

macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH



In this 4th Anniversary Issue

iListen

Logo Creator

Parallels Desktop for Mac

And much, much more...

Volume 4 Issue 7 2006

<i>Masthead</i>	4
<i>Letter From the CEO</i>	5
4 Years?	5
<i>According to Hoyle...</i>	6
Cross-Platform Software Development from a Macintosh Perspective: Converting Legacy Frameworks	6
<i>Ivory Tower - July 2006</i>	9
<i>Music and the Mac</i>	11
Application Software for Songwriters, Composers and Musicians	11
<i>The Mac Night Owl</i>	15
Not a Rumor: Why Apple Might Release Pro Desktops Early	15
<i>Mac ReviewCast</i>	17
Mac Freeware of the Month	17
<i>Macsimum News</i>	22
Intel's wireless, multi-core patent applications for June 2006	22
<i>Musings From Mars</i>	26
How're We Doing Now? An Update on DHTML/Ajax Browser Compatibility	26
<i>Practical Strategy Consulting</i>	38
Bunny Slippers	38
<i>Scam Artistry – Where's the Pony and the Bogus-Meter?</i>	40
<i>Sudden Impact: Apple's Great Asteroid Hoax</i>	50
<i>Books</i>	52
Chief Customer Officer: Getting Past Lip Service to Passionate Action	52
Digital SLR Photography with Photoshop CS2 All-in-One	54
Everyware: The Dawning Age of Ubiquitous Computing	55
Fixing Windows XP Annoyances	61
Photoshop CS2 Workflow: The Digital Photographer's Guide	62
Web Site Cookbook: Designing, Maintaining and Marketing	64
How to everything with Windows XP: Third Edition	67
<i>Hardware</i>	69
EyeTV 250	69
Microsoft Wireless Laser Desktop for Mac	71

Parrott TalkPro Headset: VXI USB 7.0	75
Petito 512 MB Flash Drive for USB 2.0	77
Snowball USB Mic – Retro Professional Quality	78
<i>Shareware</i>	82
<i>doc_Babad's Software Review Overview - An Introduction</i>	82
AppZapper 1.5.2 and 1.6 — You tried it out, spurned it so then burn it	84
Disc Cover 1.0.8 - Create great disc covers and CD/DVD inserts and booklets using fine templates or your own design skills	89
Folder Icon X 3.0 — There's still no more excuse for generic or just solid colored icons	95
Screenshots Preference Pane 1.0 — Don't get PNG'd, you have a choice	99
Sidenote 1.7 — Sidenote is another fine option for note taking, one with a stickies type paradigm	102
Smart Scroll X 1.3.3 — Scroll with your keyboard and not just your mouse	106
<i>Software</i>	109
Accio Dictionaries for iPod	109
Art Explosion: 750,000 Images	111
Centrify - DirectControl for Macs – Seeing the Forest	112
iListen 1.7 – The Search for the Speech Recognition “Holy Grail” and the Power of Voice!	115
The Logo Creator MEGA Pak – Get Professional!	118
Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X	120
<i>Advertising</i>	125
Amazon.com	125
Apple Store for Individuals	126
Apple Store for Businesses	127
Lionshead Studios Limited and Feral Interactive - Black & White 2	128
Lionshead Studios Limited and Feral Interactive –The Movies	129
DigitaMediaTraining	130
Ominex	131
<i>macCompanion Media Kit</i>	134
Statistical Analysis	134
Advertising with <i>macCompanion</i>	134
Site Ad Rate	134
PDF Ad Rates	135
Rate Table	135
Affiliations	136
Sponsorships	136

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Thanks to Daniel Counsell of Realmac Software Development (<http://www.realmacsoftware.com>) who graced these pages and our website with newer rating stars.

Our special thanks to all those who have allowed us to review their products!
And to our readers, who make this effort possible.

Letter From the CEO

4 Years?

by Robert Pritchett

Well actually, we've been publishing for more than 4 years, but pumping out an issue of the magazine each month is something we have officially been doing here at *macCompanion* for 4 years, as of this month.

Like any business environment, a few of our excellent all-volunteer staff have come and gone as life has taken its toll, while we've moved forward through this particular time continuum. It has been gratifying to see some of those who began with us, have moved on to their own successes and we've prayed and fasted for those who have had to battle through the exigencies of mortality, such as job losses and changes, relocations, hospitalizations, marriages and births, graduations and other family activities that make life interesting and are much more important than a monthly magazine ever could be. How's that for perspective?

macCompanion has been an experiment in publishing, with a desire to learn about books, computer hardware, software, training materials and in offering opinionated columns on a variety of topics that interest us, and probably you. And we intend to be here for the long term, as long as each of you click through our affiliates, purchase items in our Bazaar and touch base with those who paid to advertise with us on our website and in our magazine. Currently, we are almost breaking even as we pay bills for the monthly overhead charges we incur by maintaining both the website and publishing the magazine.

Of course, we'd like to get to a point where we are actually generating income to do more than just "break even". And that is where you come in. Spread the word about *macCompanion* and the work we do for you.

Along those lines, apparently many of those manufacturers, book publishers and software developers also are enjoying what we do and have done, over the last 4 years, based on their **overwhelming generosity** in offering products in our July celebration that will be "gifted" to lucky subscribers of the magazine and listeners of the *Mac ReviewCast* at <http://www.macreviewcast.com> each week, when we do the "gift-away" the 2nd weekend of July. Well over \$4,000 USD worth of gifts will be distributed either by us, or by those who offered their wares, to "direct-ship" products. We feel during a celebration that it is better to "gift" than to receive, don't you? We thought so!

We also feel we are "riding the wave" and "hanging 10" as we surf the crest of the Apple-induced tsunami that is beginning to sweep over the computer industry. This is really exciting!

Your gift to us would be in letting others know we exist and that they too can read our free monthly commentary and reviews, either online or in the downloadable PDFs we produce each month at <http://www.macompanion.com>.

We really would like to see an increase in traffic from around 2 million page views per month and see that move closer to 3 million or more by year's end. How about it? It's really simple. Just talk about us.

After all, by our count, there are close to 80 million people around the world that use Macs and with around "5% marketshare", as if that were a real indicator. There are 95% more potential readers of the rest of the computer users on the planet that probably never heard of us – and they should. Would you agree?

Yep. Hard to believe, isn't it? Four years and by our estimate, getting better by the month. All because of you.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for reading, linking and communicating with us about this "Lifestyle" that Apple has bestowed upon us. Without them and those who produce products for this industry, we would not have anything really to discuss now, would we?

According to Hoyle...

Cross-Platform Software Development from a Macintosh Perspective: Converting Legacy Frameworks

by Jonathan Hoyle

jhoyle at maccompanion.com

macCompanion

July 2006

For these past 10 months, we have spent this column examining a wide number of cross-platform frameworks and development environments available from a Macintosh perspective. For those just catching up with us now, here is what we have covered so far:

- **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>
- **AMPC:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/march2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Java compilers:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/april2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Basic compilers (Part I):**
<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/may2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Basic compilers (Part II):**
<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/june2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

All of these articles have been discussing the various options of starting a new project. However, a large number of you already have projects in place but need to update their codebases. This month, we shall tour some of the most widely used frameworks and development environments and look at cross-platform tool choices, which best fit them.

Metrowerks PowerPlant

Until relatively recently, the dominant C++ framework used by Macintosh developers was Metrowerks' *PowerPlant*, an object oriented framework which came free with their C++ compiler CodeWarrior. *PowerPlant* served the needs of both Classic and Carbon developers alike for nearly a decade. Unfortunately, its parent company, Motorola, spun Metrowerks off to Freescale, where it was mismanaged and starved for resources. In a short two-year span, Freescale turned a dominant marketshare into insolvency. Left high and dry are the thousand upon thousands of Macintosh software projects, which were heavily invested into the *PowerPlant* framework.

One solution, which has recently become more popular is the C++ framework *CPLAT* [http://www.ksoft.net/cp_home.htm]. *CPLAT* is an object-oriented framework with an API very similar to *PowerPlant's*. Although not as fully featured as other solutions (such as *Qt*), *CPLAT* does the majority of what most applications need. It is not free, but its \$50 price tag is very reasonable, especially when you consider that you will be able to compile for both Windows and Macintosh. For a full review of *CPLAT*, see this article:

<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/december2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

Microsoft Foundation Classes (MFC)

Just as PowerPlant was the dominant framework for Carbon C++ developers, so too is MFC for Windows C++ developers. There is a huge base of MFC applications, virtually all of which are Windows specific. Porting these projects to a cross-platform framework is best done with wxWidgets [<http://www.wxwidgets.org/>]. wxWidgets' API is modeled to be very similar to MFC. Best of all, wxWidgets is open source, so there is no charge to you the developer. Using wxWidgets, your project can be compiled for Mac OS X, Classic, Linux and many other operating systems. See this article for a full review of this framework:

<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/november2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

Cocoa and Interface Builder

For those using *Cocoa* to create Mac OS X applications, Interface Builder is an integral part of creating the GUI. Unfortunately, Interface Builder is Macintosh-specific, and is thus unsuitable for cross-platform development. However, Interface Builder need not be dropped if your project is architected properly. In particular, using a design pattern called *MVC (Model-View-Controller)*, you separate out your business logic (the *Model*) from Interface Builder .nibs (the *View*) and its associated interaction (the *Controller*). Following this pattern, you would keep all of your Objective C code inside the *Controller* files, as they would be Mac-specific. Your model files should remain in C or C++. At this point you can then use a different rapid application development package to create a GUI for another operating system, e.g.: *Visual C# for Windows*.

For more information on *MVC*, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Model_view_controller .

Another solution that will become available is with *REALbasic*. REAL Software has announced that *Cocoa* bindings will become available in a future release. When this happens, you will be able to replace Interface Builder with *REALbasic's* cross-platform GUI generator. Although the *Cocoa* bindings themselves will remain Mac-specific, it will allow you an easy access to drop in Windows-specific code where needed.

Microsoft Visual Basic

Visual Basic is the dominant Basic compiler available today, regardless of platform. The power and elegance of its environment is very attractive, and so most *VB* users are not inclined to leave it just to include Macintosh and Linux customers. Fortunately, there is a cross-platform product, which is very much like it: *REALbasic* from REAL Software [<http://www.realbasic.com/>]. The look and feel of *RB 2006* is very much like *VB*, so users will not have much of a problem making the transition. *REALbasic's* programming API is similar to classic Visual Basic, so those transitioning from *VB 6* and earlier will find it fairly straightforward. Those using *VB.NET* will find that they will need to convert their .NET system calls. REAL Software has documentation on *Porting VB Applications to Linux and Mac OS X* [<http://www.realbasic.com/support/whitepapers/portingvisualbasic/>], and it is definitely worth beginning the process with this document. For the full review of *REALbasic*, go to:

<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/january2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

Another choice available to classic *VB* users is *KBasic* [<http://www.kbasic.com/>]. *KBasic* is a low cost downloaded Basic compiler designed to closely mirror the *VB 6* API. Although not as full featured as *REALbasic*, *KBasic* is still powerful, and less expensive. Note however that its Macintosh target is relatively new and available only in the Professional version of *KBasic*.

Visual C# and .NET

Visual C# was introduced by Microsoft when they delivered their first .NET programming environments. Despite the occasional rumors that Microsoft will port *C#* to the Macintosh, it is highly unlikely that this will ever transpire. So what would be the best path forward for *C#* projects? The solution involving the least amount of work would be to simply port the *C#* project to *Java*. *C#* is essentially *Java* with extras, and so the conversion process is a lot easier than to, say, *C++*. The biggest work will be in replacing .NET calls with native *Java* calls, such as the *Swing* API.

Another solution is to use one of the many *C#* to *VB* converters and then translate into *REALbasic*. This would be ideal for those who find *Basic* to be a more suitable language than *Java*. The *Java Swing* API is very different from .NET, so again most of the work will be in translating API calls.

MacApp and other Macintosh frameworks

Older Macintosh frameworks such as *MacApp* and *Think Class Libraries* do not have easy transition options. These frameworks are similar enough to *PowerPlant* that you may wish to follow the recommendations for it. However, serious consideration ought to be given for rewriting the app from scratch. If money is no object, the expensive *Qt* is probably the best framework choice from a feature perspective [see <http://www.trolltech.com/>]. For those on a budget, the fastest way to develop cross-platform software today is by using *REALbasic* as the GUI front end, while the back end can be kept in *C/C++* housed within a *DLL*. Another approach is to port the entire application to *Java*. Regardless of which direction you choose to go, rewriting the application completely is likely to be your penalty for having waited so long.

Next Month: *C++* Framework Update! See you in 30!

Ivory Tower - July 2006

by Ted Bade

Will Apple help Intel grow? -- Some time ago, I mentioned that I had read that some people believe that the Apple/Intel alliance will be good for Intel (as well as for Apple). Apparently someone from Intel mentioned that Intel couldn't really innovate, because the chip they produced had to satisfy Microsoft. Now, with Apple as a customer, they have a venue with which they can innovate. (Yes, us Mac users are very much experienced with changing our entire software library to take advantage of the next big chip!) Who knows what heights this alliance will bring us to?

The Mac News Network had an interesting little note that this fact came up again at Computex. According to their article, an Intel Exec told an IDG reporter that Apple was pushing them "on both packaging and thermals".

<http://www.macnn.com/articles/06/06/06/apple.pushes.intel/>

I hope this is the case. Wouldn't it be interesting if someday, you could run Windows on a Mac a lot faster than on a regular PC? How about if gamers decided that buying a high end Mac was a better investment than buying a high end PC? Cool, is all I can say. It just might happen, and I truly hope it does.

Boot Camp good for Apple marketshare - An Analyst from [Needham Co.](#) recently indicated that they expected to see Apple's marketshare to improve because of Boot Camp. According to a report found on the Mac News Network site, the increase could triple in the US and perhaps increase by 75% worldwide.

<http://www.macnn.com/articles/06/06/13/analyst.upgrades.apple/>

I also felt that the fact that people could run Windows if they needed to, would cause a fair number of Windows users who are sitting on the fence to make the move to Apple. If Apple can manage to create drivers that allow all Macintosh peripherals to work smoothly on an Intel Mac running Windows, that in itself would be a thing of note. Truly, the real test is; will consumers buy more Apples? We will have to wait and see.

You know you are popular at Universities when - Speaking of studies and interesting things, a recent survey of college students asked them to rate the importance of fun things like listening to their iPod, text messaging, and bar hopping. Apparently 73% of the students placed the iPod above all the rest. Another study placed iPods ahead of beer for 71% of the students. This makes it only the second time in the 18 years of the study where beer was dethroned from the number one position. Last time was in 1997 when it was beaten by the Internet.

I personally never thought I would hear that any item from Apple was more important to students than beer! Wow, that really is hitting the big times, I guess! To celebrate, I am going to relax with a bottle of my favorite brew (my homemade Imperial Stout) and my iPod, to contemplate which I might like better.

To read the full article posted on the Yahoo site, go to:

http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/060607/colleges_ipods.html?.v=3

Bring the iPod literally anywhere! -

There are hundred of iPod accessories that allow you to enjoy, protect, display, and enhance your iPod. The latest most interesting one is the Stereo Dock for iPod as part of a Bath Tissue Holder! (I don't usually include images with this article, but this item really requires a view!). Yes, you can convert your bathroom toilet paper dispenser with an iPod dock! Sit back, relax, and listen to your favorite tunes as you enjoy your quality time!

This nicely designed stereo was developed by Atech Flash Technology, Inc. The iCarta looks like it would perform very well. Check out the audio and other specs by visiting their web site:



<http://www.atechflash.com/products-icarta.html>.

Too long has the bathroom been ignored as a place to relax with music. Buy one today and enjoy your iPod, everywhere! (Hey Atech Flash Technology, Inc., I would happy to "review" one of these! © , No really. My wife might kill me, but it would be fun).

Sage advice: Bring a Mac to school - A recent Business Week article By Stephen H. Wildstrom suggested that freshmen bring a Macintosh computer to school with them. To quote:

"This year I have some advice for the college-bound: Unless you have a compelling reason not to go with a Mac, an Apple laptop or desktop offers the best combination of features, ease of use, and value."

Wow. I couldn't agree more, but then I am one of the Mac dedicated. The article goes on to explain other values of owning a Macintosh. Including the fact that Microsoft's Vista will only catch up to Mac OS X and even before Vista will be released, Apple will release a new version of Mac OS X. Read the complete article by visiting:

http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/jun2006/tc20060614_650605.htm?sub=techmaven.

What will happen to Microsoft without Bill? - You have probably heard that Bill Gates announced that he was going to retire from the day-to-day activities of running Microsoft and concentrate on his charity company.

This obviously caused quite a stir. How well will Microsoft perform without its visionary leader? Will Microsoft actually come up with something new (on their own) or will they continue to copy or buy companies as they have for years?

There has been a lot of unrest between Microsoft and their customer base lately. Much of it being caused by the delays of Vista and some of it by Apple and Linux promotions. I am sure that many Mac faithful cheered when they heard this news, thinking that this might be the start of Microsoft's decline. I am not too sure of that. I think definitely the company will change without Mr. Gates running the show. The real question is whether it will be for the good or bad of Microsoft, of their customers, or both. We can hope that this move will help increase Apple's marketshare.



Music and the Mac

<http://www.ilovemymachthesong.com/> Copyright ©2006 Daphna

Application Software for Songwriters, Composers and Musicians

by Daphne Kalfon

Most of the software that gets attention, has to do with recording and performing music, such as programs like digital audio and MIDI sequencers and editors, effects plug-ins, virtual instruments, samplers, CD-burning software and such. While these software programs are invaluable tools to any songwriter, composer or musician of any level, there is a lot more to it all besides recording and performing. In my column this month, I will look at a few of the types of software programs in the “other” category. The good news is that there is a virtual treasure trove of shareware and freeware available, and at the end of the column I will also mention some websites where you can find more.

It is important to keep in mind that no program does it all. Each one has its own strengths and weaknesses and it is up to you to decide what you most want to get out of that particular application. One way to find out whether or not it's what you're looking for, download the 30-day trial version and actually use it during that time. This will save you the cost of buying the software package outright and also save you the time it would take to otherwise transfer or enter all of your data into yet another application. Try downloading just one trial version at a time to avoid confusion, especially between similar applications. When you have finished your own assessment of one application, download the next one and repeat the process. Once you settle on an application and become accustomed to using it, you might begin to wonder how you ever managed without all of its helpful tools.

I did a Google search to help better identify those sites that deal with applications specifically for the Mac and the one that proved most helpful in this regard was the Hitsquad Musician Network. The reason for that is once you arrive on the site, you can actually specify your search by platform as well, which is really important when you have a Mac!

<http://www.hitsquad.com/smm>

The first page lists all the various music software categories. Click on the one that interests you, choose for which platform, and it's as easy as that.

Clicking on a software title sends you to another page to view other information about the application such as its full name and version, who created it, license conditions, system requirements, release date, as well as links to view user comments, related software categories and developer updates. And of course there is the option to download the application.

The first category I clicked on was “lyric writing tools” and I was taken to this page:

http://www.hitsquad.com/smm/mac/LYRIC_WRITING_TOOLS/

Four programs are listed, one of which I have mentioned in a previous column where I focused specifically on lyric-writing techniques. The application goes by the name, “MasterWriter”. I must say that my numerous Internet searches kept coming up with MasterWriter, so I can only conclude that it is one of the more widely used and preferred lyric-writing tools on the Mac. There is a demo version available, and the other three mentioned are freeware, shareware or donationware.

There is a link that takes you directly to the MasterWriter website: www.masterwriter.com. A tour of the program is available and a free 30-day trial can be downloaded, which as I mentioned earlier, is the best way to go when you are considering purchasing any software application.

There is an application, not mentioned on hitsquad, but that kept coming up in my searches and looks quite interesting. It is from WriteExpress and is called “Rhymer”, with a byline that reads “Unlocking Writer’s Block.” There is plenty of information about this application and this one comes with a 30-day money-back guarantee, which I think is a real bonus. Check it out here:

<http://www.rhymer.com>

Next I clicked on the link that said “Music Theory/Tuition” and was taken to this page:

http://www.hitsquad.com/smm/mac/MUSIC_TUITION/

Again, these are all applications for the Mac. Going by the number of applications in this category, I’d say it is certainly one of the more popular and in-demand ones. There are so many listed in this category that it really is best if you check it out for yourself, and depending on what you are looking for in particular, you can make your selection.

There is everything from theory teaching software, ear training software, learn how to read music notation, learn piano playing basics and learn basic guitar method. They are freeware, shareware, or, as in the case of MasterWriter, are indicated as being “demo”, which means that those particular programs are for purchase, but that a free demo is available.

Next I clicked on “Chords” and what came up seemed to be applications leaning mostly towards those who play the guitar, although definitely not all. All except for one are shareware. You can find the list of these applications here:

<http://www.hitsquad.com/smm/mac/CHORDS/>

Next I picked the “Ear Training” category and I was surprised to see such a long list of applications come up. Although it indicates that these are all applications related to ear training, learning to play by ear, learning to identify notes when you hear them, and developing musical skills in general, it looks from the short descriptions provided for each application in this listing, that some also deal with things such as instrument tuning, the study of jazz related chords, help with writing and playing music, learn to recognize scales and modes, learn key signatures, musical intervals and more. As far as being demo, freeware or shareware, this category is definitely a mixed bag.

Here is the direct link:

http://www.hitsquad.com/smm/mac/EAR_TRAINING/

In the “Notation Software” category, there is also a very large selection to choose from, and it just depends on what you are looking for. This collection of application software is for reading, writing and understanding musical notation. Programs here vary from the very simple to the very sophisticated, and again, is a mixed bag in terms of being shareware, freeware or demo:

<http://www.hitsquad.com/smm/mac/NOTATION/>

I've used Encore, Finale and Sibelius, the last of which is my favourite. Also listed are versions of notation software for the guitar.

It seems that in all of these listings there is somewhat of a crossover, which means that some of the applications that came up in previous searches are coming up in this listing as well, so keep that in mind as you conduct your own search. For instance, in the search results for "Notation Applications", there are also listed applications which aid in learning to read written music, provide music theory training basics, transcribe recorded music, teach sight-reading, how to produce, print and read lead sheets and more.

Another category, which I thought was kind of cool was, "slow down music". These are software applications to slow down music and in most cases, without affecting the pitch. This application is helpful for transcribing recorded music, working out a tricky solo or riff and for other uses such as accompanying a dance performance. About half a dozen programs are listed and all are shareware.

If you would like to dig a little more, here are a few sites to check out:

<http://www.sonicspot.com>
<http://www.songwriting-software.com>
<http://www.taxi.com>

I'd like to also make mention of the option to take online music courses, and in that category again, there are numerous choices, with some definitely better than others. I would start by first checking out the two below. Berklee is a highly regarded college of music in Boston and offers their online courses for those who are unable to attend in person:

<http://www.BerkleeMusic.com>
<http://www.SongU.com>

As an aside, I also recommend bookmarking www.songwriter101.com for all the interesting and educational articles, which are presented in a fun and concise way. Besides that there are feature stories, news, books, links, interviews, FAQ, a forum and much more.

In this column I have just touched on what is available. The variety and number of applications can be a little overwhelming but the fact is that for any one of the myriad of things having to do with music, there are a wealth of non-recording software tools available to the music maker. Always try to have some fun along the way, and remember that it is still all about the music!



The Mac Night Owl

<http://www.macnightowl.com> Copyright © 2006 Making The Impossible, Inc

Not a Rumor: Why Apple Might Release Pro Desktops Early by Gene Steinberg

Not so long ago, a lot of us suggested that the Mac Pro, the expected successor to the Power Mac, would probably be announced in August during the keynote at the WWDC. It makes sense, since the newest updates to Intel's chip line will be in full production.

But wait just a moment! Maybe we're missing something. You see, it's clear that the next great version of Mac OS X, code-named Leopard, heads the August agenda. Apple has said as much in a recent press release, which is why you're going to read lots and lots of stories about what might appear in the new release, along with various and sundry wish lists.

I know I've given mine, but what about the remaining members of Apple's Mac lineup? With consumer desktops and consumer and professional notebooks out the door, only the release of the latest members of Intel's revised chip family might have held up the new Power Mac and, of course, the Xserve.

You can expect that Apple wants to get the products out as soon as the new chips are in production, just as they did when the Intel-based iMac and MacBook Pro were announced in January. Yes, even though they're only small customers to Intel, dwarfed by Dell and HP, Apple didn't find itself placed at the end of the food chain. Apple is clearly the prestige customer for the world's largest chipmaker, and I have no doubt this was part of the deal that made them switch processors.

This week, Intel introduced its Woodcrest processor, which is officially known as the Dual-Core Xeon 5100 series. Topping at 3GHz, this is a high-end 64-bit chip that's earmarked for both servers and high-end workstations. You can be certain that Apple has already gotten prototypes and that it is developing ways to harness the extraordinary power of this new chip, and certainly an Xserve would be as good a place as any to place it.

So with the chip shipping now, and designed for "high-volume server, workstation, communications, storage and embedded market segments," according to Intel, what is Apple waiting for? Yes, you read that correctly! The word "workstation" is used there, and the Power Mac G5, in the past, has been compared to a Xeon-equipped workstation.

So with the new generation chips at hand, is there any reason for Apple to wait much longer before completing its Intel migration? That magic 3GHz point ought to be particularly tempting, in light of the failed and embarrassing promise Steve Jobs made about delivering a Power Mac G5 with that rating within a year after the initial model was introduced.

In announcing the new chip, Intel claims "135 percent performance improvements and up to 40 percent reduction in energy consumption over previous Intel server products." Does this mean that the Mac Pro, the expected name of the Power Mac's successor, won't need liquid cooling? I wouldn't know, and I wouldn't pretend to possess secret information about the status of Apple's design scheme for its new desktops.

But I will say this: Unless there is some unexpected delay in developing and testing its professional model, I don't see any reason for a further delay. Accordingly, I'm going out on the limb here, and I may end up being the fool as a result. But that doesn't matter. I fully expect that Apple will announce the Mac Pro and a brand new Xserve before the middle of July.

I expect both will have form factors similar to the existing designs, largely because the customers who buy such computers aren't as style-conscious as those who buy the new MacBook or an iPod. They simply want something that delivers the computing horsepower and reliability they need for their work. If cooling requirements are more modest, of course, Apple might find room for more internal drives, but I'm not taking any bets.

Of course there is another factor that Apple has to consider: With Adobe's Creative Suite and other applications still not ready in Universal form, early adopters of the new Mac professional desktops will have to rely on Rosetta emulation for large portions of their work. Now if Intel's claims of tremendous performance improvements are true, and the Xeon 5100 series can trump a Power Mac G5 by a comparable margin, you will experience only a negligible performance loss with, say, Photoshop. But Universal applications will just soar.

As to Adobe, one might expect that, with the Intel transition done, they'd have their work cut out for them in delivering a Universal Creative Suite. Maybe they can even advance their timetable, but I'm not going to go that far. Besides, my crystal ball is getting a bit cloudy, and I need some sleep.



Mac ReviewCast

<http://www.surfbits.com>

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Mac Freeware of the Month

Tim Verpoorten

<http://www.macreviewcast.com>

Hello, I was having time issues this month, so I had to bring you an abbreviated list of freeware. There's still enough here to keep your interest and I promise next month I'll set a record on *The macCompanion* for the longest article to make up for the short one this month. Have fun and I hope you're all enjoying the summer.

Aquallegro

<http://andyvn.ath.cx/?sect=tech&cat=soft&topic=aqu>

So you want to learn music? This is for you. Aquallegro is a suite of music theory teaching software. It contains sections that teach note names in Treble, Alto, Tenor, and Bass clef, and helps with the recognition of key signatures - both flat and sharp. It also teaches ear training to help recognize Major, Minor, Diminished, Augmented, Maj7, and Min7 chords in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th inversion, as well as all intervals from perfect prime to perfect octave. It also teaches the notes on a piano keyboard, including accidentals. It has an easy to use interface, and lets the user customize more than they'd ever need. All of the quizzes are scored while in progress, so the user continuously knows how well they're doing. Aquallegro is perfect for the comprehensive music student or just for the curious that want to hone their musical skills.

Cooliris

<http://www.cooliris.com/index.php?s=MAC>

Cooliris is in beta yet, so it's only partially functioning, but it's still a unique and functional piece of software.

Cooliris Previews for Mac Beta 1 is a free extension for the Safari browser that lets you preview the underlying content of links without clicking. Simply rest your mouse on a link from an assortment of sites and see its content almost instantaneously. Cooliris Previews works for links on Google (Web, Images, News, Groups, Froogle), BBC News, CNN News, Craigslist, eBay, Del.icio.us and RSS feeds. Simply rest your mouse over a link and see the content immediately. This helps you reduce Back button clicks and dead links, and lets you browse the web more quickly and hassle-free. It's really unusual to see the whole webpage come up in the preview, but you can set the size of the preview window and the speed it appears. Give this one a try, it's going to get better and better as goes along.

CoverFlow

<http://www.steelskies.com/coverflow/HomePage.html>

One of the big attractions of a physical album is the beautiful packaging and aesthetic appeal, something that's sorely missed with the digital equivalent. CoverFlow aims to bring that aesthetic appeal to your mp3 collection. It allows you to browse your albums complete with beautiful artwork pulled from any sources it can find, whether that's buried in your song tags, collected via Synergy, or looked up on Amazon. Coverflow is actually a beautiful environment for browsing & launching your albums from. It's an interface, actually.

Dockyard

<http://belkadan.com/dockyard>

Dockyard is a "dock switcher" for Mac OS X. It allows you to have multiple docks and switch between them with one click. Dockyard now comes in three forms: a menu extra, which appears in your menu bar, a widget, which appears in your Dashboard (Mac OS X v10.4 only), and a normal application (called Dockyard Manager) which allows finer control over your docks. All three programs were created with Apple's Cocoa API, using the Objective C programming language. If you want to use the Dockyard menu extra, you must first get a program like Unsanity's Menu Extra Enabler to allow it to work. After you install one of these programs, just double-click on Dockyard.menu to launch it. From then on, it will always be in the right side of the menu bar. If you would prefer the Dockyard widget, you may simply download and install it like any other widget. The widget will run on any system with the Dashboard, that is, Mac OS X v10.4 or later. Last is Dockyard Manager. Unlike the menu extra and widget, Dockyard Manager is a fully-fledged dock editor. Not only can you create, rename, reorder, and delete docks, but you can also add, remove, and reorder the individual items in them. Finally, you can change docks straight from the current Dock by accessing Dockyard Manager's dock menu.

Eudora Mailbox Cleaner

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

Eudora Mailbox Cleaner is a simple drag'n'drop application, which helps you migrating your mail and related data between different client programs. Contrary to most other solutions, it preserves message status flags (read, replied, ...) and re-attaches attachments Eudora stripped from incoming messages. It supports migrating data from Eudora (both, Mac and Windows versions) and Thunderbird to Apple Mail or Thunderbird. If you have Eudora and want to experiment with Thunderbird or Apple Mail without losing all your data from Eudora, this app is for you.

Goban

<http://www.sente.ch/software/goban>

You can use Goban to play a game of Go with the computer or online against people on servers across the world. Goban is a powerful, simple, fast go board for Mac OS X. The game is written in a simple and fast Aqua interface and it has a long list of features. SO if you're looking for the perfect Mac experience in an online board game, this is the one for you.

GoogleMaps Plugin

<http://www.briantoth.com/addressbook/>

The Google Maps Plugin enables you lookup your Apple Address Book addresses using Google Maps as well as get directions between your Address Book addresses. Take Google's hybrid map views that combine street names and satellite images, following directions has never been easier! At the time this was written, Google Maps supports the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, Spain, Italy and France. Google Earth is now supported as of June 15, 2006.

iTuneMyWalkman

<http://ilari.scheinin.fidisk.fi/itunemywalkman>

iTuneMyWalkman is an iTunes script that will help you synchronize the contents of iTunes playlists with your mobile phone or other portable device. The purpose is to make this happen as automatically as possible, almost like it does with an iPod or an iTunes-compatible Motorola phone. The script is able to detect automatically when you connect your phone.

- Synchronizes the contents of specific iTunes playlists to your mobile phone/other device.
- Detects automatically when the device is connected.
- Creates directory structure according to information for artist/album, playlist or genre.
- Recognizes albums with various artists and tracks with featured artists.
- Copied files can be re-encoded on the fly to save space.
- Play counts can be incremented automatically when songs are transferred.
- Pictures and videos taken with the phone camera can be automatically moved to a user-specified location on your hard disk during synchronization.

Jeteye

<http://www.jeteye.com>

Think of Jeteye as an organizational tool for your thoughts or projects. You can easily store websites, text messages, or images in a group that they call Jetpaks. Then you can keep them private or share them with anyone on the website. For example, this is how I use it. My name on jetpak for my account is *surfbits*. My jetpaks are named after my podcast episodes. So this one was called mrc58. I save all the websites of the freeware, software and hardware I want to talk to you about in a jetpak along with the text from the emails I receive and the notes or tips I want to share with you on the podcast. Then when I go to write the podcast I have everything I need in one spot. Now why is this so handy? Well it works from the website, but better yet, it works as an extension to Firefox browser in either PC or Mac, so I can easily access my jetpak from the office or at home, and whenever I find something I want to talk about on the podcast, it's easy to add the website or email. You can go and search for tags that I use for the podcast, such as macreviewcast, freeware, macs, or my name and you'll find my jetpak and can go into it and surf the links I have and read the emails I enclosed. That's how I use it, but you know you'll find your own method to using it. Give it a visit and see if Jeteye may help you organize your life just a bit more, it sure helped me.

Jiggler

<http://www.sticksoftware.com/software/Jiggler.html>

Jiggler is a little freeware app with one purpose: to keep your Mac awake. When you have some lengthy task for your computer to do, it's annoying to have to turn off your screensaver and turn off the sleep timer, only to have to turn it all back on again when you're done. (The "never sleep" corner will keep your screensaver from kicking in, but still won't prevent your machine from falling asleep.) What you really want is a little helper who will bump your mouse every once in a while to keep your machine alert. That's Jiggler. Jiggler just wiggles your mouse every once in a while, keeping your machine awake and happy. When you want to stay awake, run it. When you don't want to, quit it. You can even run it while you're working, because you can set it not to wiggle your mouse unless your computer has been sitting idle for a while.

MacTracker

<http://www.mactracker.ca>

MacTracker provides detailed information on every Apple, Motorola, PowerComputing, and UMAX Mac OS computer ever made, including items such as processor speed, memory, optical drives, graphic cards, supported Mac OS versions, and expansion options. Also included is information on Apple mice, keyboards, displays, printers, scanners, digital cameras, iPod, AirPort Base Stations, Newtons, and Mac OS versions. This software is a must-have for any Mac user with an older machine or a yen for the past.

Man Handler

<http://home.comcast.net/~nitewing98/index.html>

If you like using the UNIX foundation of OS X, you'll love Man Handler. The "man" pages are a great help when working in UNIX, but using them in a Terminal window is less than satisfactory. Man Handler lets you open multiple man pages, returns the whole text of the page you're after, and the files are save-able so you don't have to look up frequently used commands over and over. Plus the OS X services are all usable by Man Handler, you can make the text a sticky note, have your Mac read it aloud, email to someone, and a lot more. Written in AppleScript Studio with source code.

MiNews

<http://www.js8media.com/minews>

MiNews is an RSS newsreader that's written in Cocoa and has a beautiful Aqua style, just like the iApps. It's simple to use, full featured, like many of the shareware applications on the market. You can import feeds, share them with your friends and gives you the ability to change views and styles to fit your needs. So if you're not happy with your newsreader, or maybe you're not even using an RSS reader, then make sure you check this one out, it will certainly be one of the best looking apps you've used, I'm sure of that one.

Open Fire

<http://bluetorchstudios.com/games/openfire>

This is a fun, 3D graphics shooter. The webpage describes it like this.. What is there for a lone man in a tower, armed only with his trusty rocket launcher, unlimited ammo, and cunning wits, to do with an endless stream of lemming-like tanks and army jeeps? Blow them up for fun, perhaps?! Featuring seamless, integrated real-time global online scoring, a holy-man-that-was-a-big-explosion-o-meter, and awesome arcade gameplay backed by the incredibly realistic Ageia physics engine, Open Fire shoves you in the shoes of a lone operative armed to the teeth with explosive rocket rounds. Get ready to unload your weapon and riddle your screen with pockmarked scars of battle, because it's time to Open Fire!

Reference Miner

<http://www.sonnysoftware.com/aboutreferenceminer.html>

Reference Miner searches the Internet to find and display reference information from PubMed, Amazon (US, UK, Germany, and Japan), and the Library of Congress. Special features include the display of book cover art (Amazon) and the ability to easily perform complex searches. If you or your institution has a subscription to the journal, directly open a PubMed full-text article in your browser. It's a unique way to search these online resources and get the full articles and info instantly.

PatchBurn

<http://www.patchburn.de>

PatchBurn is a tool to patch existing CD/DVD-drivers (under Mac OS X 10.2.x) or to generate and install new device profiles (under Mac OS 10.3.x and later). It allows many, otherwise unsupported burners to be used directly with Mac OS X, iTunes and Disc Burner. In other words if you have a third party CD or DVD player that you can't get to work with OSX, give this program a try and you'll be surprised at how many burners will start working that didn't work before.

