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## YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH

MACINTOSH SECURITY
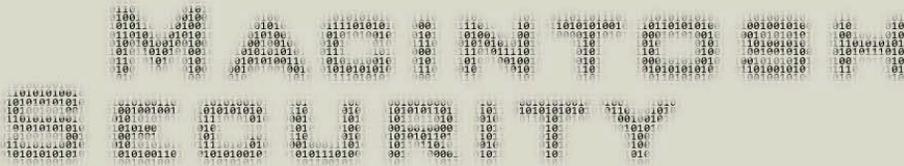
ARE YOU AS SAFE AS YOU THINK?

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• FontNuke 1.0.5
• Mac Security 101
and much, much more

Volume 4 Issue 11 November 2006

# Masthead

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# About that Apple Optical Output Port – It's a TOS up

by Robert Pritchett, November 2006

I received a call from Micah Sheveloff about Thiel http://www.thielaudio.com/ wanting to get into the computer-based entertainment center business and with the Macs specifically. Their speaker systems require an amplifier between their units and the computers and I instantly thought of that little-used/known port on every Mac built after September 2005, including the Mac minis, MacBooks, iMacs, Mac Pros and even the Airport Express named the "Optical Audio Port".
http://developer.apple.com/documentation/Hardware/Conceptual/HWTech_Audio/Articles/Audio_concepts.html

So I had to do a little research and thought you might be interested in what I found.

Do you know what I'm even talking about? It's the headphone jack!
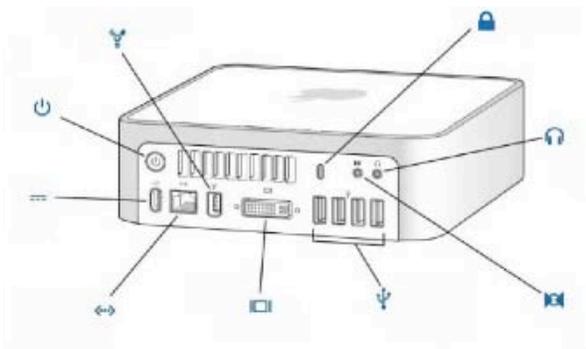


Mac mini
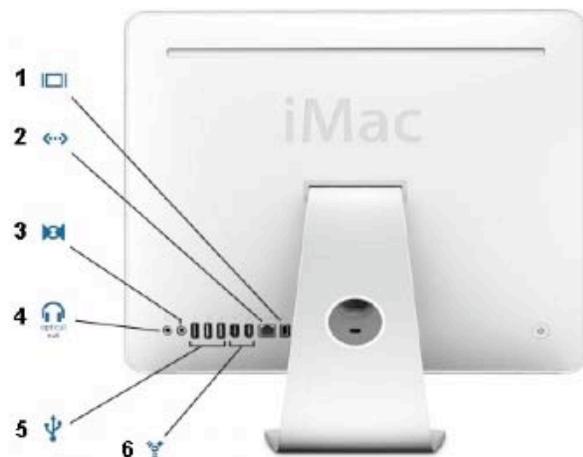


iMac (Late 2006)



MacBook



Power Mac G5

MacBook Pro

Airport Express
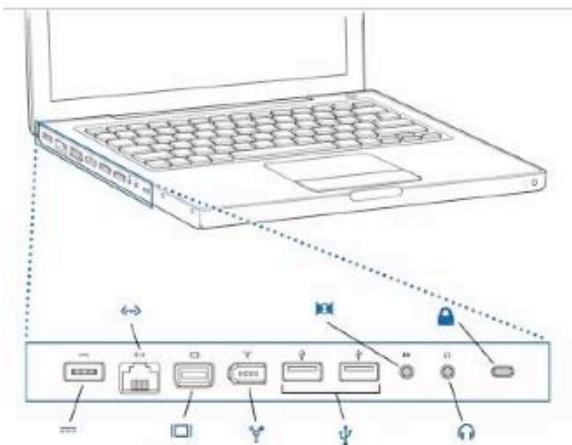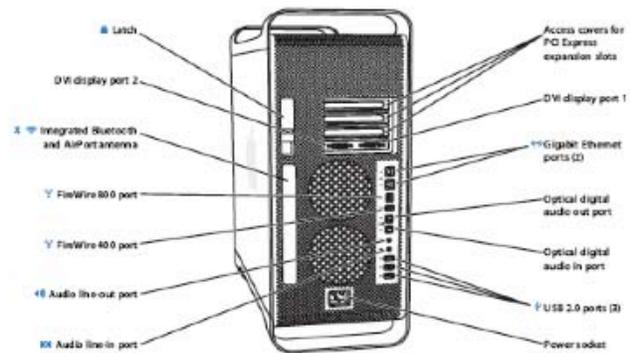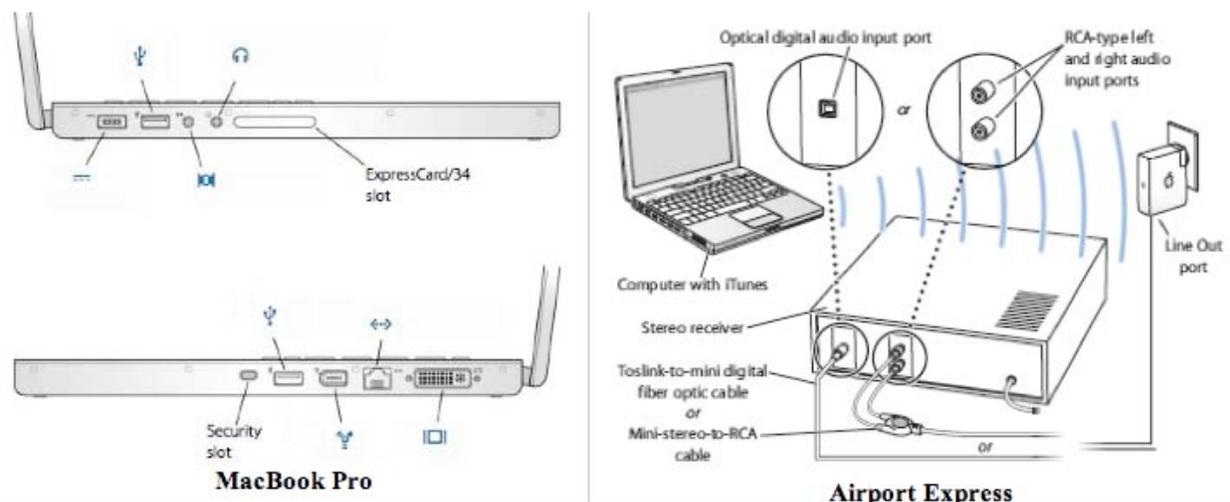
But you see, Apple didn't just take the port and make it just for headsets. They took it up a notch, literally. The audio port is a combo port, meaning that it takes copper *and* fiber type connectors. These jacks provide digital audio out as well as analog audio.

So first of all, why fiber? No electrical interference. Audiophiles like that, and so will you. No pops, hiss or jitter. Clear sound.

So let's get geeky for a moment. We'll discuss the mini-toslink and S/PIDF in a little bit, just stay with us.

Each Mac takes the technology just a little bit differently. The Apple Specs provide the following information:

The PowerBook G4 has both a combined optical digital input/audio line in (minijack) (17-inch model) and output/headphone out.

The Mac mini, MacBook and MacBook Pro duplicates that, but also the headphone/line output jack accommodates digital optical audio output, analog audio output with a 24-bit, 44.1-192 kHz D/A converter, digital audio output up to 24-bit stereo and 44.1-192 kHz sampling rate and supporting encoded digital audio output (AC3 and DTS standards). Analog audio line input is accepted through a 3.5mm mini phone jack. It also accepts a stereo miniplug-to-RCA cable adapter for connecting stereo equipment to the computer.

Optical audio input is S/PDIF format and uses a standard toslink cable with a toslink mini-plug adapter, accepting up to 24-bit stereo and 44.1-96 kHz sampling rate.

For analog headphone/line output a standard audio cable with 3.5mm metal plug should be used. For digital audio, a standard toslink cable with a toslink mini-plug adapter can be used.

The early 2006 iMac headphone / line output jack accommodates both digital optical audio output and analog audio output with a 24-bit, 16-96 kHz D/A converter. For digital audio, a fiber optic cable with 3.5mm plastic or nylon optical plug should be used. The late 2006 iMac sound input jack accepts line-level stereo signals up to 24-bit stereo 44.1-192kHz sampling rate. Notice the difference between those two?

The Power Mac G5 computers (and we can probably assume, so do the Mactels) have two optical audio ports of a type new to Macintosh. These optical audio ports allow the transfer of stereo audio or encoded 5.1 audio (commonly found on DVD movies). And the Power Mac G5 uses the Sony/Phillips Digital Interface (S/PDIF) protocol (IEC60958-3) for data and the Toslink optical (IEC60874-17) for the connector. Bits per sample are either 16-bit or 24-bit. For optical digital audio out, the playback sample rate of a 1 kHz, -1 dB FS 24-bit sine wave, 44.1 kHz output sample rate is usually around 32 kHz, 44.1 kHz or 48 kHz. The signal-to-noise ratio is greater than 130 dB. Total harmonic distortion + noise is less than -130 dB (0.00001 percent). For optical digital audio in, playback of a 1 kHz, -1 dB FS 24-bit sine wave, is usually Fsi-input sample rate (external clock mode) around 32 kHz, 44.1 kHz or 48 kHz Fsi-input sample rate (internal clock mode) of 16 kHz to 96 kHz signal-to-noise ratio (external clock mode). Greater than130 dB signal-to-noise ratio (internal clock mode, 16 kHz < Fsi < 96 kHz), is less than -112 dB.

The total harmonic distortion + noise (external clock mode) is less than -130 dB (0.00001%) and total harmonic distortion + noise (internal clock mode, 16 kHz < Fsi < 96 kHz) is less than -112 dB (0.0003%). Feel all warm and fuzzy, now that you know that?

Now armed with that knowledge, how do we use it? We need to learn more:

Apple says;

> "All current Macintosh computers include the circuitry to play high-quality audio content. Hardware features differ among Macintosh models, as appropriate for the expected use of that model.
>
> Digital audio I/O conforms to the Sony/Philips Digital Interface (S/PDIF) model. S/PDIF technology results in a clean audio signal with no noise added as a result of transmission to or from the external audio device.
>
> Most models support analog audio in and typically have a built-in microphone. Some models support S/PDIF digital audio in through an optical digital interface.
>
> All models support analog audio out, through an internal speaker or speakers, a headphone jack, a line-out jack, or some combination of the three. Computers described in this note also provide digital audio out, through both an electrical interface and an optical digital interface.

**3.5 mm (1/8") Combination Audio Jack**
Both electrical and optical audio signals are provided by the computer through the combination audio jack, commonly called the combo jack. The combo jack accepts standard electrical audio cables with a 3.5 mm (1/8") stereo plug and standard TOSLINK optical cables with a 3.5 mm optical plug. Adapters are available that attach to the friction-lock type F-05 plug to convert it to a 3.5 mm optical plug. TOSLINK cables are available from pro-audio, musician's supply, hi-fi and other retailers.

The electrical signals for the combo jack are connected as they are with the standard 3.5 mm electrical jack, described in the previous section.

**Note:** The terms 3.5 mm and 1/8-inch are interchangeable in defining the jack.

Digital audio signals can be provided by a 7.5 mm optical digital jack. The physical connector, shown in Figure 1, is commonly referred to as a TOSLINK connector. The jack is for both input and output and conforms to IEC 60874-17.

**Figure 1** Optical digital S/PDIF connector

Cables with TOSLINK friction-lock type F-05 connectors are available from pro-audio, musician's supply, hi-fi and other retailers.
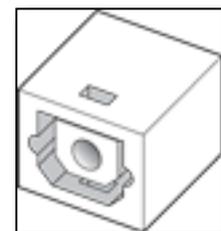


So digging a little deeper I found these links on jacks and S/PIDF:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_plug
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S/PDIF
http://www.andrewkilpatrick.org/mind/spdif/



S/PIDF

COAXIAL    OPTICAL

Toslink

Many of the pics found here were taken from Ram Electronics. http://www.ramelectronics.net You might want to visit them for more information.

The Apple Optical Audio port takes the fiber optic Toslink mini jack. So what the heck is a Toslink connector?

**TOSLINK**® is a registered trademark of Toshiba and comes from TOShiba-Link which is a variation on the EIAJ optical "Red Book" standard for digital audio (stereo or multi-channel) that uses light from an LED "transmitter" as the source, instead of laser light. TOSLINK was established to create digital streams between MiniDisc, CD players and DAT recorders using either 1 mm plastic optical or glass fiber. Signal cable has to be less than 10 meters in length and usually are less than 5 meters in length. The connector itself is usually a JIS F05 (JIS C5974-1993 F05).

For more information look here:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TOSLINK

http://www.audioholics.com/techtips/audioprinciples/interconnects/toslink.php

Okay, now what? We can either use the headset jack or get fancy and interface with Audio-Visual gear that uses the Toslink technology directly or the S/PID copper solution. But with the Apple jack, we need to use a mini-toslink first to get from here to there, assuming we want to do the fiber thing. (And we do!) Apple sells the Belkin PureAV Digital Optical Audio Cable with mini-toslink adapter http://store.apple.com/1-800-MY-APPLE/WebObjects/AppleStore?productLearnMore=TA968LL/A for about $30 USD.
And Apple also sells the Monster iCable Fiber kit for the about same price or you can get it here - http://www.monstercable.com/productPage.asp?pin=2809

And there is a Monster Cable $40 kit for the AirPort Express on Apple's website as well.

In most cases, if you don't have Audio/Visual receivers that have a direct toslink port, a converter to 75 ohm coax (S/PDIF) may be needed and Ram Electronics provides those.

Converters are required to move from toslink to S/PDIF and can range anywhere from $25 USD to $40 USD
http://www.ramelectronics.net/html/audio_toslink_adapters.html

So how do we hook these up? Ram Electronics provided a somewhat skewed diagram:
http://www.ramelectronics.net/assets/images/av-connect/Home-Theater-connection.pdf

Connection Diagram
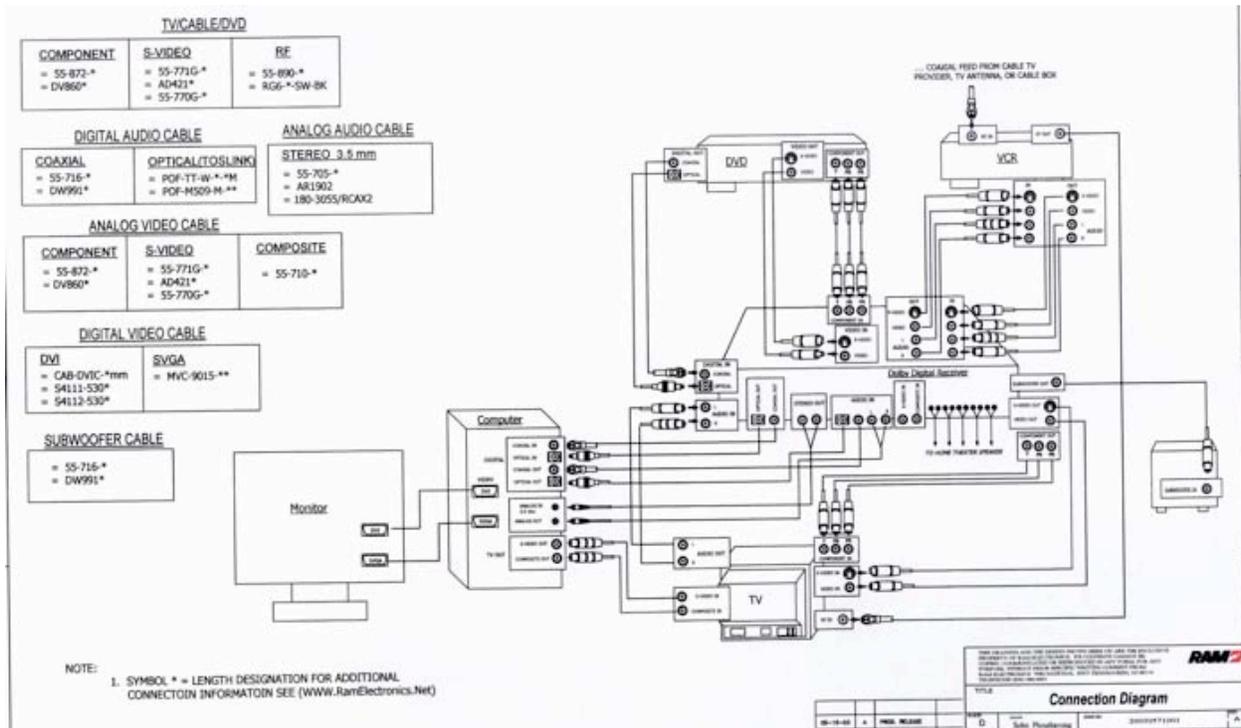
If you can go fiber-to-fiber (toslink-wise), you are better off, but your distance is limited due to the LED source characteristics. Ram Electronics provides a toslink extender for another $30 that can take the fiber cable out another 30 meters. They also provide toslink splitters ($10 USD) and switches ($30 USD).

