macCompanion
YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH

Mac

Universal

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Masthead

Letter From the CEO

Current Events
by Robert Pritchett

Pity Parties and MUGs
Do you know what Pity Parties are – Ladies get together and cry on each others shoulders and drown their sorrows in lots of comfort food. Anyway, that is what I was told. There are actually folks who specialize as Pity Party Consultants and get paid for putting them together!

From what I was able to research, there are no Macintosh User Groups in Louisiana, but there are 2 or 3 in Mississippi and 4 or more in Alabama. The insurance agencies I communicated with in Mississippi said the devastation is much worse than is being reported nationally, as they continue to work out of FEMA shelters and compare trailer trappings at their Pity Parties.

So folks, if you can, please donate to your favorite charity organization and perhaps earmark your US tax returns in an effort to assist those in need, especially in the Deep South. Of course any folks who read this outside the US could do similar stuff in your countries as well. Please make a positive difference in the lives of others!

Crossplatforming Mactels
The XP on MacTel contest is now over $12,000 USD. Colin Nederkoorn posted his rules at
http://windowsxp.onmac.net/The%20Contest.html.

Brett Johnson's ELILO (EFI Linux Boot Loader) gets Linux on a Mactel platform at
http://sourceforge.net/projects/elilo.

Apparently WINE can be ported to Mactels and can emulate Windows on Macs without the Windows OS at
http://www.winehq.com/.

Schadenfreude and Mac Malware-du-Jour
I called it *Malware-du-jour,* because it seemed we were getting the trend of a malware report per day, but it stopped. Mostly due to the fact the 2nd report was of a vulnerability that was actually handled by Apple way back last summer, yet the press jumped on it as a current event the day after the Leap-A worm was reported. Sensationalism and just poor journalism was being exhibited and those of us who live in the Mac environment were calling them on it.

Schadenfreude is a German word that describes the pleasure in reporting someone else's misfortune:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schadenfreude

What we have been experiencing is Schadenfreude by the non-Mac media as they continue to use unmitigated gloating as they misreport recent Mac Malware events.

I guess perhaps one of the broken 15 or more commandments (Rev 1) that Moses had initially destroyed of the stone tablets on Mount Horeb (so as not to completely condemn humanity, he had to go back and get them replaced (Rev 2) with the lesser 10 strongly–worded suggestions, the Decalogue or in Hebrew, "10 Statements" discussed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Commandments). One could have been on not committing Shadenfreude;

"Thou shalt not commit Gloating."

We've been countering Mac-inspired malware **Schadenfreude** by discussing correct information and quelling FUD (Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt) in our *macCompanion Blog* and many of our staff have also been spreading good information in their other podcasts during February.

MacSurfer.com also posted a link to our *Mac OS X Tiger Safety and Security* videos that are accessible from our home page at macCompanion.com. Over time we will be updating those and improving them.

In the *Mac ReviewCast* (http://www.macreviewcast.com), Episode 42, Tim Verpoorten and I talk some about Mac Security issues and what to do about them.

Steve Stanger did an excellent job in his *The Mac Attack* episode #29 http://themacattack.libsyn.com/ explaining about why the Leap-A worm was named Oompa-Loompa.

Gene Steinberg interviewed Intego again and he also interviewed Kirk McElhearn, a former member of the macCompanion staff at http://www.techbroadcasting.com/ in the February 23rd podcast as they discussed the so-called security issues. He also posted how to practice safe computing in his MacNightOwl site at http://www.macnightowl.com/index.htm#precautions.

Tom Yeager at *InfoWorld* talked about alarmist media and Mac Malware attempts at http://www.infoworld.com/article/06/02/23/75815_09NNmacvirus_1.html.

The latest vulnerability being reported regards Safari and the Mail.app.

Folks can go to *Safari > Preferences > Remove Download* list items and uncheck *Open safe files after downloading*. It is that simple to stop this vulnerability from happening.

I'm sure Apple will release a so-called security update to make the Preference in Safari not default to being on when it comes to having the option to *Open Safe files*.

Meanwhile, Intego released a PR item also showing how to do this, but also state that their latest virus definitions list for VirusBarrier X and X4 offer protection from hidden executable files and we posted their PR piece in our macCompanion Blog on February 24th.

Mark Allan's donationware clamXav we reviewed in December (http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/december2005/Shareware/ClamXav.htm), also has updated definitions to cover recent malware activities. I've got ClamXav set to scan Emails, because it keeps finding phishing Emails that have nasty attachments intended to compromise my machine. Thankfully so far, they only affect non-Mac OSes.

Mal means bad in Spanish and Malware is any combination of Internet-contracted viruses, Trojans and Worms. They all may be manipulated little binary ones and zeros in code, but each focus on different weaknesses in technology. We care how they are being presented to the public even if the casual computer user could care less. We just don't like malware and we want it stopped.

Meanwhile Steve Gibson and Leo Laporte call Mac OS X a "Consumer OS" and say that there are more secure UNIX OSes out there in Episode 28 of *Security Now!* at http://grc.com/securitynow.htm.

May Apple continue to improve the best "Consumer OS" on the planet!

Letter From the Editor

Marching Forward!
By Robert Pritchett

March is a great month for transitioning between sleepy Winter and born-again Spring. Along with getting past the Flu Season, and Macs not catching malware (no they are not viral infestations in spite of what headline-catchers are trying to do) and we even have one anti-malware firm apologizing for spreading Mac-misinformation (Go Sophos!)

Its time to read my letter on Pitty Parties, cross-platforming and Schadenfruede, Rants, Raves and Revelations from Harry {doc} Babad, cross-platform software development by Jonathan Hoyle, a guest article from Adam Knight on Mac Basics on security, the view from the Ivory Tower of Ted Bade, a take on Universal Access in the Mac Attack by Steve Stanger, a look at virtual instrument plugins in the Music and the Mac by Daphne Kalfon, Mac reliability with Gene Steinberg and the MacNight Owl, March Madness of Mac Freeware by Tim Verpoorten, possible speculation of a Mac-based digital book by Dennis Sellers, issues with Google, AOL and Yahoo and Apple compatibility by Leland Scott and an obvious hot button about the Faceless Corporation by Christopher Duncan.

We then jump into a variety of book reviews, a couple of neat hardware reviews, a bunch of shareware reviews by Harry {doc} Babad and finally a few software reviews by Mike Swope, Eddie Hargreaves and myself.

So come join us as we walk through March. And by all means, stop by and smell the crocus, tulips and other hardy flowers that can be found among the advertisers and affiliates that have joined us. When you buy their produce, we get some table scraps to help keep *macCompanion* online.

The Macs are marching one by one hurrah, hurrah. The Macs are marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah! The Macs are marching one by one, come see what can be done, as Apple comes marching home…

According to Hoyle...

Cross-Platform Software Development from a Macintosh Perspective:
AMPC: *Axiomatic Multi-Platform C*

by Jonathan Hoyle

Last year, we began our series on cross-platform software development for the Macintosh. Over these past many months we have examined many cross-platform approaches, from C++ frameworks to complete development environments. For those who are just joining us, below is a list of what we have just covered:

- **Intro**: http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/september2005/Columns/According_to_Hoyle_1.htm
- **Qt**: http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/october2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm
- **wxWidgets**: http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/november2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm
- **CPLAT**: http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/december2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm
- **REALbasic**: http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/january2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm
- **Runtime Revolution**: http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/february2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm

This month we examine *Axiomatic Multi-Platform C* (AMPC), an ANSI C compiler by *Axiomatic Solutions* which creates applications which can run in the Java runtime environment http://www.axiomsol.com]. AMPC is available for Windows, Linux and Mac OS X.

But aren't C and Java were separate languages?

There are. Sort of. Unfortunately, the word *"Java"* can be used in one of two ways: as the programming language or as the resultant bytecode it's compiled into. Java the programming language, like C++ or Basic, is the front-end language the developer writes in, which the compiler turns into object code. Java the bytecode is the back-end which runs in the runtime environment, which is available on many different platforms. Typically, the Java programming language gets compiled into Java bytecode, so the distinction is typically not important. However, AMPC uses C as the front end programming language while preserving the Java bytecode back-end. In this way, AMPC finally gives C programmers the ability to create cross-platform applications right out of the box.

Is this a true ANSI C programming environment? Do it really create true Java applications?

Surprisingly, yes to both. It is quite an impressive technology from that perspective. The Java runtime environment is fully object oriented with built-in garbage collection and Java-built applications are written to take advantage of it. On the other hand, the C programming language (AMPC does not do C++) is a procedural-based language using pointers and has no ability to access objects. Yet within AMPC, they coexist marvelously. Moreover, AMPC allows you to call Java functions within your C code as well, giving you even more flexibility.

C pointers are done particularly well. Remember that in a traditional C compiler, pointers are references to raw memory locations. In the Java Runtime Environment, raw memory locations are not available. To solve this problem, AMPC implements pointers as opaque handles referring to Java objects; all of this happens under the hood and is transparent to the user. There are however some unusual aspects of this C compiler. For example, all scalar types: short, int, long, float, double, and even char, are each the same size: 32-bits. AMPC does provide its own proprietary DOUBLE (all caps) data type for 64-bit floating point numbers (implemented as a struct of two 32-bit values). Also, certain language features are not yet fully implemented, such as bitfields and limited goto's.

Creating Applications with AMPC

As you might expect, there isn't any built-in facility to make native calls to the Mac OS X API. For a cross-platform development environment, that isn't terribly surprising. AMPC does provide C-equivalents to the Java Swing API, ensuring that the applications you build with it are truly cross-platform. Standard console applications can also be compiled, using traditional scanf() and printf(). C source and header files are handled identically as they would in any other ANSI C compiler, except AMPC projects are compiled into .jar files (Java equivalents to libraries and executables) rather than traditional applications. .jar files can be launched in Mac OS X simply by double-clicking them.

For those interested in obtaining more technical information about AMPC, download the user manual at: http://www.axiomsol.com/hedesu/fm/download_file.php?id=180. There is a free demo that can be downloaded as well, but strangely, only the Windows version is available from their web site. I emailed *Axiomatic Solutions*, and they told me that to obtain the Mac demo, I had to retrieve it from http://www.download.com.
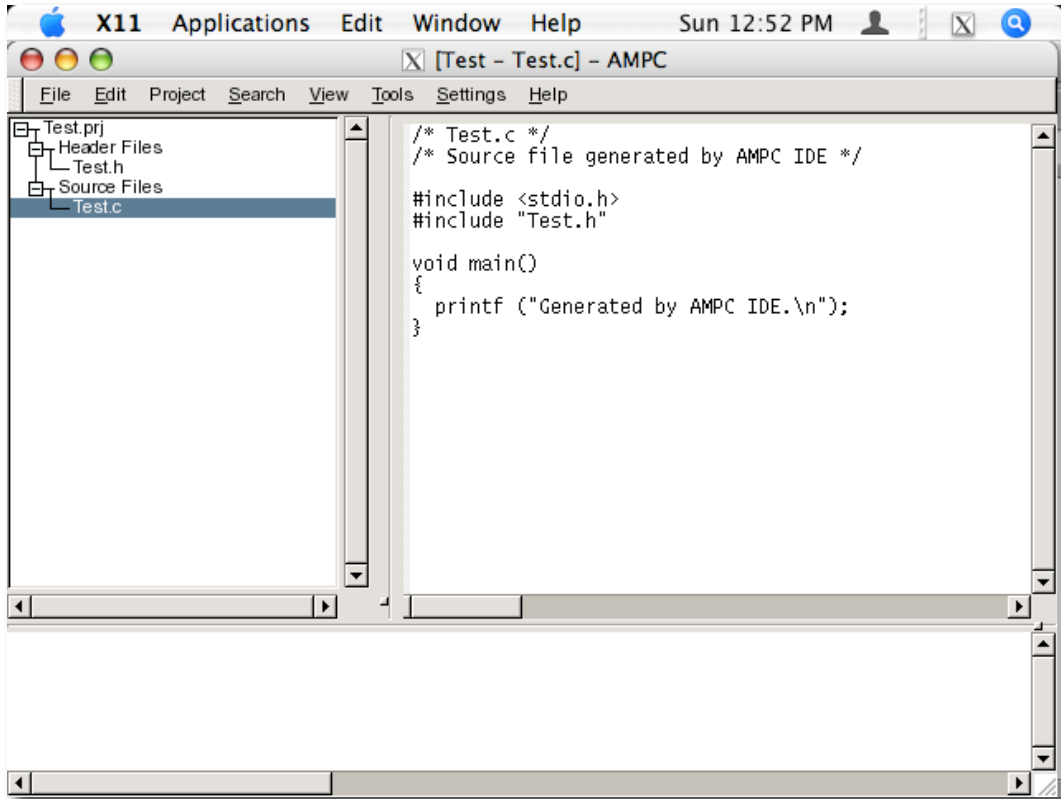
The Macintosh User Experience

Unfortunately, this is where AMPC comes up a bit short. Unlike traditional Mac OS X applications, AMPC runs inside the X11 runtime environment. X11 is optional and does not come as part of the default installation of Mac OS X. Therefore, to run AMPC, you will have to break out your Mac OS X Install DVD and install X11 first (AMPC requires 10.4 Tiger).

After the installations of X11 and AMPC, its poor Macintosh user experience first presents itself with a double menu bar: the X11 menu bar where the application menu should be, and the application menu attached to the window. When launched, AMPC sizes itself to fill the entire screen; although this may be appropriate behavior on some operating systems, it is not so on the Mac. The first great difficulty in usability came in attempting to resize this window. The window's lower right corner thumb did not easily respond to my mouse. After several attempts, I was finally able to resize the window, but once I let go of the mouse, the window's title bar is suddenly moved beneath the X11 menu bar, preventing any further attempt to access it. I had no further choice than to quit and relaunch the application.

Accessing the application menu and opening files behaved somewhat as expected. The file picker however is not from Navigation Services found with native Mac OS X application, but rather a Java Swing picker which looked awkward. A Unix directory listing is displayed, including directories such as "./" and "../". I then clicked a little too far to the left of the File menu and unintentionally tore this menu off.

Conclusion

AMPC is priced well at only $99. The technology is quite intriguing, and it opens up a new realm for creating cross-platform applications. Unfortunately, the environment (particularly the Mac version) is still relatively immature. Sadly, *Axiomatic Solutions* views their Mac OS X target is merely another version of their Linux target. Even some of the most basic usability tests seem to be lacking, as it is painful to use for more than just a few minutes at a time. AMPC shows a great deal of promise, and I hope that a future version will be forthcoming which is more Macintosh friendly. Until then, as much as I'd like to, I simply cannot recommend AMPC for Mac users at this time.

codepoetry

First posted on:
http://www.macgeekery.com/tips/security/basic_mac_os_x_security

Basic Mac OS X Security

by Adam Knight aka CodePoet
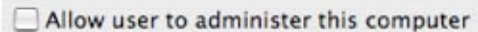
Well, now that we have a possible candidate for another Mac Trojan[1] (not a virus, not a worm, not an exploit, and not good code[2]) I think now's as good a time as any to cover some basic Mac OS X Security so that people not familiar with such things have more than an ice cube's chance in Phoenix at keeping secure.

Mac OS X is a secure operating system in that it's multi-user and has limits on what some user accounts can do. If an account is setup as a basic user, that user can only hurt himself, not the whole system or other users. However, in the interest of being "friendly" to new users, Apple leaves of a lot of the secure bits off for the first user created and this means that Trojans like this week's can cause some pretty nasty problems on your system.

Yet, all of this is easy to correct. Just run over the following and you should be well on your way to a protected computer.

Rule #1: The Administrator is Not for Daily Use
Contrary to what Apple does with the setup program, the administrator account is not viable for daily use. There are too many things this account can do that you don't want a script to be able to, such as cleaning out /Applications or various folders within /Library.
Instead:

- Go make another account in System Preferences
- Make it an administrator
- Login with the new account and remove administrator rights from your original account
- Log back in with the original account

Now when you're prompted to enter a password to do something ~~stupid~~ creative, use the admin account name. This has the added benefit that people that walk up to your computer can't do bad things to the system, either (just your account, so keep reading).

Rule #2: System Preferences is Not for Daily Use
You can do some crazy stuff in System Preferences. Happily, Apple realized this and added some settings to protect the system from random idiots (driver or passengers). You'll want to use these to lock System Preferences out to roaming users that happen to get a hold of your computer. Open System Preferences and go to the Security pane. Review the following as you make the changes.

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[1] http://www.macrumors.com/pages/2006/02/20060216005401.shtml
[2] http://www.macrumors.com/pages/2006/02/20060216005401.shtml
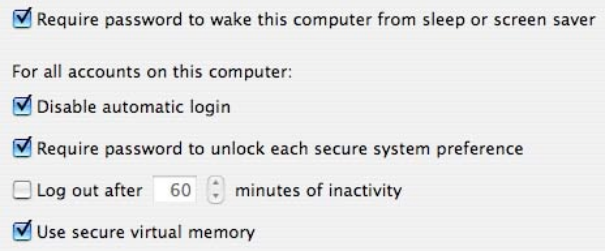
- Require password to wake this computer from sleep or screen saver: This does exactly what it says. If you put the computer to sleep or have a screen saver setup then you'll be asked for your user account information to unlock the computer. Use this, especially on portables. Of course, a restart will make this go away, so ...
- Disable automatic login: This completely disables automatic login. Your system will startup to a login panel with a list of names. This is the most secure option because it doesn't make the computer usable from a cold boot. If you know the system will log you in as a user with a restart, any security measure meant to prevent someone from having user-level access can be defeated with a reboot. Turn this on to prevent that.
- Require password to unlock each secure system preference: Notice how a lot of preferences have that lock at the bottom (like Network, Security, and Accounts)? Turning this on locks all of those by default, requiring an admin password (even for the admin user) to unlock. If you don't do this, anyone can come right back to this preference pane and turn all of these settings off. Check it.
- Log out after __ minutes of inactivity: More annoying than useful to me, but if you tend to walk away from your computer and don't mind losing your place in your work, turn this on. Locking the screensaver works well for me, instead.
- Use secure virtual memory: **Turn this on.** If this is off, then any time you enter a password it's possible the system will write that password out in a block of memory it's dumped to a file in /var/vm and, thus, makes the password recoverable. Using secure VM means those files are encrypted and it's near-impossible to discover a user's password from the swap files.

Rule #3: Turn off Services You Do Not Use
Go to System Preferences, then Sharing. Uncheck everything you're not using, even if you think you will. Turn it on when you need it and turn it off when you're done.

Rule #4: Secure Secure Shell
By default, SSH allows SSH v1, listens on the default port, and allows anyone with an account remote access. Secure, my ass. Change the port and limit the users allowed to users that need it. In /etc/sshd_config change:

```
- #Port 22
+ Port 2200

- #Protocol 2,1
+ Protocol 2

- #PermitRootLogin yes
+ PermitRootLogin no
```

That moves ssh to port 2200, prevents root from logging in remotely (presuming you set a password for root, which you should not), and forces the more secure v2 protocol without a fallback. The only change you'll need to remember is to connect to your machine as follows, instead:

```
$ ssh -p 2200 myuser@myhost.local
```

Now, we need to restrict the users that can login (your other users will unlikely ever need to ssh in, including that admin you made previously).

```
AllowUsers codepoet
```

Now only I can login to my machines. Replace the username as appropriate, or make me an account and tell me your IP address.

Update: As mentioned on CIPB[3] the port change happens in /etc/services, not in /etc/sshd_config because launchd is starting sshd rather than it running as a daemon. Change /etc/services as follows:

       - ssh 22/tcp
       + ssh 2200/tcp

Rule #5: Outbound Calls Only, Please (Firewall)
Some look at Apple's firewall as useless because it automatically pinholes running services and doesn't allow some users in while locking some users or or whatnot. It's not a commercial-level firewall (GUI) but it does do something very well: it prevents ports opened by rootkits or trojans from being accessible. Turn on the firewall and unauthorized listeners will be blocked.
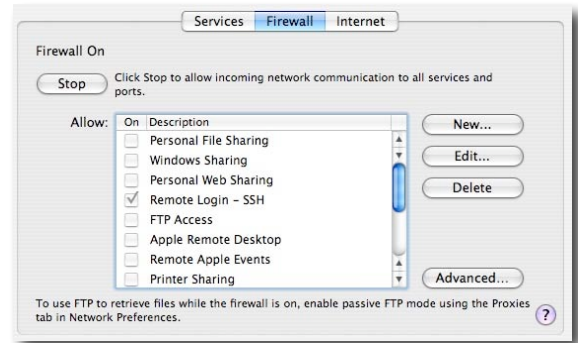
It also makes our SSH hack above useless by blocking 2200 by default. Click on New and pick Other from the menu and add 2200 as an option and check it and any other services you want to offer.
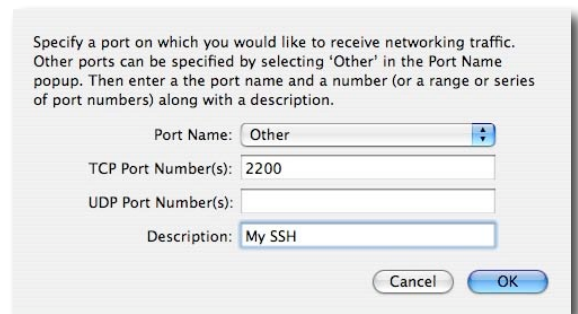
Rule #6: Freeze the Credit Card (Keychain)

The Keychain is the most dangerous moment of brilliance I've ever seen. On one side, it knows your passwords to everything and lets you get away with being human while still being secure. On the other, it lets you get away with being human while being *insecure*. If you walk away, I can connect to just about any password-protected service you have access to and the computer will fill in the password for me.

Yet, it has controls (again, turned off by default) that let you get around this. In Keychain Access, go to Edit and then to Change Settings for Keychain. You can do two things here: set an idle timeout, or tell it to lock on sleep. I prefer just locking on sleep, myself, because I rather depend on the screensaver to do the idle locking for my systems. Sleep, however, especially for portable users, means that the person waking the computer may or may not be the owner, and that's prime time to start asking for passwords.

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[3] http://blog.kung-foo.tv/archives/001646.html

Until a password is entered you won't be on IM, or checking mail, or whatever else. Programs that use passwords will be locked from getting new data.

If your keychain password is different from your account password then you have an even greater level of security as the screensaver password won't work for the keychain, and vice-versa.

Rule #7: Make a Good Password
The best password I've ever seen was someone that memorized a Windows license key and moved the sections around. Almost pure randomness, but ordered enough to remember. There are easier ways, and things you already know. For instance, do you know your car's license plate? Know the plates of previous cars? Combine them in a memorable fashion, such as breaking them in half and merging two plates together.

Another popular method is to take two longish words and *misspell* them. That would result in something like "twinkel%unihorn" or "rut]row" or the like. Easy to remember and hard to guess.

If that's too simple for you, Keychain Access has a tool that helps make passwords, but since there's no emotional investment in them they can be hard to remember (though, there is a phonetic method that makes near-English words as passwords). To get there pick New Password Item from the File menu and click on the lock icon (just one way; there are other ways to get to the assistant).
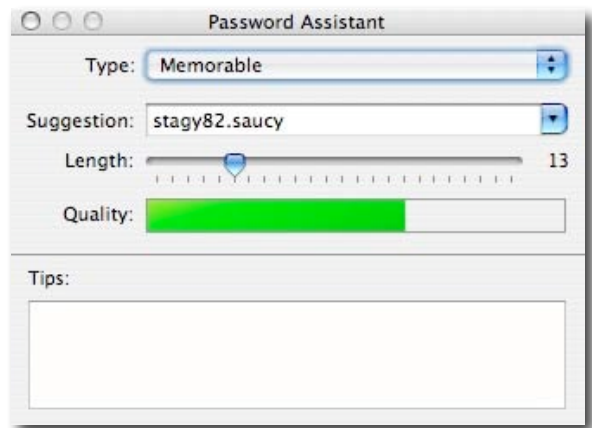
Rule #0: Never Lose Physical Control
This is at the end so you can remember it, but it's the top concern for security. Do not lose physical control of your computer. Do not leave it somewhere unattended. Do not walk away without locking it down. Do not let someone you don't know use *your* account to do something like browse the web. Use Fast User Switching and get to a dummy account for things like that. Your account is yours, and that's how you keep your stuff yours.

Another Resource
Apple has a very good guide on hardening Mac OS X in their Common Criteria[4] tools. Download them, do not install them, but read the PDF. There are a ton of tips on how to lock the system down in there.

And there are other published resources such as "Mac OS X Maximum Security"[5].

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[4] http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/commoncriteriatoolsfor104.html
[5] http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/july2005/Books/MaximumMac.htm

Rants, Raves and Revelations

by Harry {doc} Babad

Annotating and Making Text Recipes Pretty – It takes more than one tool

As many of you know, I have a long-standing hobby, collecting recipes. Being slightly overweight (lies, all lies) and with the children having flown the coup, we don't cook much anymore, but the recipes are fun. From my past articles and occasional recipe management software reviews, you will remember that there are two ways to collect and organize recipes:

> 1) You can store your recipe in a database using software such as the excellent TheRecipeManager [reviewed macC December 2005]. The good thing about this method is that you have all the benefits of a well-designed database that can be used to retrieve just the recipe you want from you collection of thousands. The bad things about this are (1) entering a recipe is an extra step, easy to do, but an extra step; and the (2) collection is harder to share with friends. In any case, in order to input your recipe to the software, it must be in text form, scanned and OCR'd if necessary.

> 2) A second alternative, one which I've been doing for years, is to either download a recipe or alternatively scan and OCR it from a hard copy. The new recipe can be stored in a well-organized hierarchy of nested folders in either PDF (my preferred graphic format for recipes) or as word-processed text. Such collections can be burned to a CD and shared with special friends. [Remember, much of this stuff is c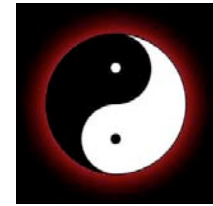opywrited, so follow the rules when sharing.] I've talked about the limitations of organizing recipes by folder in my March 2005 macC 3Rs article *In Search of Perfect Recipe and Cooking Software.*

In this 3Rs column, I'll share my experiences, for the pure joy of it, in turning simple text recipes into pretty illustrated and annotated PDF files. Now I don't do this prettification for every recipe, but it's fun to do for those special recipes. Comparable things can be done if your preferred recipe end state is a MS Word document, but most of you already know how to add graphics and supplemental text to a word processing document, se we won't go over that again.

What You Will Need In Order to Play
A Recipe in PDF Format — One that was downloaded, not scanned from a book. If you scan a book, than convert the recipe to a text file with either Acrobat or software such as ReadIris 11 [macC, January 2006]. It is possible to modify a "pure" graphics file, but I find it easier to work with text, especially when wanting to add both a picture of the finished recipe and perhaps some comments by way of background information.

A Picture of the Cooked Recipe — These at times are available in a book or on a recipe card. To capture them, scan them to JPEG in color at about 200 dpi. Alternatively, check the to see if the found recipe came with an illustration. If so, capture it, by drop and drag, to your desktop. When a picture doesn't accompany the recipe, I can often find good recipe illustrations on *Google Images* or by using Beholder http://www.mesadynamics.com/beholder.htm, [reviewed macC March 2003.]

Collect and Format Any Clarifying or Background (Text or RTF) Not in Your Scanned Recipe — Raita, I need a definition — I went to http://www.epicurious.com/cooking/how_to/food_dictionary/, a great place to find out the meaning of food terms and I captured the following as a clipping file:

> **Raita** [RI-tah] YOGURT salads popular in India, raitas are a combination of thick, whole-milk yogurt and various chopped vegetables like cucumbers, eggplant, potatoes or spinach, or fruits such as bananas or tomatoes. These salads are variously seasoned with black mustard seeds, GARAM MASALA and herbs such as chervil, coriander, cumin, dill, mint, parsley or tarragon. Raitas are designed to be a cooling counterbalance for many spicy Indian dishes.

> © Copyright Barron's Educational Services, Inc. 1995 based on THE FOOD LOVER'S COMPANION, 2nd edition, by Sharon Tyler Herbst.

Let's Pretty Up the Recipe

The recipe I'm going to use to illustrate the process is for *Cool Cucumber Raita* created by Master Chef Tyler Florence which I copied from the following Food TV link: http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/recipes/recipe/0,,FOOD_9936_28790,00.html.

The recipe as posted, contains all sorts of extraneous material, but its Food Network page contains an option to go to a full page version containing no additional sponsor information. Also, notice that the recipe itself is spread over two pages, of which I only show the first.

If you wanted to use MS Word as a basis for storing recipes, you could, in Acrobat, grab [use the select tool] the parts you wanted and paste them sequentially into Word. Such a document would be your starting point for recipe gentrification.

Instead of Word, I downloaded the Full Page Version by printing to PDF.

Note: When in the Full Page Version, I have Safari make the text large. It's easier on my eyes and will translate to enlarged text in my mostly plain text recipe.

Please note the position of the Food Network Icon, the dead space after the copyright notice and the lack of both a recipe illustration and a definition of Raita. These are things we're going to change.

Tuning Up the PDF *Text* File

First, let's move the footer line *http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/recipes/recipe/0,FOOD_9936_28790,00.html Page 1 of 2* to kill the dead space.

Dealing With Dead Space — Open the PFD File in Acrobat and select the Touch up objects tool [tools > *Advanced Editing > Touch Up Objects* tool]. [1] Select and copy the desired text to your clipboard. [2] Then past the text into the body of the recipe — no I can't control its location, but don't fret, it's not a problem. [3] Select the newly pasted text and move it to the location you desire. Save the file! [4] Return to the text on the bottom of the page, select it and then backspace to delete it.

There's still some unneeded space on the bottom of the page and we could use Acrobat's Crop pages tool [*Document > Crop Pages*] to eliminate it. Let's wait to do that to see if we'll need that space as we add both a graphic and the definition of Raita. We can always copy the PDF if desired.

Adding a Graphic — This particular recipe did not come with a picture of the cooked dish. Few you want to download do. I searched *Google Images* to see what would turn up and found an image that pleased. I followed the link to a larger version of the thumbnail and dragged the image to my desktop. I was getting closer to my goal. In the Acrobat version of the text recipe, I was ready to add the graphic.

I know how to drop-and-drag and external graphic into a PDF file, but when I opened the image using *GraphicConverter* (my favorite graphics tool), I was able to copy it to the clipboard. I selected the *hand tool* in Acrobat, and then pasted the clipboard image into my recipe document. Again, the software has a mind of its own and the image was both in the wrong place and covered up some of the text. No matter! Grab the image, and then one of its corners. Shrink the image to the size you want. Note that unlike MSW (Microsoft Word), images in Acrobat can only be resized on the diagonal Save! Then continuing to use the hand tool, move the image to the location you want. As you'll see at the end of the article, I move the picture to the top right hand section of the recipe opposite the title and recipe summary. Wasn't that easy?

Now the Added Text - So how can I place the definition I'd earlier collected, into the empty space I left at the bottom of my now illustrated recipe? Since I've never been able to figure out, even using the manual, and books I've reviewed, how to add new text to a PDF file In Adobe Acrobat, I turned to *PDFpen Pro* [macCompanion Review, July 2005] to get the job done.
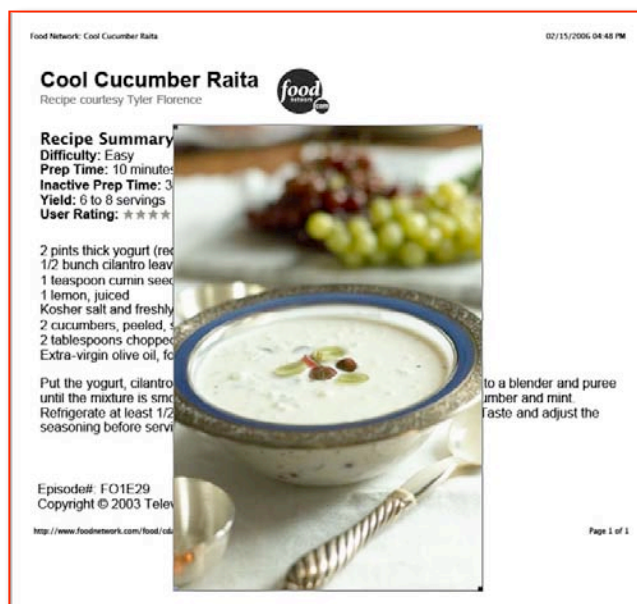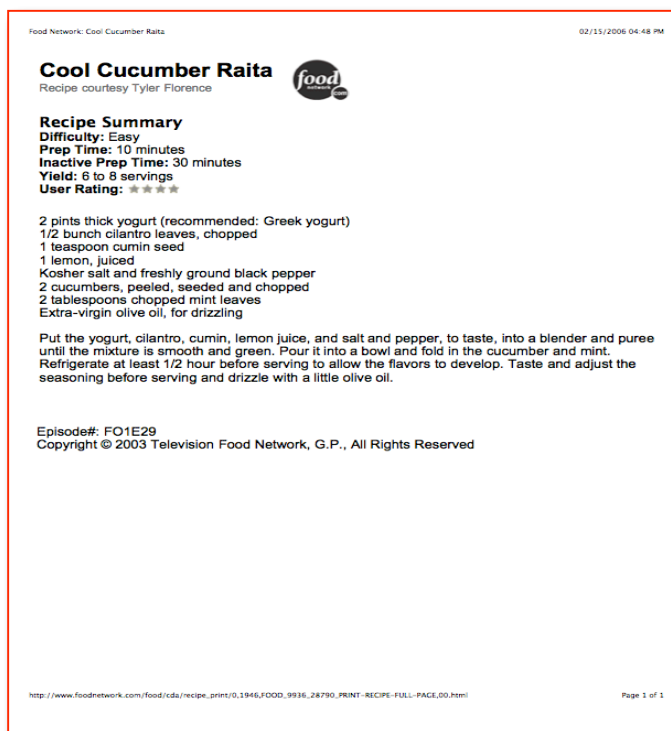
In Acrobat, the text field, text touchup, or touch up reading order tools worked to add NEW text to my recipe document. Am I missing something?