Sunrise Browser

<http://sunrisebrowser.com/en/index.html>

This is the open source browser for web designers. It has auto-resizable windows, transparent windows, CSS files linked for easy viewing, graphical bookmarks, The URL field is your search field too, create PDF's of any webpage instantly. easy modification of the source file on any webpage, and so many more features. If you like to experiment with browsers, this one is going to be a lot of fun for you.

That's it for the July issue, have a great month and remember to catch Robert and I every week on the *MacReviewCast* Podcast at <http://www.macreviewcast.com>.

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Intel’s wireless, multi-core patent applications for June 2006

by Jack Purcher (Neo)

The following report covers patent applications that were filed by the Intel Corporation in June 2006. Specifically, this report focuses on those patent applications, which relate to wireless and multi-core processor technologies. These are exactly the types of technologies, which could very likely work their way into future Apple hardware – such as cellular network communication systems, and methods for processing traffic at a wireless mesh node.



This is a raw patent report for the sake of news and therefore carries no opinion or analysis.

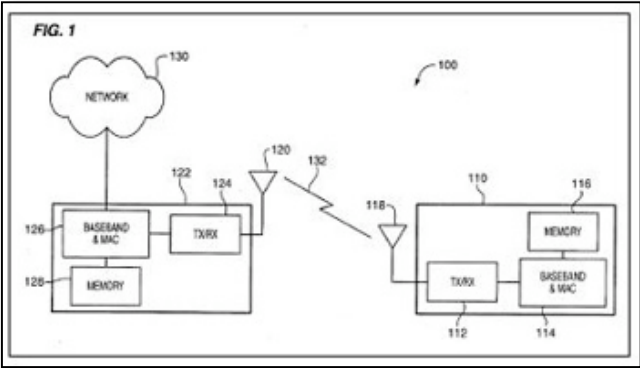
Relating to wireless technologies

Patent 20060125703: Slot antenna having a MEMS varactor for resonance frequency tuning

Abstract: Briefly, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention, a slot antenna may include a primary slot and one or more secondary slots. The size of the antenna may be reduced by adding one or more of the secondary slots that may add additional inductance to the antenna. Furthermore, the size of the antenna may be reduced by increasing the inductance of the secondary slots via increasing the length of the slots or by changing the shape of the slots. The antenna may include one or more MEMS varactors coupled to one or more of the secondary slots. The resonant frequency of the slot antenna may be tuned to a desired frequency by changing the capacitance value of one or more of the MEMS varactors to a desired capacitance value.

Patent FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a wireless local area or cellular network communication system in accordance with one or more embodiments of the present invention.

Intel’s Background: Miniaturized antennas are effective for utilization in mobile wireless communication applications, particularly for handheld devices such as cell phones and personal digital assistants that may incorporate a radio-frequency communication system. Miniaturized slot antennas have been described and designed. When the size of an antenna size is reduced, its bandwidth is also reduced accordingly. As a result, miniaturized antennas having a size suitable for handheld devices may have a bandwidth that is too narrow to cover the pass band of a communication standard that is desired for the handheld devices to utilize.

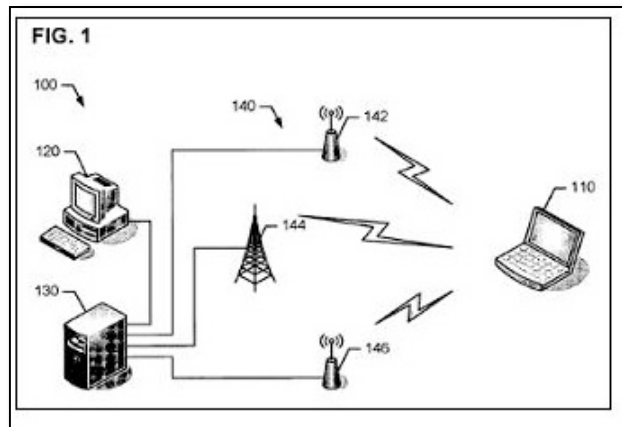


Patent 20060128350: Methods and apparatus for operating transceiver systems of a wireless platform

The present disclosure relates generally to wireless communication systems, and more particularly, to methods and apparatus for operating transceiver systems of a wireless platform.

Patent FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram representation of an example wireless communication system according to an embodiment of the methods and apparatus disclosed herein.

Abstract: Embodiments of methods and apparatus to operate transceiver systems of a wireless platform are generally described herein.



Detail excerpts pertaining to Patent FIG.1: In general, methods and apparatus for operating transceiver systems of a wireless platform are described herein. According to one example embodiment, a wireless platform having a plurality of transceiver systems may be configured to manage power consumption of the plurality of transceiver systems. In particular, the plurality of transceiver systems may include a host transceiver system and one or more client transceiver systems. To reduce power consumption, the client transceiver system(s) may be disabled from receiving incoming communication (e.g., shut off or operating in a sleep mode). While the client transceiver system(s) are disabled, the host transceiver system may be active to receive a notification indicative of an incoming communication associated with a particular client transceiver system. In response to receipt of the notification, the host transceiver system may transmit an alert to that particular client transceiver system. Accordingly, the client transceiver system may be enabled to receive the incoming communication. The methods and apparatus described herein are not limited in this regard.

In the example of FIG. 1, an example wireless communication system 100 including a wireless electronic device 110 is described herein. For example, the wireless electronic device 110 may be a laptop computer, a handheld computer, a tablet computer, a desktop computer, a television, a cellular telephone (e.g., a smart phone), a pager, an audio and/or video player (e.g., an MP3 player or a DVD player), a game device, a digital camera, a navigation device (e.g., a GPS device), a wireless peripheral (e.g., a keyboard, a printer, etc.), a remote control, and/or other suitable wireless electronic devices.

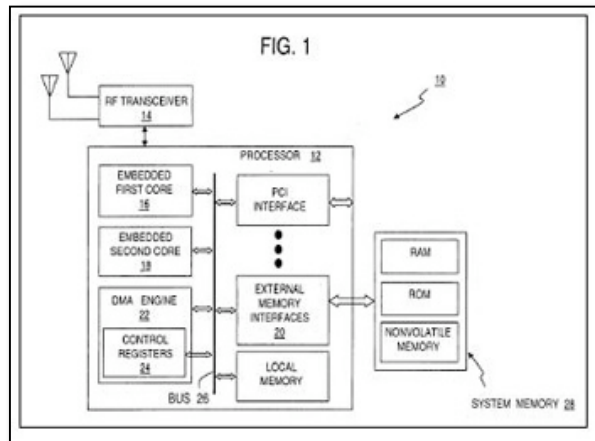
The wireless electronic device may include a wireless platform configured to operate in accordance with a plurality of wireless communication protocols to communicate with other wired and/or wireless platforms, devices, nodes, etc. For example, **these wireless communication protocols may be based on analog, digital, and/or dual-mode communication system standards such as the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) standard, the Frequency Division Multiple Access (FDMA) standard, the Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA) standard, the Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) standard, the Wideband CDMA (WCDMA) standard, the General Packet Radio Services (GPRS) standard, the Enhanced Data GSM Environment (EDGE) standard, the Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS) standard, variations and evolutions of these standards, and/or other suitable wireless communication standards.**

Patent 20060129710: Programmable transaction initiator architecture for systems with secure and non-secure modes

The proliferation of mobile devices has evolved into mobile computing platforms, complete with needs for trusted services. **Operators, manufacturers and wireless users need confidence in the integrity and security of the wireless network, as well as the wireless device in the distribution of digital media. Mobile devices have access to sensitive personal data for online payment and other private information, and therefore, enable secure transactions to deliver protected and secure services.**

Abstract: A wireless device dynamically programs a control register for a command-chain driven DMA device. The control register stores a beginning address of the linked list of commands and a secure bit. The secure bit is set if the transaction writing register is secure and a bit in the data being written into the register is set. DMA devices and other bus-mastering peripherals perform tasks described via a command chain that has access to secure resources when the processor is operating in the secure mode and the secure bit is set.

Patent FIG. 1 illustrates features of the present invention that may be incorporated in a device 10. Device 10 may have applications in laptops, MP3 players, cameras, medical or biotech equipment, automotive safety and protective equipment, and automotive infotainment products. However, it should be understood that the scope of the present invention is not limited to these examples. Additional examples of applications, some including wireless devices operating in networks such as mobile phones, communicators and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) may incorporate the present invention.



As an example of device 10 operating in a wireless communications embodiment, a transceiver 14 both receives and transmits a modulated signal from one or more antennas. The analog front-end transceiver may be a stand-alone Radio Frequency (RF) integrated analog circuit, or alternatively, be embedded with a processor 12 as a mixed-mode integrated circuit. The received modulated signal may be frequency down-converted, filtered, then converted to a baseband, digital signal. **Patent 20060120387: Methods and apparatus for processing traffic at a wireless mesh node**

The present disclosure relates generally to wireless communication systems, and more particularly, to methods and apparatus for processing traffic at a wireless mesh node.

Abstract: Embodiments of methods and apparatus for processing traffic at a wireless mesh node are generally described herein. Other embodiments may be described and claimed. **Patent 20060143693: System, method and device for secure wireless communication**

Abstract: Embodiments of the present invention provide a method, apparatus and system for selecting a wireless communication device for establishing a connection. The method according to some exemplary embodiments of the invention may include selecting a communication device for establishing a connection by determining whether one or more security-related characteristics of the communication device satisfy a security policy corresponding to a selected security class. Other embodiments are described and claimed.

Relating to multi-core processors

Patent 20060117199: Method, system, and apparatus for improving multi-core processor performance

The present disclosure pertains to the field of power management. More particularly, the present disclosure pertains to a new method and apparatus for improving multi-core processor performance despite power constraints.

Abstract: A system, apparatus, and method for a core rationing logic to enable cores of a multi-core processor to adhere to various power and thermal constraints.

Patent 20060117200: Method, system, and apparatus for improving multi-core processor performance

The present disclosure pertains to the field of power management. More particularly, the present disclosure pertains to a new method and apparatus for improving multi-core processor performance despite power constraints.

Abstract: A system, apparatus, and method for a core rationing logic to enable cores of a multi-core processor to adhere to various power and thermal constraints. Patents [20060123263](#) and [20060123264](#): Method, system, and apparatus for improving multi-core processor performance The present disclosure pertains to the field of power management. More particularly, the present disclosure pertains to a new method and apparatus for improving multi-core processor performance despite power constraints.

Abstract: A system, apparatus, and method for a core rationing logic to enable cores of a multi-core processor to adhere to various power and thermal constraints. This application is a division of co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/621,228 filed Jul. 15, 2003.

Patent 20060129795: Interleaved boot block to support multiple processor architectures and method of use

Abstract: A flash memory has an interleaved boot block compatible with multiple processor architectures. The interleaved boot block may include one boot block compatible with a first CPU architecture and another boot block compatible with a second CPU architecture. These two boot blocks may be combined in an interleaved manner in the flash memory so that during a boot process only one of the two boot blocks executes, although both are stored in the flash memory. By interleaving different boot blocks, a common socket computer system capable of supporting multiple processor architectures may be achieved without fully replacing an incompatible basic input/output system (BIOS). Further, the flash memory may contain an updatable portion in which any BIOS segments incompatible with a processor architecture may be updated via a recovery, or update, process.

Notice

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Note that all the hyperlinks in this report were current as of 8PM yesterday. Government URLs are not always stable, so some may redirect you to the wrong patent. In such cases, simply enter the publication number into the USPTO's search engine [here](#).

Neo at macsimumnews.com

Musings From Mars

<http://www.musingsfrommars.org>

How're We Doing Now? An Update on DHTML/Ajax Browser Compatibility

by Leland Scott

Since my original report on the browser and platform compatibility of some 50 Ajax JavaScript libraries in March, the market has continued to produce new toolkits at a rapid pace. I recently finished grading all (but one) of the 8 libraries added since March, and I've revisited the scores of another 8. With that, the time seemed right for a report on how Ajax library developers are doing at achieving cross-browser, cross-platform compatibility in the tools they're giving us—tools, which programmers around the world are using to hammer out their unique vision of Web 2.0.



I'm very pleased to report that the trend is moving strongly toward full compatibility. Of the eight new libraries, a full five of them achieve top grades of "A". That's a much higher percentage of the total than in March, and of the three non-A libraries, only one was a D (D+ actually). One was graded C+ and the other B. Of the revisited libraries, I was able to raise grades for three—Backbase, ICEfaces, and MochiKit. Only one library had a lower grade (Rico, down from A- to B), and the rest were unchanged.

Only two of the 8 new libraries have commercial licenses you'd have to pay for, and in one case you are really only paying for the IDE. Three of the new libraries require a java server architecture in order to be happy, one would prefer Cold Fusion, and the others are pure client libraries that are agnostic with respect to the application server. One library was added just a couple of days ago (Jitsu), and I haven't had time to review it yet—but you'll find it summarized here with the rest. Only one of these 16 libraries is DHTML with no Ajax controls—Uize. Even without Ajax, however, I think you'll find Uize to be one of the most interesting here—especially in terms of visual richness.

Here is a tabulation of the results for this group:

Name	Grade	Date Added	Date Rated	Date Revisited	Direction	Server Req	License
Libraries New to the List							
Echo 2	A	6/4/06	6/5/06			Java	Commercial
Google Toolkit	A-	6/4/06	6/5/06			Java	Open/Free
Jitsu	NA	6/25/06				.NET/Mono	Open/Free
jsLINB	A-	6/4/06	6/18/06			No	Open/Free
Neuromancer	C+	6/4/06	6/18/06			ColdFusion	Open/Free
Uize	A-	6/4/06	6/24/06			No	Open/Free
Zapatec	6/4/06	6/22/06			No	Commercial	
ZK	D+	4/27/06	6/23/06			Java	Open/Free
Revisited Libraries							
AjaxFace	E			6/5/06	o	Proprietary	Commercial
Atlas	D			6/27/06	o	Proprietary	Open/Free
Backbase	B			5/3/06	+	Proprietary	Commercial
Dojo	A			6/5/06	o	No	Open/Free
ICEfaces	B+			6/25/06	+	Java	Commercial
MochiKit	A			6/18/06	+	No	Open/Free
Rico	B			6/18/06	-	No	Open/Free
Tibco	E			6/23/06	o	Proprietary	Commercial
General Interface							

All of the notes about these libraries are now included **as part of the original article**, but I'm presenting the brief writeups about each one here as well, since some of these may be new to you. The libraries are presented in the same order as the preceding table—the new libraries first, and then the revisited libraries.

One other general observation I can make before getting into the details... It's clear that the Ajax application market is splitting into two camps, pretty much the same two that have dominated application development teams since the dawn of the client-server era:

- Those who like, need, or want a visual development tool and a minimal amount of actual coding (in Ajax, this also means preferably as little *JavaScript* coding) as possible,
- Those who prefer to code with a text editor or equivalent, with as much control over the actual code as possible.
-

In general, the commercial tools lean toward the former approach, while the open source libraries lean toward the latter. The commercial products also tend to favor proprietary server-side components, either in the form of an actual server or in the form of the data formats delivered by their own GUI IDE tool. It's probably as a result of their use of proprietary components that the scores for the commercial products are, by and large, much lower than the open source products in terms of platform and browser compatibility.

Finally, a quick note about the lengthy table on Microsoft Atlas: Atlas is the only one of the many libraries I've tested that doesn't seem to understand that if a control or link causes a page refresh, it isn't Ajax. In that case, it's just a synchronous server connection like we're all used to. One of the aspects of Ajax that makes it special is the ability to design a user interface that doesn't disappear on you just because you entered some data or made a selection in a form. Web users have become accustomed to the page refresh as normal behavior, since it's what all web applications do. Linking from one page to the next is just the web norm and has been since the web was born.

Don't misunderstand me to be saying that Ajax is meant to put an end to the page refresh. It's not, and I'm not. I'm merely saying that Ajax provides the technique to allow seamless contextual changes to a persistent user interface, where that's appropriate... As it's often described, Ajax lets you make web interfaces more like the interfaces of desktop software, which don't do page refreshes. What we now call Ajax is a new tool that user interface developers can work with in order to improve usability as they continue on their quest for that Holy Grail of usability: Providing a truly intuitive web interface. Eliminating the page refresh is one of Ajax's signature features, and the presence of a page refresh means it ain't Ajax.

Many of the Atlas controls require a page refresh to get the job done, and therefore I have counted them as "not working." Yes, some of them "work", but not as Ajax controls, and that's what Atlas is supposed to be providing. I have no idea what techniques Microsoft engineers are trying to use in Atlas, but I do know that by and large the controls Atlas provides are extremely pedestrian and have been available since DHTML was new. Why these simple DHTML behaviors would cause a page refresh in modern browsers like Firefox and Safari—and why they don't work at all in Opera—is a complete mystery to me. By all means, visit the Atlas site and judge for yourself.

Note that nowhere in late June could I find a statement that Atlas is a “preview” or “beta” product, which was the excuse many Atlas defenders used when I pointed out some compatibility issues back in April. In April, the reference to “preview” release was on a page linked to the Atlas home page, but if such a statement exists today I couldn’t find it. My purpose here is not to “bash” Microsoft or any other developer, and if I seem to dwell on Microsoft’s weaknesses here, it’s only a reflection of the company’s dominating position in computing. Every action Microsoft takes automatically receives a great deal of attention, and many people who look at Atlas may have no idea how weak it is compared with most of the competition. In this field, not only was Microsoft late to the game, but they are entering with very few chips. The chips may appear large and shiny, but if you look closely, you’ll find they are quite thin—and actually hollow on the inside.

Once you try out the Atlas demos, be sure to also visit the many A-rated toolkits in this list, as well as in the **full list** from the April article. I think you’ll find that the A-rated libraries not only provide superior compatibility across browsers and platforms, but also embody amazingly innovative thinking and offer some truly elegant, mind-opening approaches that will get your wrists itching to get typing. I’ve tried to point out each library’s noteworthy features in the library summaries, but I’m sure I missed some. If you know of a particularly cool feature of your favorite library that’s not mentioned here, by all means let me know!

Frankly, the hard part about settling on an Ajax library these days is getting over the yearning to try all the great ones out! I’ve personally been doing nearly all of my Ajax experimentation with Prototype and Script.aculo.us, but I really want to set them aside if time permits and try jQuery, Dojo, and MochiKit, all of which I find appealing for one reason or another. Did anyone say “kid in a candy shop?” That’s truly what delving into these wonderful JavaScript libraries has been like for me.

Ajax/DHTML Libraries New to the List

Echo 2

Grade: A Server Required: Java License: Commercial

Echo2 is the next-generation of the Echo Web Framework, a platform for developing web-based applications that approach the capabilities of rich clients. Echo2 applications are developed using only server-side Java code. No JavaScript, HTML, or XML development is required.

Echo 2 uses a java-based server architecture, plugged into a servlet engine, to transform HTTP requests into client-side JavaScript that run in the user’s web browser. The FAQ’s claim that you don’t need to know JavaScript to build an Echo application, and if you use the company’s Echo Studio, an Eclipse plugin, you probably don’t as long as you don’t want to do anything Echo Studio can’t do. The library itself is free and open source, but the IDE is available as a 30-day trial. For the life of me, I couldn’t find anywhere on the site any information on how much a full license for Echo Studio costs. The Echo 2 website has a large number of sample applications and includes an interactive tool for building Echo widgets that presumably is similar to the kind of work you would do in Echo 2. Also available is a tutorial and a full javadoc (in HTML) that fully documents the java API. Echo 2 has this statement about browser support: “Echo2 supports browsers that support the Level 2 DOM and CSS specifications and provide XMLHttpRequest support.” They specifically mention Firefox/Mozilla, and also note that they support IE “because of its widespread use.” I encountered no difficulties navigating the Echo 2 demos in Firefox 1.5, Opera 9, and Safari 2. Echo 2 has a complete set of DHTML and Ajax components that feel very robust and are thoughtfully designed, including an accordion widget, window widget, tabbed panes, and split panes. DHTML effects are limited to a few transition effects. I also downloaded the Echo Studio IDE, and it worked just fine in Eclipse on Mac OS X Tiger. If you’re a Java developer who doesn’t know (or want to know) JavaScript, HTML, CSS, and the rest, and who is used to working in a full-featured visual IDE, Echo 2 may be a good choice. Certainly, I saw no browser or platform-compatibility issues.

Home Page - <http://www.nextapp.com/platform/echo2/echo/>

Documentation - <http://www.nextapp.com/platform/echo2/echo/doc>

Demos - <http://www.nextapp.com/platform/echo2/echo/demo/>

Google Web Toolkit

Grade: A- Server Required: Java License: Open Source/Free

Google Web Toolkit (GWT) is a Java software development framework that makes writing AJAX applications like Google Maps and Gmail easy for developers who don't speak browser quirks as a second language.

The GWT has attracted the kind of attention you would expect for an Ajax toolkit developed by the company that released what many consider the first major Ajax applications: Gmail and Google Maps. If you're a java developer, it's especially appealing since you don't have to know JavaScript or other server languages, just java. GWT comes with a command-line tool for compiling your files into a project, and that project can also be built to be Eclipse-aware. To avoid what Google refers to as "browser quirks", the GWT is extremely spartan in the DHTML department, having only the kind of widgets that have been stable for many years: DHTML menus, trees, buttons, and tabs. It steers clear of effects completely, and in general reflects the developers' disdain for JavaScript and the state of compatibility in today's web browsers. Here's Google's statement about browser compatibility with the GWT: "If you stick to built-in widgets and composites, your applications will work similarly on the most recent versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari. (Opera, too, most of the time.) DHTML user interfaces are remarkably quirky, though, so make sure to test your applications thoroughly on every browser." Indeed, I found nothing that didn't work fine in my test browsers. Goggle Web Toolkit provides the fundamentals for Ajax application development, and if you favor the spartan appearance and functionality found in Google Calendar and Gmail, and if you are a java programmer who doesn't require anything more than Eclipse for development, GWT is certainly worth a try, and you can be certain you won't be building incompatible Ajax web apps. (Note: I've subtracted 1/2 point for GWT because it's so bare-bones in the DHTML department. One of the reasons it's able to be cross-browser compatible is that it eschews DHTML to a great extent.)

Home Page - <http://code.google.com/webtoolkit/>

Documentation - <http://code.google.com/webtoolkit/documentation/>

Demos - <http://code.google.com/webtoolkit/documentation/examples/>

Jitsu

Grade: Not Yet Rated Server Required: .NET/Mono License: Open Source/Free

Jitsu contains an integrated set of tools to enable developers to build and deploy sophisticated user interfaces for web applications. These include an Xml markup language, page compiler, data binding engine, JavaScript runtime, control library, runtime inspector, animation engine, cross-platform library, Ajax, and back button support. Jitsu apps use DHTML and run in most modern web browsers.

Jitsu is an open-source Ajax toolkit and framework that's been in development for a couple of years. Unlike most, it uses XML as the presentation language, and I believe it's unique in providing a compiler for the XML. It works in all modern browsers and has the usual full range of user interface controls and widgets for web interfaces. The site has plenty of documentation, a free download (it's an .exe), and a slew of demos available. It uses Microsoft's .NET framework, so much run either on a .NET server or a Mono server (Unix port of .NET). The product has just entered public alpha stage, with production release planned for March 2007.

Home Page - <http://www.jitsu.org/jitsu/index.html>

Documentation - <http://www.jitsu.org/devindex.html>

Demos - http://www.jitsu.org/jitsu/quicktrous/basic_helloworld.html

jsLINB

Grade: A- Server Required: None License: Open Source/Free

jsLINB (Lazy Internet and Browser) is designed to allow developers coding in a more targetable, clearly, and efficiently way. jsLINB is platform-independent and language-independent, which is C/S, B/S, RIA and Web2.0 compatible.

This toolkit appears to be the product of a Chinese developer, and the English documentation is shaky in spots. Oddly, the toolkit home page uses jQuery and moo.js rather than jsLINB itself for the DHTML bits. Like several other toolkits, the documentation itself is a demo of the JavaScript widgets and DHTML effects. The javascript navigation for the documentation loaded unreliably or not at all in Safari and Firefox. The developer states that the jsLINB library has been tested and certified in IE6/IE7, Netscape 8 Firefox 1.5, Opera9, and Safari 2.0 (limited). Indeed, I had no trouble running any of the widgets and demos except for the Windows widget, which didn't work in Safari (though this may have been a temporary glitch). The developer doesn't make the library available for anonymous download, but will provide the URL on request. Overall, my impression is that jsLINB is a work-in-progress by a single developer, who has developed some striking and unique approaches to JavaScript-enabled web interfaces using a rigorous object-oriented framework.

Home Page - <http://www.linb.net/>

Documentation/Demos - <http://www.linb.net/linb/index.html>

Neuromancer

Grade: C+ Server Required: ColdFusion License: Open Source/Free

Neuromancer is a set of javascript libraries that provide a common interface between browsers and allow for javascript remoting.

This is an open source library with nightly builds that was begun in 2004. The library provides APIs for Ajax functions as well as “eye candy”—in other words, DHTML effects. The site has very good documentation and a set of sample applications built with Neuromancer. Unfortunately, it provides no systematic demos of all the Ajax/DHTML functions, and the demo applications don't cover all of them. Further, the demo apps didn't work consistently, or at all, in some of the test browsers. For example, the OS emulator partially worked in Opera, but the window wasn't movable; the window wasn't resizable in any of the browsers, though it's not clear that it should have been. The first demo, the online presentation package, crashed Opera without trying too hard, and it was impossible to add text to the bullet lists in Safari and Firefox. The photo slideshow worked fine in Safari and Firefox, but failed to load images in Opera. My impression is that some of these applications may not be using the most recent version of Neuromancer, and that they are, in fact, old demos rather than ones prepared to show off Neuromancer. Therefore, it's hard to rate the library objectively. I did download the latest version and ran the test page, but the server-side installation requires Cold Fusion in order to test. In fact, it appears that Neuromancer has been used thus far primarily with Cold Fusion as the back end app server. All three browsers passed the tests that don't require a server, except Safari failed the cookie tests (even though I set its permissions to “accept all”). The rating given here reflects my inclination to give the Neuromancer developers the benefit of the doubt for functions I couldn't test.

Home Page - <http://www.neuromancer.sourceforge.net>

Documentation - <http://neuromancer.sourceforge.net/doc/files/io/Gateway-js.html>

Uize JavaScript API

Grade: A- Server Required: None License: Open Source/Free

The UIZE JavaScript API is a suite of code libraries to help you create more effective user interfaces in your Web content and Web-based applications and services. Many of the UI widgets have been designed using the GLUE (Glue Logic Upon Elements) paradigm. At its heart, GLUE aims to aid the Web interface design process by decoupling the interface skin development from the interface functionality development.

UIZE provides some of the most sophisticated DHTML effects available from any library in these lists. The developer has conceived some truly original and unique user interface enhancements, particularly in transition “wipe” effects, a unique slide show widget, a “marquee” image viewer, dynamically beveled images, and many others. As the author states, UIZE is a “work in progress” that began in April 2005. Like Dojo, it comes with a “scruncher” to pack the code as tightly as possible. At this time, UIZE contains no Ajax functions, but it does have a sophisticated event model and highly evolved widget system. There is no simple download offered, but all of the javascripts are available in “scrunched” form at <http://tomkidding.com/uize/uize-js-api/>.

The UIZE documentation says nothing about the library’s browser support goals, but I’m happy to report that the vast majority of UIZE’s widgets and effects work fine in all the modern browsers. I noted that generally performance was slower—in some instances, quite noticeably so—in Firefox, although Firefox was the only Mac OS X browser that correctly displayed every UIZE demo. There were 6 demos out of the 40 total that didn’t work in Safari, and smaller subsets of those six demos affected Opera (5) and WebKit (Safari nightly build) (2) as well. Although some of the magic displayed here appears to be using Ajax, in fact the library doesn’t make use of the XMLHttpRequest method at all.

Home Page - <http://www.tomkidding.com/uize/uize-js-api/index.html>

Zapatec

Grade: A Server Required: None License: Commercial

Jump start your AJAX deployment by using the Zapatec suite, which includes six widgets, three modules and a library. Don’t be intimidated by the Suite’s breadth, its components are built with ease of use in mind, and you can start with one or two and migrate to using the full suite as your needs and familiarity increase.

The Zapatec Suite is a commercial toolkit for building Ajax-enabled, rich-interface web applications. It has modules and libraries that provide a wide range of DHTML effects and widgets. The Zapatec website is rich with examples and demos, and an evaluation copy of the suite can be downloaded, along with documentation. Some of the widgets come with web-based “wizards” that allow you to develop JavaScript code without knowing JavaScript. A “lite” license is available for free, which requires the developer to link to Zapatec for each module used. The commercial licenses start at \$399 for a single-server license.

This is one of the most impressive commercial Ajax/DHTML suites I’ve encountered since starting this list. I downloaded the “lite” Zapatec suite and went through all of the demos with Firefox, Opera, and Safari on Mac OS X. I’m pleased to report that everything worked, and in fact worked in almost exactly the same way in each browser. There were a few anomalies that I noted—for example, the custom visual effects are “flickery” in Firefox, and the background color for the modal windows appears opaque black in Safari and Opera rather than translucent grey. There were a few others, but frankly the suite is so strong that I started noting every tiny discrepancy simply because there was so little deviation in appearance and functionality.

Particularly impressive are Zapatec's powerful and flexible menu, calendar, tab, and table grid widgets, as well as the suite's visual effects. To date, I've found the Script.aculo.us effects to be about the best out there in terms of variety and flexibility. But Zapatec's go a step further. Like Script.aculo.us, Zapatec offers combo effects, but the effects are much smoother, and it's much easier to set up and modify them. The table grid widget is likewise the best I've encountered. Not only can you do the standard column sorting, you can also filter the HTML table on any of the various column fields it contains. You'll have to see this to believe me, but it's truly remarkable. One of the grid demos shows how Zapatec can even take Yahoo search results and set them up as a grid on the fly, allowing you to sort on modification date, URL, title, etc. Simply amazing.

All this power would be for naught if the company had built it on lousy, proprietary, and difficult to maintain JavaScript. But I'm also pleased to report that their DHTML implementations are pure DOM scripting—Unobtrusive JavaScript in the very best sense. Behind their menus, tabs, table grids, etc. are simply HTML constructs with DOM ID's—Unordered lists, HTML tables, and so on. All of the JavaScript is in the header, where it belongs. One additional advantage that helps in implementing the library quickly is that each set of functions is associated with a discrete combination of JavaScript files that have little if any overlap. Aside from a utility (util.js) file that's common to all, you add to your application only the needed components, and those are clearly documented.

Which brings me to the final strength of this package—Documentation. Whereas Dojo has some terrific widgets, and even some you won't find in Zapatec (yet... its scope is quickly being expanded), you also can't find documentation on the Dojo widgets. The Zapatec developers have meticulously documented each and every function, widget, and demo they've provided, and it's all presented in a clean, consistent manner with convenient print versions available as well. If you investigate, I do recommend downloading the full suite. In one case, I found a couple of drag-and-drop demos that aren't on the website or in the demo index file, but which filled in a functionality it seemed to lack: Namely, sortable, draggable lists. Those are there, hidden in the drag/drop demo folder.

Home Page - <http://www.zapatec.com/website/main/products/suite/>

Demos - <http://www.zapatec.com/website/main/products/suite/demo.jsp>

Documentation (Sample for Effects) - <http://www.zapatec.com/website/main/products/effects/docs.jsp>

ZK

Grade: D+ Server Required: Java License: Open/Free

ZK is an open-source Ajax Web framework that enables rich UI for Web applications with no JavaScript and little programming. With event-driven feature-rich components, developing becomes as simple as programming desktops. With a markup language, designing becomes as simple as authoring HTML.

ZK uses XUL and XHTML components, together with its own scripting language, XUML, to build rich interface Ajax applications. Your web pages are served up by any of a number of java servlet engines (including Tomcat and JBoss), and the XUML code is transformed into client-side javascript on the fly. The ZK website has a tree-based list showing all of its interface elements. When I first visited in April 2006, viewing this page generated an "unsupported browser" message in Safari 2.0.

Update 6/23/06: ZK's support for Safari 2.0 didn't improve over the last 2 months, but it does now support the WebKit nightly to a large extent. Although support for WebKit doesn't substitute for support for Safari 2.0 (the latest supported browser), I'm giving the kit a "+" for it. Unfortunately, ZK also fails completely in Opera 9, on both Windows and Mac OS X. (I've made a screenshot of the javascript error message in Opera for future reference.) On the Mac, Firefox was supported to about the same extent as WebKit: The sliders didn't work quite right (though better on Windows), and the right-click menus didn't work at all. Even in IE6 on Windows, this library had some quirks: The tab boxes drew themselves painfully slowly—the only browser that exhibited this behavior.

ZK does have a couple of unique and worthy features. The two I really liked were the dynamic table demo, where data is pulled from the server as you scroll down a long set of data (sort of like the Google Maps functionality). And also this is the first attempt I've seen to demo drag-and-drop for tables where the user can move entire rows of multi-column data. All of the other demos of this kind show only single-column data.

Unfortunately, ZK has not reached the maturity level needed for cross-browser, cross-platform functionality, primarily because of insufficient testing by the development team. Here is their statement on browser support: *“Theoretically, any modern browser supporting DOM and JavaScript could be used. However, due to compatibility issue, we don’t know whether a browser is supported, until we test and make some adjustments. Currently, ZK has been tested on Internet Explorer 6+ and Firefox 1+.”*

Home Page - <http://zk1.sourceforge.net>

Demo/Documentation - <http://www.potix.com/zkdemo/userguide/>

Ajax/DHTML Libraries Revisited Since March

AjaxFace

Grade: E Change from Previous Grade: No change Server Required: Proprietary License: Commercial

AjaxFace from VertexLogic is a framework for building rich WEB UI using client-side rendering architecture. The main component of the framework is a rendering-engine written in JavaScript. Developers use a high level API for constructing UI in JavaScript.

Evaluation copy available for download by registering. No documentation available on the website. Application scheduled for production in March 2006. Demos say they work only in IE 6.0 and that Firefox support is in development, “Please check back after 1/15/2006.” However, when I turned on Safari’s “spoof” mode to IE 6.0, the widgets loaded, though most were semi-broken. The data load function, in particular, did not work at all. (Note from 6/5/06: The individual component demos still have the same message originally reported in March—“Please check back after 1/15/2006”.) AjaxFace is a commercial product that uses a proprietary server component.

Home Page - <http://www.vertexlogic.com/product.html>

Demos - <http://www.vertexlogic.com/demo.html>

Atlas

Grade: D Change from Previous Grade: No change Server Required: Proprietary License: Commercial

ASP.NET “Atlas” makes it easy to build rich, interactive web-based applications for personalized web experiences. It allows you to create rich web applications that also harness the power of the server and browser. This brings a richer, user experience to web applications without the traditional need to post-back to the server.

Since my **first in-depth review of Atlas** in mid-April, Microsoft has had a couple of small upgrades, one of which claimed that Atlas now supports Safari. So on June 27, I returned to test Atlas again, and much to my surprise, Atlas was actually no better than when it was first released in April. Although Microsoft is claiming they now support Safari, that’s not really true. Of 13 controls now available (up from 9 in April), only 4 work as they’re supposed to in Safari. Whereas 3 controls worked in Opera in April, none work in Opera now. This is actually moving backwards from standards compliance, folks, not forward. With Firefox, the same control that didn’t work in April still doesn’t work. It also doesn’t work in IE 6.0, as it turns out. Here are a few details of my latest test of Atlas.

Home Page - <http://atlas.asp.net/Default.aspx?tabid=47>

Documentation - <http://atlas.asp.net/docs/Default.aspx>

Demos - <http://atlas.asp.net/atlastoolkit/>

Backbase

Grade: B Change from Previous Grade: Up Server Required: Proprietary License: Commercial

Our goal is to make development of rich AJAX applications fast and easy for you. We want to provide you with AJAX development software that is fully based on open Internet standards, doesn't require plug-ins and operates on all browsers, offers over 50 out-of-the-box AJAX widgets (including source code), and runs on any platform (e.g. J2EE, .NET, PHP, Coldfusion, or XML).

(Updated 5/3/06) Backbase has a lofty vision and promises to provide a comprehensive ajax/dhtml library with impressive GUI controls, which will be free for noncommercial/noninstitutional use. Backbase eschews JavaScript on the client, instead introducing its own XML-based markup language, BXML. Backbase relies on an XML server to generate native JavaScript from the BXML/HTML pages it receives, tailored for each client. The Backbase server can be used with a variety of back-end server architectures, including J2EE, .NET, and LAMP. Although the Backbase home page still puts up a roadblock to Safari, Opera, and other DOM-compliant browsers that use neither an IE nor Gecko engine, Backbase this week **released a public preview** of its **Backbase Explorer** application for testing by Opera and Safari users. (**Note!** This pre-release of Backbase works only in the WebKit nightly build, not in the Safari that Apple includes with Mac OS X 10.4 (Tiger). References to Safari in this description are to the WebKit nightly.)