Coax is cool, but fiber is better, believe me. And Apple has had this technology available for 2 years and you probably didn't even know you had it on your machine. Now you do!

See how Dave Nagel put it to use:

http://www.creativemac.com/articles/viewarticle.jsp?id=69934
and how he used the Belden mini-Toslink kit - http://www.creativemac.com/articles/viewarticle.jsp?id=47126

In the future, hopefully we will see how Thiel puts it to use too.

# Apple's Software License Agreement vs. Microsoft's Vista License Agreement

By Robert Pritchett, November 2006

Which Operating System license would you rather agree to? Apple's or Microsoft's? Apple's Mac OS X Tiger (soon to be Leopard) is a 4-pager of fine print, while Microsoft's runs on for 14 pages, because it covers so many different Vista OSes.

But if you look at the fine print, they both are somewhat similar, no doubt colored by past history between them and updates due to litigious-society feedback over the years.

I bow to expert Wikipedia resources for the history behind Licensing, this time between Apple and Microsoft – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_v._Microsoft

Robert X Cringley wrote an article on Cross-Licensing - http://www.pbs.org/cringely/pulpit/pulpit20060427 html

Apparently, Apple is hamstrung with the Microsoft Office license.

Derek Meier wrote:

> Hey, you always go on about how you don't own Windows, you are leasing it. Well, take a look at the Tiger EULA!
>
> 1. If you look below, you don't own the software either from Apple or Microsoft.
> 2. Also they can take away anytime they want, just like Windows.
> 3. Hanford cannot use OS X for their critical systems and must use windows, as I have verified and seen @ EN.
> 4. Calling home base, just like Windows.
>
> All in all, you "DO NOT OWN THE SOFTWARE, JUST LIKE WINDOWS*
>
> Hence your argument with leasing Windows is the same as OS X, except you pay yearly with OS X with updates.
>
> 'Nuff Said

Apple Legal
http://www.apple.com/legal/sla/

Microsoft Legal
http://www.microsoft.com/about/legal/useterms/default.aspx

Mac OS X software license agreement
http://www.apple.com/legal/sla/macosx html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mac_OS_X

John C. Welch wrote this over at http://www.bynkii.com

> **Fun with Licenses**
>
> Okay, so since I beat Apple about being tools, I knew that if I waited long enough, Microsoft would rise to the competition and show their own Makita-like behavior...and I was not wrong.
>
> It's funny, how in the middle of promoting their own virtualization products, they commence to doing their best to restrict their use in such an environment.
>
> From the EULA for Windows Business:

*You may use the software installed on the licensed device within a virtual (or otherwise emulated) hardware system. If you do so, you may not play or access content or use applications protected by any Microsoft digital, information or enterprise rights management technology or other Microsoft rights management services or use BitLocker. We advise against playing or accessing content or using applications protected by other digital, information or enterprise rights management technology or other right management services or using full volume disk drive encryption.*

Well isn't that handy. Microsoft forbids you from using their DRM/IRM technology, then recommends you don't use anyone else's. Thanks a pantload Chet. Now, while the DRM thing brings to mind "Okay, so don't use Windows Media Player at work", it's leaving off the fact that there's quite a few uses for DRM within business purposes. The more restrictive one is the enterprise rights management technology prohibition. This is what things like *Office* use to restrict/control access to things like oh, sensitive documents, etc.

So, you can use Vista Business in a VM, but you can't use it for work that might be of a sensitive nature. How friggin' handy. Thanks again. This bizarre restriction also applies to Ultimate. Yeesh. The Vista home versions are better. You can't use them at all in a virtual machine. Go Microsoft Legal.

But it gets better. From section 8, Scope of License:

*You may not work around any technical limitations in the software;*

What the [HECK] does that mean? If I find a bug, (which can *easily* be defined as a "technical limitation in the software"), am I now restricted from doing anything to work around it until Big Daddy Ballmer blesses me with a fix? What if it's never fixed, or isn't fixed until the next paid upgrade? If I find something that Windows doesn't do well, and I figure out a way to make it do it better, evidently, I'm required to work at the more crappy level, rather than "work around a technical limitation in the software". That's vague in a very dangerous way, as it could be taken to mean no patching, no hacking, no modifying, etc. Great. So much for things like non-Microsoft-provided versions of Winternals. This is so STUPIDLY vague as to be able to prevent you from installing ANYTHING that overrides an inferior Vista function.

Again, this is not the Home version or the others. It's the *business* version.

Now, to be fair, Apple's OS X EULA completely proscribes using it on non-Apple hardware. That can, with most logic, be extended to VMs. However, since Apple's not *selling virtualization software*, it's a little less dumb. As well, as long as you were running the VM software on a Mac, then you're still running on an "Apple-labeled computer", so you'd not be in violation of the EULA, as long as you weren't running more copies than you were licensed for.

The closest the OS X EULA gets to the stupidity of section 8 of the Vista EULA is in section 2, paragraph C:

*Except as and only to the extent permitted in this License, by applicable licensing terms governing use of the Open-Sourced Components, or by applicable law, you may not copy, decompile, reverse engineer, disassemble, modify, or create derivative works of the Apple Software or any part thereof.*

Oh yeah, and don't use it in a Nuclear Facility. Do note, it doesn't say, "You may not work around any technical limitation in the software", and even the prohibition against copying/decompiling/reverse engineering/disassembling/modifying/or creating derivative works only applies to the Apple software, not the open source stuff.

I don't like the "modify". Again, it's a vague legal term. Do they mean modify the code, or just what happens when it runs? Is an input manager or a haxie part of this? Vague legal terms, bad idea.

It's still not as bad as specifically preventing you from working around technical limitations however. That's just...lame.

Ah, Microsoft. Overachieving yet again.

Apple's Full Software License Agreement is 4 pages long (okay, a little over 3 pages in 7-point font [that is why it is called 'fine print']).

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EA0310

Compare that to what we are hearing about the yet-to-be-released Vista and the current MS license agreement –

Gregg Keizer over on  *TechWeb Technology News* wrote: http://www.techweb.com/wire/software/193300234

### [Update] Vista Licenses Limit OS Transfers

By Gregg Keizer, TechWeb Technology News

*[Update, Fri. Oct 13, 11:00 am: The initial version of this story erroneously mischaracterized the way Microsoft's Vista license applies to user of the OS in a virtual machine, stating that there was a blanket ban in effect. This is incorrect; we regret the error. The updated version of this story removes all references to a VM ban, including a change in the headline, removal of a virtual machine reference in the lead paragraph, and the deletion of the fifth and sixth paragraphs of the original story.]*

Microsoft has released licenses for the Windows Vista operating system that dramatically differ from those for Windows XP in that they limit the number of times that retail editions can be transferred to another device.

The new licenses, which were highlighted by the Vista team on its official blog Tuesday, add new restrictions to how and where Windows can be used.

"The first user of the software may reassign the license to another device one time. If you reassign the license, that other device becomes the "licensed device", reads the license for Windows Vista Home Basic, Home Premium, Ultimate, and Business. In other words, once a retail copy of Vista is installed on a PC, it can be moved to another system only once.

The new policy is narrower than Windows XP's. In the same section, the license for Windows XP Home states: "You may move the Software to a different Workstation Computer. After the transfer, you must completely remove the Software from the former Workstation Computer." There is no limit to the number of times users can make this move. Windows XP Professional's license is identical.

Although the Vista team's blog did not point out these changes, it did highlight others. "Two notable changes between Windows Vista license terms and those for Windows XP are: 1) failure of a validation check results in the loss of access to specific features; and 2) an increase in our warranty period from 90 days to 1 year, which brings Windows in line with most other Microsoft products," wrote Vista program manager Nick White.

Specifically, the Vista license calls out the ramifications of a failed validation check of Vista.

"The software will from time to time validate the software, update or require download of the validation feature of the software," it reads. "If after a validation check, the software is found not to be properly licensed, the functionality of the software may be affected."

Vista's new anti-piracy technologies, collectively dubbed "Software Protection Platform", have met with skepticism by analysts and criticism by users. Under the new program, a copy of Vista that's judged to be in violation of its license, or is counterfeit, is disabled after a set period, leaving the user access only to the default Web browser, and then only for an hour at a time.

Robert McLaws writes over on the *WindowsNow* Blog - http://www.windows-now.com/blogs/robert/archive/2006/10/11/Important-Windows-Vista-Licensing-Changes.aspx

**Important Windows Vista Licensing Changes**
Ed Bott tells us about changes to the Windows Vista EULA. But that's not the whole story. Starting on Page 11, here is a synopsis of what I believe are the most far-reaching changes, as I have interpreted them:

- **Home Basic**
    - Can't copy ISO to your hard drive
    - Can't install to a network server
    - You may share files, printers, etc with a maximum of 5 network devices
    - You MAY NOT use Remote Desktop, only Remote Assistance
    - You MAY NOT use in Virtual PC | Virtual Server |VMWare
    - **Home Premium**
    - Still can't copy ISO to your hard drive
    - Still can't install to a network server
    - Sharing for 10 network devices
    - Still no Remote Desktop
    - Still no virtual hardware
    - 5 simultaneous Media Center Extender sessions (up from 3 in MCE 2005)
- **Ultimate**
    - Can copy ISO to your hard drive
    - Can install to a network server (I'm assuming for Terminal Server scenarios)
    - Sharing for 10 network devices
    - Can use Remote Desktop
    - Can use in a virtualized environment, BUT
        - Can't use DRM-protected content if Vista Ultimate is the "guest" OS
        - Can't use BitLocker if Vista Ultimate is the "guest" OS
    - 5 Media Center Extender sessions

I'm not sure how I feel about this yet. On one hand, I don't have a problem with it, cause I'll be using Ultimate anyways... but I have a feeling that other people probably will. Either way, I'm thinking maybe they should put this stuff at the top of the EULA, instead of burying it at the bottom. These are important things that people in a purchasing position need to know about.

Ed Bott wrote in his *Ed Bott's Microsoft Report* over on ZDNet - http://blogs.zdnet.com/Bott/?p=156 and he does a tit-for-tat with Paul Thurrott about what was, what is and what will come from Microsoft regarding Vista at http://blogs.zdnet.com/Bott/?p=158

**A sneaky change in Windows licensing terms**

*Update 16-Oct: For additional information about the new Windows Vista retail license, see "Get facts, not spin, about Vista's new license."*

I've seen several sites point to Microsoft's new Software License Terms page, which contains PDF versions of the license agreements for many Microsoft products. Most sites that have commented on the new Windows Vista licenses have picked up on this blurb from the Windows Vista Team Blog:

Two notable changes between Windows Vista license terms and those for Windows XP are: 1) failure of a validation check results in the loss of access to specific features (this is the SPP news you've likely been reading about this past week); and 2) an increase in our warranty period from 90 days to 1 year, which brings Windows in line with most other Microsoft products.

I read through the license agreement for Windows Vista Home Basic, Home Premium, and Ultimate (PDF) and saw lots of new language. Much of it just formalizes what Microsoft has been doing under separate agreements for some time, such as the Validation requirements introduced with Windows Genuine Activation.

But I have yet to see anyone point out one significant change in retail licensing terms. Think you can transfer that retail license to any machine you want? Think again. In Section 2, "Installation and Use Rights," the text reads:

Before you use the software under a license, you must assign that license to one device (physical hardware system). That device is the "licensed device."

Sections 15 and 16, "Reassign to Another Device," and "Transfer to a Third Party," are new. You can go read the exact terms for yourself. The sort version is that you may "reassign the license to another device **one time**" or "make a **one time** transfer of the software, and this agreement, directly to a third party." [emphasis added]

That limitation on retail licenses is a remarkable change. Previously, a retail license could be removed from one computer and reinstalled on another with no limits. Now, you get to reinstall one time and one time only.

I looked at the license agreement for Windows XP Professional (PDF) for comparison's sake. The difference is … interesting. Section 1, "Grant of License," says, "You may install, use, access, display and run one copy of the Product on a single computer, such as a workstation, terminal or other device ("Workstation Computer"). Section 4, "Transfer," describes what you can do with the underlying license:

Internal. You may move the Product to a different Workstation Computer. After the transfer, you must completely remove the Product from the former Workstation Computer. Transfer to Third Party. The initial user of the Product may make a one-time transfer of the Product to another end user.

With a retail version of Windows XP, there are no restrictions on the number of times you can transfer the software from one computer to another in your household or office. That's about to change for the worse in Vista, with only one lifetime transfer allowed. It makes the outrageous price difference between retail and OEM copies even more difficult to justify.

Will this affect a lot of people? Not really. Those most likely to be affected are hobbyists who constantly rebuild, replace, and upgrade systems. Presumably, the new two-machine limit will be enforced by Windows Product Activation.

I wonder why this change didn't make it into a press release?

The 14-page Vista Usage License from Microsoft can be found here:

http://download.microsoft.com/documents/useterms/Windows%20Vista_Ultimate_English_9d10381d-6fa8-47c7-83b0-c53f722371fa.pdf

The *Architosh* staff writers even feel the heat regarding the draconian measures that Microsoft is enforcing regarding virtualization and Vista on Macs as they quote Geoffrey Green over on *MacIntouch* about this issue - http://www.architosh.com/news/2006-10/2006a1016_mm-vistaoswars.html and http://www.macintouch.com/readerreports/virtualization/

And even Jeffrey Mincey over on Mac360 asks if Microsoft even wants Mac users to run Vista on their machines = http://www.mac360.com/index.php/mac360/comments/does_microsoft_want_macs_to_run_windows/


So stay tuned. This issue of licensing Operating Systems  and the rights of those who use them, is not going to go away any time soon.

# Rants, Raves and Revelations

By Harry {doc} Babad, November 2006

Internet Risks for Your and Yours – Don't Get Caught

For the last several months we at *macCompanion*, partially addressed Internet security for both the individual and corporations.

In the August issue of macC, I reviewed *Steal This Computer Book 4.0 – What They Won't Tell You About the Internet* by Wallace Wang [No Starch Press (O'Reilly Press)]

In the October macC issue of macC, Ted Bade & I talked about *The Internet: The Missing Manual: Taming the Jungles of the Internet* by David Pogue and J.D. Biersdorfer [Pouge Press, O'Reilly].

This month, moving from individuals to corporations, I *review Enemy at the Water Cooler — Real-Life Stories of Insider Threats and Enterprise Security Management Countermeasures* by Brian T. Contos [Syngress Press, O'Reilly & Associates Inc.]

