guess who).

So, after the iPod's and iTunes' roaring success of the last 2 years, I'm beginning to relax a little bit.

Which brings me to Turley's truly hysterical anti-iPod campaign. I just can't resist tearing the few "facts" in his argument to shreds. Keep in mind that this guy is supposed to be a geek... I mean, he's supposed to be sophisticated about computers and electronics. After all, he's "editor in chief of Embedded Systems Programming" magazine. Presumably you need **at least a few** IT credentials to have a job like that.

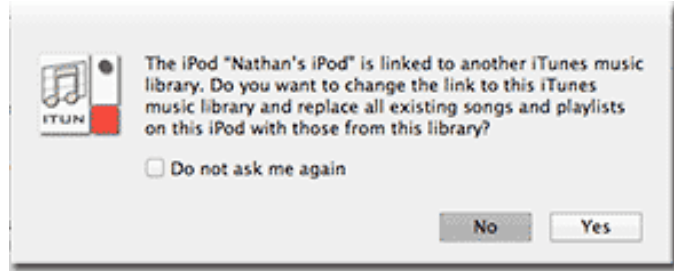
As I said, Turley doesn't offer many facts in his brief tirade, relying almost totally on his "opinions." But let me clear up the few "facts" I could identify:

- *It's just a hard disk with a Play button.* No, Jim, it's not quite that simple. Perhaps you missed some of the more obvious features: Hypertext notes (e.g., the Bible on iPod), Games (yes, you can now run Doom on your iPod!), Contacts and calendars, podcasts (of course maybe Turley doesn't read technology news), disk mode (one of the best portable firewire drives around!), photos and slideshows (if Turley knew about the Playboy offerings he might want another look...), remote control, FM broadcasting, etc. Also, the iPod doesn't have a "Play button."
- *With no controls, you can't screw it up.* Jim, the iPod does have some controls. See that round wheel thing with the button in the middle? Most people figure it out very quickly, but I can imagine that people who prefer a dozen buttons where one will do can't grasp the concept that two little controls can do so many things so easily. Sorry you missed that, but the iPod does, in fact, have very sophisticated controls.
- *In no time at all, I'd erased all the content I'd laboriously downloaded onto my iPod. Twice.* Actually, I'm not listing this "fact" here to refute it... I'm sure a klutz like Turley did in fact manage to do this. What I'm taking issue with is his characterization of the process of downloading content to an iPod as "laborious." My dictionary defines "laborious" this way:

"requiring considerable effort and time : years of laborious training | the work is very slow and laborious."

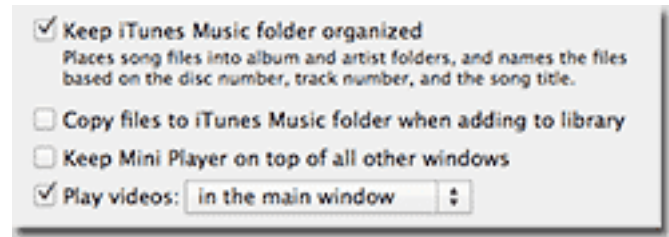
- Now, let's see... how do you download content from iTunes to an iPod? Oh yes, you just connect your iPod to your computer and wait a few minutes (depending on the size of your music library) for iTunes to do the work for you. You can hardly characterize this as an "effort" at all, let alone "considerable effort". To enjoy skewering this thought just a moment longer, let me add that even if you did manage to wipe out your iPod's music library, the process of restoring it also requires virtually no effort. You just select the playlists from iTunes you want to synchronize with iPod, and let the two do their beautiful symbiotic thing once again. Jim, just be more careful next time... OK?
- *I could go on and on about how iPod only copies files one direction (from your PC to your iPod, never the other way)...* Yes, Jim, you've got that straight. From the music industry's viewpoint, that would be (or could be) **stealing**. After all, so the logic goes, you can only get music onto your iPod from your computer, so... why would you want to move it back if it's already there? Turns out, though, that there are some legitimate reasons why you might need to do this. For example, your hard drive goes kapluie and you want to restore your iPod collection to a new hard drive. Perfectly legitimate. Fortunately, there are a gazillion free utilities out there that let you move songs from your iPod to your computer's hard drive. Oh... but I forgot. Turley doesn't know how to do an Internet search or download and install software on his computer. He'd rather just complain about a missing functionality that you can be sure Apple would like to add, but that it simply can't and still stay friends with the music industry.

➤ *[The iPod] obliterates all your content should you casually plug your iPod into someone else's computer...* Um, no. It actually takes a pretty clear act of stupidity on the user's



part to get this to happen. When you plug your iPod into someone else's computer (whether casually or not), a big warning message pops up that asks, "Do you want to change the links to this iTunes music library and replace all existing songs and playlists on this iPod with those from this library?" (see screenshot) You then get a big "No" and "Yes" button to choose from. Now, who else in the known universe thinks Apple could have made this choice any clearer? If you're the impetuous kind who just hits the Return key whenever a dialog box gets in the way, notice that Apple has made "No" the default choice. Apple's engineers and user interface designers are geniuses at keeping computer idiots out of trouble... they provide the model for how to keep stupid users from damaging themselves accidentally with their computers. But it's hard to program around the computer idiots who don't know that they are idiots, like our friend Jim here. Poor Jim... wiped out his iPod library and had to go back home to "laboriously" restore it. Maybe next time he'll read the dialog box.

➤ *[The iPod] makes you keep a duplicate copy of every music file on your computer, wasting 20 Gbytes of disk space. Why only 20 gb? Heck, my music library is*



well over 100 gb nowadays! If what Jim says were true, I'd have an issue, too. But fortunately, it's not. Jim is just misinformed (see how nice I can be?) You see, there's an option you can set in iTunes preferences that reads "Copy files to iTunes Music folder when adding to library." I actually figured out what this meant right away, and of course I didn't want iTunes to do that. Now, in Jim's defense, I have to point out that the option is one of several in the "Advanced" preference tab. You can't expect sophisticated computer experts like Jim to look at the Advanced preferences, after all.

➤ Jim concludes: *Alas, these and other glaring mistakes-which afflict no other manufacturer's products-seem to trouble the general public not at all. They're all enamored of iPod's sleek white exterior. Yes, my friends, we have entered the age where high-tech electronics are sold based on the color of the plastic. Can anyone see the factual error here? I see a hand in the back there... Yes, you sir. What do you think Jim's mistake is? "Well, for one thing, not all iPod's are white." "Also, they aren't all made of plastic!" Yes, that's true, but it's not the mistake I was thinking of. Anyone else? Yes, young lady, what's your take on Jim's mistake? "White is not a color." Yes! That's it! Gold star for you, my dear.*

In conclusion, let me read an excerpt from the "mission statement" for the column Jim writes for [*Electronic Engineering Times*](#), where this opinion piece appeared. Here's what Jim is supposed to be writing about:

"Embedded Insights" column provides thoughtful analysis of trends within the embedded industry. In this column, Jim Turley writes about what's current in embedded systems, new development tools, and what's weird and wonderful in the embedded world.

Although I suppose you could say that this article is about what's "weird" in the "embedded world" (whatever that is), it's a bit of a stretch, don't you think? The good folks at *Electronic Engineering Times* might want to find themselves an analyst who can actually analyze. And one of the first things you need to be able to do to analyze software and hardware is to figure out how it works.

With the iPod, most everyone who uses one understands how it works right away. This leads me to conclude that almost anyone in the consuming public is probably more qualified to write this column than Jim Turley... don't you think?

P.S. To Microsoft et al... I hope you didn't pay Jim too much for this piece of drivel. In any case, now that his credibility is completely gone (I mean, who's going to take advice from a guy who can't figure out how to use an iPod?), I assume you'll have to remove him from your list of reliable FUD'ers.

PODCASTING & VODCASTING: a White Paper by Peter Meng

- Technical Business Analyst, Special Projects, University of Missouri, IAT Services

<http://www.missouri.edu/~mengjp/whitepapers/MUPodcastingWhitePaper.pdf>

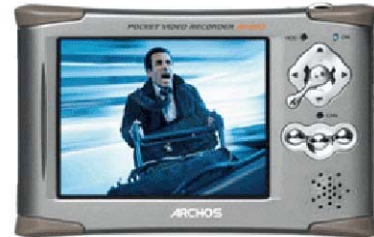
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What is Podcasting?

Defined

The word “podcasting” is an amalgam of the word broadcasting and the name of the popular MP3 player from Apple Computer called the “iPod”. It’s a bit of a misnomer in that it implies that an iPod is required to podcast. In fact

podcasts can be used with a variety of digital audio formats and play on almost any MP3 player or portable digital audio device - as well as any brand of desktop computer or laptop.

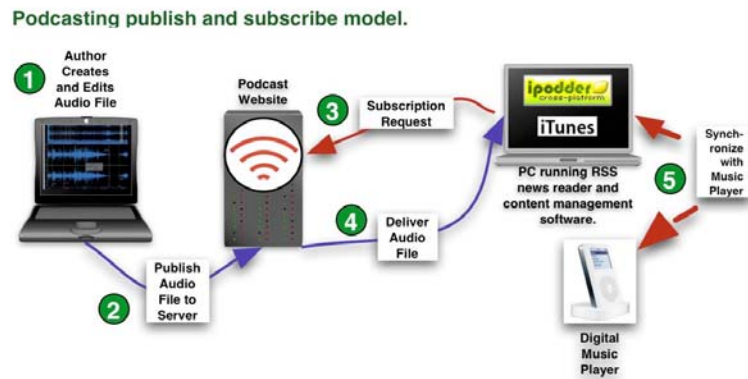


To define it: Podcasting is the process of capturing an audio event, song, speech, or mix of sounds and then posting that digital sound object to a Web site or “blog” in a data structure called an RSS 2.0 envelope (or “feed”). RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication and is an agreed specification of XML tags used to define objects, which can be subscribed to through a “RSS news reader” (see glossary). Using specialized newsreaders like iPodder or iPodderX, users can subscribe to a Web page containing RSS 2.0 tagged audio files on designated web pages and automatically download these files directly into an audio management program on their personal computer like iTunes, Windows Media Player or MusicMatch. When a user synchronizes their portable audio device with their personal computer the podcasts are automatically transferred to that device to be listened to at the time and location most convenient for the user.

Many have compared podcasting to Tivo or a DVR (digital video recorder) because of its “time-shifting” ability. In some aspects it is similar, but it is also different in that the recorded content is delivered in its final format to a portable device that is independent of the recording device.

A Metaphor

Podcasts follow a simple publish and subscribe model but with a convenient twist. Imagine the following scenario: You've just heard about a great new magazine where each week a number of influential people from your profession are interviewed and share highly personal knowledge and advice - sounds interesting. You fill out the request form for your free 1-month trial and send it in.



When the publisher receives your request they notify the distributor, where the latest version of the magazines are stored, and tell them send you the latest copy of their magazine each week. The distributor calls United Parcel Service (UPS) to schedule regular pickup/deliveries of your magazine. UPS picks up your magazine from the distributor for same day delivery. The UPS courier delivers the magazine to your house and puts it in your mailbox. But (... and here's the twist) instead of going out to the mailbox to pick up your magazine, Ralph, your trained Rotweiler, goes out to the mailbox grabs your magazine and places it - gently - in your briefcase. The next morning, as you ride the train to work, you open your briefcase to read the magazine you know is waiting for you there.

VODcasting (also called "vlogging") - the "VOD" stands for "video-on-demand" - is almost identical to podcasting. The difference is that the content is video versus audio, and the content is more likely to be played on a laptop than a PMA (personal media assistant) due to their newness and relative expense.

How It Works

Doing a Podcast

Podcasts are rapidly increasing in popularity because they are simple to produce and very inexpensive to deliver. At its simplest, all that is required to create a podcast is a personal computer with a sound card, an inexpensive or built-in microphone, sound editing free ware, and an internet connection with access to a Web site. Because of the low cost of entry, anyone can be a publisher, or more accurately a broadcaster with their own "radio" show.

VODcasts are a bit more complex and require a slightly larger investment in equipment and time, but still fall well into the technical and financial realm of anyone with a digital video camera and a higher-end desktop or laptop personal computer.

The Pod/VODcasting Process

The process for podcasting and VODcasting can be broken down into five steps. The complexity of those steps is dependent on the purpose of the content to be created and the quality level at which it will be produced.

- I. Create or capture and edit the content.
- II. Publish content to a web site or blog.
- III. Subscribe to the content using an “RSS News Reader”.
- IV. Download the content into content management software (CMS).
- V. Play content on download device or synchronize CMS with portable media player and play.

Required Tools and Equipment

Podcasting

- I. *Audio capture tools.* Nothing will affect the quality of a podcast more than the tools selected to capture it with. A quality microphone is a good start, combined with audio software and a personal computer. The microphone can be connected to a tape player, digital recorder with a memory card, or directly to the “MIC” input on the editing computer. If you use some type of recording device you will need some way to transfer the captured sound to your computer for editing and packaging for the Internet. The way the recorded content is transferred to the computer depends on the type of recording tool you used, so check the instructions that came with the device or the numerous web sites that discuss digital recording.
- II. *Audio editing tools.* There are numerous excellent audio editing tools available for all computer plat-forms. Price is not necessarily an indicator of quality or features, as there are numerous quality share-ware, freeware and open source packages that will do the job admirably - <http://www.sourceforge.net> and <http://www.shareware.com> are good starting places for recording tools. Key requirements are multiple track editing and multiple audio compression formats including, AIFF, WAV, ACC and MP3.
- III. *File transfer software.* Once content files are created they need to be published to a Web site or Blog using any traditional file transfer method; basic FTP/SFTP, HTTP upload, virtual drive (WebDAV), or server upload will all work well. Also the software that is used for Web site or Blog creation will probably transfer the content files to the desired location as well. Check the documentation of your Web or Blog design tools for additional assistance.
- IV. *RSS Enclosures.* Preparing the content for delivery requires it to be tagged via XML in a format known as RSS 2.0. The enclosure can be created with software designed to create RSS feeds or can be hand coded using your favorite text editor or WYSIWIG web design software. See the resource portion of this document for a list of editors and articles on creating a RSS enclosure.

- V. *Specialized RSS news reader.* To automatically download the podcast requires a type of software called a RSS News Reader. It must be designed to specifically download podcasts to a specific folder on the subscriber's computer or can be modified to do so. Two packages to look at are iPodder (free - <http://ipodder.sourceforge.net>) for most popular operating systems, or iPodderX (\$40 - <http://www.ipodderx.com>) for the Apple's Mac OS X.
- VI. *Content management software.* There are a number of software tools that are available for managing podcasts or any other audio content. CMS software allows the user to sort and organize their content into "playlists" which can be scheduled to automatically synchronize with a media player when you connect it to your computer or at specified times of the day.

By far the most popular CMS for podcasting is Apple iTunes, which allows users to manage their audio content on both Windows XP and Macintosh OS X computers. Microsoft's Windows Media Player and Sony MusicMatch for Windows XP are excellent alternatives to iTunes and provide the added advantage that they will manage and play almost any type of media including photos and video. They also work with a wide variety of media players from a number of vendors. iTunes will natively synchronize content with both an Apple iPod music player and other assorted MP3 players via associated plug-ins or applications.

- VII. *A digital music player.* There are too many choices of MP3 players and media players to list in this document. Prices range from \$15 for 32MB flash players to luxury \$1500 multiple media wireless personalized players. Pricing is dependent on storage capability, features, styling and brand. The popular Apple iPods are priced from \$99 to \$499. Most of these players come with some type of content management software and methods for synchronizing with a desktop or laptop computer.

VODcasting

- I. *Video capture tools.* Nothing will effect the quality of a VODcast more then the tools and techniques selected with which to capture it. However the quality required for a VODcast is dependent on the purpose of the VODcast. If the objective is to simply record an instructors lecture for future reference, then a simple \$400 DV camcorder may be adequate, but you will need to have a strong understanding of the limitations of your camcorder to get the best results from it. However if the VODcast needs to meet broadcast standards or may be shown on a very large screen, much higher quality equipment may be required. A level of comfort and expertise will be required to get satisfactory results from the higher quality broadcast class equipment.
- II. *Video editing tools.* There are variety of video editing applications that are available covering the range of capability and pricing from free for the novice, to thousands of dollars for the expert. Movie Maker from Microsoft and iMovie from Apple are both excellent products with which to create surprisingly sophisticated VODcasts. For the highest quality projects Final Cut Pro or editing products from Avid may be required.
- III. *File transfer software.* Same as for podcasting.

- IV. *RSS Enclosures*. Same as for podcasting.
- V. *Specialized RSS news reader*. To-date we have not yet found news reader software specifically designed for VODcasting. Podcasting news readers like iPodder, iPodderX, and PlayPod will work, as well as stand alone generic news reader applications like FeedReader and Awasu.
- VI. *Content management software*. iPhoto for the Mac and Adobe Album are both great products with which to organize your content. iPhoto can synchronize with the Apple iPod Photo and (currently) display stills. Rumor has it that a forthcoming software upgrade to the newest iPod Photo will also allow it to play MPEG 4 videos. Adobe Album allows organization and playback of VODcasts on a laptop computer. Although it will synchronize with some devices, none of these devices currently have video playback except for several models from Archos (<http://www.archos.com>).
- VII. *A laptop computer or portable digital media player*. Although portable video devices are beginning to appear, the most popular playback environment for VODcasts is still the laptop or desktop computer. Interestingly, some of the units even have built-in personal video recorders (PVR) allowing for the creation of additional content, which can then in turn be VODCast.

Required Skills

Podcasting and VODcasting both require basic computer abilities and an interest in learning several new, although easy-to-use, software packages. Most students enter the university technology environment with enough basic technical skills to easily create and distribute podcasts. VODcasting takes a bit more work and planning but it is still very much within the realm of most student and staff technical abilities.

However, as the importance of the message increases, generally, so does the level of effort to create high-quality content. Higher quality audio or video generally require a higher level of technical expertise. Currently many podcasts are known for their “scratchy” or homemade personalities. As the popularity of podcasting grows we will see ever more sophisticated broadcasts with increasing production values and higher level of required technical skills. The School of Journalism at The University of Missouri has already committed to producing all future podcasts and VOD casts using “best practices” - a professional quality level for their podcasts and VODcasts, which they are currently defining.

The area of podcasting that currently requires the greatest skill-set, is also the area that is evolving most rapidly and will soon open up podcasting to even greater numbers of individuals. The software used to manage and post the content to a Web site or blog is rapidly becoming easier to use and manipulate. At the current trend, posting audio and video content for podcasting will simply be a matter of dragging and dropping content to a virtual container where it will be automatically prepared for on-demand distribution.

Implications

Potential Uses for Podcasting and VODcasting at the University of Missouri

Even though the concept of podcasting is less than six months old, the sudden interest in podcasting and VODcasting comes from the numerous uses that the technology promises. The following table identifies different ways podcasting might be used and who would benefit from those uses.

POSSIBLE USES OF PODCASTING	PROSPECTIVE USERS
Record and distribute news broadcasts.	The entire campus community and general public
Students can record and upload their foreign language lessons to their instructor's Web site. The instructor can then listen to the lessons on their MP3 player at their convenience.	Students, instructors
Audio / video recruiting development brochures with personalized messages.	Prospective students and parents, development and recruiting personnel
Recorded teacher's notes	Student, teachers
Recorded lectures distributed directly to student's MP3 players.	Students, teachers
Recorded meeting and conference notes.	Students, faculty, staff, admin
Student projects and project support interviews.	Students
Oral history archiving and on-demand distribution.	Students, faculty
Sport event distribution.	Students, alumni, and public

Effect on Current and Future Infrastructure

Both podcasting and VODcasting represent challenges to the current infrastructure albeit in different ways. The effects of these new technologies will be outlined for the following areas: storage needs, bandwidth, security, support-ing hardware, and other requirements.

Podcasting

BANDWIDTH	The basic audio objects recorded at 32 kHz for speech content uses about 250 KB for every minute (15 MB per hour) of audio. In our current network environment a one hour audio segment will take about 1-2 minutes to download depending on network congestion. Because many podcasts are scheduled downloads, they can be scheduled for odd times of the day to reduce demand on the network.
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The basic audio objects recorded at 32 kHz for speech content uses about 250 KB for every minute (15 MB per hour) of audio. In our current network environment a one hour audio segment will take about 1-2 minutes to download depending on network congestion. Because many podcasts are scheduled downloads, they can be scheduled for odd times of the day to reduce demand on the network.

STORAGE	<p>At 15 MB per hour of speech based audio, the University could store approximately 65,000 hours of classroom audio on a single terabyte drive - more then the sum of all lectures at the University for a semester.</p> <p>Although the storage costs of this much valuable content are dropping dramatically, the bigger cost may be in the cataloging, searching and retrieval of this information. Because of it's linear nature and data structure, it will be difficult, at best, to catalog the contents of these files without a significant effort. Most likely the files will be simply "meta-tagged" using the original editing or publishing software with generic informations such as: title, author, participants, subject, size, date, and select keywords. Actually tagging every subtopic and "time-coding" the tag for search purposes will be done on only the highest value content, or when currently nonexistent software appears that can automate the task with a certain level of reliability.</p>
SUPPORTING HARDWARE	<p>Hardware requirements for podcasting are nominal. Any computer with an Internet connection and the ability of running Windows XP, Apple OS X, or Linux, has all the horsepower, storage, sound input/output, and memory required to create, edit, package and distribute a podcast. The only other equipment that is required is an external capture device with either an internal or external microphone. This includes both analog and digital recorders - analog recorders would require that captured content be transferred to digital format before editing and compression.</p> <p>To play podcasts, the user can use the personal computer to which the media has been downloaded or can use almost any brand of MP3 or digital audio player as long as the device supports some type of synchronization software running on the users computer.</p>
SUPPORTING SOFTWARE	<p>The software specifically designed for podcasting is just beginning to appear. There are two types of software required - publishing and subscribing. Current publishing software needs both an audio capture application - like Win Amp, Audio Hijack Pro, or Audacity, and and RSS editing package that will create an RSS 2.0 enclosure and deliver it to a web site or blog for distribution site - like FeedForAll or FeedBurner.</p> <p>Subscription software retrieves the specified content feeds, on-demand or on-schedule, and can place the content directly into the specified folder of a content management application like iTunes or Windows Media Player. These same applications allow synchronization of the podcast with the MP3 player or digital audio device.</p>
OTHER REQUIREMENTS	<p>A broadband Internet connection is <u>highly</u> recommended due to the relatively large file sizes and the amount of information that needs to be transmitted. Although dial-up could be used, the user would have to be selective as to the type and number of podcasts they would download.</p>

VODcasting

BANDWIDTH	<p>In our current network environment a one hour video segment will take about 10 minutes to download depending on network congestion. Because many VODcasts are scheduled downloads, they can be scheduled for odd times of the day to reduce demand on the network.</p>
STORAGE	<p>Depending on the resolution (for the purposes of this document we'll assume a frame size of 320 x 240 pixels). At 70 MB per hour of video the University could store approximately 10,000 hours of classroom video on a single terabyte drive.</p> <p>The storage and searching issues for video are similar to those for audio, although it may be a bit easier to catalog the video components. Since the nature of video editing lends itself to time-coding and often uses embedded markers and comments in the video editing process, with some editing foresight, searchable tagged "bookmarks" could be embedded in the digital file, aiding the ability of the user to skip directly to a desired location or video event. An example of this is the Sports Tech system currently being used by the Athletics Department. This content would lend itself well to a database driven portable on demand video solution.</p>
SUPPORTING HARDWARE	<p>Hardware requirements for creating VODcasts are more demanding than for audio. Required hardware would be a computer with an Internet connection and the following recommended configurations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows XP and Linux , Intel P4 3.0 Ghz +, 140 GB, HD, 1 GB RAM, sound card • Apple OS X, 1.5 Ghz + PowerPC, 140 GB, HD, 1 GB RAM <p>Other equipment required would include a video camera, ideally a DV cam (digital video) because converting analog video is time consuming and requires additional hardware. External microphones and lights may be required based on the location of filming and the quality of project required.</p> <p>To play podcasts, the user can use the personal computer to which the media has been downloaded or can use almost any brand of MP3 or digital audio player as long as the device supports some type of synchronization software running on their computer.</p>
SUPPORTING SOFTWARE	<p>The software specifically designed for VODcasting is, as it is in podcasting, just beginning to appear. There are two types of software required - publishing and subscribing. Current publishing software is primarily a video capture and editing package - like iMovie or Adobe Premiere Elements.. And then some type of software that will create an RSS 2.0 enclosure and deliver it to a web site or blog for distribution site - like Feed-ForAll, or FeedBurner.</p> <p>Subscription software retrieves the specified content feeds, on demand or on schedule, and can place the content directly into the specified folder of a content management application like iPhoto, Windows Media Player and DopplerRadio. These same applications allow synchronization of the podcast with a Pocket PC and Archos personal media assistant (PMA).</p>
OTHER REQUIREMENTS	<p>A broadband Internet connection is mandatory due to the large file sizes and the amount of information that needs to be transmitted. If the popularity of this technology takes-off there could be requirements for a content reservation system so that the available bandwidth and server capacity are not overwhelmed by a sudden demand for a specific piece of content. For example, if a teacher unexpectedly makes available their video lectures the day before a Psychology 101 final, we could find 500+ students all scrambling to download a 100MB file in a very short period of time.</p>

Other Implications

Because the content types are significantly greater in storage and bandwidth requirements than text or image based files, podcasting and VODcasting will make their presence known on the existing infrastructure. In the event that a very popular class or student created “show” is released, the electronic “buzz” created by the wide variety of communication tools can quickly create tremendous demand for large amounts of content. Thus flexible and directable bandwidth may be required as well.