I dropped the Acrobat file onto the *PDFpen Pro* application icon and opened my recipe document in that application. I then pasted my definition clipping into the blank space at the bottom. After a bit of sizing, using the handles at the corner of the newly placed text box (Raita definition), I had the text where it belonged.

There are a few peculiarities about this operation. First, the image you've work so hard to place is not visible in *PDFpen Pro*. Second, the bottom line of the text file (footer) you deleted earlier, as well as the line moved still shows up in the *PDFpen Pro* window. Ignore those artifacts; just place the new test where it needs to appear. Save the file. Then reopen it up in Acrobat. Wonder of wonders, your image is back! Get rid of the extraneous footer with the touch up object tool.

I could have worked with the new text either in *PDFpen Pro* or *MS Word* to optimize its size, before pasting it into the recipe, but got lazy. Folks, there are a number of excellent tools in *PDFpen Pro* for otherwise manipulating text in a PDF file, but that's another story.

After Thoughts
In 20-20 hindsight, it probably takes fewer steps to first introduce the extra text using *PDFpen* by changing the order of the steps, but I usually only add an image to my text files, so I'm leaving the order of the steps as-is. Namely, I] Tune the text Copy. [II] Add a selected photo of the recipe. Finally [III], add any supplemental text using *PDFpen Pro*.

And the result is…

Cool Cucumber Raita
Recipe courtesy Tyler Florence

Recipe Summary
Difficulty: Easy
Prep Time: 10 minutes
Inactive Prep Time: 30 minutes
Yield: 6 to 8 servings
User Rating: ★★★★

2 pints thick yogurt (recommended: Greek yogurt)
1/2 bunch cilantro leaves, chopped
1 teaspoon cumin seed
1 lemon, juiced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and chopped
2 tablespoons chopped mint leaves
Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

Put the yogurt, cilantro, cumin, lemon juice, and salt and pepper, to taste, into a blender and puree until the mixture is smooth and green. Pour it into a bowl and fold in the cucumber and mint. Refrigerate at least 1/2 hour before serving to allow the flavors to develop. Taste and adjust the seasoning before serving and drizzle with a little olive oil.

Episode#: FO1E29
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http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/cda/recipe_print/0,1946,FOOD_9936_28790_PRINT-RECIPE-FULL-PAGE,00.html   Page 1 of 1

raita

[RI-tah]

YOGURT salads popular in India, raitas are a combination of thick, whole-milk yogurt and various chopped vegetables like cucumbers, eggplant, potatoes or spinach, or fruits such as bananas or tomatoes. These salads are variously seasoned with black mustard seeds, **GARAM MASALA** and herbs such as chervil, coriander, cumin, dill, mint, parsley or tarragon. Raitas are designed to be a cooling counterbalance for many spicy Indian dishes.

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Enjoy!

doc_Babad

Views from the Ivory Tower

by Ted Bade

Steve Jobs and Disney Corporation - You probably heard that Disney purchased Pixar. By bringing Pixar into Disney, they bring in a lot of talent, not to mention they get to distribute all future Pixar studio movies. I wish the best for all the Pixar talent. The two Pixar top dogs were given nice positions in the Disney structure.

What you might not have heard is that this purchase makes Steve Jobs a major holder of Disney stock personally holding about 6.5%. Steve Jobs also becomes a member of Disney's board of directors.

There is some speculation that bringing Mr. Jobs into Disney might be what Disney needs to grow into an even more successful company. He has proven that he knows what the consumer wants. Look at the success of the iPod and the iTunes music store. If he could bring that knack to Disney projects, who knows what will happen.

Also, his position might benefit Apple and Apple users in general. One would think that he would steer technology decisions at Disney toward Apple or to ensure that loyal Apple customers are not left out.

For the moment all we can do is speculate. Although right after the purchase, Disney shorts became available at the iTunes Music Store. Let us hope that this purchase/merger is good for all parties involved and especially good for consumers.

Booting XP on a MacBook - We knew it wouldn't take people long to begin trying to figure out how to run XP on an Intel based Mac. Virtual PC is nice, but running native in hardware is always the best and obviously fastest solution.

Since I don't own an Intel based Mac, the whole argument is academic for me, but I expect I will own one at some point and would like to be able to use Windows on a rare occasion. Right now, VirtualPC is my useful although somewhat sluggish solution.

I found one site that explains how to do this on a MacBook. Presumably, the author of this web page actually did this http://neosmart.net/blog/dual-booting-windows-xp-on-a-macbook/. I won't cover any of the details. If you are interested, read the information on the web site. There are a couple of requirements that might be hard to accomplish.

If anyone personally gets this working, I would like to hear about your experiences. Take a moment and drop me an email.

There is another solution that I found very interesting. This is a means of running Windows applications from a non-Windows OS. In this case we turn to the great people involved with Open Source applications. There is an Open Source application called WINE, http://www.winehq.com/. This application can be considered a compatibility layer on tope of your current OS, allowing it to run applications designed to be run under Windows.

Since this is an open source application, it can be worked on my anyone. apparently some people have recompiled it to work on the UNIX inside of Mac OS X, providing another solution for people who need to run a Windows application.

If you are interested in reading about how this process is coming along, visit the following forum http://forum.osx86project.org/index.php?s=d866e88db220f38aee1b548e90eafb33&showtopic=8699&st=0&p=54080&#entry54080. There is a live discussion with a person who is actually doing the recompiling. This is posted on the OSX86 Project website, a site dedicated to keeping track of the new Intel based Macs and their abilities. If you are interested in this topic, you should consider visiting their web site - http://www.osx86project.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1.

I think this is a cool solution. I might like to run a Window's application, but I might not want to run Windows to do it. This would be my favorite solution, but I am sure there are limitations and there will be problems to work through. I plan to keep an eye on this one!

Looking forward to April 1, 2006 - Apple Computer Corporation will celebrate its 30th year of business on April 1, 2006. I expect Steve Jobs will use this anniversary day to unveil something new from Apple, perhaps even something major.

We could guess all day what it might be and would still have to wait and see what happens! I expect it will have something to do with digital entertainment. The iPod is the top dog with audio, so perhaps something for videos. But then again, it is April Fools day, perhaps it will be nothing at all. ;-)

Is it a Virus? Is it a Trojan? The debate goes on about the first Mac OS X bit of Mal-ware. - Apparently there is a Trojan Horse mal-ware called Oompa-Loompa. This is how it works, by some means you get a copy of a file called " latestpics.tgz" which when unarchived, appears to be a JPEG image. It is in fact an executable file. If you run it, it will creates a newer copy of itself which can affect other real applications making them useless. The mal-ware propagates itself through iChat.

Of course, there isn't much information about what would cause a person to try to execute what they thought was a JPEG image. I guess double-clicking on the image would essentially run it, but what I wonder, is why a person would find a archived file on their computer, have no idea where it comes from, unarchive it, then double-click on the resulting file, then provide a password to allow it to install a program.

Also, the above tgz file is stored in your /tmp directory. What, you didn't know you had a /tmp directory? Most gui users will never see this directory. Just about the only way to get to it is by using the Terminal application. Am I just ignorant about how this works or is this just a non-problem virus?

Okay, so the virus is a "Concept" virus, that is one that proves that a virus can be created for Mac OS X. It doesn't necessarily have to actually do anything to be a concept virus, it just has to show it does something. But then, under that definition, we could make a hardware virus right here.

    1: go to hardware store
    2: buy hammer
    3: bring hammer to computer
    4: smash hammer into your display screen

Please, don't let this one get out, it could cause a lot of damage ;-)

TV shows and the iPod - It is interesting to note that some networks have seen an increase in the number of viewers of those shows that have episodes available in the iTunes Music Store. Pretty interesting. I know a lot of TV people were very apprehensive about having their video material available in the digital domain.

According to an article found on the Reuter's web site, http://today.reuters.com/news/NewsArticle.aspx?type=televisionNews&storyID=uri:2006-02-06T085637Z_01_N06373811_RTRIDST_0_TELEVISION-IPODS-DC.XML&pageNumber=1&summit, an executive from ABC/Disney says there has been an increase in ratings since the availability of video.

Like cassette tapes, and VHS recorders, the digital domain will pass along as just another way for the entertainment industry to make additional money. They always complain at the beginning, until the money starts rolling in!
One Billion songs - (That is 1,000,000,000, for those of you who like zeros.) Apple announced the winner of the contest to be the person who purchased the 1 billionth song from the ITMS. The lucky dog from Michigan will receive a 20" iMac, ten fifth-generation iPods and a gift card for $10,000 for purchased at the iTMS. That comes to ten thousand songs or five thousand videos! Not bad for a $1 investment! As part of the deal, Apple will also establish a scholarship in this person's name at the Juilliard School (a famous art school in NYC).

The iTunes Music Store has come a long way from its inception. I always thought the concept was a good idea and apparently so has the music consumer! Great Job Apple! Let's look forward to the next billion songs sold.

"The Mac Attack" - Mac Tips, Tricks, and Hints

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Mac OS X Accessibility Features – Universal Access

by Steve Stanger

In this months article I'll be taking a look at the accessibility features in Mac OS X. The accessibility features built in to Mac OS X can help users who may be visually or hearing impaired and users with physical or motor difficulties. Even though this article is a about accessibility I really think many Mac users may find the features useful.

From Apple's Accessibility web page: Apple's commitment to accessibility is evident throughout the Mac OS X operating system which is by design, easy to use, but also includes a wide variety of features and technologies specifically designed to provide accessibility to users with disabilities. Apple refers to these features collectively as Universal Access and has integrated them right into the operating system so they can be used in conjunction with a variety of applications from Apple and other developers.

The majority of Mac OS X's accessibility features can be found in the Universal Access preference pane in system preferences.

The first tab in the Universal Access preference pane is called 'Seeing'. The first item under the seeing tab is Voice Over.

Voice Over allows you to hear audio cues as you navigate dialog boxes, navigational controls, web pages, file and folder names and menus. The Voice Over Utility allows you to fine tune exactly how Voice Over works. There are a number of options and steps to go through to get Voice Over customized to the individual users needs, but once it's set Voice Over does a great job.

To see a short demo of what Voice Over does follow this link.
 Click here: (http://www.apple.com/macosx/theater/voiceover.html)

Another way to get audible feed back is in the Speech preference pane. Under the 'Text to speech' tab you can turn on 'Announce when alerts are played', 'Announce when an application requires your attention', and 'Speak selected text when the key is pressed'.

Back to the Universal Access prefs pane - The next option under 'Seeing' is Zoom. Zoom magnifies a specific portion of the screen. This is system wide and works with any application. There are keyboard shortcuts to turn this feature on and off, plus keyboard commands to zoom in and out.
Note: I have used the Zoom feature a number of times when doing demos and training. It is very useful when you want to specify or zero in on a specific part of the screen during a presentation. It is very impressive when used with a projected image.

The last option under 'Seeing' is Display. Display allows you to invert the screen image. The default setting is black on white, black lettering on a white background. By clicking on white on black it inverts the screen so you get white writing on a black or dark background. With either of these settings you can click on use grayscale so everything on your screen is then represented in shades of gray. There is also a slider allowing for varying degrees of screen contrast.

One more vision related setting and it's under the 'Mouse & Trackpad' tab and that is cursor scaling. There is a slider at the bottom of the window that allows you to easily increase the size of the mouse cursor so it's easier to find the on the screen.

Note: Cursor scaling also comes in handy if you happen to lose the cursor due to the size of your screen or have if you have your screen set to a high resolution. This is another setting that you may find useful during demos or training and want the participants to be able to follow your cursor easily.

Under the 'Hearing' tab in the Universal Access pane you can set the screen to flash when an alert sound occurs. The visual alert flashes the whole screen to let you know that a window or dialogue box requires your attention.

Video content developers can create and display a text track to provide closed captioning in QuickTime. Closed captioning is also an added benefit in noisy environments where you might not be able to hear the audio track, but be able to see and read the screen. Another feature of QuickTime video content with closed captioning is that you can search for specific text and move to that location of the video based on your search.

Hearing impaired users can use iChat and an iSight camera to communicate using sign language over the Internet. iChat produces high quality video good enough to clearly see the finger and hand movements of sign language.

Mac OS X can also help users with physical and motor difficulties navigate their computer—even if they have difficulty using the keyboard, mouse, and track pad. These setting can be found under the Keyboard tab in the Universal Access prefs pane.

For example, Sticky Keys lets you create "key chords" (i.e. Command-Q and Shift-Option-8) by pressing them sequentially. With Sticky Keys active, each key in the sequence is displayed on screen so you can verify the sequence and correct it before it's executed. This gives you more flexibility if you can press only one key at a time. The Slow Keys setting adds a delay between when a key is pressed and when it takes effect to help prevent unintended multiple keystrokes.

Under the 'Mouse & Trackpad' tab you can turn Mouse Keys on - this allows the user to use the numeric keypad to move the cursor around the screen. Mac OS X also lets you navigate menus, the Dock, windows, toolbars, palettes and other controls via the keyboard. Everything you can do with a mouse you can do using the keyboard.

Another accessibility feature built in to OS X is Speech Recognition. It's called 'Speakable items' and it lets you command and control the computer using your voice, without requiring you to train the computer. You can use commands to open and close programs, navigate the menu bar, switch between programs, control application-specific items, to enter keyboard shortcuts and speak front window controls such as check box names, radio button names, list items and buttons. You can access the speech recognition settings in the Speech preference pane under the 'Speech Recognition' tab. You can get a list of speakable commands by clicking on the 'Open Speakable items folder' button under the command tab.

If you would like more information about the accessibility features of Mac OS X or to find out more information about third party assistive technologies, visit Apple's Accessibility web site and Apple's Macintosh Product Guide (http://www.apple.com/accessibility) (http://guide.apple.com/uscategories/assisttech.lasso)

If you have any questions or comments about this Article please feel free to email me at sstanger@maccompanion.com and I invite you to listen to my weekly podcast - "The Mac Attack" at http://themacattack.us.

Mac ReviewCast

http://www.surfbits.com

March Madness of Freeware for the Mac

by Tim Verpoorten

We've been getting bombarded with stories in the press about all the Mac viruses and worms, well if you remember last week, Robert Pritchett and Jeff Powell and I all talked about the overblown coverage that press and bloggers who either have an ax to grind against Mac users or are too ignorant to really understand what these threats are and what they can do. The two worms that were released in February are simple and easy to deal with, just update your Mac OS X version via your software update option in system preferences, and do not open attachments to emails. We also had a vulnerability in Safari show up last week. Robert and I talked about the freeware program called *ClamXav* found at www.clamxav.com, which can scan your system for any Worms or Trojans that may have snuck onto your Mac, and this week, Unsanity software, makers of some great Application Enhancer and haxies for the Mac came out with another haxie that I wanted to talk about;

Paranoid Android
http://www.unsanity.com/haxies/pa

A vulnerability in Apple's Mac OS X results in a potential situation in which a malicious person could execute arbitrary commands on your machine through safari. This vulnerability involves the use of URL "schemes". These are the part of a web address that specifies what program should be used to handle the address. *Paranoid Android* can protect you from this potential vulnerability until Apple makes an official fix available. It does this by watching the URL schemes that are requested and delaying them until you've had a chance to say whether you'd like to proceed or not. If you know that the url that's being loaded is legit, go ahead, but if it looks suspicious, Paranoid Android gives you an opportunity to cancel it. A further vulnerability in the way Mac OS X handles strong document bindings can lead to documents opening in a different application when opening a document causes an application to launch. This can lead to an arbitrary execution of code. Paranoid Android has been updated to address this new vulnerability. If the application that will be launched is not the one you expected to be launched, *Paranoid Android* gives you an opportunity to open the document in the default application for the file type. Until Apple makes an official fix for safari available, *Paranoid Android* can help protect you.

The next program I want to tell you about is called;

Pastor
http://www.mehlau.net/pastor/

If you read our www.Surfbits.com blog, which you all should be doing religiously... you'll remember Jeff Powell telling you about *YoJimbo* from BareBones software. Pastor is similar to that. Pastor is a tool to store all your passwords, website logins, program serial numbers, etc. RC4-encrypted and password-protected. With built-in password generator. It's simple, beautifully designed and totally Mac. Check it out for yourself and make your online experience a bit more secure.

On the subject of security, let's look at a program called;

Espionage
http://www.mindquirk.com/apps/espionage/index.htm

This is a simple little program to code your conversations with friends. Just write your text into the program and convert it to unreadable cipher. The new version has the capabilities of placing your cipher directly into iChat. This app isn't a professional encryption program like PGP, it's just a simple cipher that can be translated with anyone using espionage.

Let's change speeds and look at an application for the TV watching listeners out there;

MacProgramGuide
http://www.coolmacsoftware.com/mpgmain.html

If you're looking for a program guide for your Mac-based Home Theater, well look no further. *MacProgramGuide* harnesses the power of Web Services and the Internet to provide program schedules, episode, cast and crew information. MacProgramGuide provides search capabilities to allow you to find out when your favorite shows or movies are on. *MacProgramGuide* presents data using a familiar grid style interface. If you need a TV guide for your Mac, check this out.

SoundSource
is a freeware app from our friends at Rogue Amoeba software. You can find them at www.rogueamoeba.com and they are the developers for such topnotch Apple apps like *Audio Hijack, Airfoil*, and nice cast. Like all great Mac software developers, they give Mac users freeware that is unique and functional. Besides the *Soundsource* application, Rogue Amoeba also gives us *Linein*, which you can use to play sound coming in through a microphone or any other device plugged in to your Sound In port, just as was once available with OS 9's "Play input through output device" option. *MemoryCell*, which gives you a quick menu list of the ram that's being used for each application running. Also *Detour*, which allows you to switch to different audio output devices and lower the volume of certain applications relative to others. So you see that many of the great shareware companies in the Mac family are also great freeware developers for the community.

Here's another one that you may want to check out;

Sound Menu
http://www.aspirine.li/public/softwareup.php?ID=1

Sound Menu allows you to switch your default audio input and output. All available (and only available) audio inputs and outputs are listed. Supports every sound card, USB card, USB audio gadget which is supported by Mac OS X in system preferences. Mute and system sound option are present. It works off the menu and is as handy as any Audio switching programs I've seen.

SizzlingKeys
http://yellowmug.com/sk4it/

SizzlingKeys allows you to control iTunes with keyboard shortcuts from any application your in at the time. iTunes is the best music player out there, but don't you wish you could control it without interrupting your task at hand? Now you can. Control iTunes. Whether it's to pause the player, adjust the volume, skip a track or rate a song, you can do all that and more with simple customizable keystrokes. Also it's great to see what's playing. Why bring up iTunes just to see what track is playing? *SizzlingKeys* features a floating window that shows you the current song name, artist and more. Place it anywhere you wish on the screen by simply dragging it. *SizzlingKeys* let's you Control iTunes, Rate Songs, Select a playlist, Search for Songs, and control your current song all without bringing up the iTunes application.

1001
http://1001.kung-foo.tv/

1001 is a desktop client to be used in conjunction with Flickr, the online photo-sharing website. *1001* not only uploads photos to your Flickr account, it notifies you anytime new photos from either your contacts, everyone, or your favorite tags are uploaded. 1001 allows you to step into the stream of photos passing through Flickr and to quickly see what's new at the moment. Just run the app in the background and if triggered, 1001 pops up a small unobtrusive window to notify you of new photos. *1001* comes with a Flickr screensaver that will incrementally display the latest image from Flickr. You do not need to have 1001 installed to use this screensaver.

No Gravity
http://www.realtech-vr.com/nogravity

I loved the computer game series *Wing Commander*, played them all and even had guts enough to see the movie at the theaters. *No Gravity* is a space shooter in 3D ' a la Wing Commander'. The player is controlling a space ship view from the first person. In each mission, the player need to accomplish some objectives, like shoot and destroys enemy ships or base, escorting some ships, clearing mine field, etc. *No Gravity* invites you to a fantastic and futuristic universe made of five intergalactic worlds. An arcade type game with great playability, where it is easy to plunge into space battles against spacefighters, space stations and more! Fifty-five hard hitting missions plus ten training exercises will help you to enter this real time textured 3D environment. Missions set not only in deep space, but also inside enemy structures will have you patrolling high risk sectors, on reconnaissance in enemy space, escorting friendly ships or defending your space stations and even sneaking in to sabotage enemy weapons. No Gravity is a must check out game for any arcade shooters out there.

Alarm Clock
http://www.robbiehanson.com/alarmclock/index.html

This handy little application runs unobtrusively in the status bar so it won't get in the way and it won't take up space in the dock. Use it to set as many alarms as needed, either one-time alarms or repeating alarms. Then choose anything in the iTunes library to wake to: songs, playlists, even radio stations. The application takes care of the rest, even waking the computer from sleep if needed. When it's this simple, why even bother with older alarm clocks? With this little application you can wake up to the sounds you want. You can configure your snooze duration to the length you want. You can even increase/decrease your snooze time right from the alarm window! And, if waking up to blaring alarms in the morning isn't your cup of tea, there's an "easy wake" option which will gradually increase the system volume over time. And even this is configurable for you!

Esperance DV
http://www.mparrot.net/index.php?page=freewares&lang=en

Esperance DV is a module for System Preferences making a RamDisk. A RamDisk is the use of a part of read-write memory (RAM) as a hard disk. It has the option to re-mount the RAM disk on login, which is great, and also shows up in /Volumes, which is also great.
Write performance is stunning, as high as 500 MB/sec on a dual-2GHz G5. Read performance is also much faster than your standard disk, at around 240 MB/sec on the same G5.

Snail Mail
http://nixanz.com/products/snailmail/README.html

Snail Mail is an envelope addressing and printing application which interacts directly with the Address Book database in Mac OS X 10.3 or higher. Its primary function is to quickly address and print single or multiple envelopes based on entries in the Mac OS X Address Book database, but it also allows ad-hoc manual entry of addresses directly onto the envelope. Batches of envelopes can be based on Address Book groups, or ad-hoc lists selections of addresses. Snail Mail can print barcodes for more efficient mail handling.

TrailRunner
http://www.trailrunnerx.com/english.html

This is a great program for all you joggers or hikers or walkers out there.
If you ever asked yourself how long your workout routes are and what route you should choose for this evening - then *TrailRunner* should be your training-partner. A list of features include:

   * Geographic display of your workout area.
   * Plan routes interactively.
   * Collect routes.
   * Route description and direction signs at crossings.
   * Timed-checkpoints according to your pace.
   * Rate your favorite tracks.
   * Plan routes automatically with target distance and as many favorite tracks as possible.
   * Export route descriptions onto your iPod as Notes-Text or NanoMap-Photos
   * Collect your workout data in a Diary.
   * Send to and exchange routes with friends and workout partners.
   * Import GPX-Tracklists from GPS-units.

SyncTunes
http://www.nesfield.co.uk/synctunes/index.html

SyncTunes copies tracks and podcasts from iTunes to a mounted volume (e.g. such as a SD card in a card reader, or a PDA's expansion card using Missing Sync). In short, many people with a Mac, iTunes and a PDA or phone with audio playback capability, or non-iPod music player. From user reports, *SyncTunes* transfers files that work with Palm PDAs, Sony PSP, Sony Ericsson K750/P910/W800i, no-brand MP3 player. It is probably compatible with other audio players too, except iPods which have a special database file.

ViJournal Lite
 http://freespace.virgin.net/jeremy.dronfield/skoobysoft/vijournal/lite.html

viJournal Lite is a free lightweight version of *viJournal*. It's designed as an analogue of the good old-fashioned page-a-day bound diary - the kind you buy in a stationer's. You write your entries under dated headers and save them collectively by month and year. *viJournal* has many powerful features, such as a parallel notepad, export to HTML and PDF, file encryption, password protection. All these tools have been added in such a way that they do not clutter the interface or detract from the original purpose of having *viJournal* work like a traditional bound diary

OKFont
http://www.supercustomized.com/

If you ask most graphic artists about their Mac OS X problems they will more than likely tell you that they either have font problems or permission problems. What you may not know is that occasionally permission issues come together with your fonts to give you a new set of problems from the combination. The purpose of OKFont is to quickly unlock and change the permissions of font files (and only font files) so that they are easily accessible for all programs and users on your system.

VodCaster
http://www.twocanoes.com/vodcaster/

 Vodcaster allows you to quickly drag-and-drop audio and video files, and create podcasts and vodcasts to share. Whether you want to put your Podcasts on your own webserver, add them to the iTunes Music Store Podcast Directory, or some other service, VODcaster allows you to enter in all the important information without having to know XML. If you just want to record your podcast and not worry about all the other coding you need to do, this is a great piece of software for you. And it's free.

NMS
 http://slicedapple.ath.cx/nmsutility.html

If you live on your laptop, a huge pet peeve is probably laptop Insomnia. It has plagued many Apple laptop users, even before Mac OS X (although sleeping then was so unstable it was best to avoid it). Slowly (or not so slowly) your system would loose the ability to sleep automatically, although sleep could usually be restored with lots work consisting of some combination of permissions repairs, combo-udpate re-installs, Open Firmware and/or power manager resets, or even dissassembly to remove the PRAM battery. It is a pain, sleep always eventually failed again, and invariably progressed to the point where it could not be fixed without a wipe and reinstall. Whats worse is if you have systems that are so not-sleepy that they run the battery totally dead and then turn off the slow-die way which quickly kills a $100 battery.

NMS is a utility to force system sleep at a set idle time or on Screen Saver activation. It can follow Energy Savers settings in an "install and forget" way or operate completely independently.

Cashbox
http://wbyoung.ambitiouslemon.com/cashbox/

Cashbox was designed to be a quick and simple to use application for managing personal finances. As it has evolved, it has become more feature packed while keeping with the original goal of simplicity. Today *Cashbox's* robust feature set includes: The ability to import files in the Quicken Interchange Format (QIF) so you can easily import information obtained from online bank accounts or other sources. Need your account information on paper? Cashbox can now print out your reports. Cashbox can also search accounts, generate reports, and reconcile accounts. One little bit of info for you, the developer of Cashbox is also the same one that gave us *Senuti* which is iTunes spelled backwards and the best freeware solution for placing your ipod songs into your computer's iTunes. It shows that good Mac software developers keep creating good Mac software.

iBackup
http://www.grapefruit.ch/iBackup

iBackup is a simple to use backup/restore utility for scheduled backups of files, folders, applications and your system preferences like the dock, desktop picture, time settings, firewall, bluetooth and system applications like AddressBook, Mail, Stickies, iChat, iTunes and more. You can edit these preferences settings and add your own. This is version 4.1.4 of the program.

Monolingual
 http://monolingual.sourceforge.net

Do you have a Mac that has a hard drive ready to burst? *Monolingual* is a program for removing unnecessary language resources from Mac OS X, in order to reclaim several hundred megabytes of disk space. It requires at least Mac OS X 10.3.9 (Panther) and also works on Mac OS X 10.4 (Tiger). One caveat, make certain you never remove the English files or their subsets, it will cause your OSX to become inoperable.

NeoOffice
http://www.planamesa.com/neojava/en/index.php

NeoOffice is a fully-featured set of office applications (including word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, and drawing programs) for Mac OS X. Based on the OpenOffice.org office suite, NeoOffice has integrated dozens of native Mac features and can import, edit, and exchange files with other popular office programs such as Microsoft Office. Released as free, open-source software under the GNU General Public License (GPL), NeoOffice is fully functional and stable enough for everyday use. The software is actively developed, so improvements and small updates are made available on a regular basis.

Seamonkey
http://www.mozilla.org/projects/seamonkey/

This open source application, available as a free download from its mozilla.org-hosted website, features a state-of-the-art web browser and powerful email client, as well as a WYSIWYG web page composer and a feature-rich IRC chat client. For web developers, mozilla.org's DOM inspector and JavaScript debugger tools are included as well. *SeaMonkey* 1.0 is one of the most complete, powerful, and secure internet software packages available today. *SeaMonkey* comes with the the look and feel familiar to users of its predecessors, the Mozilla Application Suite and Netscape Communicator packages, but adds many new features as well as back-end changes that improve security, stability and performance. Some highlights are: drag&drop reordering of tabs, phishing e-mail detection, support for a single shared inbox when using multiple accounts, and support for Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG).

ScummVM
http://www.scummvm.org/

Do you have any old computer games that won't play on your new Macs? Well this may help, *ScummVM* is a program which allows you to run certain classic graphical point-and-click adventure games, provided you already have their data files. The clever part about this: *ScummVM* just replaces the executables shipped with the game, allowing you to play them on systems for which they were never designed! Some of these great old adventure games include Monkey Island, Day of the Tentacle, Sam and Max and more LucasArts along with Adventuresofts, Revolutions, and others. They keep adding games, so check out the website and see if this program works for you.

CoconutWiFi
http://www.coconut-flavour.com/coconutwifi/index.html

This app displays a small aqua-bubble at the top of your screen in the menu, which indicates whether you're in range of a wireless network or not. The app also tells you if the wireless networks in your range are encrypted or open, so you won't miss the next open wireless network any more. It's simple and handy.

See you next month with our April List of Freeware!

Music and the Mac

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Virtual Instrument Plug-ins
by Daphne Kalfon

Last month I talked about audio effects plug-ins. If you aren't familiar with the concept of plug-ins, I gave a brief explanation in the opening paragraphs of last month's column. Let me just add here that I discovered another place where you can get more free audio effects plug-ins:

http://www.kvraudio.com/get.php?mode=results&st=q&s=10

The difference with virtual instrument plug-ins, is that unlike audio effects plug-ins, which are generally known to change the nature of a sound in some way, virtual instrument plug-ins act like a musical instrument, but are software based. Back in the old days of analog recording and actually up until not that long ago, music recording studios consisted of large racks of hardware to perform audio effects, and real, live musical instruments to record the music.

It is easy to see how the modern-day studio has been streamlined, with most of this hardware now available in the form of software. This has made the studio much more compact in its operation, and more importantly, has made it far more accessible to the general public.

In this column again, I will deal mostly with free plug-ins, but I'll start off with the one that is not free, but comes highly recommended:

Arturia's minimoog V. It retails for $199 USD and for owners of the previous version, the minimoog V upgrade to 1.5 is a free download. I'm told it is easy to use and very musical in its sound quality, and in the update, more effort has been made to create an even closer analog emulation to the original minimoog.

They even have direct links to examples of the particular improvements they have made to the plug-in's filter, oscillator, certain waveforms, envelopes, and more. These examples come in pairs - one example was created with the real minimoog, the other example was created with the minimoog V. This makes for easy and convenient comparison.

It also comes loaded with more than 500 presets which were all created by a select group of sound designers and musicians.

The page also has a link to demo tracks that were composed with the minimoog V. I listened to several of them, and I thought they really were well done and interesting to listen to. You can also download those demos for free if you like. Except for the drum sounds, which are audio samples, the demos were created solely using the minimoog V used as a VST plug-in in either Cubase, Logic Audio, or Sonar.

For more info, the direct link is: http://www.arturia.com/en/minimoog/minimoogv.php

Now to the free ones. KVR Audio is the place to go to get news and information about open standard audio plugins and more. They report things such as new releases, announcements of new products as well as product updates for plugins VST, DirectX, and AU. They maintain a fully searchable database of audio plug-ins, instruments, effects and hardware, which is updated daily, and they offer their members many free services that include user reviews and a vibrant discussion forum.

The link below should take you to a page that lists free AU virtual instruments.

http://www.kvraudio.com/get.php?mode=results&st=adv&soft=i&type[]=0&f=au&fe=au&osx=1&free=1&sf=0&receptor=&sort=1&rpp=45

If that link didn't work and/or you wish to conduct your own customized search, first get to this page:

http://www.kvraudio.com/get.php

Once there, scroll down, and you can choose the various criteria by which to conduct an advanced search of your own for the plug-ins or whatever it is you are looking for.

Apparently one of the most popular of those listed is the instrument by the name "Crystal". If you click on its name, it'll take you to a page where you will find further information about what this software synth can do, who the developer is, news updates about it, and user reviews. Here's the direct link:

http://www.kvraudio.com/get/219.html

When you click on the "download" link on the left hand side of the page, you will be taken to Green Oak's page for "Crystal". On this page you'll find a ton more information about this instrument and what it does/can do, as well as documentation along with a set of tutorials to guide you through its features.

Along the top of the page, you can click on the "Demos" link which will allow you to hear tracks that people have created using "Crystal". When you click on it, it takes you to http://www.soundclick.com. I found that you do have to register and create an account with soundclick in order to listen to anything on there, but it's really easy and straightforward. Once you've activated your account, you have access to all the services they offer their members, and you can listen to those tracks created with "Crystal". I listened to them, and for the most part, really enjoyed those ambient soundscapes. It's good music to relax to, that's for sure.

And as if that's not enough, "Crystal" comes with lots of patches as well as hundreds of additional high-quality downloadable presets. Pretty impressive what you are getting at no cost.

For other free virtual instrument plug-ins, visit this page: (it was mentioned in my previous column because it also contains free audio effects plug-ins)

http://www.apulsoft.ch/freeports

Starting from the top and scrolling down, the first one you'll come across is called "daHornet synthesizer", created by NUSofting and ported to Mac OSX VST and AU by apulSoft. It emulates a vintage synth.

KVR has a page with more information, news and user reviews on "daHornet" here:

http://www.kvraudio.com/get/416.html

Back on the apulsoft page, just below "daHornet" is one called "Sam: Chip32". It's a LoFi Wavetable Synth. It basically produces the old school electronic sounds and allows you to edit your work graphically. It does come with a readme file, and the developer's name is actually Sam, and once again, was ported to OSX AU format by apulSoft.