As I was checking to figure out which of Paul Taylor's tips I would use in my column for November, I ran across the following article from Apple Barrel, Ridgecrest, CA in *Paul Taylor's Hint & Tips*.

It contains about as clear a set of guides and warning as I have seen. It deserves stand-alone attention, so here it is.

My data has been stolen but so far I'm safe. A federal government contractor's employee lists were not as secure as they should have been. I done what needed and am keeping my toes crossed, since I can't type w/o my fingers. Yes, I've done the notification thing and now check every statement as soon as I receive it.

When the subject of Internet fraud becomes mainstream — meat for such magazines as *Business Week* [www.businessweek.com], *Consumer Reports* www.consumerreports.org/main/home.jsp and *Time Magazine* www.time.com/time/archive/ we should all tune in – I have and will.

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**Ignore The Bait**
Reprinted with Paul Taylor's and Apple Barrel Permission

Tracy Baker (a digital Journalist) warns "Don't Get Hooked By Phishing Scams" and she offers some help to readers who may still be unsure about the dangers of the Internet.

You've become accustomed to deleting ridiculous Nigerian "money scams and all those spam messages promising to help you lose 50 pounds in five days, but this message looks different; it has the eBay logo and uses the same fonts as eBay's site. It contains links to eBay pages and is professionally written. It's telling you your account has been associated with fraudulent activity and is about to be suspended, unless you can provide some personal details to prove that everything is on the up-and-up.

As official as an email like this appears, don't take the bait! Millions of consumers rely on the Internet to shop, pay bills, and manage their financial accounts, and a new generation of scam artists is using a combination of social engineering and technological savvy to bilk unwary consumers out of their money or steal their identities. This practice is called phishing (that's short for pass-word harvesting fishing), and although the techniques used in this type of scam are timeless, the Internet has provided phishers with a vast ocean in which to cast their nets.

Phishing email messages differ in their specifics, but they all share a few common traits. First, they appear to come from a legitimate company, using the same graphics you'd expect to see at that company's web site. Second, they try to create a sense of urgency, telling recipients that their accounts are about to be suspended or are otherwise experiencing major problems. Third, these messages contain forms to fill out or links to online forms where users are supposed to enter personal information, such as an account password or a credit card number. Once you enter the data in the form and click submit, it is sent to the scammer's computer and he or she can use it to steal from you.

Phishing scam artists consistently come up with evermore-elaborate schemes to ply their illegal trade, but by following a few simple rules, you can play detective and catch them in the act instead of becoming their next victim.

**Rule#1: Pay Attention To URLs**
URLs (uniform resource locators) are the characters you type into your browser's address bar in order to visit a particular site, and a favorite trick among phishing scammers is to make users think they are going to one URL when they are really visiting another URL.

URLs can tell you a lot about the site you are visiting. The URL for our web site, for example, is http://www.smartcomputing.com. The ".com" portion is the top-level domain identifier (also called the domain extension), and generally it tells you what type of site it is. For example, ".com" identifier is mainly used for commercial web sites, whereas ".edu" is for educational institutions and ".org" is for nonprofit organizations. The companies most commonly targeted by phishing scammers mainly use ".com" top-level domains, so if you see a URL such as " http://www.ebay.org " or http://www.citibank.edu linked to a spam email, it's highly likely to be a site set up by a scam artist.

The most important part of the URL, as far as detecting a phishing site is concerned, is the domain name. This is the text to the left of the top-level domain identifier (such as "smartcomputing" in our example). All content at the Smart Computing web site is accessible via the "smartcomputing.com" domain name, so any additional text between the domain name and the top-level domain should raise a red flag.

For example, a web page located at " http://www.smartcomputing.scammer.com " would actually be located at the domain name "scammer.com" and a page at " http://www.ebay.customerservice.com " would actually be located at the domain name "customerservice.com," not at "ebay.com".

Any text that appears to the left of the domain name is a subdomain associated with the main domain. That's so important it bears repeating. Any text that appears to the left of the domain name is a subdomain associated with the main domain.

In the examples we just provided, "smartcomputing" would be a subdomain of "scammer.com" and "ebay" would be a subdomain of "customerservice.com". Ignore sub-domains and focus on the domain name when determining whether a link or URL is legitimate. Hyphens and symbols such as @ also are used to make a phish site's URL appear more legitimate, so watch for those, too.

Unfortunately, some scammers have figured out how to use a sophisticated exploit that displays a fake address bar (containing a legitimate-looking address that doesn't arouse suspicion) in a Web browser window, so other steps are necessary to fully protect yourself.

**Rule #2: Watch The Padlock**
All popular browsers display padlock, icons when user visits a secure site; these icons are generally in a lower corner of the browser window. When users visit secure sites, or secure portions of sites after they've logged in, the padlock icon appears and the URL in the address bar now begins with "https:" instead of the usual "http:" we see. Knowing this, if you ever see "https:" in the address bar but don't see a padlock icon displayed, the page isn't secure and it's likely you're visiting a phishing site, so don't fill out anything or click any links. However, even this method isn't entirely foolproof, as scam artists have figured out ways to forge padlock icons, so be sure to follow the other rules we cover for maximum protection.

**Rule #3: Type, Don't Click**
The Internet has conditioned us to click on hyperlinks to open new pages, but don't let that habit get the better of you when a seemingly urgent email arrives. One of the main techniques phishing scammers use to lull users into a false sense of security is to put links in an email — links that look like they point to a legitimate company site when they actually point to a phishing site. This is called link masking, and it's easy to spot and avoid if you know what to look for.

Some email applications enable users to hover a mouse pointer over a link to see a pop-up window displaying the actual link. For example, a scammer might send an email that has a " http://www.paypal.com " link, but when you place the mouse pointer over the link, the pop-up window reads " http://www.paypal.phishsite.com ." Of course, you should avoid clicking that link.

Also, most phishing sites use IP (Internet Protocol) addresses (such as 12.39.144.5) instead of domain names, so if you hover the pointer over a link and see a string of numbers, the link probably points to a phishing site.
Instead of clicking links in emails, type the URLs into your browser's address bar, but do so only if the links use the proper company domain name.

**Rule #4: Notice Login Inconsistencies**
Some scammers cover their tracks by sending victims to the legitimate company sites after collecting personal information. Common examples of this are phishing sites that ask users to enter usernames and passwords they would use to log in at legitimate sites, and then automatically connect users to those sites after collecting their valuable login information. If ever you attempt to log in to a legitimate account after following a hyperlink in an email, and the Web site rejects your login information even though you typed it correctly, it is likely you've just been scammed. Contact the legitimate company that the phishing scammer pretended to represent, let them know what happened, and change your login password immediately.

**Rule #5: Protect Bank Account Data At All Costs**
It's bad when scammers gain access to your credit card accounts, but at least most of these accounts are protected to the point where victims are liable for a maximum of $50 only. Debit card and bank accounts often don't have this level of user protection, so never divulge bank account information in response to an email.

[**Doc's note** – Credit card companies such as Visa and Master Card, but from only some banks, are affording customer the same protection on debit cards as the on credit cards. They foresee Federal Legislation to match that which some stated such as California are implementing.]

**Rule #6: Keep Personal Information Personal**
If you take nothing else away from this article, remember this: legitimate companies never should ask for personal information via email (and if they do, they're not worth doing business with anyway). Never fill out a form via an email, and never blindly follow links embedded in emails — no matter how official they appear to be. Scammers rely on input from you to do their work, so by trusting your instincts and never responding to email messages that ask for personal information, you can help force these jerks to find real jobs and earn their own money.
Original written by Tracy Baker from Smart Computing, February 2005 • Vol.16, Issue 2

Also check out Phishing Scams Grow Teeth & You're The Prey -
This Is Personal by Tracy Baker
http://www.computerpoweruser.com/Editorial/article.asp?article=articles/archive/c0606/34c06/34c06.asp&guid=

Apple Barrel, Ridgecrest, CA
Hints and Tips, June 2005
http://www1.iwvisp.com/croton/

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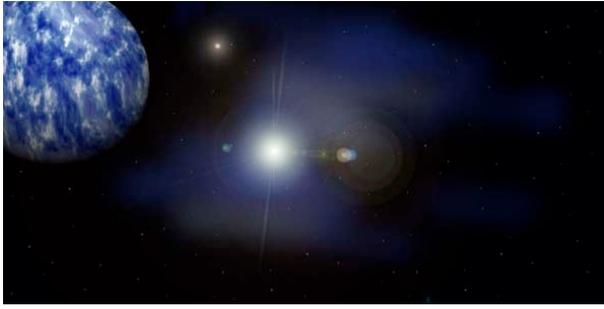
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**Cross-Platform Software Development from a Macintosh Perspective: C++ Application Programming with REALbasic**

by Jonathan Hoyle, November 2006
jhoyle at macCompanion dot com

For over a year now, we have been touring some of the more popular cross-platform development choices from a Macintosh perspective. These are the topics we have covered thus 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
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- **Converting Legacy Frameworks**:
http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/july2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm
- **Basic compilers (Part III)**:
http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/october2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm

We began this series with a focus on C++ development, and we come back around to focus on it again. Despite the inroads made by languages like Java (for the web), C# (on Windows) and Objective-C (on the Mac), C++ still remains the predominant professional language in the market today. It is truly the *lingua franca* of software development, even if it is beginning to show signs of age due to its lack of modern language features, such as automatic garbage collecting. There is no more powerful language today than C++, yet it still suffers from a particularly annoying Achilles' heel; the API available with C/C++ is one for console applications only. Creating even the most elementary dialog-based "Hello, World!" app is outside C++'s native capabilities. Building a C++ GUI app requires platform-specific function calls, which are not in general, compatible on other operating systems.

**Cross-Platform C++ Approaches**
Although there exist a number of large cross-platform frameworks, such as *Qt* and *wxWidgets* (each having been reviewed last year), their API's are large and daunting. *REALbasic*, on the other hand, is a very intuitive RAD (Rapid Application Development) compiler which can easily generate sophisticated GUI-based applications. Most C++ programmers think of *REALbasic* as simply an IDE for Basic programming; however, it is also a very powerful GUI generator which can be accessed by C++ code.

In last January's column on *REALbasic*, there was a small section entitled *Mixing REALbasic with C++*. In it, I spoke of the ability for C/C++ programmers to access *REALbasic's* cross-platform GUI capabilities. In this article, we shall give the specifics on how this is done. The remainder of this article assumes that you have a workable knowledge of C and C++, and some familiarity with *REALbasic* or *Visual Basic*.

**Designing Using Model-View-Controller**
Model-View-Controller (MVC) is a way to architect software, which separates an application's core data (*the Model*) from its user interface (*the View*). Typically, the *Model* is written in a platform-independent manner, so MVC allows the developer to create a separate *View* for each platform. The *Model* can be written with Xcode, CodeWarrior, Visual C++, or essentially any C compiler. Likewise, the *View* can also be written in any tool, although we will be focusing on REALbasic for this article. The code that interfaces between the *Model* and the *View,* is called the *Controller*. Since we wish to keep our C++ code platform-independent, we will place our *Controller* on the *REALbasic* side of the fence.

Note that a well-architected MVC application need not require a cross-platform framework or application at all. For example, by using available platform-dependent RAD tools, such as *Interface Builder* for Mac OS X and *Visual C# for .NET* on Windows, thin platform-specific GUI apps can be created very easily. These modern tools are dynamic and easy to learn and are often more efficient for learning than complicated cross-platform framework APIs. Using *REALbasic* for the *View* offers nearly the best of both worlds: a cross-platform GUI with an intuitive and powerful API.

From a Macintosh C++ programmer's perspective, *REALbasic* can be thought of as a cross-platform replacement for *Interface Builder*. Typical Mac OS X applications have their models built in C++ with *Xcode* and house the *View* as GUI modules inside *Interface Builder* .nib files, which live inside the application package bundle. Substituting IB with RB, the role is somewhat reversed: the *Model* is still built in C++ with *Xcode*, but it will be built as a dynamic library and this will live inside the *REALbasic* application package. The dynamic library will sometimes be referred to as the server and the *REALbasic* application as the client.

**Building Dynamic Libraries**
Creating a dynamic library is fairly straightforward, once you know how it's done. If your project already exists, simply add a DLL target. *Xcode* creates Mach-O dynamic libraries, which are called *dylib's*, and they typically have a "lib" prefix and a ".dylib" extension. REAL Software's Jonathan Johnson has an excellent web page outlining a step-by-step procedure of creating dylib's in Xcode usable with REALbasic: http://www.nilobject.com/?p=184 .

For those wishing to be backward compatible with Mac OS 9, you will be creating PEF/CFM dynamic libraries, called *Shared Libraries*, and you will be using another compiler, such as *Metrowerks CodeWarrior*. For Windows compilation, dynamic libraries are called *DLL's*, and they can be written with *Visual C++* or *CodeWarrior* for Windows. I will use the term "DLL" to describe any of these dynamic library types.

**Wrapping Your C Model Code**
Once you have completed writing the model portion of your project, you are ready to make it accessible to a client application. Let's begin by taking a simple example. Suppose we have the following ANSI C functions we wish to expose to our GUI:

```
void foo(int parm1, double parm2);
int bar(const char *parm);
```

For Mach-O libraries, such those built by *Xcode*, these functions are automatically exported by default. However, if you are compiling for Windows (e.g. *Visual C++*) or PEF on the Macintosh (e.g. *CodeWarrior*), you will need to use the __declspec(dllexport) directive to tell the compiler that these functions are to be exported:

```
// Exported functions associated with the MyModel class
#ifdef __MACH__
    #define export
#else
    #define export __declspec(dllexport)
#endif

  export void foo(int parm1, double parm2);
  export int bar(const char *parm);
```

Finally, you must take care to note whether your C functions were compiled with a standard C compiler or with a C++ compiler. Typically, you can determine this from the source file extension: if it end with .c, it usually means that it was compiled as C; if its extension is .cpp, .cp or .cc, it usually means it was compiled with C++. In the event your code was compiled with C++, you will need to place your export definitions inside an extern "C" wrapper, as such:

```
extern "C"
{
    export void foo(int parm1, double parm2);
    export int bar(const char *parm);
};
```

And now your C functions are available to the client GUI app!


**Wrapping Your C++ Model Code**
C++ programmers will typically want to export class definitions, not just C functions. To do this, the class must be thunked down into C using wrapper functions. For example, suppose we wish to expose the following C++ class:

```
// A C++ model class used in the library's implementation
class MyModel
{
    public:
    MyModel();
    virtual ~MyModel();
    void foo(int parm1, double parm2);
    int bar(const char *parm);

    protected:
        // Remaining implementation
        ...
};
```

Our client application will be accessing the class only through simplified wrapper functions, which we can define as follows:

```
// Exported function definitions
extern "C"
{
      export int MyModel_CreateHandle();
      export void MyModel_DestroyHandle(int modelHdl);
      export void MyModel_Foo(int modelHdl, int parm1, double parm2);
      export int MyModel_Bar(int modelHdl, const char *parm);
}

// Exported function implementations
int MyModel_CreateHandle()
{
      // Return this pointer as an int handle
      return (int) new MyModel;
}

void MyModel_DestroyHandle(int modelHdl)
{
      // Convert the handle back to a pointer before deleting
      delete ((MyModel *) modelHdl);
}

void MyModel_Foo(int modelHdl, int parm1, double parm2)
{
      // Convert the handle back to a pointer before dereferencing
      ((MyModel *) modelHdl)->foo(parm1, parm2);
}

int MyModel_Bar(int modelHdl, const char *parm)
{
      // Convert the handle back to a pointer before dereferencing
      return ((MyModel *) modelHdl)->bar(parm);
}
```

Most C++ methods will be able to be thunked down to C in this fashion. You can see from the example above that we used the int type to hold our class pointer, so we are assuming a 32-bit library for this particular examples. Our REALbasic application will treat modelHdl as an opaque reference and not be concerned with the fact that it is actually a memory address. You'll note that memory allocation and deallocation is done in the server, not in the client.