As the technology grows in popularity, so too will the desire and demand to associate revenue with the content. Pod/VODcasting lends itself to a variety of revenue generating opportunities including subscription, sponsorship, product placement, as well as traditional blatant and indirect advertising. Revenue generation may seem antithetical to the mission of a public education institution, but with diminishing federal/state funding dollars and the rising popularity of on-line and lifelong learning, the repurposing and sale of content. All of these require supporting infrastructure as well as management tools or policies as previously discussed. By far the biggest issue generated by the evolution of these and other new technologies is aggregation of the content and then redistributing the appropriate content to the appropriate presentation device. Finding a way to search, present, and repurpose content across the greatest number of existing and upcoming mediums requires a concerted and centralized plan/effort that needs to be considered before unanticipated infrastructure consequences occur from a sudden acceptance of a particular creation/presentation technology.

Pedagogical Implications

The pedagogical implications of podcasting and VODcasting are intriguing. There are some simple and obvious uses, like recording classroom lectures and making them available for student notes. Even though this is technically easy to do, not only would a standardized recording process have to be set up, but more importantly, a permissions based distribution architecture would have to be established to limit access of the class content to approved class members. This could be done through the current WebCT and Blackboard architecture, or something completely new - again pointing to the fact that global content management and distribution in the University community is a growing issue.

Beyond simple recordings of lectures, a variety of other uses to enhance learning can be imagined for podcasting - in fact many of these are already being tested. Following is a sample list of ways that podcasting might be used:

- Audio recordings of textbook text, made available for students by the chapter, would allow students to “read” or review texts while walking or driving to class. It could also be a significant aid to auditory learners.
- Students could record and post project audio and video interviews which could be automatically downloaded to an instructor's laptop or MP3 player for review. This would be an enhanced version of what is currently being done in the J-School).

The same could be done for language lessons where students forward audio of their pronunciation dialogues. They could even swap these with peers for peer review before turning in the final form to the instructor:

- Oral reports recorded and archived.
- Musical resume's. Music critique.
- Libraries of bird sounds that the budding ornithologist could receive via seasonal subscription and take with them to the field.
- Downloadable library of high resolution heart sounds for medical students.

Beyond the technical opportunities and issues, both podcasting and VODcasting raise other significant issues. Some of the questions already being asked:

- How does podcasting or VODcasting challenge the current "talking head" model of classroom lectures? If all lectures are available via video and audio, do students need to go to class? How often? Why? How do we keep them in class?
- Who owns the content, the school, the instructor, the user? Can this content be used outside of the university community? How is it protected or secured to the owner or subscriber.
- Who's going to edit the content? What are the guidelines for editing? What's real - what's not?
- How is copyrighted material tracked and/or verified?
- Can we make money from this?

Evolutionary Path

Both of these technologies are evolving rapidly and will become significant players in media distribution. As the tools to capture content become more prevalent and easier to use, variations on the theme will occur at a surprising pace. Already variations are occurring. Mobile blogs, called moblogs, currently allow individuals with Internet enabled camera phones to instantly submit photo images from their phone directly to the moblog, which are then in turn automatically transferred to someone else's phone through a Macromedia Flash enabled browser. Users are testing using their phones for sound recording and submitting those to specific sites that dynamically turn the file into a podcast. The new generation of videophones will naturally encourage the same thing for video.

These evolutionary steps are happening in weeks and months - not years. Defining their exact impact is impossible, but if the adoption and evolutionary trail of lifestyle digital tools in the last five years is any indication we will see highly useful, if not amazing, changes in the next five years.

Most likely pod/VODcasting will not replace traditional broadcast radio or television, but become an intelligent ex-tension of it, offering more variety to a significantly larger audience from an ever increasing number of content providers and producers, each with their own unique, highly-targeted revenue models.

Conclusion

Podcasting and VODcasting, and their pending derivatives, are not fads. They are very real and very practical distribution technologies. The ability to time-shift content versus traditional broadcast distribution models expands student teaching and learning opportunities significantly. The supporting technologies are relatively inexpensive and surprisingly easy to use - in fact easy enough to use that faculty and students will begin to actively produce and distribute content through this medium by summer semester 2005.

The rapid evolution of audio-photo-video recording capabilities through phones and inexpensive hand-held devices will create a flood of multimedia content. They will be immediately adopted by the current class of students and will be looked at with disinterest or uncertainty by many of the current faculty. Both distribution technologies will quickly create demand for more bandwidth and storage for that content, both for academic purposes and student-social activities. They will intensify the need for a centralized content management and monetization infrastructure, as well as an education support architecture to assist faculty in the integration of these technologies that will be demanded by the incoming class of students.

But in this challenge is also the opportunity to provide all new classes of services for on-campus, distance and life-long learners. In fact the greatest opportunities for these technologies are in the ways they will be used that have not been imagined yet. The portable and on-demand nature of podcasting and VODcasting make them technologies worth pursuing, implementing and supporting.

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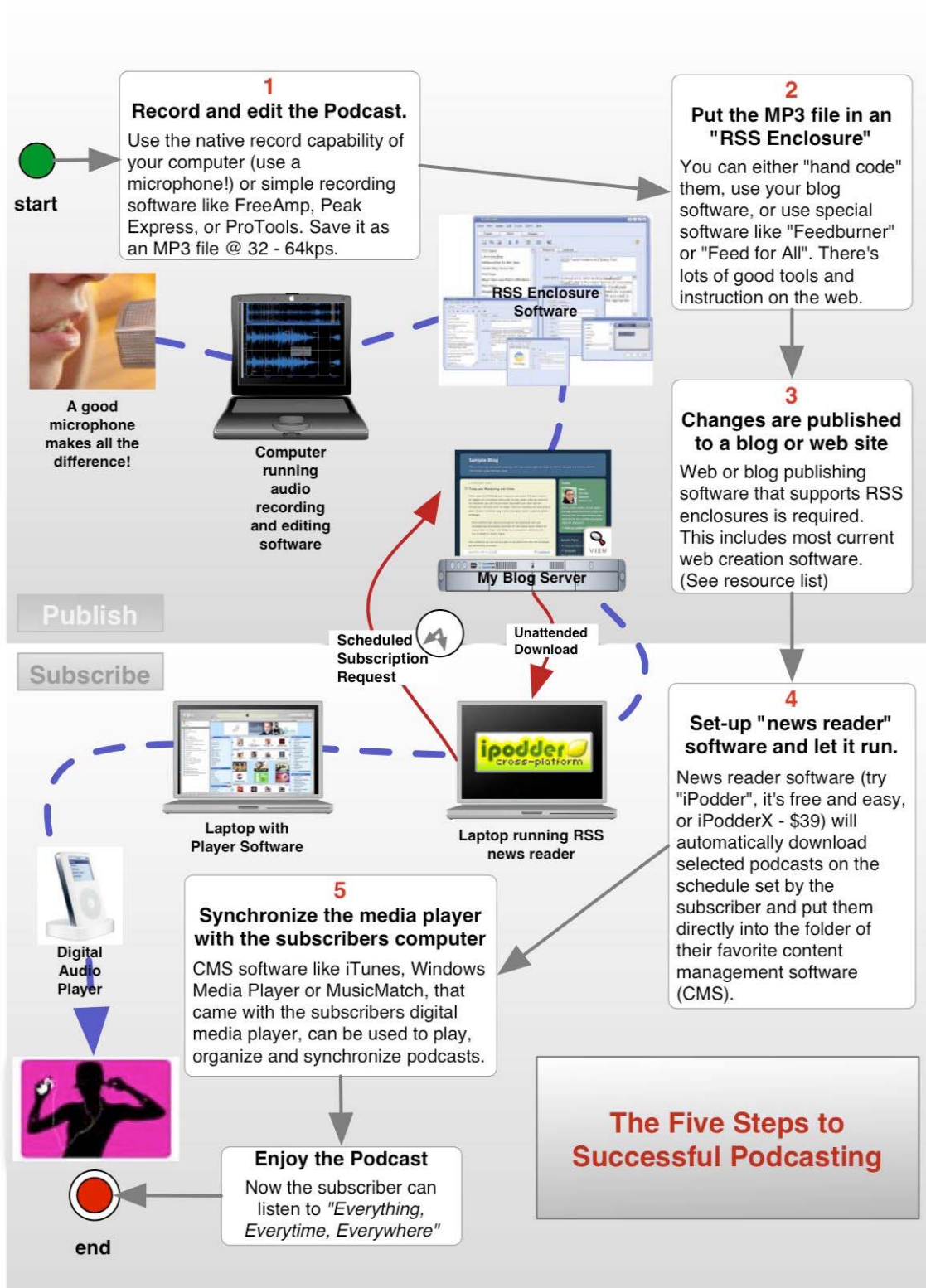
<mailto://mengjp@missouri.edu>

<http://iatservices.missouri.edu>

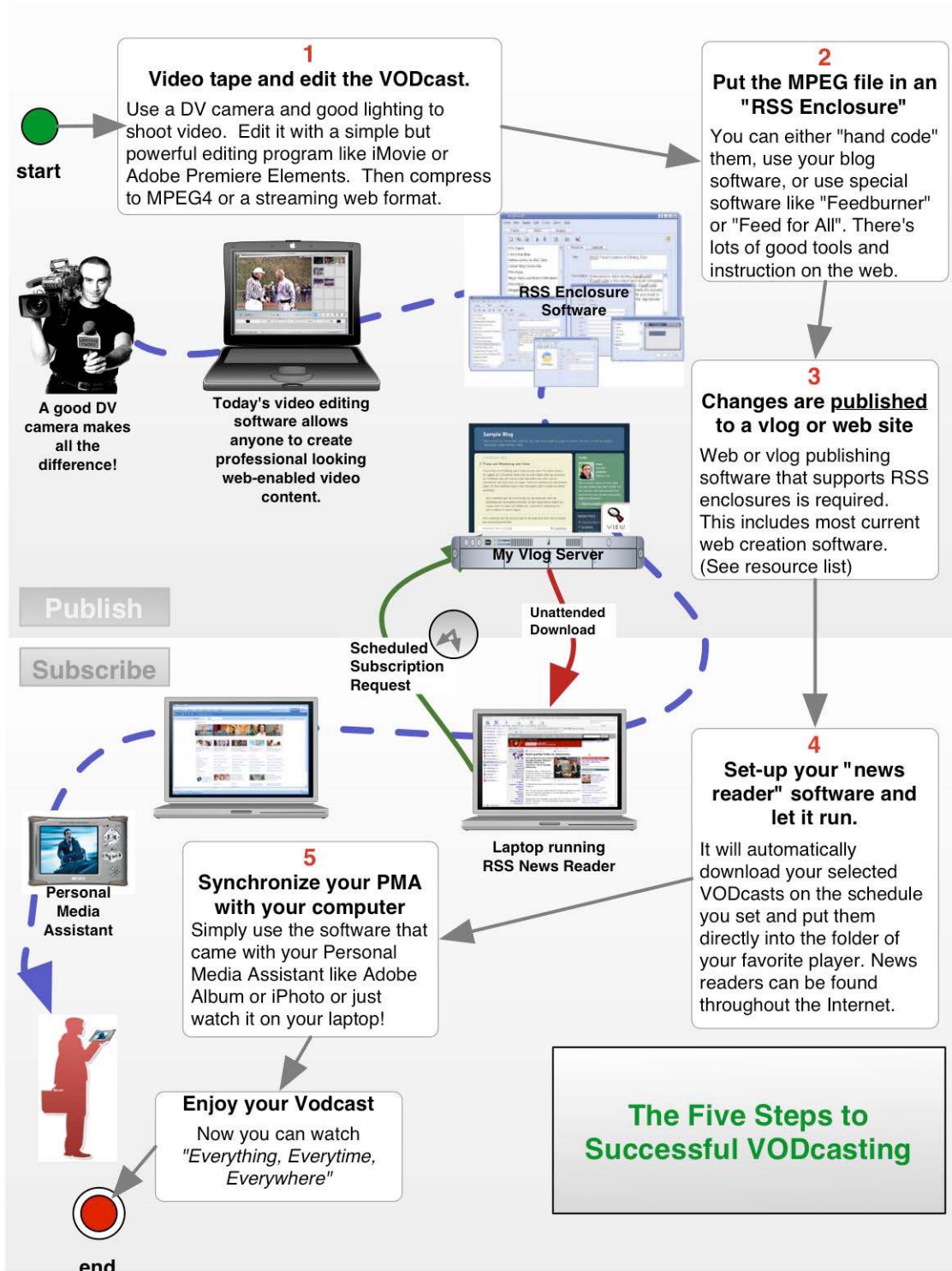
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How to Podcast



How to VODcast



Resources

The following resource list will be seriously dated before this document is distributed for the first time. The number of portals, Web sites, Blogs, and vlogs that are providing podcast and VODcast services is literally changing by the hour. Many of these sites will continue to change and evolve with the technology. Some of them will eventually transform into full-blown news or entertainment sites before year's end. The items found here are a starting point:

Articles

Oct 8, 2004. "Podcasts: New Twist on Audio". Wired News article by Daniel Terdiman.
<http://www.wired.com/news/digiwood/0,1412,65237,00.html>

Oct 23, 2004. "Podcast: Time-shifted radio listening gets a new name". Webtalk Radio.
<http://www.webtalkradio.com/news/000017.shtml>

Oct 28, 2004. "New Food for iPods: Audio by Subscription". New York Times article by Cyrus Farivar. (subscription required.)
<http://tech2.nytimes.com/mem/technology/techreview.html?res=990CE3D6153DF93BA15753C1A9629C8B63>

Dec 2, 2004. "Personal soundtracks". The Guardian article by Ben Hammersley.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,1363637,00.html>

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<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6640519/site/newsweek/>

Dec 8, 2004. "The people's radio". An article on audiobloggers featured in The Independent.
http://news.independent.co.uk/world/science_technology/story.jsp?story=590702

Dec 10, 2004. "'Podcast' your world". Christian Science Monitor article by Stephen Humphries on podcasting.
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1210/p12s03-stct.html>

Dec 30, 2004. "Podcasts bring DIY radio to the web". BBC News Online article on podcasting.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4120773.stm>

Jan 7, 2005. "Podcasting: The Next Big Thing?". KUOW 94.9 FM Puget Sound Public Radio (NPR) segment on podcasting.
<http://www.kuow.org/weekday.asp?Archive=01-07#10>

Feb 7, 2005. 'Podcasting' Lets Masses Do Radio Shows. USA Today article by Matthew Fordhal.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4120773.stm>

Feb 7, 2005. 'Podcasting' takes broadcasting to the Internet CNN.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4120773.stm>

Feb 8, 2005. "Wave goodbye to radio"
Portland Tribune article by Anna Johns.
<http://www.portlandtribune.com/archview.cgi?id=27858>

Feb 9, 2005. "Radio to the MP3 Degree: Podcasting"
USA Today article by Byron Acohido.
http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2005-02-09-podcasting-usat-money-cover_x.htm

Feb 13, 2005. "Podcasters' deliver radio-on-demand"
New Scientist article by Celeste Biever.
<http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn6982>

Feb 16, 2005. "Millions buy MP3 players in US"
BBC de-scribes the take up of digital music players in the US.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4268015.stm>

Feb 19, 2005. "Tired of TiVo? Beyond Blogs? Podcasts Are Here"
New York Times.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/19/technology/19podcasting.html?adxnnl=1&oref=login&adxnnlx=1108824080-OWD6D/mIOe8Tb94WzIq1sQ>

Feb 22, 2005. "Adam Curry Wants to Make You an iPod Radio Star"
Wired.
<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.03/curry.html>

Information

Podcast & Portable Media Expo: Trade show and conference for podcasters.

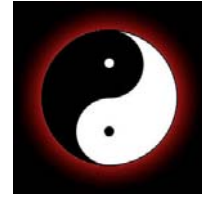
Podcast Alley: The podcast portal for everything about podcasting and a comprehensive listing of currently available podcasts (growing by more than 100 podcasts per day!)

podCast411. How to Information for Podcasting. Including How to hand code an RSS Feed and How to Explain Podcasting to the Technically Challenged (Flashing 12s).

Yahoo! Podcasters mailing list. A mailing list for pod-casters and podcast listeners to communicate about podcasting for the iPodder platform.

iPodder.org: The official iPodder website.

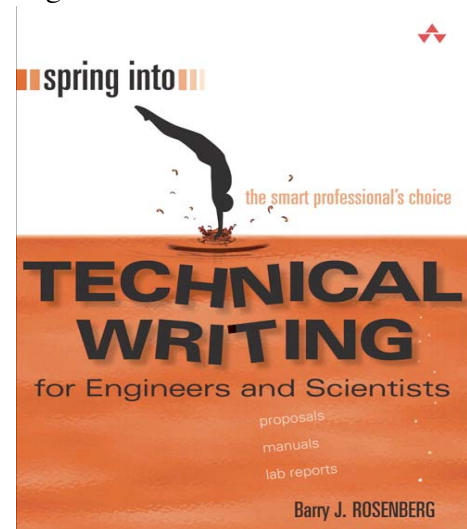
Rants, Raves and Revelations by Harry {doc} Babad
Edited by Julie M. Willingham



A 3Rs Column to Barry J. Rosenberg, author of *Spring Into Technical Writing for Engineers and Scientists* [Addison Wesley, ISBN: 0131498630, \$30 USD;
<http://www.awprofessional.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0131498630&rl=1>

Barry, my love-hate relationship with technical writing has a long history: I've lived my technical life both as an individual perpetrator of awful technical prose and, as a manager, like a "Don Quixote" or Socrates" looking for light in my staff's writing.

In this 3Rs column I'm first going to share with you my own trials and occasional triumphs as a technical writer, and then highlight some great advice provided in your outstanding book. Robert Pritchett (my editor-in-chief) wrote a mini-review of this book in the July 2005 issue of *macCompanion*. He gave the book 5 macC's and his review punch line was that the book was *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.)*



To Barry Rosenberg and my readers — Since I am one who rants and raves by nature, constraint and diplomacy are not my strengths. I'll take you a bit deeper into this fine book than was done in the July *macCompanion*. Feel free to skim my almost lost, but eventually won, battles with good technical writing. I'm sure most of you readers have your own tales to tell. If my reminiscing bores you, skip the next section, it's only a paper blog.

doc_Babad da Technical Writer?

It all started in 1955 as an undergraduate, where I passed a course in technical writing with an "A", but had to retype my draft BS thesis five times. No, not for spelling, but in order to meet my thesis advisor's expectations. Dr. Becker was a nice guy who'd take all of his students out for real steam table deli sandwiches on Friday night, as long as we were in the laboratory working on Saturday before he got in at 10 a.m. It was just that he believed in the value of the well-written word.

Later, as a first year teaching assistant at the University of Illinois, I chickened out of challenging bad writing because almost all of my students were Korean War veterans. I wasn't about to tell those ex-military types that their writing sucked. I figured some professor would share that message, and their technical writing would get straightened out. After all, I was a weak-chinned

20-year-old (my beard now hides that) who had little ‘worldly’ experience. Why stick my neck out about writing skills — the technical reports the students submitted were otherwise usually correct.

Further into graduate school, my PhD thesis adviser went seven rounds with me before he’d accept my thesis. Remember, this was a time before we had even IBM *Selectric* typewriters. Dr. Applequist, my advisor, even gave me a mimeographed style guide developed by the University of Illinois Chemistry Department, which he had annotated to make it easier to understand for his ‘foreign’ students.

Then I managed to get through several post-doctoral stints, which led to journal publications, but only by relying on the kindness of my advisors’ secretaries. Indeed, at the University of Chicago, my advisor, an émigré from Germany, was my hardest taskmaster.

However, after a decade or so in academia and industry, I took a management position at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. The wheel had turned 180 degrees and the yin became a yang. I had to deal with poorly written documents created for undefined audiences. After all, my job description required I approve them. As Barry Rosenberg and others have written, you must write based on your audience, that is, differently for a technically out-of-touch senior manager, your peers and immediate manager, or for the sponsor of your work.

Now the shoe was on the other foot. A small technological miracle made all of this a bit easier. In the 1970’s, customized word processing systems, terminals on mainframes and mini’s, and, ultimately, personal computers had arrived. Therefore, editing documents became less of a nightmare. Of course, despite its ongoing annoyances, Microsoft Word became a more robust piece of software. It became more capable of dealing with the creation and formatting of a wide range of technical reporting needs, including whole books.

Well, back to Hanford and my first close call with getting fired. I soon found that a majority of my staff could write peer-oriented technical documents, but could not deal with missives to folks who were not technical experts. Now, this was a serious problem, because all of these non-techies determined the technical staff funding and future. Although the system was less formal in the late 70’s and 80’s, sponsors still needed to know what you’d accomplished and what was in it for them. Second or third level managers needed to know what your results meant in terms of meeting mission goals—safely, cost-effectively, and aggressively cleaning up the Hanford site.

So with little advance notice (dumb!), I decreed that before these folks got their next raise or promotion, they’d need to get some formal training in technical writing. The complaints spread like a forest fire. How dare I, a young pipsqueak who hadn’t known how to spell *nucular* (e.g., *nuclear*), challenge the ever-so-experienced and more mature technical staff? However, I had a guardian angel. The most senior and most widely respected person in our group, Wally Schultz, got up at the next staff meeting and told his fellow scientists to cool off. He quoted chapter and verse from reports his colleagues had screwed up—the silence was deafening.

Much to my delight, many of these folks, now my friends, told me that learning how to more write effectively had really helped their careers. (Management was never actually my strong point, as this tale shows.) There has to be a better way to show bright and responsible technical folk that good writing counts. Barry Rosenberg's book does that and more.

My Thoughts on *Spring Into Technical Writing for Engineers and Scientists*

To start with, as I've evidenced above, there was not too much about technical writing in your book that I had not heard before. Over the years, I'd been trained and at times ignored those lessons, to my regret. Barry, much of the sage information you've shared is all but invisible to those who most need it. After all, they'll tell you, I am too busy and my milestone is almost overdue. The rest of this column serves to add my words to your treatise on technical writing in the hope that they'll wise up.

When I dove into your book, the appropriateness of the 'advice' and the clarity of the narratives and examples made me switch my paradigm about what it took to use the written word to communicate more effectively.

The differences, folks, are between *talking the talk* and *walking the walk*. I've read other books on technical writing focused on technical professionals, and they've long since been donated to the local Friends of the Library book sales. I know that if what I've learned and hope to better practice works, that Julie, my macC technical editor, will breathe a sigh of relief.

This book is well organized, written with a simpatico touch that did not make me feel guilty about my writing bloopers. These still abound after both spelling and grammar checks. (No, Julie, I will not give up my Babad-isms, but the rest of your findings when editing these articles and reviews are fair game.) My main problems as a writer are using Germanic-style sentences and losing paragraph focus. And I still have little luck writing below a 10th-grade level. Even though I've been ten years retired, I still don't have (take) the time to approach making the writing "purrfect".

As a career document peer reviewer, I was particularly enthralled by the quandary faced by all technical editors, including myself. A good technical editor will fix errors of fact and relevance, but not grammar or spelling unless a wrong word or poor sentence affects the technical clarity. Good editors will also work to teach you how to write more clearly, but they are not proofreaders. Over the years, I often have been surprised at how many document reviewers hide their knowledge of the subject by creating long lists of typos and "punctos". They also change sentences in documents to push their point of view on an author.

But, to almost quote your book, a writer needs to:

- Understand their audience, and target the content appropriately
- Learn how to write for an international audience
- Use active voice to communicate with confidence and authority
- Produce effective lists, tables, and graphics]
- Create useful examples

- Write effective manuals and release notes
- Implement solid technical websites
- Develop winning research, business, and book proposals
- Create and present compelling PowerPoint presentations
- Write e-mails that don't ignite flame wars
- Learn how to integrate documentation development into best engineering practices

Almost forgotten simple things once again wowed me:

Picture your primary and secondary audience — Are you writing primarily for:

Your manager	Your manager's boss	A product end user
Your client	Your regulator	Your peers

Barry, thanks for the reminders in Chapter 2, *The Audience*.

Electronic or print publication — New to me were the thoughts on *Medium and Message*. Having grown up with the printed word, tuning a message to electronic media was not in my consciousness.

Words and more words — The materials in Section 2, Writing: General Principals, served to ground my thoughts on the subject. Although you made extensive use of summaries at the end of each section, I found *Words* (page 43) exceptionally helpful.

Lists vs. tables — Sections that I found very useful included the chapters on lists and tables (Chapters 7 and 8). The descriptions on these topics explained when to put information in a table and when a list is more appropriate. Although I prefer borderless tables when I write, the information on lists was valuable. (Yes, I am guilty of too often creating non-parallel lists.)

Sentences, an overview — Your summary on page 53, along with others in your book, would make a great PowerPoint presentation for managers who have a serious interest in improving their staff's writing.

Be paranoid about email — The advice you give in Chapter 17, *Email*, is highly appropriate. However, I suggest that email users maintain a healthy sense of paranoia when writing such documents. After all, what you share with a colleague will likely be passed on to others, who might not have your best interest at heart.