In my tests, I found the Explorer to be very slow, especially in Opera. (Backbase acknowledges slow JavaScript on Opera to be a known problem.) However, the vast majority of Backbase's rich GUI widgets worked in both Safari and Opera on my test G5 PowerMac. The experience wasn't 100%, however: With both Safari and Opera, Backbase's drag-and-drop Tree Widget failed to function as expected. In addition, the Backbase datagrid widget failed (rather horribly) in Opera. Nevertheless, this is a step in the right direction for Backbase. Although this version of Backbase is not officially released, and though it's still got some work to be fully functional in Safari and Opera, and though it still doesn't support Apple's official Tiger version of Safari, I'm upgrading Backbase's score to a B from a C. Now all they have to do is finish eliminating those caveats, and they'll be at an "A!"

Home Page - <http://www.backbase.com/go/>

Documentation - <http://www.backbase.com/protected/devnet/devcenter/manual/index.xml>

Demos - <http://www.backbase.com/demos/explorer/>

Dojo

Grade: A Change from Previous Grade: Unchanged Server Required: None License: Open/Free

Dojo is the Open Source JavaScript toolkit that helps you build serious applications in less time. It fills in the gaps where JavaScript and browsers don't go quite far enough, and gives you powerful, portable, lightweight, and tested tools for constructing dynamic interfaces. Dojo lets you prototype interactive widgets quickly, animate transitions, and build Ajax requests with the most powerful and easiest to use abstractions available.

Dojo is one of the most mature and most popular DHTML/Ajax toolkits now available. It was initiated by and is still closely affiliated with Jot.com, which uses Dojo as the Ajax/DHTML engine of its powerful wiki system, Jotspot. (Updated 6/5/06) Dojo clearly states its broad browser support to include Safari 2.0+, Opera 8.5+, IE 5.5+, Firefox/Mozilla 1.0+, and Konqueror 3.5+. A new home page now provides a fully Dojo-powered, Ajax interface to all of Dojo's many widgets and to its Ajax and DHTML features. Dojo's documentation has also improved, as the company's new wiki provides a growing set of API documentation and tutorials.

Home Page - <http://www.dojotoolkit.org>

Documentation - <http://manual.dojotoolkit.org/WikiHome>

ICEfaces

Grade: B+ Change from Previous Grade: Up Server Required: Java License: Commercial

ICEfaces is an Ajax application framework that enables J2EE application developers to easily create and deploy thin-client rich web applications in pure Java.

This is another impressive framework for building rich web 2.0 interfaces using client-side javascript and Ajax technologies, but using a java server framework to manage the view. ICEfaces is available in a free “Community Edition” that has most of the product’s full functionality, and a commercial “Enterprise Edition” that adds features of interest to large deployments. The ICEfaces website has a comprehensive demo of their user interface components, as well as three complete applications built with the product. Each of the demos is documented and provides a “peek” at the source code.

Update 6/25/06. ICEfaces was released as a production application in May 2006, so I decided to take a second look at the product. This time around, I tested all of the online demos in all of the modern browsers for Mac OS X, since previously the grade was based on IceSoft’s statement that Opera was not supported, while Safari, Firefox, and IE were.

As it turns out, ICEfaces doesn’t work 100% in any of the three browsers, though it supports all of them about equally. The failures are relatively minor and can generally be worked around by an end-user. Of the 22 interface demos, I noted 4 problems in Opera, 3 in Firefox, and 2 in Safari. (**This document** shows the specific problems I found.) In WebKit, the Safari nightly edition, ICEfaces worked perfectly. Given the relatively broad—but still incomplete—support for these browsers, I’m giving ICEfaces a “+” for effort. Clearly, they need to do a little more testing of ICEfaces on different platforms.

Home Page - <http://www.icesoft.com/products/icefaces.html>

Documentation - http://www.icesoft.com/support/icefaces_docs.html

Demos - http://www.icesoft.com/products/demos_icefaces.html

MochiKit

Grade: A Change from Previous Grade: Up Server Required: None License: Open/Free

MochiKit is a highly documented and well tested suite of JavaScript libraries that will help you get things done, fast. MochiKit makes JavaScript suck less.

Updated 6/18/06. When reviewing MochiKit 3 months ago, the DHTML functionality provided was pretty weak, which is fine for some kinds of apps. The MochiKit team also had a relatively few number of demos available online. What a difference 3 months makes in AjaxLand, eh? Now, MochiKit has incorporated the Script.aculo.us effects library, has a full drag-and-drop suite, and has added a number of innovative demos to their site. Everything I tried passed with flying colors, and I noted that the team has this statement on browser compatibility: “Our current test platforms include all of the modern and popular browsers: Safari 2.0.2, Firefox 1.0.7, Firefox 1.5b2, Internet Explorer 6, and Opera 8.5. Other JavaScript platforms should work if they’re standards compliant.”

On top of its powerful Ajax and DHTML libraries, MochiKit provides some unique and extremely useful tools for developers—an interactive JavaScript interpreter, a logging pane (either floating or embedded) for displaying errors and debugging, a terrific code-display module that includes syntax highlighting (!), and “hundreds” of tests for—among other things—reporting errors in MochiKit back to the development team, led by Bob Ippolito. As Dan Webb noted in **a recent article** in SitePoint, MochiKit appears to be an extremely well designed JavaScript library that draws from both Objective C and Python for its inspiration, syntax, and structure. And if you’re looking for top-notch documentation, MochiKit will not disappoint. It’s very detailed and well organized. I noticed also that the **TurboGears** Ajax application development framework is built with MochiKit as the JavaScript backbone, and TurboGears itself looks very inviting, especially if you are a Python programmer.

Home Page - <http://www.mochikit.com>

Documentation - <http://www.mochikit.com/doc/html/MochiKit/index.html>

Demos - <http://www.mochikit.com/demos.html>

Screencast - http://www.mochikit.com/screencasts/MochiKit_Intro-1.html

Rico

Grade: B Change from Previous Grade: Down Server Required: None License: Open/Free

An open-source JavaScript library for creating rich Internet applications. Rico provides full Ajax support, drag and drop management and a cinematic effects library.

Rico is another DHTML/Ajax toolkit based on Prototype. It focuses on an accordian widget, a data grid widget, some effects, and an Ajax engine. It was originally financed by Sabre Airlines, which retains rights to widgets developed by Rico. All demos but those that use drag/drop work in Safari.

Updated 6/18/06. The original grade of A- was giving the Rico team the benefit of the doubt on their support for Safari. However, after 3 months, two of the drag and drop demos still do not work in Safari, and in general progress on this toolkit has been agonizingly slow. Rico's best feature is the accordian widget, but if that's your main interest, you can use Moo.fx for a lot less disk space. In addition to weakness in Safari support, Rico also has a couple of bugs in Opera 9. The first is a simple display anomaly in the first motion effects demo, but more seriously, the Ajax Weather widget demo fails in Opera. Also odd in Opera is Rico's DataGrid demo, which shows the scrollbar *below* the table rather than within it (as usual).

A sneak preview of Rico build 31 is available for download, though it represents only a small part of Rico—namely, it serves to show some new “skins” for the accordian widget and presents four demos of the widget.

Home Page - <http://www.openrico.org/rico/home.page>

Documentation - <http://www.openrico.org/rico/docs.page>

Demos - <http://www.openrico.org/rico/demos.page>

Tibco General Interface

Grade: E Change from Previous Grade: Unchanged Server Required: Proprietary License: Commercial

TIBCO General Interface is a framework that enables you to quickly and easily develop and deploy rich Internet applications (RIAs) using AJAX—the asynchronous JavaScript and XML capabilities already in Web browsers.

From original March 2006 review: Tibco requires developers to register, but then use of the client-side toolkit is free (as stipulated). However, Tibco's download is a Windows .exe file, and the company's browser compatibility statement still claims that IE is on 97% of corporate and end-user desktops. Support for Firefox is “forthcoming,” and support for Safari is not mentioned.

Update 6/23/06: About a month ago (mid-May), Tibco announced plans to integrate their toolkit with Dojo and Yahoo! User Interface, saying “With our open architecture, we're addressing the needs of developers who want to include open source and commercial AJAX components in their applications.” So I added a re-review of Tibco to the punchlist, hoping to get some better news this time around and raise their grade. Unfortunately, it turns out that Tibco's marketing language is highly exaggerated. To say that Tibco has an “open architecture” is misleading in a style worthy of “Microsoft's greatest hits” when you consider that this is one of the very few Ajax libraries that can only be used on a Windows platform.

Anyone who has worked with JavaScript and modern browsers know that you have to tie yourself pretty tightly to Microsoft's Internet Explorer platform to have a hard time making your scripts work with Firefox, Opera, and Safari. And I don't think basing your code on IE's proprietary extensions can be called "open." The best Tibco has been able to say to date is that partial Firefox support will be coming in "late Summer." This means it's taken them 3 months simply to get to the point of providing a timetable, and it's going to be another 2-3 months before they're ready to let developers try the code—and then, only Windows developers.

Tibco makes a point of saying that their applications require no special server or client components. But if you read the installation instructions, it's clear that you can't build or deploy a Tibco application without using their GUI Tibco General Interface software, which is a visual builder tool like Microsoft's Visual Studio. It writes out proprietary format files that contain the XML, XSL, and JavaScript that will be transformed into your Ajax application when served through HTTP.

It's clear from reading their developer forum topic on this subject that they have no intention of widening support beyond Firefox, which simply isn't adequate unless you're interested only in covering Windows users. To show their progress toward Firefox, they've posted a video of Tibco working in that browser, but unfortunately—like everything else they make available—it's in a video format that's very difficult to view on a Macintosh. With all the other truly excellent JavaScript libraries available today for DOM scripting and Ajax, I can't imagine why anyone would even give a second look to Tibco's tool if they care about providing truly open, standards-based Web 2.0 applications. Perhaps if a company is firmly committed to Windows and has no non-Windows desktops, Tibco might be appropriate for building Intranet applications. I'll keep an eye on Tibco, only because they do so much advertising it's hard not to. I hope things improve, and I'll certainly document that here if they do.



Practical Strategy Consulting

<http://www.PracticalStrategyConsulting.com>

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Bunny Slippers

by Christopher Duncan

Back in the 70s, a bumper sticker that seemed to be pasted on the posteriors of well-heeled VW buses everywhere espoused a philosophy that I've always enjoyed. "Life is far too important to be taken seriously." Trite, perhaps, but there's a grain of truth in there that can serve us well in the midst of our ever so serious business lives.

General Patton once observed that tired soldiers were invariably pessimistic soldiers. In today's frantic and stressed out workplace, where there's always another deadline and the corporate culture makes you feel like a whiny loser if you want to skip the overtime tonight or actually take a day off, burnout is legendary. People often think that they're giving a lot of value to the company by putting in continual extra effort, but consider this: what quality of work do you think tired and pessimistic people are going to produce? If you don't find ways to perk your people up, their hard work and dedication will run your company right into the ground.

Consequently, I look for every reason I can find to laugh and have a little fun with my career. I've learned the hard way that all seriousness and no silliness makes for one crispy critter. Like many others, I rarely do my best work in this state.

Back when I was a programmer working for a major telephone company, I lobbied for the ability to telecommute from home on occasion. My justification was that I did my best work in my robe and bunny slippers. Somehow, much to everyone's delight, this got leaked throughout the company. In a serious corporate environment, the image of a techie walking around with furry, floppy-eared footwear became local legend. I didn't have the heart to tell them that it was just a figure of speech and that I didn't actually own any bunny slippers.

Nonetheless, in my little corner of the world, the joking lightened things up a bit. Consequently, I made it a point to embrace my notoriety as a somewhat eccentric character. We had some ridiculous deadlines and put in our share of all-night adventures. Rather than letting the stress turn me into a quick-tempered and pessimistic drone, I decided to not take myself so seriously. I laughed when I could, kept things in perspective, and together we kicked out some great work. And we had fun doing it.

Turning work into play is another way to improve morale. Periodically, I'll stand in line for a sandwich and watch the person behind the counter spin bottles in the air, twirl knives, crack jokes and generally ham it up. Far from slowing them down, these natural entertainers are invariably the fastest workers, make the best quality food, and most importantly, have the most repeat business during their shifts.

This same scenario is repeated in a wide variety of industries. People would rather have fun. When they decide to show a little personality and lighten things up a bit, they're always more productive. Why? It's not really rocket science. All other things being equal, happy people do the best work.

Although going to outlandish extremes might not be appropriate for some environments (I'm not sure I want to do business with a banker dressed up in a clown suit), you can always find ways to have a little fun with your work. What kind of atmosphere do you promote? Are your people enjoying themselves? If they aren't, I can assure you, you're not getting their very best.

Bunny slippers became a running joke with people who knew me, and a close friend finally tracked down a pair as a gift for me. Do I wear them? Absolutely! In fact, if you happen to catch one of my speaking engagements, don't be surprised to find me sporting them. Life is far too important to be taken seriously. So is business.

Scam Artistry – Where’s the Pony and the Bogus-Meter?

by Robert Pritchett

P.T. Barnum said it best; “There’s a sucker born every minute”. I could write a book...

<http://www.scamorama.com/scamming-for-dummies.html> No, that’s not it.

When Ronald Reagan was president of the USA, he often spoke of the pessimist and the optimist:

One of his favorite stories was of two young brothers, one a pessimist, the other an incurable optimist. For Christmas one year, their parents gave the first a room full of toys and the other a load of manure. The optimist gleefully burrowed into the manure, exclaiming, "There's a pony in here someplace!"

<http://www.davidgergen.com/index.php?page=speeches&item=470>

By the way, you might as well know now, there is no pony under this pile of manure, but some folks are making hay selling [Anti-Scam software](#).

US Federal Counterfeit Check Law

“The laws that affect you as the holder of a Nigerian Counterfeit Check

US Criminal Code, Title 18, Section 113 Sec. 472. - Uttering counterfeit obligations or securities

Whoever, with intent to defraud, passes, utters, publishes, or sells, or attempts to pass, utter, publish, or sell, or with like intent brings into the United States or keeps in possession or conceals any falsely made, forged, counterfeited, or altered obligation or other security of the United States, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both.

Sec. 473. - Dealing in counterfeit obligations or securities Whoever buys, sells, exchanges, transfers, receives, or delivers any false, forged, counterfeited, or altered obligation or other security of the United States, with the intent that the same be passed, published, or used as true and genuine, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both.

Sec. 479. - Uttering counterfeit foreign obligations or securities Whoever, within the United States, knowingly and with intent to defraud, utters, passes, or puts off, in payment or negotiation, any false, forged, or counterfeited bond, certificate, obligation, security, treasury note, bill, or promise to pay, mentioned in section 478 of this title, whether or not the same was made, altered, forged, or counterfeited within the United States, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both.

Sec. 480. - Possessing counterfeit foreign obligations or securities Whoever, within the United States, knowingly and with intent to defraud, possesses or delivers any false, forged, or counterfeit bond, certificate, obligation, security, treasury note, bill, promise to pay, bank note, or bill issued by a bank or corporation of any foreign country, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both.”

Background

There are elements from the dark side of the Internet who are adept at taking your hard-earned money and running away with it. The cons discovered the Internet a long time ago and continue to ply their trade since the beginning of recorded history. Consider them playground bullies taking much more than just your lunch money.

<http://oreneta.com/kalebeul/2005/06/14/walter-raleigh-and-nigerian-and-spanish-scams/>

And we are not talking about the kinds of Journalist scams that folks like John Dvorak foists on the public either:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAWDYaWAVQQ>

There are various schemes and scams that have been perpetrated on the public. There are the typical Nigerian-like 419 Scam variants and the “we are looking for a relative of so-and-so who died and left behind a large bank account that will expire shortly” types. Some appeal to our good natures and plead and beg for help to assist them in transferring funds from there to here, so they can get out of desperate situations and some even request sponsorship to our country. Some have a large trunk or package that requires a courier to walk the item through the system via diplomatic pouch privileges. *There is always a fee involved.* Some want to do electronic banking transfers. And those are two-way, so what is in there comes out of your account if you aren’t careful. I have a business associate whose retirement fund bank account got cleaned out...

<http://www.consumerwebwatch.org/dynamic/fraud-investigation-checks-in-mail.cfm>

Going, Going, Gone!

A year or so ago, okay, maybe two by now, I wised up to the money transfer scheme, after opening a bank account specifically for the purpose of accepting funds and then forwarding the majority of such funds to some other location outside my country for pickup via *MoneyGram* or *Western Union*. Supposedly, I was to receive a percentage for services rendered. Easy money, right?

In one instance, it was an internal bank transfer and extraction (Wells Fargo). I ended up paying a huge sum (to me anyway) to the bank afterwards, because the internal bank transfer turned out to be bogus – even though I had waited about a month to let the bank verify the funds were legit. I received lots of *frantic* phone calls around the clock from the original requester in the UK. Vonage records calls in a call log, but these always came from “Anonymous”. I also was sent lots of Emails by this individual, ALL IN UPPER CASE. The rule of thumb is that if you don’t know the person personally, don’t send the funds, period.

I had to close out the account after paying a huge sum to the bank, so my name was cleared of any wrongdoing. I then submitted a police report on the activity and let the authorities attempt to go after the fraudsters. After the transfer was completed, the person disappeared and the Email address began bouncing when I sent him the information regarding what happened to me with the bank. And of course, the phone number I originally was given was dead too. Ever heard of “throw-away cell phones”? He got what he wanted and I did not. I fell for it, hook, line and sinker.

The Down Side – Serious Business

I have a big, fat portfolio of such things I turned over to the police (Email, bank account information, Phone records, etc) last year, so they could continue their investigations internationally. Feedback to me from them indicated *some of these perpetrators have actually been killed by the authorities in their countries!* And some of the investigators and informants *have also been put to death* by corrupt law enforcement types in Africa. These are serious organized crime kinds of things that *include activities by terrorist organizations* desiring the demise of our societies and general havoc of our economies worldwide. They seem to be having some, no, **LOTS of success**, as many banks haven’t wised up to the situations fast enough. I also understand that with regards to some so-called courier services, they really do come visit here, but bad things happen as a result, if they don’t get what they expected for their services. Hopefully, they will get what they deserve instead.

I remember one instance where a group from Nigeria (you had to guess, right?) supposedly sent this courier with a box full of cash to the US. Each time he called it was from a different airport around the country. No kidding! He never did show up, but the detective I was working with on this case said never send money, because those funds will walk away and the goods will never be delivered. I wanted to see the goods and check to see if they too were counterfeit, but that really needs to be a job for the Dept of Commerce and the Secret Service.

By the way, the Nigerian scammers have teams of gang members in various parts of the US now working their schemes locally, instead of from abroad and the authorities have been shutting them down as they become aware of them.

Some of these scammers are so sophisticated they have not just pictures, but videos of money going into the shipping containers full of cash to entice us into buying into the “inheritance” scheme. Those pictures and videos are delivered by untraceable Emails from them to us, by the way.

The “Investors”

Ever since I put out a request for investors for my business a while ago, these kinds of folks have been coming out of the Internet woodwork like fruit flies to sweet pickle juice! And these flies have been appearing from everywhere on the planet. Believe me. From Spam to Scam.

I was told this kind of thing has become commonplace. **Lots** of people have lost money on these ventures. I know of at least one person down the street who lost his ceramics business, because of one of these so-called cheques. He lost everything and has to pay back something like \$75K USD to the bank. They own his house now...

Company Rep Scams

These are where we are asked to be business reps and are provided part-time job offers with benefits, where foreign interests desire a stateside rep to accept funds on their behalf from customers. Once all the legal paperwork is done, checks or Money Orders supposedly arrive and the interested party is forwarded the lion’s share of the fees for services or products sold. Does this sound familiar now? It should. Variations on a theme.

However, I got smarter, if not wiser. I requested that the bank do their fraud-checking *before* the funds went into my account, so I would not be getting hit with processing fees (I paid a few) when the funds turned out to be fraudulent. They agreed. I love my Credit Union! You might want to be forewarned about other banks, who don’t do due diligence:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/31/AR2006053102004_pf.html

Bad Cheques (Rubber) and Money Orders (Odors, Like, In Something Smells Really Rotten)

To make a short story longer, 100% of the cheques ("checks", in American English) I’ve received from abroad over the last few weeks and months (so far) as opportunities for either doing business here or as investments in my business or working for them part-time, have all been discovered to be fraudulent, counterfeit or bogus. ***Every - Single - One!***

<http://www.joewein.de/sw/419rep-data.htm>

The Cheque May be in the Mail, But...

My bank will not accept any more cheques from me that from abroad any longer. Canada, Great Britain, the European Continent, all of Africa, the Middle East and Asia are now on notice by me.

The bank was kind enough to return all of the latest Cheques and Money Orders that were mailed to me, so I could take those and turn them over to the proper authorities. I asked them to stamp each one with the appropriate red “counterfeit” stamp so they would not get recirculated somehow, with my name on them. I’m deeply indebted (pun intentional) to the Fraud Department of my Credit Union for taking their precious time and working with me on these activities. Unfortunately, they have been incredibly busy of late and they have cabinets full of sad stories to tell...

When I’ve gone back to the hiring entities to let them know what we’ve unearthed, they’ve all expressed surprise (no, really!) and said they would immediately investigate the situation from their end. I’m holding my breath (sarcasm).

Practically everyone of these scammers that I've talked to on the phone have incredibly bad accents and difficulties speaking English. Their phones start having communication problems when I mention the issues regarding bad Cheques and Money Orders. They all of a sudden can't hear me any longer. Same goes for those with those whom I've talked to verbally about not sending them any money up front for future services. I find that particularly interesting, don't you?

On Scammers

<http://www.fraudwatchers.org/forums/faq.php>

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

Advanced Fee Scams

Rodrigo De Rato (Rodrigo The Rat) represented himself as the International Monetary Fund Managing Director & Fund Release Official from the United Nations Money Laundering Agency mr.rodrigo.derato@hotmail.com and rodrigo.derato@imf.org

<http://rjohara.net/nigerian-419-fraud/2006-international-monetary-fund>

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/unlinks.html>

How cool is that? I had \$46,900,000 USD coming my way without delay. Did you know the UN had a *Money Laundering Agency*? That explains so much, (not)!

I was asked to correspond with Marcel Ospel. I think the *real* Marcel Ospel would perhaps like to get the pseudo-guys doing this and have them stop using his name in vain. Is this Identity Fraud? It is Computer Fraud.

Taking it further, after signing forms and submitting them, the next step is to obtain a CHIPS account for a Union Bank of Switzerland Escrow Electronic Telephone bank account. Once that is accomplished, a Financial Action Task Force CHIPS Transfer Authorization Order has to be created.

Next, a United Nations Payment Release Code needs to be obtained. Supposedly the Email and correspondence is from Marcel Ospel, Chairman of UBS, AG, but the Email is from marcel.ospel@yahoo.com. A so-called UBS account is opened after signing 3 documents. Looks official and everything! That is when they begin asking for a fee. That costs 5,950 British Pounds Sterling to be sent via MoneyGram to Neth, Shelten G in Zurich Switzerland. Now your bogus-meter should be pegging out at the top of the scale! By now, you should see that sending funds via MoneyGram, Western Union or by other systems, should be considered suspect from the get-go.



Even after I served notice to Rodrigo, he still has me on his recent distribution list *for the exact same thing*. What Chutzpa!

Prof. Charles Soludo Scam

He keeps calling me, so I am going to let you know again that he is part of the 419 Scam system from Nigeria. Maybe he will get the message that we are on to him...ENOUGH already!! He still insists he's the "real" Charles Soludo and that I should do business with him... He doesn't let up one bit. He's still sending out Emails...He still calls...

<http://419.bittenus.com/CharlesSoludo/>

<http://rjohara.net/nigerian-419-fraud/2005-04-22-charles-soludo>

http://www.quatloos.com/submitted_419.php

Phishing Scams

<http://worldwidespam.info/phishing/>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2006/TECH/internet/04/13/irsphishing/>

Money Laundering Scams

http://www.data-wales.co.uk/nigerian_laundrying.htm

<http://rjohara.net/nigerian-419-fraud/>

http://www.expertlaw.com/library/consumer/spam_email_fraud2.html

Scam "artists" use Deaf System To Order Products

Since January, a phone system designed to help the hearing impaired has been hijacked by "Nigerian" Scammers to order equipment costing over \$10K per order:

<http://www.azstarnet.com/sn/related/17393.php>

Scoffing at Scammers

Go ahead, laugh all you want...but the Scammers are dead serious.

<http://www.how-to-become-rich-dotcom.de/>

I enjoyed this one that wasn't on that website. It arrived April First:

"I have a new email address! You can now email me at: amalovotu@yahoo.com

Dear Sir/ Madam,

It will surely be a surprise to you to have received this mail from me. I didnt got your contact through your country's Trade Journal here in Spain. I was directed to you after much fasting and prayer and greed, seeking unholy intervention in my life regarding my plans to scam a foreign trustworthy person whom will serve as guardian of my Fund and family jewels (diamond) not worth several million in dollars for investment.

Please do not disclose my business intentions to any person or group of person, because I want the scam to be handled as confidential as possible. This is the reason why I decided to contact you by email. First I must introduce myself. I am Mr. Sanko Ama Otumuku the only surviving son of Mr. Kuala Amana Otumuku one of the key fictional officers who where serving under the then fcitional head of state Major Johnny Koroma in Sierra Leone.

As you are fully aware, my country relied heavily on the foreign earning generated from Scamming Trade. This money was personally kept by the then President, Major Johnny Koroma, since our banking system had collapsed during the war.

However, as the war progressed, it became apparent that we were going to lose the war to the superior and better armed West African Allied Forces (ECOMOG). At this point, the key officers of the Administration started making frantic efforts on how to leave Sierra Leone safely, thereby sharing the proceeds / money from the Diamond Trade. My Fictional Father being one of the key officers who succeeded in getting the sum of US\$14.5 Million (Fourteen Million, Five Hundred Thousand United States Dollars) and four cubes of Africa blue diamonds.

This Money and valuables was not transferred through diplomatic means to South Africa and kept in a fake security company, My Father and I along with my two younger scammers lived for good three years in South Africa till the untimely death of my Oga through heart attack after 3 years of exile in South Africa, I and my two sister automatically became the illegal owner of the said money since we were the only surviving members of the family as my mother died long ago before the war.

My two ugly sisters are now still in South Africa, after I realized I need to invest the Fund outside African country, I decided to steal from Europeans with the help of the courier company, on arriving here, I deposited it a security company for safe keeping although this security company is not aware of the content of the consignment.

Presently I'm not living in Spain seeking political asylum, just to make sure I can secure my staying here also to monitor my Fraud. Although we have not met, I need you as a trustworthy victim that will assist me and my family to transfer this money to his or her account outside Europe, as the strict monetary laws here do not allow thieves certain financial rights to open a foreign account.

I shall be grateful if you assist me to accomplish this transaction and hoping too that you remain addlebrained, that you will not take any advantage of me after the Fund is under your custody.

As I promise you that, you will regret knowing me, you will regret your effort and assistance; I am prepared to give you 30% of the total sum while 5% will be set aside for all the expenses incurred during the course of this transaction. The rest 65% will be for my family investment in your country.

Note that this transaction is 100% risky as such the only thing I ask from you is total assattery to transfer this money, complete trust and assurance that my own part of the money will be safe when transferred to your country.

If you are touched in the head and interested in assisting me please contact me by email.(sankoama@netscape.net)

Kind regards.

Mr. Ama Sanko Otumuku,
0034-654-140-652.
- sanko otumuku

On Cheques from Foreign Countries and Business Opportunities

<http://techdirt.com/articles/20060601/031244.shtml>

Fraud Identification http://www.fraudinvestigator.co.za/cheque_fraud.htm

<http://www.bizpack.com/forgery.htm>

[Identification](#)

<http://www.visa-asia.com/ap/sea/merchants/riskmgmt/travelerscheque.shtml>

Money Order Fraud http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Money_order

[Countering Fraud](#)

Protect Yourself <http://www.ncua.gov/>

http://www.secretservice.gov/financial_crimes.shtml

[Identifying Fake Money Orders](#)

Some get caught

http://news.com.com/2100-7348_3-6053370.html?part=rss&tag=6053370&subj=news
http://www.wired.com/news/ebiz/0,1272,62124,00.html?tw=wn_tophead_5

Fighting Back and Toiling With Fire

Here is recent correspondence from a Nigerian bank (supposedly) regarding funds they hold from a relative of mine (so I was told). He has the **same last name** and he died from an accident and they were looking for someone to accept the funds from his bank account. I figured I could do it and deliver the funds to his other relatives on his behalf. Being a nice person, I agreed to help. After all, I could track down his relatives with the portion I would receive, right?

I finally told them no, after they wanted me to send them money to cover account transfer charges. So you might see me on *CNN*, if their threat is carried out. The Fraud Department thought this was hilarious!

By the way, all misspellings, etc. are originals and I have not edited them.

On Wed, 7 Jun 2006 09:36:13 -0400, "United Bank" <uba-foreign-transfer@Safe-mail.net> wrote:

UBA HOUSE, 57 MARINA LAGOS NIGERIA

INTERNATIONAL/FOREIGN REMITTANCE DEPARTMENT

PHONE: 234-56044358

DIRECT FAX: 13605307391

DATE : 07/06/2006
OUR REF: UBA/RC/146695

ATTENTION: ROBERT PRITCHETT,

THIS IS VERY INCREDIBLE AND UNSERIOUS OF YOU.

**YOU HAVE JUST GIVEN US IMPRESSION THAT YOU HAVE BEEN PERTAKING IN A FRAUD,
IS IS NOT?**

**FINE, SINCE YOU DECIDED TO RUBISH OUR IMAGE AND INSULT US, WE SHALL
FORWARD ALL THE DOCUMENTS INVOLVED WHICH YOU HAVE SIGNED WITH YOUR
ORIGINAL SIGNATURE AND ALSO YOUR DRIVER'S LICENCE TO FBI, CIA , OTHER LAW
AGENTS IN THE STATES AND GO AS FAR AS PLACING THEM ON THE WORLD WIDE
INTERNET AND PROVIDE YOU AND THE WORLD WITH THE WEBSITE WHICH MILLIONS OF
AMERICANS AND OUTSIDE PEOPLE WOULD VIEW AND HAVE A VERY BAD IMPRESSION
ABOUT YOU AND EVEN AVOID DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU AND YOUR COMPANY MPN LLC.**

**BUT WE BELIEVE YOU DO NOT WANT THIS RIGHT? SO THINK ABOUT IT FAST AND GET
BACK TO US IN YOUR OWN INTEREST.**

**THEN, YOU HAVE TO FINISH THIS TRANSACTION ON A GOOD NOTE AND PROVE YOU ARE
REALLY THE NEXT OF KIN TO RECIEVE THIS INHERITANCE.**

**WE WOULD EXPECT THIS PAYMENT OF 3,800 USD OR WE SHALL BE FORCED TO GO EVEN
BEYOND WHAT WE EXPLAINED ABOVE.**

**THIS IS NOT A CHILD'D PLAY AND WE ADVISE YOU TO ADHERE VERY STRICTLY IN
THE NEXT 48 HOURS.**

YOURS FAITHFULLY,

MANAGEMENT,

UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.

From: "United Bank" <uba-foreign-transfer@Safe-mail.net>

Date: June 7, 2006 12:25:31 PM PDT

To:

Subject: YOU ARE TOILING WITH FIRE

ATTENTION: ROBERT PRITCHETT,

**YOU HAVE JUST IMPLICATED YOURSELF EXCEPT YOU DO NOT KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WHAT THOSE US LAWS
IMPLY.**

**THIS IS AN INTENT TO STEEL AND DEFRAUD ON YOUR PART, BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO US THAT YOU DONT EVEN
KNOW THE DEAD PERSON LET ALONE RELATING TO HIM TO CLAIM HIS ESTATE.**

**ON THAT NOTE, YOU ARE CULPABLE AND WE SHALL DO OUR BEST TO LITIGATE THIS AGAINST YOU AND PUBLISH
YOUR NAME AND IDENTITY WITH US ON MOST FRAUD WEBSITES AS A FOREIGN PARTNER AIDING AND ABETING
FRAUD IN US.**

**THIS COULD BE EASILY PROVED TO PEOPLE BY SHOWCASING YOUR SIGNED COPIES OF THE DOCUMENTS AS A
RELATIVE. OR DIDN'T YOU?**

YOU ARE TOILING WITH FIRE AND YOUR IMAGE AND YOU WILL BE MADE A SCAPE GOAT.

IN ESSENCE, YOU MUST CONCLUDE THIS TRANSATION OR FIND ALL THESE DONE, AND IF DONE, IT MUST AFFECT YOU NEGATIVELY IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.

WE WAIT TO HEAR FROM YOU BEFORE THE 48 HRS DEADLINE OR YOU WILL ALSO HEAR THE ANONYMOUS NEWS ON CNN AND OTHER NATIONAL NETWORKS WITH YOUR IDENTITY TO START WITH BEFORE OTHER FOLLOW UPS.

YOURS FAITHFULLY,

MANAGEMENT,

UBA.

I wrote back:

“You are already on the Fraud sites and have a tarnished history. Threatening and painting me with the same brush won't work.

I am not paying a fee to receive funds that are "rightfully" mine. I am abandoning the process, because every instance I've had dealing with banks in Africa have turned out to be dead-ends. This one is too, as far as I'm concerned, and I'm cutting my losses of time and effort before I send any money your direction. Case closed.

Go after those who worked with you to perpetrate this fraud and leave me out of it.

I've been in contact with the local authorities and the FBI on this side of the world already. My name is also on the Identity Fraud lists.

I'm sorry I have wasted your time with this nonsense.”

The Bottom Line

The bottom line is that if you are approached by anyone, for any reason, as online panhandlers, be aware that there is a big iceberg of corruption hiding below those initially innocent requests. When they start asking for money, be sure your bogus-meter is turned on and running and report the incidents to the proper authorities, so they can respond appropriately to the situation.

Anybody can be duped, but you've been warned. I make mistakes, so you don't have to. ;^)



The Rumor Mill

Groundless Mac Rumors by Anne Onymus

Sudden Impact: Apple's Great Asteroid Hoax

by Anne Onymus Entire [Low End Mac](#) site copyright ©1997-2006 by [Cobweb Publishing, Inc.](#), unless otherwise noted. All rights reserved.

If you've been following the **legal ruckus** surrounding Apple's "Asteroid leak" case, you know what happened: Someone leaked details of Asteroid, a **breakout box** for use with GarageBand, and some websites published the info. Apple then **subpoenaed their email records** to discover the identity of the leaker, and the websites went to court to protect their journalistic integrity.

Whether you think rumor mongers have **journalistic integrity** or not (include me among them if you wish), the courts sided with them for two reasons: Apple hadn't **exhausted their options** before issuing the subpoena, and the courts have ruled that these "reporters" are journalists.

Red Flags

All of that is fine and legally proper, but there's a **fact** that everyone seems to be **overlooking** - after over two years, Apple hasn't released a breakout box for use with GarageBand.

The company has **transitioned** its Macs to Intel CPUs, introduced a **plethora** of new iPods, and even created a speaker system for the iPod, yet they haven't released Asteroid.



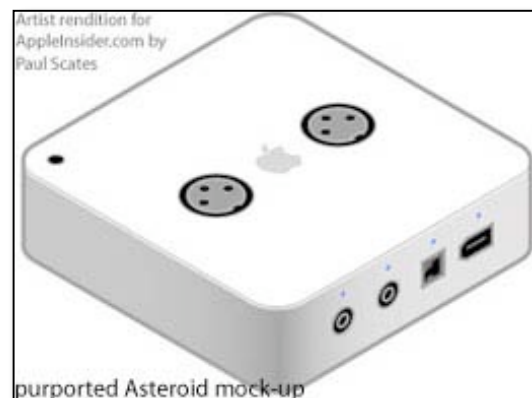
Sound suspicious? It should. If this was an important project, you'd think Apple would have gone ahead with it even after the "**trade secret**" of its existence was made known. You'd think they would have rushed to market to take advantage of the buzz.

If Asteroid were a **viable** product, you'd think Apple would at the very least want to get it out the door before a **competitor** - now fully aware for Apple's planned GarageBand breakout box - would beat them to the **punch**.

Red Herring

Since it hasn't happened, it's time to **reveal the truth**: Apple never intended to release "Asteroid" to market.

Apple used to have a decent relationship with rumor mongers, such as Mac the Knife, and use them to send up **trial balloons**. Then Steve Jobs came back, and the company developed a real **disdain** for rumors.



What if, rather than creating Asteroid as a real product, the aim of the Asteroid Project was to **destroy the rumor sites**? All Apple would have to do is assign a few people to developing a **semi-viable** product be sure to include a "mole" on the team, and have this individual **deliberately leak** project information to the sites Apple wanted to put out of business.

How would that **scenario** be any different from the one reported over the past two years?

After all, Apple wouldn't have to make any attempt to **determine the identity** of the leaker, if it were a plant. All they'd have to do is prove that Apple Insider, PowerPage, and the rest had received their **information** from this individual - and that's why they needed to subpoena email records.