**Accessing Exported Functions from within REALbasic**
It is important to remember that client application must be of the same compilation type as the server it uses. For example, if the server is built as an Intel-based Mach-O dylib, then only an Intel-based Mach-O client app will be able to access it. Likewise with PowerPC Mach-O, PowerPC PEF, Windows and Linux. To build an Intel-based or universal binary client, you must use *REALbasic 2006 Release 4* or later.

Once you have your functions exported from the DLL, they are now available to be called by your REALbasic client application. At the top of a REALbasic method in which you call a library routine, you must Declare the exported function before using it. If our exported C function were of the form:

```
extern "C" ReturnType FcnName(pType parm, ...);
```

then the REALbasic declaration must be of the form:

```
Declare Function FcnName lib LibName(parm as pType, ...) as ReturnType
```

If ReturnType is void , then the word Function is replaced with Sub and as ReturnType is dropped. For Mach-O, LibName is a complete pathname to the dylib, which can be relative to the Unix executable (note that the Unix executable live two levels beneath the app's bundle). For non-Mach-O targets, just the library name will do if the library is in the same path as the application. REALbasic source code for a lib may look like this:

```
#if TargetCarbon
    const ModelLib = "MyModel Shared Library"
#endif

#if TargetMachO
    const ModelLib = "@executable_path/../../../libMyModel.dylib"
#endif

#if TargetWin32
    const ModelLib = "MyModel.dll"
#endif

#if TargetLinux
    const ModelLib = "libMyModel.so"
#endif

Declare Function MyModel_CreateHandle lib ModelLib() as integer
Declare Sub MyModel_DestroyHandle lib ModelLib(modelHdl as integer)
Declare Sub MyModel_Foo lib ModelLib(modelHdl as integer, parm1 as integer, parm2
as double)
Declare Function MyModel_Bar lib ModelLib(modelHdl as integer, parm as Cstring)
as integer

Dim modelHandle as integer
Dim barValue as integer

modelHandle = MyModel_CreateHandle()
MyModel_Foo(modelHandle, 12, 3.0)
barValue = MyModel_Bar(modelHandle, "Hello, World")
MyModel_DestroyHandle(modelHandle)

return barValue
```

**Conclusion**

By following some very simple design and implementation principles, Macintosh application projects can be easily transitioned into cross-platform projects with the use of REALbasic as a functional replacement for Interface Builder. For those interested, I created a sample C++/REALbasic project for the *MacHack 2005* conference, which you can download by visiting: http://www.jonhoyle.com/machack/.

# MyAppleStuff

## The European Perspective
by Chris Marshall, November 2006

After my September "Mad Mac Month" October has been a much cheaper month, not only in that I haven't purchased any more stuff, but also because I have been busy setting it all up, so I haven't been out much at all. I love all the preparation and planning, the organizing of the equipment and the environment, so it has to be said that I have had a great month ☺ I also had a reality check, as my parents were over from the UK before they went back to Florida, so I had to tidy up and upgrade their Windows Notebooks ☹

The month didn't start off well though, as my screen fell fowl of the demon called Parcel Force Worldwide. I won't bore you with the story here, but I did blog about it at the time. Suffice to say that I had no control over using them, as I had vowed never to use them after they lost my PC when they shipped it to Spain 5 years ago. On the positive side, I love the screen, although the lack of the Mac Mini meant that initially I had to hook it up to the PowerBook. which was fine. Although in "Mirroring" mode, it gave me a 1" black margin around the whole of the screen, which was a little disappointing. In Dual Screen mode, it worked a treat with every pixel of the 23" screen working perfectly. 1-0 to eBay so far, as I can't fault the screen, and I saved £200.

Next up was the iMac for my wife, which gave me a bit of a dilemma! It didn't arrive until she had flown to the UK. So I was torn between waiting for her to come back so that she could enjoy the whole process of unpacking her first Mac and setting it all up.  When she came back it was all set up and ready for her to use. What would you have done? It was a bit like being bought two ties by your wife at Christmas… whichever one you wear first, you know you will get the "What's wrong with the other one?' question! If you thought the delivery issues with the Screen were bad, you really wouldn't believe what Apple and TNT managed to do with the iMac! Again I blogged about it at http://chrismarshall.vox.com/library/post/tnt-a-story-of-incompetence.html so if you want to read about truly poor service, go ahead and take a look ☹

When the screen arrived, I decided to video the opening process, not so much to capture the event, more to have some evidence in case it had got damaged in transit or wasn't in the condition that the eBay seller had indicated. I have decided this is a really neat thing to do with high value items, as it doubles up as a record that you owned the item in case of a future insurance claim. So as the current trend is to share these experiences with everyone, I have posted the Screen video on my blog.

Again, the lack of the Mac Mini meant that my first experience with the LaCie drive wasn't as anticipated i.e. stacked with the Mac Mini, but hooked up to the PowerBook it was excellent. The hub factor with the extra USB and FireWire ports are already proving invaluable.

 The iMac has been truly awesome though. My wife loves it and has found the Mac OS extremely easy and intuitive to use.  I had zero problems setting it up and transferring her data, but I did have a problem leaving it to her and going back to my "very slow" PowerBook G4, even with 2 GB RAM. She has even started her very first at http://sandramarshall.vox.com/. It was pretty funny actually, as she posted some pictures of the iMac and straight away got a comment with a question about the Skype phone she has connected. Not sure she was that impressed that she was getting "techy" questions and she hasn't been blogging much since!

Finally, the Mac Mini. I got a call from Apple to say that the delay was down to the shortage of 160GB hard drives. They said they had lots of the 120GB and 80GB in stock, so I cancelled the order and placed a new order for one with a 120GB hard drive. So far so good. They confirmed the order saying it would ship in three days and the supervisor at Apple rang me up to say he would try and ensure it was a priority order. The day before it was due to ship, I got an email saying the shipment date had slipped EIGHT days. Talk about feeling conned. In all seriousness, Apple has gone so far down in my perception of their customer service, that I have to say they now sit in my all time worst 5 companies ever!!

*My 'Casts*

| Fun | General | Mac | News | Review | Sport | Technical |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| French Maid TV | The Daily Mayo | BRITISH MAC | Today | Mark Kermode's Film | The Football Phone-In 606 | AV Forums |
| Ricky Gervais | Daily Breakfast | Macnation | Telegraph | iTunes New Music Tuesday | Nike Football | commandN |
| Tiki Bar TV | | Mac Roundtable | | | The Game | Diggnation |
| The President's Weekly Radio Address | | MacCast | | | Podrunner | Engadget |
| | | MacBreak Video | | | | Life on line with Bob Parsons |
| | | macTV | | | | Inside The Net |
| | | Mac ReviewCast | | | | This week in TECH |
| | | Typical Mac User | | | | |

These are all available via the iTunes Store at http://www.apple.com/itunes/. Note the new name change from Apple ☺

**Under Consideration**

:MacBreak Video as I am just not getting anything that I am really that interested in watching.

: Life on line with Bob Parsons as I am just not getting round to listening to it at all.

**Recently Deleted**

:The Daily Nut. For one reason or another I got a couple of weeks behind with this, and realized that I just didn't miss it. I worked out that it was one of those 'casts that I sort of forced myself to keep up with, and that the vast majority of the content just wasn't too my taste. I sort of liked it, but can't say that I miss it at all.

: New York Times Book Review. This is an interesting one to delete as I have started to get some ideas on books to read through a couple of "neighbors" that I have hooked up with on my vox blog at http://chrismarshall.vox.com.

**Just Added**

: The President's Weekly Radio Address. Extremely irreverent and funny, proving that "the truth hurts!!!"

; Podrunner. Having bought my wife a Nano and Nike + Sports kit I downloaded an album from the iTunes Store, but came across this 'cast which is absolutely brilliant for running to.

**Featured 'Casts** – Mark Kemode's Film

This is a weekly segment in The Daily Mayo radio show on BBC Radio. Mark has a PhD in Horror Films (or something like that). Seriously – he has a PhD in watching films. What a great way to spend three years and of course now he spends all his life watching films! He has strong opinions on what a good film should be, but he is very unbiased and appreciates pretty much every genre of film.

*European News*

Not a lot to be honest. Apple came in with some strong numbers, up 27% year on year in Europe "broadly in line with the group as a whole" according to Pascal Cagni, head of Apple Europe.

It was good to hear iWoz reviewed and discussed by Steve himself on Simon Mayo's program. I certainly will read this book at some stage in the future.

In recent months, I have tried to give you an insight into life here in Spain, and in particular the difference in culture and how that effects the technology scene here. Well this fact from the Confederation of Banks will give you a good idea of the differences with say the UK or UDA; 7 out of 10 Spanish men still sleep in their childhood bead at the age of 34. Woman leave home on average at 28, men at 30.

Like many people I enjoy a good game, I own a PSO and a PS2 and I don't use them anywhere nearly enough, so I am not in the market for a PS3 a Wii or any new device. I know many that are though, so it seems that Sony is going to alienate a fair few people over in Europe, if the article on Gizmodo was true.

> "Sony sure does know how to make friends. It emerged today that Sony fully intends to screw its most loyal European customers (you know, the crazy people who intend to import a PlayStation 3 before the official European launch) by using the "full scope of the law" to prevent such imports from happening. Sony says it's trying to "protect consumers" from the horrors of buying a game console that won't work with domestically released games and Blu-ray movies. Yeah, because the people who have the money to import a PS3 into Europe don't understand the consequences."

Skype on the other hand seem to be courting the English with the offer that has been in the US for a while;

> "Skype users who buy Skype Credit to pay for international and mobile calls will get six months free calls to UK landlines"

And my favourite little tit bit of news;

> "large screens can offer gains of up to 65 per cent in productivity on a variety of specific office tasks, an Apple-sponsored study claims."

So if the rumours of a 50" HD Cinema Screen are true, just think how much more productive we could all be ☺

*Digital Media Solution*

I have very little to say on this at the moment, as I am really just waiting for the Mac Mini to turn up. I have a question though. Does anyone know of a USB device that I can hook up to the Mac Mini that would allow me to use the Apple Remote from a different room? I am looking at an option where I have the Mac Mini in the study connected to the TV in the lounge (I have a cable running through the wall that allows me to do this), so it would be good to run a device from the Mac Mini into the lounge that would allow me to bring up Front Row on the TV,

If you can help please drop me an email. Thanks.

*And Finally ………… what has iTunes done for me?*

Some time ago I heard a discussion on how people use iTunes. I think it was on the *Mac Roundtable*, but I am not 100% sure. The debate got me thinking about what iTunes has done for me in terms of my own listening behaviors. I buy more music because of iTunes than I would without it. Partly because I don't really have access to that much music here in Spain (through choice), partly because I am not traveling at all this year, having made 42 flights in 2005, so I am not killing hours in airport shops, but mainly because I hate with a passion larger book, music, DVD stores. I keep trying to go in and browse, but after 10 minutes I just feel so overwhelmed by the choices, that I have to leave!

 I buy about 20 albums a year from iTunes, mostly new stuff, sometimes the new releases from favourite artists, and occasionally replacements for old albums, or greatest hits from my youth.

The real plus for me of iTunes is that having loaded up all my old CD's (about 60GB worth) I now listen to them a lot more than I ever used to. It is still nice to pick a CD out and stick it in the B&O when people are round, but on a day-to-day basis as background music, I just love the fact with iTunes it is just so easy to "see" an older album and hit the play button.

This has been an unexpected bonus – a free piece of software that has given me better value from my existing investment in music, a really win-win as far as I am concerned.

**About Chris Marshall**

Educated in the UK and USA, I have lived and worked in the UK, USA, and Spain. I currently live in Spain in a state of semi-retirement where I spend most of my time developing my skills on the Mac and understanding the significance and opportunities of the "Web 2.0" explosion.

I have recently started writing reviews and articles for *macCompanion*[1] and for *The Mac ReviewCast*[2].

From a "day job" perspective I don't really have one at the moment. I am doing some PC training and support locally and have been advising a couple of small start-up businesses. When I do work, it is a business consultant[3] with an emphasis on small and start-up businesses and mentoring individuals. I am particular keen to help US organizations establish themselves in Europe. I am also keen to develop my writing skills.

Frappr: http://www.frappr.com/myapplestuff

MySpace: http://www myspace.com/myapplestuff

Blog: http://www.myapplestuff.com

Digg: http://www.digg.com/ (MyAppleStuff)

Flickr: http://www flickr.com/photos/chrismpics/

Family: http://web.mac.com/chris.marshall

Personal: http://www.chrismarshall.vox.com
YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/myapplestuff

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[1] http://www maccompanion.com/
[2] http://www.surfbits.com/
[3] http://www m2associates.info

## Geek Speak: Random Mac Stuff You Need to Know

By Matt Brewer, November 2006

http://www.macfanatic.net/blog/
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## Using the Growl Notification System

After using your computer for days on end, you get used to the way that it works. Users often setup a routine that is just so and think that they are as productive with their machine as they are ever going to get. I'm here today to tell you that just because you have a Mac and you are more productive than the rest of the world already, you can do better my friend. All you need is a little help from Growl.

Growl really is a pretty awesome technology. First off it's open source development, so there is a lot of work that goes into the project and it really benefits from that. It's a unique way of using all the pop-up windows and such that users get used to when using a system. It's a fresh, very customizable, and downright sexy way to get the most out of your computing experience. Enough with the intro, let's get you up and running.

Once you download the disc image from the link located at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Growl, you're going to open that up and use the provided installer script to get your up and running. This will enable a lot of applications to take advantage of Growl right from the start. A few examples of these applications are the latest Yahoo Messenger 3.0 Beta, Ecto - a wonderful Mac OS X and Windows blogging tool, Newsfire - an amazing RSS reader, the latest app from Dave Wantabe - XTorrent, and several other applications. However, to really get the most out of the tool, you're going to want to add Growl support to some of your most used applications and then you're going to want to customize the boxes so that they are really sexy and informative at the same time.

### Adding Growl Support to Mail, Safari, iTunes and Camino

We're going to add Growl support to a few applications that I'm pretty sure everyone uses at least on a semi-frequent basis. I would say that most Mac users that aren't using some sort of webmail-based solution are using Mail or Entourage, and as I don't use Entourage anymore, I'm not sure if there is a plugin for it to enable Growl support. However, Mail has a nice little plugin that will allow you to get the subject lines of incoming messages and a snippet of the message in a nice bubble window on your screen.

You just need to install it and restart Mail to be up and running. When new mail messages arrive, you should see your Growl bubble appear on your Desktop. You're all set!

The process for adding support to both Safari and iTunes are similar. You're going to install the plugins from the "Extras" folder in the disk image, and then restart the applications. Keep in mind that for all of these applications, there are tons of stuff that you can customize, so continue reading to get to the goods.

To add support for Camino you're going to need to download the plugin from the following link, then open the disc image, install it, and restart Camino, keeping in mind that there are other customizations to be made later. Download Camino support for Growl here; http://willmore.eu/plugins/growlcamino.html.


**Customizing Growl**

I have to say that what really made me take a more serious look at Growl was the Smoke style windows. Some of the other styles are really nice and everyone has their preferred taste. However, the Smoke style really embodies what I believe to be the latest in OS X interface design. You'll hear more about this style from me as Apple is adopting this design in several applications in Leopard with their HUD windows. If you've used the latest Webkit builds (the open-source development version behind Safari), than you would have used the updated Inspector palette that has the same design. Aperture and iPhoto 6 also embody a lot of this design.

To change the default design to something that works for you, you're going to need to fire up System Preferences (located in your Applications folder, or just use Spotlight) and click the "Growl" system preference pane at the bottom of the window. From there you have a wealth of choices to make in customizing both the behavior and style of Growl.