Below that, one called "Ticky Clav", available in VST and AU. It emulates the ultra-funky sound of a famous clavinet called the Hohner, which is forever associated with Stevie Wonder's song "Superstition". Yeah, that one. This plug-in was developed by the people at Big Tick and apulSoft ported it to OSX AU format. I read some of the user reviews and people seem to love it, especially clav fanatics.

KVR has a page with more information, news and user reviews on "Ticky Clav" here:

http://www.kvraudio.com/get/190.html

And finally, "Big Tick's Cheeze Machine". It's a pad synth, emulating the classic string ensemble sound. It was developed by Big Tick for win VST and apulsoft has ported it to OSX AU.

KVR has a page with more information, news and user reviews on "Cheeze Machine" here:

http://www.kvraudio.com/get/177.html

As I mentioned in my previous column, developers and programmers have worked hard to bring you these free plug-ins and everything else that comes with them, so please remember to make a donation before you download.

Have fun!

The Mac Night Owl

Reality Check: A Look at Apple Reliability

by Gene Steinberg

Fascinating how things change. Back in the 1980s, when Macs became dominant in the publishing industry because of the LaserWriter and PageMaker, you didn't read about the goings on at Apple in the mainstream press every single day. It's hard to realize that Apple had a double digit market share way back when, although the total PC universe was a lot smaller. At the time, however, I was too busy earning that paycheck to think much about the computer I used to for my work.

I felt lucky when I only had one or two system crashes a day, that a floppy disk didn't become corrupted, and that an attempt to output a high resolution document didn't fail. No, things did not always "just work," but you put up with the anomalies and the annoyances and persevered. Yes, there was also an occasional computer virus or two. I learned the hard way to get proper protection from such things, and accepted that, too, as the cost of doing business.

When System 7.0 arrived in the early 1990s, it ran like a slug on a 68000 Mac, but was only a tad less responsive on something with a more powerful processor, such as the IIci, with a 68030 chip. But suddenly, 8MB of RAM didn't seem so massive, and I welcomed 32-bit addressing. The IIci and its predecessor, the IIcx, were dust magnets, by the way, and it would all gather in the rear of the floppy drive, which is why it would stop working until cleaned. You could say I lived in a dusty environment, and maybe you could say that about New York and New Jersey. But I didn't shout to the skies that Macs were unreliable, especially after hearing the trials and tribulations of friends who used PCs. And, oh yes, crashes were a bit less frequent.

Of course things didn't just get better over time. When the first Macs with PowerPC processors arrived in 1994, I noticed that they seemed to run slower than the Quadra. Product reviewers noticed that you had to use software especially compiled for the new chips to get any performance speedup. Doesn't that sound familiar? I suppose these new models were better, but some were designed by what I felt were a bunch of lunatics who relished the pain you suffered when you had to pop a bunch of cable assemblies and even the logic board just to add memory. What were they thinking? What indeed.

Apple seemed to fall into a huge hole before long. In 1995, with the arrival of the first Macs with PCI slots (just like those in a high-end PC box of the time), the first operating system was a disaster. One or two crashes would be a revelation. Having it happen just 15 minutes after setting up a new computer was only the beginning of my woes, until Apple patched the system to make it sufficiently reliable that it required a mere one or two restarts a day. Sure, some of you went on for days without trouble, but as soon as you ran a resource hungry content creation application, you saw your Mac demonstrate its true colors.

And then there was the first PowerBooks with PowerPC chips, which shipped late and maybe should haven't shipped at all, because they were so filled with hardware glitches. Apple even had to issue a recall to address power port, logic board and other ills. I sent back a 5300ce, which cost over five grand by the way, several times to fix one problem or another. One weird symptom was the appearance of some sort of sealant at the bottom of the screen bezel. I had to wonder, at times, whether it was infected by an alien parasite. In any case, with the proper cautionary explanations, I sold it to a local user group official, and he had to send it back to Apple again for repair before he found another victim to take it off his hands.

So today, when you look at the online chatter about Apple problems and the first real virus infection in years, you

have to wonder what they're complaining about. We've grown so accustomed to the Mac OS on Unix that up time's of less than three or four weeks is absolutely unacceptable. Yes, there is still that occasional hardware glitch, and extended repair program. But today if a group of people are affected by what they perceive to be a defect, they don't just send their products to Apple or a third party repair shop to fix the problem, they file a class action lawsuit. Of course, if the legal action is successful, the lawyers will make millions and you will end up with an offer for a coupon to save a few dollars on your next purchase or a tiny rebate. Was it all worth it?

Today, anything that slows down your Mac, even for a fleeting second, is a major issue that Apple must repair forthwith. In the days when there were several powerful viruses a year on the Mac platform, you didn't see it blasting from a thousand and one tech columns across the free world. Today, a single infection, even one that really isn't so damaging in the scheme of things, is portrayed by some as a major problem confronting Apple that it must address forthwith before things get out of hand.

At the same time, millions of Windows users confront thousands of malware variations every single year and only the very few that can bring businesses to their knees get reported. How many Mac users were affected by the recently discovered Oompa-Loompa strain? The reports say perhaps several hundred, but it is pictured as an example that the Mac has finally entered the real world of personal computing.

So do you really long for the good old days?

Special Update Request from Gene Steinberg

WHAT'S GOING ON: Three years ago, we did the unthinkable. We asked for donations from you to help solve a serious family-related problem. Basically, my sister-in-law and her husband, who have a handicapped child, have for years been subject to legal harassment by a wealthy woman with vengeance on her mind. The unfortunate fact is that almost anyone with deep pockets can abuse the U.S.'s court system with nuisance lawsuits, and consequences are rare. The family was brought to the edge of bankruptcy. My wife and I emptied our savings accounts, maxed out our credit lines and committed all our resources to help out. My son donated most of his college savings, and has to rely on student loans to cover his tuition.

WHAT WE NEED NOW: The end is in sight. Legal actions are behind us, and we expect the final resolution within the next 60 days. The nuisance lawsuits have prevented my sister-in-law and her family from claiming money from a lucrative financial transaction that occurred some years back, and that money will soon be theirs. To get from here to there, however, is proving to be near impossible. They still need your help to cover expenses for such necessities as housing, food, insurance, medical care and so forth. Your generous financial contributions have helped everyone survive until now, but more needs to be done before they get their lives back. The rest of our small family has helped as much as it can. Now we need additional outside support. If you want more information before sending a donation, please write to help @ macnightowl.com for further details.

For now, the easiest way to you to help is to send your donation via PayPal (use the link below). If you prefer to send us a check or money order directly, please make it payable to Making The Impossible, Inc. and send it to: Making The Impossible, Inc., 15111 N. Hayden Rd., Suite 160-144, Scottsdale, AZ 85260. A special thank you for those of you who have already sent your donations. Your generosity will not be forgotten.

Macsimum News

Day of the digital book may be dawning

by Dennis Sellers

Let's see. Apple has music and videos at the iTunes Music Store (which evidently needs a new name—The Apple Media Store, perhaps?). Maybe Jobs & Company should add a literary slant to the offerings since many experts are convinced that digital books are finally ready for takeoff. But it may take a company like Apple to really launch digital books into stratosphere.

"Every other form of media has gone digital—music, newspapers, movies," Joni Evans, a top literary agent who just left the William Morris Agency to start her own company that will focus on books and technology, told *Business Week Online*. "We're the only industry that hasn't lived up to the pace of technology. A revolution is around the corner."

So why is now the time (at last) for digital books? Portable devices are becoming lighter and more appealing and books are being scanned into digital form by the thousands, *Business Week* online adds. Then there's "digital ink," the technology used for displaying letters on a screen. A company called E Ink has created a method for arranging tiny black and white capsules into words and images with an electronic charge. Because no power is used unless the reader changes the page, devices with the technology could go as long as 20 books between battery charges. The text also looks just as sharp as ink on a printed page, since each capsule is the size and pigment of a grain of laser-jet toner, according to *Business Week Online*.

The principal components of electronic ink are millions of tiny microcapsules, about the diameter of a human hair. In one incarnation, each microcapsule contains positively charged white particles and negatively charged black particles suspended in a clear fluid. When a negative electric field is applied, the white particles move to the top of the microcapsule where they become visible to the user. This makes the surface appear white at that spot. At the same time, an opposite electric field pulls the black particles to the bottom of the microcapsules where they are hidden. By reversing this process, the black particles appear at the top of the capsule, which now makes the surface appear dark at that spot.

To form an E Ink electronic display, the ink is printed onto a sheet of plastic film that is laminated to a layer of circuitry. The circuitry forms a pattern of pixels that can then be controlled by a display driver. These microcapsules are suspended in a liquid "carrier medium" allowing them to be printed using existing screen printing processes onto virtually any surface, including glass, plastic, fabric and even paper.

E Ink's electronic ink is an image stable reflective display technology that uses low power but can be read under any lighting condition—including direct sunlight. Unlike liquid crystal displays, the image on E Ink displays looks the same from all viewing angles and won't distort when touched or flexed, making electronic ink the ideal display medium for flexible displays and portable devices, according to the folks at E Ink.

E Ink currently offers all-plastic segmented cells that are flexible and comfortable. These cells can be used in a range of applications from clocks and watches to electronic shelf displays and preprogrammed signage. While E Ink's display materials already enable fully flexible displays, flexible backplane technology for high-resolution, active matrix displays are in the development stage. Once these backplanes are widely available to display manufacturers we can expect to see the adoption of flexible displays in a number of applications requiring high resolution.

This spring Sony will debut the US$400 Sony Portable Reader (shown), which uses E Ink and closely mimics the size, weight, and feel of a book. Sony also will offer roughly 10,000 book titles for download from its online store, along with news stories and blog items. It has a six-inch "electronic display" with SVGA 800×600 resolutions (approximately 170 pixels per inch).

However, it may take Apple to come up with a digital book reader—or iPod add-on—that really works with digital books. The Sony Portable Reader hasn't gotten great pre-release buzz.

Dan Farber, writing for *ZDNet*, has this to say: "Isn't it totally obvious that compared to buying a book, which is utterly portable, requires no batteries, has a well-defined user interface, and comes equipped to be understood by most pairs of eyes, buying a crippled digital player that can only handle one kind of media—and can't even surf the Web in 2006—is a stupid idea. Add the fact that you can only buy books that publishers have translated into Sony's format, running the gauntlet of the company's own hated Digital Rights Management software, and that they cost almost as much as the book anyway, and you have to wonder what is in the sushi they serve at Sony's headquarters. For about the same price as one of these "readers," I can buy a PDA that has few limitations, will surf the Web and let me send email, is about the same size, and can already display books to boot."

With its iPod, Apple has demonstrated that millions of people are willing to carry around digital devices with their favorite content," *Business Week Online* says, adding "After music, why not novels and nonfiction?"

That day is coming, I'm sure. It's just a question of who gets it right first. And I wouldn't bet against Apple.

Thoughts? Write me at dsellers@macsimumnews.com
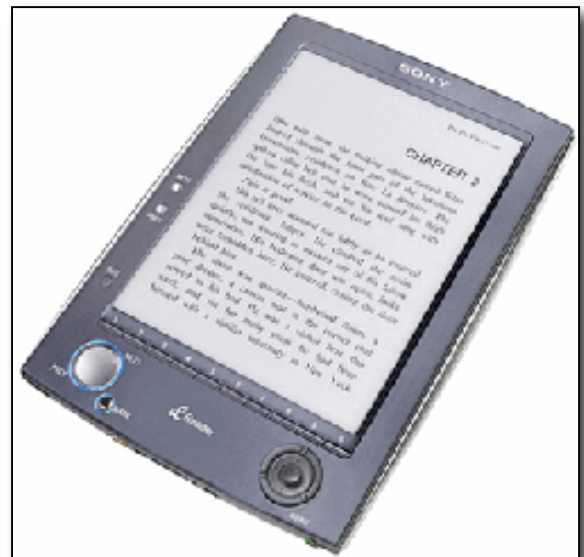
Musings From Mars

Google, AOL, Yahoo and Apple Compatibility
by Leland Scott

Google Lets Apple Safari Users Down Again

Google Labs today released another shiny new toy for geeks to play with… this one, a web page creation tool. My colleague says it uses Ajax and a rich DHTML Javascript interface to make page creation fun and simple. I wouldn't know, since so far it doesn't work in Safari.

I do plan to go back and try it out with Firefox, but what a pain! How come Windows users don't have to suffer this way? Safari and the other KHTML-derived browsers are still the browsers of choice for Mac users, so by leaving Safari out in the cold, Google is once again doing the same thing to Mac users. Not good. Not nice. Bad Google!

I hope it's just coincidence that the Google "Page Creator" abbreviates to "PC" and that it's not a message from the clot of PC users that appears to be blocking Google's technical heart.

Later on 2/23… I've now confirmed that Safari users can*not* get in to Page Creator using Safari's Debug menu, trying to masquerade as IE 6.0, Mozilla 1.1, Netscape 7.0, etc. That means Google isn't blocking Safari merely by looking at the user-agent string… there's some underlying technical reason. My suspicion is that it's related to Safari's lack of a "content editable" function, which both IE and Mozilla have (though those two browsers have completely different implementations of "content editable"). This is a convenient, and common, excuse, but it's not acceptable. There are two other ways to include Safari in the party while waiting for the Webkit team to engineer a content-editable function in Safari: You can either employ a lightweight java rich-text editor, such as Edit-on Pro, or you could use an even lighter-weight DHTML editor, such as the one Dojo provides. Either of these would be pretty simple to accomplish technically, so I ascribe Google's failure to do so to commonplace PC prejudice.

> **Google** Page Creator BETA **Oops!**
>
> **Sorry, your web browser is not yet supported.**
>
> Our programming wizards tried their darndest to get Google Page Creator to work with as many browsers as possible. But alas, even the most expert practitioners of web sorcery must sleep now and again, lest their JavaScript magic run dry.
>
> So, for now, you'll need either to download a new version of Firefox or download a new version of Internet Explorer (Windows only), and then come right back.

AOL's I Am Alpha: A Wide Slap At Mac Users on Safari

I Am Alpha: AOL's Take on Widgets Doesn't Work on Safari

So, here's another company that's dying to get in on the cool goodness that is Dashboard Widgets. This time, it's AOL with something called I Am Alpha, and they're basing their work on the excellent open-source Dojo Javascript framework.

Sounds great, but then it turns out that they left Safari users out in the cold!

This is another horrible example of a company with blinders on. Google has been doing this lately, too. What am I talking about? Why, thinking it's OK to release a new product without support for Safari or other KHTML-based browsers.

It's particularly galling in this case, since the whole concept of little HTML/CSS/Javascript/Ajax widgets was pioneered on the Mac… first with Konfabulator, and then, in a purer format, by Apple in the Tiger Dashboard. Another reason why it's horrible is that Dojo itself is almost completely Safari-compatible. Indeed, the Dojo rich text editor is one of the very few that actually works on Safari. It runs great on the latest nightly build Webkit versions, but decently on the latest Apple releases (I haven't yet tried 10.4.5, which was released today).

It's NOT OK to do this. Firefox/Camino/Seamonkey/Mozilla are great browsers, but there are features of Safari that keep even those of us who admire the Mozilla family of browsers using Safari the majority of the time. By the same measure, it's NOT OK to release ANY kind of web application without support for Safari. After all, Safari is–I think this is still the case–the browser that has the MOST COMPLETE alignment with the w3c standards for HTML, CSS, and Javascript. If you want to talk about open standards, that's great. But then don't go and release applications that work fine in a crappy browser like IE6 yet not in a brilliant one like Safari.

Grrr. AOL should be ashamed, and this alliance is certainly not something that Dojo should be proud of.

Addendum It should be noted that Yahoo, by contrast, has released its dynamic HTML library of widgets with complete support for Safari. If you haven't checked it out, you should… there are some marvelous javascript/css widgets for animation, trees, slides, and the rest at the recently released Yahoo Interface Library. What's even more remarkable–particularly in light of AOL's arrogant behavior toward Safari–is that Yahoo has developed well defined standards for browser support, and guess what? Apple's Safari's browser for both Panther and Tiger is listed as an A grade browser. See the full table here.

This table shows the grade of support that each browser receives. For more information, see Graded Browser Support.

	Win 98	Win 2000	Win XP	Mac 10.0	Mac 10.2	Mac 10.3	Mac 10.3.x	Mac 10.4
IE 7.0	n/a	n/a	A-grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
IE 6.0	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
IE 5.5	A-grade	A-grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
IE 5.0	C-grade	C-grade	n/a	C-grade	C-grade	C-grade	C-grade	C-grade
Netscape 8.0	X-grade	X-grade	A-grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Firefox 1.5	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade
Firefox 1.0.7	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade	A-grade
Mozilla 1.7.12	X-grade	X-grade	A-grade	X-grade	X-grade	X-grade	X-grade	X-grade
Opera 8.5	X-grade	X-grade	A-grade	C-grade	C-grade	C-grade	X-grade	X-grade
Safari 1.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	X-grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Safari 1.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	X-grade	X-grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
Safari 1.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	X-grade	X-grade	X-grade	n/a	n/a
Safari 1.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	X-grade	A-grade	n/a
Safari 2.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	A-grade

Practical Strategies

Nameless Faceless Corporation

by Christopher Duncan

Script by Christopher Duncan, **Voices of** Charlie Aldenderfer and Deirde Smathers, **Music on hold by** Jerry Wickham

 Listen: http://www.practicalstrategyconsulting.com/audio/CorporateFollies-NamelessFacelessCorporation.mp3

[music on hold] Thank you for calling the Nameless Faceless Corporation. If you are a new customer, please press 1 now. Existing customers, please press 2.

[touch tone 2] Thank you. By pressing 2, you've indicated that you are an existing customer. Consequently, since we already have your money and you're now no more than an ongoing expense to us, we'd be very grateful if you'd just go away. However, please feel free to hold until you come to your senses and hang up on your own. And thanks for calling!

[music on hold] Did you know that you can be ignored in a much more convenient manner on our web site? You have just as much a chance of corresponding with a real, live human being there as you do by phone, so hang up now and visit our new, state of the art website. When it comes to ignoring our customers, we spare no expense. And thanks for calling!

[music on hold] Many people find it much more convenient to send us an email rather than waiting on hold. We'd much rather be using the line you're currently tying up to take an order from a new customer who doesn't know any better. So, avoid all those annoying hours on hold and send us an email instead. It's much easier to ignore. And thanks for calling!

[music on hold] Thank you for continuing to hold. Your patience is greatly appreciated, as it allows us to have only one phone line for customer service, thus cutting down on unnecessary expenses and allowing our CEO to take that much needed vacation in the tropics. Your call will be ignored in the order in which it was received. And thanks for calling!

[music on hold] All agents are currently assisting other customers, namely those who are giving us money instead of taking up our time with problems and complaints. The average hold time is [pause, mechanical] 2 hours and 43 minutes [pause]. Your call will be ignored in the order in which it was received. And thanks for calling!

[music on hold] Your call is unimportant to us. If we really wanted to deal with you, we would have hired more people so that we could give you better service. However, since this isn't a toll free number and it's costing you money instead of us, please feel free to continue to hold until you come to your senses and go away on your own. And thanks for calling!

[music on hold] Thank you for continuing to hold. You have experienced a longer than normal hold time of [pause, mechanical] 3 hours, 27 minutes [pause] due to an unusually high call volume. Your call will now be handled by our next available agent. Please enter your 20 digit account number so that we may route you to the correct representative.

[20 digit touch tone] You entered [mechanical] 9 8 5 0 8 1 5 3 6 9 8 6 7 0 5 3 9 7 4 1. If this is correct, please press 1. If it is not correct, please press 2.

[touch tone 1] Thank you. Please enter your 5 digit zip code.

[5 digit touch tone] You entered [mechanical] 0 1 0 3 8. If this is correct, please press 1. If it is not correct, please press 2.

[touch tone 1] Thank you. For your protection, please enter your social security number so that we may verify your account.

[10 digit touch tone] You entered [mechanical] 9 6 8 5 9 2 1 7 3 8. If this is correct, please press 1. If it is not correct, please press 2.

[touch tone 1] Thank you. Please listen to the following selections entirely, as our options are frequently changed to avoid having to deal with you. To place an order, please press 1. For complaints about our service, or to reach the janitor directly, please press 2. For information about a previous service call, press 3 and enter your 37 digit customer service ticket number. To get a party's extension through our automated company directory, please press 4 and enter the first 17 letters of their mother's maiden name in Pig Latin. For technical support, please hang up and call the direct long distance number to our outsourced call center in Elbonia. For customer service, or to hear these options again, please press 0.

[touch tone 0] I'm sorry. 0 is not a valid option. Please listen to the following selections entirely, as our options are frequently changed to avoid having to deal with you. To place an order, please press 1. For complaints about our service, or to reach the janitor directly, please press 2. For information about a previous service call, press 3 and enter your 37 digit customer service ticket number. To get a party's extension through our automated company directory, please press 4 and enter the first 17 letters of their mother's maiden name in Pig Latin. For technical support, please hang up and call the direct long distance number to our outsourced call center in Elbonia. For customer service, or to hear these options again, please press 0.

[frustrated - touch tone 00000000] Thank you. One moment, please, while I transfer your call…

[rapid touch tone pattern] Thank you for calling customer service. Please enter your 20 digit account number so that we may route you to the correct representative.

[20 digit touch tone] You entered [mechanical] 9 8 5 0 8 1 5 3 6 9 8 6 7 0 5 3 9 7 4 1. If this is correct, please press 1. If it is not correct, please press 2.

[touch tone 1] Thank you. Someone will be with you shortly.

[phone ringing] Thank you for calling the Nameless Faceless Corporation. If you are a new customer, please press 1 now. Existing customers, please press 2…

[scream] [heavy object hitting floor] [objects being slammed against wall] [fade out]

See Christopher Duncan's Bio at:
http://www.maccompanion.com/info/aboutus.html#christopherduncan and

http://www.practicalstrategyconsulting.com/Bio.aspx

Book Reviews

Excel Scientific and Engineering Cookbook
reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: David M. Bourg, http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/702
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/excelseckbk/index.html
$45 USD, $63 CND, £32 GBP, €40 EU
Published: January 2006.
Pages: 442
ISBN: 0596008791
Requirements: Microsoft Excel. Visual Basic for Applications. (For Macs go to http://www.realsoftware.com/.)
For folks who already know how to do math.

Strengths: Lots of recipes that work in Excel.

Weaknesses: None found.
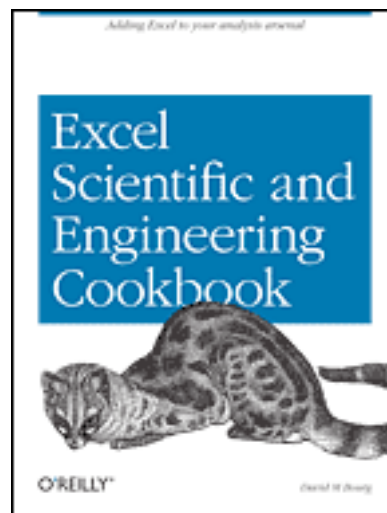
Excel Scientific and Engineering Cookbook by David M. Bourg is well, a cookbook for showing how to use the mathematical functions in Excel by the scientific and mathematical communities as a "poor-boy" option to developing using either FORTRAN, Matlab or Mathematica.

If you only use about 5% of Excel's capabilities and don't do much more than simple spreadsheeting, you don't need this book. If you are into complex formulas and functions, than this book has quite a few recipes to choose from to help you get your work done.

This book opens up those usually hidden resources for importing and analyzing data pr performing calculations or solving science and engineering problems.

David Bourg has captured a number of examples from various disciplines such as biology, chemistry and physics.

Each entry follows a *Problem – Solution – Discussion* format that makes it easy to quickly get up-to-speed.

There are instructions on maximizing 3D charting and statistical analysis, working through Fourier Transforms, visualizing vectors, manipulating matrices and even getting into multivariable calculus.

The last chapter digs into financial apps that reminded me of HP programming books for the early hand calculators.

There are 14 chapters on Visual Basic apps, manipulating data, charting, statistical and time series analysis, mathematical functions, curve-fitting and regression, numerical integration and differentiation, solving ordinary and partial differential equations, performing optimization analysis and financial calculations. There is no Appendice.

If you want Microsoft Excel to really jump through hoops, why not look at what is done here instead of reinventing the wheel?

Learn to Program

reviewed by Jonathan Hoyle

Author: Chris Pine
Pragmatic Programmers, LLC
P.O. Box 293325
Lewisville
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Or
9650 Strickland Road, Suite 103-255
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http://www.pragmaticprogrammer.com
Website:
http://www.pragmaticprogrammer.com/titles/fr_ltp/index.html
Distributed by Addison-Wesley
http://www.awprofessional.com/
Released: January 16, 2006.
$20 USD, $28 CAN, £9 Net UK €18 EU
Pages: 175
ISBN: 0976694042
Audience: Beginning programmers.

Strengths: Excellent programming introduction.

Weaknesses: No screenshots, just textual examples.

The Pragmatic Programmer series of books has made a quite name for itself over the past few years with some of the best reference books available for experienced developers. Released just this year, the series introduces *Learn to Program*, a book targeting the beginner market, and I expect this title to do extremely well. *Learn to Program* teaches the beginner all of the important concepts starting out and brings him along to some advanced concepts in short order.

Using Ruby as the programming language with which to teach beginners, may appear unusual, but is actually an ideal choice. 10 or more years ago, one would have expected this same book to be written using Basic or Pascal. However, Basic is no longer as "basic" as it used to be, and there are no viable Pascal compilers any longer. Nor are either of those good transitional languages, as their syntaxes are very different from modern languages. Some might wonder why not use C or C++, but each of these languages still requires a great deal more memory management than modern "garbage collected" languages do. Ruby, on the other hand, is relatively new and modern, with a syntax very similar to PHP and Perl. Ruby is an excellent "gateway language" to Java or C# and allows for easy development of Web applications as well. Best of all, Ruby comes free with Mac OS X!

Aside from being a beginner's tutorial, *Learn to Program* is a prequel to *Programming Ruby*, the authoritative language reference. Both books are part of the *The Facets of Ruby Series* by the Pragmatic Bookshelf. This reviewer knew next to nothing about Ruby prior to reading this book, but after having done so, I have now become so interested in it that I look forward to the next book in the series. However, the programming principles that this book teaches apply to any programming language and are not specific to Ruby.
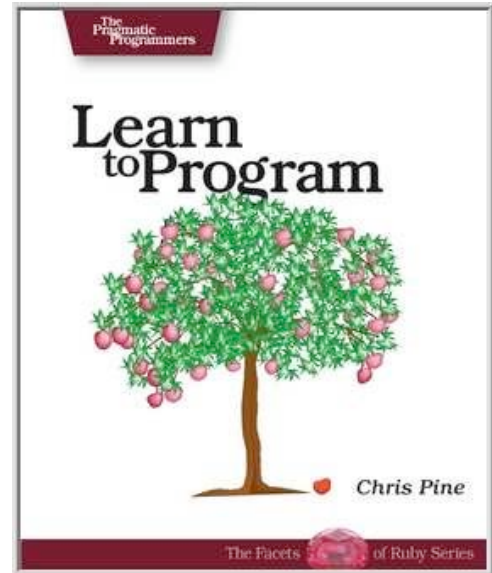
The introductory chapter s a good motivation for learning to program. Chapter 1's *Getting Started* covers installation issues of the Ruby environment for Windows, Linux and Mac OS X. For many books, the Mac section is a forgotten one, completely unrelated to the rest of the book. Not so in this book, as author Chris Pine notes in the *Macintosh Getting Started* section:

> *If you're using OS X, you're in luck! You can use the best (in my opinion) text editor, Ruby is already installed for you in OS X 10.2 (Jaguar) and up, and you get to use a real command line (not that silly wanna-be command line we have to use on Windows)!*

Numbers and strings are covered in Chapters 2 and 3 and that is used for the discussion on variables in Chapter 4. The real work picks up with Chapters 5 and 6 with keyboard I/O, string manipulation, mathematics and random number generation. Looping and branching are covered in Chapter 7's *Flow Control*, followed by an introduction to arrays and iterators in Chapter 8. All of this is in way of preparation for the second half of the book, which takes the reader from neophyte to true programmer.

Chapter 9's *Writing Your Own Methods* is the watershed chapter that takes the beginner to create his very first self-made methods. The pace continues unabated with more advanced concepts such as recursion and sorting in Chapter 10, and then accessing files in Chapter 11. More heady object oriented topics come next with custom classes in Chapters 12 and 13, and function pointers (called Procs in Ruby) in Chapter 14. Finally, Chapter 15 gives direction from where to go next.

That all of this information is presented in such a compact volume is an amazing achievement. Much of its success is due to the choice of Ruby as the programming language, as it allows the author to spend most of his time teaching programming concepts, and less time worrying about obscure language idiosyncrasies. For anyone interested in learning how to program, whether it be with Ruby or any other modern programming language, *Learn to Program* is hard to beat.

Linux Multimedia Hacks

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

O'REILLY®
computer books • conferences • online publishing

Author: Kyle Rankin; http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1849
Booksite: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/linuxmmhks/index.html
$30 USD, $42 CND, £21 GBP, €26 EU
Published: November 2005.
Pages: 330
ISBN: 0596100760
Requirements: Linux.

Strengths: Shows which multimedia apps work within Linux.

Weaknesses: None found.
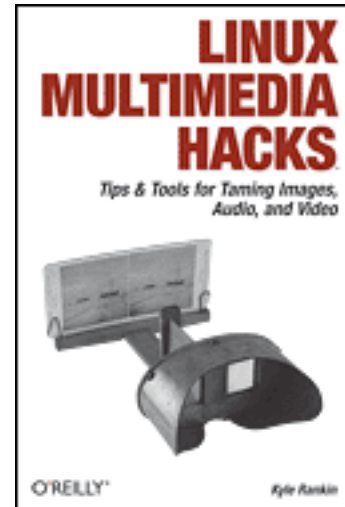
Linux Multimedia Hacks by Lyle Rankin and 15 other contributors shows how to use no-cost apps to work with Linux to do multimedia on a system that uses Linux. It breaks these up into 100 hacks.

Now if you were brought up in the Mac environment, you kind of go, 'What EVER!" when looking at these hacks for Linux. Remember, sometimes it can take a day or two to get Linux up and running to a level that makes a machine productive. If your time is not too valuable, than all the effort that goes into making a Linux system work well, is essentially free. (If you get paid as a consultant by the hour, than the free part changes considerably.)

Linux is the last true shade-tree mechanic OS left in the world. It offers ubergeeks a way to strut their stuff and there is a whole lotta struttin' goin' on within the pages of this book.

There still isn't an equivalent Tivo-like MythTV for Macs - yet. But don't let that stop you from learning, because much of what can be discovered here can be transferable to the Mac environment, if you are not dissuaded by the Unix-side of the Mac. (Personally, I think Mac OS X out Linux's Linux, but that is just my opinion.)

The main difference is that with the Linux environment, you can tweak 'til the cows come home – and tweak some more. And when all is said and done, you can say, "I did it" and mean it.

The book is divided into 5 chapters covering image manipulation, audio format conversions and metadata tweaks, video, broadcast media for webcasting and TV and Interneting multimedia productions.

Everything is all step-by-step "how-to". Like as in most O'Reilly Hack-books, the author didn't do this all on his own, he had help from 14 other cool contributors.

If you like to experiment, this is a fun place to start. And after reading the book and scripting is still a challenge, you didn't let Linux get under your fingernails.

No Nonsense XML Web Development With PHP: A Practical Step-by-Step Guide

reviewed by Jonathan Hoyle

Author: Thomas Myer

SitePoint Pty. Ltd.
http://www.sitepoint.com
Booksite: http://www.sitepoint.com/books/xml1/
Released: July 27, 2005
Pages: 354
$40 USD, $56 CND, £28 GBP, €35 Euro
ISBN: 097524020X
Requirements: A desire to do web development and PHP 5.0.
Audience: Intermediate and advanced PHP programmers.
Strengths: Most thorough XML on PHP book available.

Weaknesses: The XML database section is too short.
http://www.sitepoint.com/books/xml1/errata.php

With the ever-growing popularity of PHP programming, combined with the increasing usage of XML, SitePoint has published *No Nonsense XML Web Development with PHP*. This book is a practical guide for PHP programmers wishing to develop with XML. Note that this book is more designed for accomplished PHP developers wishing to learn XML than it is for accomplished XML programmers wishing to use PHP.

Chapter 1 is a thorough introduction to XML, explaining what it is, why you would want it and some good XML examples. Unfortunately, this chapter is also where it shows its Windows bias, as it describes various Windows browsers to use for testing your XML code, but no mention of Safari or any Mac version of a browser. Chapter 2 continues with specific XML implementations and how they are used. Between these two chapters, any PHP programmer will be fully armed to move forward.

Chapter 3 covers XML consistency and Chapter 4 continues with more browser specifics for XML programming. The following chapter is an interesting tour of XSLT, the specification for transforming XML-based documents into other documents. Programming aspects cover sorting, counting, numbering, conditional processing and more. Chapter 6 is one of the most useful chapters as it discusses XML's use with JavaScript. As JavaScript is the most popular client-side language on the web, whereas PHP is the most popular server-side language, creating and accessing XML code across both languages opens up a great deal of flexibility.

The real meat of the book finally happens in Chapter 7, as it speaks specifically to PHP programmers. Using SAX, DOM and other such technologies are reviewed in this chapter. Chapter 8's *RSS and RDF* gives the reader some of the most useful examples of how to use XML with PHP, which nicely leads into web services covered in Chapter 9. The final chapter all to briefly covers XML databases, which is perhaps its most powerful usage. If there is one criticism of this book, it is that it should have had more coverage in this Chapter.