I hate to sound like a **conspiracy theorist**, but the scenario of Apple using **Trade Secret law**, a dummy project, and its own mole to take out the rumor sites is every bit as feasible as Asteroid being important enough for Apple to sue over the leaks yet unimportant enough that the product never see the light of day.

Okay, who am I kidding? It's more likely.

And it did hit these sites like an asteroid, which explains the name of the project.



Books

Chief Customer Officer: Getting Past Lip Service to Passionate Action

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Jeanne Bliss

<http://www.customerbliss.com>

Jossey-Bass: An Imprint of Wiley

<http://www.josseybass.com>

<http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787980943.html>

Released: March 2006

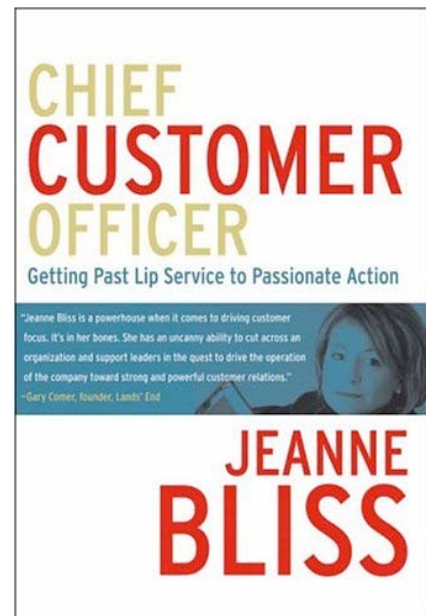
Pages: 320

\$28 USD, \$36 CND, £19 GBP, €23 Euro

ISBN: 0787980943

Strengths: Takes Corporate-speak and shows off/throws off the Emperor's new Clothes. Great questions to be asked regarding accountability.

Weaknesses: I don't really know if we need a CCO, if we are being swallowed up by a larger fish in the corporate ocean.



Chief Customer Officer: Getting Past Lip Service to Passionate Action by Jeanne Bliss was written in the hopes that corporations would pay more attention to those who buy their wares instead of navel-gazing all the time.

What caught my attention was that Jeanne's last name is "Bliss", which is what corporate types would like to think is the customer satisfaction level when they purchase their products. But then again, Jeanne has not sat in just one corporate environment for very long; 5 different corporations in 25 years. I'm beginning to believe that is the life-expectancy of just about anybody in a corporate environment these days, what with constant change and constant shuffling. Maybe Chief Customer Officer's don't have long-term life expectancy?

This book goes to great lengths to discuss customer satisfaction metrics based on her own personal "survive-and-thrive" experiences at Allstate, Coldwell Banker, Lands End, Mazda and Microsoft before "going consultant at Customer Bliss. On her website she has a CCO Blog and a Reality Check Audit and her Chief Customer Officer Toolkit composed of topics discussed in the book: Power Core, Customer Quicksand, Guerilla Metrics, a Tom Sawyer Formula and the question she would like all corporations to ask – Do you need a CCO? There are also two dynamic streaming videos online on discussing Power Core and Guerilla Metrics.

By the way, we used to call Power Core, "Core Competencies".

The book is predictably full of charts, graphs, lists and questions. These are found in four parts; Part One discusses why customer efforts crash and burn, corporate mediocrity, and silo-mentality where metrics, mechanics and motivation compete for time and resources. Part Two wrestles with handwaving vs. real passion from gut feeling and intestinal fortitude, gathering guerilla metrics and heading C.A.T.S - customer targets and the Reality Check Audit. Part Three asks if a CCO is really needed and what it takes to become one. This is where the Tom Sawyer Formula kicks in and where we read about what it really takes to drive change. Part Four is a section devoted to success stories of existing (still?) CCOs at Nautilus, Evercare, Cisco Systems, Colorado Rockies, Monster.com and Unica.

The book wraps up with an Epilogue that lists a bunch of questions regarding our current state of corporation and customer leadership. After that is an Afterword by Jill Griffin where she states; “having the information in this book and not acting on it is a lot like sitting on a winning lottery ticket and not cashing it in.” Maybe she should have had this put in the Forward, because she says that this book is really an accountability blueprint.

Pardon me from stepping away for a bit, I’ve got a corporate website to “de-silo”, since “customers defect when the silos don’t connect” and want a superior customer experience. Shouldn’t we be focusing on satisfying customers instead of dishing “mediocrity” out to them?

Digital SLR Photography with Photoshop CS2 All-in-One

reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Kevin Ames

Wiley

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0764595776.html>

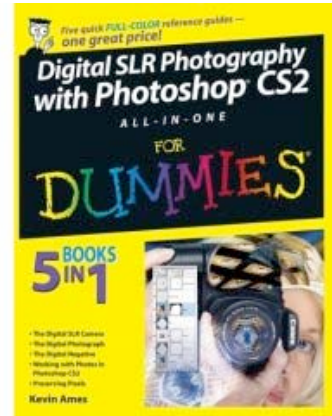
Released: January 2006

Pages: 449

\$35 USD, \$45 CND, £23 GBP, €29 Euro

ISBN: 0764595776

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced



Strengths: All-in-One impressively written book, full of in-depth information, tutorials, and visual guides that help to learn about camera, photography, making your images better. Uses excellent color screenshots, photos to illustrate and visualize the tutorials.

Weaknesses: None found.

Digital photography has become very popular since the market has exploded with new products, camera and more. This book is a truly All-in-One, packed with a great wealth of information for novice to advanced users who want to learn about digital SLR (Single Reflex) cameras, Photoshop and much more.

The five sections are: “Digital SLR camera”, “Digital Photograph”, “Digital Negative”, “Working with Photos in Photoshop CS2”, and “Preserving Pixels”. Within these five parts of the book covering 449 pages, are valuable tips, information on the web, technical information, and warnings to heed along the way and valuable insights to remember.

The author is a Photoshop author, columnist and commercial photographer. This book shows that he not only knows the digital oriented subjects in the book and regarding the title but he also writes the book in a Macintosh-friendly manner, but also is good for PC people.

The book covers a great range of these topics also highlighted blue, in-depth and with understanding for novice, intermediate and advanced users. Within the chapters are superb color photos, illustrations, screenshots, and pull down menu snapped pictures involving Photoshop. Going one step further are the red circles and red arrows, which highlight more specifically what the tutorial is communicating about regarding the tasks, and activities ideas. Special icons on the pages target tips, warnings to know things to remember and technical information.

This all in one book has five sections that are all excellent to read and learn. The detailed and well-written tutorials will usher you into the digital world, in more ways than one. The price is right, not only for the magnificent job that the author has done in writing the book, but also how he communicates all the “sums of the whole”. Buy it, learn more about the digital world and find out why this book is one I rate as a best buy, especially for digital novice and intermediate users. It will be a resource for you for a long time to come.

Everyware: The Dawning Age of Ubiquitous Computing

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



Author: Adam Greenfield

New Riders Press

Series: One Off

<http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321384016>

Released: March 10, 2006, 1st Edition

Pages: 272

\$19.79 USD, \$40 CND, £22 GBP, €25 Euro

ISBN: 0321384016

Paperback: 9 x 6.5 x 0.6 inches

For three great but somewhat overlapping interviews with Adam Greenfield check out:

<http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/004298.html>

http://www.boxesandarrows.com/view/hiding_in_plain_sight

<http://voice.aiga.org/content.cfm?ContentAlias=getfullarticle&aid=2055350>

Audience — A serious and slightly pedantic book for literate folks who are interested or concerned about Ubiquitous Computing. A good command of the English language and well as computer talk words is a prerequisite.

Major Strengths — As noted by Steve Silberman, EDITOR, *WIRED MAGAZINE* this is "A gracefully written, fascinating, and deeply wise book on one of the most powerful ideas of the digital age--and the obstacles we must overcome before we can make ubiquitous computing a reality." -- If you care, it's a must read book!

Weakness — I'd really like to see something on this subject given an evenhanded treatment for the rest of us. Although fascinated by the depth and insight in the book, it was tougher reading than I'd have liked. Although I'm forced to agree with Rebecca Mackinnon, Berkman Center for internet and society, Harvard University "Adam is a visionary. He has true compassion and respect for ordinary users like me who are struggling to use and understand the new technology being thrust on us at overwhelming speed." Its still an addicting but hard read.

Where appropriate the instructions in the book was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.3

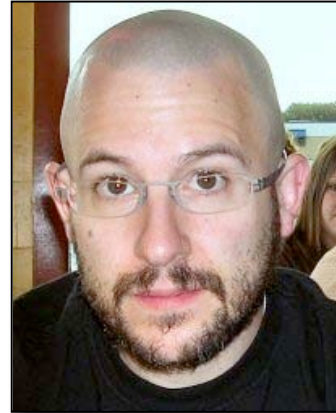
[Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.](#)



Informat.com Overview

This book examines both the positive and negative sides of these issues and summarizes the consequences of what will clearly be a revolution.

From the RFID tags now embedded in everything from soda cans to the family pet, to smart buildings that subtly adapt to the changing flow of visitors, to gestural interfaces like the ones seen in *Minority Report*, computing no longer looks much like it used to. Increasingly invisible but present everywhere in our lives, it has moved off the desktop and out into everyday life—affecting almost every one of us, whether we're entirely aware of it or not. Author Adam Greenfield calls this ubiquitous computing "everyware." In a uniquely engaging approach to this complex topic, Greenfield explains how such "information processing dissolving in behavior" is reshaping our lives; brief, aphoristic chapters explore the technologies, practices, and innovations that make everyware so powerful and seem so inevitable. If you've ever sensed both the promise of the next computing, and the challenges it represents for all of us, this is the book for you. "Everyware" aims to give its reader the tools to understand the next computing, and make the kind of wise decisions that will shape its emergence in ways that support the best that is in us."



Review Introduction

I have based on articles in Business week, Consumer Reports and Time, with Tidbits I Scientific American, gotten intrigued with the idea of ubiquitous computing [UbiCom].

[Folks, the acronym of UC {pronounced *uck* is too close yuck for my taste.]

What was all the fuss about? Was this an issue that the Electronic Freedom Foundation www.eff.org, should be concerned about?

Questions had already been festering in my mind:

How could the development and emplacement of RFID technology lead to encroachments in our daily lives? [See my review of **RFID Essentials** by Bill Glover and Himanshu Bhatt O'Reilly) in the June 2006 macC.]

How could I avoid encroachments, not only of my own and grandchildren's privacy but ultimately for having them live in world in which *Big Brother is always watching* and responding?

What would it be like to live in a world, or at least for my children to do so, in which their lives were invisibly intruded upon by signals from their clothes, furniture, transportation and even the building in which they lived and worked?

Genetic engineering of living things and even the idea of human gene tinkering to health purposes don't spook me. I safely made a career in nuclear energy and unfortunately have lived down wind from coal powered generating stations-ick. Nevertheless, as a devout and devoted reader of science fiction, UbiCom pushes my buttons.

Therefore, when the opportunity to Review Adam Greenfield's *Everware*, arose, I jumped the chance to review it.

The Book Itself

Introductory sections, *Section One*, Thesis 1-8, deal with: *What is Everyware?* The theme that everyware is information processing embedded in the objects and surfaces of every day life is introduced and expanded upon. The differences between an embodied everyware and our present approach to interfacing with computers, networks and all their associated systems are clearly identified. A key message that UbiCom, computing everywhere also of necessity means information everywhere. It all begins, (e.g., RFID tags, band width) when computational resources become so cheap that they become ubiquitous.

Such information sets the stage for Adam Greenfield to step out and share: *How is everyware different from what we're used to?* (*Section Two*, Thesis 9-26). A simplistic way of illustrating one element of this difference is to consider, as Greenfield does, is change changes everyware makes in the user experience in interacting with a computer system or computer *driven* environment. Of course, human system interfaces in which interaction errors that can't be Command-Z's (Control-Z or PC folks) away start to raise their ugly heads. Specifically, (page 39) "designers of user experiences for standard systems rarely have to worry about questions of the following sort:

- "When I address a system, how does it know I am addressing it?"
- "When I ask a system to do something how do I know it is attending?"
- "When I issue a command (such as save, execute or delete), how does the system know what it relates to?"
- "How do I know the system understands my command and is correctly executing my intended action?"
- "How do I recover from mistakes?"

Are you beginning to hear the message Adam Greenfield is trying to share? It's all about the *you* in the equation. An almost random gleaning of section 2 foci – the potential characteristics of everyware:

Thesis 10-15 - UbiCom, Its where? My bedroom or office, wristwatch or automobile or pill bottle or slippers?
Thesis 16 - Everyware can be engaged inadvertently, unknowingly or even unwillingly.
Thesis 17 - The overwhelming majority of people experiencing everyware will not be knowledgeable about it.
Thesis 23 - Everyware has profoundly different social implications than <i>any</i> previous information-technology paradigms
Thesis 26 (Section 3) – Everything that can be digital will be; everything digital can be yoked together – hence everyware.

Its scale is enormously variable extending from your own body, to the rooms you live or work in, every building you may visit or public space in general.

In *Section 3*, *What's driving the emergence of everyware?* Adam seems to answer: Because it can be done, the profit motive, an aging population needing help, 9/11 associated security-safety, dealing with technical complexity in society, and crime in the streets and last but not least government control freaks. What, Adam, no apple pie? Yet, despite my sarcasm, there is too much inevitability in section 3 for my comfort. Moreover, as well are reminded throughout the book and daily by our news media available information can be accessed everywhere, mined and manipulated or mal-used.

Section 4, Thesis 34-51: What are the issues we need to be aware of? Below I provide you with a gleaning of section 4 foci. Of course, these are at times annotated in *parenthesis* to express my clarifications.

Thesis 35 - Everyware surfaces and makes explicit information that has always been latent in our lives, and this will frequently be incommensurate with social or psychological comfort. (Why didn't we know all that material about us was out there?)
Thesis 42 - In everyware, many issues are decided at the level of architecture, and therefore do not admit to any substantive recourse in real time. This limits user control of the features. (Preferences you control will likely be banned since father knows best.)
Thesis 43 - Everyware produces a wide belt of circumstances where human agency, judgment, and will are progressively supplanted by compliance with external, ... standards and norms. (With speed dial, how many phone numbers do you remember? With you pocket calculator always available, can you still do long division? Some of my grandkids can't read an analog clock face. What skills you used to use will become amputated as we become dependent on UbiCom?)

Section 5, Thesis 45-51 is short and to the point. *Who gets to determine the shape of everyware?* In particular, I was thrilled with Thesis 49: *Present IT development as applied to everyware will result in unacceptably bad user experience.* Therefore, what's new, that axiomatic for most IT products I've been forced to use over my technical career.

From my perspective the paranoia and heat at starts in Section 6, Thesis 52-69. *When do we need to begin preparing for everyware?* Below I provide you with a gleaning of section 5 foci. Of course, these are at times annotated in parenthesis to express my clarifications.

Thesis 53 - Depending on how it is defines, everyware is both an immediate issue and a hundred-year problem.
Thesis 58 - As yet, everyware offers the user (emphasis added) no compelling and clearly stated value proposition. As the author notes, <i>It's ironic, then, that one of the things that real people demonstrably do not want in their present situation is everyware. There is no constituency for it, no pent-up demand; you'll never hear someone spontaneously express a wish for a ubiquitous house or city.</i>
Thesis 68 - Given that the underpinnings necessary to construct a robust everyware already exist, the time for intervention is now. However, as the author cites we need to exercise some ethical constraint. 1. Build it as safes as you can and build into it all the safeguards to personal value you can imagine. 2. Tell the world at large that you are doing something dangerous. Quoted from Technologist's responsibilities and Social Change by Mark Webster.

Indeed the quintessence of the ideas in Section 6 can be summarized by Adam's thoughts that despite technical "readiness" *There are days, in fact, when it can seem to me that the entire endeavor has arisen out of some combination of the technically feasible and that which is of interest to people working in human-computer interaction. Or worse, much worse: out of marketing, and the desire to sell people yet more things for which they have neither a legitimate need nor even much in the way of honest desire.*

Section 7 is the section of the book of either hope or despair, depending on your worldview. Are you technophilic or technophobic? The section addresses: *How might we safeguard our prerogatives in an everyware world?* I paraphrase the issue as: If we are not vigilant: stupidity, short sightedness, a rush to market, greed or a lust for control will take matters out of our hands.

Thesis like Adam's: It will not be sufficient to say "First do no harm" (Thesis 70) do not comfort me. Nor do they comfort the author. From my perspective medicine, as practiced in America, is a prime of patient care decisions made under conflict-of-interest conditions. [Read John Carey's article Medical Guesswork in Business Week May 29, 2006, pages 72-79.] Ponder upon how business and the governments protect our privacy data. I'll not walk you through all the remaining thesis that were of most interest to me, but as noted below, the core of the authors principles of everywhere development and deployment lie in Thesis 73-77, Adam's five principals. I do have a concern with what I read to be a feeling of laissez-faire in the author's final recommendations. The book is not a call to arms, alas, but rather a call to reason. But from reading his BIO, Adam Greenfield is that sort of a human being.

Kudos, and a Feeling of Disquiet

There were many (perhaps a myriad) places where a phrase or image made some thought or theme of Adam's clearer to me. Not all were pleasant – e.g., the concept of hived minds as an example of UbiCom. Although that image transforms itself in the ideas of unobtrusive and invisible ambient networks, a background of a spider web of attentive back ground computing focusing on my being and actions still trouble me. Paranoid, perhaps — Inappropriate, not necessarily.

Disquiet — The author seems to have too much faith in the ultimate goodness of institutions, when realities show the contrary. His five principals (listed below) plus the good will of businesses and governments do not seem protective of my right to remain invisible.

Everyware must default to harmless (Thesis 73)
Everware but be self disclosing (Thesis 74)
Everyware must be conservative of face (Thesis 75)
Everyware must be conservative of time (Thesis 76)
Everywhere must be deniable (Thesis 77) (e.g., you can opt out)

Discomforts

Where can I Read More — The book liberally names-names, cites the applicable literature, references ongoing studies and debate without providing any references. This is a serious flaw in an otherwise scholarly document, one that cripples the readers ability to follow up on the ideas presented in the author's 81 essays (called thesis.) – Adam has posted a list of sources, in response to reader feedback at:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/redirect.html/ref=cm_plog_item_link/002-1141232-8501626?%5Fencoding=UTF8&location=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.studies-observations.com%2Feveryware%2Fbibliography.html&token=8931CC53838AE554D75BA43C22D8A860A1D4CCBC

I spot-checked a few of the sites for subjects of interest to me — Hurrah!

The Overall Structure of the Book — This book is about advocacy, making you understand the potential riches of and risks of UbiCom. Most contemporary books that deal rationalizing and expounding on advanced technology have adopted a stronger pattern of information presentation.

Tell what you're going to tell me
Tell in detail, and
Tell what you told me in an encapsulated form focusing on major points

Help me remember, I cry out, key concepts more easily. This is something I wish the author had done more of. It would have served to better pull together the seven sections of the book. [See *Spring Into Technical Writing for Scientist and Engineers* by Barry J. Rosenberg (Addison-Wiley) review in the September 2005 macC.]

Fog, Fog and More Fog – let me count a few of the ways. None of these terms were in the online Webster’s unabridged dictionary but the wikipedia.org site helped for a few of the words I blanked out on included: Global mnemotechnical system; gestural, exformation [found in Wikipedia.]; ambident (not ambient) findability; to limit myself to four of dozens I’ve highlighted or searched.

A good dictionary at your fingers or mouse is essential, even for you MENSA types, if you want to get the most out of this insightful book. Moreover, I love learning new words, but then I out-mensa’d MENSA in my youth.

In Closing

The books, after the initial “thesis” is not easy read and understand. It’s neither the Economist nor even Scientific American in semantic complexity. It is linguistically complex, more so the reading Kierkegaard, TS Eliot or Spinoza. However, although, it took a little time, my overall all conclusions about the book is that if you care: you will make the time to understand the author’s premises and analyses. I spend day reading and reading the book — It was worth the while. If I were younger, I might start a movement or a crusade aimed at the gaining the benefits with out the burdens of everywhere.

If we want protection from everywhere by stealth, we will need to start assuring it for ourselves. The author’s suggests (below) are a good start, but will they be enough. Perhaps my grandchildren will have the answer to that question.

- Educate ourselves as to the nature of the various technologies I have here grouped under the rubric of everywhere;
- Decide which of them we will invite into our lives, and under what circumstances;
- Demand that the technologies we are offered respect our claims to privacy, self-determination, and the quality of life; and (hardest of all)
- Consistently act in accordance with our beliefs at work, at the cash register, and at the polls.

In conclusion, the overwhelming message in this book is that by following Moore’s Law, UbiCom is coming to a life near you. [E.g., according to the June 2005 *In Magazine*, Last year human beings produced more transistors (and at a lower price) than grains of rice. So, *how can we deliver the promise of everywhere while forestalling some of the pitfalls that are already apparent? How can we, as users and consumers, hope to influence something that is already in the process of unfolding?* Read the book, become aware and start some grassroots action if you find things getting as dicey as the protection of our personal data. Rating **4.5 macCs**

Author BIO

ADAM GREENFIELD is a writer, user experience consultant and critical futurist. Before starting his current practice, Studies and Observations, Adam was lead information architect for the Tokyo office of well-known Web consultancy Razorfish; prior to that, he worked as senior information architect for marchFIRST, also in Tokyo. He’s also been, at various points in his career, a rock critic for SPIN Magazine, a medic at the Berkeley Free Clinic, a coffeehouse owner in West Philadelphia, and a PSYOP sergeant in the US Army’s Special Operations Command.

With a particular interest in the interplay between mobility and the user experience, Adam organized the highly successful First International Moblogging Conference in Tokyo in 2003, acclaimed as the world’s first symposium devoted to the practice of Web publishing from mobile devices. More recently, Adam sat on the final jury for the Fusedspace competition on novel uses of information technology in public space.

Adam lives and works with his wife, artist Nurri Kim, in New York City.

Fixing Windows XP Annoyances

reviewed by Kale Feelhaver



Author: David A. Karp

Publisher: O'Reilly Books

<http://www.oreilly.com>

Booksite:

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

Released: March 2006

Pages: 239

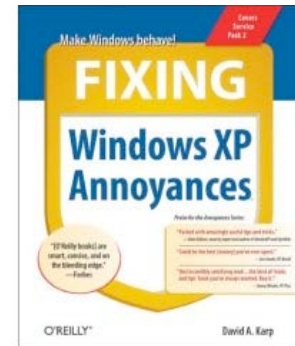
\$20 USD, \$28 CND, £14 GBP, €17 Euro

ISBN: 0596100531

Requirements: An interest in Windows XP.

Strengths: Lots of tips and tricks for fixing Windows.

Weaknesses: It's about Windows.



This book is about making Windows more user-friendly. Everyone knows Windows is full of annoying bugs and problems. That's probably one of the reasons most of us are Mac users. However, some of us may still have to deal with Windows at work, or in other situations. That is where this book comes in handy.

In the book's 239 pages, Karp talks about how to fix some of the problems in Windows XP and how to reveal some of the hidden features of the OS. In short, this book is designed to make Windows more like a Mac. The book is very easy to understand and relatively inexpensive. This is a good purchase for anyone who hates Windows, but is forced to use it.

If you are a casual Windows user, there may be several helpful tips in this book. However, if you are an experienced Windows power user, you probably already know a lot of the tips in the book, and if you are a hard-core Mac user... you probably don't care. This book tells a lot about how to fix the annoying parts of Windows XP, but the easiest way to fix Windows XP's annoyances permanently... is to become a Mac user.

Photoshop CS2 Workflow: The Digital Photographer's Guide

reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Tim Grey

Sybex

1151 Marine Village Parkway

Alameda, CA 94501

<http://www.sybex.com>

<http://www.sybex.com/WileyCDA/SybexTitle/productCd-0782143962.html>

Released: May 2005

Pages: 304

\$40 USD, \$52 CND, £28 GBP, €33 Euro

ISBN: 0782143962



Strengths: Includes information on raw format images. An in-depth highlight of curves with the applications, which is a very difficult topic, is applied in an excellent fashion in this book. Information regarding adjustment layers well done.

Weaknesses: I would have liked to have seen more arrows and pointers to stress the information laid out in the screenshots and applications to highlight the well thought out instructions. This would have clarified some of the additional information to an even greater extent.

“Workflow” is the latest “buzzword” regarding digital imagery. It is a whole process of taking your images from the beginning to end and all the process, tasks and management issues that are needed for making your finished images even better for home, school and business.

Chapter 1 talks about layered based workflow and focusing upon the final results you want for your images. Chapter 2 use of Download Pro for Windows XP (page 8) explains using 3rd party software with PhotoShop. On page 28, the “palette set up” is very well written in explaining and using palettes. The tool and palette shortcuts (page 34) are also well done and useful. Chapter 3, “Benefits of conversion with camera raw” is well explained in terms of the reasons for using RAW images instead of JPEG or other types of images. Chapter 4, “Basic adjustments” details how to use basic tools as, rotate and crop, using crop tool, using aspect ration.

Chapter 5 “Basic tone and color “ specifically targets evaluating channels. This written introduction and more, gaining insight into channels is done very well. In fact, this is some of the best information on the topic that I have seen (page 91). The screenshots and the shots of the application windows (example, Curve, levels, etc.) help with the understanding. However only in a few places (example, page101) have additional insets, made into the windows (for example: in the way of red enumerated small circles or additional ways) to verify even more explicitly. This chapter (page 100) ask has a real nice listing of five benefits of adjustment layers without changing the underlying pixels of the images you are working with clipping with histograms (page 102) is in this chapter as well. Basic level adjustment, which includes turning, your images into posters (posterizing) are also on this page. Color balance (page 108) and (page 112) basic saturation have well done instructions.

Notes in Chapter 6 are very helpful. Here in Chapter 6, “Image cleanup” has information concerning healing brush, cloning stamp (copying parts of the text to others to clean up smudges by copying from one part of the image into another – for example sky color).

Chapter 7, “Advanced tonal adjustments,” covers working with image tones. Shadow highlights (page 138) is an interesting section and nicely done. Curves information and adjusting these (page 143) I feel are the most difficult to understand and master. The author does an exceptional job in explaining this topic done and is some of the best I have ever seen. Ways to use anchor points are excellently written

Overall the author does a solid job with learning about PhotoShop through the use of digital photography. The notes throughout the chapter help break up the use of the text and highlight additional information that will help in the understanding of the applications. On page 1010, information about the different of clipping (lost information) or gapping (gaps in the histogram) is written solidly. I would have liked to see arrows or pointer to the parts of the histogram that the text is “talking about.” Sometimes the terms (like posterization on page 103) are inserted at the end of a paragraph. While this terms is used in the next paragraph I did not quite understand why it was important.

Learning to highlight images and make your final product better taken time, insight and the use of tool at your disposal is what one usually does when you have no where to start or when you are lost in the process. There is much in this book that really “hits the mark” in terms of understanding and improving your digital photography. Sometimes the text feels like a seminar workshop that went a little too fast and then I got lost only I don’t have time to go back over the information because the seminar has moved ahead.

But fortunately this is a book and you can go back and try to make sense of the process. As mentioned, if you do get “lost”, Email Mr. Grey for additional feedback, but if you read carefully, you should be able to follow the tasks. At times there might be a few gaps in the understanding of the book, but overall this is a real solidly done book for intermediate and advanced users who want to improve their image production.

Web Site Cookbook: Designing, Maintaining and Marketing

reviewed by Mike Swope

O'REILLY[®]
computer books • conferences • online publishing

Author: Doug Addison

O'Reilly

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

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

Released: February 2006

Pages: 261

\$40 USD, \$56 CND, £28.50 GBP, €33 Euro

ISBN: 0596101090

Audience: Readers with novice to intermediate proficiency with web design/development. Focus on readers with several years of experience behind them and comfortable working with raw HTML, Apache and PHP code.

Strengths: Credible author. Problem-Solution-Discussion format. Hundreds of small but useful tips and tricks. Clear, concise writing. Real-world, practical information. Select references for further study after each problem-solution-discussion. Avoids the trite "cookbook" theme.

Weaknesses: Limited discussion of cascading style sheets, blogs, and other open source applications.

Pulp Mentor

If you've built even one web site, you've had questions. I've been building web sites for ten years, and I still have questions about how best to accomplish certain tasks. Unfortunately, I don't have friends with more experience that I can call on for an answer at a moment's notice. The Web Site Cookbook is the next best thing, filled with hundreds of practical and worldly tips and tricks that all web developers can begin using right off the shelf to make their sites more successful. I earmarked during my first read, no less than 30 pages relevant to my current web sites in development. This Web Site Cookbook will also prove useful for website owners and help them understand and appreciate the complexity and special skills required to build an effective web site.

Doug Addison presents his wisdom clearly and matter-of-factly. Though I expected the Web Site Cookbook to use a trite cookbook theme, it thankfully does not. It's all business. Like most books of this genre, the Web Site Cookbook opens with the basics and ends at a considerably advanced, but general level. The first five chapters discuss domain names and registration, web server platforms, site host selection, site planning and charting, page design and navigation, and formatting text, code and graphics. The remaining five chapters deal with content creation and delivery, visitor interaction, promotion and e-commerce, and site maintenance and troubleshooting. An ideal mentor, Doug's presentation is direct, worldly and practical.

Doug, however, does not intend for the Web Site Cookbook to be read linearly, from beginning to end. He understands that his readers will have varied experiences with web site development. So he presents his information in a problem-solution-discussion format. He has anticipated common questions readers will bring to his Cookbook and answers them. Some of the problems-solutions I earmarked during my first read of the Web Site Cookbook are:

- Designing Pages for Advertisements
- Creating Breadcrumb Links
- Writing Standards-Compliant Web Pages



- Including Dynamic Content in Static Pages
- Disabling Image Download
- Creating Watermarked Images on the Fly
- Adding Preview Information to Links
- Creating Effective Pop-Up Windows
- Randomizing Text or Images
- Generating Downloadable Files Automatically
- Duplicating Form Field Data
- Creating an HTML Newsletter
- Generating Income from Traffic & Content
- Handling Requests for Missing or Relocated Pages
- Adding the Referring Page to a Form
- Evaluating Your Site with Metrics

For most readers, using the Web Site Cookbook will be as if they have emailed Doug and he has responded to them with just the answer(s) they need.

What's Missing?

Doug Addison's Web Site Cookbook is a superb web site design and development general reference, but it sidesteps some of today's noteworthy web development technologies and trends. Specifically, cascading style sheets, blogs and open source applications.

Although Doug mentions cascading style sheets on several occasions, he does not discuss them in any depth. In fact, neither cascading style sheets or its abbreviation (CSS) or other derivative appears in the Web Site Cookbook's index! CSS has been a hot topic for web site design and development for more than two years, so it is somewhat surprising that Doug virtually ignores the technology that helps separate a site's content from its presentation. Along with limited discussion, Doug also provides little guidance for more study of CSS. More information about CSS would be helpful to Web Site Cookbook readers.

Doug also fails to discuss at any length any open source solutions in the Web Site Cookbook, though he has ample opportunity to do so. Open source communities seem to grow larger every day, and many fine web sites are built with code and applications provided by them. Though Doug discusses blogs and e-commerce, his discussions are narrow. Blogs are discussed in relation to RSS feeds and, though Doug mentions that a side-by-side comparison of blog resources follows in the See Also section, I could not find that section for further study (an omission, I believe). Many web developers may find open source blog software more than useful for entire sites and specific purposes, other than a "web log." So this omitted information may have been very useful to some readers.

Doug also fails to acknowledge the growing number of task-specific open source solutions available. For example, in the e-commerce chapter, Doug's discussion is limited to enabling SSL, disabling a form submit button after the first click, creating complex select menus and protecting sites from fraud. Though important, these things do not an e-commerce site make. Doug has assumed in this case that the reader has an e-commerce site. If this is the case, then the reader is likely familiar with these topics and has already dealt with the majority of them. The e-commerce discussion here might have better centered on solutions available, including those provided by the open source community, much like his discussion of server platforms and host selection in Chapter 1.

Somehow, too, while discussing open source solutions, Doug might also find a way to mention other task-specific solutions available for classified ads, auction sites, real estate sites, and more, and point readers to resources that may answer their questions if his Cookbook does not.

Final Serving

While the Web Site Cookbook is a great how-to book, the author himself notes that it is not the definitive how-to book for web design or development. It is, instead, a superb primer and a must-have reference for anyone having anything to do with building, launching or maintaining a web site. Doug Addison's wisdom is dead-on with practical, real-world experience, particularly in the early chapters. For the early chapters alone, I recommend this book to web site owners, so they have a better understanding and appreciation of the skilled and detailed work their designers, developers and webmasters do for them. With clear, concise writing, Doug wastes no space or words, and his Web Site Cookbook is an essential reference tool. Readers will undoubtedly find dozens of tips and tricks they can put to use immediately, just as I did.

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

How to everything with Windows XP: Third Edition

reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



McGraw-Hill Osborne
2100 Powell Street, 10th floor
Emeryville, CA 94608

<http://books.mcgraw-hill.com/getbook.php?isbn=0072259531&template=osborne>

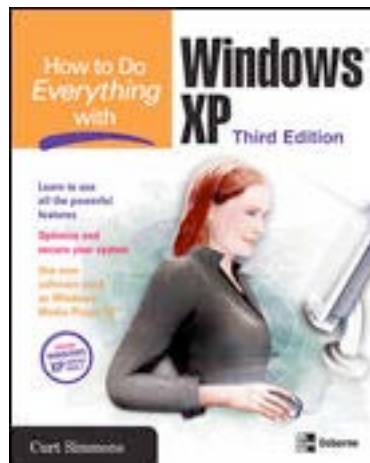
Released: April, 27, 2005

\$25 USD, \$3 CND, £15 GBP, €21 Euro

ISBN: 0072259531

Strengths: Covers many aspects of XP OS information. Not a wealth of screen shots, Side notes, Creating a custom CD section in the middle of the book is actually the nicest part of the book as it is more like a tutorial and written in a different style. Information about songs and playlists and much more are included. Text is fairly easy to read. The chapters on the inside of the top of the page help with finding the pages and the content needed.

Weaknesses: Black and white screenshots. Few if any inserts and information to point out more detail visually. Video creation section could have included more. Not the fanciest looking book. There is minimal use of points or ways to highlight screenshots.



Whether we like it or not, the Windows operating system is used on a majority of the computers in the US and World. Many computer users still don't use the most updated version for a variety of reasons. However to run more multimedia and applications, the latest version is needed. While many others are using Linux, Mac OS X, most people use their computers with Windows. The latest version is Windows XP.

The author is a technology expert and has worked with Windows XP since its early testing. He states that this book is about "the best operating system Microsoft has produced." What caught my about this, the text said "Microsoft." Needless I found that statement interesting (does that mean he hasn't looked at others, compared them?). The characteristics for this version of Windows profess it to be "friendly, easy to use, best use of the Internet and digital imagery." Well let's see what the book shows regarding is OS, this version and the ideas in this book.

This 407-page book is nicely divided into four chapters. The text, is "plain jane," for the most part black text on white. Tips and note inserts are found throughout the chapters and are insightful. Part 1 is "Get to know Windows XP"; Part 2 "Get Connected"; Part 3 "Cool things you can duo with Windows XP"; Part 4 "Optimizing, troubleshooting and Fix Windows XP"; The Appendix installing Windows XP.

Chapter 1, "Explore the XP Desktop," deals with acquainting yourself with the desktop. The recycle bin is the "trash" I noticed.

Chapter 2 "Manage your computer with the control panel" includes much about the control panel. Now these can be divided into categories (long overdue.) Microsoft considers the tools found in Category the most common. In Microsoft common fashion, flexibility is not afforded unless you find out what else can be done. The author nicely points out (p.16). In the CP Options, switch to Classic view and you see more. A host of keyboard options are explained in detail and well done. The author does a good job elaborating upon the Pointer options and task start menu.

Chapter 3, "Configure system settings" demonstrates how to customize the start menu, reduce clutter, add menu shortcuts, configure display, how to remove themes. With Chapter 4 "Manage components, programs, folders and files" Learn in this sections about file types, settings, configure folder views, customize the toolbar, and manage the programs. Dealing with many files and deleting files. A cautionary note warns (p.74) not to change folders or files etc in the Windows folder.

Chapter 5 "Use the accessories that come with windows: teaches how to utilize the tutorial like "wizards." Accessory modes are explained. It is here that there is more about Windows Explorer. Since Windows ME, this Explorer is considered an Accessory. Even though some common ones are on the control panel these can be changed and the instructions are included. Chapter 6, "Manage hardware," has some important XP golden rules. Also included is how to install drivers, working with device management. With Chapter 7, "Use printers, fax machines, scanners, and digital cameras," you learn to do just that.

Part 2 "Get Connected" covers chapters 8-13. It has more specific information about the Internet. Chapter 8 "surf the internet. Learn to use Chapter 10 "Run outlook express," the email client service. Chapter 11, "Create a home network," has information about home networking. Chapter 12 "Manage users and groups," is helpful as it details how customizes groups. Chapter 13 "Windows XP security and remote connections," has much information about the prime concern for many, security. For Windows this is important because of the many viruses that can infect the system.