One Significant Gripe and Lesser Issues

Acronyms be banished — I had only one significant difference of opinion with the author. I am the founding father and perhaps the only member of HSOAA, the Help Stamp Out Acronyms Association: If it's not in the dictionary or not understood outside of your small technical circle, don't use it. DOE (Department of Energy) is fine but TFRS (Tank Farm Retrieval System) is not. I know Barry might say that glossaries should be a part of most reports. But have you ever

noticed that unless you have perfect recall, how much alphabet soup slows you down when reading documents? I'm saddened; you could have been our second HSOAA member. I know you've covered this on page 32, *Jargon*, but...

Readability indices — What ever happened to the FOG index rating system? It was one of the means used by teachers at all levels of schooling to assess writing to meet the audience. In addition, the term “readability” was omitted from the index.

Grammar checking — It would have been useful had you mentioned that word processors contain such checkers, which can be tuned to the writing style of the document you are creating. (I've reviewed a number of stand-alone Macintosh grammar checkers, but I keep returning to the one that is provided in MS Word.) But they still can't replace a good editor or proofreader. Thanks Julie!

Added sources of information about Punctuation, Fonts and Typography, and Graphics — I've long admired and work with the fine books created by Robin Williams (Peachpit Press) on these subjects. Your readers could have benefited from references to these or other straightforward books on the creation and effective use of graphics. It's a subject broader than you had space for, but it affects written documentation as well as the ability to make persuasive presentations.

My Last Hurrah

Barry, this is a great book, as evidenced by the many fine reviews posted on the Internet. The only real problem I had with it was what it did to my neck. As I read, I unconsciously nodded so often that I developed a crick in my neck.

You've organized every facet of effective technical writing into more than 175 short, concise, fast-paced tutorials, most of which I found relevant. Your examples of what to do and what *not* to do, plus start-to-finish instructions for writing exactly the kinds of documents one needs to create, were a joy to read.

I agree with Noel Davis <http://www.rootprompt.org/article.php3?article=8894> in his 2005 review that that “*Spring Into Technical Writing* is a great book on the subject of writing and not just for engineers and scientists. Anyone who writes as part of their job will find it useful or even essential.”

This book is a keeper, unless you're an aspiring novelist, poet, or playwright. I'm keeping my copy right next to my hard copy dictionary and thesaurus.

doc_Babad

doc_Babad's Macintosh Tips

A Macintosh Tip or Three... by Harry {doc} Babad



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

This month I continue sharing my occasional tip related finds with you. Oh, I almost forgot! Unless otherwise noted, *all* the tips and tidbits I share, where appropriate, work on my software. If I don't own the software, I'll so note. The software related tips were tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under Macintosh OS X 10.3.9 or now OS X 10.4.2.

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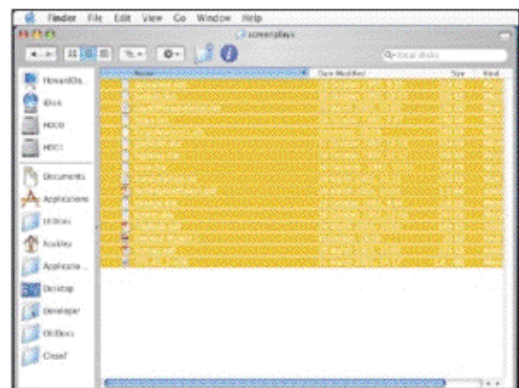
CREATING FOLDER LISTINGS — Question from Bruce Kern
The Works Column — Howard Oakley MacUser UK 05-27-05



Q: How can I insert a listing of the contents of a folder into a Word document?

A: Although some applications, such as the text editor BBEdit and its freeware relative TextWrangler <http://www.barebones.com/products/bbedit/index.shtml> have menu commands to put folder listings into documents, you can do this perfectly well using just the Finder. Complete flexibility and power inevitably come from use of shell commands in Terminal if you're prepared to go that far.

Arrange a Finder window to contain an appropriately ordered listing of the folder contents. While column view will sort by name, list views give you the greatest flexibility, and you can modify the list by name, date modified, size, kind and more. Select all of the items in the list (command-A), copy (command-C), and paste (command-V) into your document.



MacUser [UK]- May 27, 2005

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Something I picked up, perhaps in an email, without grabbing the source reference — Mea Culpa

“This month I received a plethora of contaminated email attachments, in Zip format. They were virus laden missives that came both from what was my IP provider and from the macCompanion website. The different message headers warned that —

- My security had been compromised and that I needed fill out the attached form
- My service had been suspended for too much spanning
- My service had been suspended because of a security crash at my IP
- My password had been corrupted at my IP site.

Obviously, the messages were delivered and of course, I continued to receive email. It turns out that this particular malicious mail was aimed at PC users; but it’s contains the kind of message many people would respond to. Alas, when decompressing the file, they risk the integrity of their data or create access to their system and data.

So even from trusted sources, use the phone to validate whether your IP or a trusted on-line business is alerting you to a problem. Keep your virus updates current e.g., Symantec’s updates its virus definitions at least once a month and as need 2-3 times a month. They do not send an email note on available definition updates, but you can set their *Live Update* feature to check on a weekly basis. The latest virus definitions are also posted on the MacUpdate and other sites. — *Perhaps from James Meister?*

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Upgrading to Tiger

In this month’s issue of macCompanion, I’ve reviewed Tom Negrino’s *Upgrading to Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger*. I am fond of the generally well-written Take Control books <http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/> a series initiated by Adam and Tanya Engst of Tidbits fame (see <http://www.tidbits.com/>). A few of these eBooks have been bundled together in paper format, but most are available as eBooks for a mere five dollars.

I ran across Matt Neuberg’s *Take Control of Customizing Tiger*, a book that will take you to the next level in gaining con troll over Tiger’s new features. I quote — “It’s Day 2 of Tiger, and you’ve played with the new features. But you can become even more productive if you customize Tiger for your needs.” *By Harry (doc) Babad*

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Tired of Long Font Lists – Checkout FontCard by Unsanity, LLC

<http://www.unsanity.com/haxies/fontcard/>

FontCard is a seventeen-dollar shareware haxie that modifies the Font menu in Carbon and Cocoa applications. It can add an icon that displays the format of a font next to the font menu item, display the font name in the font face, group fonts into submenus, and add font collections to the font menu. It is my way of accessing my most recently used fonts, thus my defacto favorites; they’re just a click away. *By Harry (doc) Babad*



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AppleWorks and Tiger A Printing Problem

AppleWorks 6.2.9 worked perfectly with Panther, but when I recently upgraded to Tiger one aspect of the software was broken. I could not print AppleWorks [AW] documents (CD Labels) that I had created in 2000–2003.

I of course expected that AW would ask me to update the document to the current version and so label it. That worked and I made a few changes to update the label to work with a new CD of shareware I'd created, saving the result. I was ready to print my new label on my HP color LaserJet 3500. Alas, the print job hung up, and hung up... I tried printing a *save as* but it to hung up my printer

I finally solved the problem in an indirect manner. I opened up a new CD label template document in a new window. After dragging and dropping the original text and graphics from the old document, and saving that newly created label, it did indeed print correctly. - *By Harry (doc) Babad*

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The following tips are reprinted with permission from Paul Taylor's excellent **Hints and Tips Column** <http://www.mac-hints-tips.com>. If you have tips to share, you can reach Paul at <mailto:paul@mac-hints-tips.com>.

Apple's Customer Installable Parts Support Page [H&T 6.05]

Do you do your own upgrades? Then Checkout... "Apple's Customer Installable Parts support page offers a wealth of information on how to install various parts, including hard disks, memory, batteries, AirPort cards and more, and it is all available in QT video, .html and .pdf formats. For example, installation primers for the PowerMac G4 (digital audio) include battery, ATA and SCSI hard drive cables, Airport Card, video card, CD/DVD Drives, hard drive (ATA, SCSI), Zip Drives, front panel board, memory, and power supply. <http://www.info.apple.com/support/cip/> This is a very valuable resource for both consumers and pros. *Insanely-Great.com*"

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How to Print Font Previews {H&T 6.05]

Q: How do I print a list of all my fonts so that I know what they look like?

A: Lemke Software's FontBook 4.1 (\$10, <http://www.lemkesoft.de>) lets you view and print font samples. It can print up to 75 fonts per page using whatever sample text you give it, though a pangram (a sentence that contains every letter of the alphabet) is the most-useful choice. Our favorite is "Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs."

MacAddict Magazine

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A Totally Useless Mac Trick [H&T 7.05]

Do you miss the sound of the old typewriter when typing on your Mac? Try this tip: Go to the Universal Access preference pane and click on the keyboard tab, then turn on Slow Keys (the last preference on the pane). Move the slider called “Acceptance Delay” all the way to “short” (the far right side of the slider) so that it won’t delay the keys at all. Make sure the checkbox named “Use key click sounds” is enabled. user interface sound effects” in the Sound control panel, otherwise you won’t hear the typewriter sound.

This may fall into the category of totally useless Mac tricks, but for those of us who grew up typing on a “real” typewriter, it’s a good sound to hear! One caution: I found that enabling “Slow Keys” DISABLED my keyboard eject key. Be aware of keyboard changes if you try this trick. If you have a problem, just reverse the process above.

Charlotte MacWorkshop, Charlotte NC



Why’s This PDF So Big? [H&T 8.05]

If your PDF file sizes seem bloated, you can find out which elements are causing the bloat by using Acrobat’s Audit Space feature (Acrobat 5: Tools > PDF Consultant > Audit Space Usage; Acrobat 6: Advanced > PDF Optimizer > Audit Space Usage button). It will show the sizes of images, content, fonts, links and annotations, form fields and more.

One–Way to instantly shrink a PDF that has been edited is to choose File > Save As, and resave it. Acrobat (like several other Adobe applications) doesn’t remove deleted items when you save a document. Instead, they’re only marked as “deleted” and are not removed from the file until you choose File > Save As. *Design Tools Monthly*

That’s all for this month.

Views from the Ivory Tower by Ted Bade

There is a very subtle, yet potentially severe attack going on against Apple Corporation and Macintosh users in general. It has to do with audio files, audio players, Digital Rights Management, and a lot of misinformation.

Audio books are becoming a big thing, especially now that so many people have portable MP3 players. People are finding that they can change a normally dull commute into an interesting trip by listening to a book while they travel. I do it all the time.

Libraries across the US have been adding audio books to their collections for a while, providing yet another valuable service to their patrons. Some (like my local library) even provide MP3 versions of these books. Since MP3-based books are actually downloadable, wouldn't it be nice to be able to checkout an audio book of this nature from your library via the Internet?

This is actually happening right now. Several companies have realized they can make money selling a service to libraries to provide MP3-based audio books. With money as tight as it is, a service like this would be very appealing to libraries. It allows them to offer a valuable service to their patrons with considerable less cost than if they purchased a vast collection of audio books. They don't need to find shelf space to store the books, and the company provides the Internet services necessary. I can see many libraries moving their audio book collections to this type of service. Unfortunately, those that don't have computers or who have iPods or Macintosh computers cannot take advantage of these services!

Why is this? Somebody has the audio book people convinced that they NEED Microsoft's Digital Rights Management (DRM) features to protect them. While Microsoft makes a version of Windows Media Player for MacOS X, this version just happens to leave out access to any files protected by their DRM features. On the Windows side, Windows Media Player doesn't talk to iPods. Interesting.

So why are Macs and iPods left out of this? It all surrounds Microsoft's DRM features. Microsoft won't create a version of Windows Media Player for MacOS X that takes advantage of this. It is not hardware related because I have listened to such a protected book using Virtual PC on my Mac. Everything worked fine. Windows Media Player doesn't recognize iPods probably because Apple isn't willing to provide some piece of information to Microsoft and because Microsoft would rather you buy something other than an iPod.

The services use the fear factor to sell Microsoft's DRM. You wouldn't want your library to be liable for copyrighted materials being illegally copied! Of course they fail to mention that a person with a Windows machine and the right MP3 player can make copies with no problem. They also don't point out that the music industry has embraced Apple's own form of DRM.

What can we do about it? Probably not much more than protest. Contact your local library, see if they offer such a service, and if it won't work on your iPod or Macintosh, complain! I know I will if our library ever gets such a service. (Although it will be preaching to the choir in my case, because the director of my local library is a solid Macintosh fan.) Keeping Macs and iPods from accessing this audio book service might be a minor thing, but I believe it is building a foundation for the future. What will be the next thing you won't be able to use on your Mac or iPod?

We might also want to contact our local political leaders. While I hate to say it, perhaps it is time the government stepped in to force a standard in DRM features that anyone with a computer and an MP3 player can use.

I would really like to hear what you think about this situation. Take a moment to send email to me or visit MacCompanion's forums and post your thoughts.

No MacOS X on a standard Intel Machine - As can be expected, Apple is doing what it can to prevent people from running MacOS X for Intel on any Intel based computer. It makes sense, Apple sells computers as well as MacOS X, so they don't want to lose half of their business.

As I expected, rumors are saying that Apple is going to use a chip to provide this protection. Apparently the latest version of the MacIntel uses a "TCPA/Palladium implementation that uses a Infineon 1.1 chip which will prevent certain parts of the OS from working unless authorized."

However, some information about this type of chip leads me to believe it is not a good thing. Once source indicated that the chip hands controlling power of your computer over to the software. Which sounds like a very exploitable item to me.

In any case, there is a web site that has been trying to organize information about running MacOS X on a standard Intel based computer. If you are interested in this topic, check them out: [http://wiki.osx86project.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page]. Last time I looked, they were being gagged by Apple corporation, so they must have collected some useful information!

Manual for writing Viruses for Microsoft Vista is available - In an article posted on the InfoWorld web site http://www.infoworld.com/article/05/08/04/HNvistaviruses_1.html, they pointed out that a manual for writing Viruses for the soon to be released Microsoft OS called Vista, has been released on the Internet.

To quote the article: "The viruses were published last month in a virus-writing tutorial written for an underground hacker group calling itself the Ready Ranger Liberation Front, and take advantage of security vulnerabilities in the new command shell. Unlike the traditional Windows graphical user interface, which relies heavily on the mouse for navigation, command shells allow users to use powerful text-based commands, much like Windows' predecessor, DOS."

Apparently this manual explains how to exploit various aspects of this new OS. Pretty scary to think the operating system hasn't yet been released and already there are viruses ready to go. Guess I'll stick with my Macintosh!

Computer security - While we are on the subject of computer security, let's take a moment to bask in the golden light of our Mac OS X.

Once again Consumer Reports has pointed out that the MacOS is more secure than Windows. While this might not be news to you, it is good that such information is getting out in this venue.

In a must read and pass along article called "Net threat Rising", they discuss the current state of threats on the Internet. According to the article, Computer owners spend more than \$2.6 billion in protection software over the past two years, and over \$9 billion in repairs related to malicious software! Wow, even with all the computer junk I buy, I am proud to say I did not contribute to that number! I have said before that there are hidden costs to running a Windows based computer, guess this proves it ;-)

The situation is bad on the Internet (if you hadn't noticed), to quote the article, "As our survey results indicate, the Internet is no longer the urbane information motorway it was five years ago. It's more like a no-holds-barred raceway teeming with unsavory drivers and with hardly a police car in sight. Consumers now face assaults through e-mail, Web sites, messaging services, and downloads."

The article discusses the results of a survey of home computer users. There are some frightful statistics, such as 64% of the respondents indicated they had detected viruses on their computer in the past 2 years! Of course, my favorite paragraph was the one about the Macintosh. To quote the article again:

"Macs are safer than Windows PCs for some online hazards. Only 20 percent of Mac owners surveyed reported detecting a virus in the past two years, compared with 66 percent of Windows PC owners. Just 8 percent of Mac users reported a spyware infection in the last six months vs. 54 percent of Windows PC users."

Personally, I would like to speak with the 20% of the Mac people who detected viruses in the past two years. There is no indication of how many Mac people were part of this survey of 3,200 households. 20% could be one of the 5 Mac users surveyed.... More information is available for people who subscribe to this web site.

I can't end this section without pointing out my sarcastic theory of malicious software. The Consumer article hits it right on the head, that is the secondary market that generates BILLIONS of dollars of revenue. No matter how badly people are hurt by this stuff, do you really think anything will be done to stop it, when there is a **multi-billion dollar** industry to support? If you do, you probably are also waiting for weapons manufacturers to quit making weapons so people won't kill each other or drug manufacturers to stop selling because drug addiction is not a good thing ;-).

The big patent problem - Oh no, Mr. Bill has figured out a way to dip into iPod profits. Apparently, Microsoft had filed a patent claim to an interface that looks a lot like the iPod interface, but they filed before Apple filed their claim. Apparently, Apple took its time to actually file the patent claim and in the mean time, Microsoft filed one of their own. Which means that Apple could be facing the blunder of its corporate career!

If Microsoft is given the patent, Apple will be forced to pay Microsoft royalties for each iPod sold! This could cost Apple millions. The only good news is that there are some rules used by the patent office to prevent a case like this.

In an interesting blog article on the WizBangBlog site <http://wizbangblog.com/archives/006750.php>, discusses the patent concept of “Prior Art”, which protects a company who doesn’t apply for a patent in a timely manner if they are actually using or selling an item. So hopefully, this will apply and Apple won’t be responsible for royalties to Microsoft. Definitely read the blog, the author has been following this issue since it began and has a lot of interesting detail on it.

Apple takes top place in reader choice awards - Apple owners are really fanatics! Nothing shows this better than a survey of owners. They love their machines. PC Magazine recently published the results of their Reader’s choice awards. Apple scored highest in both the desktop and laptop categories! They got a 9.2 for desktop versus the next closest PC (Alienware box) that received 8.8. PowerBooks also received a score of 9.2 compared to the closest PC laptops (IBM and Fujitsu) scoring 8.4.

The article points out that:

“ The company's scores are so high there's some concern that they can't be completely trusted: that Apple users are so passionate—almost fanatic—about the company and its products, they're not quite as objective as other computer owners.”

But continues to say that:

“ Still, there's solid evidence that Apple computers may actually be worthy of devotion. There's little doubt, for instance, that the company builds unusually reliable products.”

What the article doesn’t realize is that Mac owners are as objective, but they are comparing their Mac experiences with their PC experiences, rather than comparing their current PC with other PCs they have used. Macs are head and shoulders above the basic PC in many ways, and this is why we are so dedicated to them!

Other statistics included in the article point out how much less Apples need repairs or service calls than PCs. But we know this. It is just nice to see the information being published in a major magazine, especially a PC based one!

Hey, too much chatter on my part this month. So I will end it here. Think about my opening paragraphs and let me know what you think.

Books

Advanced Perl Programming: Tools & Techniques for Perl Developers 2nd Edition reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Simon Cozens

<http://www.oreillyn.com/cs/catalog/view/au/199>

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/advperl2/index.html>

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

Published: June 2005

Pages: 298

ISBN: 0596004567

Requirements: Perl Programming knowledge.

Strengths: What is shown works.

Weaknesses: Some errata found and posted on the booksite.



Advanced Perl Programming: Tools & Techniques for Perl Developers, 2nd Edition by Simon Cozens is a much-needed update and should be looked at as a tutorial.

Simon Cozens covers introspection, parsing with Yapp, HTML templating, object serialization and database abstraction, natural language tools, Unicode, the Perl Object Environment, testing, writing inline C extensions, obfuscation and a few fun things at the end as we quickly go through 10 chapters.

As Simon Cozens says in the beginning, “The key to producing advanced Perl...depends on two things; knowledge of techniques and experience of what works and what doesn’t.” He shows what magic works.

This should be on the shelf right next to “Perl Best Practices”.

Beginning Mac OS X Programming reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Michael Trent, Drew McCormack

<http://www.wrox.com>

Booksite: <http://www.wrox.com/WileyCDA/WroxTitle/productCd-0764573993.html>

\$40 USD, \$52 CND, £25 GBP, €34 EU

Published: July 2005

Pages: 695

ISBN: 0764573993

Requirements: A desire to program in the Mac environment. Mac OS X Tiger Developer Tools.

Strengths: Excellent intro to Mac programming using Xcode 2.

Weaknesses: Some errata have been found, but not much.

http://www.wrox.com/WileyCDA/WroxTitle/productCd-0764573993.descCd-view_errata.html

Code download: <http://www.wrox.com/dynamic/books/download.aspx>

WROX Forum: <http://p2p.wrox.com>



Beginning Mac OS X Programming by Michael Trent and Drew McCormack is a great college textbook tutorial approach to coding Mac OS X Tiger. We are even encouraged to find issues with the book and spot any errata. As of this review, only a couple have been found so far. We are also encouraged to participate in the WROX Forum to discuss issues with other programmers at p2p.wrox.com. Think of this a a companion book to *The Mac Xcode 2 Book* we reviewed in August.

I posted the link to the chapter script downloads for the book for each of the 13 chapters. Each chapter also has exercises with answers at the end of the book.

So what is inside? The book is divided into 3 parts on resources, application programming and script programming. The chapters cover the core and the Apple Human Interface Guidelines, installing and using the developer software apps and the Apple Developer Connection, digging into Xcode, the Interface Builder, basic bundling, the C and Objective-C languages, Cocoa Frameworks, Carbon Frameworks, scripting languages like Bash and the Bash Shell, AppleScript and AppleScript Studio, Python, Perl, JavaScript and even Dashboard, and finally, using scripts in applications. The three Appendices cover the answers to the exercises, developer resources and developer tools roadmap.

If you are into learning how to program for Mac OS X Tiger, this is an excellent place to start. Wiley really Wrox!

Degunking Your Mac, Tiger Edition reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Joli Ballew

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

<http://www.paraglyphpress.com>

Degunking Series

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/1933097051/>

\$25 USD, \$35 CND, £25 GBP, €21 EU

Published: July 2005

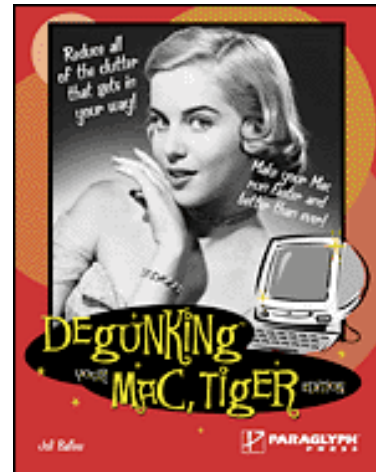
Pages: 350

ISBN: 9781933097053

Requirements: Mac OS X Tiger.

Strengths: Follows the now familiar Degunking Series formats.

Weaknesses: None found.



Degunking Your Mac, Tiger Edition by Joli Ballew follows the tried and true methods for degunking systems, but this one focuses on Mac OS X Tiger.

Joli Ballew manages to show how to manage the Mac with Mac OS X Tiger in 19 chapters by asking if the system is gunked up to begin with, discussing how to degunk, removing unnecessary files, and uninstalling programs, organizing files and folders, cleaning up the Dock, Finder and Menu Bar, cleaning up the Dashboard, iChat, VoiceOver and QuickTime 7, Fonts, iPods, preventing Spam, cleaning up Email, optimizing the hard drive(not what you think), staying organized and up-to-date, adding hardware, running maintenance and troubleshooting tools, improving security, backing up files and using Automator. There is also one Appendix covering Troubleshooting using Degunking techniques.

Probably of most value to me was the Security chapter, where I learned about the Firmware password and hiding certain buttons (Restart and Shutdown), and Tiger's Safari security options.

Like running a car around town without taking it out on the highway once in a while, the Mac can get gunk in its engine. Joli Ballew does a great job showing us how to manage and maintain the Mac vehicle so it gets the best electronic gas mileage and optimizing the Mac OS X Tiger engine.

Apple Training Series: Desktop and Portable Systems, 2nd Edition reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Owen W. Linzmayer

<http://www.peachpit.com>

Apple Training Series

Booksite: <http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321335465>

\$55 USD, \$76 CND, £40 GBP, €47 Euro; with CD

Published: July 14, 2005

Pages: 768

ISBN: 0321335465

Requirements: A desire to be an Apple Certified Desktop Technician (ACDT) or Apple Certified Portables Technician (ACPT).



Strengths: Walks through Assembly, disassembly and troubleshooting for both Desktops and Portables, eMacs and Mac minis through G5s, iBooks through PowerBook G4s.



Weaknesses: None found.

<http://www.apple.com/training>

Apple Training Series: Desktop and Portable Systems, 2nd Edition by Owen W. Linzmayer is an Apple-certified training course book for those who want to be either an Apple Certified Desktop Technician (ACDT) or Apple Certified Portables Technician (ACPT). It is the book used in AppleCare technician training courses.

Each chapter ends with both questions and answers that relate to what is in those chapters. Some chapters are almost not as long as the exams at the end. Learn the proper methods of taking apart and putting together Apple's latest desktop and portable offerings. And also learn the troubleshooting techniques Apple suggests should be followed.

If you aren't interested in getting certified but would like to be good at fixing your own system, this is a great place to start. Even with the little snafu I ran into with the 1.1 upgrade to the Security upgrade to "fix" the 64-bit app issue in August, I discovered that I had "followed procedure", except for not backing up before I did the update – which gave Murphy's Law all the rope it needed to hang me. By reading the book, I found that I indeed had walked through all the troubleshooting steps like a good little boy, only to discover to my chagrin, that sometimes a reinitialization is really all I could do to "rescue" my system.

There is a CD that comes with the book. Don't expect to get an "AHT" or Apple Hardware Test with it though, since the AHTs come with each new machine. The CD does contain all the PDFs and video presentations for each model discussed in the book however.