Author Tom Myer has done an outstanding job pulling together the various technologies for PHP programmers. The practical examples and step by step instructions found in most of the chapters are invaluable as a teaching aid. I am surprised that there is no accompanying CD to incorporate the many examples. If you are a PHP web developer, it is probably only a matter of time before you will need to interface with XML on some level. When you do, *No Nonsense XML Web Development with PHP* is the ideal book for you.

Photoshop® for Right-Brainers: The Art of Photo Manipulation, 2nd Edition

reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher
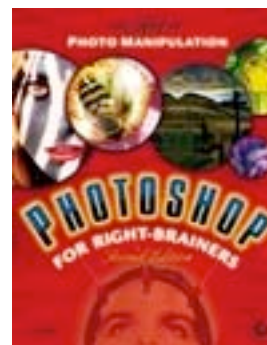
Strengths: This book is for the intermediate graphics user. Novice users might be able to improve their knowledge and understand after learning basic Photoshop application and options (especially using layers) and then using the book's helpful information. Most helpful to the artistic process is the author's inclusion of notes about the special stages; in the sidebars on each page, which involve "Concepts, Visualize and Realize." Photoshop users will find the instructions and ideas most helpful for all sorts of artistic needs with images for helping improve their projects. "The Right Brain" and artistic way of learning in the book is a breath of fresh air in terms of providing instruction in a different manner that stresses visualization, imagery and creativity. The book uses Adobe Photoshop CS to take advantage of all the tools. If you don't have that particular version, you can still model many, if not most of the instructions in the book, for your artistic purposes.

Weaknesses: This book is best for intermediate to advanced users, but novices might find it useful if they find out more about the tools in Photoshop first. For example, you should know how to use layers before you try this book. Learning about the tools from the ground up is not a part of the instruction, so learn about the tools first and then try to tackle this book.

Computer users, who want to learn how to use their computer for a variety of projects, usually start with learning how to use the hardware and software. Many feel that this is the first place to start, as the focus for the user is the computer. But it is your brain that is doing the thinking and many times the books can be too structured in terms of lessons that can be learned. Not everyone learns in the same way. Suppose you want to learn in a different way. What can you do? One way is to try a book that helps you think in a different creative way. If that's the case then try *Photoshop® for Right-Brainers: The Art of Photo Manipulation*.

What if are you more interested in the creative process of photo imaging? Possibly, you are more interested in learning about using software through the art of creative expression hailing from the right side of your brain (yes there are two sides called hemispheres and everyone has two sides but some people are more disposed towards intuitiveness and creativity, not structure.) This book offers a different perspective to look into your use of computer technological tools, in this case photographing imaging and manipulation. It is fresh way of using and applying your creative skills with computer tools from that point of view and the book takes you through the steps.

Al Ward, who has written for Photoshop User magazine, worked with the National Association of Photoshop Professional and is a featured writer for graphics and their Photoshop website and books. He has written this 340-page book to apply the use of Photoshop tools. But his focus is with visualizing the images first and then using this to enhance the techniques used in Photoshop. With this new knowledge that pervades the book, the reader has a chance to look at, see and use images in a different "light." Using this method, the author hopes to convince you of a different way for graphic manipulation. Ward starts this process in the beginning of the book as the author outlines three ways to view learning.

 The chapters help show how and why projects are developed. This includes the how the concepts are formulated to give the user a better idea how creative tasks are build. Each chapter is well laid out and outlines the three stages to accomplish what you would like to do in each chapter. The examples are well done and serve to give a good insight into the author's technique of teaching through Photoshop use. Visualization and imagination is the key and the 'tutorial type instructions' help to sway you towards gaining a different perspective.

This is the second version of the book written by the author. There are once again, ten chapters but several of the chapters have been changed to focus on more precise methods, projects or techniques. The helpful project also helps you along the way. Once again, each chapter can be used as is, as a series of small or larger projects.

Chapter 1, "Tool for Building Your Masterpiece" focuses upon the tools that needed and the background to the techniques to explore throughout the whole book. The focus on this chapter includes extracting images from background, working with layers, adjustment layers and blending specific (colored) layers.

Chapter 2, "Techniques for Embellish," introduces methods for making cosmetic corrections and enhancing portraits and your images. Whitening teeth, hiding and correcting blemishes and more highlighted more possibilities for your favorite photos. Enhancing eye colors, lip color and hair color as well as "face swapping" are now integrated in this chapter as well.

Chapter 3, is now called " A Few Right- Brained Special Effects." Creating glass spheres (with images inside), chromium sphere, and generating metallic colored text on backgrounds give one more opportunities for transforming more effects.

Chapter 4, is now renamed " Textures, Colors, and Layer Effects." Human subjects are still the main focus utilizing creative transformations that involve the images. Focusing on lightening, darkening and coloring images in this chapter demonstrated ways to change parts of the pictures. Also included are montages, adding color to black and white images, working with hand-tinted appearances, brush effects and more.

Chapter 5, is now "Effects in the Real World" and deals with landscapes sky and water (reflections). Changing the mood by using the curve tool had interesting and well-done instructions.

Chapter 6, "Animals" shows how to work with living creatures. Changing the eyes, working with bugs, and even transforming "cross-bred creatures" are covered here.

" Digital Alterations and Manipulations now covers Chapter 7. covers techniques that deal with the creation of photo-realistic effects. The use of masking tools was an artistic method of extracting and pasting different objects into a different background that could then be used with text for advertising. This took a little more work but had potential as well.

Chapter 8, "Going Beyond Canned Filters" integrates working with Photoshop tools that need special techniques to use in the proper manner. Line- art sketching, portrait use, and "vector art" (which included using Japanese anime art) are included. Working with the merging of photos, paint and texture was the most interesting part but these tasks will take much time.

Chapter 9, "People as Art-Digital Manipulation," includes many ways to paint the human subject. Making a Zebra woman was also interesting.

Chapter 10, now is " Digital Intensive." Portrait collages are main stay in this chapter.
The Appendix now has information that includes saving images to web, building a web photo gallery, creating a presentation, creating a contact sheet, and creating a picture package and displaying work.

Overall, the book is easy to read. The examples and tutorials are well done and thorough, while the visuals give a better understanding concerning what can be done but also future potential. A CD, which accompanies the book, has lessons that include graphics for use with the lessons. All the photographs and computer screenshots help make the reading even more a pleasurable learning experience.

I could not help but feel the straightforwardness of the chapters because of the "right brain" emphasis of the whole text. You are eased into complex processes that do not seem complex once you start reading and trying the tutorials. Once you learn and use the tutorials, the methods can be used to create and visualize what you have learned previously; and many will feel that this is the "right way " to learn. This book can help you discover new skill sets in a different way and take computer graphic use to even higher levels. Try this book to let your Right Brain relax and show you the way to use your imagination, creative and computer artistry.

A Practical Guide to UNIX for Mac OS X Users

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Mark Sobell; http://www.sobell.com
Peter Seebach
Prentice Hall PTR
http://www.prenhallprofessional.com
Booksite: http://www.phptr.com/title/0131863339
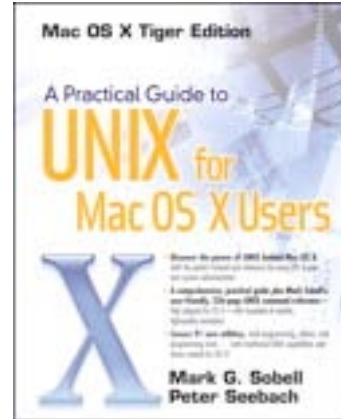**Released:** December 21, 2005.
Pages: 1,056
$40 USD, $56 CND, £29 GBP €35 EU
ISDN: 0131863339
Requirements: Mac OS X Tiger.
Intended for beginners.
Strengths: Covers all the UNIX bases.

Weaknesses: One page missing (page 477).

A Practical Guide to UNIX for Mac OS X Users by Mark Sobell and Peter Seebach isn't really shovelware from UNIX on other platforms, even though it may appear to be, especially if you have read Mark Sobell's other books on Linux and UNIX. This has to be because he enlisted the help of Peter Seebach. Thank you Mark, for adding him to the editorial staff on this book!

This book takes the strengths of UNIX and Linux background experiences and applies them to the UNIX inherent in Mac OS X Tiger. It is rather telling that in Appendix C there is only a 2-page "difference in behavior" section between "features and quirks" between Apple's version of UNIX and the rest of the UNIX world, such as lack of case sensitivity, three development APIs of Cocoa, Carbon and BSD UNIX, handling metadata, using sudo instead of using su to get to root, the way it works with X Windows among others.

You cannot honestly go through this book in one sitting. It isn't designed for a quick-read. It appears to be more along the lines of a textbook, because it has chapter summaries, exercises and advanced exercises at the end of each chapter. I didn't get the Teacher's edition, so the answers are not listed to the exercises or in an appendix nor on Mark Sobell's website. Maybe the 1,056-page size negated that being in print, but if the book were more reader-friendly, I personally would have expected an answers section somewhere. The book says even-number answers are located on his website. As of this writing, they are missing. There are errata links and even-numbered answers for his other books, however, if you go to their book links on his website.

I found one page in this edition that was missing. Actually, it was replaced with one further back in the book, like exactly 10 pages later. So I see where Prentice Hall's press shop somehow skipped a digit electronically and their QA didn't catch it.

On the other hand, the Preface does an excellent job listing the features and contents as it's own "book review".

What I really enjoyed were the references to the GUI (Graphic User Interface) tools and their CLI (Command Line Interface) counterparts. I also thought the NetInfo section was excellent.

In the System Maintenance section, there is even information about how to avoid Trojan Horses. ((Path variables not having colons at the beginning or end or a double-colon anywhere in the path).

Mark Sobell's website has a full Table of Contents list, so I won't repeat it here. However, I will do like I do with other book reviews and do a quick synopsis.

The book is divided into 7 parts with part one intended for newbees covering and introduction to 30 or so command line utilities, the file system and the shell. Part 2 the *vim* and *emacs* editors. Part 3 gets into the Bourne Again and TC shells. Part 4 is where I was most interested, because it digs into networking and system maintenance. Part 5 discusses various programming tools with separate chapters on *awk* and *sed*. Part 6 is the utility-belt list of 90 or so "most important" utilities. And part seven has 3 appendices on regular expressions a help section and the 2-page features and quirks section and an extensive 500-term glossary.

What I do like is that UNIX is spelled correctly and with the trademark throughout the book. What I don't like is that Prentice Hall posted a bunch of comment-quotes on their website and those apparently were repeated on Amazon.com regarding the Linux book and not the Mac OS X Tiger book. Where this book is posted.

During this review, the author updated his website so that the questions and errata can be seen, including the missing page.

Other than these "glitches", I highly recommend this book. It isn't just "Practical", it is comprehensive.

Simplified Mac OS X Tiger

reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Author: Erick Tejkowski
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River Street
Hoboken , NJ 07030-5774
http://www.wiley.com
Booksite: http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0764599992.html
Released: November 2005.
Pages: 240
$25 USD, $32 CND**,** £17 GBP, €22 EU
ISBN: 0764599992

Strengths: Very visually oriented specific. Book is well laid, colorfully laid out and includes screenshots, and colorful. Good job done with iPhoto, iTunes watching and editing video.

Weaknesses: The automator utility could have shown more examples. No information about the keywords that are used in iPhoto to classify and sort your pictures.

Mac OS X Tiger is a proven operating system that has become even more versatile and powerful since being created a few years ago. With each version, there are more proven capabilities that the computer user can utilize in many ways. Some of the operating features are easy to understand and use. Other capabilities may be a little more formidable to understanding. That is where a good book can help understand how to get the most about knowing about Mac OS X Tiger. The book Simplified Mac OS X Tiger is a great book to find the mysteries of Mac OS X Tiger.

The author is a write and developer on numerous Mac-related books and articles that have appeared in magazine such as MacWorld, MacTech and MacAddict. This book has 12 colorful chapters with over 228 pages. The visual appealing step by step instructions are well laid out and easy to understand. The instruction includes red highlight dots that the colorful screen shots help in the demonstration of the knowledge and information. But more visual cues help the understanding.

Color codes
A green-colored computerized creature with legs, sneakers, hands and a cap serves to introduce information on most of the pages.

Red color step by step
Red numbered dots points to the screenshots information instructions. These are very well done, some of the best I have seen in self- help books that clearly illustrate and point out the specific information needed to know. No guess work to find the instructions. These colored dots highlight each specific step by step instruction and red arrows point toward the parts of the screenshots being talked about.

Blue titles - Helpful in boldface

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1, " Mac OS X Tiger Fundamentals," talks about the various facets of the Finder, interfacing with other equipment and running Applications. Small bits, but possibly important information are also included like subsection: Click the mouse once or twice, Controls the Mac with menus, working with the finder windows, changing the windows view option, understanding applications using the dock, toggle applications, put your Mac to sleep, get help and more. This information is basic information, but important especially for novice Mac users.

 Chapter 2, " Mastering the Finder, " reviews context menus, increasing productivity, organizing windows, customizing icons, duplicating and deleting files, creating file archives and duplicating files. There are additional help sections like the window that talks about "What step do I need to take a copy a file from one hard drive to another disk," and " I copied the wrong file, How what should I do?" Suggestions like (p.32) " increase productivity with the sidebars" simplify screen tabs were informative. Another great example that the author suggests is the remaking of the sidebars my finder windows (page 33) " is another great suggestion.

 Chapter 3, " Customizing Tiger with System Preferences, " shows various ways to make your operating system work the your own way. Learn about changing the interface, dock, customizing the desktop background, play a screen saver, adjust settings, keyboard, mouse, date and time. These are some of the inner workings of the preferences that can be adapted to the way you desire.

Chapter 4, " Completing everyday Tasks, " works with the daily simple tasks to communicate. Address book, contacts, numerical conversions and reading and writing documents with textedit are here. The new edition here is Spotlight, which is the new application to find information. This application serves to find any type of file or information on your hard drive or, sometimes very importantly, within application that supports it. There is a great little section (page 77) "what is metadata, and what does it have to do with Spotlight?" and "How to find a document (text, HTML, PDF, word-processing files)" on your hard drive.

More fun begins with, Chapter 5, " Working with Images." Working with iPhoto is a major portion of this chapter. Importing, exporting, editing and viewing images and more are all previewed to show you how to use iPhoto. However using the little mini- application called "keywords," (used to classify, find and sort photos and which I just found about and started to utilize) is absent so that cataloging the photos will have to something you will have to find on your own.

Knowing about music is covered in Chapter 6, " Listening to Music." Listening and working with iTunes, organizing CD audios, music collections, building playlists burning CDs, sharing music and additional information are covered.

Chapter 7, " Watching and editing video" delves into the complexity of video editing. Starting with capturing video from camcorders, the chapter then carries you through adding clips, mixing audio, creating titles, using transitions and special effects and sharing movies are reported here.

Chapter 8, "Harnessing the power of the Internet," includes more information to include starting out about the internet but includes more advanced information for better "surfing" capabilities.

Chapter 9, " Connecting the other machines on a network" lets you harness the ability to share with other Mac and Windows computers, build web serves, sharing printers, using Ichat and more.

Sharing files with Macs and Window users, adding a iChat Buddy, sending instant files messages with iChat.

Learning about " Utilities" in Chapter 10, (page 180) highlights network activities, viewing system information, grabbing screen shot, managing printing are the main applications included previously. New applications are Dashboard (P.190) and Dashboard (page 190) and Automator common tasks (page 194). The handy new tools, called Widgets, in Dashboard can display a variety little applications (stock quotes, calculator, and others). Removing a widget and installing other widgets (also highlighted, which is a nice touch, is a website to see where to get more widgets) is most helpful because I found both these operations a needed welcome.

"Automate a common task" is new. This utility allows the working with actions, an automated building block that typically performs a single or multifaceted function. Possibly Apple decided to place this in Tiger to duplicate

operations you would normally do many times, saving time and effort. Some of the possible actions are open a folder, sort by date, save list, do events with iCal and more functions. I had tried Automate previously before receiving this book and found the steps a little confusing. However with this book, I found the visual screen shots and additional information assisted me in gaining a better understanding for using these mini -utilities. Also helpful were the two windows which included "Can I use an Automator workflow with launching Automator? " and " How do I remove a step from the workflow. "

Knowing about Chapter 11, " Connecting peripherals to a Mac, " helped gain a handle on using peripheral devices so that you can connect to your Macintosh (digital camera, iPod, etc). Using a microphone with chat, conducting a video chat, working with iPods are also part of this chapter.

Troubleshooting Mac Problems, Chapter 12, was a chapter I found interesting. Knowing how to quit a frozen application, I knew. However, force-quit from the dock was I probably had not discovered. Here I also found the questions to answer " Is it safe to force-quit an application?" and "What causes applications to freeze? Is it my fault?" an interested read. Some users might not know how to update their software on a regular basis. The help query, "If I set Software Update to check for updates automatically, will it install software without asking me? " and " The update take a long time to download. Is there anything I can do to lessen this wait?", but a worthwhile read. Also helpful was uninstalling an Application, Repair a disk, Empty startup disc, Troubleshoot with a New User, also with the nine-page index.

This book is a great resource for novice to intermediate users who want to learn about Tiger. The colorful and well laid out pages are easy to read and informative. While the book has a nice set of resources Intermediate to Advanced users may want to consult other books and resources that have more specific and in depth information concerning iMovie, iPhoto, Automator and others.

Software Piracy Exposed: Secrets from the Dark Side Revealed

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

SYNGRESS
IT BOOKS AND CERTIFICATION SOFTWARE

Authors: Paul Craig, http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1386
Ron Honick, http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1997
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http://www.syngress.com
Booksite: http://www.syngress.com/catalog/?pid=3230
$40 USD, $56 CND, £23 GBP, €35 EU also as an E-Book -
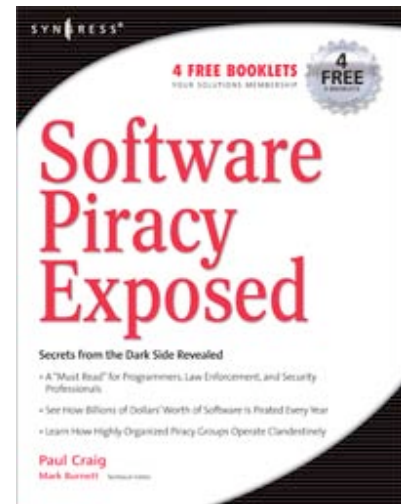http://www.syngress.com/catalog/?pid=3235
Published: September 2005.
Pages: 400
ISBN: 1932266984
Requirements: A desire to look at the "Dark Side" of computing.

Strengths:

Weaknesses: Bad language, give this book an R-Rating. And more than a few typos and technical errors make this book look like a "pre-publish" print.

R-Rated.

Software Piracy Exposed: Secrets from the Dark Side Revealed by Paul Craig, Ron Honick and Mark Burnett offers an exposé on the steamier and seamier dark side of the Internet and appears also to be shoddy, unprofessional, rushed, unedited and is printed from the same paper as dime-store novels. Even the ink smells!

Perhaps the authors spent too much time in the warez environment and not enough time proofing their work. As an editor, I would have expunged all the 4-letter cuss words to keep this book from being tossed outright by folks that don't care to be bashed in the eyeballs with such trash talk. Or maybe that was part of the plan to publish this book "as-is" all along? If your sensibilities had been offended by the content in the first part of the book, than you would have dropped it like a hot rock and moved on, not noticing the few grains of wheat amongst so much chaff.

The book, instead of being presented as an authority on the topic comes off as a shallow approach to the piracy topic.

The book doesn't so much expose us to the soft underbelly of software piracy but rather lets us see the authors with their pants down around their ankles.

And they seem apparently totally unrepentant about pirating anything. After buying this book, you just might feel that you were robbed too.

The dongle content dangles. An expert needed to provide input on those instead of the way the issue is presented as some much dancing around the topic instead of taking it head-on.

By now, you should know that we ding publishers for typos and for bad language.

The book comes across as an apologist for bad behavior. The interspersed *Piracy Facts* sidebars seem to be mostly correct. The Summary on Appendix A end saying that this book is not a book about morality, stating that it is instead an exposé showing how widespread the problem is, why and how it is done and how it is being stopped.

Note: If any publisher wants a better review, they need to address those short-comings up front.

So is this review a little harsh? Well, yeah, but I really expected more and so should you.

If I had written the book, I would have put the chapter on Piracy and the Law up front, showing which laws are broken, what the penalties are for pirating software and which "scenes" got taken down by justice departments and security forces. Then go into who did what, when.

There are 11 chapters and 4 Appendices. The cover an inside look of the "scene", how it began, suppliers, crackers, site rules and types of sites, the distribution chain, the areas that piracy focuses on, the law and future of piracy and a couple of pages of closing notes. The Appendices cover piracy justification, hazards, solutions and tools an dhow to fight back.

I found that probably the sweet spot for not pirating software is where Steve Jobs has placed it at $2 USD for video and $1 USD for music. And if more software firms offered demo versions of their products there would be less "need" to pirate their wares – unless of course, they prefer "viral marketing".

What is most "revealing" is that practically all piracy is done from "inside" by folks who should know better than to expose their firms to too early releases and opening their apps to the competition. An other way Apple has been out front is that they offer most of their source code to anyone who really wants to look at it. Again, if more firms did that, there would once again be "no need" for piracy.

One thing I learned was that warez for the Mac came much later than for the Windows and Linux environments – probably because there was no "need", really. I found that both refreshing and revealing. Don't you?

Software Security: Building Security In

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

ADDISON-WESLEY

Author: Gary McGraw
http://www.cigital.com
Addison-Wesley Software Security Series
http://www.awprofessional.com
Booksite: http://www.swsec.com
http://www.awprofessional.com/title/0321356705
Released: January 23, 2006.
Pages: 448
$50 USD, $67 CND, £35 GBP, €44 EU
ISBN: 0321356705
For software programmers interested in security.

Strengths: Pools the best from the White Hats side of security offering tools, techniques and sound principles for developing software with security up-front.

Weaknesses: You will need to get the other previous two books (*Exploiting Software* and *Building Secure Software*) in the series in order to take full advantage of this one.

References: http://www.swsec.com/resources/
Software Security: Building Security In by Gary McGraw lays down some interesting criteria for looking at software security. He builds on three areas of Risk Management, Touchpoints and Knowledge to attempt how best to reduce the $45 billion expended in the worldwide network security business. Focus has been so far trying to treat the symptoms instead of going after the root cause – poorly created software. And the book isn't just a thinly disguised advertising campaign for Cigital either. This is a "How-To" book. Simply put - software security is not security software – and Gary McGraw shows why.

This is the next book in the Addison-Wesley Security Series following up on previous books we've reviewed here by Gary McGraw in *macCompanion* on *Exploiting Software* http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/may2005/Books/ExploitingSoftware.htm and *Building Secure Software* http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/may2005/Books/BuildingSecureSoftware.htm.

I personally find Gary McGraw incredibly articulate and he knows how to get the "build it in at the beginning" point across. I also noticed he tends to say when a spade a spade, especially when it comes to development software. He doesn't have a whole lot of good to say about the C language either and gives plenty of "for-instances". I also enjoyed the thought processes that were behind the yin/yang whitehat-blackhat cover after the research I did last month on the Ubinary logo being used by Apple.

This book comes with both a great Forward by Dan Geer and an excellent Preface (summarizes each chapter in the book), along with three parts consisting of thirteen chapters (how apt, if you are not superstitious), and four appendices. The appendices discuss source code analysis, ITS4 (http://www.cigital.com/its4/), a C and C++ source code security scanner, Smurfware Scanner as a hypothetical software architectural risk analysis engine and a short glossary. Compare these to the later apps that have been developed and discussed in this book.

The other 13 chapters cover the areas of vulnerability such as connectivity, extensibility and complexity (the Trinity of Trouble), definitions of what bugs, flaws and effects really are form a software standpoint (I love his definitions!), the three pillars of software security (applied risk management, security touchpoints and knowledge), the risk management framework, seven touchpoints of software security (code, architectural risk analysis, penetration testing, risk-based security testing, abuse cases, security requirements, security operations and external analysis), enterprise-level programs and an annotated bibliography and references for digging deeper.

The book builds on the software security touchpoints "best practices" that has been adopted by various vested interests and shown as a diagram initially in the *IEEE Security & Privacy* magazine in 2004 tha tis both amplified and detailed here.

Security can't be added on after-the-fact. It has to be "always on" from the first line of code or it will not be effective.

I like a quote that was included in the "Advanced Praise" section of the book. Paul Kocher wrote, …"Even though the protocol itself is believed to be solid, a 'lock' icon is hardly of much significance when displayed by a bug-riddled browser running on a spyware-infested computer talking to a compromised web server…"

Gary McGraw pools his past experiences into this Security Yin/Yang book and offers a fine focus on the finite features of the wide field so software security instead of painting us into a corner with just application security. Treat the cause and not the symptom. There is a big mess to clean up and anyone worth their salt, can groom themselves into a software security position now. Read how.

I would highly recommend this book and perhaps make it required reading for any programmers that want to make a living in the computer industry. The solutions to software security are here. It is just a matter of taking the time to apply the carefully balanced principles discussed within the pages of this book.

Soundtrack Pro: Professional Sound Design - Apple Pro Training Series

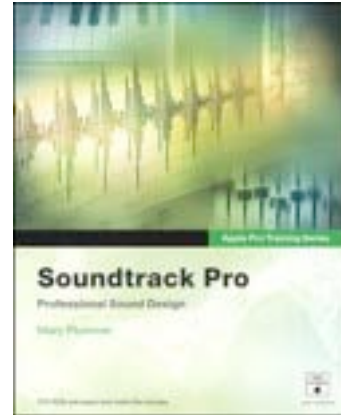reviewed by Tim Verpoorten

Author: Mary Plummer

Peachpit Press
 http://www.peachpit.com
Booksite: http://www.peachpit.com/apts.soundtrackpro
Released: December 21, 2005.
Pages: 528
$45 USD, $63 CND, £31 GBP, €40 EU. **Included:** DVD-ROM with lesson files and media files.
ISBN: 0321357574

Requirements: Current version of Sound Track Pro from Apple, Mac G4, or G5 500Mhz, Mac OSX 10.3.9 or later, QT 7.0, 512 megs of ram, Display with AGP or PCI Express graphics card and a display with 1024x768 resolutions or higher and 500 MB of disk space.

Strengths: Walking a new user through the program, step by step and giving you a DVD full of sound clips and lessons that can turn you into an Apple Pro Trainer.

Weaknesses: Difficult to jump into the book for specific how-to's.

If you've been using Soundtrack Pro and want a reference book, this might not be the perfect fit.

Soundtrack Pro is part of the Apple Final Cut Studio package. You could also purchase it as a standalone product until the next version due out in March of 2006 when Soundtrack Pro will only be a part of the Studio. Soundtrack Pro was developed to create high quality soundtracks for your music and video productions.

As part of the Apple Pro Training series books, upon completing the course material in this book, you can become a certified Apple Pro by taking the certification exam at an Authorized Training Center near you. (http://www.apple.com/software/pro/training) This Apple-certified book and DVD combo offers a complete, self-paced course in all aspects of Soundtrack Pro.

The book requires a familiarity with Mac OSX, but it assumes you are new to Soundtrack Pro. For new users, the book starts out with basic interface explanation and works into the advanced topics. If you have worked with Soundtrack Pro before, you may want to jump into the lessons a bit further along. I have been using SoundTrack Pro for about 6 months in order to record and edit my podcasts. I found that there were many ideas, options, and procedures that I was missing with my self-taught usage of the software. I felt most comfortable with skimming through the early chapters and then paying close attention to everything from lesson five and beyond.

The chapter, or lessons as they were called moved along quickly and were laid out as follows: Lessons 1 and 2 described the interface and explained how to find and use your files and arrange them in a timeline. These are basic techniques that you will use through the whole book. Lessons 3 and 4 had you building a soundtrack from scratch. You will choose sound effects, and begin using some of the basic editing functions on the tracks in your production. Lessons 5 and 6 were the starting points for my studies. They focused on using the powerful waveform editor in Soundtrack Pro. You learn how to amplify, stretch, edit and customize the sound. Then the podcasting features made their appearance with learning to work on voiceovers. The book explains the ideas of normalizing, amplifying, noise reduction, compression and how to fix problems like clicks and pops and hisses.

In lessons 7-9 you learn how to record, mix and add effects to your sound file. Than after you do all those to your file, you'll learn how to modify the output levels to prevent clipping. Again, this set of lessons was very useful for anyone that wanted to use Soundtrack Pro to do their podcasting work. You finish up the lessons with the final three lessons on exporting and managing you files, then learning some advanced Soundtrack techniques and finally how to use Soundtrack pro with the other Apple Pro programs in the Final Cut Studio package.

As I look back over the lessons, there were times that they really got in the way of a fast, easy method of help. Lessons with example files can give you the experience you need to take full advantage of Soundtrack Pro, but for a fast reference item, this book was overkill. For anyone that purchased Soundtrack Pro and wanted to learn the program inside and out, this book is perfect for you. If you are only using a small portion of the program for either recording or mixing or editing, then the manual that came with Soundtrack Pro will suit your needs.

Hardware Reviews

Miglia TVMini HD
reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Miglia Technology Ltd
The Old Silk Mill Brook Street
Tring
HP23 5EF
United Kingdom
+44 (0)870 747 2988
Fax: +44 (0)870 199 1289
info@miglia.com
http://www.miglia.com
Product Site: http://www.miglia.com/products/video/tvminihd/index.html
Released: January 6, 2006.
$249 USD (Only in the USA)
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 EyeTV 2.0 requires a G4 and 500MHz or greater.
Comes with: TVMini HD ASC USB 2.0 unit; Remote Control with 2 AAA batteries; Portable TV antenna (with lots of cable!); carrying case; USB Cable; CD-ROM with EyeTV software.

Strengths: Small footprint. Uses Elgato Remote and EyeTV 2.0. Offers HDTV viewing and recording on a Mac.

Weaknesses: Requires strong signals for the antenna and checking the High Definition website to see if there is local access. Does not allow connection to non-digital channels. And there aren't a whole lot of channels to choose from right now – at least from this location.

Here is a palm-sized portable device that permits HDTV to be viewed on a Mac.

One of the first gotchas I discovered right off the bat, is that the USB connection must be tied to a USB 2.0 port and not through a powered USB 1.1 Hub. (Well, now I know what kind of USB hub I am using!)

Can we get HDTV by going retro and back to antenna input instead of being connected to cable? Can we get ATSC? This chart is what I was able to discover by going to http://www.checkhd.com and looking locally. The EyeTV app scanned through 86 channels before settling on the ones shown here. Each of these has an equivalent High Definition channel.

Network	Call Sign	Channels
FOX	KFFX-DT	11.1
CBS	KEPR-DT	19.1
NBC	KNDU-DT	25.1, 25.2, 25.3
PBS	KTNW-DT	31.1, 31.2
abc	KVEW-DT	44.1, 44.2
		VIEW FULL GUIDE

The TVMini HD comes with EyeTV and a portable antenna and has an internal ATSC/Clear QAM decoder that also supports 1920x1080 (1080i) digital video-streaming for the Mac.

ATSC (Advanced Television Systems Committee http://www.atsc.org/) allows for airwave reception while Clear QAM permits unencrypted satellite or cable signals.

Discover more about ATSC here; http://www.hdtvprimer.com/ISSUES/what_is_ATSC.html and here; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ATSC.

My experience with the antenna and the 5 channels to work with showed the feed would "fade" in and go out instead of staying strong and streaming. If I had put the antenna on the roof or used a stronger antenna, this behavior would change. I'm sure that was caused by radio interference, so I switched over to the cable to see if it was any better. Instead of scanning 86 channels, it began scanning through 812 of them. It came up with 4 channels of which 3 had signals, but these were digital TV and not High Def. So if I want to use this device, I can switch between the antenna and the cable, but my picks are not that great either way – at least for today. I understand more systems will be coming online to HDTV later this year.
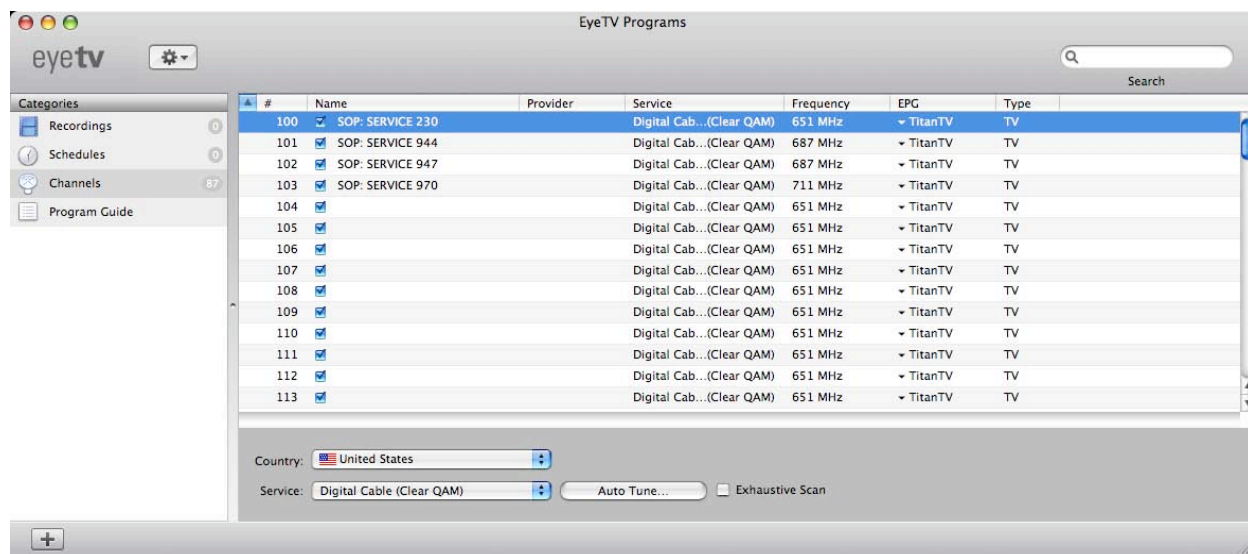
The infrared remote is essentially is a EyeTV Infrared Remote Control from Elgato Systems that controls this Personal Video Recorder (PVR) just like a TV/VCR Remote.