Part 3 (14-18), starts off with Chapter 14, "Play games." Game screenshots, learning how to install the games, troubleshooting (game controller issues, gamelocking up troubles) are discussed. Chapter 15 "Use windows media player 10, has the information about playing multimedia (included music visualization options P.249). Music players on the iTunes or with this Media player and like many people, with one or both of these application, many do not know the visualization to tools exist.

However Chapter 16, "Create movies with windows Movie maker 2.1," focuses on video application. I was curious to find (p.260) that while there was much about the video process, the information focused upon analog video. Later (p.262) the author points out there are capture devices to convert analog to digital format but does not mention there are higher grade camcorders that take video in digital video (DV) format that save some from this headache. Nothing is mentioned about DV use outright without analog. But then I read (page 261) what some of the weaknesses were. It is free application, which is good but can only be saved in Windows Media Video (WMV) format. Specifically it is pointed out (page 261) if you want to play a WMV movie imported from a Windows (XP) you might have capability problems. If you are reading this book and want to do more video work, you need to find out more information then is offered in this book. But the focus is the Operating system not just the video section. But more information would have been good.

Chapter 17, "Manage digital photos in Windows XP," informs about photo tool use. Chapter 18 "Explore XP Plus packs and powertoys," (must be bought), is a CD based set of goodies has some extra features for XP (themes, screen savers, games and more).

Part 4 (chapters 19-21) has Chapter 19, "Take care of Windows XP, Chapter 20 "Manage disks, Chapter 21 "Solve problems with XP. This is a fairly good chapter for troubleshooting and managing problems.

The book is comprehensive and has much information. The author covers most of the topics. Most topics are in depth Much is said that this version of Microsoft, is the best yet (compared to previous versions). Since most people use this OS, versus Mac OS X, Linux and others. Since the new version has been delayed, this is the best version for now. Whether it is the best operating system to use on the market or is just the best Microsoft offers for now is not really said. But the book does speak for itself in being a readable and informative book to learn about XP. It seems like a good book to start one needs help with XP. A good starting point indeed. The price is right also for learning about XP and most of the operating system but not video recording.

Hardware

EyeTV 250

reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves



Elgato Systems
Nymphenburger Str 86
D-80636 München Germany
info@elgato.com
<http://www.elgato.com/>
http://www.elgato.com/index.php?file=about_contact
http://www.elgato.com/index.php?file=products_eyetv250

Released: April 6, 2006
\$199 USD

Requirements: G4, G5 or Intel Core processor; 256 MB of physical RAM (512 MB recommended); Built-in USB port; Mac OS X 10.4 (or later); 589 MB of disk space required for one hour of recorded TV; Internet connection required for the optional online TV guide

FAQs: <http://faq.elgato.com/index.php/main>

Comparison: <http://www.elgato.com/matrix/index.php>

Strengths: Video quality not dependent on Mac specifications due to built-in hardware encoder; Easy to set up and use; Many options for export/conversion/burning; bundled software makes it an incredible value.

Weaknesses: Software interface not well-suited to viewing from a distance; Cannot change channels of digital cable box.

Last month I reviewed Elgato's EyeTV EZ, a low-cost analog TV tuner that allows you to watch and record TV on your Mac. Its shortcoming was that it made your Mac do all the hard work of encoding the incoming video signal, putting a hit on your processor and requiring a dual G5 or Core Duo processor for the best quality recordings.

The EyeTV 250 takes nearly everything that's great about the EZ and improves on its main deficiency by using a built-in hardware decoder. I don't have the time to repeat everything I wrote about the EZ model, so if you haven't read that one yet, do so now and know that all of its strengths hold true for the 250. It has the same beautiful, small form factor that matches the design of the Mac mini, but allows you to watch the highest quality video even on a lowly single processor G4. (A 1-hour show, recorded at "Standard" quality, is 720x480 pixels, and uses about 1.9 GB of disk space.) The only real tradeoff is that it requires the use of a (provided) AC adapter, making it more suited for desktop use than portable.

The hardware encoding also makes the 250 more of a true DVR than the EZ by allowing you to pause and rewind live TV, like a Tivo. Making it better than a Tivo is its Mac functionality. Using the bundled EyeTV software (which alone costs \$79) the programs you record can be exported to 5th generation video iPods with one click, burned to DVDs with Toast 7, and exported to many video formats such as H.264 or DV format for use with iMovie and Final Cut. Commercials can be removed after the recording is finished using the built-in editor, and specified segments of a recording can be exported to other formats.



Tivo, by contrast, does not allow you to watch, edit, or convert your recorded programs on your Mac. They've promised to enable transfer and playback for about two years and have currently set a date of "mid-2006." Well, it's late June right now but they may consider December 30 as falling within mid-2006.

But the EyeTV 250 is not a complete replacement for a Tivo. First, it cannot change channels on a digital cable box. Second, the remote has only one setting for fast forward/rewind (4x), making the fast-forwarding of commercial breaks tedious. Third, the included remote is adequate, but nowhere near Tivo's superb design (thanks for the batteries, though). And mainly, the EyeTV software interface is not particularly usable on a standard definition television set from couch distance.

But on a computer display, Elgato's EyeTV software, (a Universal Binary currently at version 2.2.1) is incredibly functional and elegant. If anyone is waiting for Apple to produce TV software this good, they need to stop.

As if its DVR capabilities weren't enough, the EyeTV 250 has other strengths. It can turn your VHS tapes into DVDs using the included Composite and S-Video adapter cable and simple-to-use VHS Assistant. You can also turn on Game Mode, which disables the hardware encoder to let you use your Mac as a display for a game console and recording your game play.

With an extensive list of export presets and file formats, the EyeTV software itself is incredibly useful. Together with the 250 hardware encoder, it's a compelling package. And at only \$50 more than the software encoding EZ model, it's inarguably a bargain.



Microsoft Wireless Laser Desktop for Mac

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052-6399
<http://www.microsoft.com>
[Laser Desktop](#)

Released: Mouse; September 2005. The Desktop combo with keyboard – May 30, 2006.
\$100 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later; 30 MB hard drive space (for wireless software); CD-ROM Drive; USB port.

Contains: Microsoft Wireless Comfort Keyboard for Mac; Microsoft Wireless Laser Mouse 6000; Microsoft Wireless Desktop Receiver 31A; 4 AA batteries (two for the mouse and two for the keyboard); 1 CD with IntelliType Pro and IntelliPoint software.

Strengths: Extra function keys. Great laser mouse.

Weaknesses: No “manual”. (Find most information using the Microsoft Help button.) No LED indicators. Not Blue-Tooth (this wireless implementation is a much shorter range). 30 MB of hard drive space for the two Microsoft-specific mouse and keyboard drivers. Why?

Other Reviews:

<http://www.macobserver.com/columns/userfriendly/2006/20060623.shtml>

Also discussed in the Mac ReviewCast episode #61.

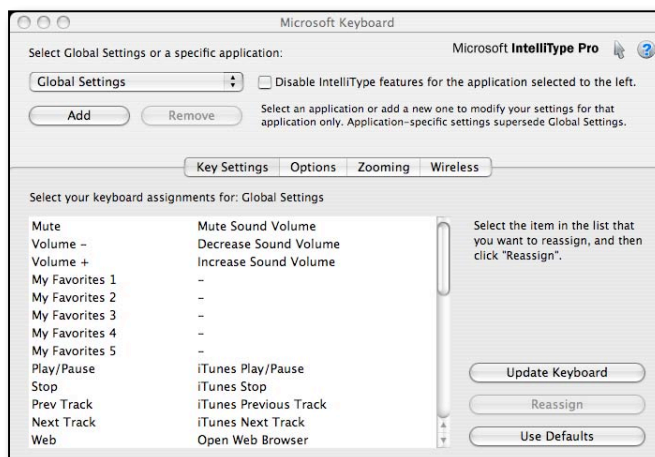
<http://www.macreviewcast.com>

And Commentary to Chris Marshall’s opinion:

<http://www.surfbits.com/?p=797>

What can be said about a wireless mouse and ergonomic wireless keyboard? Probably plenty. Maybe Microsoft doesn’t make the greatest software known to man, but the company has always produced mice and keyboards that always seemed to work well.

It took nearly 7 years for my last Microsoft mouse to die and that was because the cable broke right up next to the mouse itself. If I’d had a spare cable or if I’d really wanted to rebuild it, I could have, but sometimes it better to just let go.



The keyboard that comes with the iMac is not ergonomic. And most of us have grown accustomed by now to 2-button mice and scrollwheels. So Microsoft saw the need and filled it.

But with this Wireless Laser Desktop, there are some pre-requisites. The software needs to be installed. We are to assume it gets loaded into the Application folder. It won't be found under Keyboard or Laser, but it will be found as *Microsoft Keyboard*. There seems to be a certain fascination with the company name, because *all* the parts all begin with the name *Microsoft*.

And even though there is a pamphlet that is named *Microsoft Product Guide*, there is precious little in it that is really useful for such things as how to use the *Microsoft Wireless Desktop Receiver*. Assume we know why there are 3 green LEDs with a "A", "1" and a symbol or that we can understand what the graphics on the back/bottom of the unit mean and we have to begin experimenting. But first the *Microsoft IntelliType Pro 6.0* for Mac and the *Microsoft IntelliPoint 6.0* for Mac software has to be installed before anything gets plugged in. And in typical Microsoft fashion, the computer has to be shut down in order for the software to "take".

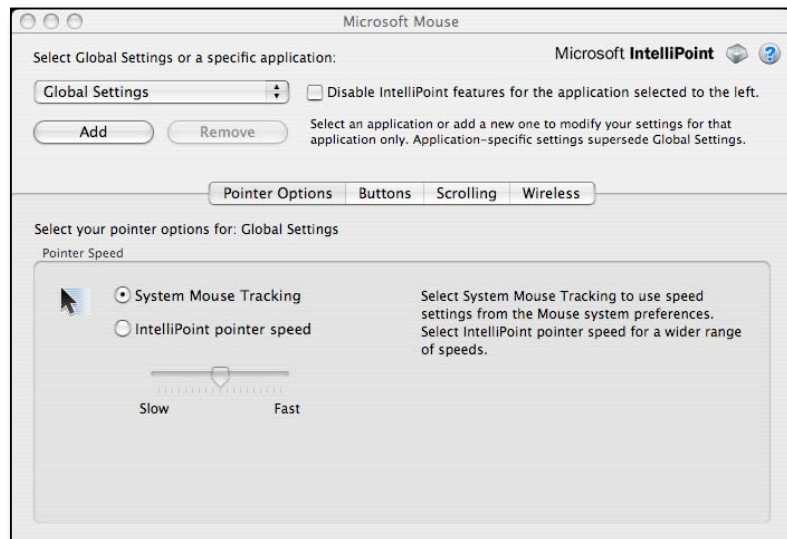
Microsoft Wireless Laser Mouse 6000 and two more go into the two "AA" batteries go in the *Microsoft Wireless Comfort Keyboard for Mac*. The 4-page, 4-language (English, French, Portuguese and Spanish fold-out pamphlet shows an iMac to put the CD in, a picture of where to put the batteries in both units, a place where the Receiver is supposed to be plugged in and how far the receiver works (between 1.8 Meters or 6 feet instead of a Bluetooth range of 30 feet) and the last page shows where the Microsoft Keyboard Help is located as in ; *Apple > System Preferences > Microsoft Keyboard > Help > Microsoft Keyboard Help*. Okay, THAT is where the "manual" is hiding! Under *Other* in the *Preferences*, right next to *Microsoft Mouse*.

Now I can figure out how to make those two extra buttons on the right-handed mouse, left side to work.

I can take the smaller button on the left side and use it to magnify whatever I have the cursor sitting over. Holding it and scrolling at the same time, lets me do nearly infinite zoom in, by scrolling forward or scrolling backward for smooth zoom out, back to where I started.

The 2nd larger button on the left side defaults to backspace on a website.

Both these buttons can be changed to do a number of different things, based on the buttons dropdown menu. Both buttons can be manipulated for a number of those kinds of functions, unless you want to just stay with the defaults.



The scroller is a smooth scroller. No more of the clickity-click sounds when using the wheel we've experienced in the past. And it can be set to do side-to-side scrolling as well as up-and-down. I found that to be a very cool feature.

Now, let's check out the extra keys on the keyboard. On the left side are 5 keys assigned to web, photos, music, chat and Email. Right next to them is another Zoom slider that goes further in magnification than the mouse button. Above the ergonomic keyboard are the function keys and above them are mute, plus and minus volume keys on the left side. In the middle is a star button that opens a dialogue box for 5 "favorites" for assigning your own functions. To the right of them are iTunes controls. To the right of the regular keyboard, are help, search (with a magnifying glass icon, so don't get that confused with "zoom" in applications) and CD/DVD eject buttons. And under the

Microsoft logo to the far right are three more buttons that are for the *calculator*, *log off* and *sleep*. All the keys on the keyboard are translucent. Why? Unknown.

The *IntelliType Pro* software is needed to use the *zoom slider* and *my favorites* keys.

I found no noticeable lag between the keyboard and the computer or from the mouse and the screen, but Ted Landau did and he has been using the keyboard longer than I have. The mouse comes as designed for right-handers. I suppose I can learn to use a right-handed mouse.

So where is the laser in this system? It is in the mouse. The Microsoft High Definition Laser Technology extends battery life out to 6 months using .18 micron CMOS technology. The mouse also uses the Microsoft Intelligent Tracking System algorithms for smoother tracking and better precision at 1,000 dots (X-Y resolution) per inch and 6,000 frames (imaging rate) per second. What it is really doing is bouncing the signal off whatever surface the mouse is on at higher speeds using laser technology to do so and communicate that back to the computer via the wireless receiver.



The *IntelliPoint* software controls the *Tilt Wheel* (scroller) and *Magnifier* tool functions.

The mouse, by itself goes for around \$65 USD.

What is missing on the keyboard? A Caps Lock LED indicator! I suppose those LEDs suck up a lot of power over time and so to extend the batteries out 6 months, somebody must have thought it was a good idea to eliminate the shift lock light. That's okay for those who are touch typists, but some if us don't look up at the screen until it is TOO LATE!

Underneath the keyboard is a *Connect Channel* button. I had to go elsewhere to discover its use. The Tech Sheet shows that this system operates at 27 MHz with the keyboard using one of two channels; 27.095 MHz with channel 0 and 27.195 MHz in channel 1 and the mouse using 27.045 MHz in channel 0 and 27.145 MHz on channel 1. And depending on which keys you use, the keyboard can last as much as 1 million keystrokes. And this is curious; scrolling is 100,000 revolutions forward and 300,000 revolutions back (vertical) with 350,000 right and left (horizontal) before failing.

When I pushed the *Connect Channel* button some of the keys lost their usual functions and gave other key functions instead of what is decaled on those keys. Yes, the labels on each key are little decals.

I had to go change the keyboard from US to *US Intl - Microsoft* in International Preferences with the US Flag, in order for the keys to all play nice. The regular *US Standard* doesn't show some of the "correct" key assignments, such as the ' and) or (keys. The documentation doesn't mention anything about this. Oh, and the Microsoft Keyboard Help actually mentions the missing LEDs under the various keycaps, as if they existed!

I think if I had a choice between the Zoom Slider and the LEDs, I would have gone for the LEDs myself. After all, the Zoom keyboard combos function are what again? Cloverleaf/Option/= and Cloverleaf/Option/- and the toggle to turn off and on is Cloverleaf/Option 8. But the Slide is a nice gimmick for folks who aren't able to do the 3-finger combos or know how to turn on sticky keys. And if you can do it with the mouse and "Tilt Wheel", why bother doing it with a *zoom slider* on the keyboard?

Maybe *my favorites* buttons can handle Exposé and Dashboard, etc.?

And I still have not figured out what the A on the caps lock keyboard is for. Found it. No function, as far as being no more than a label for the *caps lock*.

So yes, this is a repackaged, repurposed *Microsoft Wireless Laser Desktop 6000* PC keyboard and mouse <http://www.techgauge.com/review.php?id=4425> with software that works with Mac OS X. The proprietary functions can be turned off and the Mac OS X keyboard functions can take over, but that means the extra functionality for *zoom* and *my favorites* won't be there. The zoom in and out and smooth wheel functions will not work as nice. So does 30 MB of hard drive space justify use of the *my favorites* keys and the *zoom* features? I do not know. I thought the multimedia keys were a nice thought, but I really like the mute key and the calculator button. I'm not too hip on the *log off* and *sleep* buttons, but that's just me. And the soft palm rest is a nice touch (pun intended).

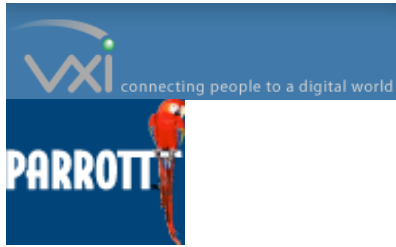
I really would like to know when I'm in UPPER CASE THOUGH! Or maybe I can just kill the *caps lock* with a freeware app...it seems to be only ever needed really when wanting to shout in print or in filling out really long registration codes for software. Caps Locks are so "typewriter era".

Ted Landau also asks some great questions in his review we linked to above, such as Wireless vs. Bluetooth and he goes a little deeper into the *my favorites* keys and other programmable key options.



Parrott TalkPro Headset: VXI USB 7.0

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



VXI Corporation, Inc.
One Front Street.
Rollinsford, NH 03869.
1-603-742-2888 or 1-800-742-8588
FAX: 603-742-5065

<http://www.vxicorp.com>

Released: August 23, 2003 Certified for use with Mac Speech iListen April 4, 2006.

\$99 USD

Requirements: Mac or Windows system with audio or USB ports.

Comes with: headset and 2-way USB Pod (\$60 USD if purchased separately).

Strengths: Noise cancellation. Gentex microphone. 2-year warranty. Cross-platform. Incredibly comfortable headset. Extra-long cable.

Weaknesses: Even with the batteries in the Parrott Translator, the Skype feedback made it sound “muffled”.

FAQs: http://www.vxicorp.com/support/faq_parrott.asp

Other Reviews: Also discussed in the Mac ReviewCast, episode #60 at <http://www.macreviewcast.com>

The Parrott TalkPro has a Gentex mic <http://www.derry.gentexcorp.com/> that is specially designed for speech recognition accuracy and audio fidelity. This is why it is offered by MacSpeech for use with iListen.

The unit I have also has a flexible mic boom that rotates/swivels 270 degrees, so it can go to the right or left. The headband can be ratcheted to fit whatever head size we might have (within reason).

The monaural (one ear) TalkPro uses noise cancellation and VXI Translator technology that handles the band response (older sound cards built prior to 2000 apparently cause problems that the Translator corrects). It also adjusts for flat frequency response, limiting high frequency output, high immunity breath pops and low distortion at all levels. By the way, it also has a jack for adding external speakers on the Translator.



Costas Papadopolous wrote a paper on microphone enhancement for speech recognition posted at http://www.vxicorp.com/support/faq_parrott_translator.asp

The headset is designed for non-Mac systems with the typical green and orange audio jacks and soundcards. The unit sells by itself for \$94 USD. It also has a battery compartment for systems that can't handle the mic alone and need a power boost from 2 AA batteries. If you have a computer built later than 2000, than the Parrot TalkPro Express can save you about \$20 USD, without the Translator.

I first tried using the mic without the 2-way USB Pod in the iMac and found that I could hear fine, but the mic wasn't recognized as being an Inline mic. I suppose I could have added batteries to find out if the mic needed the signal boosted, but instead, I used the included TalkPro 2-way USB Pod, which worked just fine, thank you very much. The 2-way USB Pod by itself sells for \$60 USD and converts the links from the audio plugs to USB input. It has an LED on it that is always on so that helps with not needing a set of batteries for the mic because it uses the USB power. It does not require being plugged into a Powered USB hub to operate either.

Now I can use the TalkPro as a Skype phone. I can also use it with iListen. Both of these units came in a package from MacSpeech that I purchased. If you want superior audio quality for use with iListen, the VXI Corporation puts out some good stuff.

Petito 512 MB Flash Drive for USB 2.0

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



ATP, Inc.
PO Box 641651
San Jose, CA 95164-1651
1-408-732-5000 or 1-877-ATP-6900

flash@atpinc.com

<http://www.atpinc.com>

http://flash.atpinc.com/products/view.php?product_id=1232

Released: March 7, 2006

\$35 USD for the 256MB version; \$60 USD for the 512MB version and \$90 for the 1GB version.

Requirements: Powered USB 2.0 port.

Strengths: Cross-platform. 2-year warranty. Solid-state SIP technology. Waterproof. Dust proof. ESD proof. Shock-resistant. 10-year data retention. Hot-pluggable.

Weaknesses: No security app for the Mac.

Other Reviews: We discussed this in the Mac ReviewCast, episode #60 at

<http://www.macreviewcast.com>

Interested in a super-small pinky-drive? The Petito weighs in at a not-so-hefty 8 grams and is 9.4 mm thick by 17.6 wide and only 36.3 mm tall (1.63 inches). This is a true “thumb drive”! The warranty period is two years and the insertion rate is 100,000 cycles. It can come in dark blue, gold, silver or titanium. Since it is solid-state, it is shock resistant (physically) as well as ESD (electrostatic discharge), dust and water-proof.

There are two drive partitions. One is the size of a floppy (1.44 MB) containing the software for non-Mac security password protection software and the 11-page user guide, and the other is the rest of the drive.

Data transfer is 30 MB per second on a 2.0 port.

Now, if you don't mind a feminine approach to technology by using this drive as jewelry, than ATP may have found a niche market. However, the rest of us may think that size does matter and really can see that smaller is better when it comes to a footprint for external memory. Or we might just decide that this is a 007 gadget. Remember when the 64 MB units cost over \$100 USD? Now a 1 GB Petito flash drive unit costs \$129 USD. All that is missing is the necklace/lanyard and the gift-box. Tell me these don't look elegant!

I really need the larger capacity *macho* unit though. Maybe I'll go for the ATP 4 GB Tough Drive?

<http://peripherals.consumerelectronicsnet.com/articles/viewarticle.jsp?id=36223>



Snowball USB Mic – Retro Professional Quality

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Blue Microphones
5706 Corsa Avenue
Suite 102
Westlake Village, CA 91362-4057
1-818-879-5200
FAX: 1-818- 879-7258
support@bluemic.com
<http://www.bluemic.com>

Released: January 20, 2005.
\$160 USD.

Requirements: Mac OS X USB or Windows XP Home or Pro; 1.0 or 2.0;
64 MB RAM.

FAQs: http://www.bluemic.com/snowball_faq.php

Comes with: 10-page “Userguide”, Heavy-duty chrome foldable tripod
and extra-long USB cable.

Firmware Update: <http://www.bluemic.com/update.php>

Forum: <http://www.bluemic.com/index.php?name=PNphpBB2>

Blue U: <http://bluemic-university.com/>

Strengths: No drivers. USB universal (cross-platform) for either USB 1.0
or 2.0. Three-option switch – Cardioid or Omnidirectional. Excellent audio.
Great Studio mic.

Weaknesses: Cannot be used with an analog mixer. “Settings” are not
labeled, except as “1 2 3”. Not for use with iListen, because of volume
control issues. Muffled (softened voice) with Skype.

Other reviews:

<http://www.macobserver.com/columns/rantsandraves/2005/20050722.shtml>

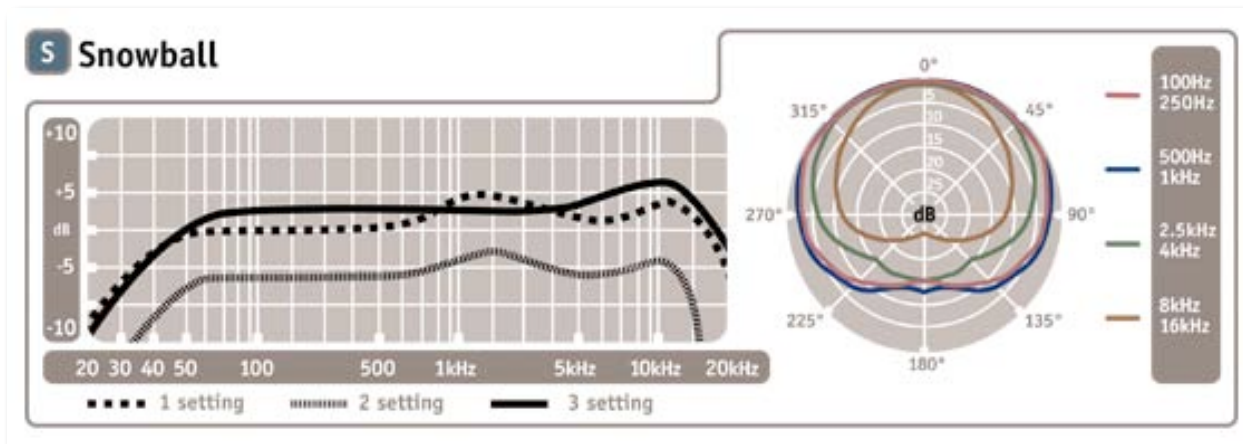
[Review Your Rig](#)

<http://www.macreviewcast.com/podcasts/MacReviewCast57.mp3> (Jeff
Powell, 2/3rds through the Podcast).

The Snowball Mic, retro-looking though it be, is a condenser mic originally made in Latvia, but my box says this Snowball was made in China. It uses power from an “unpowered” USB port, so batteries are not needed. When it is plugged in, the red LED located above the metal-mesh screen and “Blue” logo is on.



If you look at the chart here, you will see that the output for this mic is optimized for use at 44.1 kHz.



So what's with the Cardioid option? Does that mean the mic has a heart? No, it means it hears right in front of it instead of picking up sound from everywhere else. There are two cardioid “settings” (1 and 2 on the slide switch). The first is intended for “robust vocal” sound with the second using a filter of -10dB to handle loud noises and offering an “open, airy” sound. Think of these as “voice” positions.

The omnidirectional option (“setting” 3) could be considered the “instrumental” position, since it does the 360-degree grab-surround-sound thing by combining both the “capsules” (two internal mics) into one function.

Because this is a USB mic, there is a latency period that needs to be taken into account when recording. Me, I didn't notice.

The mic looks and weighs (maybe a bit more) about the size of a softball (not a baseball). The interior construction is excellent. There is a big flat metal plate (brass?) attached to a wire that sits behind the two mics that gives the Snowball that heavy solid feel. It does have an electric wire soldered to it. The grids, front and back, are metal, while the case is ABS plastic. In other words, the Snowball is well-constructed and was built to last. The swivel base rotates forward and back about 45 degrees and has a screw-base that is standards-compliant for mic stands.

The solid, well-built chromed tripod (not iPod) stand looks like something that George Jetson (The Jetsons) would enjoy with its Blue-logo rounded “please caress me” palm-sized base. The 3 legs fold up and the stem can telescope up another 2 inches. It weighs about as much as the mic.

From the *Snowball* website:

Software Setups

How to get audio from my Snowball with...

Garage Band

1. Go to *Preferences > Audio* and select the Blue mic as the input device (it will only show up when *The Snowball* is plugged in).
2. Create a vocal track and select the Blue mic as the input device for that track.
3. You may need to adjust *the Snowball's* input level in the control panel if you experience any distortion (crackling).

Logic 7

1. Open the Audio and MIDI setup program in your *Apps > Utilities* folder.
2. Create an Aggregate Audio Source (Audio menu - open Aggregate device editor).
3. Add the devices you want to use to the aggregate device (Built in audio and Blue mic).
4. Change the audio device in Logic's audio preferences from Default to Aggregate.

Sonar

1. Select "USB Audio Device" (1, in, 0 out) from an audio track.
2. From within that subcategory, there are 3 selections: Left USB Audio Device, Right USB Audio Device, and Stereo USB Audio Device.
3. Select Left or Right for mono audio tracks.
4. Press "R" to arm the track for recording.
5. Roll disk.

Hardware Platforms

Macintosh Setup Procedure

1. Open *Apple menu > SYSTEM PREFERENCES*.
2. Double-click **SOUND** preference file.
3. Click **INPUT** tab.
4. Double-click **BLUE USB BALL MIC** under **CHOOSE A DEVICE FOR SOUND INPUT** dialog box.
5. Set input volume to the appropriate level. 6. Exit **SYSTEM PREFERENCES**.

Windows Setup Procedure

1. Under **START MENU** open **SOUNDS AND AUDIO DEVICES** control panel.
2. Select **AUDIO** tab; insure **BLUE BALL USB MIC** is selected as **DEFAULT DEVICE**.
3. Click on **VOLUME**; select appropriate volume level.
4. Exit control panel.

To test this device, I had to load iLife, update Garageband and run it through its paces. I discovered that for voice, setting 1 is optimal. Settings 2 and 3 make the volume less and voice softer. I also was able to prove to myself that this is not a mic for use with iListen, because of the volume control issue. I have a soft-spoken voice, so I had to crank up the volume in Preferences and on the desktop. With iListen, I could never get it to show "green" as iListen monitored the mic for compatibility.

This is most definitely a studio mic and no doubt works best as a unit designed for podcasting, radio or a sound studio. It is being advertised as a "perfect for Podcasting" mic as a professional mic. And we tried it on the *Mac ReviewCast* over Skype. Not as clear as using the old AVID headset. It tended to sound a bit muffled. So the "Ideal for Podcasting" moniker really means if you are in a studio environment, sitting around a table or have the Snowball between 1 and 5 inches from your mouth, it would work fine.

For the studio environment the "Ringer" accessory might be better than the heavy-duty foldable tripod". It costs round \$50.



“All of our shockmounts and pop filters are composed of solid brass and individually hand-built and soldered. Crafted with the same attention to detail that goes into all of our mics, these accessories will last a lifetime.

Designed for our complete line of spherical microphones, The Ringer is a vintage-style suspension mount designed to isolate the microphone body from low-frequency energy when mounted on a mic stand. The Ringer also accommodates virtually any microphone with a standard thread mount.”

“Low frequency” would be things like rumbling, or bumping the desk and other “background” noise that may creep into the recording.

To get this device, you have to go to retailers who specialize in audio equipment. The website provides a link to local dealers, worldwide and does not offer online shopping from the bluemic.com website at this time.

You really ought to go check out the Blue University posted above. Learn about the science of sound.

The Snowball would be a perfect mic for “talking heads” environments. And it works great with Garageband.

Shareware

doc_Babad's Software Review Overview - An Introduction

July 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 10.4.6.

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This month I continue sharing my software, shareware and freeware finds with you, not focusing on any particular genre. 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 than what appears interesting, amusing, or heavens forbid, useful.

As you will note, I found a few winners and one shareware product that with a bit of improvement could join the winners' circle.

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., Disc Cover]. Indeed, where I agree with the developers' description and other comments or those of other reviewers of the product, I unabashedly use them in this column. If not, you'll *read* about it, *load and clear!*

A bit of hocus-pocus — Two categories of software can easily be defined depending on their price or lack thereof. This category is usually called Freeware/donationware compared to other software offerings. It is difficult to distinguish beet commercial software and shareware based either on price or function so I tend to use the MacUpdate designation for labeling shareware vs. commercial products. The distinction is blurred since many larger software developers are now offering time limited full feature products as trials. If you have a better set of criteria let me Know.

Items Reviewed

AppZapper 1.5 (Shareware \$13)— Clear out unused applications and their blow-bys Readers of macCompanion get a discount for the product) AppZapper's aim is to make uninstalling applications on OS X as easy as it is to install them. It surely meets the developers' goal. **5.0 macC's**

Disc Cover 1.0.8 (Commercial Product \$40.00)— Create great disc covers and CD/DVD inserts and booklets using fine templates or your own design skills. At last some real competition for disclabel and Discus – making CD/DVD labels and inserts in now even easier. Disc Cover offers a clean interface for arranging text and graphics, this time within the confined space of CD/DVD disc labels, jewel case covers and booklets, along with odd items like mini CDs/DVDs and business card style CDs/DVDs. Yes you can also do VHS labels). **4.5 macC's**

Folder Icon X 3.0 (Shareware \$15) – There’s still no more excuse for generic or just solid colored icons. The product very easy to use, fast and stable and has a comfortable user interface. The product is easy to use, fast and stable with a comfortable user interface. **3.5 macC’s**

Screenshots Preference Pane 1.0 (Shareware \$2) — Don’t get PNG’d, you have a choice. You Apple shortcut screen shots can result in any graphic format you choose-JPEG anyone. The product very easy to use, fast and accurate! In addition, I don’t have to learn a new shortcut. **5.0 macC’s**

Sidenote 1.7 (Freeware) — Sidenote is another fine option for note taking, one with a stickies type paradigm. It works effectively, within its “one-level of notes” limitations as described by its developer 3.5 macC’s

doc_Babad

AppZapper 1.5.2 and 1.6 — You tried it out, spurned it so then burn it

reviewed by Harry Babad

Developers: Brian Ball and Austin Sarnier

Support: support@appzapper.com

Publisher's Website: <http://appzapper.com/>

Manufacturers List Price \$13 [USD], Family Pac \$18, Educational discount available.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later. Power PC and Universal Binary

Released: June 15th, 2006

Audience: All user levels It's localized in Japanese, Italian, French, Polish, Chinese, German and more.

Strength — AppZapper's aim is to make uninstalling applications on OS X as easy as it is to install them. It surely meets the developers' goal.

Weakness — None that I could find.

Discount Coupon for AppZapper: MACCOMPANION

Note: It's on AppZapper.com site, click the redeem coupon button. It's NOT directly on the PayPal page you get when you click buy. Cost to you \$9.00

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.6.

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

Introduction

I've now got a tool that is both simple and elegant. Therefore, other alternative will have to wait, perhaps until I change to Leopard. The only problem with the product is that its too easy to toss stuff I haven't used for a year or two that I may get over eager, like I did with Spring Cleaning on very late evening. However, that's another story. I've also got backups for all my software (including license Information) on Shareware CDs so I can go back to an abandoned product should I need to. Its called belt-and-suspenders protection.

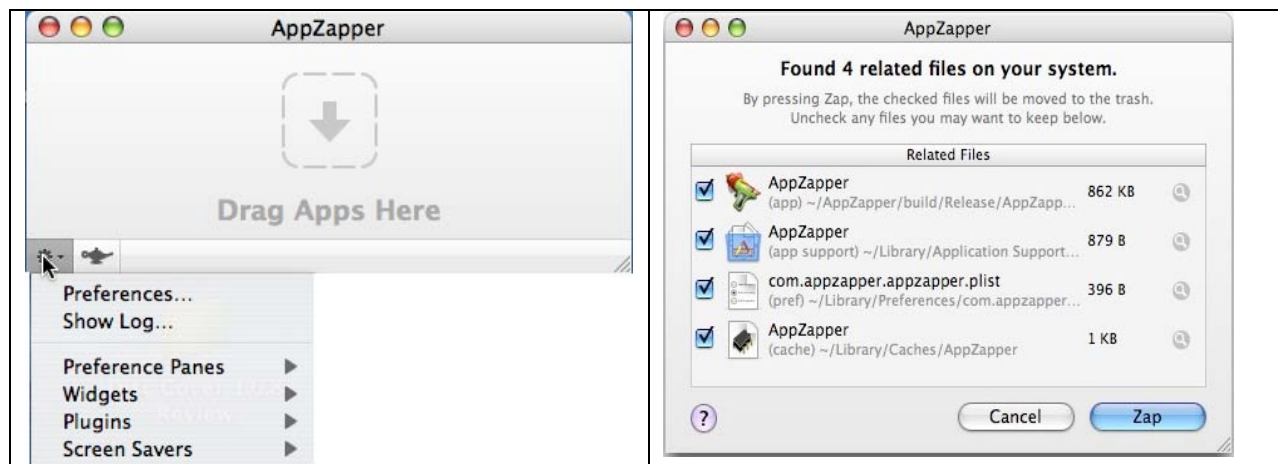
Everybody loves the drag and drop nature of OS X. Drag an app into your applications folder, and it's installed. You'd think it would be that easy to delete an app — just a matter of dragging it to the trash. No, it's not. Applications install preferences, caches, and other *application* support files throughout your computer that take up space and generate clutter. Leaving the behind, although not reported to put your system at risk, wastes disk space. Adding to the fun of playing hide and seek with the places installer stuff hides in, is the variable of whether you've chosen to install application for single user (you) or all users. Finding these files, especially with Spotlight, and the deleting these by hand every time you delete an application is a royal pain.

AppZapper is for people who want to confidently try new apps while knowing they can uninstall them easily. Drag one or more unwanted apps onto AppZapper and watch as it finds all the extra files and lets you delete them with a single click. Put simply, AppZapper is the uninstaller Apple forgot.



Working With AppZapper

The installation is as simple as most OS X apps. Open the .dmg file and it will be mounted. Once mounted, copy AppZapper application to Applications folder and then run the program.