You can quickly and easily pick a style by choosing the "Display Style" button in the "General" tab when you first open up System Preferences. You can also click on the "Display Options" tab to more finely tune your color options, the opacity of the windows and more. Play around with all of these settings to your heart's content and make your Growl notifications look true outstanding. To preview all of the changes that you're making, there is a small button (and I missed it until a friend pointed it out to me) in the "Display Options" tab at the bottom right-hand corner of the window that says "Preview". Click that and you get a small Growl window so you can see what you're changes look like.
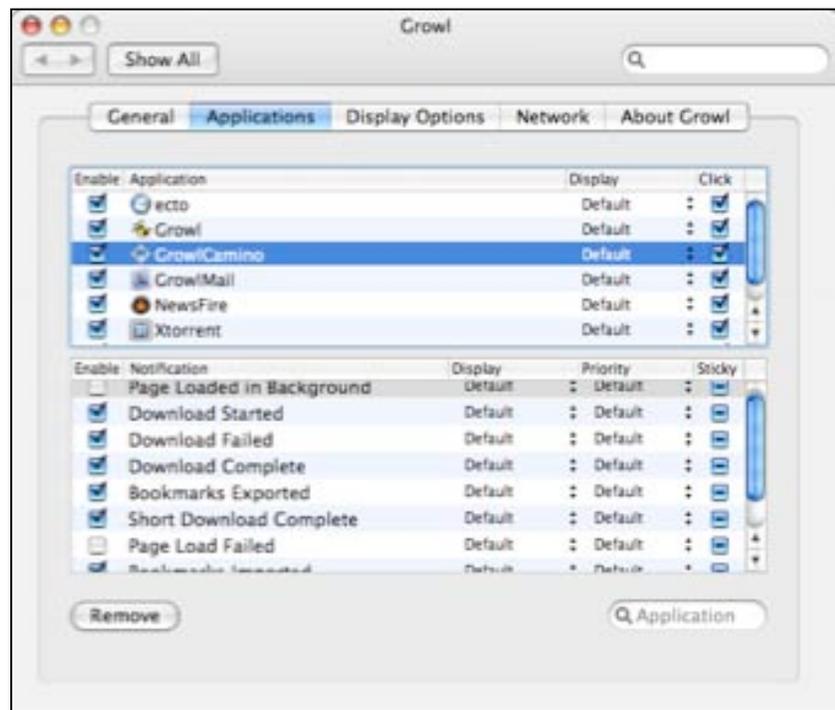


There are a few other customizations that you can make to keep you running on your toes, however. First off, GrowlCamino places it's own preference pane in your Camino Preferences as well as in System Preferences, so check both areas to make some tweaks, but the basic setup should be just fine for everyone. You can also make a lot of tweaks to each applications behavior by using the "Applications" tab in the Growl area of System Preferences. A few applications, like Newsfire, don't even use Growl by default and you have to enable it if you want to use it. Just select that application and put a checkbox by the feature that you want the notifications to appear for. Other applications have settings to change, so that you can be notified more or less, just to your liking.


There are several more applications available to make using your Mac more productive and as most people tend to spend a lot of time using email, one site that I highly recommend visiting because of pure wealth of add-ons for various mail applications for Mac is amazing. Check that site out here; http://www.hawkwings.net/

**Contact Info**

You can always send me an email at mbrewer at macCompanion dot com or visit my website at http://www.macfanatic.net/blog/for more information about me and my ramblings. I also produce a weekly audio podcast taking an in-depth review of cool and new Mac applications, along with tips, developer interviews, and the occasional tutorial.

# Ivory Tower - November 2006

By Ted Bade

I think the newest set of Apple commercials is having a good effect for Apple. Why is this? Because people keep telling me about them. No, not my Macintosh friends, my non-Mac friends (or should we call them future Mac owners?)

I have been a pro-Macintosh player for a long, long time. Everyone that knows me knows this. As a general rule, all my non-Mac friends make a habit of letting me know when things aren't going well in Macintosh-land. I am sure most Macintosh users are familiar with the routine.

But recently, more and more of the people in this group have been coming to me with tales of woe about the latest virus attack/crash/ or other Window's based horror stories and often the tale is connected to a laugh about one of the new Apple commercials. "That PC guy is funny, but it reminds me of my PC." I believe that the common home computer user likes these commercials because they hit home. There are too many #@#$@ types of malicious applications for Windows. Also there are a lot of empty promises from real software companies. Many pieces of software for the PC say it will do this or that, but it never really works or at least not exactly as one would expect. How come you Macintosh people never seem to get pissed off at your computers?

I fancy that I see a shrouded look of hope in their eyes. Is it possible that any of what these commercials imply could be true? Should one even dare to hope? They hope, yet, having been burned so many times in the past, they are afraid to trust. All we can do is truthfully answer their questions. Often evangelism is too strong and will scare people away. In other cases, this is exactly what is needed.

Often real life examples are the best. Recently, when talking about doing my finances on the computer with a friend the question came up about keeping paper registers. My PC friend said she would never keep digital only records because she was afraid of loosing data. She then asked me, "How many times have you lost data because of crash?" I had to answer truthfully, I curled my thumb and forefinger, and held it up to her, zero. That is kind of scary to a person that was currently recovering from a virus disaster and had done so several other times in the past. But it is absolutely true.

However, I don't think everything is perfect in Apple-land. There are a number of things in Mac OS X that could be improved. Right now, I am really annoyed with the latest version of iPhoto. Slowly, but surely Apple is turning this application into troublesome bloatware.

In the older version, I could use the slide show function to review the images in a album or those that I just imported. With the latest version, if I do this, a slide show file is created. I didn't want to save it, I was just using it to review some images. Which means I now have to do the extra step of deleting the created slide show file.

Speaking of slideshows, in this new version there doesn't seem to be a way to set the generic slideshow default. Yes, there is a button that says save, but it apparently saves only for the slide show one is creating, not as a generic thing. I don't want the Ken Burn's effect when I am reviewing images. Why? Because I want to see the whole picture. Having it slide back and forth across the screen is a nice effect for kiosks, but when one wants to see an image, detail is lost. So every time I want to review some images with a slide show, not only do I have to delete the slideshow file after I am done, but I have to remember to turn off the Ken Burn's effect before I start.

While I am ranting about iPhoto, another blatant lack in this program is portability of my albums. I have a desktop machine. I use the desktop machine to work with my photos. When I want top bring my photos to show friends, I use my PowerBook, not my desktop machine. I think this is pretty typical for a Mac user. One would think that Apple would make it very easy for me to do this. But alas, they don't.

Since I don't want all my photos on the PowerBook, I only move those albums I want to show this time. If I move the images from one machine to the other, the organization of the images is lost, which is annoying, since I spent hours arranging them. If I copy the album over (to keep the organization), I have to include copying duplicates, since iPhoto won't put the photo that is already on the PowerBook into the transferred album. I even tried to copy the album to a CD, so I could use the CD on another Mac. Somehow the organization of the images was lost. It was like I dropped a physical album on the ground, randomly picked up the photos that fell out, and placed them back into the album in no particular order.

How long is it going to take Apple to realize that some, perhaps even many, of their customers have multiple Macs: a desktop and a portable? I don't want to share my photos over a network. I want to pick my album up from my workroom and bring it with me to show my friends, which includes their organization.

This is beginning to sound more and more like the what I would expect from Microsoft and not from Apple. Sure it is minor stuff, but it is the annoying minor stuff that always gets in the way. I doubt there is anything better on the Windows side. I just wish Apple would become more Apple-ish than more Microsoft-ish!

**Macs in more places** - Apple announced that it is working a deal with Circuit City and Best Buy to carry Macs and Macintosh-related software. That's pretty cool. The more places that sell Macs, the more likely people will buy them!

Keep your eyes open for Mac products if you visit these stores, and definitely support them if it is convenient for you to do so. I it important to let these stores know there is a market for Apple's products.

**Apple financial results** - Wow! - Apple released its 4th quarter financial information in mid-October. It was an excellent quarter for Apple. Sales of Macs and iPods both were way up. Sales of Macs rose considerably moving Apple's market share up to 6.1% of the US market. Apple hasn't seen this position in a long while.

According to Apple, http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2006/oct/18results.html  they shipped a record 1,610,000 Macs and 8,729,000 iPods which represents a 30% growth in Mac sales and 35% in iPod sales over the same quarter last year. This is making it a really great year for Apple and for the Macintosh.

These figures must have also pleased investors, since the stock price rose significantly after this announcement. According to one report I saw on the Mac News Network site, http://www.macnn.com/articles/06/10/19/ml.on.apples.q4/, research firm Merrill Lynch said that Apple beat their estimates for sales and profit. I believe they outdid other estimates as well. Some people even called this a "blow out" quarter for Apple! Which means that investors are finding Apple to be a good investment. It has been fun watching Apple's stock price rise this past month.

Apple being strong financially is a good things for all Macintosh fans, since it means they will continue to innovate and create those wonderful computers we all love. Let's hope they continue with this trend and more and more people come to enjoy our platform!

**Apple scored as "most reliable" computer** - A study finds that Apple and another computer company called Lenovo, are the most reliable computers, according to an article found on the TechWhack news site http://news.techwhack.com/4552/apple-and-lenovo/.

Well being considered the most reliable computer is probably good for something. ;-). Never-the-less it is nice to hear positive comments about Apple and Macs. Keep up the good work Apple.

(By the way, in case you are not familiar with Lenovo, this is the name of the company that took over IBM's PC division.)

**Have your IT friends read this article** - The world of computers is constantly changing, or as engineers like to say, in flux. No company more so than Apple fits the description of constantly changing. Because of this and many businesses fear of change, many "myths" have been created related to Apple and the Macintosh.

Every so often, someone publishes an article explaining how the myths are not really true. These articles are great ones to share with everyone, especially those people responsible for buying computers for a business.

I recently bumped into such an article on the Mac News World site, http://www.macnewsworld.com/story/PwnRHOVCcL6vZf/An-Apple-for-the-Enterprise.xhtml.  It's a must-read and must-share article. I won't say more about it. Read the article yourself!

**Is there a serious quality control issue?** - We are all glad to hear that Apple is selling more Macs and even more happy to welcome the influx of new Macintosh users to our family. However, as Apple ramps up production, there are signs of a serious lack of quality control.

Most Macintosh portable users are probably aware of the recent bad news about batteries. Briefly, due to some manufacturing problem, the batteries could overheat and burn up the laptop and in some violent cases, many things around them! While this isn't specifically a Macintosh problem, it is part of the problem. The batteries were manufactured by SONY Corporation and were used in a variety of portable computers including Apple. In late October a SONY executive made a formal apology about the incident.

Recently we have been hearing of some serious problems with the new MacBooks. There seems to be a variety of little, yet annoying problems with these first generation Apple Intel laptops. The biggest problem is one that has its own name, "Random shutdown syndrome" or RSS. Apparently, some MacBooks shutdown randomly, sometimes several times a day. I would find this very annoying as I am sure any Mac portable user would.

While these problems are more annoying to longtime Macintosh owners, than newer PC converts, it doesn't help Apple's reputation at all. Think about it, if I was a convert from a Windows environment and I listened to all the ads and noise that Macintosh users make about how dependable the Macintosh is, then got one only to find it is little better than the PC I replaced, I wouldn't be shouting my joy to all my other PC friends.

Many people are wondering why this is happening. Is it lack of quality control? This would mean that the design of the computers is sound, but because of poor manufacturing practices they fail? If true, it would suggest that the factories that Apple is using to manufacture their computers are not reliable. Can anything be done about this?

Don't take this wrong, but it seems to me that most US manufacturing has taken a turn for the worse over the past couple of decades. It seems that the penny pinchers have cut almost every ounce of quality from manufactured products in their attempt to maximize profit. As one that is opposed to slave or near slave labor, I often wonder about the quality of products manufactured under these conditions. How can a person who is forced to do something for little or no compensation, consistently create a satisfactory product? Is it worth saving a few dollars to cause humans to be treated as less than human? I don't think so.

Ultimately, we will all pay the big price for our lack of concern in these matters. Products will fail just when they are needed the most and the only the top executives that made all the profit will be happy with the situation. We will be forced to buy and re-buy products as they fail faster and faster.

If anyone from Apple is listening, take heed. You won't gain marketshare, if you pull people into your market with a myth. For they will discover the myth and quickly the flow of new Mac users will cease.

In any case, as I am finishing up this article, Apple has released a firmware update for the MacBooks that is supposed to resolve the random shutdown syndrome. We shall see what really happens.

Until next month... Keep on doing that Macintosh thing!

# MacFevre

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## How to Make an AudioBook, Part 3
by Wayne Lefevre, November 2006

In this session, we will use basically the same principles as we did in the last section at http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/October2006/Columns/MacFevre.htm, only this time we will be splitting it into true chapters. You may want to actually rip all your CD's onto your computer with this procedure, as sometimes CD's will not conveniently end with a chapter, but start on one CD and end on the next. Again we will use all the tools as the previous, only we will be adding the script Track Splicer. iTunes can join tracks, but only if they're consecutive CD tracks, and you haven't imported them. Again, not an option if a chapter spans across two CD's. This script allows you to join any two (or more) tracks, provided that they're not protected or streams, and they are the same format and bitrate.

It just so happens that the first disc of Pompeii contains the first four chapters in their entirety. As you can see, I



| Name | Time | Artist | Size | Track # | Kind | Album |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 1 Chapter 1 | 5:49 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 5.4 MB | 1 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 2 Chapter 1 | 4:54 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 4.5 MB | 2 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 3 Chapter 1 | 5:27 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 5 MB | 3 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 4 Chapter 2 | 6:21 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 5.9 MB | 4 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 5 Chapter 2 | 3:55 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 3.6 MB | 5 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 6 Chapter 2 | 4:04 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 3.8 MB | 6 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 7 Chapter 2 | 6:05 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 5.6 MB | 7 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 8 Chapter 2 | 2:43 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 2.6 MB | 8 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 9 Chapter 2 | 4:05 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 3.8 MB | 9 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 10 Chapter 3 | 7:50 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 7.2 MB | 10 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 11 Chapter 3 | 5:10 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 4.8 MB | 11 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 12 Chapter 3 | 4:11 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 3.9 MB | 12 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 13 Chapter 4 | 2:46 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 2.6 MB | 13 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 14 Chapter 4 | 4:34 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 4.2 MB | 14 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |
| ☑ Pompeii Disc 1 Track 15 Chapter 4 | 7:14 | Bert Hanks, Rea... | 6.7 MB | 15 of 15 | MPEG audio file | Pompeii (Disc 1) |

have ripped the first CD, and I've also renamed the files for my convenience. Usually, the way you have to do this is start playing every track until you hear at the beginning "Chapter 2", and so on. With Pompeii, they don't split it into normal chapters, nor do they announce them. Luckily, I also have the book, and have been able to determine the chapter splits by that.
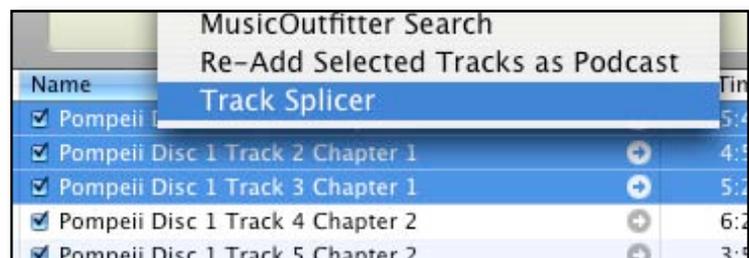
So, now our files look like this. We need to combine each chapter into one file. That is where Track Splicer comes in. Despite the name, it does a great job in putting the tracks together, not splicing. You also keep the originals. Select the files for all of chapter 1. Select the scripts scroll, then Track Splicer. The script will then ask you to make sure they are in the proper order. After selecting yes, and confirming the join, Name the file, it will join the files and ask if you would like to import back into iTunes. Select *Yes*.