I personally found the onscreen controller to be more responsive than the infrared remote.

Besides the excellent 63-page Elgato System EyeTV Software manual there is a like to where folks have discovered other ways to make the app work for them at; http://www.elgato.com/index.php?file=support_tips

What with the US government mandate to move to HDTV in 2006 and I understand that has been pushed out now, there are not a whole lot of choices to choose from as far as regarding channels and content.

The Elgato EyeTV 2.0 system looks a little smoother than the Elgato EyeTV system we reviewed earlier with the ConvertX PVR (Version 1.8.4 update).
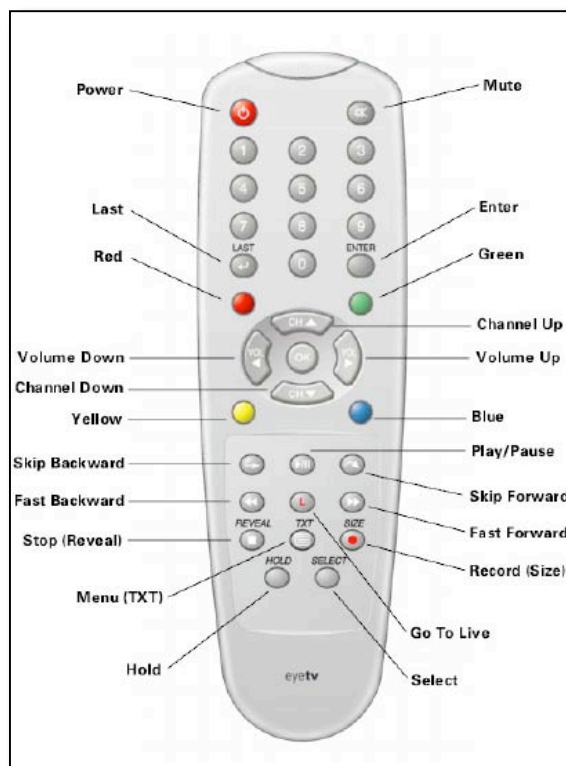
At this point the optimal system would be one that plays both analog and digital. The ConvertX is optimized for analog and the Miglia TVMini HD is optimized for use with High Definition channels. Elgato made the software versions system-specific so they are not interchangeable between hardware platforms even though the menu gives the options. The Activation Keys are such that one does not work with the other.

I like the look of the Miglia TVMini HD. I like the fact that the antenna unit has lots of cable. I wished the Elgato Remote responded better. And I wished the TVMini HD also handled analog, because it looks like we are going to be seeing a lot of it for the foreseeable future evidenced by the number of HD channels currently available (as in not many).

If you are a gadget geek, get this.

To get the picture on HDTV, here are some more links for digging deeper:

http://www.hdtvinfoport.com/
http://www.hdtvpub.com/
http://www.hdtvmagazine.com/index.php
http://www.ee.washington.edu/conselec/CE/kuhn/hdtv/95x5.htm
http://www.cnet.com/4520-7874_1-5102926-1.html
http://www.nab.org/

MiScope

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Zarbeco, LLC
12 Ridge Road
Randolph, NJ 07869
973-989-2673
Fax: 973-989-2674
info@zarbeco.com
http://www.zarbeco.com
Product Site: http://www.zarbeco.com/miscope_1a.htm
$275 USD for the base unit with one-year warranty.
$480 USD - with accessories (includes the MiScope with LED switch (MiSC-SW), 1 watt LED flashlight for oblique illumination, portable light table for back illumination, hard case, and Video ToolBox Pro advanced image capture software (Windows environment only). Everything necessary for portable inspection or documentation.
Requirements: For the Mac, miXscope 2.0 for $15 USD. Mac OS X 10.2 or later; 400 MHz G3 or later; 128 MB RAM; 50 MB hard drive space; 800 x 600 resolution, USB port.
Windows 2000/XP; Pentium III 500 MHz or greater; DirectX 8.1 or later, Internet Explorer 5 or later; USB port. Oh, and a desire to want to photograph things up real close!
Comes with: MiScope, USB cable, printed User Guide and software CD.

Strengths: Moves from 40X to 140X with the slide. Four bright white LEDs for source light.

Weaknesses: The basic unit has no LED off switch. The Video Toolbox Pro is only for Windows environment. The GPS accessory requires the Video Toolbox Pro to operate - at this time. For Macs, pay another $15 USD to get the software. USB 1.1 and not USB 2.0. The port is on the side and not out the back.

Reviewed with an iMac G5 and Mac OS X 10.4.5 Tiger.

To use MiScope with a Mac, the $15 USD miXscope from EhH Software, LLC is required at http://www.edhsw.com/mixscope/. The Video Toolbox Software comes with the unit and is included in the cost.

This digital microscope uses a 1/3" CMOS chip and USB port LEDs with magnification fro 40 times to 140 times with 4 micron resolution at 640x480 pixels and it fits in the palm of a human hand. It uses a slider to adjust both the magnification and focus. The field of view is 7.5 mm x 10 mm at 40X and 1.8 mm x 2.5 mm at 140X.
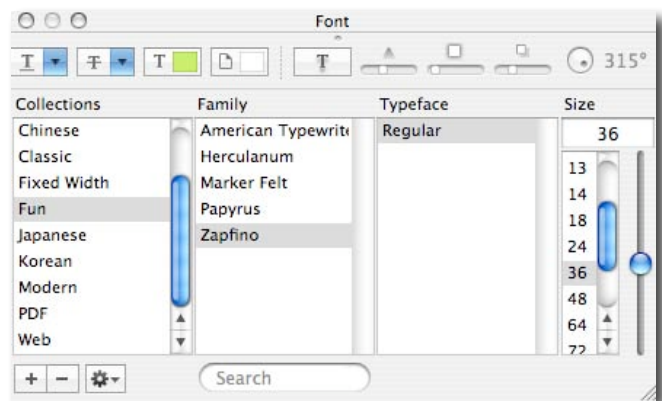
But like most USB-based digital devices, the hardware is only half of the story. miXscope is designed with the Mac in mind and can capture snapshots or do time-lapse video, add timestamps and text comments, do image overlays make measurements and draw on the images.

There are a few effects associated with the miXscope such as *Emboss* color or gray, *Find Edges* white or black, *Flip* horizontal or vertical, showing as a negative and color balance. There is also live drawing over the photo. Preferences can be set for snapshots, iMovie or the Web as well.
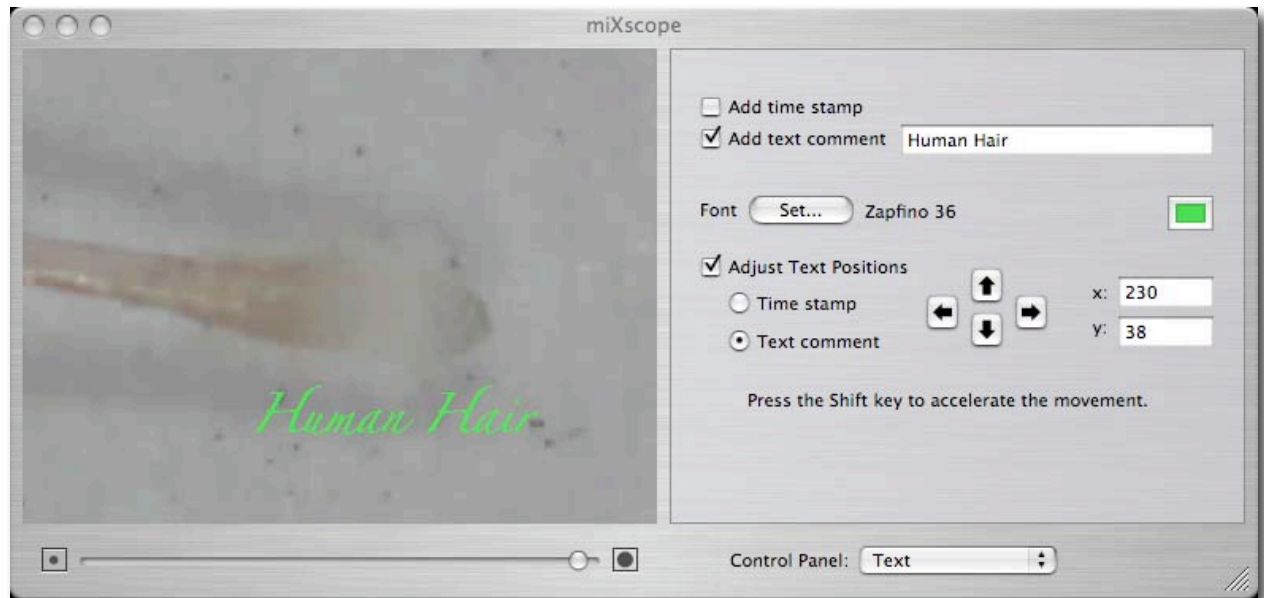
One plus that I like with the miXscope software is that the hardware can go up to 140X, but the software has a slider to zoom in even further and that is how I was able to capture this hair, showing the root. The black spots in the background? Would you believe it is from the white paper I have the hair laying on? That is probably why Zorbeco also offers the white backlit table.

Apparently the only way to turn off this particular miScope, is by disconnecting the USB cable. There is no *Off* switch with the basic unit. And the USB technology used is USB 1.1 and not 2.0. The price for the product ranges from $275 USD for the base unit, up to $480 USD depending on the configuration. For $300 USD, the video version is available. For $350 the one with the On/Off switch for the LEDs is available, as well as permitting external lighting, infrared or ultaviolet. A hard case can be had for another $50 USD. A battery-powered light table costs another $80 USD. You want GPS with that? It only works with the Video Toolbox software as a USB port attachment for $300 USD. A laptop screenshade costs another $150 USD. Or get everything (except the GPS and laptop screenshade) for $480 USD.

The USB cable has an upside and a downside that plugs into the side opposite the slider. Apparently folks have tried to install it incorrectly and damaged the MiScope unit, so there is a 3-pic color page showing top, bottom and where to plug it in on the 'scope. Why is the port located coming from the side instead of from the back?

Instead of an *On/Off* switch, there is a *Capture* button on the same side as the USB port. It is supposed to work with an iMac G5 using Mac OS X 10.4.5 Tiger. Dave Zweig wrote the following:

> The capture button is supported with the miXscope software and should work
> properly. Here is what should happen when you press the capture button:
> the image should momentarily freeze on the screen and then return to live.
> The images are typically captured into your Users/<Your User Name>/Pictures
> folder. If you select the Preferences menu and press the Snapshot button
> you will be able to configure where the images are saved and how they are named.

What's missing for the Mac is the Video Toolbox Pro and GPS functionality. Is there a Mac solution? iMovie or iPhoto apparently handles the first part. Once again; Dave Zweig answered:

> The miXscope software provides almost all of the features of our Video ToolBox software for Mac users including tools for annotation and measurement. The miXscope software also adds transparent overlays which is not available in the standard version of the Video ToolBox progam. The Video ToolBox Pro software adds the overlay feature as well as more measurement tools and options for automatic measurement reports.

> The miXscope software does not currently support the plugin tools for our Video ToolBox software, including such tools as our GPS option, Video Averager and our Particle Analyzer plugin for particle counting and sizing. We hope to be able to add these tools in the future.

I didn't get the GPS unit, so I can't examine it to see why it can't work with a Mac. After all, USB is supposedly "universal", right?

If you want to examine cell structure or something down at the micron level, this 'scope isn't really going to do the job. But for getting up close and personal within the normal visual spectrum for humans such as for the study of insects, plants, skin, electronic boards or other objects of interest, this is cool technology!

Shareware Reviews

doc_Babad's Software Review Overview - An Introduction

April 2006 Edition

by Harry {doc} Babad

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.4 or 10.4.5.

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This month I continue sharing my software, shareware and freeware finds with you, not focusing on any particular genre. I was looking for tools to make my own computing life easier. As is usual, I continue to pursue my interest in shareware esoterica and somewhat eclectic tidbits… so read on! Remember, there is no rhyme or reason for my choices other then what appears interesting, amusing, or heavens forbid, useful. As you will note, I found a few winners.

Note that although it do a quick test run of 4-5 hours, at the very least, on each of the shareware items I review in this column, that review is never as complete as are the individual in-depth software reviews I do for macC [e.g., DEVONnote]. Indeed, where I agree with the developers' description and other comments, I unabashedly use them in this column. If not, you'll read about it, load and clear! [Aren't mixed metaphors wonderful?]

Items Reviewed

CandyBar 2.5.1 — Customize your System, Application, Toolbar, Dock and other icons the easy way. Wintel users can't seem to do this. "CandyBar is a simple, easy, and fun way to customize your icons under Mac OS X! You can use CandyBar to change a heap of standard system icons —get a shiny new trash can, and personalize the look of your computer selecting from thousands of free icons available for download. and much more! You can also use CandyBar to put a new face on your favorite applications, or dress up your hard drives. CandyBar does it all! [4.0 macCs]

CocoaBooklet 2.0.1 — Create a booklet from of a PDF file or other document including web pages. This program also lets you create a booklet out of a PDF file, which is known as pages imposition. It is a useful tool to reduce the number of pages that has to be printed, which lets you save a lot of paper. [4.5 macCs]

DEVONnote 1.8 — A text content-oriented personal information manager. "DEVONnote helps you take notes and keep them organized. It keeps all your ideas, documents, important information, and even your bookmarks in one single, accessible place, and supports you with professional but easy-to-use features for making structure out of chaos." [4.5 macCs]

Illumination 1.5.7 — Find document files on any disk, whether it's initially mounted on your Mac or not. Illumination makes it easier to find, within its few limitations, the files you're looking for in your archives or linked fileserver volumes. Once you find the right file, simply double click on it to open it on its original source volume. If not mounted, the software points you at mounting the source volume on which your file is located. Then, simply double click (or right click) on it to open your found file.

Mouse Locator 1.0 — Find you mouse when you've lost it and save your eyesight and keep your cool. Mouse locator is just what I've wanted especially when using MS Word. Press a key to find the "temporary locator pointer or move the mouse a little bit. I like the key press alternative more than the move mouse, but both are good. [4.5 macCs]

PDFshrink 3.1 — Put your PDFs on a diet! PDFshrink is an excellent solution for the problem of bloated, oversized PDF files. Depending on the end use for the PDF, you can, with this application, significantly reduce it in side without adversely affecting image quality. [4.0 macCs]

CandyBar 2.5.1 — Custom System, Application, Toolbar, Dock and other icons the easy way

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

The Iconfactory
candybar@iconfactory.com
http://www.iconfactory.com/cb_home.asp
Clear Help (ReadMe) and FAQ available at the website.
Version Date: May 27, 2005
Shareware: $13 USD.
File Size: ca. 4 MB
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1 or later including Tiger.
Audience: All user levels

Strength: An easy to use tool to customize the system and application icons on your Macintosh

Weakness: Insufficient emphasis provided to users on the fact that one must have an external source of icons to best apply the software to create a truly personalized result.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.4.

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Introduction
Last year I reviewed FolderBrander 1.3 [macC February, 2005] and iconCompo 2.0 [macC March, 2005]. I've enjoyed using both to customize my generic folders with *branded* either text or an image. However, these products, although useful to me did not serve as fully integrated icon creation and replacement tools. I've also read good things about Folder Icon X and will be reviewing it shortly.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm neither slamming these fine products nor asking them to perform outside of the function they were designed to do. However, when I read about CandyBar, Iconfactory IconBuilder's easier to use sibling, I jumped at the chance to review it. What I was looking for was a more versatile method of creating custom icons including icons for my operating system, without the need to reach into either a serious graphics or photo editor. [Alas for wanting an all in one application, I was wrong about the product's overall capabilities. No matter, it turned out to be a tool well worth working with.] The CandyBar application was not a totally generic customize-all-icons tool, able to deal with both systems and generic finder icons, but what it did it did very well.

Using the Product
Getting started was easy; I just dragged the CandyBar folder to my Application folder. One click, and I was off and doing customizations.

The product metaphor involves replacing existing icons (located in its main window pane) with your choice of replacement icons. The software finds all of your system and applications related icons by scanning your hard disk. Alternatively, if you chose to open an iContainer, those icons are loaded and can serve to replace those presently installed on your hard disk, at once, all at once.. The scan finds both systems and application icons. For obvious reasons, it does not include generic folder or document icons – Use the other tools I've identified to customize those.

System Icons found include General, Folder, Dock, Device, network, and clipping icons. Application icons: all packaged application icons were identified. The software couldn't find MS Word, Excel etc. even after I dragged their aliases into the top level of the Applications folder. Microsoft doesn't package its icons in a manner accessible to CandyBar.

Drag a new icon, from an external source, into any well to replace it. Import and export icons in a wide range of formats, including PNG and TIFF. To reverse this process, drag any icon out of a well to restore its original. The Internet contains many sources of free icons that can be used to customize your Macintosh.

In addition iContainers as well as conventionally formatted icon collections are available from http://www.iconfactory.com/ware.asp?preset=candybar. The iContainers to allow you to, with one click, totally change the appearance of your present operating system related icon set. Mixing and matching is more work, but then your icons will be truly unique.

The Software-Its Features (Abstracted from the developer's notes)
"CandyBar is a simple, easy, and fun way to customize your icons under Mac OS X! You can use CandyBar to change a heap of standard system icons —get a shiny new trash can, and personalize the look of your computer selecting from thousands of free icons available for download and much more! You can also use CandyBar to put a new face on your favorite applications, or dress up your hard drives. CandyBar does it all!

"CandyBar's Features CandyBar 2.5 fully supports Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger. Customize Mac OS X apps, toolbar icons, volume icons, folders, trash and more. Customize entire System & Application sets easily with iContainers It uses a "Drag & Drop" user interface to make changing icons a two-click process.
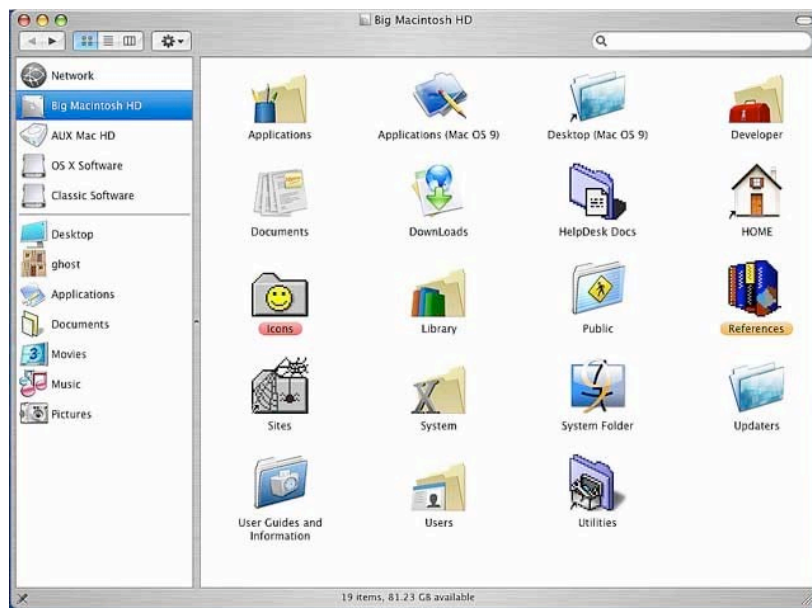
"*To Change System, Application, or Volume Icons*
> 1. Select the icon type you wish to edit by clicking "System", "Applications", or "Volumes" in CandyBar's toolbar
> 2. Drag any icon from your Desktop (or Finder) into any icon well to change that particular icon
> 3. Drag an icon out of any image well to restore it to its original state
> 4. Hit "Apply", enter your Admin username and password, and you're set!

"*To Change Application Extra Icons*
> 1. Click "App Extras" in CandyBar's toolbar
> 2. Drag an application to the Application Selector box to read its toolbar and document icons, and begin editing
> 3. Now, drag any icon from your Desktop (or Finder) into any icon well to change that icon
> 4. Drag an icon out of any image well to restore it to its original state
> 5. Hit "Apply", enter your Admin username and password, and you're set!

When CandyBar first changes an icon, it will automatically back up the existing original icon, so you can restore to it at any time. That's really all there is to it! Additionally, an auto-updating feature keeps CandyBar in sync with the latest OS X releases you install.

"What are these iContainer things?
"CandyBar also supports iContainers, pre-saved sets of icons bundled into a convenient single file. You can use iContainers to easily change large numbers of icons in one swoop, perfect for system replacement sets. Alternatively, you can save your favorite CandyBar icon setup into an iContainer, to easily share with others.

"To load an iContainer, simply double-click it, or choose *Open iContainer* from the File menu. That's it — the icons in the iContainer will be automatically loaded into the right image wells in the right section, replacing any icons currently loaded!

"To save any iContainer, just set up CandyBar's icons exactly the way you want, and choose save iContainer from the File menu. (If you plan to publish your iContainer on a web site, you should add your author information, so people know who made the icons.) Give it a name, and your iContainer will be packed!

"Saving an iContainer from the *Applications* mode will save an iContainer with only your replacement app icons. If a user who loads your iContainer doesn't have some of the applications you have, it's no problem -- those icons will be ignored.

So, get going! Double click the CandyBar icon, and enjoy!

Since most users will be replacing their system icons via iContainers, the process is extremely simple: double click an iContainer, wait until it loads, and click *Apply*. There is simply nothing ambiguous or unintuitive about CandyBar, in part due to Panic's excellent design, and because of the simplicity of the app's nature and function.

A Few Gripes
The Need For a Source of Externally Created Icons — Although some lip service is given to this fact, it its not well emphasized. A casual or newbie user will not realize that one cannot capture any individual icon from a given container for selective use. Fortunately, many such collections, in Macintosh OS X format are available in the Internet.

Wrong Application Type

CandyBar cannot change this application's icons. Only applications that have been 'packaged' can be edited.

OK

Missing Stuff — There seemed to be no unique icon for Zip disks [Tanks Fed Carden] and I wish I could easily modify with the Microsoft Office application icons. It'd be nice if CandyBar also changed the Finder icon.

Finding Icons for CandyBar — The publisher claims "a powerful search feature finds the icon you're looking for in seconds.' Actually this feature finds only icon collections created for Iconfactory, one still must search each downloaded collection manually if you're looking for a specific icon. In addition to the Iconfactory site, I suggest you check out XIcons and others at http://interfacelift.com/icons-mac/

Conclusions

If you don't like the supplied icons, no problem! There are lots of them on the Icon Factory web site and on Apple's site. If you already have a collection of icons, you can install them by augmenting the contents of one of the many containers. (Containers store the icons for CandyBar.) In addition, if you want to put some time into the process, you can make your own unique Mac icons using the other tools developed by the Iconfactory or the shareware tools I've earlier listed.

This was my first experience with CandyBar and wholesale changing of ones icons. I found it to be a most entertaining, as well as rewarding exercise. I've changed my icons back to the tried and true ones but know that I can easily create a unique looking interface for my Macintosh. So, can you!

I rate this product 4.0 macC's.

CocoaBooklet 2.0.1 — Create a booklet from of a PDF file or other document including web pages

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Publisher: Fabien Conus
fabien@iConus.ch
http://www.iconus.ch/fabien/cocoabooklet/
Released: January 24, 2006
Clear and complete Manual available as a Readme file.
Donationware
File Size: ca. 2.4 MB
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or Tiger.
Audience: All user levels.

Strengths: It works, with no glitches as described. Indeed, but not important to me it does it does save paper when printing PDFs as booklets, at the cost of reducing of page size.

Weaknesses: No serous ones were identified during my limited testing.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.4.

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Introduction
Although at present I have no need to convert my PDFs into booklets, the description caught my eye. To use it, I simply copied the application to my applications folder. I read the author's excellent readme file and I was ready to go. Now all I have to do, after months pass by, is to remember I have this fine tool in my collection when I need to blow a friend away by handing him a PDF file transformed into a booklet. As Kristie Masud of Spymac.com noted, "CocoaBooklet is incredibly easy to use." http://www.spymac.com/news/article.php?contentid=4023.

Within a few minutes of installation, I was able to create booklets directly from a PDF file, as well as this review formatted as an MS word and the author's Readme file that was formatted as an HTML file by using built-in print service feature.

Publisher's Description of CocoaBooklet's Function
This program lets you create a booklet out of a PDF file, which is known as pages imposition. It is a useful tool to reduce the number of pages that has to be printed, which lets you save a lot of paper.

A booklet is book that is bound in the middle. Which means that a booklet has four pages printed on one sheet of paper (two on each sides). A booklet is usually a half page in size while a mini-booklet is a quarter page in size.

How the software works — You just have to drop your PDF files on the application icon, or on the drop window to create a booklet. A progress window will show up giving you an estimation of the progress. The first step (initialization) can be quite long if you document is big, so be
Patient...

Such a booklet has a number of pages that is a multiple of 4. If your document does not have the required number of page, CocoaBooklet will automatically add blank pages at the end of the document, to achieve this multiple of 4.

As you deal with the product, most of the design of your booklet is done my way of the preferences panel. Once you've set your preferences, which will fifer for booklets of different lengths, you're ready to use the software.

CocoaBooklet Has Three Preferences Tabs

Page Setup — This first tab lets you set the page size. The default page orientation is landscape. This is what you will use most of the time to create a booklet out of a portrait PDF document. If you have a landscape formatted document (for example PowerPoint slides) ,you should enter a portrait page size for the booklet. The preference tab also lets you change the margins. These will mainly depend on the margins allowed by your printer and create gutters for "binding".

Destination — The second tab sets the destination of the created booklet. The default behavior is to ask you for a destination for each created booklet. However, you may also choose to save it in the same directory as the original PDF document. The booklet will have the same name as the original file but with an added suffix that you can choose (default: -booklet). You can also decide to use a specified directory. The suffix is not mandatory in this last case but you should still set it in order to avoid replacing the original file.

Options — The third preferences tab holds some additional options:

Make a mini-booklet
Make a double-sided mini-booklet (see below)
Do not flip odd pages
Split the document into several booklets
Split the booklet into odd and even pages
Add fold and cut guides

You drop your PDF files on the CocoaBooklet application icon, which I've placed in my dock. As Kriste Masuda noted, and I verified, "with a document that is less than 20 pages the process takes just seconds. Large documents will take significantly longer".

Remember a booklet has a number of pages that are arranged and printed as a multiple of 4. If your document does not have the required number of page, CocoaBooklet will automatically add blank pages at the end of the document, to achieve this multiple of 4.

CocoaBooklet also lets you create a mini-booklet. This is especially useful for printers that cannot print on both sides. What you will get is this:
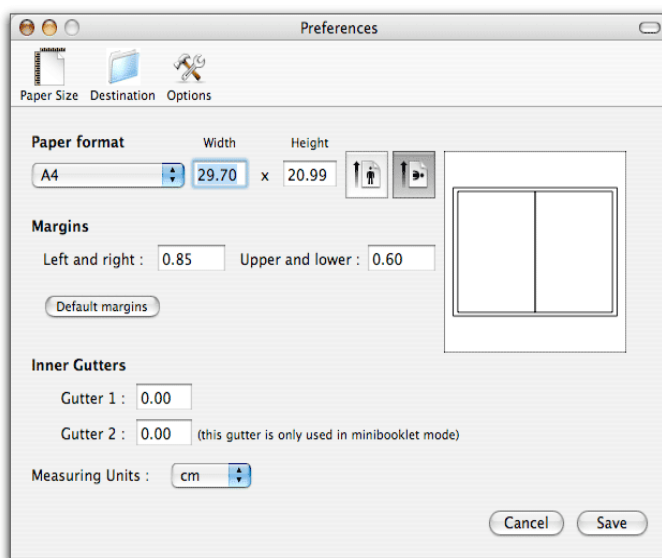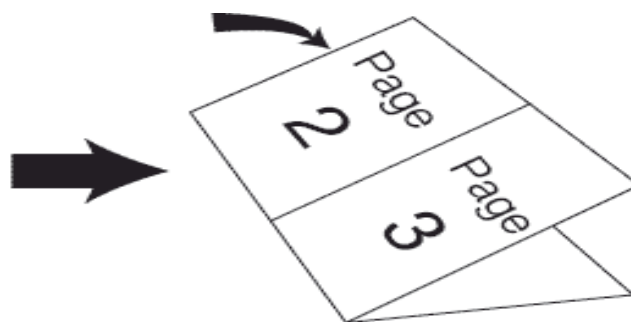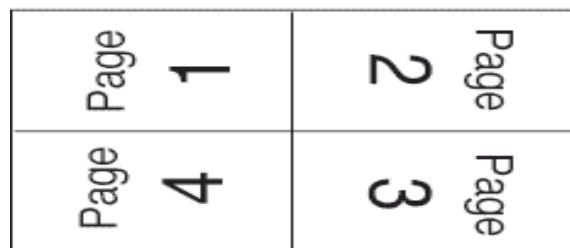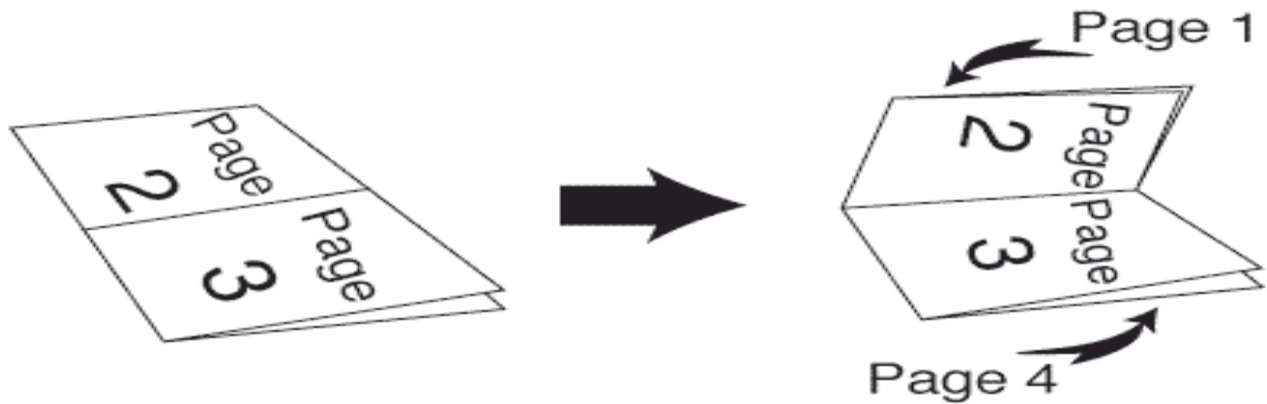
Using CocoaBooklet as a PDF Service —
CocoaBooklet lets you use it as a PDF service. That
service is only available for Mac OS X 10.2.4 and
above.

Once this is done, try printing a document (from
your favorite browser or text editor or whatever).
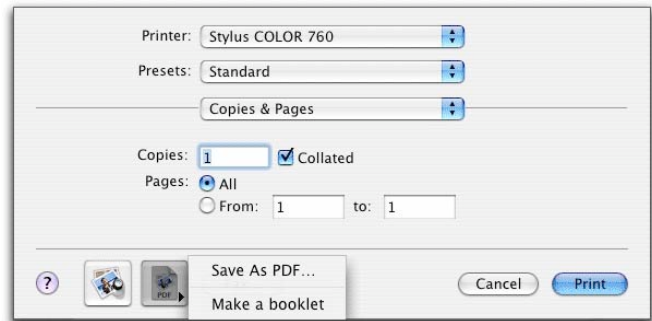On the print window, you will find a button with a
PDF icon. if you click on this button you will have
the opportunity of not only creating a PDF file but
also to directly create a booklet from within any
document that supports printing.

For more information about PDF services you can checkout Apple's website at
http://www.apple.com/applescript/print/.

A few Minor Problems
Printing Booklets inside of Acrobat — Although I could create a booklet from an HTML file, I could not make a
booklet from within the print menu of an Acrobat file [opened in Acrobat 7]. To do so, I had to drop the closed PDF
file onto the CocoaBooklet Icon or into application window.

Changing Between Booklets and Mini-Booklets — In order to change your selected (e.g., preferred) booklet format,
you must reset your CocoaBooklet preferences. I attempted to create a service booklet for each but did not succeed.
Perhaps Monsieur Fabien Conus can provide that ability in the next update of this otherwise excellent product.

Conclusions
What more can I tell you? The software works in the manner described by the developer. If creating booklets from
your PDFs appeals, download it and donate to its developer. I rate this product 4.5 macC's.

PS:
The Developer: Fabien Conus, if I've translated the French correctly, is an engineer and physician who lives in
Lausanne, Switzerland.

DEVONnote 1.8 — text content-oriented personal information manager

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

DEVONtechnologies, LLC
support@devon-technologies.com
http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/devonnote/devonnote.php

Shareware: $20 USD Free Download - Expires after 150 hours of runtime.
File Size: ca. 10 MB
Released: 24 Nov 2005
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later including Tiger
Audience: All user levels.
 Clear and complete manual and FAQ available at the website, as well as active user forums.

Strengths: "DEVONnote helps you take notes and keep them organized. It keeps all your ideas, documents, important information, and even your bookmarks in one single, accessible place, and supports you with professional but easy-to-use features for making structure out of chaos."

Weaknesses: The software's AI engine cannot yet harness Spotlight's search capabilities, supplemented by a user-selected phrase or two (e.g., Boolean phrases), to search my hard disk in order to hyperlink all *related* notes together. But being a non-linear thinker, I'm not sure that I could live with the AI results, so it's not a big weakness.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.4.