There are 36 chapters with the first ones covering tools, practices, common hardware and technologies, and network troubleshooting before it gets into desktop models for CRT iMacs and eMacs, LCD iMacs, iMac G5s, Mac minis, and Power Mac G5s. Then it moves on to iBook and PowerBook G4s. Each section also covers upgrading, taking apart and troubleshooting each model, including symptom charts.

Maybe it's just me, but I would have switched the Taking Apart and Upgrading chapters around, otherwise I thought this is a great addition to the Apple Training Series. You won't find part numbers, but you will see lots of pictures with emphasis on what is important for upgrading, and troubleshooting systems that otherwise give very little grief. But when they do, come here first.

Head First Design Patterns: Your Brain on Design Patterns reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Eric Freedman, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2003>
Elizabeth Freedman, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2002>
Kathy Sierra, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1084>
Bert Bates, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1085>
Head First Series

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

\$45 USD, \$66 CND, £32 GBP, €38 EU

Published: October 2004

Pages: 676

ISBN: 0596007124

Requirements: Some knowledge of Java.

Strengths: All about seeing and programming in patterns in Java.

Weaknesses: All coding books get printing gremlins and this one is no exception. There are a number of errata on the booksite.

The Code: <http://www.wickedlysmart.com/headfirstdesignpatterns/code.html>

Java Ranch: <http://www.javaranch.com>



Head First Design Patterns: Your Brain on Design Patterns by Eric and Elizabeth Freedman and Kathy Sierra and Bert Bates (the Gang of Four) shows there are only so many ways to dream up code and some of it takes on a life of its own known as Object Orientation.

The Gang of four show both good and bad design so we can tell the difference. And in true Head First format, this one nourishes both sides of the brain. I'm a bit thick-headed so it took me a while to get through the book. It took me a while to wrap my brain around abstraction, inheritance and polymorphism and learning Java along the way.

There are 13 chapters dedicated to the Observer, Decorator, Factory, Singleton, Command, Adapter and Façade, Template, Iterator and Composite, State, Proxy, Compound patterns and using them in the real World. The last "chapter" is the Appendix and of course, it discusses "Leftover" patterns\ such as Bridge, Builder, Chain of Responsibility, Flyweight, Interpreter, Mediator, Memento, Prototype and Visitor Patterns.

Meanwhile, the Gang of Four shows how to stitch these patterns together into a mosaic as the programming quilt comes together. They have had years of experience watching Java take shape and they put this new way of learning together to make it a little easier to understand. Look at Java with your mind's eye.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Growing Your Business with Google reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Dave Taylor

<http://www.idiotsguides.com>

Booksite:

http://www.idiotsguides.com/nf/Book/BookDisplay/0..603_1592573967.00.html

\$20 USD, \$28 CND, £13 GBP, €17 EU

Published: August 2005

Pages: 352

ISBN: 1592573967

Requirements: A desire to make an online business financially stable and profitable.

Strengths: Walks through each area that Google can touch on your site to make it profitable.

Weaknesses: None found.



The Complete Idiot's Guide to Growing Your Business with Google by Dave Taylor does a great job showing what works and what doesn't, in regards to working with Google to enhance your eCommerce-based website.

Each of the 23 chapters in 5 parts has biztips, buzzwords and memos as sidebars to help make the process a little easier to use and understand. The parts consist of establishing a business case, building a core business Google plan, improving the online business website, promoting and growing the online business and expanding content. There are two appendices covering websites worth exploring and a glossary.

I bookmarked many sections in regards to copyrighting server security, using a contact form instead of leaving Email accesses laying around, related and trading links, site submittal to search engines and Blog indices, Amazoning and eBaying, including AdSense ads and affiliate programs. Towards the back there is even a section on working with Writer's Syndicates and leveraging content and finding staff.

Dave Taylor brings together lots of eCommerce lessons learned and shares them with us in this book. If you are into eCommerce, this would be a good place to start so your site isn't a money pit, but rather a legitimate money-maker.

Java In A Nutshell: A Desktop Quick Reference, 5th Edition reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: David Flanagan

<http://www.oreillyn.com/cs/catalog/view/au/156>

In A Nutshell Series

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/javanut5/index.html>

\$45 USD, \$63 CND, £32GBP, €41 EU

Published: March 2005

Pages: 1,252

ISBN: 0596007736

Requirements: Java.

Strengths: All Java, all the time.

Weaknesses: Wouldn't you know it? There has to be a few errors with a book this size. A few have been captured in the errata on the booksite.

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



Java In A Nutshell: A Desktop Quick Reference, 5th Edition by David Flanagan focuses attention on Frameworks and tools and less on converting from C and C++ to Java and its APIs.

Java 5.0 begins in Chapter 2 and more can be found in Chapter 4. Java Security is in Chapter 6. If you would like, pretty much Chapters 9-22 can be found online in javadocs at sites like <http://www.jdocs.com/>, but if necessary, you have a hardcopy now that “has it all”.

The Mac mini Guidebook reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: David Coursey

<http://www.peachpit.com>

Booksite: <http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321357469>

\$20 USD, \$28 CND, £14 GBP, €17 EU

Published: June 9, 2005

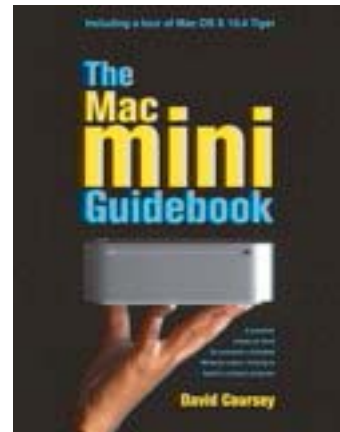
Pages: 272

ISBN: 0321357469

Requirements: Either own a Mac mini or have the desire to own one.

Strengths: Intended for helping folks from non-Mac environments to come to the Mac mini.

Weaknesses: None found.



The Mac mini Guidebook by David Coursey takes 10 chapters to walk through all things Mac mini. This is an intro book that does the BYODKM (Bring Your Own Display, Keyboard and Mouse) thing, advances to Mac mini Q&A, which one to buy, using KVMs (Keyboard, Video, Mouse) and Hubs, connecting to the Internet, printing issues, protecting the Mac, an intro to Mac OS X Tiger and apps, and finishes with a smattering of recommended software, many of which we have reviewed in *macCompanion* and a few we have not. There are two Appendices covering Keyboard Shortcuts and Resources.

Probably the most interesting for me anyway, was a sidebar on how iApps came to be, what Media Centers mean to both Apple and Microsoft and information regarding the free Microsoft Remote Desktop Connection (RDC) so the Mac mini can connect to an XP Pro system remotely.

If you are into looking at switching from the WinTel environment to the Mac, this is a great intro and low-cost solution, especially if you don't want to go the faux OSX86Project route and want to use a real honest system that is the Mac, instead of using "borrowed" software to emulate the Mac environment.

Get the real thing.

Mapping Hacks: Tips & Tools for Electronic Cartography reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Schuyler Erle,

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/129>

Rich Gibson, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1726>

Jo Walsh, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2138>

Booksite:

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

\$30 USD, \$42 CND, £21 GBP, € EU

Published: June 2005

Pages: 568

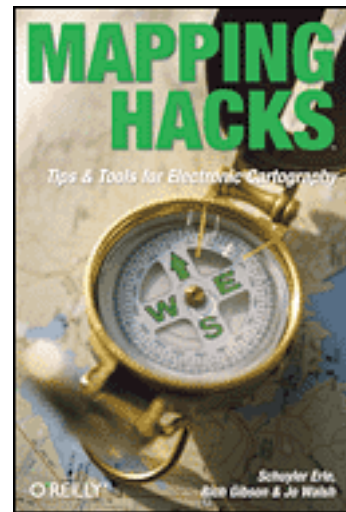
ISBN: 0596007035

Requirements: A willingness to play with mapping technology and integrate it into your computer.

Strengths: The hacks work and there are plenty of links.

Weaknesses: None found, but then again, I didn't look at the errata page yet on O'Reilly. Okay, I peeked. Still none.

<http://mappinghacks.com>



Mapping Hacks: Tips & Tools for Electronic Cartography by Schuyler Erle, Rich Gibson and Jo Walsh and 18 others, points us in the oriented direction of Global Positioning System (GPS) devices, and other areas in 9 chapters with 100 items on mapping life, neighborhood, world, web, desktop, with gadgets, names, places and other people and building the geospatial web using GeoServer, RedSpider and MapServer.

This book seems to pick up where *Web Mapping Illustrated* leaves off. One vision is to pursue R. Buckminster Fuller's goal of having a Geoscope in every home in an effort to raise the standard of living for every human on the planet.

Go check out the Blog at <http://mappinghacks.com>. It won't show you the hundred hacks, but it will give you a venue to dig deeper and help you keep on course.

One of the hacks I found to be rather interesting is the one on building a Car Computer. Perhaps Team Banzai saw this and integrated it into their unmanned vehicle that relies on GPS data for navigation across rough terrain using 3 Mac minis at <http://team.gobanzai.com/>.

Using Moodle: Teaching with the Popular Open Source Course Management System reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Jason Cole

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2201>

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

\$40 USD, \$56 CDN, £29 GBP, €36 EU

Published: July 2005

Pages: 238

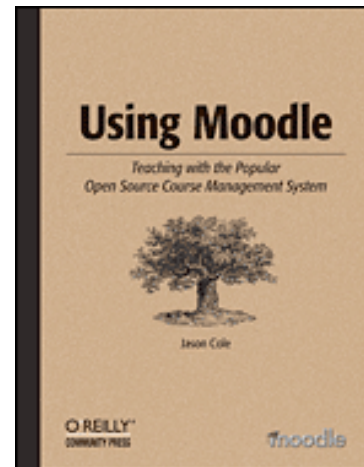
ISBN: 0596008635

Requirements: A need to use a Course Management System in teaching.

Strengths: Open Source app t hat is cross-platform.

Weaknesses:

<http://www.moodle.org>



Using Moodle: Teaching with the Popular Open Source Course Management System by Jason Cole shows how to use Moodle to create a dynamic online learning community. According to the O'Reilly blurb on the book, there are over 115 countries and 60 languages using Moodle in at least 2,000 educational organizations worldwide. I had never heard of Moodle before I got the book to review and since I have been tasked to teach Mac Security, I was looking around for something that would help expedite the learning distribution and education process. I think I found it.

If the Vail, Arizona school system has gone all paperless and whole-hog to iBooks for the Empire High School, it would seem likely they are using this, or something similar to help with their education system, right? (Listen to Gene Steinberg's interviews in the last hour of The Tech Night Owl podcast in the August 25th archive at <http://www.techbroadcasting.com>.) Just a thought.

Jason Cole uses the Modular Object Oriented Developmental Learning Environment (Moodle for the noodle and not to be confused with Google) at San Francisco State University. What I found interesting is that there are two other commercial Course Management Systems (CMSs) known as Blackboard and WebCT and Jason has compiled a feature comparison chart showing how Moodle bests the best in the battle between Commercial vs. Open Source.

What is in the book? There are 16 chapters discussing what CMS is and is not, Moodle management, creating and managing course content, using forums, chats, and dialogues, creating various kinds of quizzes, running workshops, establishing assignments and exercises, journals, glossaries, lessons, Wikis (yes, even Wikis!), handling grades and scales, managing classes, creating surveys and choices, establishing a learning environment and administering Moodle.

I personally think this CMS book would be beneficial to anyone who currently is, or is thinking about, teaching online. As a son of a retired teacher, husband of another and father of even one more, I believe the current generation of instructors are going to want to know about the best course of action to take in electronicizing instruction to help them with their workload and getting the intended instruction across to students.

Open Source for the Enterprise: Managing Risks, Reaping Rewards reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Dan Woods,
<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1214>
Gautam Guliani,
<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2285>
Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/opensource/>

\$23 USD, \$33 CND, £16 GBP, €21 EU

Published: July 2005

Pages: 304

ISBN: 0596101198

Requirements: A desire to look into Open Source apps from an IT perspective.

Strengths: Broaches the subject of Open Source and leaves no stone unturned.

Weaknesses: None discovered.



Open Source for the Enterprise: Managing Risks, Reaping Rewards by Dan Woods and Gautam Guliani braves the subject of Open Source (some would say Open Sores) and they do it with aplomb!

You don't need to be employed in an IT department to enjoy this book. Dan Woods and Gautam Guliani do a great job covering all aspects and all views regarding Open Source in 10 chapters and 5 Appendices.

I especially enjoyed their coverage of licensing issues and options, especially regarding Apple. And then there is the whole chapter on Open Source Under Attack (9) where they discuss at length such things as the SCO/Linux litigation issues, the FUD factor and who is doing what to whom, or the chapter (10) on Buy vs. Build.

The other chapters discuss roots of commercial software, the challenges associated with Open Sourcing, looking at how mature software may or may not be (and my personal experience as a tech writer makes me wonder about some commercial software apps too!), what is needed to handle Open Source regarding skill sets and risks, variables in return on Investment justifications, crafting strategies for Open Source adoption and managing the same, and even looking at the Commercial Open Source Support model, and making Open Source projects easy to adopt and a few players in the commercial arena that are doing just that. The five Appendices discuss the Open Source Platform, End-User computing, Email, Groupware, Portals, Collaboration, Web publishing, Content Management and Application development.

This is a hot topic and I marked up lots of pages. Apple went Open Source with their Darwin Project and it will be interesting to see how the Linux issue pans out. According to the authors, Sun may end up being the only “legal” distributor of Linux if the court systems work through all the litigation. It’s a good thing Apple went FreeBSD instead.

Can your IT department handle Apache, MySQL, PostgreSQL, JBOSS, Perl, FreeBSD, Linux, etc.? IBM, HP and Novell also have Open Source projects. Will you be ready to provide support for them too? What about meeting the “10 criteria” of the Open Source Initiative at <http://www.opensource.org> or are they listed in the Stable Open Source Apps at <http://www.osdir.com/>? Find out more in this book.

Perl Best Practices: Standards and Styles for Developing Maintainable Code reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Damian Conway

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2247>

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

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

Published: July 2005

Pages: 542

ISBN: 0596001738

Requirements:

Strengths: Teaches “Best Practices” for Perl coding.

Weaknesses: There are one or two oopsies, that have been recorded on the booksite.



Perl Best Practices: Standards and Styles for Developing Maintainable Code by Damian Conway is a book worthy of any programmer, mostly for its quotes and insights, and not just for the ones at the beginning of each of the 19 chapters either.

“Behaving very well may seem stuffy and conventional and uncreative and completely at odds with the whole outlaw hacker ethos, but it has one important advantage: it works.”

And

“...move beyond the illusion of the sensual programming life, and become stylistically enlightened.”

Or on habits:

“It’s a skill that has been compiled down from a cerebral process and then burnt into muscle memory; a microcoded reflex that your fingers can perform without your conscious control.”

Or

“Be strict with your hands. Rather than letting them type what feels good, force them to type what works well.”

Or from Macbeth, Act 1, Scene 7; “Bloody instructions which, being taught, return to plague their inventor.”

Or from Brian Kernighan; “Debugging is twice as hard as writing the code in the first place. Therefore, if you write the code as cleverly as possible, you are, by definition, not smart enough to debug it.”

The book is a lessons learned cornucopia of “correct” ways to do code and each gem is saved in one of five Appendices for essential Perl best practices with 3 lists of 10 for development, coding and module practices, 256 guidelines with a section heading for reference back to chapter and paragraph, Editor configurations of 5 text editors; vim, vile, Emacs, BBEdit and TextWrangler, recommended core and CPAN modules, utility subroutines and finally, a Perl bibliography.

Don’t code by doing what “feels good”, do coding because you know what is the right way to do coding by following processes that work right the first time. Dr. Damian Conway didn’t lose his way and even has some points of humor sprinkled in amongst the otherwise staid code samples and examples.

The code is from real working environments and not theoretical possibilities. It is real. Oh, and the practices are not just for Perl, they can go cross-discipline as well.

Rootkits: Subverting the Windows Kernel reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Greg Hogland, James Butler

<http://www.rootkit.com>

Addison Wesley Professional

<http://www.awprofessional.com>

Booksite: <http://www.awprofessional.com/title/0321294319>

\$45 USD, \$63 CND, £ GBP, € EU

Published: July 22,2005

Pages: 352

ISBN: 0321294319

Requirements: A desire to know about rootkit technology and cyber security.

Strengths: Probably the best book on the topic.

Weaknesses: Next to nothing on rootkits for the Mac.



Rootkits: Subverting the Windows Kernel by Greg Hogland and James Butler does a great job covering just about all thing rootkits, minus any mention of Apple rootkitting. After all, this book *is* about subverting Windows, right? Like they say, “What’s worse than being ‘owned’? Not knowing it”.

This book will become the classic on Rootkits, based on screen-scraping and gathering information from their RootKit website listed above. If you can register, you can look up the few items related to rootkits related to the Mac. I think there are at least two that are revealed, but you know by now that to compromise a Mac you have to be physically at the machine and know the Admin password to add one to the box. Meanwhile, I’m sure that many non-Mac systems have become “owned” by crackers, otherwise there wouldn’t be a multi-trillion-dollar business in computer security.

There are 10 chapters on not leaving traces and offensive rootkit technologies (host-based and network-based), kernel subversion, hardware connectivity (where I learned about Ring Zero vs. Ring 3 in the Intel x 86 family), hooking (stealthy API access), Runtime patching, layered drives (keyboard sniffing and file filtering), Direct Kernel object manipulation (self-determination, hiding and token processing), hardware manipulation (firmware modification, keyboard controlling, hard rebooting and keystroke monitoring), Covert channeling exfiltrating data, network and host manipulation) and finally, rootkit detection (detecting presence and behaviour).

I found this book simply amazing as it revealed exploits, holes, and hardware access issues that bypass software manipulation and really got my mind racing. What came to mind were the ways hardware can be controlled to actually be trained to self-destruct, if necessary. Oh, and the software issues related to the space between Ring Zero and Ring Three on the x86 technology. I hope it does not become an issue with the forthcoming MacTel chip.

And I now fully understand the mindset by MCSEs (I was one), wherein they would rather reformat the drive than find the issue and trace it back to the source. A schedule of replacing the OS every 3 months or so seems to be a standard modus operandi as non-Mac environments slow to a crawl as the boxes become zombies and are exploited and compromised.

Learn what Greg Hogland and James Butler have garnered over years of fighting the Blackhats. And then go get a Mac if you have not bought one yet. They can be cracked, but it is much more of a challenge than non-Mac systems. This book really shows just how vulnerable the Windows environment really is and should be gifted to any supposed Geek expert that still believes Windows systems can be and can stay secured. What an eye-opener!

Spring: A Developer's Notebook reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Bruce A. Tate,
<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1794>
Justin Gehtland,
<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/760>

Developer's Notebook Series

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

\$30 USD, \$42 CND, £21 GBP, €26 EU

Published: April 2005

Pages: 210

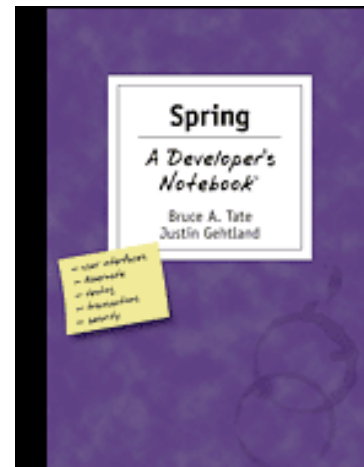
ISBN: 0596009100

Requirements: Java knowledge.

Strengths: First book on the Spring Framework.

Weaknesses: I strongly suspect that the errata page will be updated on the booksite.

Spring Framework: <http://www.springframework.org>



Spring: A Developer's Notebook by Bruce A. Tate and Justin Gehtland is the Open Source answer to Enterprise Java Beans (EJB) as a way to developing code in Java 2 Enterprise Edition (J2EE), intended to “reduce development efforts and associated costs while improving test coverage and quality”.

It took a while to read this Notebook, because this is the updated version as of August. The first had way too many code errors, so the authors decided to go back and fix the entries. I can relate to that, what with my iMac upgrade with the Security Update taking out my hard drive and causing me to lose 3 weeks of reviews because I didn't backup before I updated. So this review is also a rewrite. If you got this book before the update, O'Reilly is resending the book to those who bought an earlier release and the authors apologized for the “rush to print”.

Don't be put off by the intros in each chapter relating lots of print to mountain biking and kayaking activities. There are 9 chapters on how Spring makes programming in Java easier. This is a journalized Notebook after all and it is replete with revised code snippets and other helps. What is covered? The details discuss building two classes with dependencies, setting up Tomcat and building a view with Spring's WEB MVC framework, building a Struts user interface, using and integrating JavaServer Faces (JFS) with Spring, using JDBC and MySQL, integrating iBATIS, JDO and Hibernate, building services, testing with Mocks, and Side Effects, configuring transactions and securing application servlets and methods, building test-friendly interceptors, sending Email and remoting, working and testing JMS and finally, building Rich Clients with Application Shell. There are also a couple of programs that pulls Spring together in a Bike Navigator and Bike Editor.

All through the book are "How do I do that?", "What just happened?" and "What about..." that shows us what was expected and where to go next.

After going through the Head First series on Java, and "Java in a Nutshell", this book makes a lot of sense. It's all Open Source, so what have you got to loose?

I'm very happy to know that when O'Reilly prints books that are found to be less than expected, they go the extra mile to correct the situation. Good job O'Reilly! My hat's off also to the authors who realized what they had done and made mid-course corrections.

Stealing the Network: How to Own an Identity reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Raven Alder, Jay Beale, Riley “Caesar” Eller, Brian Hatch, Chris Hurley (Roamer), Jeff Moss, Ryan Russell, Tom Parker, Timothy Mullen (Thor), Johnny Long.

Stealing the Network Series

<http://www.syngress.com>

Booksite: <http://www.syngress.com/catalog/?pid=3250>

\$40 USD, \$58 CND, £ GBP, € EU

Published: August 2005

Pages: 450

ISBN: 1597490067

Requirements: A tolerance for off-colored language. A desire to learn about combating identity fraud.

Strengths: Excellent instances of sleuthing.

Weaknesses: Around 30 instances of really bad 4-letter language that really has no place in writing, placing this book at the very low level of a dime-store novel. Rambling and open-ended.

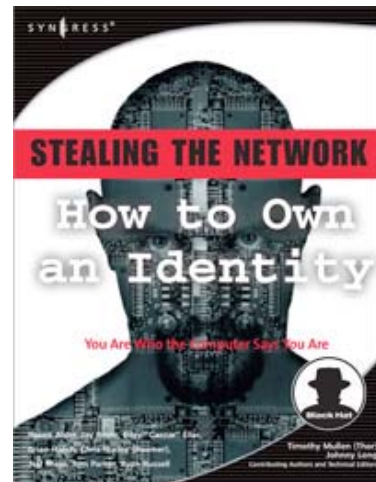
Scott Pinzon’s Review:

<http://books.slashdot.org/books/05/07/27/1542234.shtml?tid=172&tid=6>

Stealing the Network: How to Own an Identity by all the authors listed above takes us through trailing after Robert Knoll, Senirr (Knuth) in the 3rd book of the Stealing the Network Series.

Right up front, I am going to let you understand why I gave the book a 3 instead of a 5. I really, really, strongly feel that there is no excuse whatsoever for all the gutter language found in the book. Let me repeat that. There is **no excuse** for the repeated vulgarity found in the book and I nearly ran out of permanent marker ink as I went through the book censoring it.

Another reason for the “3” is because the book has too many loose ends and sets us up for the next book with a cliff-hanger at the end. I don’t know how the “main” author was able to herd the cats to get this book together with all the contributions to the book for each of the 12 chapters as strengths and weaknesses were transposed from real life to fictional text. I added a link to *WatchGuard*’s Editor-in-Chief, Scott Pinzon’s review as he writes that the “didactic fiction... range from appalling to exciting”. I tend to agree. The Publisher needs to do some more censoring and selective editing. I know I’m not perfect, but...



Caution: R-Rated Language

In a phrase: “Poorly crafted Fiction”. Also in a phrase: “Excellent security education”.

I got the most out of the chapter on “Death by a Thousand Cuts” referring to how to crack (image) an iPod without changing the iPod’s internal memory.

There are two parts to the book, Part one prologues Robert Knoll. If you didn’t read the first two books, you may not follow the storyline at all. Okay. To be fair, is there a story line? Loosely, behind a mirror, darkly, sort of.

A synopsis of each chapter is in the Contents page. The last “chapter” doesn’t need to be in the book as it is “Thor’s” short soapbox regarding Social Security Numbers and the current situation of them being used everywhere for identity purposes and a request for reform by the US Congress. Not likely to happen anytime soon. Nice try.

Will there be a next book in the series? I hope so. And I hope it is edited.

UML 2.0 In a Nutshell: A Desktop Quick Reference reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Dan Pilone,

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1182>

Neil Pitman, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2259>

In A Nutshell Series

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/umlnut2/index.html>

\$35 USD, \$49 CND, £25 GBP, €30 EU

Published: June 2005

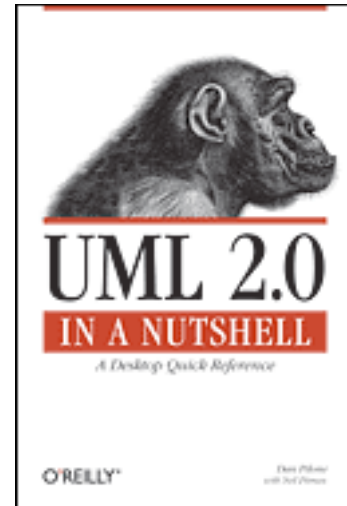
Pages: 234

ISBN: 0596007957

Requirements: Some knowledge of Object-Oriented Programming.