What do you want to name the file?

Pompeii Chapter 1

Cancel    OK
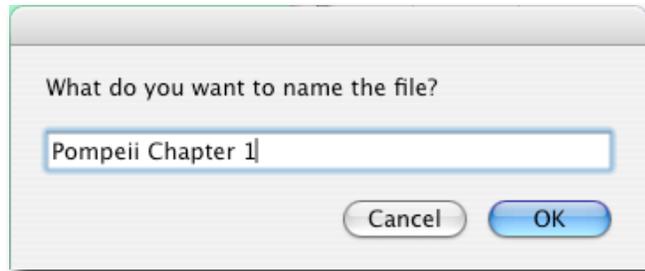
Now you can do that with the remaining chapters in the book. For this demonstration, I will only do the first disc. You may come up with this error message. The easiest thing to do is put the tracks in a temp or test playlist, then running the script again. It just wants to confirm that you do have the tracks in the correct order.

The tracks to be joined are in the library, and might be scrambled when joined. Please put them in a playlist sorted by the leftmost column with the arrow pointing up before you run the script.

OK
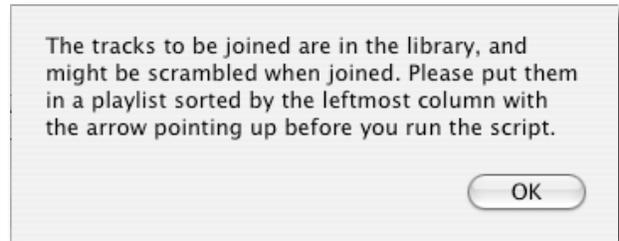
After joining chapters 2 through 4, we now have 4 files that we can join together to make the first file of our

audiobook. After renaming the files, taking out the old track name and disc number, we have something that looks similar to this.

| | ▲ | Name |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ☑ | Pompeii Disc 1 Track 4 Chapter 2 |
| 2 | ☑ | Pompeii Disc 1 Track 5 Chapter 2 |
| 3 | ☑ | Pompeii Disc 1 Track 6 Chapter 2 |
| 4 | ☑ | Pompeii Disc 1 Track 7 Chapter 2 |
| 5 | ☑ | Pompeii Disc 1 Track 8 Chapter 2 |
| 6 | ☑ | Pompeii Disc 1 Track 9 Chapter 2 |
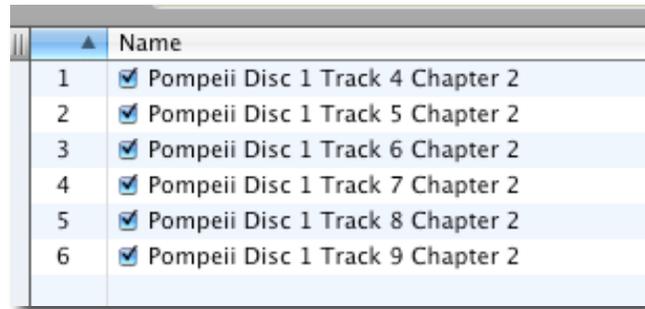
Now, we can do exactly what we did in section 2. Run Join Together. If Join Together is running, you can select all four files, then select Get Tracks from iTunes at the bottom of the Join Together screen. I would suggest when you join this way, you join just as many files as would normally fit on one CD. That way, if you ever wanted to put it back on a CD, no one file would ever be bigger than a normal CD could handle. Now when you play this one file on your iPod or in iTunes, it will keep you bookmarked with handy chapter marks to boot.
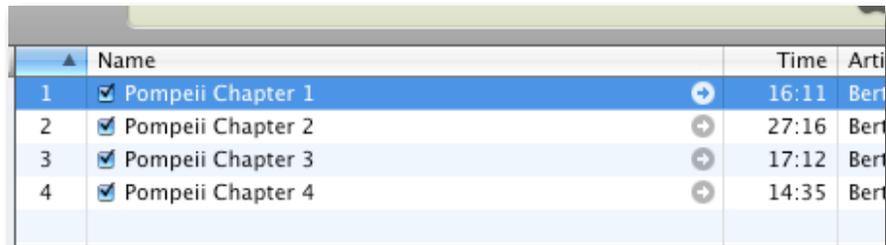
| | ▲ | Name | | Time | Arti |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ☑ | Pompeii Chapter 1 | ➔ | 16:11 | Bert |
| 2 | ☑ | Pompeii Chapter 2 | ➔ | 27:16 | Bert |
| 3 | ☑ | Pompeii Chapter 3 | ➔ | 17:12 | Bert |
| 4 | ☑ | Pompeii Chapter 4 | ➔ | 14:35 | Bert |

If you had artwork, there is even an option to put artwork at every chapter heading. Now, to be honest, every so often you might encounter some problems with the script Track Splicer. As it says in the script package,

*"This is not a perfect script. It involves UNIX commands and might not work 100% of the time. For best results, keep the auto-naming feature disabled. It's off by default, but if you want to enable it, instructions are inside the script. The new track will have all tag info (except name) of the last individual track that was joined."*

So there you have it. How to make an audiobook. Part 2 is probably the easiest and quickest way of doing this procedure. Hope this helps you out, and if you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me at wlefevre at macCompanion dot com/

## The Northern Spy

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**Think Upon a Thunk**
By Rick Sutcliffe, November 2006

In his alter ego as a university GWF (Great White Father) on programming notations, the Spy has a vast collection of tomes, encompassing old standbys like Pascal, Modula-2, and C, speciality notations like Prolog, and Lisp, once-upon-a-times Fortran, COBOL, RPG, Euclid, APL, J, LOGO, Ada, and BASIC, newer workhorses in the Java and C++ vein, and a shelf full of general volumes on programming language design principles, software engineering, data structures, algorithms, and the like -- all good light reading when he has a free twenty seconds or so.

But no notation collection today would be complete without representation from the fast growing web programming sector. Over the years, books on HTML, CSS, ECMAScript (proper name for JavaScript), Perl, Python, PHP, SQL, and now Ruby have come to occupy the primary real estate above the Spy's desk, with many others shuffled to corner shelves, halfway along the process of being relegated to the university library.

Others he's retained for sentimental reasons. An Applesoft book, language card UCSD Fortran, Pascal and Modula-2 manuals share space with 6502 and 68000 Assembler texts. Remember MPW, Farsight, IX-Box, Sempersoft, CodeWarrior, and Logitech? Let's see. Over there is a Screenwriter manual, off to the right, a copy of the dragon book, and in the file cabinet resides the assembler listing of the Spy's Ampermanager and DOS 3.3.5, (both distributed by the A.P.P.L.E. Co-op, if anyone remembers that far back). One hidden spot boasts a good quality copy of the original Apple ][ red book.

But the churn of texts and manuals has changed the shelf in less obvious ways. While publishers Addison-Wesley, MacMillan, Prentice-Hall, Wiley, and McGraw Hill still dominate the math/physics side of the office and even to some extent, the computing science textbooks, no one house has claimed a majority of the shelves in the reference computing section until recently. However, a quick scan of what he keeps within ready reach today reveals dozens of working language volumes hailing from a single publisher.

Who? Glad you asked. They're all from O'Reilly Media Inc., of Sebastopol California (that's in the US of A, in case you also are somewhat unfamiliar with foreign countries, and on Gravenstein road, of all things. We just finished off the last of this year's crop of Gravensteins, and started on the Northern Spys. But I digress.) O'Reilly has now become the premiere house for working programmers needing to purchase how-to and reference books, the kind you tend to collect, once you've learned the basics from a good text.

Indeed, not only does O'Reilly have the goods, they deliver them. The Spy recalls once putting in an order late afternoon on a weekday and receiving the books in the next afternoon's campus mail delivery. Remarkable, and kudos to a bunch who are reinventing good publishing and book distribution. The industry needs it.

**Enough generalities, on to specifics**
Two recent O'Reilly offerings offer a study in contrasts, but meet their stated goals admirably. Both illustrate how a company can profitably and beneficially identify and occupy a critical industry niche (in this case providing professionals with programming books of all types).

The first is Ruby on Rails Up and Running by Bruce A Tate and Curt Hibbs. Designed to get a developer into action with a simple framework application in this new AJAX environment/language that seems to be taking the net by storm, RRR takes the reader from installation through model-view-controller implementation, data base essentials, scaffolding, and AJAX facilities to a simple running application in a well-thought-out and engaging 162 pages. RRR is neither intended for novice programmers nor is it a language reference. Its intention is to introduce a new kind of thinking and a novel environment to experienced programmers in a quick-and-clean manner.

Tate and Hibbs succeed admirably. Buy this book if you want to get your fingers wet with Ruby. You'll need more to be productive, but you won't be disappointed with this intro. Moreover, in his role as a webhost, the Spy went along far enough to install Ruby on Rails on a server and experiment. The whole thing has interesting possibilities, especially when a developer wants to get a shared database operating quickly with robust support.

A second new O'Reilly book now claiming prime shelf space right above the Spy's keyboard, is PHP Cookbook (2nd edition) by David Sklar and Adam Trachtenberg. Cookbook style is quite different from that used for a textbook, a language manual, or a "getting started" introduction like RRR. PHPC is nearly 800 pages of over 250 "recipes"-- short how-tos for programmers who know the language somewhat, but need an assist to handle common tasks they're already familiar with from other languages or environments.

When you know one programming notation, you don't need a text to learn another. Rather, you need quick and unambiguous answers (with examples!) to questions like how to do sequence, selection, repetition, and composition, what are the basic data types and how do you handle them, how do you deal with errors, files, directories, performance, localization, graphics, regular expressions, and security. For an Internet programming notation like PHP, you also want simple tutorials on web basics, forms, SQL, XML, SOAP, and interfaces to other net services like mail. PHPC has all this, plus comments on installing and using PEAR and PECL packages. Did we say unambiguous? Nothing bugs the Spy more than a theoretical description that admits of multiple interpretations, none of them the right one. There's nothing like examples to make the point.

Sklar and Trachtenberg have done a terrific job revising and expanding an already good first edition and adding coverage for PHP5. The Spy's only caveats: the authors don't always clearly say what works in PHP4 and which techniques require version 5. This could be an issue in some cases, because not many commercial web hosts offer PHP5 yet due to compatibility issues with old scripts (for instance, the new object model). Also, the section on security could have been expanded to include more discussion of php.ini and .htaccess settings, and how they interact with Apache depending on whether one runs in module or cgi (phpsuexec) mode. After all, this substantially affects how one writes file access code. Still, these are quibbles. Besides, this aspect of the PHP security model is still being tightened up, and more changes are coming.

The bottom line: if you build quality websites, you almost certainly use PHP. Buy and use this book. You won't regret it.

The bottom bottom line: Pay close attention to O'Reilly offerings. If you're a programmer, they've probably got your book. Wish there'd been a publisher like them around a few years ago when the Spy was struggling with Merrill and its successors over his Modula-2 textbook.

**The passing of giants** is a regular happening in the computing industry. After all, the whole thing is only a few years old, barely into its adolescence, and subject to growing pains. Corporate growing pains all too often involve takeovers, mergers, and just plain extinction.

Which brings us to the case in point. Qualcomm, maker of the venerable eMail program Eudora recently announced that its program will turn into an open source collaboration with the Mozilla foundation, its features becoming an overlay atop Thunderbird. One more version as Eudora, apparently, then it's on to other pastures. This may not be extinction, but it's surely a passing of some sort.

Of course, the press bumph will tell us this is a "good thing", but the Spy isn't so sure. He's been using Eudora since not long after it was introduced in 1988 and developer Steve Dorner was working through the University of Illinois. But time and software moves on, and most people today are using Apple's Mail, something the Spy has considered and rejected a few times because of its lack of some Eudora features he uses rather much. Meanwhile, he anticipates it will take a year or two to achieve the stated goals. Who knows what market will remain for the Son of Eudora by then?

**Hall of Shame** honours this month go to Apple, who this month gave us more reasons not to use Windows, even on its own machines, by inadvertently (we assume) shipping some iPods containing a Windows virus. Whoops.

**But on the other side of the coin**
Apple's latest MacBook Pro updates (now core duo) leave it with the best-priced machines (when comparing apples to, er, the other guys) in both desktop and laptop categories. Hey, there never was any excuse to buy a cheap imitation computer when you could buy the real thing for a few bucks more. Now, doing so will cost less than buying the junk others offer, and it comes with an OS that works. Oh, and did we mention that Apple's profits (now $.62/share) and stock prices continue to climb?

Not so elsewhere in the industry, where sales have flattened and layoffs abound. Seems there's a little market saturation here and there. Oh, and no ones getting a charge out of SONY these days, what with its 95% profit evaporation in the wake of battery recalls.

**And on the gripping hand,** owning the "buzz" as well as the technological leadership, Apple seems to have chip supplier Intel eating out of its hand, giving preferential treatment, doing custom engineering for what is rapidly coming their most important customer (we didn't say the largest, that's an issue for another day.) So, right now it appears Steve Jobs hasn't the time of day for the other guys at AMD, and don't hold your breath waiting for another supplier change, but neither doubt he wouldn't switch in a heartbeat, if it became advantageous. It must be nice to hold the upper hand after being incorrectly perceived as the underdog for so long. But, did they finally get the FireWire 800 port right on the new portables? It never did work properly on the Power Mac G5 machines.

**You know you're getting old when** you hold a departmental draw at the program fair for anyone who can guess the storage capacity of a 1980s disk platter stack (the right answer was 5MB per plate) the same month that Apple introduces a build-to-order option on desktops that includes the possibility of four 750GB drives, each a fraction of the weight of one of those old stacks. A machine with 3T of storage? Who'd'a thunk it?

Come to think of it, is there any other old programmer croc in the room who's read this far and remembers what a "thunk" is? If you do, email the Spy with the answer, and enter a draw for a year's free webhosting, courtesy of our sister company WebNameHost. No fan of random numbers, he'll have Nellie pick the most colourful answer. Accuracy wouldn't hurt either.

      --The Northern Spy

Rick Sutcliffe, (a k.a. The Northern Spy) is professor of Computing Science and Mathematics at Trinity Western University. He's written two textbooks and several novels, one named best ePublished SF novel for 2003. His columns have appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers, and he's a regular speaker at churches, schools, academic meetings, and conferences. He and his wife Joyce have lived in the Aldergrove/Bradner area of BC since 1972.

Want to discuss this and other Northern Spy columns? Surf on over to ArjayBB.com. Participate and you could win free web hosting from the WebNameHost.net subsidiary of Arjay Web Services. Rick Sutcliffe's fiction can be purchased in various eBook formats from Fictionwise, and in dead tree form from Bowker's Booksurge.

URLs
The Northern Spy Home Page: http://www.TheNorthernSpy.com
WebNameHost: http://www.WebNameHost.net
WebNameSource: http://www.WebNameSource.net
nameman: http://nameman.net
opundo: http://opundo.com
Sheaves Christian Resources: http://sheaves.org
Arjay Books: http://www.ArjayBooks.com
Booksurge: http://www.booksurge.com
Fictionwise: http://www.fictionwise.com
The Spy's Laws collected: http://www.thenorthernspy.com/spyslaws.htm
Eudora Info: http://www.eudora.com/faq /
Thunderbird: http://www.mozilla.com/thunderbird/

# doc_Babad's Software Review Overview - An Introduction

November 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 10.4.8.
Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

Thoughts On Posted Shareware
As I browse through the download sites, a thought at times occurs to me whether the items posted might be a reflection of the softness of certain existing products. So I decided to check the idea out using most disliked application as the focus.

As an aside, I do know that many posted items reflect either a new direction or serious enhancements to a software genre, but that's not where I'm focused in this note.

I keep reading about unhappiness with Apple's Spotlight as well as its new linked *Find* function. As reported in *Macworld*, *MacAddict* and elsewhere, folks are uncomfortable with the Spotlight application. I am too. Indeed, hopes for an improved Spotlight in Leopard abound. I found them in articles about Apple's new OS where folks hoped that Spotlight would become less error prone and be more focused.