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Introduction

I am attracted to and like to test notepad software and, when feeling particularly adventurous, brainstorming and data organizing software. As an information junkie whose interests are eclectic, I am torn between using the tools that I have and know (e.g., FileMaker Pro [FMP], and iNotePad) and exploring for more flexible and perhaps capable tools. Though my existing tools for collecting the bits and bats of important trivia I may sometimes use are somewhat limited in their abilities, I also wonder whether the cost of changing to a new tool would be worth the effort. In the past I have reviewed

> NovaMind (a graphically oriented tool for organizing ideas and data-macC 12/2004)
> StickyBrain (a universal Note manager - macC 12/2003)
> Tinderbox (a personal content management assistant that stores notes, ideas, and plans. (09/2003) and
> a myriad of shareware notepad and ToDo List applications.

All had valuable features but none struck me deeply enough to make my note conversion costs acceptable.

But enough said… I was hooked when I read that DEVONnote is an "*easy-to-use, intelligent note pad* capable of storing and organizing plain or rich texts and file aliases". I didn't even have to read that "DEVONnote helps you take notes, collect and keep them organized." More convincing was that it claimed to "keep all your ideas, documents, important information, and even your bookmarks in one single, accessible place, and supports you with professional but easy-to-use features for making structure out of chaos."

Publisher's Highlights
DEVONnote is a notepad you can use to organize various data as linked, easy-to-retrieve notes sets (notebooks). It uses the same database technology as its big brother, DEVONthink, but has a less complex interface."
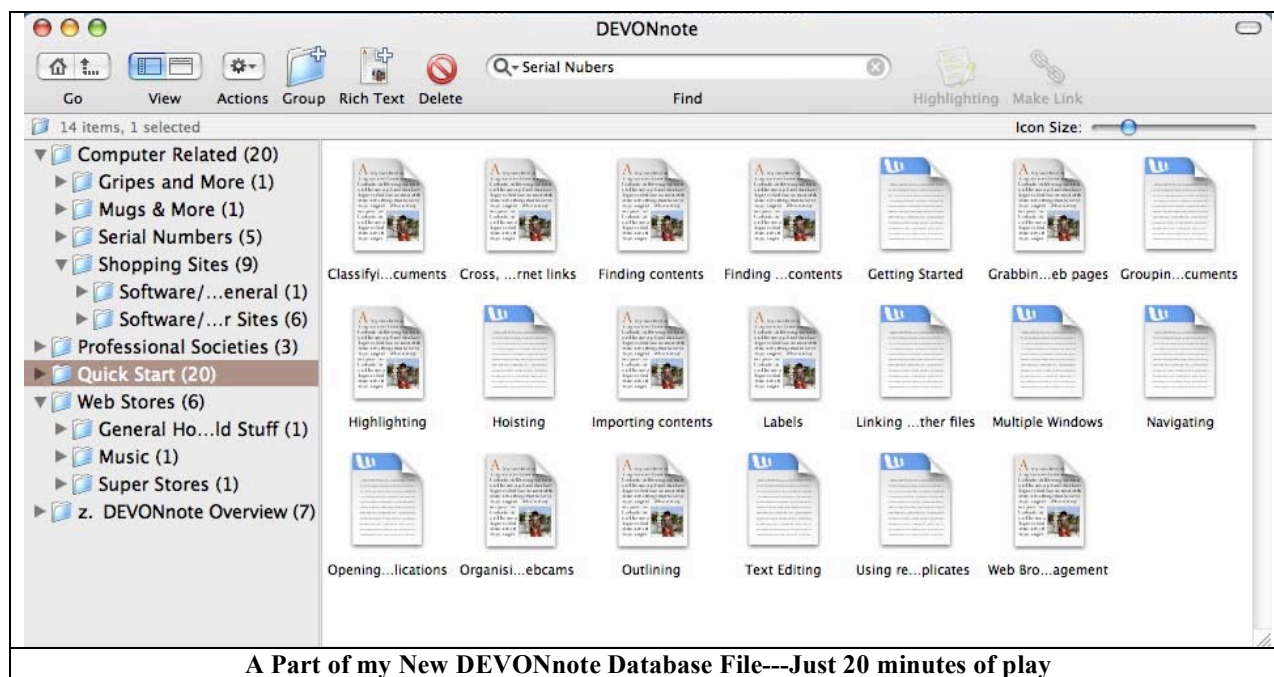[DEVONthink was reviewed by Giles Turnbull in the August 2005, Volume 3 Issue 8, macCompanion.]
"It stores and organizes plain or rich text files, as well as file aliases. It can be used to store bookmarks, and from outside the DEVONnote application, capture notes using the Macintosh OS X Services menu. Application-based information that can be handled includes the previously mentioned text and RTF files, scanned documents, notes, e-mails (text, of course), and bookmarks, as well as links to multimedia files, together in one simple to use database. The developer uses the term *notebook* as the metaphor to describe such note collections."

I agree with Giles that "DEVONnote comes in a clean, easy-to-use interface that gives you all the tools you need in a familiar Mac-like environment. Even the most complex AI functions are just *buttons*, and a simple click makes DEVONnote dig through all your data to find a place for your latest note, or to show you all ideas and concepts that are similar to the one you've just selected."

Using the Product
Installation is simple: just drag and drop the product into your applications folder and you're ready to go.

I initially tested the product by converting, in less than 20 minutes, part of the contents of my iNotePad database. Creating nested folders to meet my organizational needs was easy, and the simple drag and drop of each entry into the appropriate folder finished the job.

A Part of my New DEVONnote Database File---Just 20 minutes of play

My Initial DEVONnote Categories	**My iNotePad Data and Category Source**
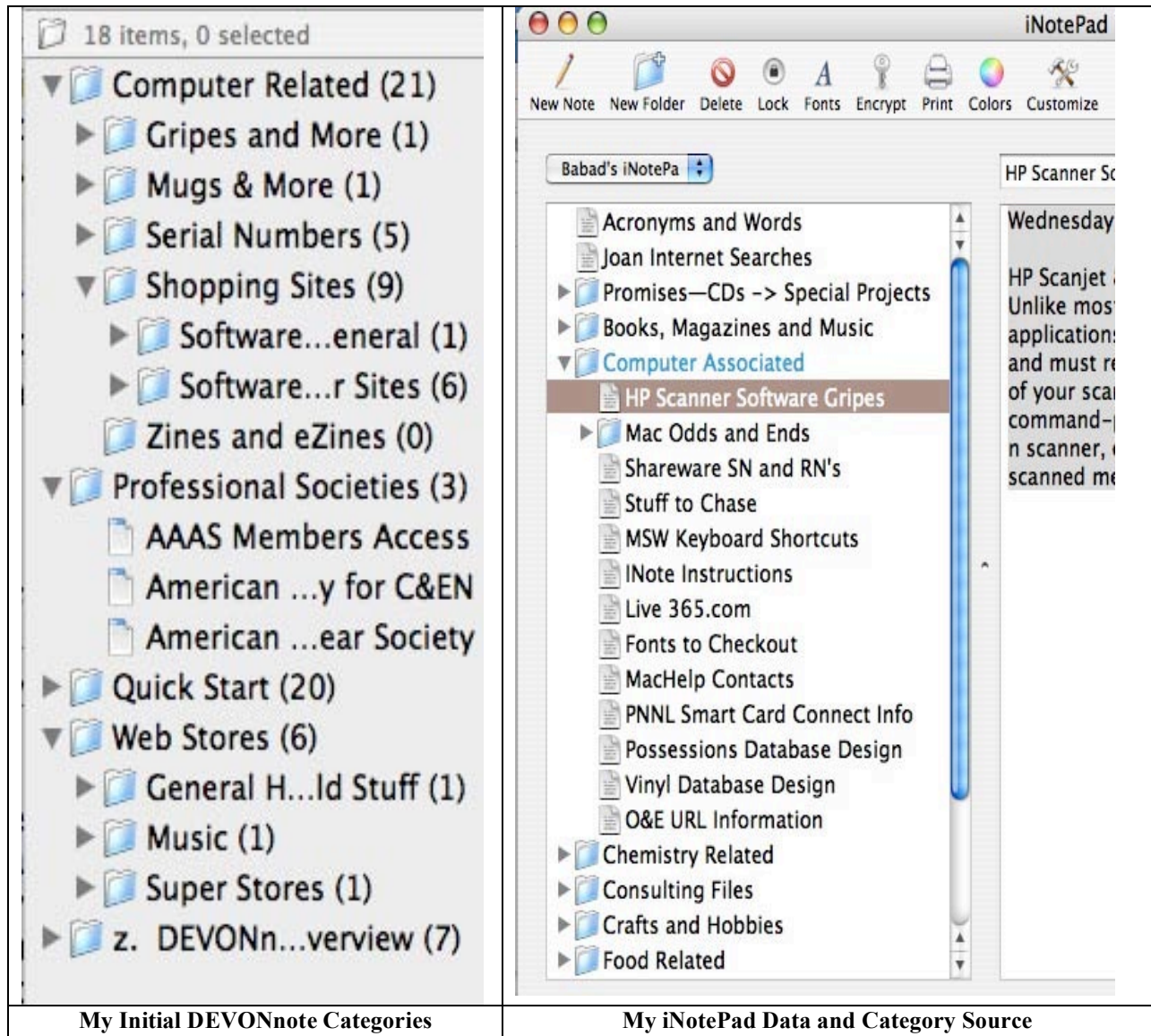
I then worked with the product, playing with some of the "possible uses" listed in the product manual. The following items, organized by project or theme, were immediately useful to me:

Write down my ideas before they vanish;
Document information during phone messages including contacts, message foci, and To-Dos;
Easily grab text data from websites and store them;
Keep together important information from any source with my various project-related documents (Some of this was cut and pasted from iNotePad and FileMaker Pro databases.);
Quickly create an info collection for a specific topic (e.g., the key focal points for my next major product review).

I also toyed with but did not seriously test these items:

> *Manage my bookmarks* — I've already passed on this challenge for a number of shareware products, so wasn't ready to step up to the plate for DEVONnote. Indeed, I recently tossed my FMP database of URLs since Google and DEVONagent were more up to date and faster than searching the FMP database.
>
> *Visit frequently used websites in a convenient interface* — I have no pattern of repeated website use except for shareware sites, so this was not a tool I needed.
>
> *Organize your ideas or projects in outlines* — Although years ago I was a serious user of outlines, I've not done much of that lately. I dislike the outlining feature in MS Word—my primary productivity tool—and have not yet tried the well-received Omni Outliner http://www.omnigroup.com/applications/omnioutliner.
>
> *Create a network of information for my projects or interests* — This is something I'll try when my next nuclear waste management consulting job comes along. It looks like a very useful feature, but will take some thought to get it right.

Of course, to integrate and thus gain access to a collection of notes, you must take the time to organize them. My solution for this problem was not to look backward at my existing stuff, but rather to start a new data notebook as I needed to use the tidbits stored on my computer and add to it new information I was collecting. I could always, if I needed to, later add the older tidbits I'd stored. In this way, I could easily add new materials to my notebook as needed to organize other accumulated factoids.

All of this worked fine with text-based materials, but *I still could not create any links to specified downloaded images I'd stored on my hard drive.* (I'm still trying to work with the Wiki linking feature — not yet being successful with either text-based content of images.) Although the developer states that links between notes, or from a note to a file or folder, can be created simply by drag-and-drop action, I could not make this feature work for me. More about that later. (Creating Wiki links requires Mac OS X 10.4.)

(The practice of Wiki linking is apparently comparable to creating *hyperlinks* in MS Word. Unfortunately, the term is not defined, nor does it fit with the standard definition of a Wiki *function* http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/w/wiki.html [e.g., any collaborative website that users can easily modify via the web, typically without restriction].)

A side thought about organizing existing material: If I never use a piece of information buried on my hard disk, so what? I simply ignore its existence. And no, I can't hear one hand clapping.

Software Features
While DEVONnote is an intelligent note pad capable of storing, editing and organizing plain or rich texts and file aliases, I found I could also use it to store (text) clippings and insert and organize my bookmarks. And, as promised by the publisher, DEVONnote can also serve as a search tool and as a tidbits archiving tool. Using its built-in find feature I searched its database, which keeps track of my notes, rapidly, with little noticeable pause in all the searches I ran.

DEVONnote includes a full-feature rich text editor with advanced editing capabilities including the ability to capture tables in rich text documents, rulers, styles, real-time statistics, and the ability to display invisible characters. It is possible to mark text sections of important passages in one of seven colors with the highlighter tool, but this is a feature I don't need.

In addition to just dropping or pasting existing information into a note, I could use the powerful view/edit features (pane) to edit any plain or rich text document right away. I could also, using the built-in browser, view web pages on the fly and capture their "text" content.

DEVONnote also comes with enhanced web browsing capabilities. When surfing the Web, you can use the DEVONnote integrated Safari-based browser (based on Apple's WebKit) to visit your favorite sites without switching applications and to capture notes in real time via the Finder's Services menu. (Of course as an Apple *Service*, you can import materials directly from Safari into DEVONnote.) New notes can be immediately removed from web content and added to a predefined DEVONnote folder without manually moving them. I continue used the web text capture features joyously, especially when doing a technical search, cutting steps from my factoid collection processes.

This product also has solid but flexible bookmark managing capabilities that I am starting to use. I like this feature better than standard bookmark organizing tools because I can add bookmark information (lists) to the folder containing other notes on a project.

Other Features of Note
> An option allows you to float DEVONnote main windows above all other windows, making dragging contents from other applications much easier.
> Supports bidirectional drag-and-drop (e.g., to and from a note).
> Group or un-groups contents to create note collections (notebooks), and organizes them in Finder-like hierarchies.
> Helps you sort in new stuff with the *Classify,* and *See Also* function buttons.
> Clones note contents to multiple groups with the Replicate function.
> Creates cross-links by Command-Option dragging documents/groups or files/folders into a rich text document.
> Imports MS Word documents using either Panther or DEVON Technologies AntiWordService freeware product, http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/freeware/applications.php
> Allows a live word, paragraph, and character count above every text document, always in sight (invaluable to any writer).

Limitations
No Serious Limitations Found — Everything I tested worked well, and the product's learning curve is much gentler than those of NovaMind, StickyBrain, or Tinderbox. DEVONnote is software I could easily learn to integrate into my daily computing.

Dealing with Downloaded Images — Most of my reports and study results are illustrated, usually in MS Word format. As a result, I have a number of graphics collections on CDs, DVDs, and on an external hard drive. I would welcome a way to create an alias pathway to a specific image and store that link in DEVONnote. This way I could retrieve all the images I might plan to use on a project. It would also save disk space, since I now put a duplicate copy of the image into my project folder. I know I could use aliases, but why not wish for more? (If this feature exists, I was unable to find it in the manual. Perhaps a simple tutorial on Wiki linking would solve my problem. If not, linking to images is a feature I would welcome.)

Cross-linking Notes — According to the developer, DEVONnote helps you sort in newly captured tidbits and cross link them with Wiki-style links (hyperlinks). I must be getting old, because I could not get this feature to work for me.

Another Point of View — I much prefer List View when looking at folder contents, and having that alternative would be welcome.

Wishes, Perhaps — As I continue to work with DEVONnote, I wonder whether it is possible to create several notebooks, each with a different name. That would allow me to set up different notebook for my professional work and for household and hobby related material. Right now, I am putting all the tidbits into one large, and growing, database. Its easy to search but…

Conclusions

As noted at the beginning of this review, "DEVONnote helps you take notes, collect existing notes (editable text and, in principle, links to images), and keep them organized. It keeps all your outlined ideas, information-containing documents, important images, and even your bookmarks in one single, accessible place."

The product supports your retrieval of information with extensive and well designed but easy-to-use features for creating a rational structure of your related notes. Its flexible trial period gives you more than enough time to realize it is worth the purchase price.

I find myself starting to use it once or twice a day, but haven't tried it in a new multiple task project. However, its familiar Finder-like folder-oriented structure makes it simple to start to categorize my notes, and the quick search makes it easy to find things I've linked within it. But I've not yet fully explored how well it can find and integrate materials on my hard disk, the factoids I've scattered helter-skelter within its 56 GB maw.

Buy it! T=The time you save searching your haystack of notes for information you've lost appears well worth the cost. I rate this product 4.5 macC's.

PS:
For more kudos about this product, from a professional writer's point of view, check out Discovery of the Week: DEVONnote *by Giles Turnbull* Monday February 21, 2005 at
http://www.oreillynet.com/mac/blog/2005/02/discovery_of_the_week_devonnot.html

Illumination 1.5.7 — Find document files on any disk, whether it's initially mounted on your Mac or not

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: Brian O'Brian
Radical Breeze Software
webmaster@radicalbreeze.com
http://www.radicalbreeze.com/illumination/index.html
Shareware: $20 USD
File Size: ca. 2.9 GB
Version Date: 05 November 2005
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later including Tiger. Windows XP and Linux versions are also available.

Audience: All user levels

Strengths: Find files on any disc. Whether it's currently on your Mac or not.

Weakness: A help file for those who are not yet intermediate level Macintosh users would be useful.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.3.

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

Introduction
I have used DiskTracker http://www.disktracker.com, as has *MacAddict Magazine*, for years as a means of indexing my archival CDs. This allowed me, in principal, to retrieve the files located on them. [There is an assumption here that when you named your document files, you gave them meaningful names. This was more difficult in early Macintosh operating systems where you were limited to 27 letters in a document name.]

The DiskTracker software functioned as a resource for finding files, after I indexed all my archival disks, but I found its interface cumbersome to use. Although the catalogs I created made me aware of what I owned, I had to then manually search my target disk since. DiskTracker offers no path information to speed up to finding the needed file.

I was therefore intrigued when I read the description of Radical Breeze's Illumination, to learn that if I mounted the target disk containing the file, Illumination would take me right to it. This review is a result of my following my curiosity. I'm glad I did.

Using the Product
Making a disc searchable from Illumination is a simple process. Insert the disc into your Mac and either drag and drop the disc onto the "Discs" list in Illumination or click the "Add Disc" button. The disks I loaded were primarily shareware and computer related, and contained both my ongoing shareware collection, articles of interest, macC review files and an assortment of volumes containing clip art and fonts.

For this review, I indexed 17 disks (CDs and DVDs, using my built in Superdrive [Pioneer DVD-RW DVR-105] in less than 45 minutes. Their net content was 8,969.1 MB and contained 38,094 files. The database created was 11.8 MB in size, but my zip archive copy was only 1.6 MB in size. The nearly 12 MB of database files is not a heavy overhead for the ease of access provided me by the software.
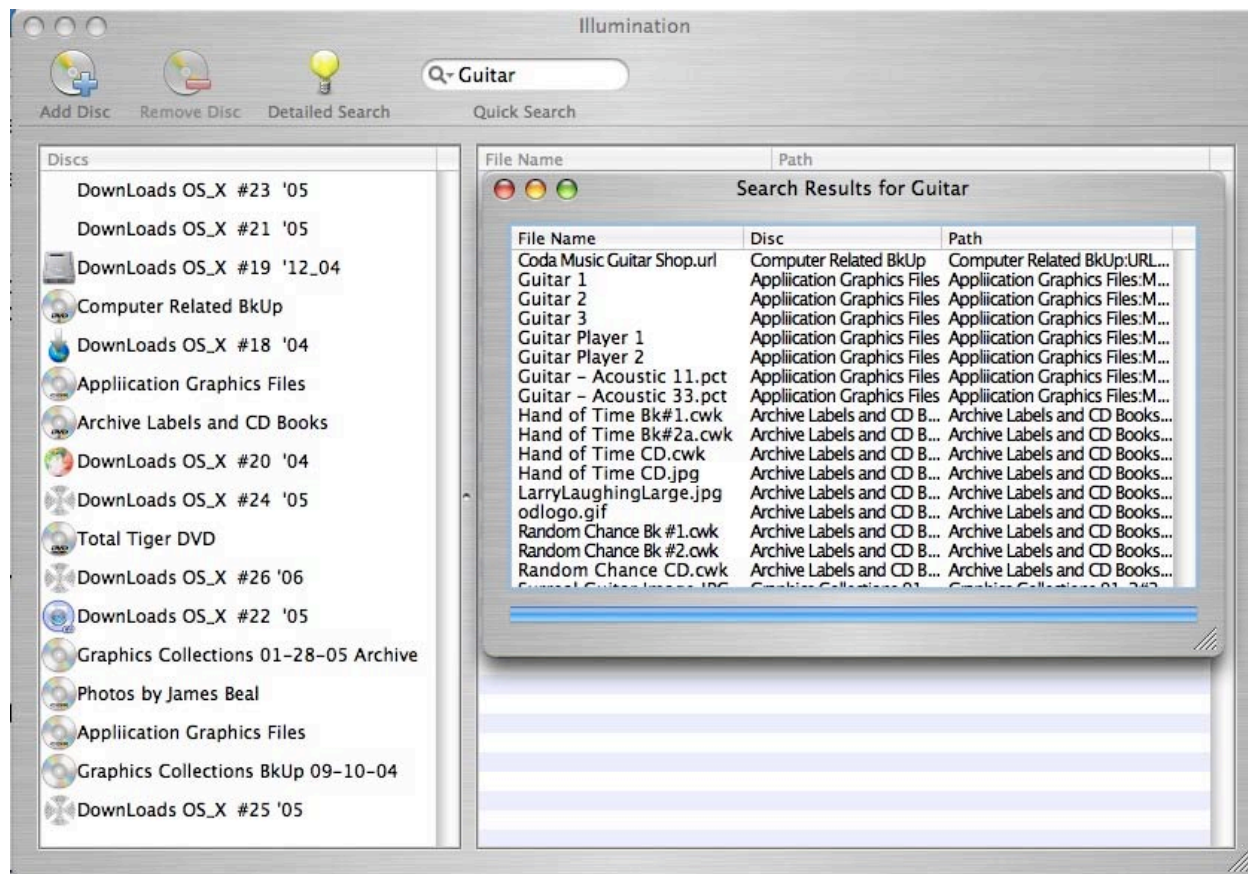
Searching for files using both simple and detailed search modes was straightforward. In a number of instances, I verified search results by using my DiskTracker indices of my selected archival disks and duplicated the *found* files identified by Illumination.

Illumination makes it easier to find, within its few limitations, the files you're looking for in your archives or linked fileserver volumes. Once you find the right file, simply double click on it to open it on its original source volume. If not mounted, the software points you at mounting the source volume on which your file is located. Then, simply double click (or right click) on it to open your found file.
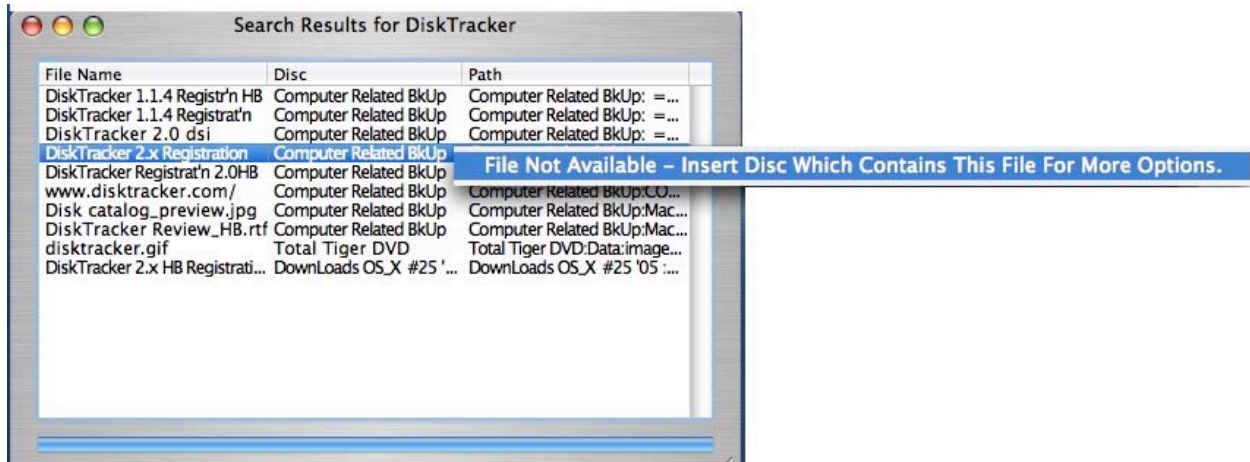
Note that its *Disc Notes Drawer* feature, if used in a disciplined fashion, makes it possible to add a note to yourself. A note reminding you where you've got the volume (e.g., CD, or DVD) stored. Remember this feature only works if you don't move the disk to a new storage location—so no Spring Cleaning is allowed.

One significant limitation of my Illumination review was that I chose not to index my hard disk. It wasn't a question of indexing speed, which certainly is fast enough. Rather, I continue to change the contents of my hard disk, archiving material to CD or DVD when I no longer use it. My day-to-day work also generates lots of new files. Therefore, any database I created would be soon be out of date. Instead, I use EasyFind [December 2005 macC] for searching my hard disk, with Apples Spotlight and Find File as last resorts. Note that a working hard disk is not an archival volume.

The Software-Its Features
Illumination allows you to index and search through any volume (any hard drive, CD, network volume). Online or offline, Illumination allows you to search through your files based on File Name, Path, Creation Date, Modification Date, Type & Creator Codes or File Size.

www.versiontracker.com

I also could, something not noted by its developer, easily search the database by document extensions [using the file name field. This turned out to be a mistake because there were more hits than I could easily deal with.

Brian, could you add another search field category that allowed searches, in addition to file name, for me to add the file extension?

In the past, that combination is one of my most effective ways to find files. This is especially true when I've forgotten the exact name of the file. *Oh sweet memories…* Earlier versions of Apple's find function allowed such searches. *As an aside, gentle reader, I have still not figured out how to search document extensions in Tiger [e.g., .doc, .cwk] with either Spotlight or Apple's find file [Command -F.]*

So whether you're looking for an MP3 file, a picture, readme file or other document, Illumination ca help you find it. Uses the product to find any specific file on one of the volumes you've indexed (once only). It utilizes of a highly optimized database of volume contents to assist you in fast focused performing searches.

Although Illumination will index packages as well as other documents, (.dmg) it will neither find nor index applications or folders. The reasons for needing to index (nested) folders are something I talk about below.

In addition, you can use the built-in, optional, web server link to search your files from any web browser, accessing the server using information designated in its preferences. *[I have no server volumes so was unable to test this feature.]*

Especial Kudos
Brian O'Brian was unusually responsive to my review questions, and based on the history of the product, the developer is quite active in maintaining this product up to date by responding to user requests for features and fixing an occasional bug.

A Few Minor Problems and One Gripe

Access to the Radial Breeze Forum — When I attempted to get to the forum at http://www.radicalbreeze.com/bbs/ neither Safari nor DEVONagent could access the link. Brian, by return eMail informed me "As for the forum... it got hacked. Hard. So we had to take it down for at least a while."

Easier Database Backup Feature Needed – Because none of the information I was able to access provided a path to the location where the database was stored, I contact Brian O'Brian, it's developer for that information. Backups can be made by accessing the database files at Illumination stores the database files in [~/Library > Application Support > Illumination]." Thanks Brian. A number of my applications [e.g., TheRecipeManager] actually have a menu item function-allowing backup of their database. It would be a nice addition to you excellent and evolving product.

Found Items Count — If the find window could list the number of files found at the bottom of the window, it would be helpful. Checking *Get Info* only provides the total size of the database.

Gripe; A Key Feature I'd Love to Love

The Inability to Search for folder names and associated folder sizes limited my use of the test database I created. Although finding information in Illumination Is fast any easy, some searches were *difficult* if not *impossible* to do. [No this is not a developer design defect. It is rather a problem created by the way I organize archival shareware disks.] Finding folders and their sizes is the only feature in DiskTracker I'd love to have you port to Illumination.
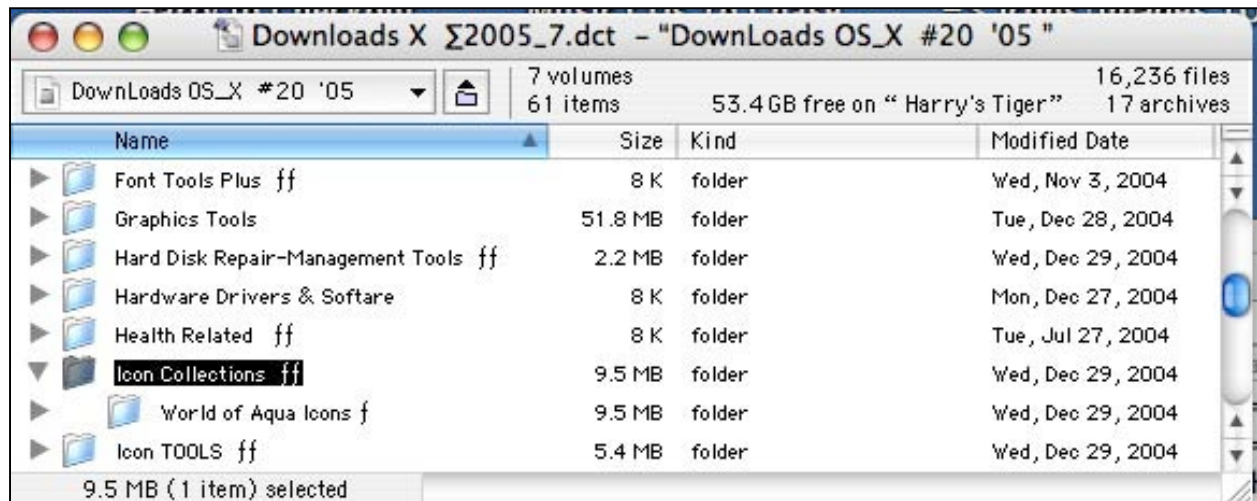
Why is finding folders and know their size is important to me? In each of the 27 CDs that contain my Macintosh OS X shareware collection, I use a consistent standard set of folders to store my goodies. For example, I use a generic folder called *Icon Collections* for storing such downloads. If I could find all *Icon Collections* folders in my new database, including their sizes, I could more easily find where I stashed that large &%$#@# set of downloaded Icons that had for several years taken too much space in my hard disk. I know it had in it a great icon of a telephone, one I need.

The Good News
Brian O'Brian Shared… In Addition, the Future Might Hold
"Just so you know, here is the list of potential improvements as it stands right now for Illumination 2:

- Faster indexing (not by a lot, but noticeable) - Faster searching.
- Optional column view of files (Babad notes I still Prefer List view.
- Import/Export of discs as XML or tab delimited files - Export search results as XML or tab delimited file.
- Spotlight plugin (to allow searching of Illumination indexed discs via Spotlight).
- Various interface improvements (icons, control layouts, etc).
- Disc icon stored within the database (it is currently stored as a separate .icns file).
- Preference to allow the location the disc database(s) is stored to be changed .

"Some of this is already complete, others may not make it into the final 2.0 release. But I thought it would be of interest to you."

Conclusions
If you archive all sorts of files to collections of CDs and DVDs, with the thought of access some of that material in the future you need a first class cataloging system. Such a system should be easy to create, and make it easy once created to find and access that file you need. The one whose name you vaguely remember which you know contains just that information you need to finish a project to find that great old song or picture. Illumination is such a tool. Within its limitations, it is the fastest way I've found to search my archives. Try it, buy it; find those lost document files will never be the same again. I rate this product 4.0 macC's

Mouse Locator 1.0 — Find you mouse when you've lost it and save your eyesight and keep your cool

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

2POINT5FISH.COM/
support@2point5fish.com
http://www.2point5fish.com/
Freeware File Size: ca. 276 KB
Version Posted: April 15, 2005
FAQ: http://www.2point5fish.com/faq.html serves as an excellent help resource.
Uninstaller: Provided.
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later. Mouse Locator version 1.0 is not compatible with Macs using Intel processors. A new compatible version is scheduled for release during the 2nd quarter of 2006.
Audience: All user levels.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.5. I sue a Logitech Model Y-5RR53 wireless mouse and keyboard.
Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

Strengths: Mouse locator is just what I've wanted especially when using MS Word. Press a key to find the "temporary locator pointer or move the mouse a little bit. I like the key press alternative more than the move mouse, but both are good.

Weakness: I've found no significant problems when using this product.

Introduction
In order to keep track of my mouse's location, I now and previously have used Unsanity's Mighty Mouse software haxie. http://www.unsanity.com/haxies/mightymouse. The good part about this product is that by enlarging the cursor, in many of its forms-especially the thin-line text cursor, it was easier to see. The bad thing was that with a larger cursor, I often grabbed the wrong or more "word or lines" when selecting text. This was especially true when working with text smaller that 12-point in size. This was due the to the cursor being taller then the text I was trying to highlight and change or grab. Now the two products, Mouse Locator and Mighty Mouse are not designed for the same task; but both can serve to locate a visually *disappeared* cursor. *[As an aside, Magic Mouse did not interfere with the operation of Mouse Locator and I'm keeping both installed.]*

Using the Product
Installation of the product was simple; just us the installer that the developer has provided. The product is installed as a system preference and the program's controls (trigger display, display time and hot key) are set from there. The installer leads you to the preferences pane, which you set to your liking. The definition of these controls is a part of the help function that is part of the preferences pane.

Display Time — Once the locator has been displayed. It will remain visible for the number of seconds specified. You can also set the Locator to fade when the mouse button is pressed. During the display lime, the locator will track your mouse movements. After the locator has faded away, Mouse locator will automatically reset.

Delay Time — Mouse Locator's trigger delay is the period that the mouse must remain stationary before Mouse Locator will be activated. Once Mouse Locator is activated, the next time that the mouse moves, the locator will be displayed, helping you find your mouse.