Strengths: Diagrams, Diagrams, Diagrams!

Weaknesses: None found and none posted yet on the website for the book.



UML 2.0 In a Nutshell: A Desktop Quick Reference by Dan Pilone and Neil Pitman is a reference and instructional guide for the Unified Modeling Language, not the Universal Markup Language. If you are familiar with UML Diagrams, than you are in the right camp.

What is learned here is by way of a tutorial in the first chapter with various types of diagramming in the next 12 chapters; Class, Package, Composite Structures, Component, Deployment, Use Case, Statechart, Activity, and Interaction diagrams and tagged values, stereotypes and UML profiles with the last chapter being on effective diagramming. Two Appendices follow up with the Model Driven Architecture or MDA and the Object Constraint Language or OCL.

Interested in an object-oriented approach to UML diagramming? It's here.

Upgrading to Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger: Visual QuickProject Guide reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, edited by Julie M. Willingham

Author: Tom Negrino

Peachpit Press,
Series: Visual QuickProject
<http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321357566>

\$13 USD, \$18 CND, £10 GBP €11 Euro

Released: June 22, 2005

Pages: 144

ISBN: 0321357566

Experience Needed/Audience: All

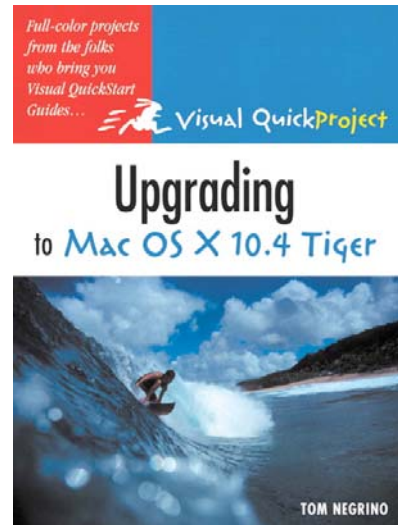
Strengths: Extraordinarily easy to read, easy to follow, and to get on with your computing life with Tiger.

Weakness: A few of my favorite Mac OS X haxies were missing from Negrino's recommendations.

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Publisher's Book Overview

For many users, it's not working with a new operating system that's intimidating, it's all that needs to be done before, during, and after the upgrade that has them running scared. That's why best-selling author Tom Negrino has devoted an entire guide to just that topic. Rather than cover every last feature and function of Apple's newest OS, Tom focuses on just the need-to-know essentials that will ensure a smooth transition to Mac OS X Tiger. In short order, readers will learn how to prepare for the upgrade, how to back up their data, what's entailed in the actual upgrade, and how to reinstall software. Once Tiger is safely installed, Tom provides a quick overview of what's changed before showing readers how to customize their systems and use three of Tiger's key features: Spotlight search, Automator (for streamlining repetitive tasks), and Dashboard (the control panel for Tiger's nifty new widget mini-apps). And for readers who want to know more about what's new in this system upgrade, the book provides a handy overview of the top ten new additions to Mac OS X Tiger.



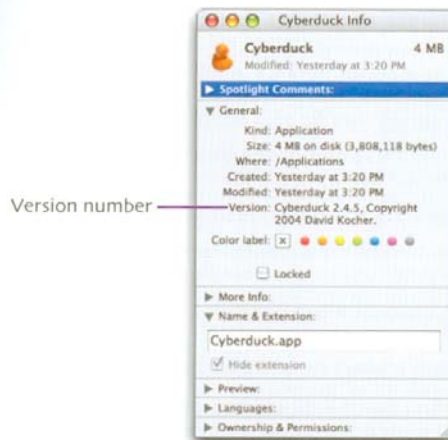
The Book Itself

The book is well organized and easy to read and use, as you can see in the sample page I've provided below. I found the chapter on Spotlight (Chapter 7) particularly informative, even though I still can't figure out how to use Spotlight to search for file extensions (e.g., Apple works drawing, .cwk), something that was easy in Panther. In addition, I've explored Dashboard (Chapter 8), even downloading widgets from the Apple and MacUpdate websites.

The only part of the book that I did not find compelling was on using the new Mac OS X *Automator* features. According to Tom, "Tiger's new Automator application takes the hassle and pain out of automating a task. In Automator, you take a sequence of steps (which, in Automator-speak, are called actions) and assemble them into a workflow. You can mix and match actions from different applications, and creating a workflow requires exactly zero programming ability. It's really easy. You can save a workflow as a document, so once you have created a workflow, you can run it again anytime. (Perhaps someday when too much task repetition finally gets to me.)

reinstall software (cont.)

If you use any utility software, you should check the manufacturers' Web sites to make sure that you're running the latest updates. If not, download and install the current versions. If you're not sure which version you have installed, you can find the application in the Finder, then choose File > Get Info. The version number is shown in the resulting window.



Many application packages were updated after Tiger's release, either to fix bugs and incompatibilities, or to take advantage of Tiger's new abilities. You can either check each manufacturer's site, or you can take a look at two pages that track updates. *Macworld* magazine's Tiger software update summary is at www.macworld.com/2005/05/news/tigerupdates/, and Macintosh's Third-Party Updates page is at www.macintouch.com/tigercompat.html. If you find software that you own on one of these pages, download and install the update from the manufacturer's site.

For the most part, the index is well organized and relatively complete. I've listed the table of contents below, since that information does not seem to be available on the Peachpit Press website:

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| 1. Prepare to Upgrade | 6. Learn What's Changed (<i>from Panther</i>) |
| 2. Back It Up | 7. Use Spotlight |
| 3. Upgrade to Tiger | 8. Discover Dashboard |
| 4. Set Up Tiger | 9. Save Time with Animator |
| 5. Customize Your System | 10. Terrific Additions for Tiger |

Items that particularly impressed me included:

- Checking startup items to determine whether you need an update (pgs. 11–12).
- SuperDuper! The best backup solution I've found (pp. 19–22). I found "Choosing backup tools" on page 23 especially interesting.
- When doing an upgrade, you can save disk space by not installing extra languages or printer drivers (pp. 29–31), an idea that would help most users who have smaller hard drives.
- Creating and using 'smart folder.'

Minor Discomforts:

Keyboard Drivers — Issues associated with the drivers for third-party keyboards were not identified on pages 6–7, but were noted on page 37, a bit further into the book than an individual planning an upgrade should need to search.

Shareware to Support Backups or Enhance Tiger — There are many pieces of software listed by the author that would serve users well. Indeed, Chapter 10 focuses on such items, but!... There are many other products recommended throughout the book, and an appendix listing them would have been very helpful.

In Closing

This is an excellent, easy to use book. But I'd started exploring Tiger prior to reading it, and I had professional help with my installation, so avoided the *slings and arrows of outrageous fortune* (e.g., Murphy). However, when attempting to use the new features (Spotlight) I grabbed the book and sought its excellent help. So buy the book either before or after you install Tiger, remembering that before is better. It's a bargain at under \$13 and well worth 5.0 macC's.

Author BIO — Tom Negrino is a Macintosh expert, book author and Contributing Editor to Macworld magazine. He began his writing career in 1985 with MacGuide magazine, joining the Macworld ranks in 1987. He is a frequent speaker at industry trade shows and conferences, and is a freelance computer consultant.

PS:

My Tiger Installation ‘Happenings’

I was a late convert to Mac OS X Tiger because I was awaiting a Cisco Systems VPN software update to access email behind a corporate firewall, and the initial release of the VPS software did not work with dual processor Macs. I also wanted Tiger installed on a new 160 GB hard disk, allowing me to keep my Panther hard disk intact.

Tom Negrino noted that some drivers and other software may need updating after installing Tiger. In my case, that meant the software for my Belkin uninterruptible power supply, my HP scanner, most of my Unsanity haxies, and my Logitech wireless keyboard and mouse drivers needed updating. On the other hand, all of my ‘keepers’ gleaned from my macC shareware testing were *good to go*.

My only failure was in trying to get an upgrade for OmniPage Pro X, my OCR software. It died in Tiger. ScanSoft apparently no longer supports the Macintosh version. I guess I’m now using Readiris Pro 9.0.17, <http://www.irislink.com/opt/uk/products/readiris/mac/index.html>, which supports Tiger.

Although I’m comfortable with exploring software on my own, Tom’s book broadened my knowledge and increased my comfort level in my initial exploration of Apple’s new Mac OS. I’ve several more advanced books on Tiger to review, so stay tuned.

Web Mapping Illustrated – Using Open Source GIS Toolkits reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Tyler Mitchell

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1898>

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

\$40 USD, \$56 CND, £28.50 GBP, €24 EU

Published: June 2005

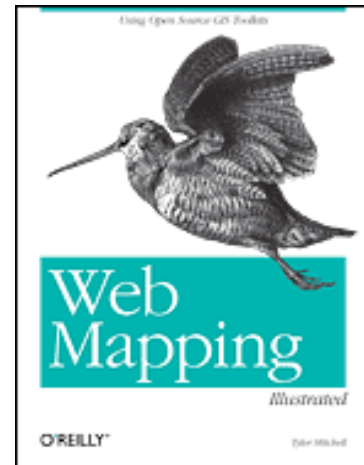
Pages: 368

ISBN: 0596008651

Requirements: A desire to create Interactive Maps online.

Strengths: Open Sourced Map making online.

Weaknesses: Mapserver-focused. North American Continent-centric. Missing info on other Open Source apps such as GeoServer and Deegree.



Web Mapping Illustrated - Using Open Source GIS Toolkits by Tyler Mitchell takes an Open Source approach to computerized mapping and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) with emphasis on University of Minnesota's MapServer. The book is in full color. A website <http://www.spatialguru.com> shows Tyler's own work.

Learning online mapping requires some knowledge of a few acronyms such as PostGIS, OpenEV, GDAL and OGR, WMS and WFS. While there are two Appendices on Map Projections and MapServer reference guide for Vector Data Access, there is no glossary.

There are 14 chapters on digital mapping tasks tools, converting and viewing maps (where Open EV [Open Source Desktop Viewer, GDAL [Geospatial Data Abstraction Library] and OGR [which has lost its original acronymial meaning] and PostGIS come into play), acquiring, analyzing, converting, visualizing, creating and editing map data, whether personal, static or interactive maps, accessing them through web services, managing a special database with PostGIS and custom programming with MapServer's MapScript.

Oh, by the way, WFS is Web Feature Service and WMS is Web Map Service and are OGC (Open Geospatial Consortium) standards.

Missing in action are references to other Open Source apps such as GeoServer <http://geoserver.sourceforge.net/html/index.php> and Deegree <http://deegree.sourceforge.net/>.

And GDAL is the Geospatial Data Extraction Library - <http://www.gdal.org/index.html>.

Go check out Tyler Mitchell's work at Spatial Guru. If you want to get behind the scenes, this is a good place to go to begin the Open Source route, but I think you will also want to get *Mapping Hacks*, also by O'Reilly.

Word Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things About Microsoft Word
reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, edited by Julie M. Willingham

Author: Guy Hart-Davis

Book Link:

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

Book Series: O'Reilly Annoyances Books

\$20 US, \$28 CND, £13 GBP, €12 EU

Published: June 2005

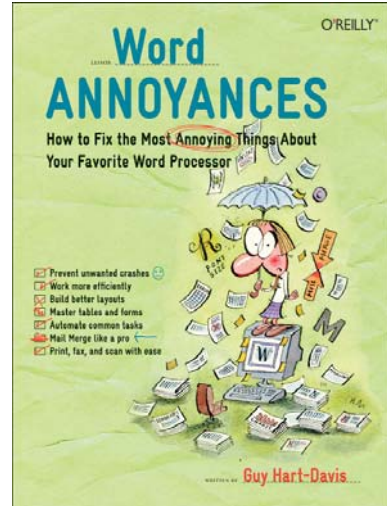
Pages: 208

ISBN: 0596009542

Audience: Primarily PC users, but suitable for Macintosh users who are familiar with Windows systems and associated with naming conventions.

Strengths: A comprehensive collection of Microsoft Word (MSW) annoyances and the often straightforward ways to fix them.

Weakness: Treatment of things Macintosh appeared to be an afterthought.



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Where appropriate, the instructions in the book were tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.2.

Ratings

Knowledgeable PC Users.

Inexperienced PC users, and Macintosh users who understand the PC interface and jargon.

For the rest of us. This could have been a 4.5 had the author more liberally spiced the PC-oriented fixes with instructions of how the fix worked on the Macintosh.



Book Publisher's Overview

Annoyances offers to the point (and often opinionated) solutions to your most vexing editing, formatting, printing, faxing, and scanning problems. It covers everything from installation and templates to tables, columns, and graphics. It also introduces the power of macros so you can slay your annoyances by the truckload. The fixes will work with most versions of Word, including Word 2000, Word 2002 (also known as Word XP), and Word 2003.

Review Introduction

I have long been, because I hated Word Perfect, a heavy user of Microsoft Word (MSW); and I was well disposed toward the 'Annoyances' series, having reviewed *Mac Annoyances* in the August 2005 issue of *macCompanion*. Therefore, when our Editor-in-Chief made me aware of the book, I jumped at the chance to review it. I was less than a third of the way through the book when I was forced to an inescapable conclusion:

There was no way that many Macintosh users could benefit from the great fixes in this book. The book's author, Guy Hart-Davis, is both bright and articulate in describing MSW annoyances and their fixes. Alas, he is speaking and writing in *PCish* (rhymes with English) not *Macintoshish*. (As an aside, the book also did not seem suitable for most of my professional colleagues, PC users one and all. Working on projects with them, on their PCs, I often showed them how to use MSW as more than a high-priced text editor.)

Although the book is almost entirely PC-centric, a Macintosh user familiar with Windows jargon and the nuances of a PC keyboard will find many of the fixes can directly translate to the Macintosh.

*The Mac Control (PC Control), Mac Option (Alt Option or Start)
and Command (⌘) (PC Alt) keys.*

Nevertheless, since the author neglected to tell reader which of the WinTel fixes also apply to the Macintosh, I felt cheated. As I reviewed the book, I used my Mac to check almost all of the fixes that interested me in Chapters 2-9. The fixes worked in MS Word 2004 both in Panther and Tiger. Users of either MSW X or MSW 2004 could have benefited greatly from the great fixes in this book, but, alas, they speak the wrong language.

The Book Itself (annotated from the publisher's description)

When most people think of word processing, they think of Microsoft Word. After all, it has been around for more than 20 years, practically an eternity in computer time. However, Word has also provided its users—nearly everyone on the face of the planet—with an endless supply of annoyances. That is, until now. *Word Annoyances* offers to-the-point (and often opinionated) solutions to your most vexing editing, formatting, printing, faxing, and scanning problems. It covers everything from installation and templates to tables, columns, and graphics. For example, learn how to stop Word from searching the Web for help, and how to enter the same text easily in multiple parts of a document—and keep it updated automatically. The fixes will work with most versions of Word, including Word 2000, Word 2002 (also known as Word XP), and Word 2003.

Among the topics covered:

- Deal with installation issues, crashes, and slowdowns, and dispose of the Office Assistant—either temporarily or forever.
- Master templates, numbering, graphics, hyperlinks, tabs, tables, headers, and other everyday annoyances.
- Tame some of Word's wildest features, such as Smart Cut and Paste, Click and Type, Mail Merge, AutoCorrect, and AutoText.
- Printing, faxing, and scanning—need we say more
- Learn to output and distribute your documents with confidence.
- Need to work with other Microsoft applications or Macs? You'll find annoyances dealing with Excel, PowerPoint, and Access, as well as a whole chapter just on Mac Word.

Things that made a Difference to Me

The following items are those particular annoyance fixes that proved useful to me. They exemplify, after translation, the author's ability to provide excellent help for those of us who do daily battle with MSW annoyances; alas, meditation does not soothe in this effort.

Removing chaff from your menus — A means of cutting menus down to size was provided. By using the Control-Command and hyphen key combination, you can remove the clutter of unused items from your menus. (For PC users, use Control-Alt and hyphen keys.) My only concern with the information is that the author did not provide a means for putting menu items back. [Chapter 1, pages 15-16.]

Minimizing freezes in long or heavily edited documents — I was delighted by the information Guy provided on how to avoid freezes in MSW. The advice focused on turning off Auto-Recover, saving files when significant new material is added, and, more often than you might think necessary, quitting your document to delete potentially corruptible temporary files. If this doesn't completely solve the problem, save your document as an .rtf file to minimize crashes. RTF files are apparently less prone to corruption. The fix is not perfect, but it seems to reduce crashes and freezes. [Chapter 2, *Creating and Saving Documents*.]

Recovering a document after a crash —Perhaps because I'm a hyperactive 'saver', I often get freezes or crashes when working in documents longer than 5 pages. I've reduced such crashes following Guy's fix listed above, but there's always one in my future. I found the multiple and prioritized methods for dealing with the problem helpful and something that all MSW users should know. Using these techniques does require a bit of translation from PC to Macintosh, but is well worth the effort. [Chapter 2, pages 31–32.]

Replace with a subscript — For technical folks who capture web content, not being able to use MSW's Find and Replace feature to deal with superscripts and subscripts is a bother. Chapter 3, page 57 provides a great fix. Also, check out the excellent section on finding any character, digit, or letter, which brightened my day. [Chapter 3, pages 57–58.] Readers take heed; the *Find and Replace* section alone is almost worth the price of the book.

Formatting and Layout problem fixes — I was delighted to read Chapter 4, which focused on how you can work, under a tight time deadline, to fix formatting errors in documents other folks send you. (In a business setting, documents often require reformatting to company standard form.) Making format changes one line at a time, is a burnout and error-prone process. Using the fixes provided made such work a piece of cake... almost. Once again, being able to translate the information provided from PC-speak to systems *Macintosh* is essential.

I've copied one of the most helpful illustrations in the book to allow you to note the level of useful detail the author provides.

HOW WORD'S FORMATTING WORKS

Word offers enough formatting options to stop a Humvee in its tracks—and more than enough to waste plenty of your time. Here's what you need to know:

- A **style** is a collection of formatting for a regular paragraph, a list paragraph, a table cell, or one or more characters. For example, a Heading 1 style for top-level headings might use a different font than normal body text, a larger font size, different indentation, and extra space before and after it. Word 2003 and Word XP support four types of styles: paragraph styles, list styles, table styles, and character styles. Word 2000 and earlier versions have only paragraph styles and character styles. If you use a version of Word that supports list styles and table styles but need to work with people who use Word 2000 or earlier versions, it's best not to use list styles or table styles. Styles are the preferred way of applying almost all formatting in Word, because you can quickly find or change a style globally in your documents.
- **Direct formatting** is formatting that you apply directly to an object, such as a word or paragraph. For example, you might apply bold or italic formatting to a word or change the alignment or line spacing of a paragraph. When you use direct formatting, which you should do seldom rather than as a rule, use it in addition to applying a style (rather than instead of applying a style).
- **Page layout formatting** controls the overall layout of the page: the paper size and orientation (portrait or landscape), the page margins, the header and footer position, and so on.
- **Section formatting** controls the layout of a particular section (subdivision) of a document. The page layout of a document can vary from one section to another.
- A **theme** is a suite of canned elements (such as a background image, bullets, and icons) and styles (for headings, the Normal style, and hyperlinks) designed to give a document a particular look. The styles in a theme override those in the document's template. The main purpose of themes is to make web pages created using different templates share the same look, but you can also use themes in other documents if you choose.

Here's the best way to apply formatting:

1. Create a template that contains the styles you need.
2. Apply a paragraph style to each non-list and non-table paragraph, as your primary means of formatting. Apply a list style to each list paragraph and a table style to each table paragraph or cell. (If your documents need to be fully compatible with Word 2000 or earlier versions, use paragraph styles rather than list styles and table styles.)
3. Apply a character style when needed to pick out a particular element in a paragraph. For example, if a word must be bold and italic, you might apply a Bold Italic style that you have created (as described in "Get Started with Styles," later in this chapter).
4. Apply direct formatting only when absolutely necessary. If you need to apply the same direct formatting to multiple items in the same document, create a style for it.

Tables and the like — Most of you who read my reviews are aware that I love tables. Guy's excellent Chapter 7 that focuses on *Tables, Columns, and Text Boxes* was well worth reading and testing. This old dog did indeed learn some new tricks from it. I was particularly pleased when I learned how to *Use Different Cell Widths in Different Rows* [page 132]. And because I write a monthly electronic newsletter for a folklife society, I appreciated learning how to create *Newspaper Style Columns* and how to *Mix Different Numbers of Columns in a Document* [page 135].

The Rest of the Book

Presented below are my thoughts on the chapters I did not, for the most part, find immediately useful. Since I don't use these particular MSW features or functions, I did not attempt to apply them in my word processing.

They are filled, except for Chapter 10, with what appear to be excellent fixes in their areas of focus. MSW is my most used program, so I have all the usual love-hate relationships with it. Nevertheless, I did not find the annoyances discussed in that chapter compelling enough to fix.

Chapter 1 — Macintosh users with no PC in their futures can skip most of the *Installation, Repair and Configuration* chapter. The only sections I found useful were discussion of working with *menus* and *toolbars*; they were great! (As an aside, anyone using my computer to prepare an MSW document will not recognize my toolbars; they are highly personalized.)

Chapter 5 — Since I almost never need to work with forms, I only skimmed the details in the chapter on *Forms, Revising, Proofing and Finalizing*.

Chapter 6 — Although useful to some readers, there was nothing new to me in the details of the *Printing, Faxing, and Scanning* chapter. Perhaps this chapter did not reach out to me because the operations described in this chapter are surprisingly easy under Mac OS X. Even when studied from a PC perspective, this was the weakest chapter of the book.

Chapter 8 — Despite needing to save time by automating repetitive tasks, I only skimmed the very detailed chapter on *Automate Away Annoyances with Macros*. My lack of interest stems from the fact that most of the automation I need requires flipping between several applications (e.g., MSW, FMP, and just plain text in email messages). Therefore, an MSW-centric macro system did not seem relevant to my needs. In addition, most of the macro creation steps were created in the MS Office Visual Basic Editor. For me, this made them a non-starter; I can't even write Apple scripts that work.

Chapter 9 — The information provided in the chapter on *OLE, Mail Merge, and Office Applications* was well written and interesting. I was so fascinated by how easy it was to work between MSW and

PowerPoint that I bookmarked that section. The chapter contains comparable and helpful material on MSW and Excel.

Chapter 10 — Stop the world I'm getting off! The eight-page chapter on *Mac Word Annoyances* came across as an afterthought. Although the chapter's sections, Crashes and Performance, Opening and Saving, Documents and Editing, and Word X, contained useful information, the material was sparse and limited in scope. After reading the rest of the book, the lack of depth on Word 2004 and Word X annoyances and fixes was my primary annoyance. This was particularly irritating after reading Guy's introduction to Chapter 10 in which he noted "...get that same Mac user talking about Word for the Mac, rather than our operating system, and you're more likely to hear a litany of annoyances than a paean of praise." Sorry folks eight-pages do not represent fixes for a *litany of annoyances*.

To illustrate a recent annoyance not mentioned in the book: When updating from MS Word X to MSW 2004, the update process trashes your custom dictionaries. They are gone forever unless you've kept a backup.

Discomforts and Annoyances

I've chilled out down while writing this review but...

Conspicuous absence of cross-references — Although many of the annoyance fixes refer to other sections of the book, the author has done a poor job of cross-referencing them to facilitate reader access. Instead, you must use the index to find the location of the cross-referenced material!

Run on fix instructions — In too many instances (e.g., page 67, *Replace With Subscript*) a multiple step set of instructions is provided in paragraph form, not as an easier to read and follow numbered list.

Help for the rest of us — I would highly recommend, if the author wants to capture some of the Macintosh user market, that he post the Mac version of a fix, where relevant, on the book's website. For the most part this would require some simple annotations to the current materials. Examples of things that were valuable to me (translated from PCish) could be a good starting point. But I did find that most, if not all, Hart-Davis' recommended fixes worked on my Macintosh.

Conclusions

Despite my gripes, I liked working with the *Word Annoyances* book because its excellent index made it easy to find specific annoyances, and the succinct fix descriptions were focused and to the point. When I got into trouble translating from PCish to Macintosh, I had to refer to Maria Langer's Book *MS Word 2004* (macC February 2005). Of course, PC users would not need such guidance.

I gave the book a series of ratings since the excellence of its information will vary both with user experience and on which platform they compute.

Unfortunately for most macCompanions, I found the all too brief material in *MacWord Annoyances* Chapter 10 (i.e., only 7 of 183 technical pages) was too narrowly focused. Perhaps the author truly believed that chapters 2–9 of his book contained annoyances that were unique to PCs. Alas, perhaps the author should become a philosopher rather than a MS Word expert. But, in fairness and to do Mr. Hart–Davis justice, there are some—less than a dozen—places where he lets *the rest of us* know that the fix also works on the Mac.

If you fall into the group for which I've rated this book highly, go out and buy it.

Ratings – See the beginning of this article.