I am also completely dissatisfied with the way Apple broke the Find [-F] feature, which in earlier versions were orders of magnitudes easier to use. The methods for limiting searches in Find, is awkward and often does not work. That why I use EasyFind 3.9 http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/freeware/ to find files on my hard disk. I have relegated Apple application to limbo, as *Control-Option-Command-F*.

Therefore, I checked *MacUpdate* for spotlight and found 63 items, about a fourth of which were aimed at either killing Spotlight, replacing it, or making more useful. Checking "find Files" gave me 53 overlapping hits, which were generally less directly applicable to my focus.

Are these tools useful? Yes, reducing the number of false positives it produces, even for simple searches.

Have I proved my point? I am not sure, but there are certainly a large number of Find and Spotlight-related applications posted for folks to try out.

doc_Babad

§ § § § § § § § § § § § § § § §

**Software, Shareware & Freeware Reviewed**
Reminder, that I always do a quick test run of 1-3 hours, on each of the more narrowly focused products I review in this column, testing for that review is never as complete as for more complex full-featured products. 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*! [Aren't mixed metaphors wonderful?]

<u>Items Reviewed</u>
*Accio English Dictionary* 1.0 (4.0macCs) and the *Ultralingua English Language Dictionary and Thesaurus* 6.0 (4.5 macCs) - With additional thoughts on other dictionary and thesaurus tools some of which I've deleted from my hard disk. If you read and write, these are tool's you'll love.

*FolderControl* 1.60 — For folks who insist on neatly arranged folders, you can automatically size and arrange the Finder's folder/directory windows into a configuration you define. If you are manic about an orderly desktop or just like to keep things neat, you'll love this product!
 (4.0 macCs)

*FontNuke* 1.0.5 Freeware (4.5 macCs)– Kill ailing font caches when ever they act up.

*Spamnix for Eudora* 3.0.28 - Out damn spam (4.5 macCs) Since I submitted my review I've had several more week of experience with this fine product. On average, it misses 1-2 items that still show up in my inbox. Training has improved the false positives, in my Junk box to one a day.

*ToDo X* 2.1 (4.5 macCs) – I revisit a fine easily accessible ToDo List application.

# Mac Security 101

## Why Do I Need Anti-virus Software? What You Should Know
By Kale Feelhaver aka: Applemacpunk, November 2006

"Macs don't get viruses, those are for Windows PC's." I hear this statement all of the time, and I want every Mac user to know that this is NOT true. Any OS can get a virus, and every OS has vulnerabilities, Mac OS X included. In this day and age, every Mac connected to the Internet should be running virus protection.

It is true that most viruses are written specifically for Windows. This is because most computers are running Windows, and it allows a virus programmer to do the most damage. However, as Macs become more popular, Mac OS X becomes an increasingly visible target. Apple release their quarterly results on October 18, 2006. The results showed that new Mac sales are the highest they have ever been. The results also showed that Apple has gained a lot of market share. Gartner rated Apple as #4 in the computer industry. Apple passed Toshiba (#5) and is close on the heels of Gateway (#3). As the Mac grows in popularity, more and more Mac-specific viruses will start showing up.

In order to understand what viruses can do to your Mac, it is necessary to understand a little about them. First of all, not all viruses are viruses. The last statement may sound a little confusing, so I'll clarify. The word virus is often interchanged with the word malware. Not every piece of malware is a virus, but every virus is a piece of malware. The word malware is an abbreviation of malicious software. Other forms of malware include: Trojan horses, worms, logic bombs, spyware, and key loggers.

Viruses (like the name implies) are designed to spread and replicate. There are several types of viruses, including polymorphic, macro, and boot sector. Viruses are generally written to cause damage to a computer system without the knowledge of the user. Trojan horses are malicious programs that disguise themselves as something else. For instance, you could receive an email with an attachment that says, "Click here for a free iTunes song". If the attachment was a Trojan horse, it may do something like delete your iTunes library, rather than give you a free iTunes song. Using AppleScript, a Trojan horse like this would be very easy to create. A worm is similar to a virus, but it propagates via a network connection. Worms are especially dangerous in companies where one worm can easily spread to hundreds of machines over the LAN. Like viruses, worms usually do damage to the host system. Logic bombs are programs that sit dormant until an event triggers them to cause some damage to your system. A common example of a logic bomb is the old adage about the systems administrator who hides a program on the network to take the entire company down if you ever delete his account. Again, this happens more than you think. Spyware is malicious software that is designed to retrieve personal information about a computer and/or user to exploit it in some way. Spyware programs can be stand-alone programs, or sometimes cookies received from websites without your knowledge. Key loggers are programs that do one simple thing, capture keystrokes in an effort to steal usernames and passwords. Key loggers are very dangerous because an attacker can gain access to personal information, financial information, or even the system itself using the stolen passwords.

Anti-virus software is the best way to prevent your Mac from contracting a virus. Most anti-virus software packages will not only look for viruses, but also worms and Trojan horses. Some will even detect PC viruses, so you won't spread viruses to your Windows-using friends (if you have any). Firewall software is the best way to protect against worms. Normally, a worm will spread using an open port that is not in use. A firewall will lock up the open ports, so the worm never has a chance to propagate. Spyware and key loggers are harder to detect. To get rid of these, you'll need an anti-spyware program. Fortunately, at this time, there a very few known spyware programs and key loggers for Mac OS X. However, more will be on the way. It is only a matter of time.

So, how do I keep these nasty things off my Mac? The answer is a very simple and very inexpensive. There are two simple things every Mac user can do. First, run anti-virus software. Second, run a software firewall. Both of these things can be done without investing a single penny in your Mac.

There is a freeware anti-virus program for Mac OS X called ClamXav. You can download it from: http://clamxav.com/ for free. This program will monitor your Mac for viruses, it will detect and remove them, and it has a free update service to make sure your virus definitions are always up to date. If ClamXav does not suit your needs, there are several commercial Mac anti-virus software packages including: Norton Anti-virus for Mac (http://symantec.com/home_homeoffice/products/overview.jsp?pcid=ma&pvid=nav10mac) and Intego Virus Barrier (http://www.intego.com/virusbarrier/). The difference between the free and commercial anti-virus programs is not in the protection they provide, but in the support you will receive if you run into a problem. Free software does not include support. However, any anti-virus is better than no anti-virus.
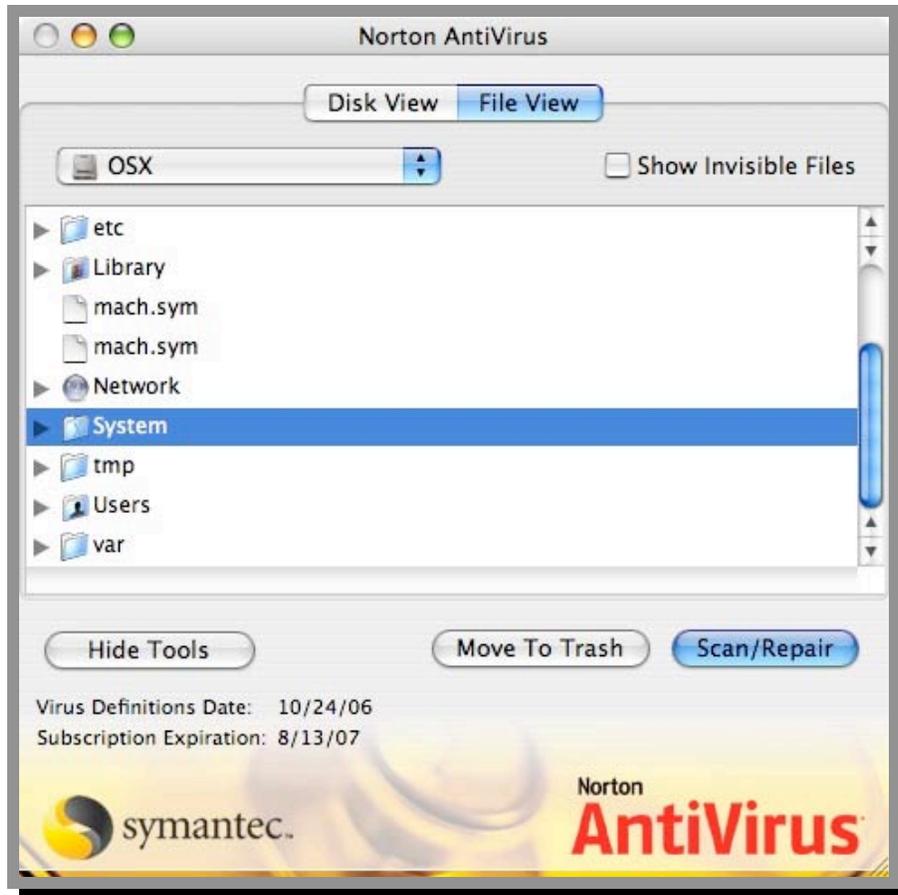
Likewise, there is a free software firewall included with Mac OS X. All you have to do is turn it on. Simply go into *System Preferences*, click on the *Sharing* icon, click on the *Firewall* tab, and click *Start*. Once the firewall has been turned on, it will continue to protect your system after restarts. Like the anti-virus software, there are commercial software firewalls available, like Door Stop X (http://www.opendoor.com/doorstop/) and Intego Net Barrier (http://www.intego.com/netbarrier/).
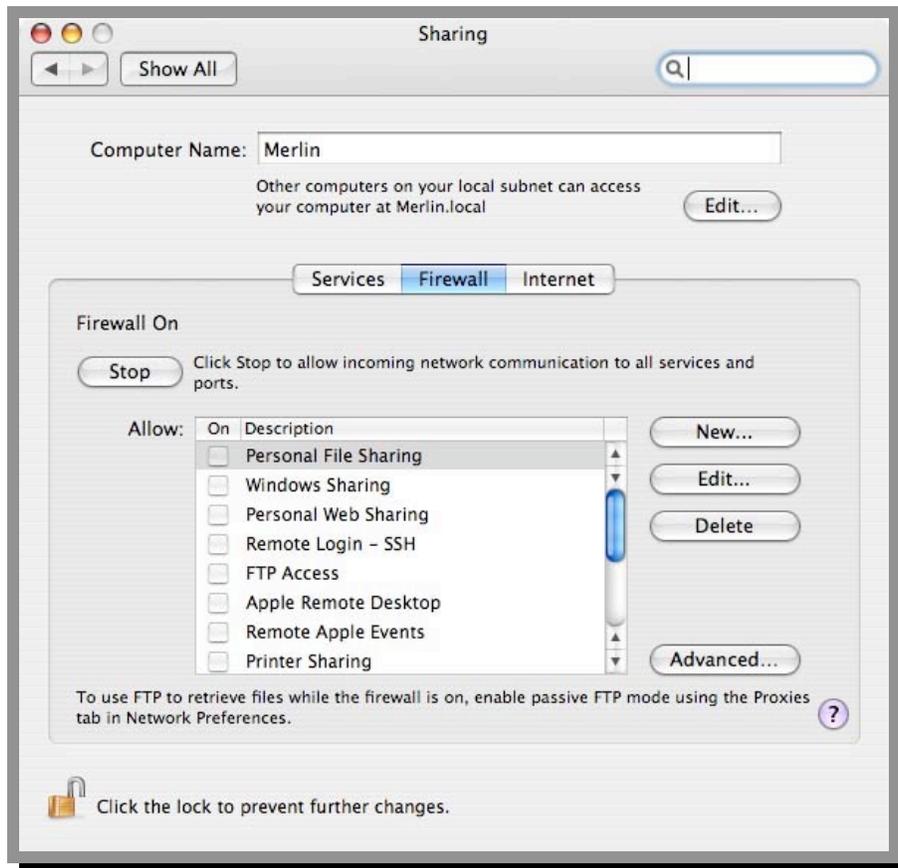
At this time, I do not know of any freeware anti-spyware tools for Mac OS X, but there is a really great shareware product called MacScan. You can download a free trial of MacScan at: http://macscan.securemac.com/ and if you like it, it can be purchased for $24.95. There are some other software packages on the market that claim to detect Mac OS X spyware, but MacScan is the first one I've seen that does a good job. This is the only one I'm comfortable recommending at this time.
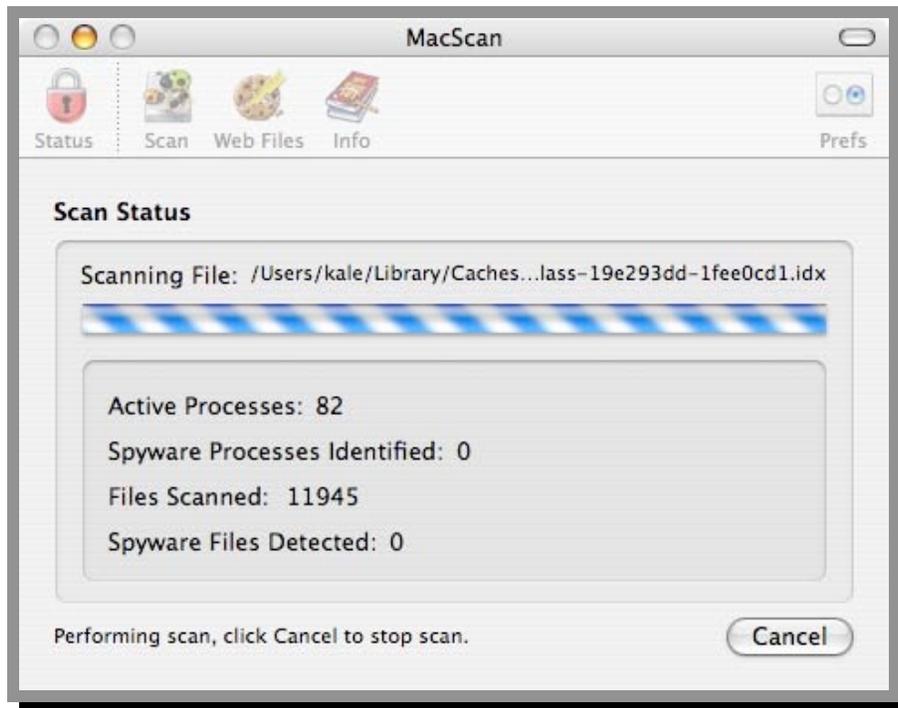
As the Mac popularity continues to increase and more and more Mac haters are born, all Mac users need to take a few steps to protect themselves on the Internet and keep their Macs secure. Running anti-virus software and a software firewall can greatly reduce these threats... and the best part is… it's free!

*Doc_*Babad's Macintosh Tips - **A Macintosh Tip or Three…**

**November 2006 Edition**

By Harry {doc} Babad

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The software related tips were tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM; running under Macintosh OS X OS X 10.4.8.

This month I continue sharing my occasional tip related finds with you. Most, but not all of the Tips I share come from — Paul Taylor's Hints&Tips column http://www mac-hints-tips.com and are used with his permission. Where I use any one else's tips for this column, I acknowledge both their source and their contributors.

Oh, I almost forgot! Unless otherwise noted, all the tips and tidbits I share, where appropriate, work on my computer. If I don't own the software but if the tip sounds interesting, I'll so note at the end of that specific write-up.

**Tips I've provided this month, as always in a random order, include:**

- Simple Questions to Help Troubleshoot Your Computer
- File Compression Done Within the Mac OS X
- Sending Large eMail Attachments
- The Bouncing Dock — Freeze that Dock!
- Windows Users Can't Open the Files You Send Them
- An Application Transforms To Document, It Won't Launch
- Using Old Disk Repair Utilities – Don't
- Mac OS X's Auto-Defragmenter- No Need
- Personalize Your Google Start Page
- How Can I Change the Icons on My Computer?