I chose to replace the standard green "bulls eye cursor the product displays [its logo) with a more colorful one following the instruction provided on the vendor website.
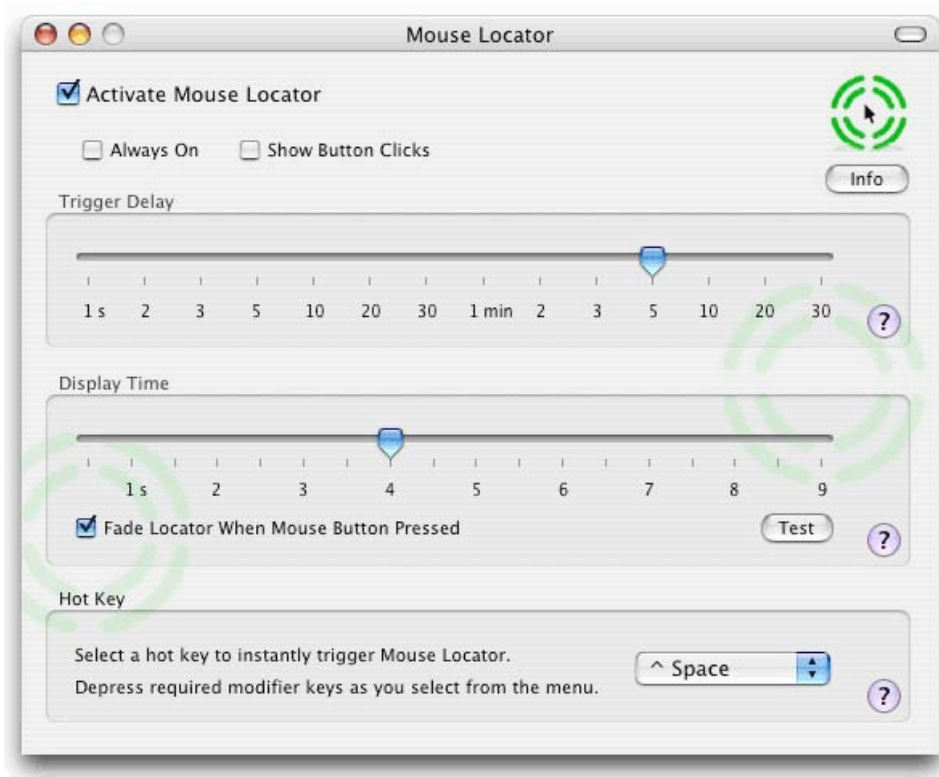

How This All Works — Mouse Locator creates an outline over your mouse cursors (location) so you can find it on the screen instantly without hunting for it. It can be actuated by a smart key combination or automatically triggers after a controllable time-period ranging from 1 second to 30 minutes after you've last moved your mouse.

I especially like the ability to customize the settings to suit my working style. I have often been frustrated by the cursor changing from a pointer to a thin bar when in text- now it's not a problem. In addition, the software is useful in graphics programs when the cursor may become a tiny crosshair if you are using certain tools/brushes.

On the website you'll also find information on how to create your own locator, a feature I chose not to test. In addition, the developers website has posted a set of locators developed by others that can be downloaded and used with the product.
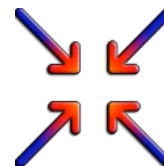
My Tests — Mouse Locator works with Microsoft Word 2004, GraphicConverter 5.8, Adobe Acrobat 7, Eudora and FileMaker Pro 6. Since these are my most heavily used applications, the results please me just fine. I did not expect the product to work with Safari and of course, it didn't. Why should it; you don't usually cursor-around in your browser. My only unusual result was with DEVONnote which I've elsewhere review this month for macC. Although the location highlight appeared, it appeared to the right of the actual cursor location. Mmmm. No big deal my notes are small and I use 14 point Lucinda Grande as my default type with a Magic Mouse enlarged text bar.

To Download and Install a Single New Locator - Customize
Control-Click on the locator of choice on the locator *gallery* or locator *exchange* webpage, and select 'Save Image to the Desktop' from the popup menu. Alternately drag and drop the desired locator image to your desktop.

Switch to the Finder and open your Pictures folder (located at the top level of your Home folder). Move the 'MouseLocator.png' file from the Desktop to the top level of your Pictures folder. Do not rename the file.

Open the System Preferences, and select Mouse Locator. If it's not on, turn *off* the 'Activate Mouse Locator' checkbox. Next, turn on the 'Activate Mouse Locator' checkbox. Mouse Locator will then locate the 'MouseLocator.png' file that you saved previously and use the new graphic for the locator. Click the 'Test' button to try out the new locator.

Nice piece of software, even as I was reviewing it, I found it useful.

A Single Gripe
The information on downloading and installing single locators was only to be found on the web page rather than in a readme file. In addition, the explanations of the product controls could only be found in the preferences panel. Make this one a purrfect 5.0. Write and include a readme file. It's easy, just cut and paste the materials you've already created and all a few screen shots and headers.

Conclusions
The product allows you to create a highly visible cursor locator, one whose design meets you esthetic sense. The locator instantly reveals your Mouse position. In addition to chasing a lost cursor while you work, the program can highlight your cursor location after you had a coffee break. Using Mouse Locator eliminates the frustrating search of your screen for that #$%&@# cursor.

Try it, its free and stable. I rate this product 4.5 macCs.

PDFshrink 3.1 — Put your PDFs on a diet!

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: Barry Bowden
Apago, Inc.
support@apago.com
http://www.apago.com/pdfshrink
Shareware: $35.00 USD
A fully functional 10-day demo is available for download. **File Size:** ca. 1.9 MB
Released: April 22, 2004
Help: The product has an easy to use and reasonably developed user guide that also contains FAQs.
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 and later including Tiger.
Audience: All PDF knowledgeable user levels.

Strengths: PDFshrink is an excellent solution for the problem of bloated, oversized PDF files. Depending on the end use for the PDF, you can, with this application, significantly reduce it in side without adversely affecting image quality.

Weakness: The software doesn't do much to decrease the size of formatted, unillustrated word processor documents or PDF containing low resolution (150 DPI) graphics; but it would not be by design, expected to.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.5.

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Introduction

Prior to testing PDFshrink, I had only two ways to shrink the size of a PDF file. The first, starting with a file that is not in PDF format is to either print to PDF or print to compressed PDF using Apples Print feature. The second is to use Acrobat 6 or 7 on a PDF file. If you already use Adobe Acrobat 7, you may not need PDFshrink. Acrobat 7 Professional does all that PDFshrink does (except eliminate tiny metadata) and offers finer control; Acrobat 7 Standard does a decent job of reducing file sizes, by narrowing the versions of reader that can open them. However, you can't control how it shrinks them.

Jim Felici noted as in a Macworld mini review of PDFshrink 3.0.1… "When it comes to PDF files, one size, doesn't fit all, especially if you want to use such files on the Web. However, if what I tested proves more universally true, Apago's PDFshrink 3.0.1 can help make many of your larger PDF files smaller by letting you alter image resolution and compression and remove unwanted content.
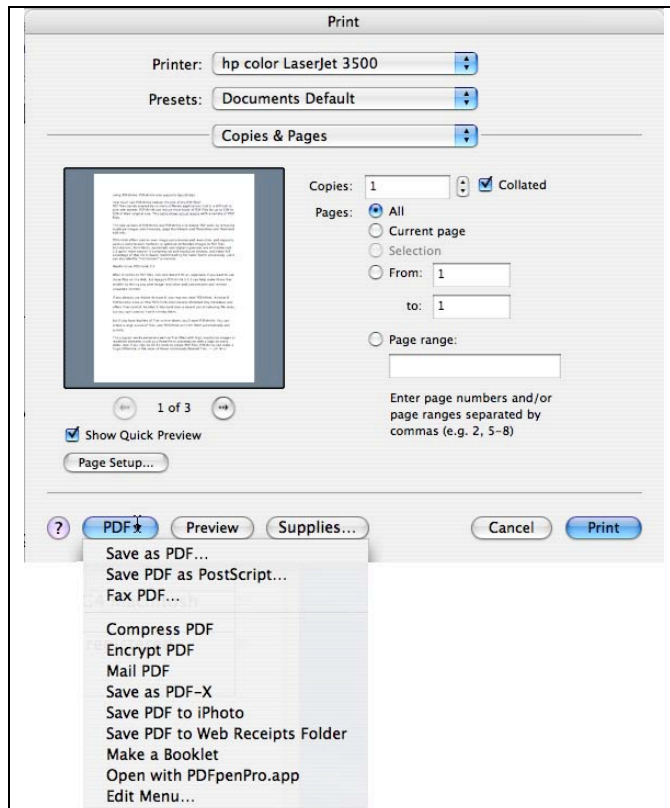
|	
Apple's Print Compress PDF Option	**Reduce File Size in Acrobat**
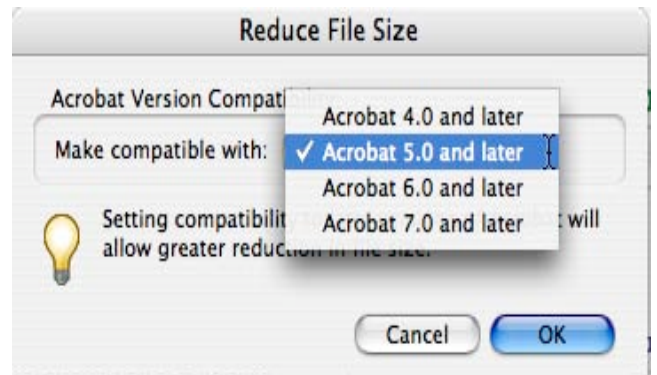
Product Description

PDFshrink is an excellent solution for the problem of bloated, oversized PDF files. While Mac OS X can easily create PDF files from most applications, these PDF files tend to be rather large and inefficient. The interface allows for setting different compression and resolution choices for color, grayscale and Monochrome images. PDFshrink takes full advantage of Mac OS X multithreading for seamless batch processing. PDFshrink can automatically reduce the size of Mac OS X generated PDF files and those created by Microsoft's Power Point, Adobe Distiller, InDesign, Illustrator and other popular applications. PDFshrink reduces the size of PDF files by optimizing the resolution and compression method of each image in the PDF file. Not being seriously graphics inclined, of the applications highlighted by the developer, I only use Power Point.

Other elements of a PDF file affected by PDFshrink that can be removed include as metadata and thumbnails, eliminating duplicate images and compressing other parts of a PDF file – Read about these in the manual.

The software's drag and drop interface allows for setting different compression and resolution choices for color, grayscale and monochrome images. Three common configurations are included; however, the user can create unlimited custom configurations.
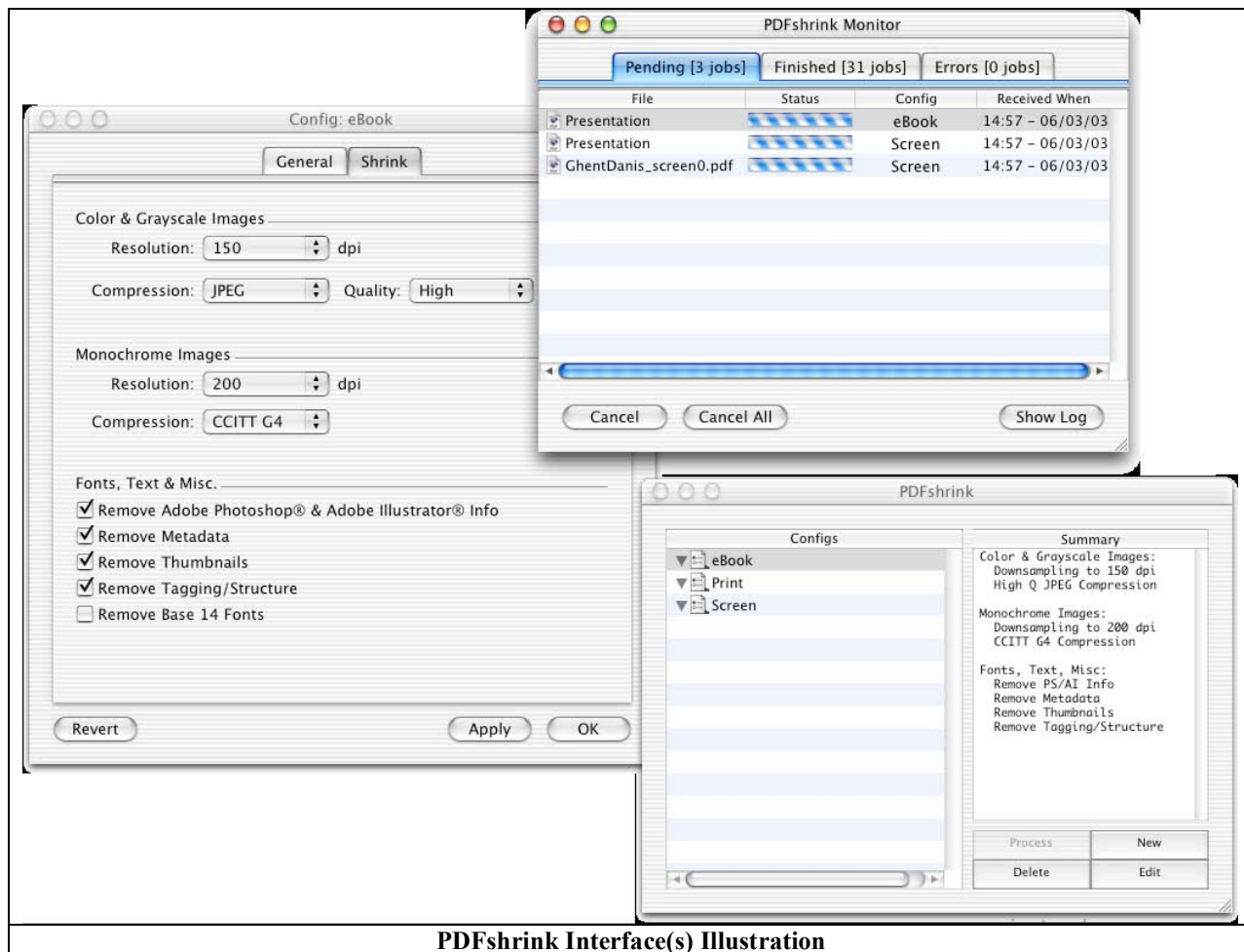
PDFshrink Interface(s) Illustration

Untested by Me — If you have batches of files to trim down, you'll want PDFshrink. You can create a large queue of files, and PDFshrink will slim them automatically and quickly. "Batch processing is supported with the ability to load multiple files and folders into a processing queue. PDFshrink simplifies the creation of optimized PDF files even further using Mac OS X\'s new PDF Services. Simply select \"Create PDF Service\" from the Configs menu and name the workflow. It\'s as simple as that. Then, whenever you create a PDF from the Mac OS X Print Center, you can automatically optimize your PDF using PDFshrink."

Using the Product
Before I share by brief testing, I found the following from the developer's FAQs both interesting and enlightening.

Q) Why are Mac OS X PDF files so large?
A) When Mac OS X creates a PDF file, it is simply reproducing what would normally go to a printer. The PDF software doesn't look for repeated images such as the background image repeat on each slide of PowerPoint slide show, a small image such as a bullet item in Word, or a company logo that appears on each page of a document. Each time an image is used in your document it is written to the PDF file.

My Screening Tests — I've tried the product on two large files. One was a large downloaded print to PDF file. The other was a Power Point presentation that I subsequently used various tools to convert to PDF format and then to compress. I also did a bit of testing on a large article scanned to PDF from hard copy of MacAddict. – More about that later.

PDFshrink is delivered in a Disk Image file and used the conventional install procedures familiar to Macintosh users. If you purchased the software, you'll want to enter your serial number other test the software free for 10 days.

SIDEBAR NOTE — As a rare exception to my normal practice and recommendations, I encourage you to read the manual before working with the product. The product's interface is simple but its capability is more complex and is tuned to the specific end use, of your reduced size PDF. The manual provides excellent information on setting the program's preferences, a key both to size reduction and shrunk PDF end use. Part of this control relies on tuning the image compression and resolution in the output PDF.

The developer has provided three basic processors or configurations as default values. These are eBook, print, and screen—alas, I could not find any detailed explanation of what I would use the choices for in the manual. I did, by assumption, connect to the factoid that PDFshrink makes it easy to optimize PDF files for use on the web, for email attachments and for on-screen reading.

However, the whys and wherefores of the differences escape me. The publisher notes — "You can change any of the default processors or you can create as many new processors as you need to meet resolution targets for you end use/location of the product shrunk PDF." Why I ask? Without information on why I would want to create custom processors, I did not take time to test this feature. [More about such things in the gripe section.

PDFshrink can, its developer claims, reduce most types of PDF files from 10 to 90% of their original size. It can also convert PostScript, JPEG, TIFF and other formats directly to PDF. Great, and it works; but so can GraphicConverter and Acrobat. Therefore, I suggest you pick the tool(s) you find best fit your work style and needs. Better yet try them all—each has features that it uniquely excels at. [A full toolbox, is better than an empty one – ouch, what an oxymoron].

First and to the point, the only file I was able to shrink, by any mans was that resulting from my Power Point presentation. No change in files size using any of the tools/modes tested above when using a scanned image to PDF (not OCR's) image or a Print to PDF file downloaded from the internet. Not a surprising result, but a limitation not mentioned in any of the developer's information. I would have thought that I might be able to somewhat shrink the cookbook pages file I printed to PDF from the web. I wasn't able to.

I worked on my presentation file to concert it two PDF format
- Acrobat PDF Maker within Power Point
- Print to PDF from within Power Point
- Compress Print to PDF from Within Power Point

I then used PDFshrink on the two larges PDF files; those from Apples Print to PDF and the much smaller PDF file obtained using Acrobat PDF Maker from within my PP file.

Transaction	Results
Initial Power Point [PP] File 18.1 MB	NA
Print PP File to PDF (Apple)	64.6 MB {360% Increase}
Use Acrobat PDF Maker from Power Point File	7.4 MB {69% Reduction}
Convert the Acrobat PDF Maker (7.4 MB) conversion with PDFshrink (Screen Processor)	2.8 MB [62% Reduction}
Convert the Acrobat PDF Maker conversion with PDFshrink (eBook Processor)	5.9 MB [20% Reduction
Convert the Acrobat PDF Maker conversion with PDFshrink (Print Processor)	No Change
Convert Apple's Print to PDF file (64.6 MB) in PDFshrink (Print Processor)	20.4 MB {From 68% Reduction}
Used Acrobat Shrink PDF to open only in V. 6 & 7 Menu on the 64.6 MB Print to PDF (Apple) file	8.1 MB {87% Reduction]
Initial Power Point File 18.1 MB in Print PP File to a compressed PDF (Apple)	21.5 MB {Slightly Larger then PP file}

For this short review, I got good reduction of sizes from one of my test files.

That was enough of a taste to allow me to finish this summary review and gain a little insight into the products interface and an initial look at its strength.
My test were aimed at allowing me to find where and how I could make good use of this excellent product, not to make myself an expert at its use.

I did not achieve the greatest size reduction; not having any high-end graphics files available. Indeed, I shank my PDFs by 60-87%, using the tabulated methods. I'll keep playing with the software as I run across large PDF files to learn what I can larn. I also only focused my efforts on size reduction for on screen reading, but am likely to work on reducing PDFs for eMail transmittals in the future.

Actual PDFshrink results with PDFs from selected file types

File type	Original	Print	E-Book	Screen
Microsoft Word® document (6 pages)	416K	168K 59%	152K 63%	148K 64%
Apple Keynote® slideshow (19 slides)	6.5M	3M 54%	1.4M 77%	1.1M 82%
Microsoft PowerPoint® slideshow (26 slides)	3.5M	2M 42%	1.1M 67%	328K 90%
Appraisal report with scanned images (24 pages)	3.9M	3.8M 3%	3.6M 6%	1.4M 64%
Annual report (29 pages)	4.6M	2.4M 48%	1.6M 64%	912K 80%
Newsletter (4 pages)	256K	196K 23%	196K 24%	192K 25%
Color magazine advertisement (2 page spread)	175.7M	1.5M 99.1%	668K 99.6%	492K 99.7%
Research report (28 pages)	38.1M	5.8M 85%	2.8M 93%	1.4M 96%
Adobe Illustrator® document	3.0M	728K 76%	496K 83%	480K 84%

A Single Significant Gripe
I've worked over every part of both the user manual and the notes on the developers web pages and still have no idea on either when to use which of the three processors, beyond the trivial. I can get no feeling of what happens when I use them and how, beyond a varying decrease in file size I most especial remain in the dark about what limitations are imposed on the compressed PDF products a result of processing a file with PDFshrink. Therefore, I get even more bewilder on when one might consider creating custom predecessors a significant feature of this software. The product's manual desperately needs a guide to processors; what they do to your original PDF that limits its capability.

For example, although I converted an initial PDF to eBook, print, and screen formats, I could not tell any difference when either viewing them on screen or when printing a page or two using my HP color LaserJet 3500 printer. So in one word… Help!

Conclusions

This review, as noted preciously is just an over-the-top look at what appears to be a fine product. I also noted that I am not a heavy user of high-end graphics programs such as Adobe Distiller, InDesign, or Illustrator, there for could only work with Power Point files and PDFs downloaded or printed to PDF from the Internet. From what I was able to checkout, the program works extremely well. From my tests, in agreement with Jim Felici's findings, it works well on files filled with high-resolution images or repetitive elements (such as a PowerPoint presentation with a logo on every slide). If you rely on OS X's tools to create PDF files, PDFshrink can make a huge difference in the sizes of such notoriously bloated files.

I recommend you download this product and try it out for the 10 days. If you create and use the kind of files in excels in shrinking, by all means add it to year collection. I rate this product 4.0 macCs

Software Reviews

Cepstral Swift Voices Version 4.0.1 - Text-to-Speech for Mac OS X
reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Cepstral, LLC
1801 East Carson Street
Second Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15203
USA
412-432-0400
FAX: + 1-412-432-0406
mailto:info@cepstral.com
http://www.cepstral.com/
Swift Released: January 31, 2006.
$30 USD per voice, 18 voices. Order online.
Downloads: http://www.cepstral.com/downloads/
Demos: http://www.cepstral.com/demos/
Requirements: Any robust computer system and lots of hard drive space per voice. In this case, either Mac OS X 10.3 or Mac OS X 10.4 or later. Including Mactel systems. But Linux, Solaris and Windows systems are also supported.
FAQs: http://www.cepstral.com/support/

Strengths: Cross-platform (Linux, Mac, Mactel Windows, Solaris), multilingual. Plays nice with Mac OS X. Very nice!

Weaknesses: None found.

We reviewed Cepstral voices back in April 2005; http://www.cepstral.com/cgi-bin/news?page=2005-03-18-00. Since then, Cepstral has not stood still. They have continued to advance forward, expanding out to more voices, improved the multi-lingual cross-platform rendering engine and made voices available for mobile equipment. Pronunciation and text processing have improved as well. Even 64-bit support has been added and the voices work with the Mactels, Sparc and Solaris, as well as the Windows and Windows Mobile systems.

Most Mac-apps co-habitate with Cepstral voices. If you find one that doesn't play nice, they want to know about it. And if you don't like the pronunciation on the Mac, here is a link to what you can do to "make it so": http://www.cepstral.com/cgi-bin/support?page=lexicon. There is a lexicn.txt file that can be manipulated. If you really want to delve into homonyms, homographs and phonemes, be my guest. Cepstral made the science of digital voice easy.

Boy, that's real Swift! If you want to get geeky, go visit the Support area on the Cesptral website and get into the FAQ sections depending on which operating system you use.

My hat's off to Dr. Alan W Black, Kevin A. Lenzo and their voice-enabling magicians to make this work as well as it does across platforms and within various technologies and human languages.

If you want to keep up with all that they have been doing, go here: http://www.cepstral.com/cgi-bin/company?page=news.

Each voice can be downloaded and a 7-page QuickStart Guide is included in each .dmg for the Mac. I can only assume the package is similar for other Operating Systems.

The version 4.0.1 voices I was able to download for Mac OS X (and it took a while) were:

Gender	Age	Language	Names	.dmg
Female	30	US - Additional	*Amy*	103 MB
Female	30	US - Premium	*Callie*	101 MB
Male	30	Character	*Damien*	98 MB
Male	30	US - Premium	*David*	72 MB
Female	35	US - Premium	*Diane*	103 MB
Neuter	30	Character	*Duchess*	29 MB
Male	40	US- Additional	*Duncan*	22 MB
Female	30	US - Additional	*Emily*	30 MB
Female	30	Canadian French - Premium	*Isabelle*	80 MB
Male	30	Canadian-French - Additional	*Jean-Pierre*	74 MB
Female	35	German - Premium	*Katrin*	76 MB
Male	55	UK - Premium	*Lawrence*	70 MB
Female	25	US - Additional	*Linda*	24 MB
Female	30	Latin American Spanish - Additional	*Marta*	89 MB
Male	30	German - Additional	*Matthias*	71 MB
Male	30	Latin American Spanish - Premium	*Miguel*	35 MB
Female	30	UK - Additional	*Millie*	66 MB
Neuter	10	US Additional	*Robin*	25 MB
Female	30	Italian - Premium	*Vittoria*	87 MB
Male	60	US - Additional	*Walter*	34 MB
Male	30	US - Premium	*William*	105 MB

I didn't pick up *Dog, Shouty* or *Whispery*.

The download files for Windows is smaller per voice and for Linux a little smaller still. There are also separate voices for Windows CE systems.

My personal favorites are *David* for a male voice and *Diane* is still my favorite female voice. Both are "close enough" to natural that I think anyone with speech challenges would be happy using them in assistive applications or augmentative and alternative communications (AAC) apps.

Oh, come on! You always wanted to make an app speech-enabled and take the existing Mac OS X speech functions up a notch. Now you can!

And of course, Cepstral doesn't do this just for the Mac, but also for navigation aids, mobile communications, toys, games, medical instruments, weather systems interaction, industrial apps, and government even has a voice. They are stretching themselves into all kinds of text-to-speech and speech-to-speech apps. Think Star-Trek-like universal translator kinds of things. It won't take too long for them to get there. Some military apps for translators are already being used.

Each voice has a $30 USD license, but you can try before you buy. And these link we researched before are still worth repeating:

Dig Deeper
Cepstrum - http://cnx.rice.edu/content/m12469/latest/
http://www.cepstrum.co.jp/1about.htm
Cepstrum Analysis -
http://documents.wolfram.com/applications/signals/CepstralAnalysis.html
http://tiger.la.asu.edu/software/cepstral.htm
http://htk.eng.cam.ac.uk/docs/cuhtk.shtml
http://svr-www.eng.cam.ac.uk/~ajr/SpeechAnalysis/node33.html

MacRabbit's CSSEdit 1.7: Convenient Near-WYSIWYG Cascading Stylesheet Editing for Mac OS X

reviewed by Mike Swope

MacRabbit Software
http://www.macrabbit.com
Released: January 2006
$25 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later.
Target Audience: CSS-savvy web developers and web designers using Macintosh Mac OS X.

Strengths: Easy to use. Allows comment-based grouping to simplify locating and arranging styles. Uses favorites features to simplify stylesheet editing. Includes real-time previews in the application itself. Extracts stylesheets from any URL. Suitable for both visual designers/developers and coders. Displays both raw code and interface controls.

Weaknesses: Would be nice if styles were displayed in the styles panel, not in a separate drawer. Style favorites not as intuitive to create as font family favorites.

If You Design or Develop with CSS...

You've gotta get CSSEdit. There's no question about it. It's hands-down the best CSS editing application available for Macintosh. Don't even read the rest of this review. Just go buy it!

But if you feel compelled to finish this review...read on.

CSSEdit - Dreamweaver or GoLive for CSS Stylesheets (But Better)

I'm no novice to CSS or to stylesheets. I'm a prosumer, a freelance web/graphic designer who builds several web sites a year while maintaining existing web sites (worked in a corporate environment doing same for nearly 9 years). CSS is the holy grail for web development in many ways, but looking at a page of CSS code can get...well...dull. After looking at a page of CSS code for hours, every line begins to look the same. I suspect it's the same for millions of other web designers just like me. It's not enough to view and edit the code. We also have to remember hundreds of combinations to write new code, and frequently some kind of reference. Then we have to switch back and forth to preview what we've done to judge the results.

CSSEdit relieves this dullness and writes CSS code in a near-WYSIWYG environment while still allowing access to raw code. It can be compared to Dreamweaver or GoLive for CSS stylesheets. Though Dreamweaver and GoLive feature built-in CSS editors, CSSEdit is better than both. Even if you use a WYSIWYG HTML editor like Dreamweaver, GoLive or FrontPage, you'll find CSSEdit more than useful. MacRabbit developers have studied how CSS coders develop stylesheets and designed CSSEdit to seamlessly slip into their workflow.

Outstanding Features

Intuitive Interface: CSSEdit's interface is intuitive and, therefore, easy to use. Though CSSEdit offers pull-down menus at the top of the screen like every-other Macintosh application, these are redundant. These functions are all available through the CSSEdit window. At the top left of the window are two buttons that switch between control view and code view. There is also a search box to help users find styles. Next to the search box are buttons to create new styles, create new group (displayed as a folder in the styles pane), create a new comment, delete selected style, preview styles, and export the stylesheet.

Below this group of buttons is the control or code view (depending on which view is selected). When code view is selected, this pane displays the raw code for the stylesheet. A handy feature for coders at heart! But if the control view is selected, controls are displayed in this pane to define or edit the selected style. These controls resemble similar controls in GoLive and Dreamweaver, so controls include what one would expect by default: font, spacing & alignment, margins & padding, position and dimension, borders, background and lists. I personally use the control view most frequently, since I'm more a designer than a coder. It is also interesting to note that users can add/remove/rearrange buttons to better help them work.

Style Groups: One of the more useful features in CSSEdit are style groups, IMHO. Even for small web sites, stylesheets can become unwieldy quickly, especially if one is doing a lot of experimentation. These comment-based style groups help organize styles into logical categories. For example, I frequently group my styles into Footer, Header, Body, and if a page has variations of any of these, create a group for those styles, too. Very handy. Very easy to find a group of styles to be edited. Saves loads of time!

Favorite Font Families and Favorite Styles: Another time saver that eliminates repetitive selections. Favorites can be created and applied for font families, and even for entire styles! It is relatively easy to create font group favorites. Font favorites are selected or created by clicking the heart icon beneath the font family field in the font control panel. Simple enough. It is not so intuitive to create a style favorite. Style favorites must be created in the Preferences. I did not find this information in CSSEdit's help feature, even with a search. It would seem that many users would want to create favorite styles, perhaps on a per-project basis. That this feature is hidden, even in the Help documentation, is unexpected.

Real-Time Previews: A wonderful triple-punch addition to an already top-notch application. Users can select to preview the selected style in the style drawer at the bottom of the CSSEdit window, in a web browser (list created dynamically from the user's system), or in any selected HTML page. The latter is particularly useful, but it is limited to previewing static HTML files. As long as the developer is working on static HTML, CSSEdit has him or her covered. If the developer's working on .asp or .php pages and needs to preview them, the revised stylesheet(s) will need to be uploaded just as they have always done to preview their revised styles. None of this is unexpected, but it is worth noting. I have no problem uploading the edited stylesheet and previewing in the server's natural environment to be assured of what I am getting with that PHP site.

Professional Reliability and Results

As you've already guessed, CSSEdit is a useful weapon in the web designer and web developer's arsenal. Not all weapons are created equal, but CSSEdit is one you'll be choosing every time you battle CSS stylesheets. CSSEdit doesn't care about the battlefield, whether static HTML, WYSIWYG web design application, or dynamic PHP e-commerce or content managed web site. All it needs is the stylesheet. Over the last few months I've used CSSEdit to edit stylesheets for my freelance Swope Design web site (http://www.swopedesign.com) (built in RapidWeaver http://www.realmacsoftware.com), several osCommerce PHP-based web sites (DeliveryDevil.com, ColaCollectables.com and WichitaTires.com), a PHP-based realty web site for The Real Estate Company (http://www.therealestatecollc.com/), and a static HTML web site for Kansas Learning Center for Health (http://www.learningcenter.org). CSSEdit has been rock solid and indispensable. I won't go back to writing or editing CSS stylesheets in any other application. CSSEdit has its place in my dock in my web design arsenal.

It should have a place in yours, too.

Mike Swope - http://www.maccompanion.com/info/aboutus.html#mikeswope

Deep Freeze Mac 2.0 with ARD – Intelligent Utilities for Absolute Control

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Faronics Technologies USA, Inc.
2411 Old Crow Canyon Road, Suite 170
San Ramon, CA 94583
800-943-6422
FAX: 800-943-6488
http://www.faronics.com
Product Site: http://www.faronics.com/html/deepfreeze.asp
Released: December 7, 2005.
$372.55 USD as $25 USD for CD and documentation; 10-seat minimum is
$273 USD. $54.60 USD for annual site maintenance. $20 USD for Postage
& Handling. http://www.faronics.com/html/orderinfo.asp
Requirements: A desire for total computer system configuration control.
Mac OS X 20.3.0 or later, Apple Remoe Desktop 2.2 or later for ARD
Integration; 256 MB RAM.

For System Administrators in a heterogenous environment.

Strengths: Offers a method of avoiding system misconfiguration and
corruption by snap-shotting a set configuration. Cross-platform.

Weaknesses: With Deep Freeze enabled, all changes since the snapshot are
removed as if they never took place. Be sure and offload changes to external
or network systems or iDisk before turning off the machine.

Other Reviews: http://www.faronics.com/html/newsmention.asp

Deep Freeze Mac 2.0 with ARD by Faronics freezes
configuration-modes for any Mac OS X-based system.
Actually, with Deep Freeze enabled, the practice of
turning off a machine will insure that any file
manipulation on that system will have completely,
inalterably have disappeared into the ether since Deep
Freeze was enabled. In my mind, this is both its strength
and its Achilles heel.

In order to have any files or documents saved so that the
Deep Freeze function is not an issue after it is enabled, is
to have a file-saving function offloaded to an external
drive of location – that would include any Email
activity. I know, because even though I had not logged
in as the Deep Freeze admin, the app most certainly
worked as advertised. If a system is never shut off (Unix – and
therefore Mac OS X - was designed for systems that are always
on), it will not have any problems.