PS

I've ended this review with an example (page 13) of why translation is needed if Macintosh user understanding is important to O'Reilly (press) and the author.

Create a suitable shortcut for a startup switch (between MSW versions)

Depending on the version of Word and how it was set up, you may not be able to use the Word shortcut that appears on the Start menu—some of these shortcuts don't let you edit the command used to start Word. To check, right-click the Word shortcut and choose Properties, then look at the Shortcut tab. If the Target text box is grayed out, you need to create a new shortcut.

To do so, locate *WINWORD.EXE* (usually in a folder named some variation of "Office" in the *Program Files* folder, which you can access by choosing Start --> Run, typing %programfiles%, and pressing Enter) and create a shortcut to it wherever you find most convenient. For example, right-click *WINWORD.EXE* within its parent folder and choose "Create shortcuts here," rename the shortcut from "Shortcut to *WINWORD.EXE*" to a snappier name, and then drag the shortcut to your Start menu, if that's where you want it. Right-click the new shortcut, choose Properties, and then click the Shortcut tab. The next sections discuss the switches you can use. Enter the switches on the Target line of the Shortcut tab after the final double quotation marks.

For example: "D:\Program Files\Office 2003\OFFICE11\WINWORD.EXE" /n

Write Portable Code: An Introduction To Developing Software For Multiple Platforms reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Brian Hook

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2103>

Booksite: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/1593270569/index.html>

\$40 USD, \$48 CDN, £24 GBP, €30 EU

Published: July 2005

Pages: 272

ISBN: 1593270569

Requirements: Coding capability and C knowledge.

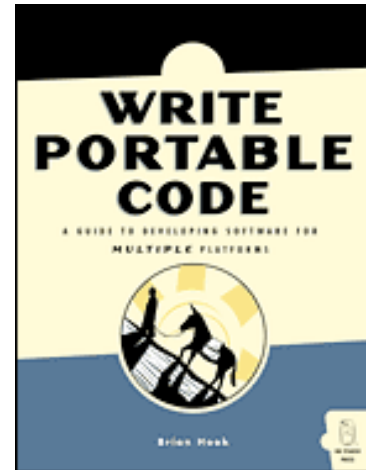
Strengths: Platform agnostic.

Weaknesses: Pretty much C and C++-specific.

Brians' booksite: <http://www.writeportablecode.com>

Simple Audio Library: <http://www.bookofhook.com/sal>

Portable Open Source Harness (POSH): <http://www.poshlib.org>



Write Portable Code: An Introduction To Developing Software For Multiple Platforms by Brian Hook comes from the C and C++ environment and much of the book is platform agnostic. I think you'll learn a lot from the Simple Audio Library, Portable Open Source Harness (POSH) and Brian Hook's own website listed above. He created POSH because he didn't like what was available at the time.

There are 19 chapters discussing techniques, editing and source control, processor differences, floating point, preprocessor, compiler quirks, networking and operating systems, dynamic libraries, security and permissions, file systems, scalability and portability, internationalization and localization, scripting language and cross-platform libraries and toolkits. There are three Appendices on POSH, The Simple Audio Library and 20-rule list on portability.

I enjoyed Brian Hook's look at Macintosh quirks, and scripting language disadvantages. Are you into mining for programming gold? Take a look here to see if you can think about more than one platform at a time from a non-Java approach.

Hardware

Speck Products' Superb Portfolio Skin reviewed by Mike Swope



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-portfolio.html>

Released: 2005

\$35 USD

Requirements: Any iPod mini.



Target Audience: Female iPod Mini owners who wish to protect their iPod investment.

Strengths: Superb quality, portfolio flap protects screen but opens easily for access to iPod controls, Kraton polymer construction (like rubber), multi-color configurations to mix and match with wardrobe.

Weaknesses: Targeted towards women. No means to clip iPod onto belt or otherwise transport iPod except in a purse or pocket. A Kraton coated clip would be a nice addition to this product for men

What The? What's It For?

Every iPod Mini owner knows or fears the woe of dropping their Mini. I let my stepson use my Mini once, and it came back the very next day with one of the corners scarred where it had likely been dropped on a rough sidewalk or other concrete surface. I haven't let him use it since. The iPod's expensive, in any flavor, and its brushed finish is

easily marred, and out of the box, the Mini's unprotected. Enter a plethora of iPod accessories to protect your Mini, including Speck Products' superb Portfolio Skin.

Remember the Greeks!

When the iPod Mini Portfolio Skin arrived, my wife confiscated it immediately, saying, "What's that? Cool!" She then confiscated my Mini and immediately began to charge it. "Can I take the iPod to work with me? I can carry it in my purse and it won't get scratched, and I can listen to it as I do my billing." I couldn't stop her. Since I didn't use my Mini too much, for fear I'd drop it or lose it, I couldn't deny her. Someone should get to enjoy my Mini. Together, we opened the Portfolio Skin package and put it on the Mini.

Speck Products' Portfolio Skin is brilliantly ingenious: a Kraton wallet for the iPod Mini. The Mini is slipped inside and a wrap-around flap, like a wallet, is strapped closed to completely protect the Mini on all sides, but easily opened for access to the Mini's wheel. The Mini's ports are also available for charging and downloading music while inside the Portfolio Skin. There's no cause to remove the Mini from the rubberized Portfolio Skin for the iPod owner on-the-go.

The Perfect Mini Accessory for Women

Speck Products' iPod Mini Portfolio Skin is the perfect Mini accessory for women. My wife's response to the Portfolio Skin is a clear indicator of such. Speck Product's product page for the Portfolio Skin also depicts this with a photo of a smartly dressed professional woman seated comfortably at her desk. The Portfolio Skin also comes in two configurations to coordinate or clash with "outfits and accessories": clear with black, blue, green and orange closure straps, or pink with white, black, pink and green closure straps. My recommendation: clear for men or women; pink for women.

The Wife Is Happy. Who Could Ask for More?

My wife likes Speck Products' iPod Mini Portfolio Skin very much. I've lost my iPod to her, unless I buy one of those alarm clocks with the iPod dock for our bedroom. She's happy, either way. With the Mini in the Portfolio Skin, it is completely protected against scratches and dings in her purse and on her desk at work. Without the Portfolio Skin, she would leave the Mini at home. I suspect most women feel this way once they try Speck Products' iPod Mini Portfolio Skin. It clearly (no pun intended) puts her mind at ease that my iPod won't be damaged while she's using it. What more could I ask for...except a clip to wear the iPod on my belt?

More about Mike Swope:

<http://www.maccompanion.com/info/aboutus.html#mikeswope>

Software

Delve into DEVONthink by Giles Turnbull



DEVON Technologies, LLC

support@devon-technologies.com

<http://www.devon-technologies.com>

Product link: <http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/devonthink/overview.php>

Released: August 17, 2005

\$75 USD.

Requirements: Mac OS X Tiger.

Guided Tour: <http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/devonthink/guidedtour/guidedtour1.php>

Comparisons: <http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/devonthink/comparison.php>

Strengths: Makes the Paperless Office possible with Automator actions and a Widget.

Weaknesses: None found.

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<http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2005/08/26/devonthink.html>

<http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/au/1154>

Giles Turnbull did a great job reviewing DEVONThink and frankly, I couldn't do a better job than he did with this review. He was kind enough to allow us to reprint his findings from the MacDevCenter.

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08/26/2005

I first noticed the buzz surrounding [DEVONthink](#) way back when I was putting together my "[Outboard Brains for OS X](#)" article back in 2003.

Several people mentioned it as a worthy kind of snippet archiver, one that offered unique features. I did try it out, but like other newcomers to the software, my first attempt left me feeling a little nonplussed. I couldn't see the usefulness.



Then earlier this year, author Steven Berlin Johnson wrote a widely linked and oft-cited [weblog post](#) about how he made use of DEVONthink as a reading and research tool. By throwing enormous amounts of data into it, he was able to make best possible use of the application's built-in semantic searching and cross-referencing. The result was that DEVONthink made suggestions and links between materials that Johnson could never have spotted himself; it actually did some of his research for him.

This kind of endorsement sparked a lot of interest in the software. The buzz really took off, and over time it metamorphosed into speculation as to what shape the next version of DEVONthink would take.

Now the world of productivity geeks is [turning a thoughtful eye](#) toward [Devon Technologies](#), following the release of DEVONthink Professional 1.0.

For a couple of weeks, a beta version of this application was available as a free trial, something that has prompted a lot of people to download it and experiment. Initial reports were varied, but some users said the new features and Tiger-specific technologies make it a very exciting release.

So here, for the uninitiated and the unenlightened, we present a guided tour of DEVONthink Professional. Our guide is based on the beta version, so some features may have been changed in the final release. What does this app offer and how does it work? More importantly, why are [some people so buzzed up about it](#)? Come with me, and I'll show you.

Getting Started

One thing that can leave people flummoxed when they first use DEVONthink is that, on starting it for the first time, there's not much to see. The standard view offers a toolbar at the top, a folder hierarchy on the left, and a large viewing/editing window dominating the screen--which on initial start is empty.

The best way to think of DEVONthink is as a *database* for the rest of your stuff. It's empty because, right now, it doesn't know where your stuff is. You just need to tell it.

The simplest way to do this is to tell DEVONthink to import your documents; just drag your *Documents* folder into the window and sit back while the application builds a database of all of your information. DEVONthink indexes everything you throw into it, building up a map of the content of the files and their metadata.

But as well as being a database environment for *viewing what you've already created*, DEVONthink makes a very good *editing* environment for *creating new stuff*. With built-in RTF, plain text, and HTML editing smarts, it becomes a very capable and helpful writing tool. Best of all, it makes connections between what you're writing and the rest of your database, *while you are writing*.

One of DEVONthink Pro's most important new features is the ability to manage multiple databases (in previous versions, everything had to be stored inside of just one). Unfortunately, only one of those databases can be open at any time. Should you wish to switch to another, DEVONthink saves everything in the first one and closes it first. This might be frustrating if you often intend to move data from one database to another.

While DEVONthink's viewing panes can be rearranged in many ways and dragged around to suit your monitor settings and the way your eyes work, the simple concept is that the app always offers a view of the files currently being used, searched, or indexed, and a view of the one file that is the current focus of your attention.

There's one further thing, a feature unique to DEVONthink. At the bottom of the window are two buttons marked See Also and Classify. These are essential to DEVONthink's success as a personal database, since they are the controls used to find, or create, connections between different documents. We shall look at them in more detail later in this article.

Once you've dragged some documents into DEVONthink, it's time to start exploring what it can do.

Make Connections

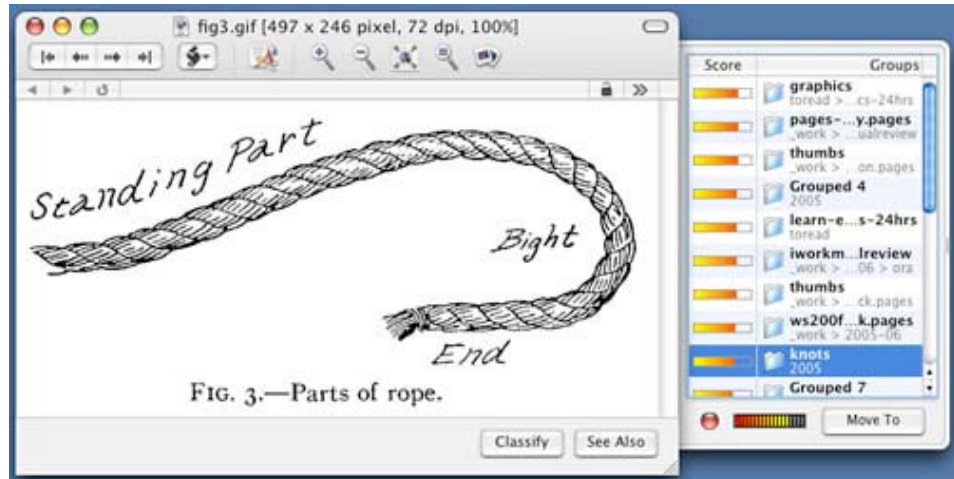
To start with, your data has some degree of built-in structure, especially if you have imported files from the Finder.

But to get the most from DEVONthink, you need to add further structure, making links and connections between files and groups of files.

When DEVONthink talks about "groups," it means documents that are bunched

together because they share some meaning or theme. You can create groups yourself, and simply drag documents into them. Groups can have sub-groups, and they appear in the DEVONthink GUI as folders, so it helps to think of them as DEVONthink's Finder alternative.

Throughout DEVONthink, in search results windows and document windows, you will see the Classify button. Click it when viewing or previewing a document, and a drawer opens, offering you likely groups to which your document belongs.



Note that DEVONthink has already picked these for you, and is making suggestions based on the existing groups' contents. A brightly colored line icon appears next to each group suggestion; the longer the line, the better suited the current document is to that group.

What's happening is DEVONthink is trying to help you. The job of classifying documents remains yours, but the software attempts to make it quicker and easier by spotting themes and commonalities between documents and anticipating how they might be grouped together.

To move a document to a group, choose one of the suggestions from the list in the drawer and click the Move button. The behavior is like that of the Finder; the document disappears from where it was (either in another group, or ungrouped) and shifts location to the new group.

Remember that all of this is happening within DEVONthink's database; your original files, the ones you imported in the first place, are not touched.

Of course, if you have a lot of data (and as we shall see in the conclusions later on, DEVONthink is the kind of tool that suits people with a lot of data), the thought of manually classifying thousands of documents might be a little off-putting.

So there's an Auto Group command under the Data menu, which does a surprisingly good job of collating a mess of disorganized files into some kind of order. It could save you hours of work.

Documents can belong to more than one group. Right- or Control-click a document, and you'll see a "Replicate to..." option. This makes an identical copy of your document (not an alias) and puts it in the group of your choice. The replicant document mirrors the original, even if the original is changed, and vice versa. Replicants are synchronized copies of their originals.

Duplicates, however, behave differently. A duplicate document exists independently of the original; edits made to it will not be reflected back.

You can ungroup things, too. Ungrouped documents move up one level of the groups hierarchy, all the way up to the top if need be, and will stay there until you assign them to a group.

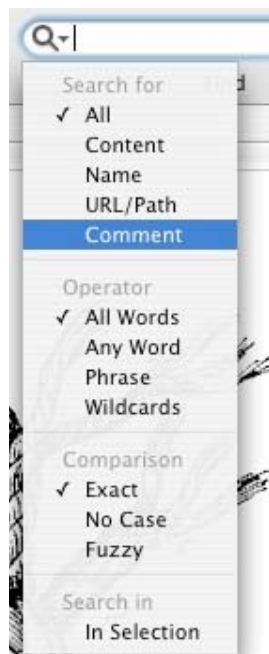
There's a subtle difference between "grouping" and "classifying" in DEVONthink. Grouping is the process of creating groups of documents; classifying is the task of assigning documents to existing groups. You are more likely to spend time grouping when you first start using DEVONthink, and classifying once you've been using it for some time.

Also, DEVONthink works better if documents and groups are kept separate. In other words, don't have documents sitting alongside groups within the hierarchy; instead, create a new sibling group and put the spare documents in there.

Find Things

Your data will be displayed as a hierarchy of folders, just like the Finder. If you've dragged in your entire *Documents* directory, its structure will be faithfully recreated within DEVONthink.

DEVONthink is very good at finding things within this large pile of information. The quick find box in the toolbar offers a variety of search options and can zip through even large databases with impressive speed.



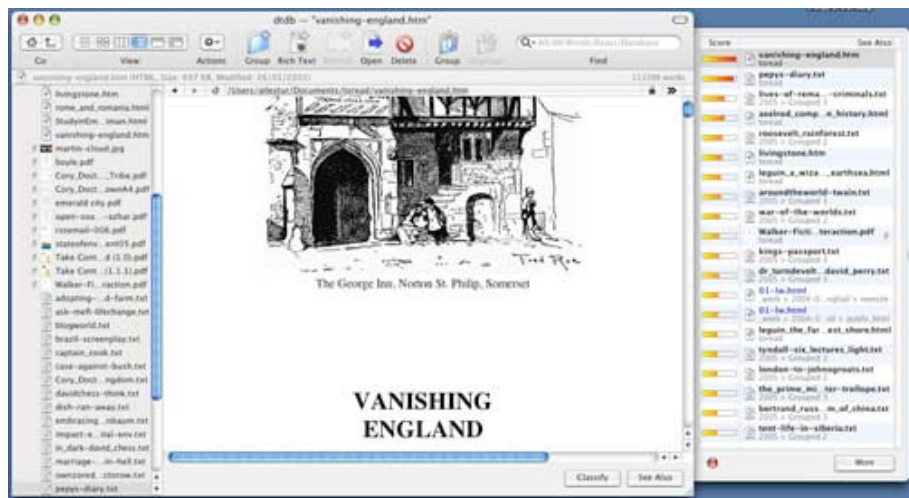
Alternatively, hitting *Command+Shift+F* brings up a separate search window that offers much more power. Enter a search term; but before starting the search, try clicking the Spelling or Context buttons. These open a drawer with a list of additional search terms that DEVONthink considers similar, either by the way they are spelled compared to your search term, or by the context in which they appear within the database.

Double-click one of these suggestions, and the search is done on that term instead. Thanks to the way the search window is designed, you can view the document you find before opening it.

Another important way of finding *related* content is the See Also button that appears when viewing any document.

This really comes into its own once you have spent some time organizing your groups and classifying your documents appropriately.

Opening the See Also drawer brings up a list of documents that DEVONthink considers similar to the one you are viewing now. Select something from the list, and you can read that in situ, while you still have the previous document in your head. Now you can perform a See Also search on this second document, repeating the process; this is exactly what Steven Berlin Johnson [described doing](#) in his influential weblog post.



He concluded that having small, granular snippets of information was much more useful than large documents: "I have pre-filtered the results by selecting quotes that interest me, and by archiving my own prose. The signal-to-noise ratio is so high because I've eliminated 99 percent of the noise on my own."

Which doesn't mean that you can't, or shouldn't, have long documents in your database; but Johnson's identification of the 50-500 word count "sweet spot" is probably one of the best tips you can find for long-term usage of this application.

Counting Words

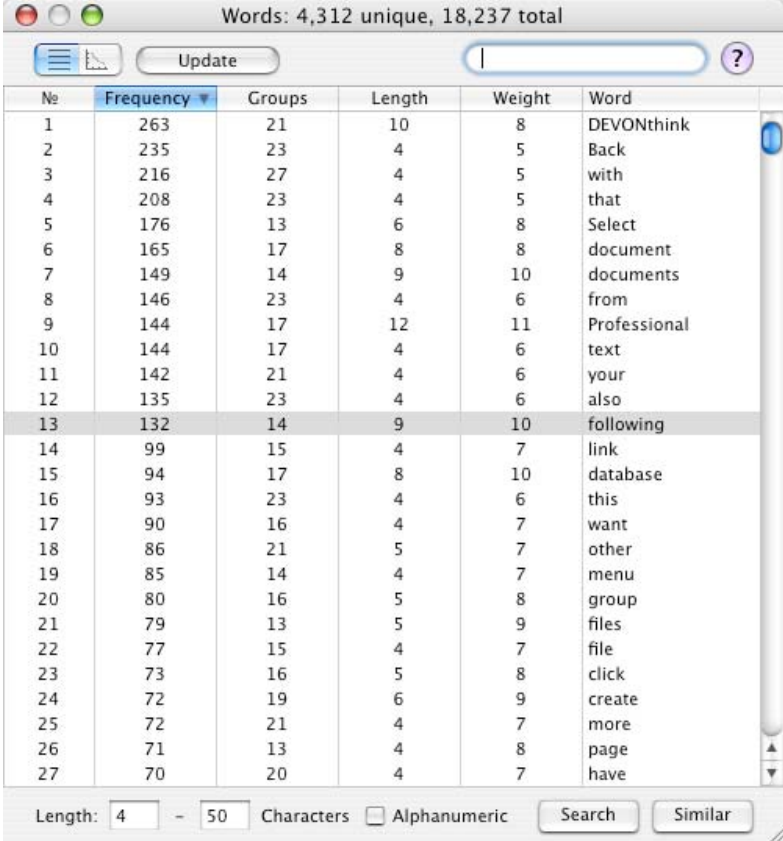
DEVONthink Pro can count the words in a document, but in more ways than one.

Sure, it will tell you how many paragraphs, words, and characters each document has, but the analysis of words goes much deeper than that.

Much of DEVONthink's *thinking* is done by examining *concordance*, or the number of times each word appears in each document.

You can examine any document's concordance with *Tools* -> *Concordance*, and detailed word count stats will appear.

From the chart, you can hit the Search button to show other files that contain the same word (great for hunting down obscure links), or the Similar button to show words with similar meanings or contexts.



The screenshot shows a window titled "Words: 4,312 unique, 18,237 total". It features a table with columns: No, Frequency, Groups, Length, Weight, and Word. The table lists 27 words with their respective statistics. Below the table are filters for Length (4 to 50), Characters, and Alphanumeric, along with Search and Similar buttons.

No	Frequency	Groups	Length	Weight	Word
1	263	21	10	8	DEVONthink
2	235	23	4	5	Back
3	216	27	4	5	with
4	208	23	4	5	that
5	176	13	6	8	Select
6	165	17	8	8	document
7	149	14	9	10	documents
8	146	23	4	6	from
9	144	17	12	11	Professional
10	144	17	4	6	text
11	142	21	4	6	your
12	135	23	4	6	also
13	132	14	9	10	following
14	99	15	4	7	link
15	94	17	8	10	database
16	93	23	4	6	this
17	90	16	4	7	want
18	86	21	5	7	other
19	85	14	4	7	menu
20	80	16	5	8	group
21	79	13	5	9	files
22	77	15	4	7	file
23	73	16	5	8	click
24	72	19	6	9	create
25	72	21	4	7	more
26	71	13	4	8	page
27	70	20	4	7	have

Delve Deeper

- DEVONthink Pro can be used as a basic outliner. Control-click a document, and choose *State -> Show*. The document's icon will be replaced with a checkbox. Standard [OPML](#) files can be imported and exported.
- There's a huge selection of AppleScripts included with DEVONthink that you might find useful. One imports all of your Mail mailboxes as plain text files; others allow you to perform basic image manipulation, such as flipping, scaling, and rotating.
- While reading a document, you can select any text within it, right- or Control-click, and choose Set As Title; the document's name will be changed accordingly.
- Of course, DEVONthink is also a writing and note-taking environment. As with many other note-takers, you can use Wiki-like links between documents, add color and text labels, or highlight chunks of text with color backgrounds.
- A Service menu command, *Command+Shift*, allows you to grab text from any other Services-aware application and instantly create a new note in DEVONthink.
- Any document, or database, can be locked to prevent further editing.
- Databases can be exported in an impressive range of formats (text, Word, RTF, OmniOutliner, OPML), as well as to your iPod or as a self-contained web site.
- The full-screen mode gives you the chance to immerse yourself in your words; very useful for writing tasks that require concentration.

For more history and rules about Googlehacking, see Gary Stock's web site at www.unblinking.com.

DISTURBING news emerged in recent weeks of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) simply falling off the map after deliberate cyber-attacks on their networks.

The first victim was Cloud Nine, an ISP based in Basingstoke. Without warning it found itself under electronic attack, by means of something technically known as a "denial of service attack".

This means that a person - or more likely, persons - unknown set up a series of computers to bombard Cloud Nine's network with requests for information.

It's the electronic equivalent of being suffocated. Cloud Nine's computers simply couldn't cope, and the attack was so serious that within hours, the company announced it was going to have to close down.

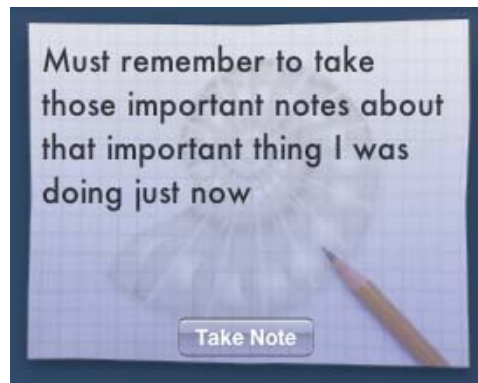
In a statement, the company said: "This activity was of such magnitude and viciousness that we took the decision that we could not continue to operate our Internet services with the resources we had available."

Since then, there have been further, but less serious attack on a handful of other ISPs.

Thankfully, there is hope for former Cloud Nine customers - another ISP, Zetnet (www.zetnet.com), has taken over their accounts and promised to honour the contracts people had paid Cloud Nine for.

There is very little that most ordinary internet users can do to prevent attacks like this.

- Image, video, and audio (MP3) files can be organized, played, and classified within the application. It's no iPhoto replacement, but DEVONthink can search a bunch of captioned and keyworded images with impressive speed.
- Bookmarks can be imported from various web browsers, and will be automatically put in a new group together.
- *Click Data -> New -> Sheet*, and you create a mini-spreadsheet document within your database. A dialog box appears first to help you customize the column titles for the sheet.
- RSS and Atom feeds can be imported and read, turning DEVONthink Pro into an aggregator. It lacks many features of other aggregators, but offers the benefit of being able to instantly save, archive, and classify interesting posts.
- Web pages, or entire web sites, can be downloaded and archived from within DEVONthink; it includes a WebKit-powered browser.
- The beta included two Dashboard widgets, a search tool with an odd jungle-themed background, and a note-taker. Your attitude to these might depend on your attitude to Dashboard in general; personally, I see no reason to use them when you could switch to the more usable, more useful GUI of the application itself.