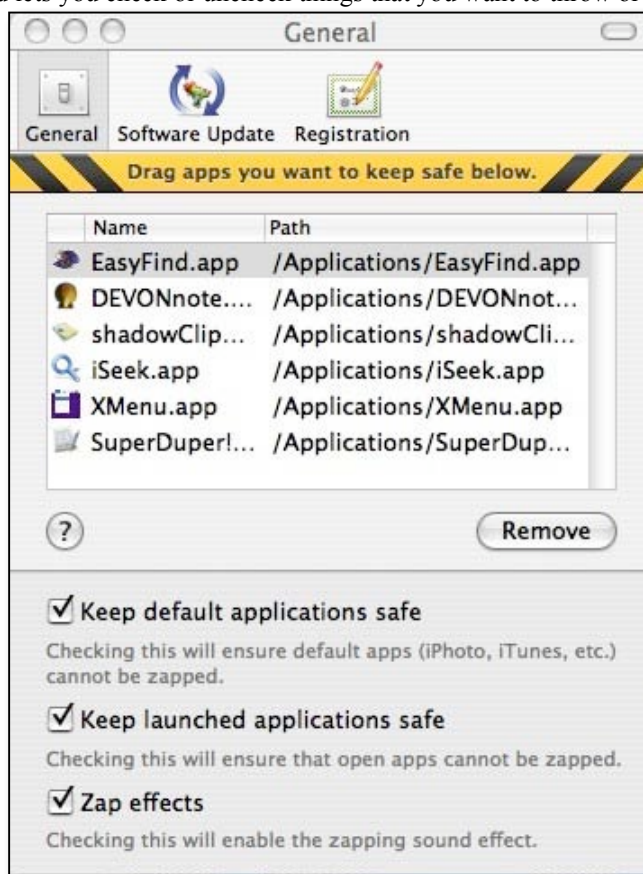


Austin Sarner and Brian Ball have really concentrated on making the ‘zapping’ of applications simple. The result is that the AppZapper interface relies on the Mac interface of dragging unwanted items like an application, into the Trash. I usually trash items by control clicking (right clicking with a 3-button mouse). With AppZapper drag and drop the application into the delete window. Once you drag the application to AppZapper, it shows you what it found, where it was found (file path), the file size, and lets you check or uncheck things that you want to throw or save. The software has a Spotlight button next to each found item that can show you that file in its Finder location.

In addition, a gear menu at the bottom of the delete window allows the user to select or deselect certain items such as preferences, caches, or support files automatically for deletion, something I’ve used to kill corrupted preference files; it takes less mousing around.

The software’s preferences allow you to keep default apps (like iTunes, iPhoto) safe. [This can be unchecked if you want to do so.] It also allows you to set those apps you would like to be protected at all times, to prevent accidental ‘zaps’. You can also configure AppZapper to keep it’s paws off some critical apps for a “just in case” approach. [I strongly suggest you protect your various security applications such as Norton Antivirus.] The presence of a log, not easy to read, allows following what AppZapper has done. I did not use this but many of you who want to delve deeper will find that feature useful.

My Test Results



CandyBar — I did some detailed checking before and after when deleting CandyBar icon tool application delete, with both EasyFind and Spotlight. Both needed some actions on my part of get to the narrowly focused details I needed. The results of checking tuned up too many files (e.g., my software review notes, recipe documents that contained the term candy bar, and those few related to install ion of the software. To keep things simple, I temporarily stuffed by CandyBar review file, deleting the unstuffed folder, and then re-ran EasyFind ending up with a more manageable list.

Spotlight dredged up more unrelated files than I knew existed, so I again abandoned using it for testing. When using EasyFind, on this deletion, I first had to zip my review comments and toss the uncompressed folder. This allowed me a list of manageable size with which to make before and after comparisons. Great! Click ‘Zap’ — the only indication that it worked was that the window showing to be deleted items closed and a, *blat-zap* (a Sci-Fi Bronx cheer) sound (easily disabled from the Preferences).

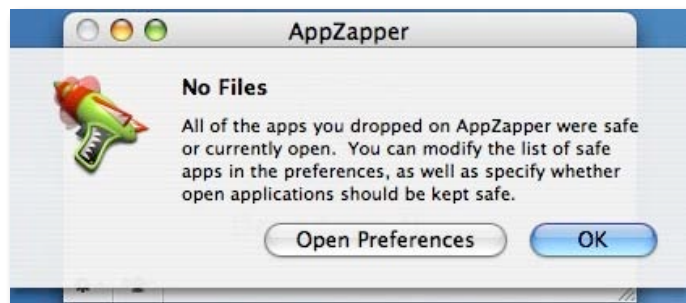
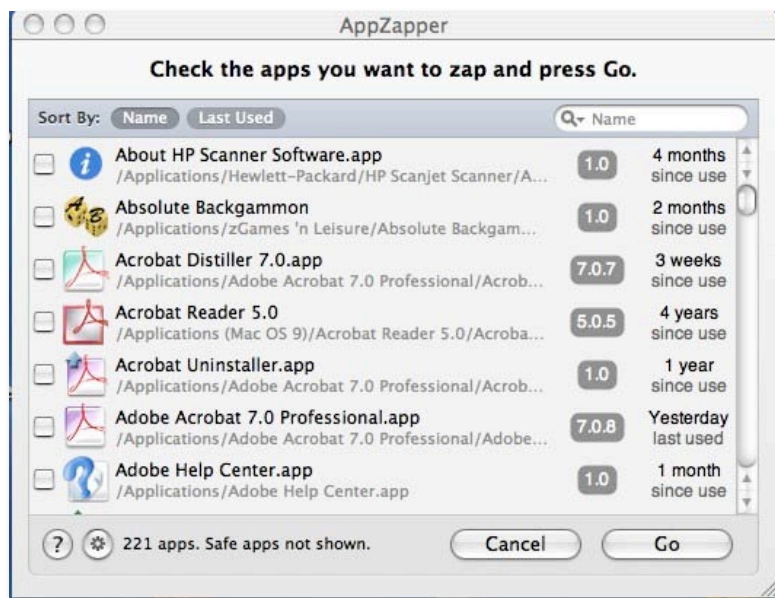
More Test Results — I zapped four more applications I’d previously reviewed and then either found wanting or didn’t plan to use. It performed perfectly each time. If you had put alias’ to the deleted application in your dock or in alternate file access and launch tools such as Unsanity’s FruitMenu (now 3.6) <http://www.unsanity.com/haxies/fruitmenu> or Devon Technologies X-menu (now 1.8) <http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/freeware/index.html>, these are not deleted. After all, you created them, not the software installation process. Finding these remaining odd and ends, using the freeware program EasyFind is a few seconds work. Drag the found results into the trash and the last “virtual” remains of an application are gone.

The version I tested, according the publisher’s web site, adds a new way to view and zap applications called ZapGenie. This allows users to browse their collection of apps, search them and sort them by the last time used — this, according to the developer, gives users an easy way to find applications that are no longer being used so they can be deleted. I found there was an amazing amount of stuff I’d not used for 3-11 years on my hard disk. A few checkmarks, and a click - they were gone, zapped.

Although I did not need to use it, the well-illustrated help files are form those who do need assistance.

Safety features — The application won’t let you remove core programs needed by the operating system, or the Apple iApplication programs. Open programs you are currently using are safe, as are those you designate as protected. This protects your ‘safe list’ set of programs from accidental deletion.

However, these safety features can be turned off in the AppZapper preference pane if you need to delete an application or part of an application that is protected. Then turn the protection back on after you deleted and likely reinstalled the malfunctioning application. I suggest you protect all of your security software, such as anti-virus protection. Who know what your grandkids are going to do.



Initial Concerns and Purposeful Limitations

Documents Associated with A Deleted Application — AppZapper is NOT designed to delete the entire document created by an application. If the data in such documents is no longer valuable, search for their extensions with EasyFind or Spotlight and delete them. If they are valuable, then find some way to export the data before you zap the application that created them. A little common sense helps when deleting things such as previously heavily used applications. AppZapper is a great tool but no one yet has created a program that can read you mind and thus do what they think it should. Perhaps this will be a feature of a future of a *Jobsintosh* computer.

Path to Protected Items - In the preference pane, I could not find a way to see the path to the items I'd protected. Adding the 'spotlight link, such as those found in the delete details window would be helpful.]

Shared Application Support Files — I did wonder, for example that the product does about files shared by number of application made by the same vendor. For example, BeLight Software installs in the root level application support folder, a variety of tools that it share between Business Card Composer [BCC] and Disc Cover. When I indeed deleted BCC, I was pleased to see that the shared folders the developer created as application support (stored in the library folder) were not affected or deleted. Since during the deletion process, I saved the preferences file. When I reinstalled BCC my password was still intact as were my other preference selections.

Dragging Application Alias' — The software does not work when dragging an alias and will not remove a .dmg package. It's not supposed to do the latter.

Deleting Files using the AppZapper Application Icon — No this doesn't work, to delete you must open AppZapper, and drag the target application to into the deletion window.

Deinstall Microsoft Word (some day) — The only test I needed to do, but avoided out of sheer cowardice was deleting MS Word 2004. This my most used application, behaved badly, quitting 2-3 time whenever I write any document that's 3-5 pages or longer. It leaves work files around and never recovers anything when it spontaneously quits.

I know Microsoft offers a deinstall application with Office 2004, but the one time I tried it, and reinstalled word along with its updaters, it didn't cure the problem. I hesitate to do this since I'd so customized MSW both toolbars and shortcuts that others can't easily use it.

Conclusions

The vast amount of freeware and shareware for the Mac [e.g., on MacUpdate.com, Version Tracker.com] is so great that the average user cannot be blamed for wanting to try out almost everything. If you review software for macCompanion or your favorite MUG, you get more than your fair share. [I'm up to 110 reviews plus all sorts of software toys that I've not gotten to writing up.

The application is fast, easy and stable. The user interface as well as the window appearance of the application is so clean, simple that it's stunning.

AppZapper is an essential tool for the addicted shareware/freeware experimenter who wants the peace of mind of a clean uninstall. Although its not freeware which some stingy folks on the Internet have complained about, it's a bargain at \$13.00.

I rate this product **5.0 macCs**.

P.S.

Performing a “A Philosophical Experiment Of course, there is this philosophical issue of uninstalling the AppZapper (not that I would ever want to). The question then is that is there a meta-AppZapper? Or to put it another way, who will zap the Zapper? As an experiment, I actually dragged AppZapper to the AppZapper window. Thankfully, it told me that this application was kept safe in my Preferences. If I turned that Preference off and tried to zap AppZapper, it appeared (and sounded *zap*) like it had been zapped. But a quick look at my Applications folder showed that it had not, until I closed the AppZapper. And it was gone. The AppZapper had zapped itself. ”

Jim Dalrymple of Macworld

<http://www.macworld.com/news/2006/05/22/appzapper/index.php?pf=1>

P.P.S.

AppZapper uses a combination of receipts, proprietary search technology and bundle identifier cross checking among other things.

P.P.P.S.

AppZapper is now available as version 1.6. Brian Ball commented that the changes in the new version include:

AppZapper 1.6 introduces Sparkle based updating for easily downloading and installing updates right within the AppZapper app. Staying up to date with the latest additions and tweaks to AppZapper is now just a few clicks away!

In addition to numerous adjustments and fixes, 1.6 also launches a new multi QuickZap™ feature, for grabbing multiple preference panes, widgets, and plugins to zap at once.

I have not tested these new features, but encourage anyone interested in this fine application to download it and do so.

– Thanks Austin!

Disc Cover 1.0.8 - Create great disc covers and CD/DVD inserts and booklets using fine templates or your own design skills

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: BeLight Software

Support: <http://www.belightsoft.com/products/disccover/supportform.php>

Publisher's Website: <http://www.belightsoft.com/products/disccover/overview.php>

List Price: Physical Product \$40 plus P & H (\$35 as Download), with Academic Discount \$24 USD



Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later. Of course, you need a printer, but you knew that. Runs natively on both Power PC and Universal Binary.

Released: March 29, 2006 **Download Size:** 23.5 MB

Audience: All user levels

Strength — Disc Cover offers a clean interface for arranging text and graphics, this time within the confined space of CD/DVD disc labels, jewel case covers and booklets, along with odd items like mini CDs/DVDs and business card style CDs/DVDs. Yes you can also do VHS labels).



Weakness — Nothing significant that I could find.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.6.

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Introduction

Over the last few years, I have been meeting my needs for CD/DVD labels, Jewel case covers and booklets with a variety of tools. I used downloaded (old) templates in AppleWorks 6.2.9 and MS Word X 2004, Software MacKiev's PrintShop 2 for desk publishing http://www.mackiev.com/print_shop.html and dedicated software such as Magic Mouse Productions Discuss 3.07 <http://www.magicmouse.com>, and Smile on My Face's Disclabel 3.3 <http://www.smileonmymac.com/disclabel/index.html>.

The lack of control when using templates limited my ability to be creative. In addition, some of the AppleWorks templates degraded under OS X 10.4 Tiger – they started printing artifacts I could not remove. In MS Word. I strangely had problems with resolution (fuzzy) of scanned images (200-300 dpi) on an HP ScanJet 8250 when printed on my HP Color LaserJet 3500, something that needed to be seen to be believed. [No don't ask, I haven't figured it out, I must be violating the Heisenberg uncertainty principal.] Therefore, I have mostly given up on using templates in AppleWorks and only use MS Word to create highly formatted booklets.

A lack of design flexibility, complexity and control in the otherwise effective PrintShop 2, despite its easy to learn interface, lead me to search on. I did make a number of very pretty labels with PrintShop 2. If your needs include the PrintShop 2's other features, it is a good package to start with.

Discuss 3.07 is a good product, easy to use and quite flexible, but the lack of masks to shape in image at time frustrated me. Perhaps this will be added to Discus release. (Discus 4L, a beta copy, is available as a final test before its release). As soon as version 4.0 is available, you'll read about my tests in macCompanion.

Before the release of Disc Cover, for folks who did not want or could not use the more complex Adobe creative Suite's software, was Disclabel 3.3. Although I respect its capabilities, I am frustrated by some of the aspects of its interface. Indeed although image masks, something I desire, were available, I could not controllably use them to crop my imported images.

Dealing With Design Complexity — Many of the CD labels I make combine elements of text in circle text mode near the CD edge, and standard added rectangular text fields in various locations containing additional contents information. The more obvious spiral text arrangements are artsy but awfully hard to read so I avoid them.

My CD covers also contain two or more images that parallel the spindle hole or overlap it in a collage. That sound busier then it looks folks, so no panic over my design abilities. Working with several images is relatively straight forward, but, for me, juggling several different style text elements is pure nightmare. So my search continues.

Okay doc, get to the point, still seeking a perfect labeling tool or at one better suited to my abilities, I asked to review BeLight Software's Disk Cover. Indeed, having reviewed other BeLight products such as Mail Factory and their fine Business Card Composer 3.1.2, so I looked forward to receiving the product. This was all the more important because I have over four-dozen competed (recorded) projects that need CD/DVD labels and case inserts and covers. IO Know I'm just a type "A" personality and information junkie.

Working With Disc Cover

Installing the software was simple and Mac-like. Now you ready to work, immediately, its almost intuitive. There are two ways to create a design in Disc Cover — from scratch, or by using one of the readymade templates.

When you open Disc Cover, you are greeted with the assistant window, which is a collection of ready-to-use templates with attractive designs. Much to my delight, I could turn that feature off in the application's preferences. I also was pleased that the interface for Disc Cover was very similar to that in Business card Composer, which I was already familiar.

The templates themselves, or tweaked by the clip art images, can be used as is, or as starting points for further modification. Note the product is seamlessly integrated with iLife and the other iApplications, but since I don't use these, I'll share other reviewer's assessment about this feature later in the review.



I worked with the physical product so had the opportunity to install all the clipart. [Fun stuff, but since I've already have a large and growing clipart collection, the extra images were added just to feed my curiosity.]

I was able to rapidly replicate a handful of particularly challenging labels that I originally created in other programs from the artwork I'd saved. Pasting images was easy, as was cropping them to get the desired effect. Typing in text manually was a little harder. I type badly and can't spell. In addition, I did need a bit of trial and error to learn the extensive set of text features. I could have cheated — used cut and paste the text... well just a time or two. You can easily experiment with styles and graphic tools. Disc Cover will fairly serve to bring you more and more design ideas. If you're not feeling creative, Disc Cover offers many of pre-designed templates you use as is or can customize.

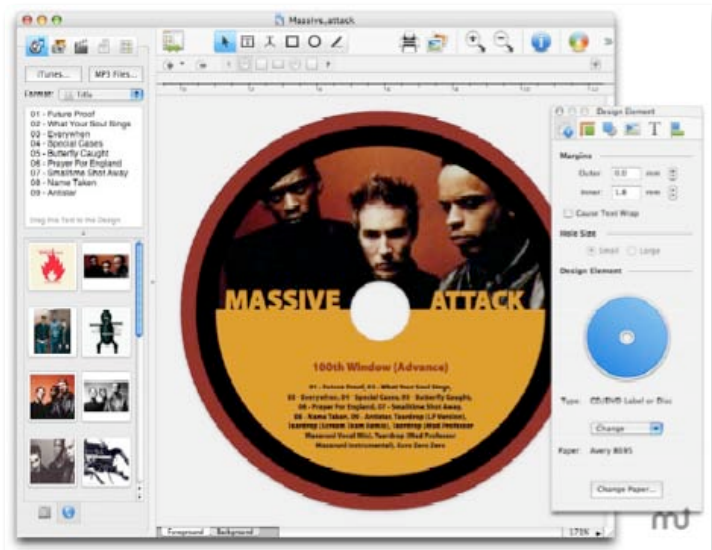
I focused my efforts, avoiding the templates, to create my own designs from scratch. As noted in my **addendum**, Disc Cover comes with plenty of easy to use tools to make this an easy task.

For an elegant concise description of working with the product check out Mark Starlin's description in *MacReview* which I'll in part quote. <http://www.macreview.com/productive/printpublishing/disccover/disccoverreview.html>

"In brief, the main work area of Disc Cover is called the design canvas. It is a sizeable window with tool buttons on the top and a "source panel" on the right side. (see Massive Attack Image)

Five buttons at the top left-hand side of the source panel allow you to access content for your design. The Music button takes you to your iTunes library; the Photo button takes you to your iPhoto library; the Video button takes you to your Movies folder; the Data and Files button allows you to select any file on your Mac; and the Clipart button gives you access to the included Disc Cover clipart.

"The top right hand side of the design canvas has buttons for basic drawing tools, text tools, and access to the font, color, and *inspector* window. The Inspector window is where you select design elements — CD, booklet, insert, etc. — and access control for modifying elements of your design."

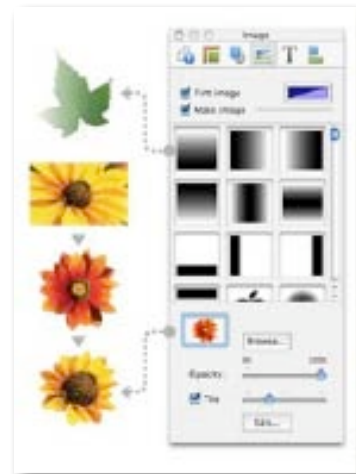


The design canvas was a distinct improvement to the quirky *Edit* (text and images) window in disclabel. Accessing many of the tools appear as floating windows when you access their buttons. They seldom got in my way since I have a 22" screen, but I could image that they might irritate some folks with smaller screen.

Where are the parts hidden? — I was a bit concerned when only the application installed in my *applications* folder, but the readme file gave me its location as well as that for the other items installed. Kudos to the BeLight team: The Disc Cover programmer(s), the author(s) of technical and help instructions! The Disc Cover folder is stored in (My Macintosh HD > Library > Application. In addition, if for some unknown reason you want to remove the program from your hard disk, that information is also available in the readme file.

If you've finally put together a CD or DVD of essays, concert records or even macC reviews, Disc Cover gives the ability to make give the package a class look. Since I don't use the Apple iApplications I'm quoting Bambi Hambi on the Disc Cover how deals with them.

"Oh it works, according to Bambi Hambi at for your GarageBand concoction, or CD or DVD of family photos, iPhoto slideshows. It's actually easy. Just as iMovie and iDVD bring in photos, movies, and music from the iLife applications, Disc Cover let you select from iLife, too; playlists from iTunes, albums from iPhoto, even DVD projects." Mac-360, Wednesday, March 8, 2006.



http://www.mac360.com/index.php/mac360/comments/need_cd_dvd_or_jewel_box_labels_and_covers/

The software includes a wealth of controls for modifying images and text. It includes a large library of photographs and clipart. I was specifically delighted with Disc Cover's ability to, transfer the design I created for a CD or DVD to create jewel case labels making a matched complete set.

Since I'm into masks and tweaking images, I found the image editing tools surprisingly easy to use. Remember, I don't work with graphics very often except for the kinds of projects Disc Cover is best suited for.



Rather than clutter up the front end of this review, *who me*, I've appended and annotated the rich features provided by its developer.

Discomforts

Documentation - The only documentation included with Disc Cover is the Help file available from the Help menu. Although well written and reasonably illustrated the help menu covers the various aspects of the application adequately. It however is, as noted by Mark Starling, a hassle to use. You always have to go back to the index to access another page for information. I agree with Mark that a PDF version would be a major addition.

Rotating Circle Text — Having to go to the inspector window and diddle with the small, or should I say tiny, circle text dingus is a pain. My favorite means of rotating objects, be the he way text can be rotated as found in Yellow Mug Software's Folder Brander <http://www.yellowmug.com/folderbrander>. It uses sliders to rotate and otherwise tweak text alignment. Alternately, just add a way to enlarge the rotation dingus so it is more easily used, especially for fine-tuning.

Rotating an Image— Having to go to the inspector window > geometry to rotate text is straightforward by the slider it too responsive so I'd like to be able to type in the angle of rotation. Like any well behaved Macintosh program, multiple undoes goes a long way to correcting my mistakes.



If Wishes were horses...

The one feature of Discus I seldom use but love to play with is the ability to pain and stamp on a label. Playing with paintbrushes, in an avant-guard way, and touching up my masterpieces with stamps, as the foundation for a label is pure unfettered joy! It reminds me of playing with my kids using KidPix then a Broderbund product and now greatly enhance and Mac-inized by Software MacKiev. http://www.mackiev.com/kid_pix.html. Just a hint, one more designs option for those of us who like toys but don't play games.

Conclusions and Asides

Of the three programs that I've mention in the review introduction, (Discus, Disc Cover, and Disclabel), this program has the most comfortable interface and using its rich features, with a little bit of practice, become almost intuitive.

The software is very intuitive to use for creating uniquely individual labels and covers. With Disc Cover, decorating your music and video jewel and DVD cases becomes an almost routine operation. Why the hedge (almost)? Well unless your willing to simply choose among the vast number of options provide with the package, you rally should think about your design. The mechanics of creating the labels and inserts with Disc Cove have become so much easier.

To paraphrase words found on review sites, the software is "slick and intuitive." It easy and so that I'm like to us it to first, despite, for now, keeping the other software installed on my hard disk. After all, I've not given Discus 4 a chance to compete, perhaps next month. But then I'm of the school that believes 'why chose only one software package' when in a ideal world perfect software likely Is found in a mix of the best of 2 packages in any given genre. I rate this product **4.5 macCs**.

Note: As a believer in a Gaussian distribution I hardly ever these days give any product a five score – that would mean that the product is not only best in its class today at least, but has little room for improvement. Enough philosophy doc_Babad

P.S.

If you need a bit of help working with images or fonts or want to find places where such can be found, for or not free, check out the BeLight Software articles entitled *Express yourself with Fonts at:*

<http://www.belightsoft.com/products/resources/fonts.php> and

Images and Illustrations

<http://www.belightsoft.com/products/resources/clipart.php>

Addenda

MAJOR DISC COVER PROGRAM FEATURES (with my italicized comments.)



Designing your Labels and Inserts

Don't Hunt for Graphics on the Internet until you check the 23,000+ high quality images (about 900 — in the download edition).

Use the 70+ professionally designed templates for Music, Photos and Data Backup collections. Use the wide variety of professionally made designs that are just fine for a quick start. (I prefer to design my own, but I haven't given those provided a fair chance since there are so many of them.

Adjust you input data, as well as using commercial label selections, lets you specify the way the text and art work appears on the media labels or storage case inserts.

Use the Software's Import and Export Features

iLife integration lets to preview and use data (text and images) from iTunes, iPhoto, and iDVD libraries. — I don't know about the apple applications since I do not yet use them, but using the finder to access my collections and to grab inform from my Music and DVD databases worked fine.

Import data (Artist, Track Titles, etc.) from music CDs, Finder and tab-delimited text files. — I use Toast and could grab what I needed from that application.

Imported data auto-fits the design. — I wasn't paying much attention, but since I didn't have to reformat the imported data, it must work.

Insert images in many supported formats - JPEG, TIFF, PDF, GIF, EPS and more. — Despite owning and actively using Beholder Mesa Dynamic's <http://www.mesadynamics.com/beholder.htm> and quickly accessing Google images from my menubar using Ambrosia Software's iSeek 1.1 <http://www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/iseek/> I found the direct web image images search useful.

Export results to JPEG, PDF and TIFF for further modification or as archives.

Working with Graphics is Straightforward

You are provided 100+ unique masks and other style options to use custom images as image masks. — I only tested out the simplest designs for this review, since although attractive (I say so) my needs were not Illustrator-level graphically sophisticated.

Smart guides help to align objects in respect to each other. — Its like the alignment features in Apple Works and FileMaker Pro, click click-click and images and text hang together just they way you envision them.

Background and Foreground layers help to create and edit advanced designs. — *I guess so, things just worked.*

Use a variety of smart shapes with controllable behavior. — Unless this means the masks, I did not test this feature since I couldn't figure out its purpose. Perhaps in a week or three I'll have time to play some more.

Crop, tint, tile, control transparency and rotate images. — *This works like a charm.*

Make use of adjustable shadows. — Well someday. I know they exist but the effects didn't enhance my test projects.

Selecting objects with the opportunity to resize and rotate them as a single item. — *Okay, again one test, which I reversed, showed that I could do this thing.*

Search images by keywords in the embedded clipart collection or Internet. — An untested feature except for finding an image or two in the library provided by the publisher.

Apply the Advanced Text Editing Feature that Become Everyday Design Norms

Use circle text mode to design CDs. — *Obviously*

Flow text from column to column. - Great for inserting cuts on a music album label.

Use the option to line up text into columns. — Its all a part of making text on a label or inset took typographically more professional.

Control line, character spacing and paragraph indentation. — Works effectively, its not MSWord or PageMaker, but shouldn't be.

Create a text list with a variety of bullets. — *Yes, but I like indented text better.*

Control transparency of the text, rotate and fill text blocks with colors. — I didn't take the time to test this since I was busy first duplicating previously designed labels and the working off a few of my backlog projects.

Printing Capabilities

An extensive collection of label paper formats from the most popular manufacturers: Avery, Neato, Fellows, Memorex and others. — I use Avery and Fellows labels because I can get them in bulk; *all my paper stock labels were supported including full cover CDs.*

It is easy to create custom layouts for unsupported paper stock. — So far all my need have been met from the provided stock label templates, but having the feature, just in case, is good to know.

Supports direct-on-CD printing for most printers, a list that is being updated in an ongoing manner. — *Don't own one of these, maybe after I get more consulting.*

Printer calibration allows fine-tuning the printer for accurate results. — I had nor way of testing this. The labels and inserts I printed on my HP color LaserJet 3500 looked great.

Cut marks can be printed, helpful for printing on non-perforated paper. — That's for me, when printing either jewel case inserts or booklets. Using 32 pound, 98 brightness papers save me lots of money.

Print to the limit of your hardware's imaging abilities, on most ink jet or laser printers. — *Hmm?*

Next month, perhaps Discus 4 — doc.

Folder Icon X 3.0 — There's still no more excuse for generic or just solid colored icons

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: Narattaphol (Naratt) Charoenphandhu

naratt@naratt.com

<http://www.naratt.com/FolderIconX.html>

Released: April 29, 2006

\$15 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later. For some advance icon making tasks QuickTime 6.4 or later is needed.



- An Icon Exporter Plug-in for Photoshop is also available.

Audience: All user levels

Strength — The product very easy to use, fast and stable with a comfortable interface.



Weakness — In Tiger, I could not implement drag-and-drop Icon creation and lack of an undo feature significantly slows down new users.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.6.

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Introduction

I enjoy customizing the icons on my folder both by adding a few words or an interesting or appropriate image. To add words to my folders I use FolderBrander 2.0.1, which I reviewed [as Version 1.3] in February 2005 macC. To create image rich folders I have used both CandyBar 2.5.1 [macC March 2006] and Icon Compo 3.2 [macC March 2005] that is now at version 3.3.1

I have long been convinced that commercial sources of icons were too eclectic and the free icons that are posted on MacUpdate or not terribly interesting.

Folder Icon X is an application for those who love custom icons. It is a graphic utility for creating custom folder icons out of one or two images: Simply gather up a fold or drive or disk media image, an image-containing icon (logo) and in several click you created a custom icon to suit any customization needs.



Publisher's Description

Folder Icon X is a Mac OS X-native application that provides a simple way to create a customized folder, disk, and document icons by placing another icon on a standard plain icon. It fully supports "drag & drop" features and can load any icons from any files, *.icns* documents and folders. All generated icons are 32-bit Mac OS X-compatible icons, which can be viewed on both Classic Mac OS and Mac OS X. This software now supports 9 languages. The product is flexible, having powerful import and export function tuned to allow you to maximize the resources you can use for icon creation.

Working With Folder Icon X

Installing the software is simple and very Mac-like. Opening the application give you the only window you need to create logo-containing icons. I played with the software creating a half dozen or two needed folder icons that contained logos. Before we get too deeply into the review, please note that the developers uses the term logo to described the image you are adding to a folder or disk icon to dedifferentiate it from a standard generic image.

I found some of the features described in the publisher's description lacking, most importantly drop and drag as a means for quickly creating icons that contained logo did not work on my system. Instead, using "select folder icon" and then "Select logo icon" I used Finder open dialog windows to navigate to my stored icons collections. This seems to me the long way around.



In addition to drop and drag refusing to work on my Tiger OS X 10.4.6 based system my scattered disk organization made finding the *objects* I wanted to use as a logo (e.g., I needed to get the Target Stores logo to create a "ToDo" target folder.)

After accommodating to these peculiarities, I had very little trouble getting used to Folder Icon X's interface, but then I'd already worked extensively both CandyBar and IconCompo. For fun, and just to see if it worked, I also created folders that open and closed when feeding them new content.

The ability to Manually Crop Images, from within the application for use in creating logos was useful. In other application, I had to do that, when importing a picture or part of a photo, in GraphicConverter. The manually Crop command is located on the Edit menu. It allows users to crop the logo icon manually.



However, more seriously, such capability does not allow you to match the shape of non-generic folders. Such alignment of a logo parallel to the upper or lower folder shape is very difficult. Skewing an icon to match the orientation of a non-generic folder is a trial and error operation. Unlike IconCompo, there is no way to simply rotate the logo, in place, to align it up with a chosen folder.

A problem of hard disk helter skelter - My testing was made complicated by the organization of my hard drive. Since I've not been as diligent in organizing the custom icons I've created, as with my recipe collection, I have such icons scattered in folders all over my hard drive. In order to make effective use of the product's interface from within the application, I (finally) had to organize my scattered collections of downloaded icons. It's a little like collecting your photographs into one place when starting to use iPhoto. [A little house keeping never hurts] Finding all those scattered icons was easy. I avoided Spotlight and used [EasyFind](#) [macC December, 2005] instead, dragging everything into a new Icons Collections Folder.

Once you've created icons saving them in a centralized location, for future use, is easy. The software allows you to organize your icons using the products of Template menu. According to Narratt, *your icon, before you apply it to the selected folder icon, are stored in the Template folder*. I did not find this factoid immediately useful but the idea that icons created can be kept and stored in an added centralized location seemed to make sense. Saving such creations for future use was an additional benefit of the product. [Of course, for the items I like, I promptly moved them to my new Icons collection folder, so there!] Therefore, I saved all the icons I played with – the good, the bad and the ugly as templates. Note, the default template folder is a folder named "Template" and is located in the same folder as Folder Icon X application.

To aid in finder based icon creation, the product also installs a "Folder Icon X.plugin" that is a Mac OS X-compatible [contextual menu module](#). This helps users to manage icons of files and folder from Finder. "Folder Icon X.plugin" allows users to more readily perform a variety of tasks to facilitate the use of the product. For instance, it can import icons from images located in the Finder by using Finder's contextual menus, using a plugin called the Folder IconX.plugin. Read the details of the product's other extensive capabilities on Naratt's website.

Other Package Features

You can import pictures, and save them as icons or .icns documents). Since doing so is not obvious, the author provides both instruction and an example that can be downloaded. In addition, you can import pictures to create a logo icon, a small icon on a plain icon (PICT-to-icon). I know you can do this in the Finder (Get Info) by pasting an image into, but that has lead to my creating small or weird looking products.

Create icons with that open and close when adding to them. Folder Icon X provides an easy way to add the dropping variant, i.e. icon of the opening status, to the folder icon. Just create your folder icon on the main window as usual, and then select your dropping variant from the Add Dropping Variant command of the Icon menu. The resulting Icon has two statuses, closing and opening.

Importing icons from images located in Finder collection by using Finder's contextual menus, is also straight forward, using a plugin called the Folder IconX.plugin.



Review Limitations — As noted in the review I did not check out some of the advanced features of this product.

Discomforts

Drop and Drag Implementation — Drop and drag of an item from a folder does not seem to work; only by finding the file in the finder from within the application can a logo be easily added. Indeed dropping a con of a folder into the empty window seem to cause the software to ting I was adding a logo.

Undo or Not to Undo — If there was an Undo feature, I couldn't find, so every time I made a mistake or a bad design choice, I had to start over – very, very irritating!

No Built-in Help Function or Attached Manual - What help there is only available on the developers website and that help could not be accessed from within the application.

No Ability to Rotate Logos – Unlike other products I've played with such as IconCompo (see illustration), Folder Icon X does not allow one to rotate a logo, where it is. That was frustrating because my favorite folder is not squared up in the generic manner that is usual to the Macintosh GUI interface. I got close using the distortion tool, but had to live of course with a distorted aligned logo.



Lack of Icon Sources - Unlike the CandyBar, the application only provides a set of generic folders to use as starting points for adding logos to folders. It also provides a few standard graphics, sound and text icons to use as logos. Other starting points, beyond folder include nice disk and media images and some documents related logo icons to use as starting points. These are accessed by control clicking in the main software window. See the PS for this review for sources of free icons you can use for either the icon frame (folder, disk) or logo,

Conclusions

There are many feature of this feature rich product that I admire, but for now the discomforts: lack of help files, no undo feature, and poor drop and drag interface will limit my icon creation and manipulation, to Folder Brander and IconCompo. This holds until the next revision of Folder Icon X, when I'll be standing in line to test it again.

I rate this product **3.5 macCs**.

Post Script

For chasing icons both for folders and for logos, I suggest.

<http://lightsphere.com/kicons/>

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

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

<http://www.iconfactory.com/ware.asp>

<http://www.iconsplus.com/> <http://lightsphere.com/kicons/>

<http://www.webcom.com/html/icons.shtml>

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

[Icons For PC and MAC Fo#10B6611](#)

[IconsPLUS - Comic Book.#10B66C0](#)

Screenshots Preference Pane 1.0 — Don't get PNG'd, you have a choice

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: Steven W. Disbrow

Publisher: EGO Systems, Inc.

info@ego-systems.com

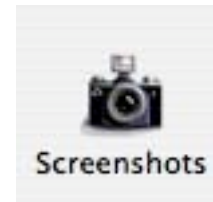
<http://www.ego-systems.com/Products/screenshotsprefpane.html>

\$2 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later, Power PC and Universal Binary –
The application can only be used in Tiger.

Audience: All user levels

Manual: A very well written and complete readme files walks the user through all aspects of the product.



Strength — The product very easy to use, fast and accurate! In addition, I don't have to learn a new shortcut.



Weakness — None that I've found.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.6.

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

Introduction

Many other third party applications, gives one the ability to set the graphics format for a screen shot. Neither the screen capture shortcuts in Tiger or in Apple's Grab application allow such selection. I've reviewed Screenshot Plus 1.1.6, now 1.3, (May 2005 macC), and SnapNDrag 1.5.2, now 2.0.1, (February 2005 macC) which do, but I'd like a more automatic means to do so – I'm since lazy. I am also licensed for Ambrosia Software's Snapz Pro, now version 2.0.2. I found that this, the gold standard for screen capture, is too powerful (and a bit complex) for my routine needs.

Therefore, I use the familiar Command-Shift 4 to grab all or a part of a static image for use in reviews or decorating recipes. The default for such screen-captured images is PNG, a lossless image format that replaced the older graphics Interface format [GIF] format. There are no simple preference panes to change this format, changing image format takes using an additional application.

When taking pictures of a screen with a pulled down menu, I use Apple's *Grab* application working with the *timed screen grab* function. *Grab* is hidden in the *Applications folder > Utilities > Grab*. Once again a limitation, the default format for grab is a TIFF graphic file. Your captured images can later be converted to JPEG by using Apple's Preview application. [For that task, I prefer to use GraphicConverter not only for cropping captured images, but also to translate images into my preferred graphics format.]