I have a habit of turning of my system when not in use, so I didn't realize that after I installed the app to my machine, it began doing its thing immediately, even though I had not gone as far as to set up an account yet. I found it rather peculiar that files and folders that I had sent to the trash kept reappearing and recent Emails and attachments were nowhere to be found as I was finishing up the issue of *macCompanion* for last month. I had to put Deep Freeze into *Thaw*-mode because Freeze mode is the default. Otherwise, all my work would be considered to be temporary and would disappear on reboot.

Of course, if I had a mirror site or were automatically saving all changes to an external drive instead of just one folder, I would have been blissfully ignorant that this app was in complete control of my machine. Except that I had requested to review it because it has an interoperability function for use with the Apple Remote Desktop (ARD) http://www.apple.com/remotedesktop/ for another $300 USD (10 clients) or higher.

There is no Preferences link to get to Deep Freeze after it is installed. The only way you know it is on your machine, besides turning it off and wondering why everything that was done had become undone, is to look in the toolbar at the top of the screen and see the polar bear icon as either blue (frozen) or red (thawed). The User

Guide is all of 18 pages in length.

Now why on this green earth would you even consider using this app? Only if you were having difficulties with either employee or government or training environment (library, student) systems or that needed to be reset either locally or remotely after a session was completed. Those using the systems would have to know that they could only save their work by offloading files to CD, thumb-drive, network drive or an Internet storage location. This app is strictly for the ease-of-use by the system administrators and not for the convenience of the end-users.

Configurations can be saved and either imported or exported and after login, settings can be changed to either frozen or thawed, drives and users can be added or removed and this is the only place where the uninstall can been easily accessed via the Deep Freeze X Control panel shown here.
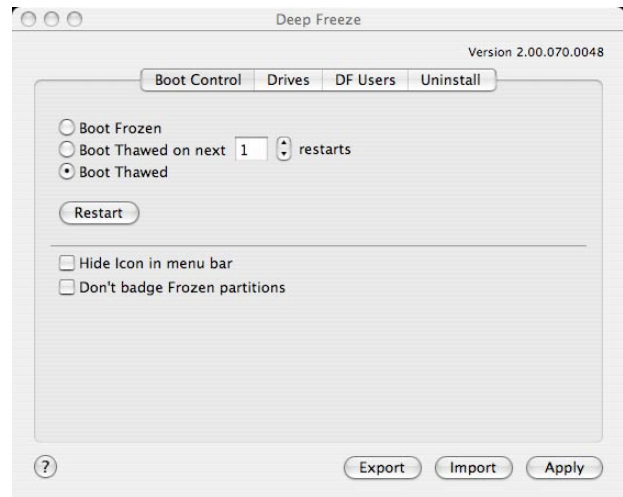
If you work in an environment that has partitioned drives, than a non-Deep Freezed partition would be a great place to save session changes.

There are server, professional and enterprise versions with the non-Mac environment specifically addressed.

DEEPFREEZE	Standard	Professional	Enterprise
100% complete recovery on restart	✓	✓	✓
Full access to all computer functions	✓	✓	✓
Guaranteed compatibility with all applications	✓	✓	✓
Windows 95, 98, Me, 2000, XP support	✓	✓	✓
Less than 2MB footprint when installed on each workstation	✓	✓	✓
Password required for administrative functions	✓	✓	✓
Supports and protects multiple hard drives and partitions	✓	✓	✓
SCSI, ATA, SATA, IDE hard drive support	✓	✓	✓
FAT, FAT32, NTFS, basic and dynamic disks	✓	✓	✓
Protects master boot record	✓	✓	✓
Supports multi-boot environments	✓	✓	✓
Fully compatible with Fast User Switching	✓	✓	✓

Feature	Standard	4 Passwords	15 Passwords
Select specific partitions to be Thawed	✓	✓	✓
Set the number of Thawed restarts with boot control	✓	✓	✓
Fully compatible with daylight savings time	✓	✓	✓
Silent Install System for rapid network deployment	✓	✓	✓
Deploy as part of a master image (compatible with all imaging solutions)	✓	✓	✓
Multiple administrator passwords		4 Passwords	15 Passwords
Password set-up not required at the workstation		✓	✓
Schedule restarts and shutdowns		✓	✓
Idle-time restarts and shutdowns		✓	✓
Schedule Thawed Maintenance periods		✓	✓
Disable keyboard and mouse during Maintenance period		✓	✓
Message box on workstation when keyboard and mouse are disabled		✓	✓
Install critical Windows 2000/XP updates through Internet or SUS/WSUS Server		✓	✓
Run a custom batch file during Maintenance period		✓	✓
Restart or shutdown workstation at conclusion of Maintenance period		✓	✓
Create a partition to save permanent changes (ThawSpace)		✓	✓
Optionally hide Deep Freeze icons in System Tray		✓	✓
Provide one-time or one-day passwords (OTP)		✓	✓
Remotely Freeze or Thaw using secure command line		✓	✓
Encrypt components with a unique Customization Code		✓	✓
Create multiple custom installs		✓	✓
Remotely monitor workstation status		✓	✓
Update passwords remotely without restart		✓	✓
Ability to specify console host name for LAN/WAN configuration			✓
Create passwords with variable expiration and activation dates and times			✓
Plant a Workstation Seed for remote installation			✓
GUI Enterprise Console			✓
Perform selective group installs or uninstalls			✓
Freeze or Thaw one or more workstations remotely			✓
Broadcast configuration updates across a LAN or WAN			✓
Monitor complete workstation status across a LAN or WAN			✓
Remotely start workstations using wake on LAN protocol			✓
Restart and shutdown one or more workstations remotely			✓
Automate workstation management by group			✓
Automatically update all pre-existing installation files			✓

Faronics

Faronics • 800-943-6422 • www.faronics.com

Deep Freeze has been localized in English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, and Japanese.

Remember that at least 10 licenses need to be purchased, so if you use anything less, there are other solutions available. This is an enterprise-level app that does its job well.

Mac Pilot 2.0.3 – Mac OS X System Optimizer

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Developer: Josh Hague
Koingo Software
22015 48th Ave #103
Langley, BC
V3A 8L3
Canada
http://www.koingosw.com/
http://www.koingosw.com/products/macpilot.php
$10 USD Single, $79 USD School, $99 USD Business. Free 15-day
evaluation.
http://www.koingosw.com/store.php
Released: February 13, 2006,
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4, Internet access to download.
Documentation: http://www.koingosw.com/support/macpilot.php

Strengths: Offers lots of Mac OS X utilities under one roof.

Weaknesses: Lots of "one-time" choices. And there are competing
comparable "free" options available.

Face it. We pay for convenience. Of course we could get a 10-pound sack of potatoes for the price of an order of large fries, but we don't want to do the hard work and time of preparing the potatoes, deep-frying them after warming up the oil and salting them before eating them. We want instant gratification. So we go to a fast-food restaurant and get an order of fries with the rest of our meal.

Ergo Mac Pilot. Yes, there are free or shareware utilities that do many of the things that Mac pilot does, but not all. And one wonders why Apple doesn't just buy this utility outright and use it in Mac OS X itself? We are looking at a plethora of nice-to-have utilities that otherwise would be done manually in terminal mode. Try something like 200 of these little gems.
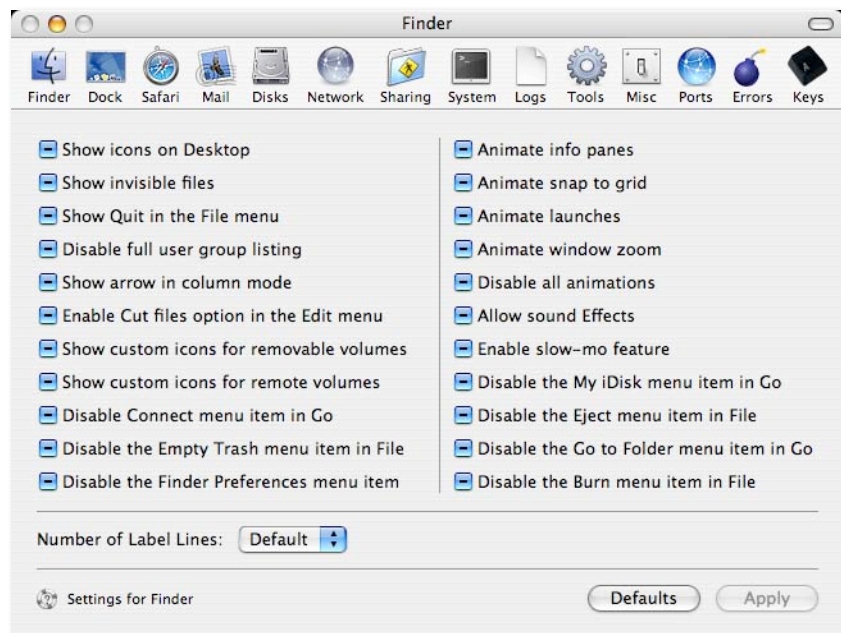
Josh's Mac Pilot has an accent is on "easy". I'm sorely tempted to post each and every one of the windows that appear when each graphic is clicked along the top "toolbar" in this app, but I won't. Go download a 15-day evaluation copy and you judge for yourself if this is worth the $10 USD price compared to the other "similar" utilities I've listed above.

Sure, some of the items are one-time-wonders, but some were unfamiliar to me and I loved the fact that I could get the intuitive approach to each item and decide if I needed to make it "live" or not. After using this utility, my system responds better. And isn't that the real point (performance improvements) of this maintenance activity?

Some nice-to-knows have been added as well such as the *Ports* list (which ports are being used by Mac OS X for Internet activities and the *Errors* list (those numbered Mac codes that are in geek and not normal-speak). Here is also a *Keys* button that lists the shortcut key combinations and a button off that, that leads to a character set based on font being used.

So go ahead and "apply" the processes in Mac Pilot. So far they work without a problem on my machine. They probably will on yours too. Are you willing to pay for convenience? You got a Mac didn't you?
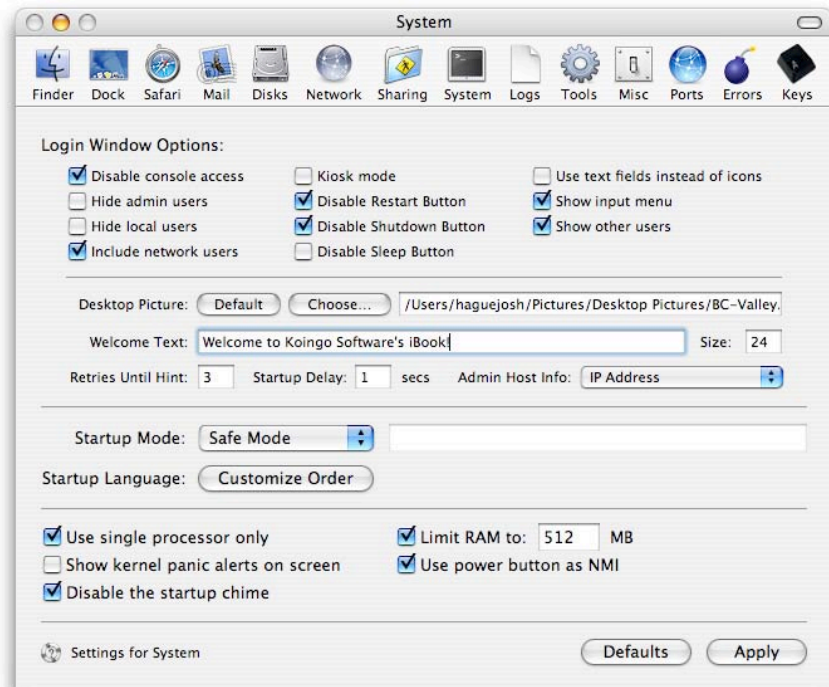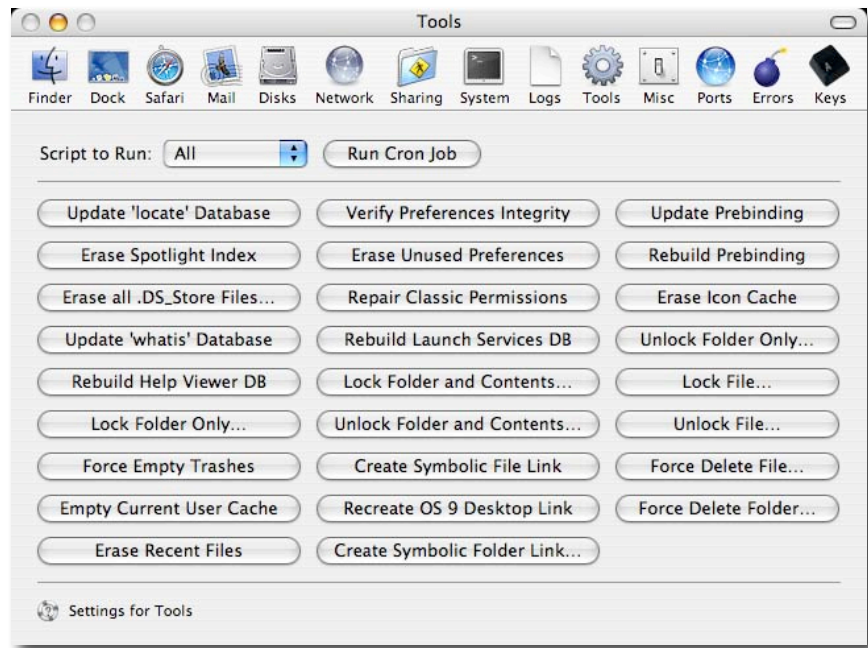
Compare to Other Utilities
CockTail:
http://www.maintain.se/cocktail/index.html
Doctor Kleaner: http://www.doktorkleanor.com/en/
MacJanitor: http://personalpages.tds.net/~brian_hill/macjanitor.html
 Onyx: http://mac.softpedia.com/get/System-Utilities/OnyX.shtml
Tiger Cache Cleaner: http://www.northernsoftworks.com/tigercachecleaner.html
TinkerTool: http://www.bresink.com/osx/TinkerToolSys.html

Say It In: Spanish

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Transparent Language
12 Murphy Drive,
Nashua, NH 03062 USA
603-262-6300
FAX: 603-262-6476
http://www.transparent.com/index.htm
$70 USD http://www.transparent.com/products/sayitin.htm
Complete Suites: $100 USD
http://www.transparent.com/products/completesuites.htm
Requirements: A desire to learn a new language. Mac OS X 10.2.0 or later;
G3 or later; 128 MB RAM; 65 MB disk space with CD or 500 MB without;
CD-ROM drive; mic and Internet access. **Windows**; 98SE or later; 300 MHz
Pentium or later; 800 x 600 resolution, RAM and hard drive space and other
equipment same as for the Mac; **Palm;** OS 5 or later; 1 MBRAM; 4-bit color
and 240 x 320 resolution; HotSync 4.0 or later. **Pocket PC;** 2002 or later;
200 MHz StrongARM or Xscale processor; 1 MB RAM; and other
requirements same as for the Palm.

Strengths: Cross Platform.

Weaknesses: None found.

Transparent Language takes learning languages from the point of strong grammar understanding mixed with
multimedia and a hypertext-like interfaceusing vocabulary, 15 lessons, pronunciation exercises and dialog activities.

I went to see the Spanish Say It In Spanish version, even though there are other languages available and there is a
Learning Suite http://www.transparent.com/languagepages/spanish/spanish.htm based mainly on Castellano and not
Latin American Spanish.

There is free software, vocabulary-
building games, other resources, online
quizzes, a Word of the Day and a
Spanish Language Meetup Group to find
out if there are local folks who are doing
essentially a Spanish Language Users
Group. If not, there are resources
available to create one. I'm guessing that
Transparent Language has done the
same format for the other languages they
offer.

The CD has 15 lessons and those have video
clips, that tie in with the displayed sentences.
There are also buttons that go to lesson
quizzes, voice practice and other areas that
engage your brain to enhance learning the
concepts.
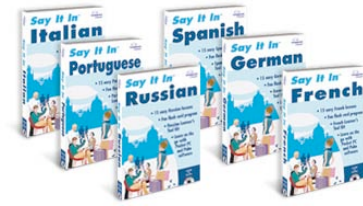
The opening window shows the agenda, the buttons along the bottom open up vocabulary cards per lesson, a link to the website, etc.

The Practice Vocabulary also links to the Before You Know It (BYKI) website for more interesting information regarding languages, academics and fun facts. To use, this requires a free download of BYKI Lite.

Lists from a file or from the BYKI site can be added to the List page that appears here when the Practice Vocabulary button is selected.
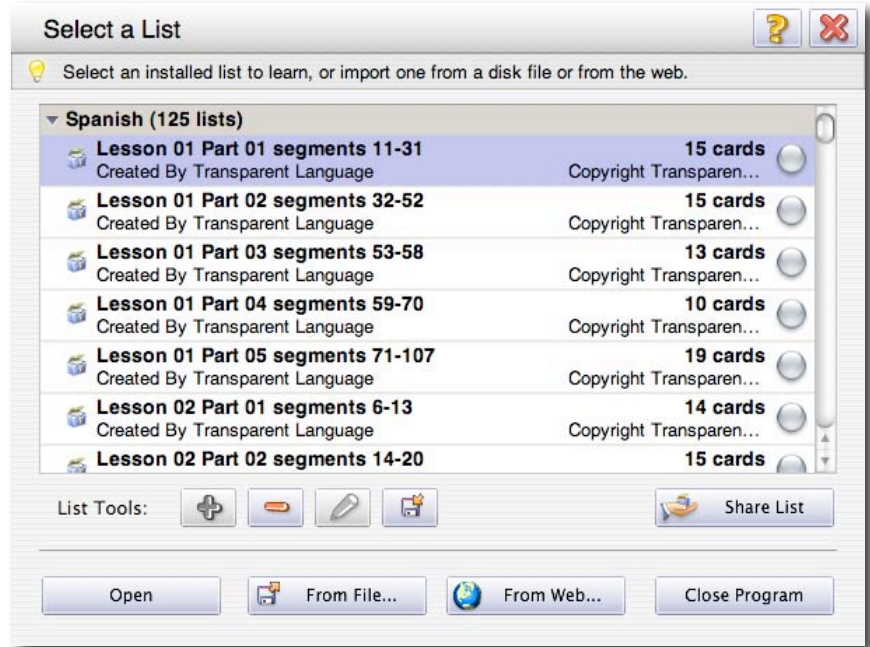

When a lesson is selected from the main page, the screen will look like this:

Each lesson is laid out with tool buttons along the top, a dialogue follow-along box, navigation tools, a video window where a person speaks the languages according to the text shown in the Segment Meaning section. There are also Word, Root and Phrase meaning sections as well as a Grammar section, Notes and Check Words for further study.

The buttons along the top open Conversation Practice, one of five game scenarios, one of three dictation or pronunciation activities (Listen and Speak), the main lesson screen (Illustration Mode) , an audio visual feedback graph section (Sound Palette), just the dialogue box, or the Theater Mode. There is also a Help button that acts as the User Guide and plays nicely with Mac OS X.
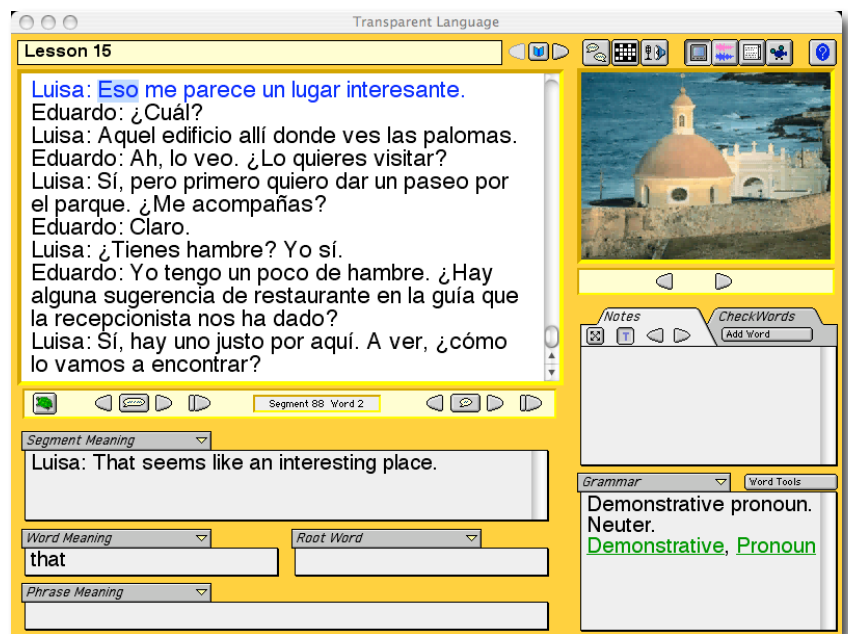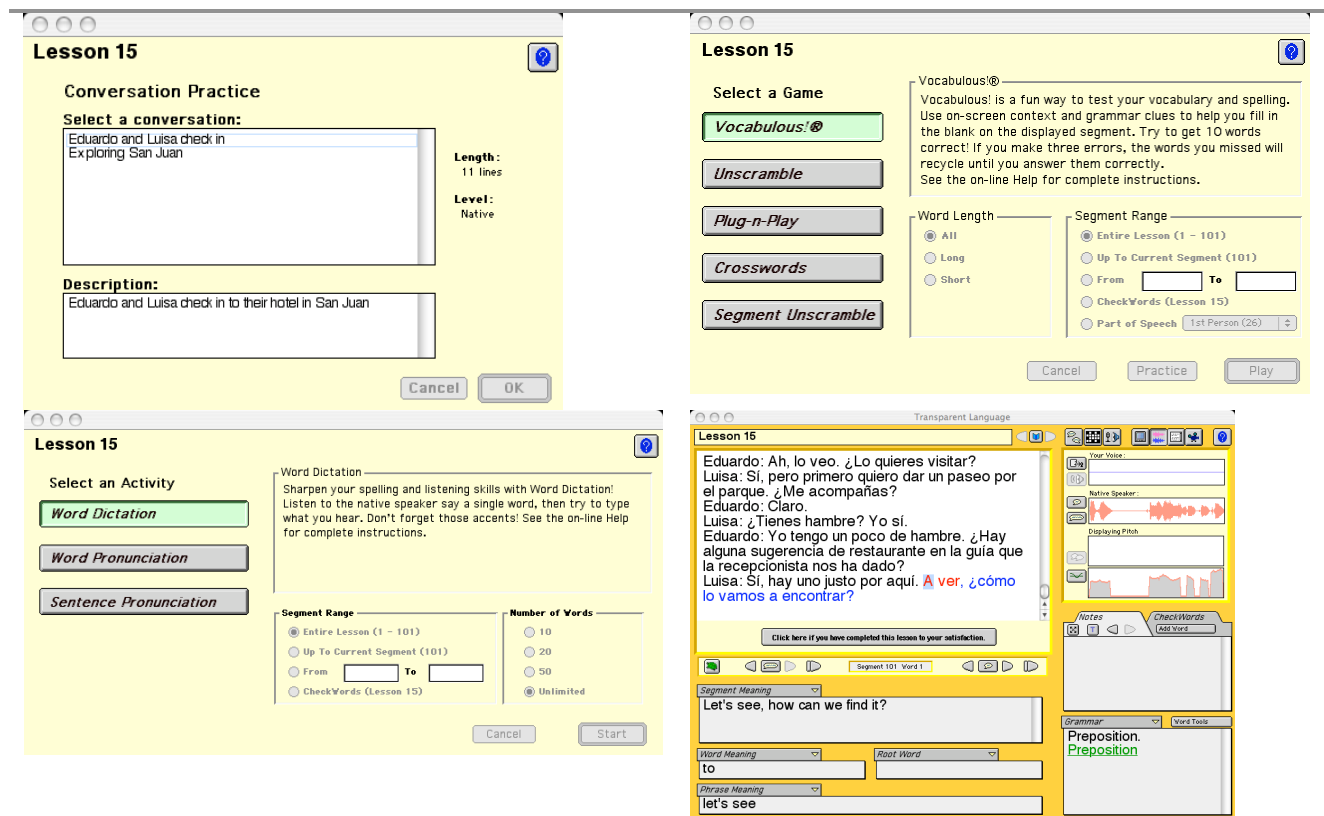
To me, the pages look very "hypercardish", but the audio and video works great and the lessons pull up quickly and correctly. I found it interesting that the online links pull towards enhancements to the program for the other apps available from Transparent Language. This makes the Say It In series appear to be a loss-leader app with the intent to get us to quickly advance to the other "better" apps.

The complete Suites contain:

- *Learn Language Now!* - the top rated program that leverages the Transparent method. Immerse yourself in language articles and videos to learn quickly.
- *PDQ Audio* - a complete language audio learning course on 4 CDs with a workbook.
- *Before You know It* - learn phrases and vocabulary with Perfect Recall in a flash.
- *Translation Dictionaries* - access over 65,000 words and their translations.

For beginners who feel the need to get into the grammar side of things, *Say It In* leads one to the other apps. Go ahead and give it a try.

There are also the *Languages of the World Series* for $20 USD each:

» Afrikaans	» Albanian	» Arabic	» Asturian
» Aymara	» Azerbaijani	» Basque	» Belorussian
» Bemba	» Bengali	» Blackfoot	» Brazilian Portuguese
» Breton	» Bulgarian	» Canadian French	» Catalan
» Cebuano	» Chamorro	» Chinese	» Cornish
» Croatian	» Czech	» Danish	» Dutch
» Ecuadorian Quechua	» English	» Esperanto	» Estonian
» Faroese	» Farsi	» Finnish	» Flemish
» French	» Frisian	» Galician	» German
» Greek	» Guarani	» Haitian Creole	» Hawaiian
» Hebrew	» Hindi	» Hungarian	» Icelandic
» Indonesian	» Inuktitut	» Irish	» Italian
» Japanese	» Kongo	» Korean	» Latin
» Latvian	» Lithuanian	» Luganda	» Luxembourgish
» Macedonian	» Malagasy	» Malay	» Maori
» Maya	» Mohawk	» Nahuatl	» Norwegian
» Papago	» Pidgin English	» Polish	» Portuguese
» Provençal	» Quechua	» Romanian	» Romansch
» Romany	» Ruanda	» Russian	» Samoan
» Scottish	» Sepedi	» Serbian	» Shona
» Sicilian	» Slovak	» Slovene	» Somali
» Sorbian	» Sotho	» Spanish	» Swahili
» Swazi	» Swedish	» Tagalog	» Tahitian
» Thai	» Tongan	» Tswana	» Turkish
» Ukrainian	» Urdu	» Vietnamese	» Welsh
» Wolof	» Xhosa	» Yiddish	» Yoruba
» Zulu			

WheresTheFreeSpace v0.1

reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves

iProv, LLC
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(501) 683-7229
http://www.iprovonline.com
Product Site: http://www.wheresthefreespace.com
$30 USD downloadable; $40 USD boxed.
Requirements: Mac OS X

Strengths: Can reveal space used by file type and user.

Weaknesses: Poor interface; does not reveal file sizes; limited functionality.

Even though the capacity of hard drives has increased dramatically in the last decade (current iMacs contain 160GB or 250GB hard drives) that seemingly endless space can disappear quickly thanks to Mac OS X's multi-lingual capabilities, the importing of digital audio and video files, and just-plain-massive applications (the newest versions of iDVD and GarageBand use at least 7GB combined).

If you want to know where all that space is going, you might try and use the Finder. That is a mistake, as there are a number of hidden directories and other folders that are off-limits even to an admin user. So your best bet is an application designed for the task.

WheresTheFreeSpace, a hard disk space manager for Mac OS X, aims to be that application. Unfortunately, it falls short in a number of respects.

First, although WheresTheFreeSpace doesn't use brushed metal, its interface is still unattractive. The button graphics look like they were borrowed from an older version of Microsoft Windows and the pop-up menu to choose the Volume isn't even long enough to say Primary hard Disk, the option I think most users are going to choose by default. In addition, the window isn't even sized wide enough by default to view the four columns shown. A quick trip to the green resize button should solve that, except that it's disabled. You have to manually resize the window using the bottom right corner (and the new size will not be remembered after relaunching the application.

After selecting a drive or a folder to measure, a progress bar appears at the bottom of the window. But the bar doesn't actually measure progress. Instead it just displays the standard spinning blue barber pole and says "this may take a while." Seriously.
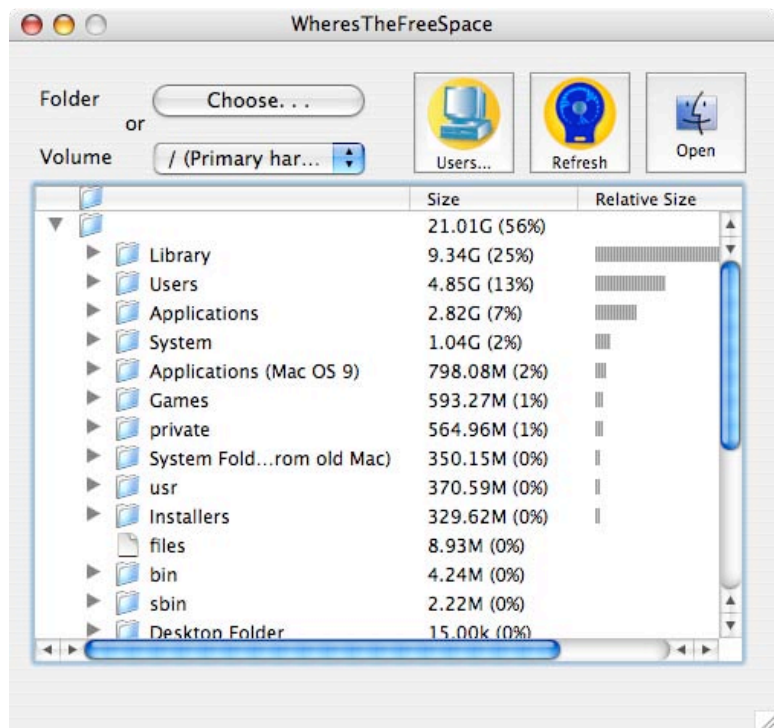
After 'a while' has passed, a single folder icon appears in the window, which uses a typical list view with hierarchical reveal arrows. The one column which is unique is Relative Size, which shows a bar graph sized to the proportion of the folder's size.

And by folder's size, I don't mean by file size. Because although the program's marketing materials state that it "will tell you exactly which files on your hardrive are taking up the most space," it will not even tell you what files are in the folders. For example, I have a folder that uses up 42MB of space and I wanted to know what files took up that space. Drilling down to that folder by clicking the arrows only tells me that there are "files" that take up 42MB of space. I then need to click the Open button to open that folder in the Finder and count them up myself. In addition, you cannot simply double-click on the folder to open it, you have to use the Open button. Imagine if this were the way the Finder worked: you had to select a folder, then mouse up to a button on the toolbar and click Open...

If this were a $5 shareware program, these flaws may be forgivable. But it costs at least $30 when a far superior program, ID-Design's WhatSize is far superior and is absolutely free. So it's hard to justify spending any money on an inferior application.

What WheresTheFreeSpace does have in its favor is its ability to "filter" by file type. You might expect this to mean that you could just select 'Photoshop file' from a pop-up menu and the results you previously waited "a while" for would limit themselves to just those files. Instead, you have to go to the preferences, type in the suffix (in this case: psd) and select the "Include only these extensions" option. Then you have to remeasure what you may have already measured. Nonetheless, it works and it could be very useful.
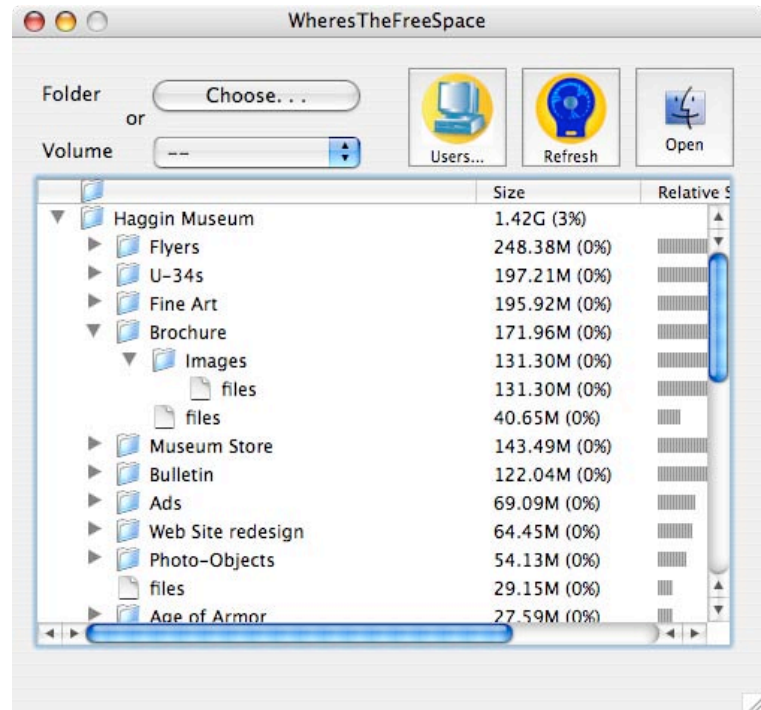
In addition, WheresTheFreeSpace can reveal your space usage on network volumes. If you work in an environment where your network administrators give you a limited amount of space on one or more servers, you can find out which folders (but not files) are taking up your quota.

Knowing how much space you do or don't have left may not be too important during the first few months of your Mac's life, but as time goes by you'll realize your hard drive isn't as big as you'd like it to be. Determining where that space went can be done with WheresTheFreeSpace, but it is neither the best, nor the most affordable choice for Mac OS X.

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