The Big Picture

DEVONthink is a big tool for big tasks. If you need a simple writing tool and your needs are basic, then TextEdit and Spotlight, and perhaps [DEVONnote](#), are better choices. The same applies if you're looking for an outliner or an RSS aggregator.

DEVONthink Pro is for people who have a huge amount of information that needs to be cross-referenced, indexed, and sliced and diced in ways that the user might not have considered before.

If you collect any sort of text-based data or write a lot of text, and are prepared to invest some time in getting it into DEVONthink in the first place, the rewards can be significant.

This application is ideally suited to a wide range of people who handle lots of data but find it hard to keep an overview of it in mind. People like students, authors, academics, or project and people managers.

The biggest barrier to adopting DEVONthink as your information management tool is the initial task of importing, grouping, and classifying; if your data store is already huge, this will be daunting and possibly frustrating, even with the use of the automated grouping and classifying tools.

But this application is one that rewards your investment of time. If you use it often, to organize lots of information over a period of time, you will soon discover the benefits: powerful searching and cross-referencing, and an ability to make semantic, intelligent links between what were previously unsorted and unhelpful data.

[Giles Turnbull](#) is a freelance writer and editor.

Popcorn 1.0.3 reviewed by Derek Meier



Roxio, Inc.
455 El Camino Real
Santa Clara, CA 95050
1-408-848-5594 or 1-866-280-ROXI (7694)
sales@roxio.com

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

<http://www.roxio.com/en/products/popcorn/index.jhtml>

\$50 (\$10 mail in rebate for current owners of Toast, Jam, iLife, DVD Studio Pro, and Mac OS X.)

Requirements: PowerPC G3 or faster processor, (G4 or G5 processor recommended for faster compression); Mac OS X v10.2.8 or later; 200 MB of free hard drive space to install; Up to 15 GB of temporary free disk space may be required while using the software; DVD recorder (all formats supported, including SuperDrive and dual-layer)

Blank recordable DVD discs.

Test System: Mac Mini G4 1.42Ghz; Mac OS X v10.2.8; 80 GB HD; Superdrive.



Strengths: Easy to use, Good Quality video even after compression, includes DVD labeling software.

Weakness: None found.

You may be overcome by a sense of deja-vu when you first use Popcorn if you have used Roxio's Toast. With a similar simple interface, Popcorn allows you to burn video to DVDs and also compresses them if needed for fit on a 4.7GB disk from a 9 GB disk. When compressing it, retains good quality vide and audio. One drawback of Roxio's Popcorn is its inability to copy copy-protected DVD's but due to the legalities it's perfectly understandable why this feature would not be included.



There are three methods you can use to make DVD's; DVD to DVD, from a disk image and from a TS_VIDEO folder. You can choose to leave out the extra languages and features when burning a larger DVD so there will not be any compression.

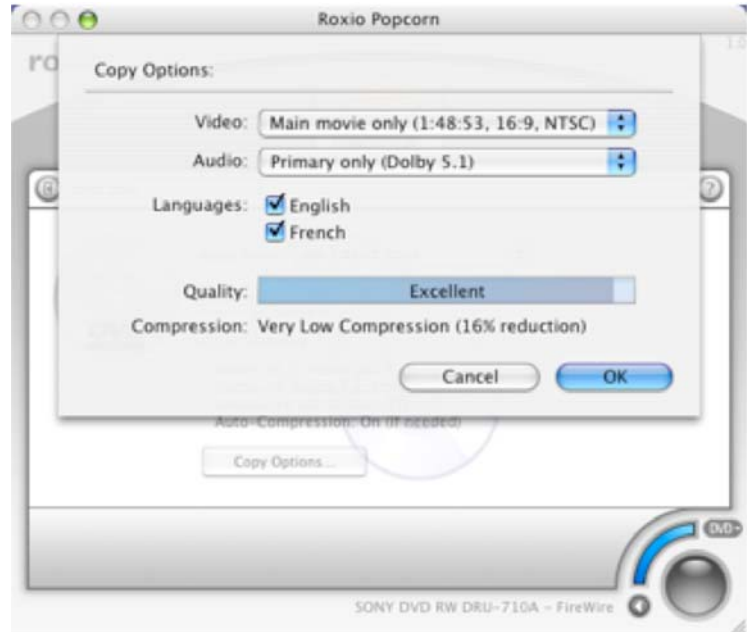
The first method I burned was a TS_VIDEO folder. You can opt out of copying the different languages and extras to the point where no compression is needed. It took approximately an hour to compress a 7 gig or so sized folder and burn this DVD although your time will vary from Mac to Mac. Burning this way is as simple as selecting a TS_Video radio

button and selecting the source then clicking the red burn button or you can just drag the folder to the burn window. My first burn was failure due to a buffer underun error. It's an easy remedy by checking the Buffer Underrun Prevention checkmark . Most modern DVD burners come with buffer underun protection technology I believe this should have been checked by default.

I had no problems copying DVD to DVD. Like the first method burning a TS_VIDEO folder you can elect to not include the extras and languages doing this in most cases lower your time to burn by not having to compress.

The disk image method works just like the others allowing to choose if you wanted to cut the additional languages and extras.

It also includes Discus CD labeling software. It allows you to make custom CD/DVD Labels as jewel case inserts.



In the end, you have an easy-to-use DVD copier. Its interface will make Toast users feel at home and make new users happy with how easy to use it is. It compresses video very well fitting a 7GB DVD onto a 4.7GB disk with no apparent quality loss. Unfortunately there is no way it can bypass encryption or copy protection to make backups of your purchased DVD's. But due to the legalities involved who could blame them. Popcorn is still a great piece of software I would not hesitate recommending it to anyone.





AssistiveWare®

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FAX: 1-972-606-8741
<mailto:support@orin.com>
<http://www.orin.com/access/proloquo/index.htm>

Released: July 25, 2005

\$300 USD, €250 EU.

<http://www.assistiveware.com/purchase.php>

An Assistiveware Access bundle that contains KeyStrokes, SwitchXS and the LayoutKitchen for \$480 USD.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later; screen resolution at least 800 x 600.



Strengths: Enables those with the inability to speak, to speak through Mac OS X Tiger-based systems.

Weaknesses: Does not work directly with apps that do not have the Apple Accessibility API enabled.

Product Comparison:

<http://www.assistiveware.com/productoverview.php>

Download: <http://www.assistiveware.com/download.php>

Proloquo is enabling software designed for folks who have difficulty with or are unable to speak verbally. It takes full advantage of Mac OS X Tiger using Acapela voices <http://www.acapela-group.com/> in Dutch, English (US or UK), Flemish, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese (Brazilian), Spanish and Swedish. It also works with Cepstral voices <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/april2005/Software/CepstralVoices.htm> as well as the built-in voices in Mac OS X Tiger. The voices are very, very good.

Why would you buy Proloquo rather than use the VoiceOver technology inherent in Tiger? VoiceOver is intended for folks who can't see. And what about MacSpeech's iListen <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/august2003/audio.html>? That is intended as a Speech-to-Text environment.

Proloquo works as a multi-purpose, multi-lingual speech solution designed to augment accessibility for folks with visual and speaking challenges intended to work first with the KeyStrokes <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/march2004/features.html> onscreen keyboard and SwitchXS switch access solution also made by Niemeijer Consult. It also works to provide feedback in any application keyed in by those who have learning disabilities and provides text-to-speech for those of us who prefer listening to reading. And because it is a multi-lingual tool, it can be used to pronounce other languages correctly. There is a separate language pack to extend the product.

The iWork Apps Pages and Keynote for whatever reason, do not support the Apple Accessibility API, nor does Microsoft Word. TextEdit and Nisus Writer Express do so Proloquo can make them talking word processors. Proloquo also has Speak Word, Speak Sentence functions as long as the "Enable access for assistive devices" is turned on in *Apple > Preferences > Universal Access. Proloquo > Preferences > Typing* also has to have the checkboxes turned on. Copy/Paste from MS Word into the Proloquo text window works fine as a workaround.

Proloquo comes with a 31-page hard-copy (as well as the PDF on the CD) with QuickStart, Features, System Requirements, and Preference settings as well as Tips & Tricks and a short list of known issues and workarounds. For example, apparently the updates in Tiger caused the Mail.app to malfunction with New Messages by graying out the text as uneditable. And Cepstral voices currently do not respond to change in pitch settings.

I posted the Product Overview Link above so you can compare the various packages and see what each can and cannot do right now. For example, in order to do Keyboard layout editing with Proloquo, the LayoutKitchen is required.

Why not give it a try? You can download from the link provided above.

Also, there is a video on its way...

The communication system is based on a technology known as Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC):

Intro to AAC: <http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/Augmentative-and-Alternative.htm>

AAC Centers: <http://aac.unl.edu/>

Selected Assistive Technology Resources: <http://wata.org/resource/communication/>

International AAC: <http://www.isaac-online.org/en/home.shtml>

Slick Transitions and Effects reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

GeeThree.com

261 Hamilton Ave., Suite 311

Palo Alto, CA 94301

Voice (650)328-2359

Fax (650)328-8092

info@geethree.com

<http://www.geethree.com>

\$50 USD per Volume.

Requirements: iMovie 2.03 or later; Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X; QuickTime 5 or later; 9MB hard drive space.



Strengths: These effects and transitions add strength and flexibility to the iMovie and video creation. The plugins are easy to install into the iMovie menu. The plugins are easy to use and work just like the original effects. The company does a good job at offering updates as needed. More volume offerings are part of the expanded line of transitions and effects. Volumes can be downloaded from website or send in mail.. These volumes give a “lot of bang for your buck” and will provide a lot of fun and creativity.



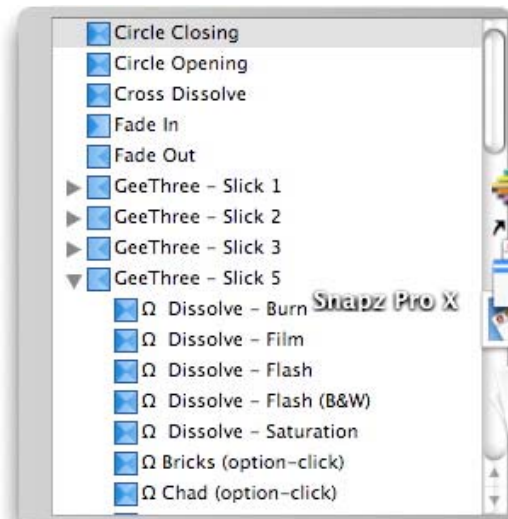
Weaknesses: The only weakness, if it is one, is that if you get all of the volumes, you will have a tough time selecting the ones you want. Because there are so many good choices, it is tough to choose. The best thing is to target one or two volumes that you think you might like to use the most, and then buy those volumes. Then again, with the great price, it might be just be easier to get all of them and try them all at your leisure!

The use of videocamcorders have made “movie making” easier and more fun. With the use of software you can work iMovie is easy to use affordable (free with Macintosh) yet surprisingly versatile video creation Application. Its flexibility is enhanced by Imovie’s ability to work with the iPhoto and iDVD. I have enjoyed working with iMovie so much that I have not “upgraded” to programs as Final Cut Pro or Express. But I have enjoyed the updated version of iMovie and its progression of utilities to help make video-creation even more fun and special. However third party software, like Gee Three’s volume set of Slick transitions and Effects gives the iMovie user, even more flexibility and power.

I became aware of the company and their nice set of iMovie effects and transitions while trying out their sample packages. I was impressed with their compatibility with iMovie and the adaptability for providing extra strength to my iMovie videos. I was glad to see the host of volumes and the plug-ins that were available. I was eager to try more of these transitions and effects.

There are now 8 versions of the volumes of transitions and effects literally providing hundreds of new ideas for your video creations. Requirements for using the software are the using iMovie 3, version 2.1.1 or later. MacOSX version 10.1 or later or the use of Mac OSX 9.1 or later. Macintosh capable of running iMovie, G4 processor recommended. Monitor with resolutions of 1024 x 768 pixels or greater and the use of QuickTime 5.0 or later is also needed.

Popping the Volume CD into the CD drive and then installing was easy to do. Then it is a matter of exploring for the transitions and effects that you want. I found that these plug-ins work seamlessly with iMovie.



Each version of the software has a series of different transitions or effects. Which volume you want depends upon documentaries, independent films, video projects or even video slide shows you want to enhance you iMovie video with. This plug-ins is installed into the transitions and effects. Clicking on the buttons and then on one of the volumes, the multimedia extras pop up. Here is where you have a chance to try them out and see which ones you would like to use for your video exploits.

Volume 1 main transition/ titles/ effects has over 100 plug-ins that include Film ratings screen, Pop-up test, Countdown, Perspectives (which looks like the text sliding into oblivion like the opening text in "Star Wars." Other transitions include dissolve, bricks, fog, wipe, and radial. More titles include rotate, seasick, split in, clockwise skew and more. Additional effects have audio-bulge, cosmic frame, strobe, color fuse and more.

Volumes 1 and 2 are included in one volume. The best of these are Film Noise, Spin & Fade (the picture screen spin-rolls in from a corner into the center), Fog (which obscures some of the video frame), and Letterbox (black stripes are on the top and bottom of the video). For Volume 1 additional favorite transitions are Barn Door Open, Barn Door Close, Door Close, Down the Drain, Rotate Out and Page Turn. Other Effects that are interesting are Lens Flare, Video Noise and others. For Volume 2, there are more transitions as Sweep-Whittler, Vapor and Trail One way. Effects include filmstrip and frames Oval (with Heart, Oval or Star). Volume 2 also has specially licensed visuals from the high-end tools the pros use. Dozens of "organic"

transitions, which give a special, look and feel to your movies as well. Our Volume Two the "Spice" collection is sure to set your iMovies on fire.

Volume 3 includes over 100 new plug-ins, with 30 titles to include in your movies. Some of the effects are State-of-the-art page curls, ripples, and soft wipes, aperture blends, Color adjust tools and an innovative Soft Paint effect tool are parts of the video tools. You can choose a title, use the transition of effect to the left to preview or see Title Movie, Transition Movie or Effects Movie. Lots of flexibility but there is more to the collection.

Large text with Headline is possible. Watch your title scroll across at full screen height (not just small lettering) with Marquee. Text floats on the screen over 30-title plug-ins included. The Transitions – called page curls, which curl over the are useful. . See images flow with Ripples, or click with Apertures. And the Soft series of Wipes and Radials add the gentle and emotional touch. Over 50 transitions included. New effects as SoftPaint, turns your video into a painting in motion. Change the color of your video with Color Tint and RGB . The new fisheye effect adds a fun look by capturing a wide field exaggerated look. The Rotate can be used to get things straight if a little out of whack.

Volume 4 has Videomix, Pictures in Picture, Split Screen and Matt-tastic. With Matt-tastic uses a special procedure with the creation of a graphic (called a matte) to overlay on a video. A clip is selected in iMovie and then combined in Matt- Tastic for professional results.

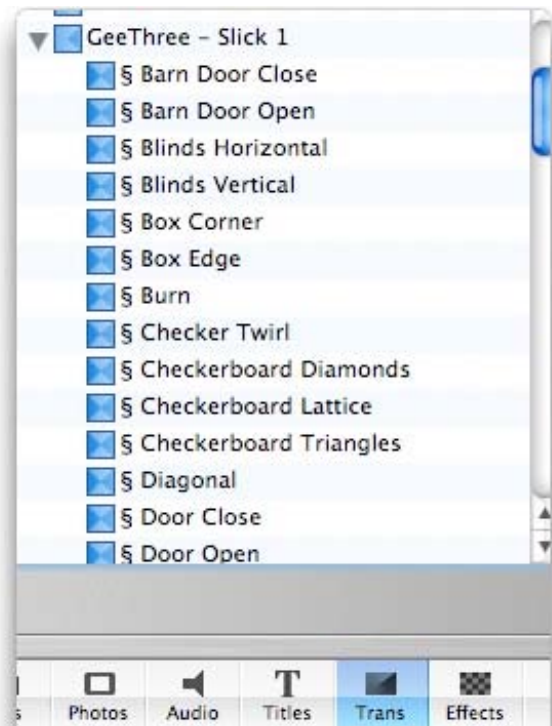
Volume 5 includes the top picks of film rating screen (like those at the movies), pop-up text (include little cloud-thought bubbles), countdown effect and last but not least, perspective. This one I call instead the Star Wars Opening in which the text starts at the bottom and gradually gets smaller when going upward towards outer space).

Volume 6 has Whiteboard effects. These are interested effects that include animated chalk board or making arrows to write over video such as those that are used in athletics and on weather charts for example. Videowall is a new one the has the means to add multiple clips in many configurations in the same frame such as splitting 4 different video into one screen), Hilite spotlight (oval or other shaped areas to highlights one part of the video) and Stopwatch (in the video). Another one allows for correction and controlling color globally.

Two new volumes have been produced. While I have not tried these yet, they include the following, Slick Vol. 7 with 70 3D transitions using OpenGL. Beautiful spinning cube effect. Powerful text tools and scoreboards, Over 2 dozen animated titles and more. Slick Vol. 8 has Amazing image stabilization. Advanced pan and zoom, Color replacer, Morph and warp, Picture-in-Picture Pro, Over 100 animated backgrounds,

Using the effects and transitions is a snap. Insert the CD, and click the icon to have the volume inserted into the area of iMovie with the transitions and effects. Finding and using any of the effects or transitions is as easy as clicking on the placement in the iMovie timeline and choosing either transitions or effects. Trying it out and see if it works for you are that easy and it's a lot of fun too.

I love iMovie and have used it quite extensively. This video creation product gets better and better. These new transitions and effects from GeeThree really give a video producer a lot of versatility, which gives iMovie new power, flexibility and makes your movies/videos more effective, interesting and makes your productions look more professional at the right price. The learning curve is an easy one so you can master most of iMovie and the transition and effects with a minimum of effort. All you need are creativity, imagination and the tools. And GeeThree now gives you more of these. So choose the volume(s) you want and start now to make your videos even better.



zsDuplicateHunter 2.21 Pro edition– Safely eliminate duplicate files on your hard disk reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, edited by Julie M. Willingham

Zizasoft, LLC
support@zizasoft.com

Product Link:

<http://www.zizasoft.com/products/zsDuplicateHunter/index.shtml>
1-303-638-9235

Standard Edition \$20 USD, Professional Edition \$40. Free lifetime upgrades for both versions.

File Size: about 1.6 MB.

A 67-page manual can be downloaded. About 45 pages of the PDF file is devoted to learning and using the software. [There is also a detailed revision history provided.]

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 and later, or a recent version of Windows.

Audience: Anyone who want to remove some of the clutter from their hard disk, and will take the time to learn the software can practice *safe deletion*.

Strengths: This is a great way to clean up your hard disk.

Weakness: To use the software safely, you should take the time to read the accompanying users manual. [For some Mac users this may be a weakness.]

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 10.4.2.

Software Overview

ZsDuplicateHunter, according to Zizasoft, allows users to easily find and safely remove duplicate files from a computer, saving hard drive space and making common operations like backups and searches faster. Found duplicates can be grouped by any combination of name, size, and checksum. Grouping by checksum ensures that the contents of two files are actually identical. Once the duplicates are identified, the user has a wide set of options on how to eliminate them. The bottom line: when you have eliminated the selected duplicates from your computer, you will gain additional hard drive space. This will make your computer run faster, speed up your backups, and, of course, make searching for files faster.



Introduction

Over the years, I've surely cluttered up my hard disk with large numbers of duplicate files. My technical work on safe nuclear waste disposal was always in a push-pull conflict of whether information needed to be organized by company and project, or, for the documents that I wanted to save, by subject category. At times, I played both ends against the middle and saved the files both ways — *Hurrah for Duplicates*.

This was particularly true when I collected information for individual tasks in project files. In any technical effort, references to documents are a critical part of defending your analysis and recommendations. Because I'm lazy, I added references to each separate folder that represented a task, so that it would be self-contained, also making it easier to send individual clients only the materials they supported. Obviously, my aggregated references collections were more broadly useful.

Therefore, over the years, I have wanted to archive project files to a CD to get them off of my computer. However, I wanted to keep a more organized set of references on my hard disk. My path forward was to store the accumulated literature references in a separate set of nested folders arranged by their primary technical focus.

Now, all of this was an evolutionary process that resulted from my not being an expert in data management. My lifesaver on finding what I needed from the now 23 GB of documents was the fact that the Apple *Find File*, and now, Spotlight, made searching if not easy, doable. Therefore, I may have as many four or five duplicate copies or only one copy of a reference on my hard disk. To make life even more interesting, some duplicate documents had slightly different names since early on we were limited to 27 letter document titles. Therefore reducing clutter and gaining back disk space from the 23 GB of data I've collected is quite a challenge. Reading about the checksum feature and other combinations of ways to group duplicated found files, I thought that ZsDuplicateHunter might be of help, even when looking for 'identical' files that had different names.

Past Trials and Failures at Hard Disk Cleanup

I ran across zDuplicateHunter either when surfing shareware/software or when reading a Macintosh publication. Reading the information on Zisasoft's website gave me a sense of confidence that in testing ZsDuplicateHunter I would not do my 'spring cleaning' accidentally — you know, toss out the baby with the bathwater.

I'd previously used Aladdin's Spring Cleaning 7.x (now unsupported and now Allume) to deal with duplicates. At that time, I got overly enthusiastic and tossed files I shouldn't have deleted. The exercise left a bad taste in my mouth about Spring Cleaning and a sense of nervousness about deletion of duplicates. This was especially true after I had to spend about many hours recovering from my ignorance. Since removing Spring Cleaning from my hard disk, I've not done any serious work on elimination of duplicates from my hard disk. After all, it was easier to buy a larger hard disk rather than working to delete an unknown number of duplicates. However, my paradigm changed when I read about and tried zDuplicateHunter to bash my duplicates.

Review Limitations

Because of time limit constraints, I thoroughly tested the software, but did not completely master `zsDuplicateHunter`. I've focused this review only on those features that appeared suited to both my needs and patience. The feature-rich product takes a bit of time to initially learn, but then removing duplicates is easy. After playing with the "checksum" feature, I chose not to use it because I became impatient with it — I did have a recent backup of my technical files on an external drive.

I've also cheated when writing this review! I found the information about `zsDuplicateHunter` both on the developer's website and in greater depth the help manual, that was clearly written. As a result, I decided to add information that I read to this review, at times almost verbatim, but without grubbing up the text with quotation marks. That way I did not need to waste time rewriting the developer's product information into my own words. I shamelessly, where correct and appropriate, reproduced some of information provided by Zizasoft, augmenting it with my own test findings. Indeed, test it I did to the tune of gaining 300 MB of disk space by deleting duplicates from three folders.

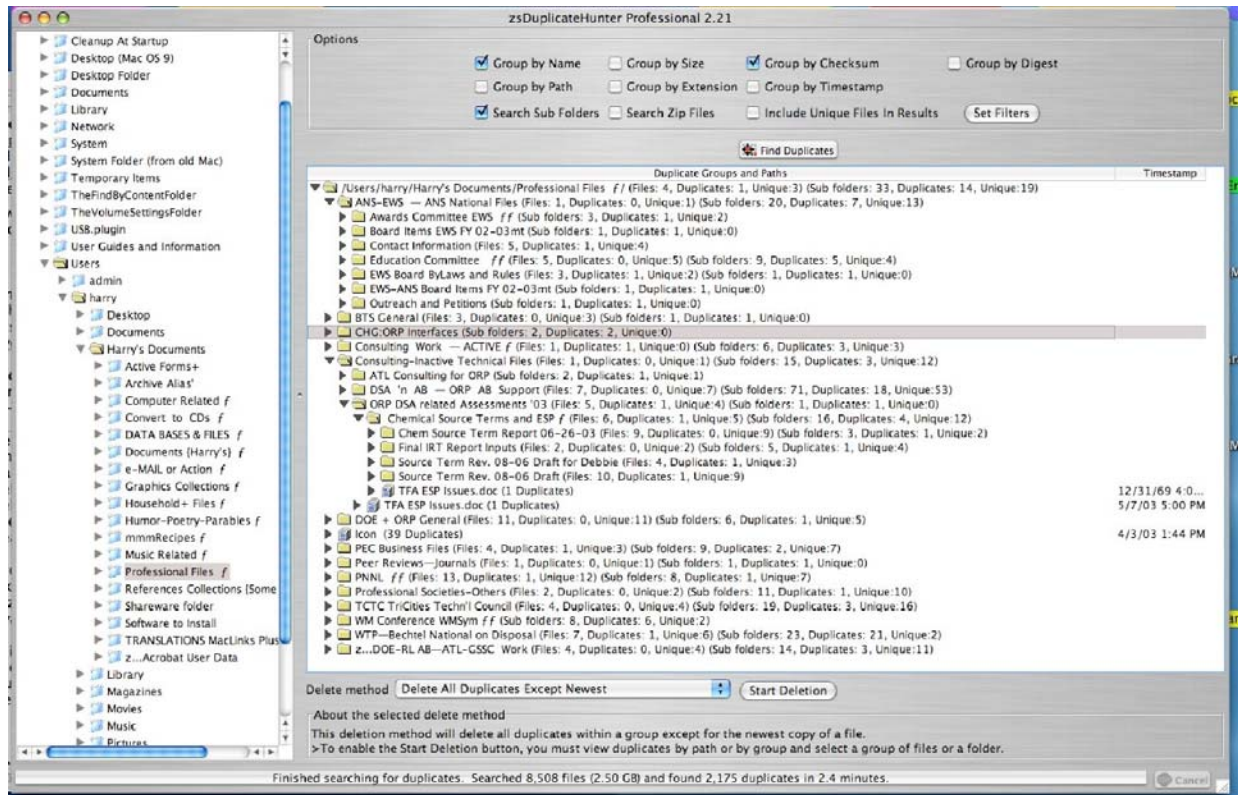
Installing and Using the Software

Like all well-behaved Macintosh software, you can install `ZsDuplicateHunter` by downloading and dragging the application to your applications folder. Double-click the application icon, then either enter the license key code into the initial splash screen or use the product for 30 days in demo mode.