Are you getting the message? Getting to the image format, if it's not PNG or TIFF with Apple provided tools, takes more than one-step or switching to third party software. What I needed for day-to-day use, was a one step, set it and forget it, means of capturing screen shots with Apples shortcuts, to JPEG format. On special occasions creating a PDF is also a necessity, especially for use in emails. Therefore when I found Screenshots Preference Pane 1.0 mentioned in an article by Dan Frakes of Macworld fame, I grabbed the chance to review it. [I know mother, I promised no puns before breakfast.]

Developer Description

“The Macintosh has always had the ability to take high-quality screenshots without the need of any additional third-party software. However, Apple has long controlled the format of the resulting picture, along with where it ends up on disk. This has meant that, when Apple decided to change any of these settings, there wasn't much that could be done about it.

“Fortunately, Apple has finally given us a way, in the form of a *.plist* file, to change these settings. Unfortunately, taking advantage of this has meant a trip to the terminal every time you wanted to alter either setting.

“Our Screenshots Preference Pane was written to make these Terminal sessions unnecessary. It allows you to change both the file format of your screenshots as well as where they end up on disk, with just a few clicks of the mouse.”

Working With Screenshots Preference Pane

“To install the Screenshots Preference Pane, just open the disk image it came on, and double-click the "Screenshots.prefPane" file. The System Preferences utility will start and you will be asked if you want to install the new Preference Pane for all users or just yourself. Pick one or the other and click *OK*.

“If you are installing a new version of the Screenshots Preference Pane, be sure to first quit the System Preferences application if it is open. Double-click the new version and you will be asked if you want to replace the existing version.

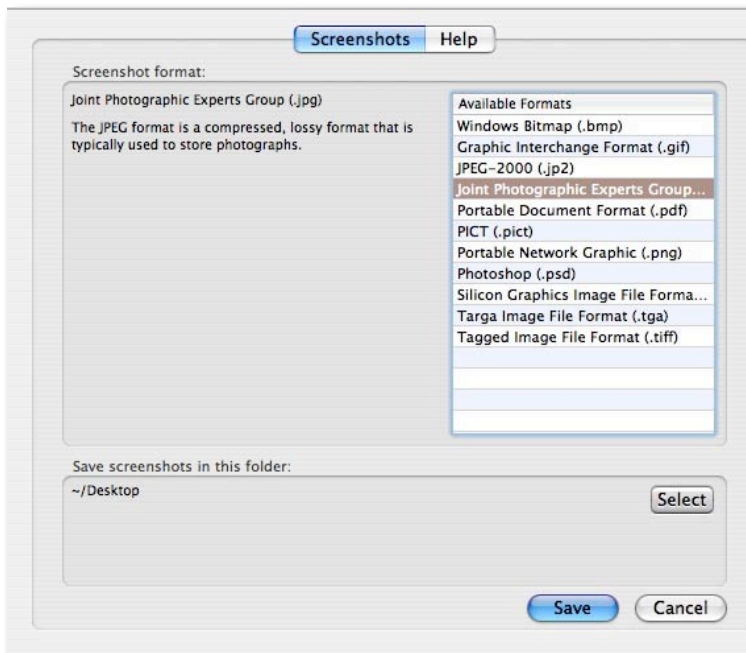
“After the Preference Pane is copied, System Preferences will open it and you'll see a screen similar to this (if you see the Help screen instead, simply click the "Screenshots" tab.)

“Select the format, in the preference pane, in which you'll most likely want screen shots captured. Screenshots Preference Pane also lets you change the default location to which screenshots are saved. Click the Select button and then navigate to your preferred folder.” (Since I'm working on reviews when I capture images, I use the default setting, which is my desktop.

That's all folks! You're done, unless you want to switch default image type formats.

Oh, most unusually, the software provides both complete deinstall (why should I do that?) and adding new graphics file formats to the application. Its all-available, common knowledge, when you “readme”.

Image Format Expandability – “The file formats available to Mac OS X's built-in screenshot capability rely on the file formats that QuickTime can save. The eleven file formats shown in the "Available Formats" list are the ones that we have been able to test and verify. Future versions of QuickTime may provide access to more file formats (or perhaps we simply missed one or two), so the Screenshots Preference Pane was designed to be easily modifiable to take advantage of any new formats.”



To read more about screen shots and their setting read Dan Frakes' Mac Gems article in Macworld.
<http://www.macworld.com/weblogs/macgems/2005/09/tigerscreenshots/index.php>

Discomforts — A Single Gripe

When reaching the screen where I can select the image output format, the choices are accurately named, followed by the extension (or if you like abbreviation) of that format's name. Now I didn't know that JPEG means Joint Photographic Expert Group or TIFF means Tagged Image Format; I didn't. hmm!

Conclusions

What can I say, the software works, flawlessly. Installation is a no-brainer and using the new default image capture format is as easy as command-shift 4, or 3 or... whatever. I rate this product **5.0 macCs**.

Wishes - Now Steven, if you could only patch *Grab*.

Sidenote 1.7 — Sidenote is another fine option for note taking, one with a stickies type paradigm

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: Pierre Châtel

admin@chatelp.org

<http://www.chatelp.org/?s=Sidenote>

Released: May 30, 2005

Freeware

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.8 or later.

Audience: All user levels with stable but simple easy to access note taking needs



Strength — It works effectively, within its “one-level of notes” limitations as described by its developer.

Weakness — In the absence of a manual, many of the products great features are hidden from the user.



The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.6.

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

The Developer’s Notes

“Sidenote tries to catch the "Stickies" spirit but in the form of a multi-document drawer that will hide in the corner of your screen (left or right). You can use it to take all your daily notes, include images and easily modify text color and font. Sidenote will automatically expand so that you will be able to drag into it any picture, text clipping or PDF file from the finder or your favorite application. [The application] supports notes auto-saving, so you'll never have to save your notes. Sidenote will handle that for you. You can also print them or export them to rtf.”

Introduction

As macC readers are well aware, I have a thing for notepad, ToDo lists and just plain tidbits gathering applications. I have previously reviewed and still use DEVONnote 1.9 as my mainstay. Since I dump all sorts of information in hieratical sets of nested folders, something that Sidenote is not designed to do. Among the products previous reviewed that serve functions that parallel Sidenote are:

Name – Version Function (Sort of)	New Version	Date macC Review
2Remember 1.0.3 – [NFR (see note)]	1.0.3	2004_08
Apimac Note Pad 1.6.6 [3.5 macC's]- Notepad check list utility; now called <i>New Notepad</i>	3.0	2005_07
ARTIS Simple List 1.2.1 [NFR]	1.4	2004_08
Check Off 2.4.2 and 3.0b1 – List Maker NFR but used by me for a year or so prior to Tiger]	3.6	2004_08
Deep Notes 1.2.1 [4.5 macCs] – A notepad utility that uses an outliner metaphor	1.33.0	2005_01
DEVONnote 1.8 [4.5 macC's] - A database engine text and graphics content oriented personal information manager	1.9	2006_03
Docket 1.1– Notepad check list utility [NFR]	1.3	2004_08
HandyList 2.0 [NFR] – Notepad check list utility	2.0	2004_08
iNotePad 2.0 [4.5 macC's]	2.3.2	2004_11
iTasks 1.4 [NFR] – Notepad check list utility	1.5	2004_08
MyNOTES 1.1.1 - Note taking program	1.1.1	2006-05
NoteTaker 1.9.6- Note taking program	1.9.11	2005_07
Points 1.1 [NFR]	NA	
Slacker ToDo List 2.1.6 [Flawed] – Notepad check list utility	2.1.7	2004_08
ToDo X 1.9.1 [4.5 macC's] – Notepad check list utility	2.0	2004_08
Notes: NFR – <i>No formally rated but would have rated 3.5-4.5 macC's if I had done so.</i>		

When I saw this application on the MacUpdate site, the developer's description caught my fancy, so this review. From the beginning, working with this product I was in a love-hate relationship.

Some of the product's features worked very well but others didn't perform, as I would have expected. I also soon became very annoyed with the open draw that popped open when ever my cursor strayed to the side it was located. Since the Sidenote window floats over everything, work I was doing was covered up. More specifics of my test results are detailed below.

The Developer's Notes

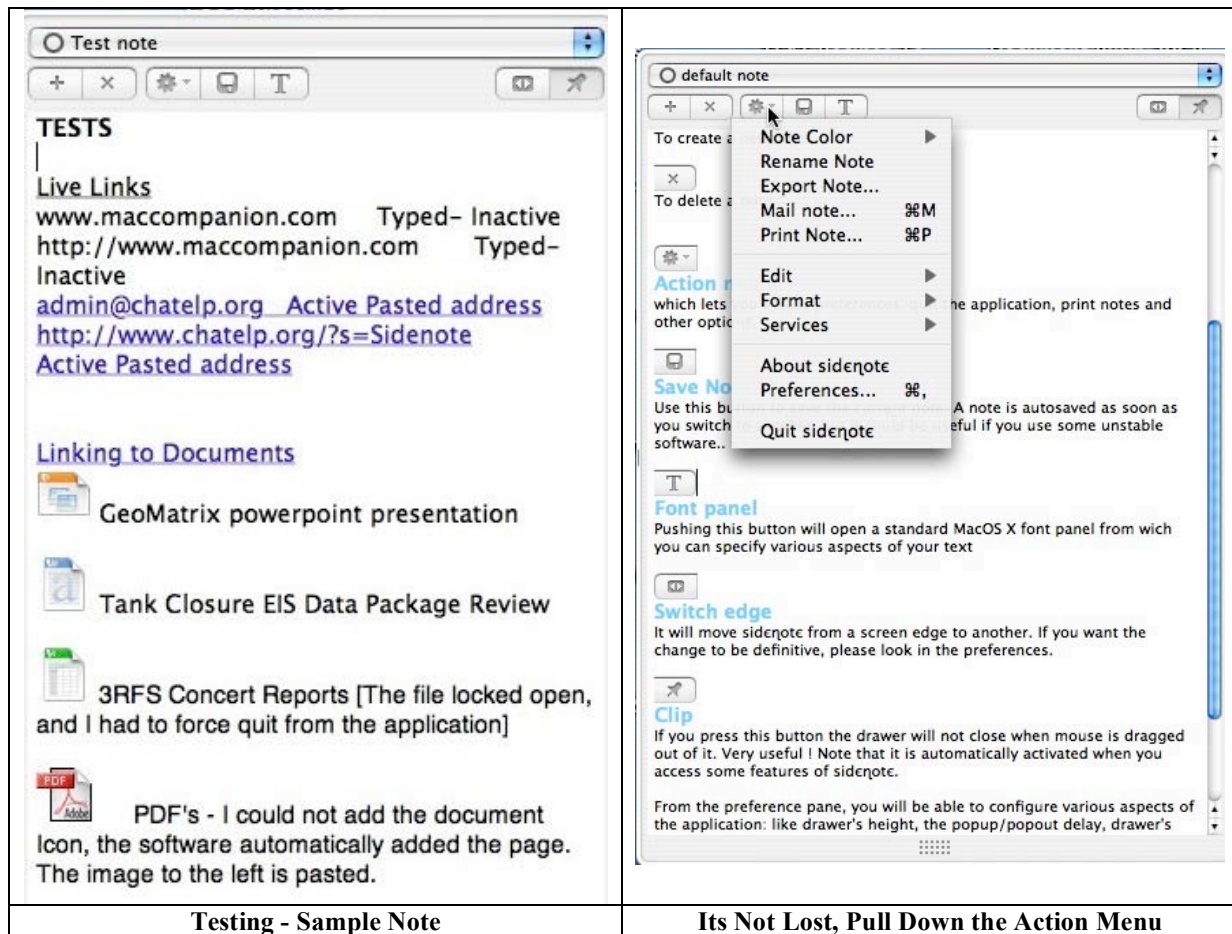
“Sidenote tries to catch the "Stickies" spirit but in the form of a multi-document drawer that will hide in the corner of your screen (left or right). You can use it to take all your daily notes, include images and easily modify text color and font. Sidenote will automatically expand so that you will be able to drag into it any picture, text clipping or PDF file from the finder or your favorite application. Supporting notes auto-saving, (so) you'll never have to save your notes. Sidenote will handle that for you. You can also print them or export them to rtf.”

Working With Sidenote

Installation of the product was easy. After a few clicks I had Sidenote installed and ready to use. It appeared as a white vertical line on the left hand side of my screen. Moving my cursor to the edge of the screen where Sidenote was located opened the notepad so the product was ready to use. The times I wanted the notepad to remain open (keep the drawer open in the developers parlance) I could click the *tack* icon in Sidenotes menu and I was free to move to other application to facilitate copying material into a note. Indeed that is the only way do a spelling check.

Adding text by either drop and drag or pasting from the clipboard to a note was easy. Create a note and start typing. Adding material to a *closed* note was a bit more complex since the note drawer snapped closed when you moved the

cursor outside of it to capture information in another document. Therefore, the sequence of actions in adding to notes is critical. Alternatively tack the note window open, do you thing and then untack it.



Testing - Sample Note

Its Not Lost, Pull Down the Action Menu

Formatting Text - The text features of Sidenote work similarly to those in TextEdit so users should have no problems getting their text notes formatted.

Spell Checking - The only problems I had when entering text was in using the spell checking and correction function which I could not make work reliably. (That's too long a description for this review.) The software did however highlight misspelled words allowing me to correct them manually.

Importing Images - I was able to add images ranging in size from 8 KB to 150 KB to a new note page. I could also, within the image containing note page, label that image by tabbing or using the *enter*-key moving the cursor below the image, and then typing its title or description.

Other Product Foibles

Where Are the Normal Function Commands Hiding? – If you want to print or export a note, or mail it, you need to do that from the *Action* menu. Normally such features are buttons on an applications toolbar, or can be easily added such a toolbar. To rename a note you must select rename from the actions menu, just moving the cursor to the note title will not allow a title change.

A Restricted Emailing Option - The product's 'mail to' option served me not at all since it did not recognize Eudora as my default mail client.

Alphabetizing Notes — It took me a while to figure out how to alphabetize my note. No this is not an automatic function, one has to go to the manage items in the note pull down menu and manually reorder the note.

Window Size Enlargement - Dragging the edge of the page can expand the width of a note. This works like expanding the columns in finder-lists views, easy to do but not intuitive in Sidenote. In order to increase the depth (length) of the note window, you needed to go to preferences.

Dragging a Document into a Note, What Fun — Adding a document to a note, at times, creates an embedded alias. I added some MSW, MS PowerPoint, Excel, and PDF document files to my test notes. All of these document icon drags worked well except for a PDF file. When I clicked on the icon of a word, PowerPoint or excel file, the document opened up. I could label each alias image with its name to identify it, a fine hidden function. Attempting to create an embedded alias for a FileMaker Pro database did not work. Nor did embedding an unopened PDF document as an alias. However, much to my surprise, dragging an unopened PDF file to a note added the file as an opened document. A bit crowded in the more limited notepad space.

Discomforts

At First, I Believed That You Cant Quit From Sidenote – A command Q shortcut does not exist for Sidenote. Quitting obvious part of the software's menu bar. The quit command is hidden in the advanced features pull down menu. (See the illustration above) Before I found the hidden quit item, I had to reboot my computer several times to escape from the application, dumb Harry. Even *forced quit* doesn't work for this application, it does not show up in the *quit* menu. Therefore, if you had added Sidenote to your startup items list, quitting would not have worked.

No Easy Way to Type Active Links – The good and the bad. Unlike all the note pad and ToDo List products I've tested, Sidenote does not create an active link when you type a link or email address. Nor is there any method for doing so after you've typed a link, a feature available in DEVONnote. On the other hand, I discovered, pasting a link into a note creates real linked text.

Location of Notes — But why does it store the notes in an invisible folder called *.sidenote* inside the home folder? EasyFind which sees invisible files, Spotlight doesn't, located the file for me after I read a hint from Anonymous in a Sidenote review comment on MacUpdate.)



Conclusions

The product, albeit useful and free, has an idiosyncratic interface that significant departs from Macintosh norm. That in itself would not trouble me if there had been a help manual that showed where essential features were hidden. For users who are more flexible than I am, this product would indeed work well for capturing a single level of notes that contained images or text. It would also serve to store a group of alias' to documents in a single note, to serve as an index to document in a project. However, there are better products for those who are tidbits and information junkies; don't let free fool you! Depending on your needs either use Sidenote or check out the other products, some of which are freeware (or nearly so) I've listed in the review.

As you are aware, after I complete most of a review, I check out what others have said about the product I've tested. Perhaps most surprising this time around was the finding that most of the reviewers of Sidenote cited in MacUpdate gave the product a *five star* rating. So it was head check time. I could find no review of this product at the usual respected places so as MacAddict and MacWorld, so I can not head check my test results and analysis. Hmm, does that mean we're doing things right here at macCompanion? Despite the flack I'm likely to receive from Sidenote's disciples, I rate this product **3.5 macCs**.

Smart Scroll X 1.3.3 — Scroll with your keyboard and not just your mouse

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

<p>Developer: Marc Moini Support: marc@a911.com http://www.marcmoini.com/sx_en.html</p> <p>Manufacturers List Price: \$15 USD</p> <p>Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.8 or later.</p> <p>Released: 13 Mar 2006 Download Size: 716 KB Audience: All user levels that want more freedom to scroll around documents and web pages</p> <p>Deinstaller to remove the application is provided.</p> <p>Strength — A great way to effortlessly scroll in a document without using the mouse. You can also add, at both ends, double scroll arrows to any scrollbar.</p> <p>Weakness — No support yet for Carbon applications.</p>	 
<p>The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.6.</p>	
<p>Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.</p>	

Introduction

In March of 2005, I reviewed a helpful application (wrapped up as a systems preference) called Smart Scroll, then version 1.1.1. Since many of our readers are new to *macCompanion*, I've decided to share this great tool with you in this mini-review. Aside from the pleasure of having double-headed scroll arrow at every scrollbar position, Smart Scroll X brings new scrolling options and enhancements to Mac OS X with an easier to set preferences interface.

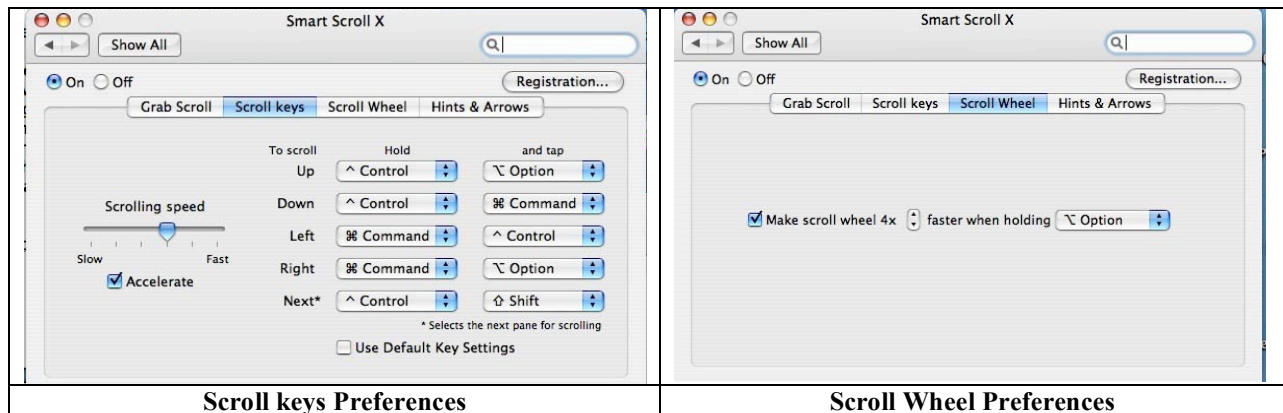
Working With Smart Scroll

Install the software, reboot the computer and go to the smart scroll preference pane. [System Preferences > Smart Scroll] Most of the shortcuts involve designation of either a combination of modifier keys (option, shift, command and control) or the buttons and the scroll wheel on your 3 or more button mouse. In addition, Scroll Keys made possible by this new kind of keyboard shortcut don't involve hitting letter keys (hence avoiding conflicts with existing key combinations). For this review, although it is not an option I prefer, I enabled grab scrolling. After finishing my tests, I turned it off for reasons I explain later in this review.

Marc notes that Scroll Keys are the same across all applications: no need to remember different keys for each app. Because of this, and because your shortcuts are conveniently located in the corner of your keyboard, you can scroll without even having to look. Instead, you hold down a one of the four modifier keys (shift, control, option or command) and you scroll by hitting one of the others. (Some keyboards like my Logitech S-530 Laser Mac, have modifier keys on both sides, letting you scroll with either hand.) Check out the image of the Smart Scroll Preference Pane.

Marc provides clear information on using the Universal Scroll Keys that his software provides, making learning how to use them a no-brainer. Curiously, the help information is provided as an imbedded readme file in the bottom half of its preference pane. You can also download, by printing to PDF, the readme file from Marc's website.

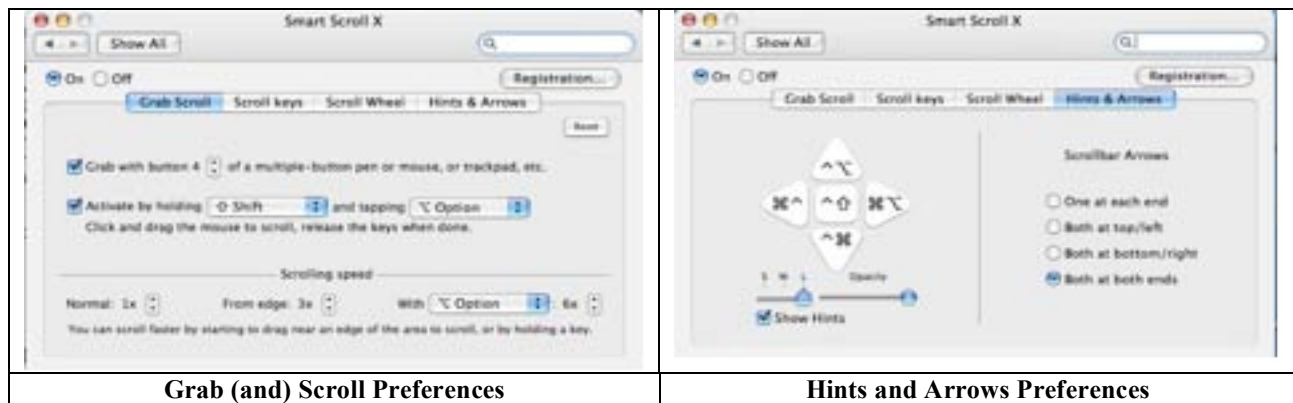
The software allows creating Custom Scroll Keys should that meet your computing style. Marc notes, with Smart Scroll you won't need, or want, to click on window margin arrows anymore. In addition, you do not need to restart applications for these “preferred” changes to take effect.



Other Package Features

Grab and Scroll — For Cocoa applications this lets you scroll by clicking and dragging anywhere in a window. Support for Carbon applications is forthcoming. With a single-button classic Apple mouse, a scroll key lets you turn the cursor into an open hand: hold the first key and tap the second one. To scroll, click and drag with the mouse. *Grab scroll* mode ends when you release the first key (the 2nd key is used to activate grab scroll).

With a multiple-button mouse, you just press one of the buttons (e.g., chose one in the preferences pane) to grab the page and slide it inside its window.



Speedup Scrolling - A "high gear" for your scroll wheel in 3-button mice, so you can have super-fast scrolling when you need it; up to 12X.

Universal Scroll Keys — These allow you to scroll without having to reach for the mouse. Since the scroll keys will be the same in every application, this gives you fast and dependable scrolling right from the keyboard. I personally prefer mousing around, but the feature works since I type poorly. [I do read fast, but the mouse works fine to move me through a document. Therefore, I don't need the extra speed or access enhancement. This feature really is a welcome alternative, for heavy keyboard users. Those include new switchers to the Macintosh from a Wintel platform. It lessens their need to always reach for the mouse. Scroll Keys are a real time saver for anyone who accurately types a lot while creating long documents.

Scroll Next Feature — If a window has two or more scrollable panes, the one under the mouse pointer scrolls. Automatic scroll focusing will select one of the panes for you when you press a Scroll Key to start scrolling. However, chances are it won't be able to guess the correct pane every time. To let you scroll another pane without reaching for the mouse, Smart Scroll X adds a Scroll Next feature: hold down, for example, **control** and hit **shift** to select the next pane in the window for scrolling. The mouse pointer jumps to the selected pane too, providing visual feedback.

A Technical Aside — Smart Scroll X uses Unsanity's Application Enhancer system there are universal scroll keys for scrolling without having to reach for the mouse. Nick Sioan, in a Version Tracker product review, noted that although it is not clear from the Smart Scroll documentation, it is possible to prevent Smart Scroll X from loading for certain apps by adding them to the relevant *Exclude List* in the *Unsanity's Application Enhancer Preference pane*.

Discomforts

Preference Pane Readme — The preference pane has four panels, grab scroll, scroll keys, scroll wheel and hints and arrows. Each has the readme file embedded in the lower half of each window. It would have been easier to use this otherwise great feature if only the information for the individual panel were available when that panel was selected.

Defining and Listing Cocoa Application Examples — There's many a Macintosh user, because the interface is so easy to use, that has no idea what a Cocoa application vs. one that is carbon, or for that matter universal binary. A listing of sample applications in each category would have been helpful. In addition, a way that a user can check, other than by trial and error, which applications they own whether from Microsoft, Adobe, and other major developers.

MS Word and Smart Scroll — I haven't tried Nick Sioan's recommendation, in the previous section, with MS Word because I don't remember whether the double-ended double scroll arrows I use in MSW come from Smart scroll for elsewhere.

Dan Frakes in a Macworld review of Smart Scroll X 1.01b1 (Mac Gems February 1, 2004) noted that "the only downside to Smart Scroll X is that some applications -- such as Microsoft Word -- have built-in keyboard commands that overlap possible scrolling commands. To use Smart Scroll X with one of these applications, you *may* need to choose different settings or change the application's own commands." I have not enabled the grab features in Smart Scroll. I did not however have any conflicts when temporarily using the grab feature when writing this review.

Conclusions

Smart Scroll X brings new, easy to use and powerful scrolling options and enhancements to Mac OS X. Try it: you'll buy it. Set it up and forget it so can you start to scroll effortlessly, without mousing around.

I rate this product **4.5 macCs**.

Software

Accio Dictionaries for iPod

reviewed by Chris Marshall



Ultralingua

<http://www.ultralingua.com>

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

Released: June 15, 2006

\$19.95 USD, \$22.30 CDN, £10.90 GBP, 15.85€ Euro (per dictionary¹)

Audience: iPod Users (Mac and Windows installer)



Strengths: Portable, Easy to Navigate, Good Basic Verbs and Expressions.

Weaknesses: Limited Expressions, Day to Day verbs missing, Individual Words not pronounced, iPod Notes Capacity²

What they say: The Accio iPod dictionary includes up to 8,000 indexed translations with the vocabulary you need for everyday usage and traveling. In addition to the database of common translations, Accio dictionaries for the iPod also include verb conjugation tables for the most commonly used verbs.

What I say: As an English speaking person living in Spain and trying to learn the language I was very keen to review this product. I am used to carrying a pocket dictionary with me wherever I go so I had two key areas that I was keen to review:

- how useful was the content, and
- how practical was it to use.

The content was acceptable. For someone with no knowledge of the language it would be more useful, but as soon as you have grasped the basic phrases the content becomes limited. In my experience the basic phrases are easily absorbed, so the content soon became a little “thin” with respect to the expressions and the verbs. The dictionary though was good, and in reality this is probably going to be your most frequently used section.

I was really impressed with how easy it was to use, and how often I used it. An obvious benefit of a paper dictionary is the ability to flick quickly between pages, but the structure of the application coupled with the *Apple Click Wheel* duplicated this ease of use very well. I would like to have had the individual words pronounced to me as the expressions are, but that isn't a major criticism.

¹ Available in French-English, Spanish-English, German-English, Italian-English, Portuguese-English.

² Not the fault of Ultralingua, but something they need to be aware of. As I had a number of other applications on my iPod Notes I had to remove some to ensure that I got all of this application installed.

By way of a “tip”, when I installed the application, I opted to manually drag the playlist onto my iPod, as that is how I have my iTunes set up. Somewhat naturally, I then went to the playlist in *Music* folder on the iPod and played the expressions. This isn't a good thing to do, as you get a pretty quick run through of the expressions with no interaction. To access the application properly go to *Extras > Notes* and you will find the *Accio* folder.

In summary: I like this product a lot and have used it more than I thought I would. Ultralingua makes good use of the limitations of the iPod, and they play to its strengths really well. As the notes capacity increases on the iPod, this product will get stronger and stronger, and if in due course, you can adapt it to your own preferences for examples and more expressions in preferred topics, then it will be really useful. Basically, I want it to be able to use it throughout my learning experience, not just at the onset of the journey.

Art Explosion: 750,000 Images

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Nova Development

<http://www.novadevelopment.com>

Released: May 13, 2003

\$200 USD

Requirements: PowerPC-based Macs using Mac OS 7.5 or later. Mac OS X 10.2 or later to use the newer image viewer. Windows 95-XP, with a display that can view millions of colors, CD-ROM or DVD-ROM Drive (for the 5-DVD Version).

Strengths: Royalty-free images and fonts. Cross-platform.

Weaknesses: Some discs didn't read.

Reviewed with an iMac G5 with Mac OS X 10.4.6.

Other Reviews: [MacReviewCast Episode #59](#)



While the rest of the world shies away from the printed word and goes PDF all the way, Nova Development continues to put out 1,800 pages of their Image Library. Only now it comes in one volume instead of two. But it still weighs a lot! And the 48 CDs that come in two "CD-ROM Portfolio" volumes weigh about as much as the Catalog. What is different with the latest release is that #48 has more fonts on it, instead of also including software (Canvas 7) that came with the earlier version. This set also uses Extensis Portfolio to view images. Of course, they all open up just fine in Preview as long as the discs are readable. (Discs 1 and 2 were not readable in the box I received.) EPS files automatically converted to PDF for viewing on my machine.

You have a choice. Either draw from scratch or choose from 750,000 images as vector or raster graphics, photos, technical symbols or web graphics. Vectored in EPS, rastered in TIFF, technical graphics in PICT, web-ready in GIF or JPEG and the fonts in either AGFA or Bitstream.

Use the catalog, or peruse the CD Portfolio contents by listed alphabetical category, open the file you want on a CD and drag it where you want it to go or copy/paste in any app.

How valuable is your time? Why reinvent the wheel? This beats downloading or searching the Internet for that one, special image And these are all royalty free. Just make sure they all work out of the box and you will do okay.

Centrify - DirectControl for Macs – Seeing the Forest

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Centrify Corporation

444 Castro St.

Suite 1100

Mountain View, CA 94041

1-650-961-1100

FAX: 1-650-962-0307

info@centrify.com

<http://www.centrify.com>

http://www.centrify.com/directcontrol/mac_os_x.asp

Released: DirectControl Suite for Mac OS X 10.4. Tiger – June 6, 2005
\$50 USD per workstation, \$300 USD per server, \$1,000 USD per System Admin.

Tour: <http://www.centrify.com/directcontrol/directcontourtour.asp>

Requirements: Macs in a heterogeneous environment running under Microsoft Active Directory.



Strengths: Plays nice with Macs in the Enterprise environment.

Weaknesses:

Webcast: <http://macenterprise.org/content/view/189/42/>

Do you have Macs in an Enterprise situation where Microsoft's Active Directory is "in control"? With Centrify's DirectControl, you can "Zone" in.

I had the privilege of being "webinarred" by David Neely (Product Management Director) for a while, as the app was shown to me and how Macs can coexist, nay, shine, in a Windows-centric environment. See, we actually have a "fer-instance" where I work where we could put this app to use, since many of the programmers use portable Macs connected in via Wireless technology, while developing software for a Windows-centric environment.

And I know of other "fer-instances", mostly government-entities, where Centrify would be a boon and a blessing, so the IT-types would feel more comfortable if they knew they could "control" the Mac-faithful in their midst. Centrify has been around for a while, but they made the Mac OS X hook recently, so now the Macs are no longer the "little red-headed stepchild" and there are fewer excuses not to "connect a Mac" into the legacy systems.

So instead of regurgitating what was said, without further ado, here is the spiel (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiel>):

"DirectControl ensures that all of the systems can be administered in the same way using Active Directory," said David McNeely, director of product management, Centrify. "Centrify's DirectControl delivers the full capabilities of Active Directory to Mac OS X Tiger users and empowers IT managers with centralized control."

Centrify DirectControl support for Mac OS X Tiger means that an administrator can, from a single console, manage user access and policies for Mac OS X, Solaris, AIX, HP-UX, Red Hat Linux, SUSE Linux, and Windows systems throughout an enterprise. This centralized management reduces administrative cost and ensures that a consistent security policy is enforced across all users and computers on the network. The Centrify solution is designed to work for versions of Mac OS X, from 10.2 and greater, including the new Mac OS X Tiger. Users experience the same set of policy, authentication and management services for all systems. The users get single sign-on access to Windows, other systems running DirectControl, and Kerberized applications and services.

Using Centrify's unique Zone technology, administrators are able to control which computers a user can log into, based on collections ("Zones") of computers, instead of the typical environment which lets any user with an account in the Active Directory forest access any computer in that forest.

Other solutions for integrating Macintoshes with Active Directory offer only limited integration. DirectControl is unique in its approach to providing enterprise-ready features for IT organizations responsible for managing large number of Mac systems.

- DirectControl's unique Zone technology enables [granular access control](#) and delegated administration that is simply not available in any other solution. You can create collections of Mac systems that can each have their own set of authorized users and administrators. Universities find this feature particularly helpful in setting up security boundaries around Macintosh labs while not exposing Macs in administrative offices to unauthorized access, but any organization with Macs that are "owned" by different departments will find they can centrally manage them without compromising security or flexibility and without stripping current system admins of their privileges.
- No other solution delivers the ease of use and robustness of DirectControl's Group Policy for the Mac. Other centralized management solutions require extensive Active Directory schema extensions or the deployment of additional server infrastructure. DirectControl leverages the native Active Directory interface and open scripting standards, giving IT managers a single tool for policy management. And DirectControl delivers a [wide variety of policies](#) tailored specifically for IT managers who need control over these workstations.

- DirectControl for Mac is part of a comprehensive solution for integrating non-Microsoft systems with Active Directory. Instead of a point solution dedicated strictly to the Mac, you have a single solution for UNIX and Linux systems as well.
- DirectControl consistently enforces password policies across all systems. Other solutions are limited in their ability to enforce periodic password changes, permit changes on all systems, or require passwords to unlock system screensavers.

-

DirectControl provides true central management over UIDs and GIDs, which is critical to ensuring seamless access to shared network resources. Other solutions require you to manage these settings locally on each computer.

End-users will be glad to know that DirectControl brings them the following benefits as well:

- You have only one user ID and one password to remember.
- You can log in to any computer (Macintosh or Windows) that belongs to the management Zones to which you have been assigned, regardless of whether you have ever logged into that system before.
- There is no affect on the way you work; the DirectControl Agent that is installed on your computer seamlessly and transparently connects you to the greater Windows world without affecting any other system components.

If you are a lone Macintosh user or part of a small group within a Windows-based organization, you can easily install DirectControl yourself and work with your system administrator to integrate your system with Active Directory.

Do your “Network Nazi’s” have a crying need to “control” the Macs in their midst? Now they can embrace them instead of shun them. No more excuses!

iListen 1.7 – The Search for the Speech Recognition “Holy Grail” and the Power of Voice!

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



MacSpeech, Inc.
50A Northwestern Drive
Salem, NH 03079
1-504-628-3640
FAX: 1-928-222-7978

chuck.rogers@macspeech.com
<http://www.macspeech.com>

Released: This version, June 2006.

\$150 USD with USB headset, \$179 USD with Pro Express headset, Transcription Solution for \$269 USD or Transcription Solution Professional 4000 for \$549 USD. <http://www.macspeech.com/store/> Also available in Australian/New Zealand English, German, Italian and Spanish.

HelpDesk: <http://macspeech.crmhelp.net/>

For anyone interested in “hands-off computing that would rather speak than type.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later; 512 MB RAM (more the better); high-quality noise-canceling mic. And the ability of being able to speak.

Strengths: Runs in all apps, voice commands for mouse controls and also can learn inside most any apps. Ubinaried.

Weaknesses: None found. Okay, built-in transcription from a file – (was removed because folks figured it could also do interviews and speeches) – Coming in TranscriptionPaks soon. It will be made freely available to current users of Transcription 1.6.8. And perhaps the Corrections function could be smoothed out a little.

Running on an iMac G5 (1.8 GHz) with Mac OS X 10.4.6 Tiger and 1 GB DDR SDRAM) and either an AVID mic or VXI Parrot Pro mic.

Interview – MacVoices: <http://www.macvoices.com/archives/2006/660.html>

Other Reviews: [iListen Rocks!](#) And we discussed it in episode #61 of the Mac ReviewCast at <http://www.macreviewcast.com>

PakPlace: <http://www.115volts.org/pakplace/>

I’ve been beta-testing the latest version of iListen and have been impressed with the behind-the-scenes activities that have made this the best Speech Recognition program for Mac OS X. Its strengths are in three areas that have improved functionality and get us closer to a speech-only way of running a Mac: TalkAnywhere (dictate anywhere keyboard entry is done); CorrectAnywhere (correct mis-recognized words within apps instead of inside iListen outside the apps); MouseAnywhere (mouse controls by mouth).