The product is available in two editions, **Standard** and **Professional**. The product comes with a 58-page user manual in PDF format that is both well written and relatively complete. Because of the detailed bookmarking, I preferred the PDF manual to the built-in Help files.

The **Standard** edition contains the basic functions required to remove duplicate files from your computer. The **Professional** edition contains additional ways to group duplicate files as well as more tools for deleting duplicate files. It is intended for more experienced users who want additional control of the duplicate-hunting process. This was the version I used, although my testing more closely resembled the standard edition's features.

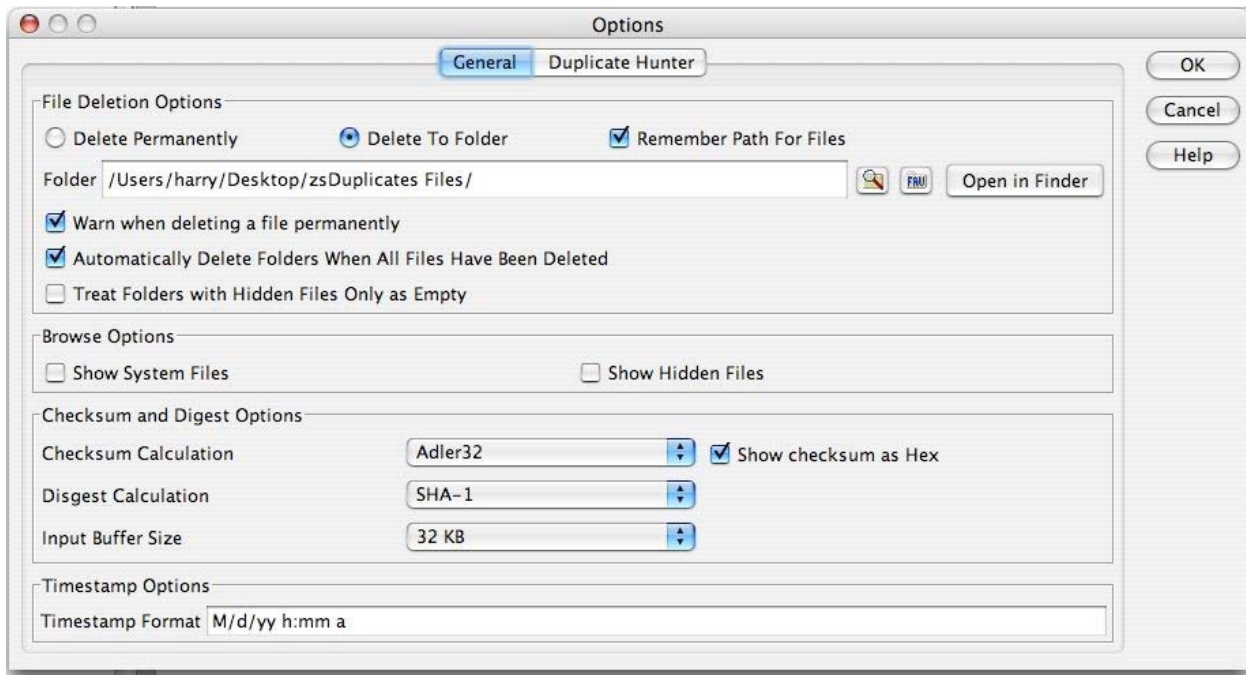
The software interface is based on doing folder or nested folder searches for duplicates, specifying which files to delete and then deleting your selections. One attractive feature is that `ZsDuplicateHunter` allows you to control how folders are searched as well as which files and folders are searched. All options to control the hunt for duplicates are on the top portion of the right side of the main screen. *Note: some options are available only in the Professional version of `zsDuplicateHunter`.*



Determining what folders to search — ZsDuplicateHunter, as illustrated above, provides a hierarchical listing of folders that exist on your computer so you can select which folders zsDuplicateHunter should search for duplicates. There are a variety of actions you can perform on folders using the context menu.

Finding duplicate files — The first step in removing duplicate files from your computer is grouping all files you are searching into groups of duplicates. This is a simple 3-step process.

1. Select the folder(s) that you would like to search for duplicates by clicking on it (them). When selecting the folders to search, we suggest you search only files you have created and that you make the search as small as possible to keep the search time as short as possible.
2. From the options section, choose the grouping options that you would like to use. To find exact duplicates, we suggest you turn on Group by Size and Group by Checksum. Detailed information on each option is available in the well-written and downloadable Help Manual.
3. Click the Find Duplicates button to run the comparison. The status bar at the bottom of the window will show the estimated time remaining for the duplicate hunt while it is running. If, for any reason, you need to stop the program while it is running, click on the Cancel button in the bottom right hand corner.



After the duplicate hunt has finished running, there will be a summary of results in the status bar at the bottom of the window. This will tell you at a glance how many duplicates were found during the comparison. The actual results will also be displayed either according to the paths the original files are located in, or as series of groups based on the grouping criteria you set. You can change between views using the View Menu. We suggest that you experiment with both views to determine which is easiest for you to use.

After the results are displayed, you can review the results and delete any files you do not need.

Removing Duplicate Files — If `zsDuplicateHunter` finds any duplicates on your computer, you will likely want to remove some or all duplicates to save disk space. `zsDuplicateHunter` provides seven different methods of deleting duplicate files (four in the standard edition).

You can:

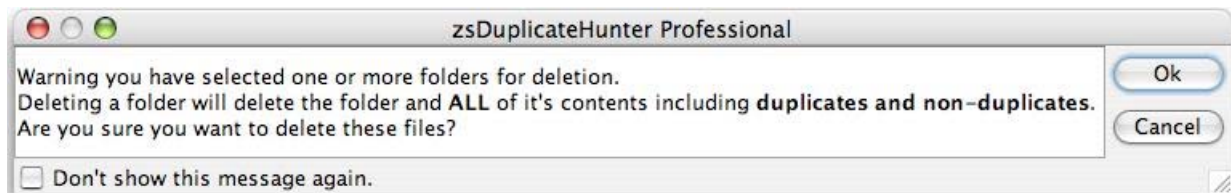
- Delete individual files
- Delete all but the newest file in a group of duplicates. *[My choice]*
- Delete all but the oldest file in a group of duplicates.
- Delete all but the first file in a group of duplicates. (Professional version only)
- Delete all duplicates of a selected file.
- Keep files in a selected folder, and delete duplicates elsewhere. (Professional version only)
- Delete all duplicates in a selected folder, preserving the files elsewhere. (Professional version only)

To make deleting as safe as possible, zsDuplicateHunter has several safeguards in place. The first safeguard prompts you before any files are deleted permanently. The second safeguard is an option that allows you to move files to a backup folder before deleting them permanently. A typical advisory note on what kinds of files you should **not** delete on a Macintosh computer is provided (e.g., anything that is not in your Users directory unless you clearly understand what the files are used for).

No, you may only think you know what the files are used for. I strongly suggest that you limit deletions to your document-associated files, staying far away from items in your Library or Systems folder. A longer list of warnings are provided for both WinTel and Linux systems, but that's fair since those operating systems are more complex and Windows is easy to break.

My results

I checked and deleted files from three folders associated with my consulting and my reviews for *macCompanion*. The professional files folder was 2.58 GB in size and contained many, many nested folders. The software finished searching my disk in 2.4 minutes and found 2,174 duplicate files, taking up ca. 290 MB of space. It took me about a half-hour, working with a feeling of paranoia and doom, to delete the duplicates..



Actually, because I wasn't sure whether the warning produced when I chose to attempt deleting duplicates from a folder that contains subfolders would destroy data I wanted to keep.

Specifically, the message seemed to tell me that there are folders that include duplicates and that those folders will be trashed. Mark Noble responded to my question to this issue: "This error message typically occurs when you use the Delete Selected method of deleting duplicates and you delete a folder. In order to delete the folder (as requested), all files within the folder must be deleted whether they are duplicates or not. In many cases, this is what the user wants to do. However, the message is designed as an extra confirmation to ensure that you understand the implications."

I can't tell you why making such a deletion appeared to me as a bad choice, but feedback from the developer validated my concern. I know that in the past I might have created duplicates of a folder that contained nested folders. There is a possibility that I have groups of two folders with identical filenames that may have had additional files 'randomly' added to them. (Checksum might have helped here.) Deleting all but the most recent files in their associated folder might have trashed such unique files. Therefore, I solved my angst by doing the deletion on a folder-by-folder basis, and not deleting files that contained the folder deletion message. Therefore, what might have been a minute's worth of work took me a half-hour, but I'll sleep better.

If Wishes Were Horses, I'd Want a Mercedes Benz

There are many things I'd like the developer consider in a future upgrade of this fine product. Despite my insatiable quest for identify enhancements, zsDuplicateHunter is a *great* piece of software:

- The Manual — A tune-up to the manual, that clearly identifies which items (paragraph by paragraph) apply to Windows or Windows and Linux, and those that were either universal or applied to the Mac OS. Folks,
Response: Mark did not respond to this concern, but based on his commitment to improving his software's functionality and ease of use, I'm sure my issue will get some attention.
- Warning Windows and the Manual — Illustrations of the more significant warning windows with an explanation, for newbies, on what the warning messages mean.
Response: We will certainly add these items to the user manual for a future release.
- Compressed and Archived Files — It doesn't help Macintosh users in checking archives if the only compressed files checked are either zip files or 'jars'. Response: We are currently working on letting the user to define what extensions to treat as compressed archives. We will also support both the zip format and the gzip format.
- PC Jargon — What is *Windows Explorer* and what does it do? Is it the same as either Spotlight (Tiger) of the *Find File* feature in earlier operating systems? This is still an issue,
Response: I'll, since this product is a keeper, check the manual in future updates.
- Easier Way to Count Duplicate Files and Folder — I may be tired, but I need a clearer way to determine the number of duplicate folders, nested or otherwise, to make deletion decisions simpler. The messages that accompany the found items are too *Boolean* in context for me to understand.
Response: Mark answered that he would welcome any suggestions you have as to how to make this easier to understand. We are always open to improving the user interface.
- Saving and Reopening a Session - Although I thought I had successfully saved the results of my professional files search, I could not get the file to reopen after I had quit the application and restarted it. Since the duplicates search took only 2.4 minutes, this wasn't a big deal, but...
Response: Did you receive an error message while opening the file, or did the program simply not open the session? [*The later.*] In addition, the session only saves the settings used for the duplicate hunt not the actual results. To save the results you need to use the save results to HTML or XML commands that are available under the File menu. [*That worked!*]
- Path Information — I would welcome a way to read the path information without having to open *zsDuplicateHunter* window to fill my 22" monitor screen.
Response: Mark wrote that we will look into ways of improving this either with *tooltips* or by displaying them on more than one row.
- Delete to Folder — Clearer instructions for using the 'delete to folder' option that allows you to move files to another directory (folder) rather than deleting them permanently. Macintosh users do not have directories on their hard disks, so much of this and other WinTel jargon only frustrates us.
Response: According to the settings in your options dialog the program should have created a directory under the */Users/harry/Desktop/zsDuplicates Files/* folder. The folder structure would mirror the structure of the files you deleted. If you select the Open in Finder button, is the */Users/harry/Desktop/zsDuplicates Files/* folder empty? "We will add", Mark wrote, "additional help for this feature in a future release. "

- Open in Viewer — I could not get this feature to work for me. Is it a WinTel-only feature?
Response: We have not previously heard of anyone having problems with this feature. Could you let me know what type of files you were attempting to open and if you received any error message or if the file simply did not open? [The later; and I ran out of time to do more checking. I'll figure it out in a day or two.]
- Deleting duplicates to the Trash — According to Mark Noble, the program can currently either move the files to the backup location you specify or delete the files permanently.
Response: Mark noted, there is currently no option to delete files to the Trash however, they do plan to add this feature to a future version.

Before leaving this section I want to let you all know how very helpful Mark Noble, the President of Zizasoft, has been in supporting my review. His help has gone far beyond the call of duty.

Conclusions

As a result of using zsDuplicateHunter, the duplicated I crated over the last 10 or so years could be eliminated from my hard disk. Using the software, I was able to delete many of the unneeded duplicates in my professional files. Another day, another folder so I'll be on my way to a better organized hard disk. Often, in the past, when I searched for a specific document by using a keyword or two using the Mac OS X 10.3 *find* feature, I caught a tiny subset of my duplicates in my search results. I'd 'off' one or two, but don't deal with my larger duplicates collection. The result was that I had treated the existence of duplicate files in a random and piecemeal fashion. It's time for a change.

I've found that zsDuplicateHunter helped me reduce some of the clutter. Once I mastered its learning curve, I was able to easily delete a large number of duplicates, but the operation was a bit nerve wracking. Yes, you must read the manual or have a completely separate *locked* backup to bail you out when you've tossed the wrong item.

I love the level of detail the publisher provides both on the website and in the manual. For example, "To help prevent deleting important files, zsDuplicateHunter offers the ability to filter files by filename and to ignore hidden and system files while searching for duplicates. Finally, if you do not group files by Checksum or Digest, zsDuplicateHunter may group files together that are NOT exact duplicates. This is because several files may exist with the same name but different contents. For example, many programs come with readme.txt files or license.txt files. When you group files only by name, zsDuplicateHunter will group these files together even though they may not be duplicates. You can also open the files from zsDuplicateHunter to review any differences."

Although I'm more paranoid about deleting potentially useful (not duplicate) files than most people are, my testing worked great. I do, however, recommend, as does the developer, that before deleting any significant amount of material from your hard disk, you back it up, preferably to an external firewire hard disk. I rate this product **4.5 macC's**

Training

Design and Deploy Web Sites with Macromedia Dreamweaver MX 2004 and Contribute 3 reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Joseph Lowery

Booksite:

<http://www.peachpit.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=032128884X&rl=1>

\$45 USD, \$65 CND, £34 GBP, €38 EU with CD.

Published: November 2004

Pages: 272

ISBN: 032128884X

Requirements: Macromedia MX 2004.

Strengths: Great instructions on how to use Contribute 3.

Weaknesses: Contribute 3 didn't work for Mac-based systems. With Macromedia Studio 8, it does now. There is no errata page online to handle the issues associated with the programs. I thought it was just me, but no, others have reported similar experiences. (I wish Peachpit would follow O'Reilly's lead on booksite errata reporting and follow-up.)



Design and Deploy web sites with Macromedia Dreamweaver MX 2004 and Contribute 3 by Joseph Lowery is another book I have been struggling to complete in anticipation of Macromedia Studio 8.

The pages and the CD are inseparable. Both build on each other, but the build stuff peters out about Chapter 3 because things don't quite work out as expected. Macromedia needs to do something about this and is why I gave it an average rating. Sorry, I have been struggling with this for months and I finally checked online and found others had similar experiences. The concept is great, the actualization needs improvements and with Macromedia Studio being released, hopefully an update will have been generated to correct the issues this book and CD combo represent.

Flash Out Of The Box: A User-Centric Beginner's Guide to Flash reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Robert Hoekman, Jr.,

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1829>

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

\$30 USD, \$44 CDN, £25 GBP, €26 EU comes with CD.

Published: November 2004

Pages: 254

ISBN: 0596006918

Requirements: Macromedia's Flash.

Strengths: Great way to walk through Flash MX 2004.

Weaknesses: A few errors have been found and noted in the errata on the booksite. Some published links no longer work.



These do:

Flash Out of the Box: <http://www.flashoutofthebox.com>

Robert's website: <http://www.rhjr.net/>



Flash Out Of The Box: A User-Centric Beginner's Guide to Flash by Robert Hoekman, Jr's title pretty much says it all. That and the CD that is included to get us started in the right direction.

There is a lot more to Flash than animated cartoons. Integrate multimedia into web pages by walking through the task-oriented exercises to quickly get up to speed.

I had to stop sitting on this and get it out the door before we jump into Macromedia Studio 8.

There are 13 chapters that lead us through drawing boxes, filling shapes with color, creating layouts, prepping text for animation, publishing movies, drawing cartoons, controlling characters with ActionScript, using images and video through importing and compressing functions, revealing objects over time with animated transitions and timeline effects, working with buttons, manipulating artwork, streaming video, loading assets, building templates and using CSS, Flashing to handhelds and CDs and the last chapter summarizes and provides other resources. The Appendix gets into workspace and workflow tips.

Ignore some of the links in the back of the book and go to the ones listed above. Flash!

Learning Macromedia Fireworks MX 2004 reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Instructress: Abigail Rudner

Lynda.com, Inc.

PO Box 789

Ojai, CA 93024

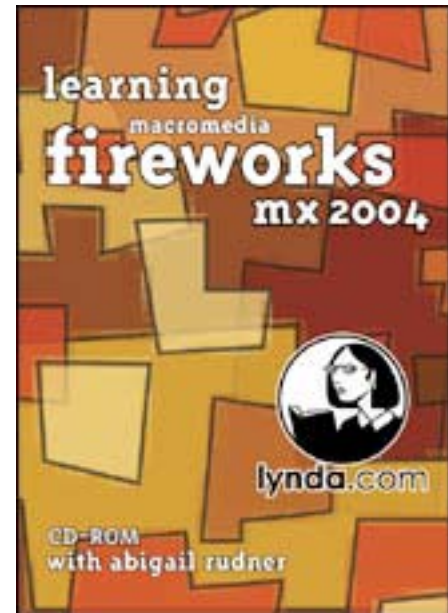
888-335-9632

mailto: info@lynda.com

<http://www.lynda.com>

Released: October 2004

\$100 USD with 2 CDs, 7-hours training or online \$25 month for all training from Lynda.com or \$375 per year unrestricted access for the complete library with all exercise files.



Product site:

<http://movieibrary.lynda.com/html/modPage.asp?ID=79>

ISBN: 1930727704

Requirements: Mac G3 or later; OS 8.6 or later; 16X CD-ROM drive; 32 MB RAM; 800 x 600-bit video; QuickTime™ 6 or Win98 or later; Pentium II; 32 MB RAM; 800 x 600 24-bit video; PC Soundcard/speakers; Internet connection if using the online option.

Beginner Level.

Strengths: Great cross-platform QuickTime™-based instructions on Macromedia's Studio MX 2004 application. Excellent navigation features.

Weaknesses: None found.



“Learning Macromedia Fireworks MX 2004 with Abigail Rudner is a movie-based tutorial designed for novice and intermediate Fireworks users who want to design and export static as well as interactive web graphics. Solid, clear, creative, and easy-to-follow instructions cover both the design and the interactive code development features offered by Fireworks MX 2004. This tutorial begins with an overview of the Fireworks MX 2004 interface and quickly advances to cover topics such as working with and creating vector and bitmap image content, animation, optimization, interactivity and exporting methods, as well as Dreamweaver integration. Exercise files accompany the training, allowing you to follow along and learn at your own pace.”

I couldn't say it better.

I have run this on both my iMac G5 and on an XP Pro box and I have to say that Lynda.com CDs work considerably better on Macs than they do on PCs, or a least better on the one I use every day. It is a memory management issue with the video. Your mileage may vary.

I can't say enough about the quality of the training materials from Lynda.com. They are just excellent.

I'm looking forward to their release of Macromedia Studio 8 training. Look at the other offerings here: <http://movielibrary.lynda.com/html/modlisting.asp?vid=69>.

Learning Macromedia Flash MX 2004 reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Instructor: Shane Rebenscheid

Lynda.com, Inc.

PO Box 789

Ojai, CA 93024

888-335-9632

mailto: info@lynda.com

<http://www.lynda.com>

Released: October 2004

\$150 USD with 2 CDs, 14-hours training or online \$25 month for all training from Lynda.com or \$375 per year unrestricted access for the complete library with all exercise files.

Product site:

<http://movielibrary.lynda.com/html/modPage.asp?ID=63>

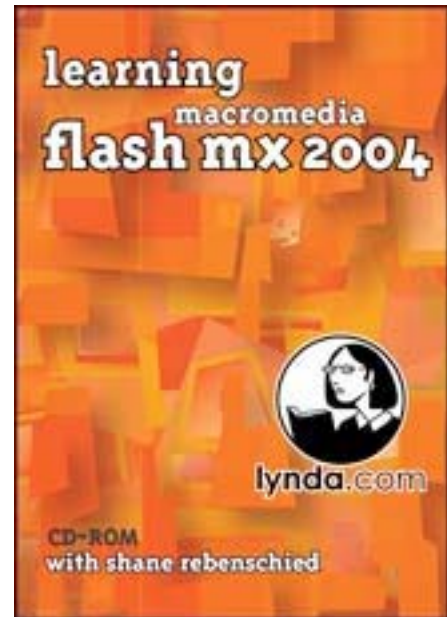
ISBN: 1930727585

Requirements: Mac G3 or later; OS 8.6 or later; 16X CD-ROM drive; 32 MB RAM; 800 x 600-bit video; QuickTime™ 6 or Win98 or later; Pentium II; 32 MB RAM; 800 x 600 24-bit video; PC Soundcard/speakers; Internet connection if using the online option.

Beginner Level.

Strengths: Great cross-platform QuickTime™-based instructions on Macromedia's Studio MX 2004 application. Excellent navigation features.

Weaknesses: None found.



“Learning Macromedia Flash MX 2004 with Shane Rebenschied is a workshop of movie based tutorials developed for beginning Flash users. The exercises walk you through the essential features of the authoring tool including drawing tools, importing bitmaps and vectors, animation, masking, working with Symbols, ActionScripting basics, music and sound effects, video, the deconstruction of a complete Flash site, and much more! Learning Macromedia Flash MX 2004 does not cover the more advanced topics and features found in Macromedia Flash MX 2004 Professional. However, all of the topics covered in this title can be applied to both versions of Macromedia Flash MX 2004.”

I couldn't say it better.

I have run this on both my iMac G5 and on an XP Pro box and I have to say that Lynda.com CDs work considerably better on Macs than they do on PCs, or a least better on the one I use every day. It is a memory management issue with the video. Your mileage may vary.

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Web Workflow with Macromedia Fireworks, Dreamweaver and Flash reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Instructress: Abigail Rudner

Lynda.com, Inc.

PO Box 789

Ojai, CA 93024

888-335-9632

mailto: info@lynda.com

<http://www.lynda.com>

Released: October 2004

\$150 USD with 2 CDs, 9.5-hours training or online \$25 month for all training from Lynda.com or \$375 per year unrestricted access for the complete library with all exercise files.

Product site:

<http://movielibrary.lynda.com/html/modPage.asp?ID=123>

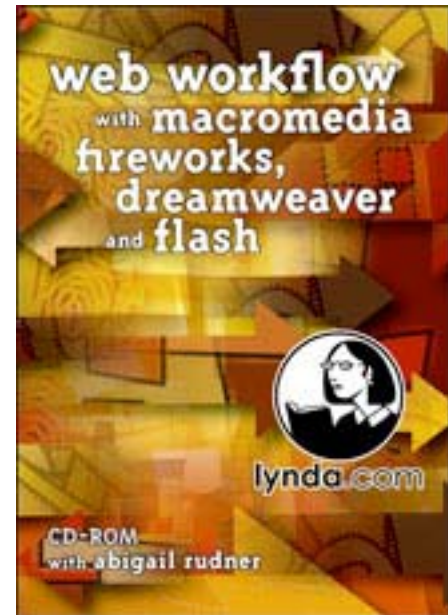
ISBN: 1596710128

Requirements: Mac G3 or later; OS 8.6 or later; 16X CD-ROM drive; 32 MB RAM; 800 x 600-bit video; QuickTime™ 6 or Win98 or later; Pentium II; 32 MB RAM; 800 x 600 24-bit video; PC Soundcard/speakers; Internet connection if using the online option.

Intermediate Level.

Strengths: Great cross-platform QuickTime™-based instructions on Macromedia's Studio MX 2004 application. Excellent navigation features.

Weaknesses: None found.



“Web Workflow with Macromedia Fireworks, Dreamweaver and Flash shows you how to be faster and more productive by employing real-life tasks and scenarios with an emphasis on creative possibilities. It also sets a strong foundation for those seriously pursuing the art and science of web design.

These intermediate level movie-based tutorials draw from the real life web design experience of an author who designs, teaches and trains. These lessons take users beyond the basics by opening them up to the creative possibilities of Macromedia Studio MX 2004.”

I couldn't say it better.

I have run this on both my iMac G5 and on an XP Pro box and I have to say that Lynda.com CDs work considerably better on Macs than they do on PCs, or a least better on the one I use every day. It is a memory management issue with the video. Your mileage may vary.

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I'm looking forward to their release of Macromedia Studio 8 training. Look at the other offerings here: <http://movielibrary.lynda.com/html/modlisting.asp?vid=69>.

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