It's nearest competitor is either Nuance Communication's Dragon Speaking <http://www.nuance.com/naturallyspeaking/> for the PC or Via Voice (originally from IBM) for the Mac <http://www.nuance.com/viavoice/osx/> Naturally Speaking costs, much, much more and is broken out into specialty areas. It has about 25 years worth of development effort in it. Via Voice hasn't been updated in a long, long time.

Good Speech Recognition has been a "Holy Grail" of sorts for the computing industry for nearly 50 years. The MacSpeech Team <http://www.macspeech.com/company/people/> has been fanatical about making it work correctly on the Mac and this version is the best yet!

The key to good functionality is threefold; a good Mac with lots of RAM and the latest version of Mac OS X, a great mic that has noise cancellation, and of course, a voice. If you can't speak, you can't use this app.

The latest mic certification with MacSpeech is VXI's Parrot unit. As much as I'd like to have one mic that "does it all", I've been discovering that certain mics do things for certain functions better than others do. MacSpeech has certified mics from Andrea, Plantronics, Telex and VXI. Apparently the key is that the mics work with USB ports. I have found that using mics through the online port don't exhibit the quality of throughput found by using the USB ports instead. iListen has a "Set up my Microphone" function that tests connectivity, volume, gain, etc. per mic. If the mic doesn't meet the minimum, it says so. For example, I could never get the USB-based Snowball Studio mic to pass muster (tried all 3 switch settings). And the VXI Parrot mic *without* the VXI USB Translator also didn't get past the test.

Other Speech recognition apps over the years have required beefy PCs, lots of RAM and months of training to get them functional. For the last few years, MacSpeech made their app functional within 5 minutes of training iListen to recognize and use your voice. There are a number of training texts to choose from, but Chuck Rogers and company are attempting to improve the algorithms and phoneme functions to use as few as possible phrases to get the most out of iListen and these have been both fun and challenging to beta-test using new profiles. Initial accuracy is 80%, so some keyboarding is still required. It is possible to get up to 96% accuracy by going through a few of the training modules. And there is a process also available for iListen to learn your writing habits for even better accuracy. The documents have to be in either plain text (.txt) or Rich Text Format (RTF) in order for iListen to analyze them, but it works!

Each profile learns one voice. So if you have one machine and multiple users, you only need one license to use the program for various people. However, I think most office environments that want to be productive are going to want to get more than one license instead of dedicating one Mac to be a dictation machine, right?

By the way, iListen works with ScriptPaks. These are app-specific AppleScript macros that the folks at MacSpeech have created to enhance interoperability with iListen and run anywhere from \$10 USD to \$60 USD, depending on sophistication. Of course, if you know AppleScript, you can "roll your own", and there is a keyboard button remembering feature in version 1.7, but I've found that most folks don't either have the time or inclination to go the "remember my keyboard process". MacSpeech made it easy. The most recent releases of ScriptPaks can be seen at <http://www.macspeech.com/store/default.php?cPath=11> And there is a website that discusses ScriptPak sets at: <http://www.115volts.org/pakplace/>

iListen plays nice with Spotlight. It also can generate text from WAV or AIFF audio files. Perhaps with the next release of Mac OS X, Automator will play nicer.

After loading iListen and adding and training a voice profile, the next step is running the program through the floating iListen *Feedback* window. Then it's just a matter of picking one of the buttons for dictating, command or correct spelling. There is a long list of things that can be done to either open, apps, jump to websites or edit text in your favorite text editor.



Dictation requires that you use certain vocabulary like; period, new line, exclamation mark, comma, colon, semi colon, question mark, open parenthesis, close parenthesis, quote, unquote, paragraph, etc. It is intelligent enough to know most of the time when a new sentence begins. It is good practice to *not* look at the screen while dictating, because it will drive you nuts watching your voice go from analog to text, as iListen tries desperately to keep up with you.

Looking at the screen while navigating around, *is* good practice however, when searching, selecting, correcting or switching.

When iListen encounters new words, they can be added by either creating new phonemes or by being spelled out so the next time those words can be recognized using the *What You See* and *What You Say* fields with such “words” as “macCompanion”.

There are such things as text macros that can go up to 32,000 characters in length as a command set, assuming you will want to create your own application-specific commands.

And if something just doesn't jive, you can always say, “ Scratch That” and begin again.

I have noticed that if I use the mouse to go to the dropdown menus, the *Feedback* window becomes inactive until the dropdown menus go away. iListen doesn't want to get confused. The mic in the *Feedback* window won't turn on until it is moused first, so complete “hands off” will need a few more AppleScript functions added, at least to my machine, if I want to navigate my Mac with my hands tied behind my back.

There is an 18-page Tutorial for version 1.7 of iListen that is well written.

As the next generation (our children) becomes more adept at multi-tasking, they will perhaps learn how to operate Macs like either helicopter pilots or hovercraft learn to use all their senses to run those sophisticated machines by using both feet, hands, eyes, ears and mouths. With iListen, we can adapt to become more proficient with our Macs by using the power of the Mac along with the ingenuity of MacSpeech, to not just use eye-hand coordination with screen, mouse and keyboard, but also by using our mouths to get work done more quickly and efficiently. This isn't just a boon to those who have physical challenges, but to all who want to make the Mac experience even better. As Chuck Rogers said, “Anybody who uses a keyboard is a candidate for iListen”.

Go listen to Chuck Joiner's interview of Chuck Rogers on *MacVoices*:
<http://www.macvoices.com/archives/2006/660.html>

As I get older, my hands seem to suffer from Dyslexia (letter transfers from the wrong fingers). As I learn to use iListen more and more, my dependency on the keyboard will become less and less and my dyslexia will not be such a burden as before. That alone is worth the cost of this “way cool” enabling app!

The Logo Creator MEGA Pak – Get Professional!

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Laughingbird Software, LLC

2510 Worth Way

Camarillo, CA 93012

1-805-386-1616

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

<http://www.thelogocreator.com/MegaPak.htm>

Released: Version 5, February 20, 2006. MEGA Pak, October 25, 2005.
\$190 USD (\$20 USD Upgrade from earlier MEGA Paks) Separate sets for \$40 USD and upgrades from the ValuePAK for \$20 USD for any or all individual sets.

Download Demo: <http://www.thelogocreator.com/demo.php>

Download version: 112 MB.

Forum: <http://www.logodesignforum.com/forums/>

Tutorials: <http://www.thelogocreator.com/tutorials.htm>

Audience: Logo Creators.

Strengths: Cross-platform. Stable. Functional.

Weaknesses: None found.

Turn those designs into hard-copy: <http://www.vistaprint.com>

Other Reviews: <http://www.thelogocreator.com/reviews.htm>

[MacReviewCast Episode #59](#)

The last time we reviewed *The Logo Creator* was back in August of 2004 when it was under macXware. Since then, sales of the app reverted back to Laughing Bird Software and their software development team has improved the product and updated it to version 5.0.

The Logo Creator is a cross-platform app designed to help us create professional banners and logos for our companies.

We were privileged to get the MEGA Pak because after a year or so of fighting with a gremlin (the text page would poof on me) and with help from the MacSpeech programming beta team, we figured out what the heck was going on and why my machine would not let the app perform properly. Would you believe it was because I had the keyboard configuration set to *US Extended* and Unicode instead of *US Standard* and Roman? Seems Mac OS X Tiger has this bug that needs to be addressed...



We also were told that folks who live in Canada also had keyboard issues and had to set theirs to *US Standard* as well with other apps. Can you imagine how good we felt when I was able to apply the same “fix” to *The Logo Creator* and the app didn’t poof on me? You have no idea how much time was spent (since October 2005) trying to figure out why the app wouldn’t work on my machine. So Marc Sylvester sent us the MEGA Pak and Chuck Rogers over at MacSpeech is going to work on a ScriptPak for iListen to work with *The Logo Creator*. How cool is that?

So what is the big deal with this MEGA Pak anyway? It is the version that has all the Logo Set templates that have been developed so far: The Corporate Set, The Entertainment Set, Business Mascots, Real Estate Pak, The Spiritual Collection, The Sports Pak and the Travel and Leisure Set, each costing around \$40 USD or \$20 for all, if they were part of the earlier ValuePAK. If a previous version of the MEGA Pak was purchased, it is only \$20 for the upgrade to Version 5.0. So pick and choose, or get them all.

In Version 5.0, a number of additional logo templates were added, the rendering engine runs faster, custom templates can be saved, elements can be dragged and dropped from the Element Library, the startup screen includes links to tutorials and other website information and the Real Estate, Sports Pak and Spiritual Editions were added. And of course, like all software, there are a few bug fixes for Mac and non-Mac systems.

We can generate web page headers with *The Logo Creator* as well.

Now we can get down to business. First, if you haven’t downloaded the demo, go do that. Then go follow the tutorials online.

If none of the existing images catch your fancy, you can always import from other graphics apps. Each template is completely modifiable now. Exporting can also be done as GIFs, JPEGs, PNGs, PDFs, TIFs, or sent either to PhotoShop or FireWorks.

If you wish to gussy up the text, there are lots of options to choose from. Try gradients, 3D effects, mirroring, play with how angles are slanted on the logos, etc. and text can be rotated. There are also sliding scales for size, character and line spacing. Similar controls are available for graphics. You can really spend a lot of time playing/working to make any logo or font unique.

Let your creative juices flow! This is just a fun app to mess/work with and Version 5.0 is worth the hassle it took for me to get working on my machine.

Just don’t let Joe or Jane-Sixpack know about this one, because if you are a Logo Consultant, this app just made the job a whole lot easier and they might not really need your services any longer!

Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X

reviewed by Ted Bade



Parallels, Inc.
13800 Coppermine Road
Suite 340
Herndon, VA 20171 USA
(703) 234-5549

info@parallels.com

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

<http://www.parallels.com/en/products/desktop/>

\$80 USD, (\$50 through July 15 2006). 15 day free trial available.

Download Site: <http://www.parallels.com/en/download/desktop/>

Requirements: Any Intel based Macintosh computer.

Experience needed: Running the Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X requires intermediate skills, the installation process is covered by a Wizard. However, running the guest OS is another matter.



Strengths: Easy to use, easy to install. Runs a guest OS in a window or full screen on your Macintosh alongside Mac OS X. Can run a wide variety of Intel-based operating systems.

Weaknesses: Your Mac's processor and RAM are shared by both Mac OS X and any guest OS you run. This might affect the performance of a processor intensive application. Documentation can be confusing at times.

The Parallels Desktop (PD) for Mac OS X is an excellent solution for people who need to use any Intel CPU based OS application (not just Windows XP), but still want to own an Intel Mac. This solution provides more options than Apple's own Boot Camp application and lets your guest OS and Mac OS X work side by side.

The Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X will let you install any OS that runs on an Intel Chip. This would be useful for people who need to run some older application that might require an older version of Windows or even a non-Microsoft OS. I would venture to guess that the Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X would run an MSDOS based application better than it would run on an XP box! Why, because with PD, you create an environment that actually runs the OS, not an emulation as XP would run the MSDOS environment!

Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X does its magic through the use of virtual machines. To install an OS, you first create a virtual machine that will host the guest OS on your Macintosh. Once that is done, you can install the OS from the installation disks you own.

The process is a bit more complicated than Apple's Boot Camp installation, but nothing so difficult that the average Mac user couldn't handle it. Let's go through a basic installation to see how easy it is:

First, you run the Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X and choose to create a new virtual machine. This loads a wizard that walks you through the process. You first need to choose what type of virtual machine you intend to create. The "Typical" version takes care of most of the details for you (this is the one I recommend). You can also create a custom configuration, or a blank one, both of which allow you to manually set up the configurations. These two are for users more experienced with PD.

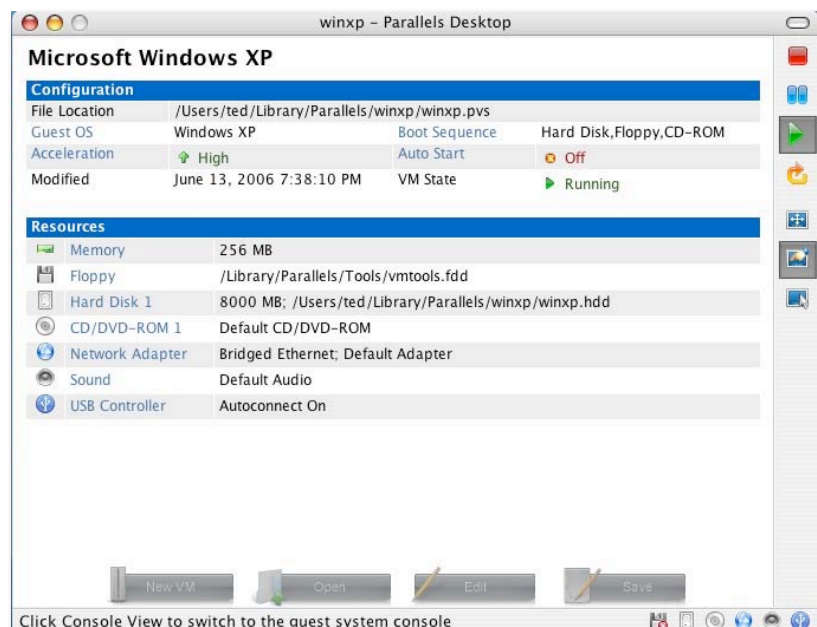
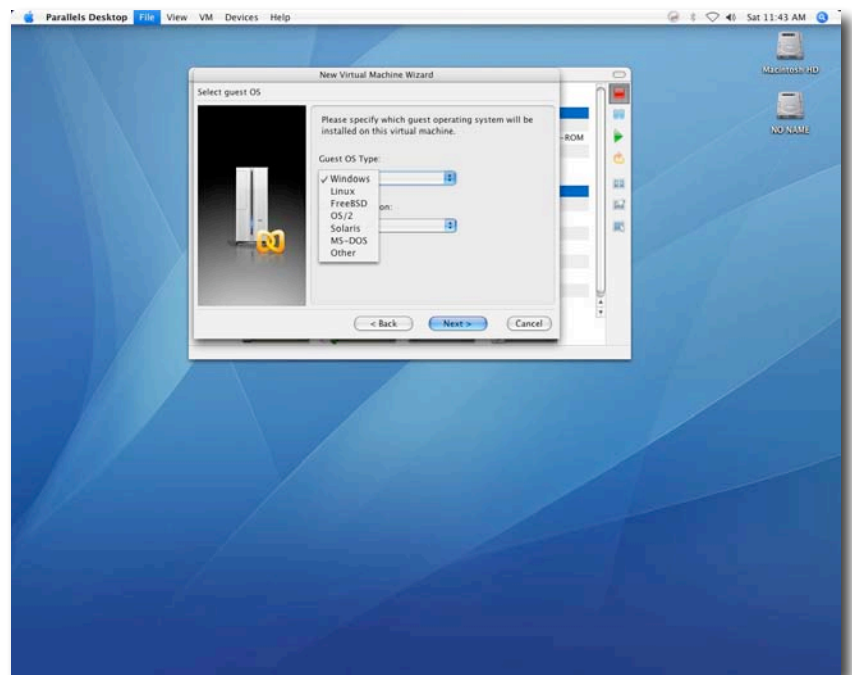
When choosing the *Typical* option, the next question you need to answer is which OS type and version you plan to use. Types include Windows, Linux, FreeBSD, OS/2, Solaris, MSDOS and more. When you select a type, the version choice window changes to include a variety of versions for each option. Once you make a selection the application sets up the virtual machine to support this OS.

Next, you name the virtual machine you are creating and decide where it will be saved. I should point out here that the file you create will be large, as it will contain the virtual hard-drive image. Users of VirtualPC will be familiar with having a huge file that acts as a hard-drive for your VirtualPC machine. This is very similar. For the record, the Virtual machine image I created for just Windows XP (no other applications installed) was 1.2 GB in size.

The default path for this file is in your home/library folder. Since this is something you might want to back up, you might want to move it someplace you backup regularly (of course, it is not a bad idea to back up your library folder regularly!).

Once this is done, you are faced with your new shiny virtual machine, which can do almost nothing as it sits there! Like a brand new computer, it is ready for you to pour the OS you choose into it. Which is the next step:

After creating a virtual machine, you are presented with a window, which is your interface to control it. This control panel allows you to manipulate various aspects of your virtual machine, such as how much memory it uses, how large the virtual disk will be, device boot sequence, audio, and a lot more. While most people will install their OS from a CD, PD gives you the option of installing from an image file, in case you have an image of the OS rather than a CD. This would be a rather useful option for an older OS that comes on several dozen floppies, or for people who have access to a corporate license that allows them to install an OS on many machines.



Whatever method your OS comes to the virtual machine, you insert the CD/DVD or point to the image file and then run the virtual machine. It will act like a brand new computer and boot into the CD and begin the normal installation process. This process might take a bit of time depending upon the OS you are installing.

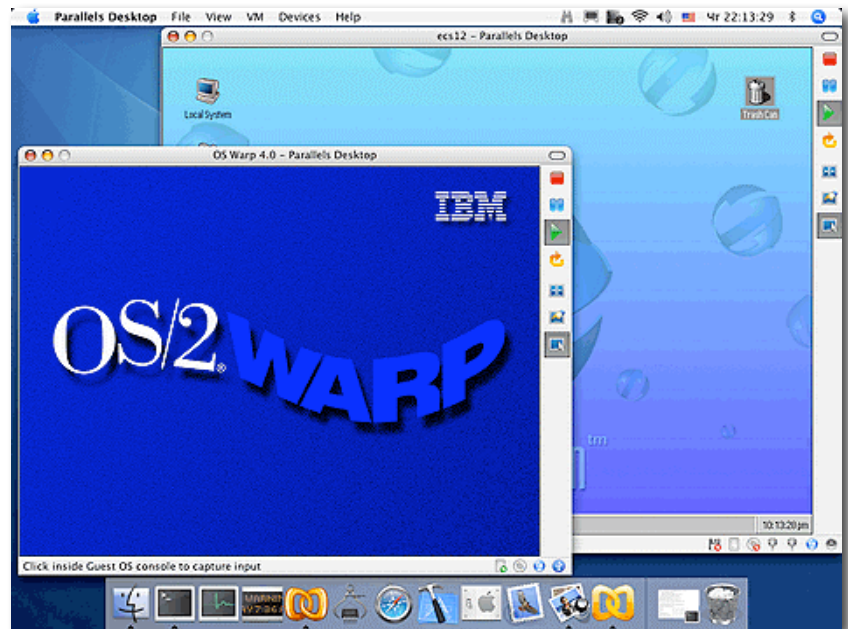
With the OS installed, your Virtual machine is ready to go. You can run your OS and its applications in a window on your Mac desktop or in full screen. Before you continue, it is a good idea to install the Parallels Tools. These tools can be installed in many of the guest OS's and provide a number of useful tweaks to make using it easier.

One very useful modification is that of Mouse/Keyboard control when running your guest OS in a window. Without the tools (and before you install them), when you click in the virtual machine's window, your mouse and keyboard are now controlled by that window and you need to use a special keyboard sequence to move control back to the Mac side. With the tools installed, when the mouse is over the virtual machine window, it has control and when you move off the window, control moves back to the Mac OS X control. Pretty slick.

Another very useful tool is synchronizing the clipboard of the guest OS to that of Mac OS X. This makes them available to either side, allowing you to cut from one environment and paste into the other.

The full screen mode is useful when you are doing any real work with your guest OS. The Parallels machine uses the rotating cube effect to move from window to full screen mode. There is a special keyboard command that returns to the window mode and lets you get back to your Mac OS X processes. It is up to you to remember the key combination to get back!

With the Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X, you can create a number of different Virtual Machines, each running a different OS. You then choose to run whatever virtual Machine you need to. As a matter of fact, you can run more than one virtual machine at a time. While this is sure to give your Intel CPU a real workout, it can be done!



So why would you want to buy this application when you can get Apple's Boot Camp for free? The most important reason that I see is that you can run **any** OS on it, not just XP SP2 (and possibly Vista when it arrives). What you might need to run might not require a brand new \$200 copy of Windows XP. It might be happy with that old copy of Win98 that you were thinking of tossing. Perhaps you want to experiment with an Intel version of Linux, or might even need to run a non-Microsoft OS. PD gives you all these options.

You don't need to reboot your computer to run the guest OS with Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X. I see this as valuable in two different ways. First of all, if you need to run some foreign application, you can do it while you are also working in Mac OS X. Stopping everything you are doing to reboot your computer is a lot more hassle than just running a virtual machine in the background. The other advantage of running the two OS's at the same time is that you can easily move data from one to the other.

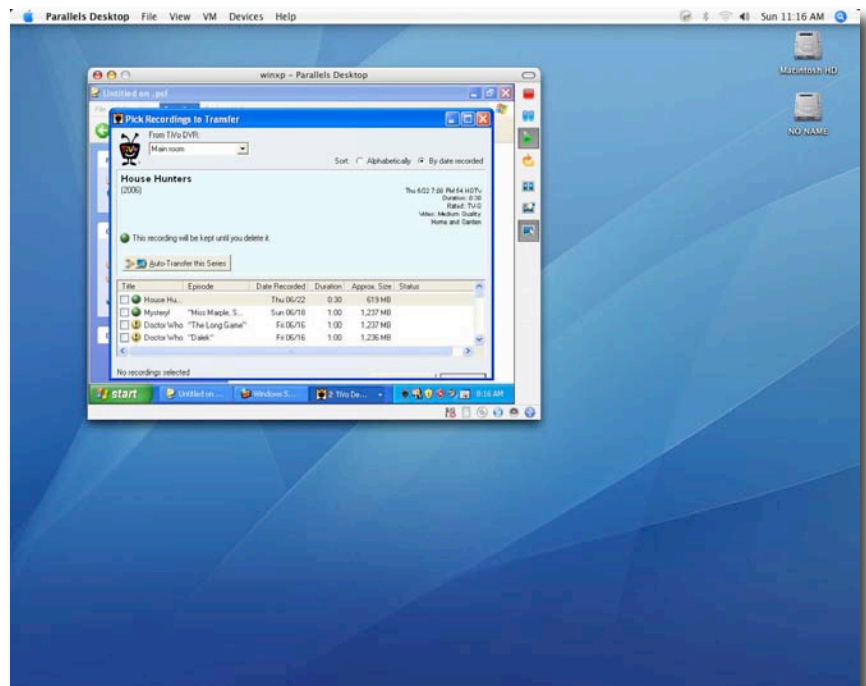
One of the limitations of Boot Camp is that Mac OS X can read, but not write to an NTFS-formatted drive. Windows XP works better with the NTFS system (what a surprise, Windows works better with a proprietary formatted drive). With the Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X, you create a shared folder to easily move things from one environment to the other. You can also cut from one environment and paste into another, something that is impossible with Boot Camp.

Another great advantage has to do with your hard-drive space. With Apple's Boot Camp, you need to choose a size to format your Windows partition when you begin the installation process. You are then stuck with that partition size. There is no way to expand it or contract it. (Perhaps there will be, but at the moment, there is not.) With PD, you can choose to use an "expanding drive format". As you add stuff to your Windows environment, the file that is acting as the hard drive, expands.

I bumped into this problem using Apple's Boot Camp. I selected 10 GB for my partition size, having no idea what I was going to do with it. I quickly filled the space as I installed various applications. The only option I have is to reclaim the Boot Camp partition, losing everything I installed that I want to keep, then starting the Boot Camp process all over again, dedicating a lot more space to it. With the Parallels Workstation, as I add applications and data, the drive size increases. Also consider that with a set partition size, all that partition's free space is locked away. With the PD, the space is available until it is used. Very nice!

The only disadvantage of the Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X is that of how much processor power and RAM you'll need. Running two OS's and a variety of applications can take up a lot of RAM. You also need to realize that they are sharing whatever processor you have in your Mac. For processor-intensive work, the PD won't perform as well as Boot Camp, since when you boot into Windows with Boot Camp, you are giving the Windows environment all of the processor. With the Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X, you are sharing the processor(s).

However, I believe that a majority of users wanting to run Windows won't be doing anything really processor-intensive and RAM is relatively cheap. So the PD package will provide you with the best advantages. All the applications I ran using the PD performed to my satisfaction. I didn't try a lot of different applications and I didn't do a benchmark test. For myself, Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X will run every application I currently am interested in.



I believe that the Parallels Desktop for Mac OS X is an excellent solution for anyone with an Intel-based Mac who wants to run some guest OS on it. It offers several advantages over Boot Camp, the biggest on being that you are not limited to XP SP2. It works very well and is worth the cost. I highly recommend this program for anyone with an Intel Mac and a need to run any other Intel OS. Please note that until the middle of July, they are offering this program for a discounted price, so if you think you might want it, this is great time to buy.

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Product Description
iWork '05 is the perfect companion to iLife. It consists of two applications: Pages, a word-processing application, and Keynote 2, a major upgrade to the Keynote presentation application. By combining the graphics power of Mac OS X with the rich media integration of iLife, Apple is building the succ... [Read more](#) ([Why is this recommended to me?](#))

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Page 125

July 2006, Volume 4 Issue 7

Apple Store for Individuals

<http://store.apple.com/AppleStore/WebObjects/BizCustom.woa/wo/StoreReentry.wo?cid=AOSA10000025758&siteID=%2Foi97eu4uMU-AtGr6EOxXtw%2FizYZGve3Aw&qprm=78313&family=iMac>



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ATI Radeon X1600 graphics with 128MB GDDR3 memory
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SPEC performance: 2 to 3 times faster than 20-inch iMac G5 with 2.1GHz PowerPC.

2-3x Faster	iMac G5 2.1GHz	iMac Core Duo 2.0GHz	▲
SPECint_rate_base2000 <small>(Relative to PowerPC)</small>	103	226	2.2x

iSight built-in



What's Included



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- iMac
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- Apple Keyboard
- Mighty Mouse
- Power cord
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Mac OS X v10.4 Tiger

Tiger offers the amazing Spotlight search technology, handy Dashboard widgets and hundreds more features. Tiger also includes the following

Apple Store for Businesses

<http://store.apple.com/AppleStore/WebObjects/BizAgent?qprm=126559>

The screenshot shows the Apple Store Business Agent website. The browser address bar displays the URL <http://store.apple.com/AppleStore/WebObjects/BizAgent?qprm=126559>. The page features a navigation bar with links for Store, iPod + iTunes, .Mac, QuickTime, Support, and Mac OS X. Below the navigation bar, there are links for 'Your Account', 'View Cart', 'Saved Carts', 'Order Status', and 'Customer Service'. The main content area is titled 'Business Agent Store' and features a large promotional banner for a 'Multipicture deal'. The banner text reads: 'For a limited time, save up to \$300 instantly on Final Cut Studio when you buy a qualifying Mac.' A green badge indicates 'Save up to \$300'. The banner also shows a box for Final Cut Studio. Below the banner, there are sections for 'New Macs featuring Intel processors' (Mac mini, iMac, MacBook Pro) and 'Macs with PowerPC processors' (iBook G4, PowerBook G4, Power Mac G5). Other sections include 'Essentials' (Mice & Keyboards, Wireless, iSight, Cinema Displays), 'Servers & Storage' (Xserve, Xserve RAID), and 'iPods'. A sidebar on the left contains a search bar and various product categories like 'New Macs (Intel)', 'Macs with PowerPC', 'Mac Accessories', 'Servers', 'iPod', 'iPod Accessories', 'Special Deals', 'Business Financing', and 'Volume Licensing'. A right sidebar contains a 'Welcome' message, 'New to the Store' links, 'Business Services', 'Work Essentials', 'Pro Video/Film', 'Pro Design', 'Pro Photo', 'Pro Audio', 'Buying Guides', and a 'Looking for a great deal?' section with a 'SAVE' badge.

Lionhead Studios Limited and Feral Interactive - Black & White 2 <http://www.feralinteractive.com/>



Prepare for the second coming - Black & White 2 is heading for the Mac

Feral interactive is enraptured to announce that Lionhead's latest release, Black & White 2, is bound for the the Mac.

From the creative mind of god game developer Peter Molyneux and RTS-creator Ron Miller, Black & White 2 is the sequel to the critically acclaimed hit Black & White. In this game that mixes up strategy and sim genres, you reprise your role as a powerful deity in search of a following and return to the once idyllic world of Eden. The land, however, has transformed itself. The inhabitants of this breathtaking 3D world have lost their innocence and developed new weapons and technology.

Will you be an evil or benevolent deity? That's the choice you must make upon entering a warring world in Black & White 2. Every decision you take will have an impact. Each action and inaction prompts obvious changes to buildings, flora and fauna, all morphing to reflect your personality. Like its wildly successful predecessor, Black & White, the sequel is all about moral choices.

With the help of your gigantic Creature that you raise from infancy, you must earn the respect and worship of the natives. How you choose to do that, whether through nurturing them or terrorizing them, is up to you. Will your sovereignty herald peaceful coexistence, or domination and conquest?

Check <http://www.FeralInteractive.com> for more information on Black & White 2 for Mac OS X in the coming weeks and months.

Black & White 2 © 2001-2005 Lionhead Studios Limited. All rights reserved. Lionhead, the Lionhead logo, Black & White and the Black & White Logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Lionhead Studios Limited in the US and/or other countries. Black & White® is a Lionhead® Studios brand.

Lionhead Studios Limited and Feral Interactive –The Movies

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



Lights down, roll camera and get into the action - This summer the Movies is coming to a Mac near you!

Feral Interactive proudly presents a Macintosh release of a Lionhead Studios game, based on an original concept by Peter Molyneux.

The Movies™ is a game that enables you to build and control your very own Hollywood motion picture studio. Starting at the dawn of the silver screen, you compete with other budding movie moguls to create a string of box office smashes and rule the Industry.

All the things you have ever heard about Tinseltown - from starlet scandals to box-office records, from greenlighting a script to making the final cut - are all right here. A unique mix of strategy and artistry, The Movies™ demands that you do it all, from developing a slate of films to formulating a release strategy, you must manage the the introduction of new technology, turn talent spotter and make unknowns into stars and then manage their ballooning egos.

Amazingly, it also lets you get behind the camera as a Director to create your own blockbusters, 'B' Movies or arthouse epics.

Movie mogul, talent agent or film director. You can be one or you can be all three. That's the magic of The Movies™.

David Stephen of Feral Interactive said:

"It's a delight and an honour to announce that we will be bringing the glamour of The Movies™ to the Mac, the world's best personal computer. At this time I would just like to thank my agent, my mother and my therapist for their unfailing support during this process."

Peter Molyneux of Lionhead Studios said:

"We are absolutely thrilled and delighted that the Movies will be coming to a Mac near you soon. The glamorous and artistic nature of The Movies means the Mac makes a perfect home for this game. For this we'd like to thank Feral, without whom this would not be possible."

The Movies will be opening on the Mac this Summer as a Universal Application. Check <http://www.FeralInteractive.com> for more information on The Movies, a Universal Application for Mac OS X, in the coming weeks and months.

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Step 1: Drop an X2O sachet ("teabag") in 18-24 ounces of purified or bottled water.
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Step 3: Allow 5 minutes for X2O to transform your water before drinking

Hydrate, Mineralize, & Revitalize with X2O!

Hydrate: X2O sachets actually make water "wetter" by lowering the surface tension of water molecules. This dramatically increases your water's ability to hydrate your body at the cellular level.

pH Defined: pH simply means potential hydrogen. Every one-point decrease on the pH scale is 10 times more acidic. For example, a drop from 7.0 to 2.0 is 100,000 times more acidic for your body!

Mineralize: Every Sachet of X2O contains calcium, magnesium, and over 70 trace minerals. These essential minerals (electrolytes) become ionic in water allowing them to be absorbed quickly and easily by your body.

X2O is delivered in a pure ionic form, which means it is immediately bioavailable to the body. X2O may also help your body to:

- Assimilate vitamins and minerals from the foods you eat and the supplements you take
- Combat arthritis and heart disease
- Cleanse the kidneys, intestines, and liver
- Protect your body from free radical cell damage
- Increase muscle and joint mobility
- Increase your oxygen levels
- Control digestive problems
- Regulate blood sugar
- Manage blood pressure
- Neutralize harmful acids that lead to illness
- Help in fighting the battle against cancer and other diseases

Revitalize: Alkalinity = good health. X2O transforms your water into a powerful alkaline beverage, which fights against the physical stress caused by today's fast-paced lifestyles.

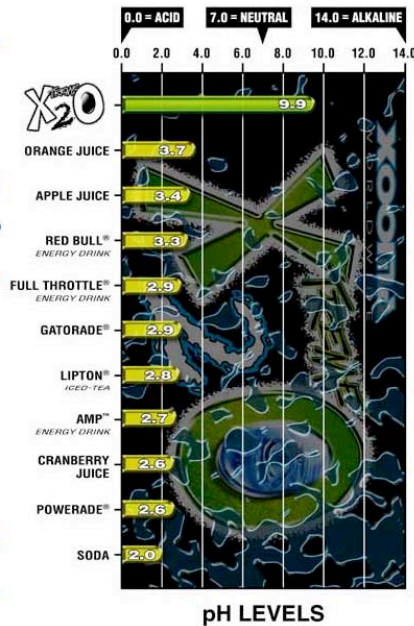
It takes 32 glasses of alkaline water to neutralize the acid from one 12 oz. soda. Each time you drink acidic soda, coffee, tea, and energy drinks your body uses its own buffers (from bone and DNA) to raise the body's alkalinity to maintain your healthy blood pH level of 7.35-7.45. [Click here to see how!](#)

The Facts:

"More than 1 in 5 Americans unknowingly drink tap water polluted with feces, radiation or other contaminants. Nearly 1,000 deaths each year and at least 400,000 cases of waterborne illness may be attributed to contaminated water"
-The New York Times - June 2, 1995
Clean your water with X2O - [Click here to see how!](#)

ORP Testing:

Xooma X2O has also been tested by an independent laboratory located in the NASA Langley Research Center. The degree of "negativity" of an ORP reading is an indicator of how bioavailable and bioabsorbable a product will be in your body. The lower the test reading, the more ions are available for your body's metabolic functions. X2O is the only product of it's kind to register "minus" readings on the ORP meter; a huge benefit over the other products tested.



pH LEVELS

macCompanion Media Kit

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

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

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

Statistical Analysis

We are very excited about our site statistics! The multilingual-capable [macCompanion](#) website is close to 2 million page views a month and readership continues to increase rapidly through our "whisper campaign".

We continue to get greater visibility every day. Many of the various 35 computer operating systems (with many moving towards the Mac® OS X™ environment), 115 online search engines, 269 countries and domains and 319 online robots have discovered us – and continue to do so. So far, over 201 other websites have also linked to us. Many of our readers have made our site one of their favorites. While nearly 70% of our readership stops by for a quick visit via RSS feeds, over 23% spend between 1/2 to 1 hours at a time going through over 250 different pages on our site (mostly archives). Many of those who quickly drop by, come to get the monthly PDFed issue of *macCompanion*. Over 35GB of bandwidth was used in December 2005 alone for download purposes. Previous months have averaged around 20GB. Trend analysis indicates that will continue to increase as folks decide to "Move to the Mac".

Advertising with *macCompanion*

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

Site Ad Rate

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

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

PDF Ad Rates

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

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

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

Rate Table

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Style	Rate	Size Fractional	Size Decimal	Size Centimeter
1/16th Page	\$40 USD	1 5/8 x 2 1/4 in	1.625 x □□□□2.25 in	4.1 x 5.7 cm
1/8th Page Horizontal	\$50 USD	3 1/2 x 2 1/4 in	3.5 x □□□□2.25 in	8.9 x 5.7 cm
1/8th Page Vertical	\$50 USD	2 1/4 x 3 1/2 in	2.25 x 3.5 in	5.7 x 8.9 cm
1/4th Page Vertical	\$60 USD	3 1/2 x 4 3/4 in	3.5 x 4.75 in	8.9 x 12.1 cm
1/2 Page Horizontal	\$100 USD	7 1/4 x 4 3/4 in	7.25 x 4.75 in	18.4 x 12.1 cm
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1/3rd Page Vertical	\$70 USD	2 1/4 x 9 7/8 in	2.25 x 9.875 in	5.7 x 25.1 cm
2/3rd Page Horizontal	\$150 USD	7 1/4 x 6 1/4 in	7.25 x 6.25 in	18.4 x 15.9 cm
2/3rd Page Vertical	\$150 USD	4 3/4 x 9 7/8 in	4.75 x 9.875 in	12.1 x 25.1 cm
Full Page	\$250 USD	7 1/4 x 9 7/8 in	7.25 x 9.875 in	18.4 x 25.1 cm



Affiliations

We do affiliations, and work with those who have made arrangements with online affiliate systems, or we deal directly with you if you have created code, and have a contract we can sign. Check out the Bazaar on our website at <http://www.macompanion.com/bazaar/bazaarindex.html>

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We also accept sponsorships. Please let us know if you would like to sponsor *macCompanion*!

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

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Email works best.

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