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**Simple Questions to Help Troubleshoot Your Computer**
Speaking with customers every day brings issues to light very quickly. Usually, once in every Mac OS series an update causes issues. In Mac OS 10.2, for example, there were issues with date and time on G4 logic boards that required another update to fix. For Mac OS X 10.4.4, I have taken calls from several people who have lost the ability to print.

Sometimes being on the cutting edge of technology makes you bleed is my belief, so I tend to hang back a bit. When people do run into problems, there are some general questions I ask to see if we can figure out what went wrong and when it happened. Write those questions down. The next time you get into a pinch, you might save yourself a tech call and find that there is a simple solution to your problem. {Doc asks, you do own a pencil and paper, don't you?}

- When did the problem start?
- Can you reproduce the problem now?
- What is the last thing you changed or added to your system?
- Does the issue disappear if you start up the computer with all third-party internal hardware removed?
- Does the issue disappear if you start the computer from a known- good system disk or external device?
- Is the problem isolated to one specific application?
- Is the problem isolated to one specific document or file?
- Is your computer producing any noise or odors?
- Has it ever worked?

The answers to these questions should help you isolate the issue. Once you get the issue isolated, you can start planning how to fix it.

Software issues can frequently be solved by a safe reboot, running disk first aid, or reinstalling the OS from your CDs.

Hardware issues unfortunately still need to be addressed by an Apple service provider. Finding one that will work with you to minimize your downtime is key to maintaining your sanity. ~ Troy

<div align="center">Small Dog Electronics      Hints & Tips June 2006</div>

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**File Compression Done Within Mac OS X**
Many long-time Mac users grew up using third-party programs, such as StuffIt Deluxe*, to compress files before sending them out on the Internet or storing them on an external media (such as floppies or CDs). These compression utilities would save files that had an extension such as .sit and .sea (self-extracting application).

When Apple created Mac OS X 10.3, aka Panther, they added a compression feature that would save files in the .zip standard that has long been used by the rest of the computer world.

Compressing files can be done by selecting your file or folder (single-click) and then going to the File menu and scrolling down to "Create File Archive of 'filename' (filename = the name of the selected file or folder)". Your new Zipped file will be saved in the same location as the original selected file or folder.

For those of you who use keyboard shortcuts: Hold down the *Control* key and the click on the file/folder. A pull-down menu will then appear and you can mouse down and select *Create File Archive* of "filename". For those of you who use a two-button mouse: Click the right mouse button to select the file/folder.

You now have a compressed file that can be safely sent to both Mac OS X and Windows computers.

* NOTE: I still use StuffIt Deluxe in addition to the built-in .zip file compression. StuffIt Deluxe has many additional features that make it a worthwhile addition to your software collection. *I do too doc_Babad*

<div align="center">Allen Kalka, Mt. Dora MUG FL Electronics      Hints & Tips June 2006</div>

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**Sending Large eMail Attachments**
So you have a 1 MB file to pass on to your colleague of best friend.  When encoded for the Internet, whether in Apple Mail or Eudora, such files often grow 30% to at least 1.3 MB. Most IPs limit the sizes of messages so such emails with large attachments bounce. They can be refused by your IP or bounce on the other end.

As a first, but often-ineffective step, you can compress your attachments to .zip files. Compressing 1 MB graphics, large complex word processing or PDF files, compressing the file sometimes does not gain you enough "space".

This is true when using either Apples "create an archive function [*Finder > File Menu > Create Archive*] or the DropStuff application from Allume Systems, Inc.

But there is another way and it's even free. Go to dropload.com and follow instructions. http://www.dropload.com.

Here's the straight scoop. "Dropload is a place for you to drop your files off and have them picked up by someone else at a later time. The recipients you specify are sent an email with instructions on how to download the file. Files are removed from Dropload system after 7 days, regardless if they have been picked up or not. You can upload any type of file, mp3, movies, PDFs, etc. up to 100MB each! Recipients can be anyone with an email address"

<div align="right">Harry (doc) Babad</div>

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**The Bouncing Dock — Freeze That Dock!**
Problem: Keeping folders in the Dock rocks for quickly accessing files, but sucks rocks when you try to drag a file into a docked folder. The dad-gummed thing scoots out of the way to make room for you to put that file itself in the Dock.

Solution: When you want to drop a file into a docked folder icon and not the Dock itself, just hold *Command* while dragging, and the docked Folder will stay put.

<div align="right">MacAddict November 2006, Page 23</div>

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**Windows Users Can't Open the Files You Send Them**

Fix the file name. Windows is essentially stupid: the only way it knows which application opens a file is to look at the three-character extension at the end of the file's name. When it sees .doc, it opens Microsoft Word; when it sees .xls, it turns to Microsoft Excel; and so on.

So when you send a file to a Windows user, you have to give the file name the right extension. For starters, set Mac OS X to display file extensions. Select *Preferences* in the Finder menu, select *Advanced*, and then select the *Show All File Extensions* option.

The next step is to make sure your files have Windows-legal file names. If you don't follow Windows naming conventions, the recipients might not be able to open your files; in some cases, they won't even be able to see your attachments.

In Windows file names you can't use square brackets ([ and ]), slashes (/ and \), the equal sign (=), the plus sign (+), angle brackets « and », question marks (?), semicolons (;), quotation marks ("), or commas (,). So if you put dates in your file names, use the Windows-legal hyphen (Monthly report 4-30-06.doc) instead of the forward slash (Monthly report 4/30/06.doc). Other no-nos: don't use a space at the beginning or end of a file name, and avoid having more than one dot (period) in it.

Renaming Conventions — A utility such as *A Better Finder Rename* makes it easier to rename groups of Mac files using Windows-safe syntax.

If you have a lot of files that you want to rename to conform to these conventions, simplify the job with Sig Software's NameCleaner ($35; http://www.sigsoftware) and Public Space's A Better Finder Rename ($20; http://www.publicspace.net). These utilities can rename and remove illegal characters from batches of files.

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**An Application Transforms To Document, It Won't Launch**
**Problem** - Several readers have reported an issue where application icons suddenly appear as document icons, also assuming document creators and types. This results in an inability to launch the application.

**Solution** — If you are experiencing this issue, you might want to try adding ".app" (without quotation marks) to the end of the file name of the Word application. If that doesn't work, click on the Word icon in the Finder, then press the *Command* and *I* keys simultaneously (or go to "Get Info" in the File" menu). Once the "Get Info" screen is up, go to the "Name and Extension" section, and make sure the file is named "Word.app" or similar – the important thing is that the end of the file contains only the .app extension.

Failing this, you may want to try rebuilding the launch services database with a tool like Cocktail. [Doc notes: I have used Cocktail to trash impossible-to-remove other documents. Although we've not yet reviewed it for macC, it's a great tool. http://www.maintain.se/cocktail/index.html]

MacFixit Late-Breakers Thursday, June 01 2006

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**Using Old Disk Repair Utilities** - DONT
Apple changed details of the Mac OS filing system with the introduction of Tiger (Mac OS X 10.4) and warned that versions of TechTool Pro earlier than 4.0.4 should not be used with it. Currently, no version of the AppleCare CD has this latest version of TechTool Pro on it — most have v3.0.3 — which means that no AppleCare CD should be used to run TechTool Pro on a Mac with Tiger installed.

In general, the same kind of warning applies to other 'pre-Tiger' disk utilities. You should not use any version of Disk Warrior earlier than v3.0.3, or any version of Norton Disk Doctor whatever, this utility not having been updated for Tiger.

*AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia via Apple Barrel, Ridgecrest, CA*
*Hints & Tips October 2006*

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**Mac OS X's Auto-Defragmenter**
Unlike in Mac OS 9, most people don't need a disk defragmenting utility because Mac OS X defragments your hard drive as you work. When a file is accessed, it checks to see if the file is fragmented (split into several different areas of the hard drive). If so, the file is copied to an area of the hard drive that can hold the entire file. It works on files only up to 20 MB in size because smaller fragmented files slow your system the most.

*Design Tools Monthly      Hints & Tips October 2006*

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**Personalize Your Google Start Page**

You can personalize Google for your start page. Open Google and in the upper right corner is a link, Personalized Home. Click on it. On the page that appears, sign in on the upper left corner of the page (unless you already have a Google account).

Fill in your email and a password of six characters or more. An email will arrive. Click on the link in it to authenticate your password. Sign in and go to Google again. Click on the "Personalize Home" link. Click "Personalize Your Google Home Page" at the left side.

A list of topics appears on the left side. Add content until you are satisfied. You can click and drag items on the right side to reposition them to your liking. Each item has an Edit and an X link to edit or remove items.

When you are done, you can make this page your start page by going into your browser preferences and choosing the page as your start page. If you like a blank page as your start page, as I prefer, you can quickly go to your personalized Google page by simply typing "google" in the URL text block and hitting "Return."

Mouse Droppings, Corvallis, OR    Hints & Tips October 2006


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**How can I Change the icons on my computer?**
First, copy the image you want to use as your icon onto the clipboard.

Second, open the 'Get Info' window of the icon you wish to replace. Highlight the icon and go to File/Get Info, or highlight it and type     -I.

Third, click once on the icon image in the 'Get Info' window.

Fourth, go to Edit/Paste or type *Command-V* to paste the new icon and replace the old one. Finally, close the 'Get Info' window and you're done.

**Note:** You can copy any icon you wish by opening the 'Get Info' window as explained above, selecting the icon and using Edit/Copy or typing *Command-C*. Also, any image or icon on the net can be copied by clicking and holding on the image or by holding the option key down and clicking. A pop-up menu will appear, which has several functions, one of them being "Copy this Image".

Warning, when you convert a busy image to an Icon, it remains that — busy!

For more customizable results you can also download Icon Brander 2.0.2 http://www.yellowmug.com/folderbrander/ and Icon Compo 3.5 http://www.loos.li/trollin/, both of which I've reviewed for *macCompanion*.

Harry {doc} Babad

That's all folks…
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# Book Reviews

**Building Online Communities with Drupal, phpBB and WordPress**
reviewed by Mike Swope, November 2006

**Authors:** Robert T. Douglass, Mike Little and Jared W. Smith
APRESS
http://www.apress.com/
http://www.apress.com/book/bookDisplay.html?bID=10031

**Released:** May 2006
$50 USD, $35 CND, £26.89 GBP, 41,75 € Euro
**Pages:** 560
**ISBN:** 1-59059-562-9

**Target Audience:** Experienced webmasters and developers who will be using the open source php applications Drupal, phpBB and/or WordPress.

**Strengths:** Reasonably in-depth information about installation, configuration, modification and maintenance. Three sections organized chronologically. Clearly written for the most part.

**Weaknesses:** Information becomes outdated when the open source subject applications are updated. Sometimes assumes more familiarity with these applications than some readers will have. Fewer illustrations, diagrams, charts or screenshots than expected.

**The Basics and More for Working with Drupal, phpBB and WordPress**

Drupal, phpBB and WordPress are popular open-source web applications for building online communities. Drupal is a CMS, or content management system. phpBB is a forum (bulletin board) application. WordPress is a blog application. But Drupal, phpBB and WordPress are not necessarily user-friendly applications for the average, every day webmaster. Installing, configuring and editing the behavior and appearance of Drupal, phpBB and WordPress involves creating a database, installing modifications and extensive source code editing. Not for the faint of heart! The average webmaster must turn to some resource for help. A resource such as *Building Online Communities with Drupal, phpBB and WordPress*. Experienced webmasters turning to these open source applications may likely find the book even more useful.

Like most computer instruction books, each section is ordered chronologically, from system requirements and installation to configuration, modification and maintenance. Readers may implement any of the three web applications, switching between reading and the next logical task. In fact, this is probably how most readers will use this book, as they get started.

Readers must expect to spend considerable time not only reading from the book but experimenting with their installations, since these applications are mature and feature-rich. Some readers will undoubtedly experience great frustration (as I myself did) as they work through the book and work on their installations. If source code is not entered exactly as shown, pages may not render correctly, or render at all. Some items may not be presented as expected. To fully realize a branded web presence, readers will need to delve into the complexities of themes, perhaps the most challenging of tasks.
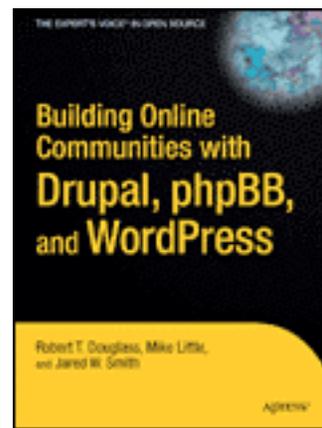
Unfortunately, *Building Online Communities with Drupal, phpBB and WordPress* could use more illustrations, diagrams, charts, tables and screenshots. Though the book is written by coders for coders, that does not excuse the lack of visuals to illustrate points and relationships. Such visuals, for example, help readers understand at a glance how parts fit into the whole, that they're on the correct screen, & etc. Though approximately 70 illustrations appear in the first 215 pages of the book, there are fewer illustrations for the more complicated tasks of customizing content and altering appearance than the simpler tasks of installation and configuration. It may be that the publishing deadline came and time had simply run out to develop the more complicated illustrations and diagrams.

For web designers and developers entering the Drupal, phpBB and WordPress open source world, *Building Online Communities with Drupal, phpBB and WordPress* is a very good introduction and manual for these powerful and complicated web applications. The book is most useful for readers with an installation of one of these applications and time on their hands to work with it. In general, readers will be hard pressed to find any better, more complete printed reference for Drupal, phpBB or WordPress.

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http://www.maccompanion.com/info/AboutUs/mikeswope.html

# On Digital Photography by Stephen Johnson
reviewed by Chris Marshall, November 2006

**O'REILLY®**

O'Reilly Publishing
http://www.oreilly.com/
http://www.sitepoint.com/books/checklists1/
http://www.sitepoint.com/books/checklists/errata.php

**Released:** July 2006 (1st Edition)
$40 USD, $56 CND, £28.50 GBP, 41,50 € Euro

**ISBN:** 0-596-52370-X

**Pages:** 305

**Audience:** Digital Photographers who want to get deeper into the mechanics and techniques of their digital photographs

**Strengths:** Communications a complex subject with as much clarity as his pictures.

**Weaknesses:** At times a little too in-depth, and concentrates more on the "mechanics" than the how.
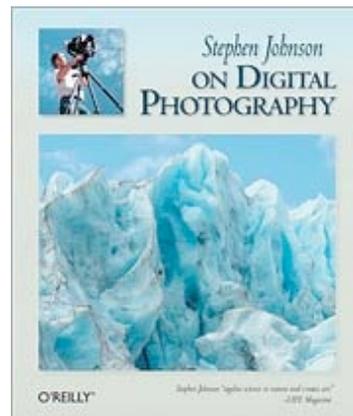
**What they say:** "We are in the Stone Age of digital photography. We've figured out how to make some tools, but it is just now beginning to dawn on us what we might do with them. I've often been frustrated at the concentration on the technical aspect of digital photography with so little discussion of the aesthetics and heart behind the image making. This book is essentially a distillation of what I've been teaching over the last 25 years."

Master photographer Stephen Johnson has been taking beautiful landscape photography for decades, and teaching others the practical art of image making since 1977. While he started out with traditional film camera techniques, Johnson is widely recognized among his peers as a pioneer of digital photography. Stephen Johnson on Digital Photography chronicles his ride on the bleeding edge of this medium's evolution, and provides a practical in-depth introduction to digital photography that offers the latest techniques for beginning and experienced photographers alike.

What sets this guide apart from other books on the topic is its approach and execution: This isn't a Photoshop book, although Photoshop has its place within the book; it's a book that a master teacher and photographer creates after a lifetime of showing others how to understand and make great photography. With five color photographs throughout, including black/gray duotones, and 715 illustrations reproduced with a 200-line screen, Johnson's book covers everything from:

\# The basics of digital photography
\# Film camera techniques vs. digital
\# Practical approaches of the filmless photographer
\# Techniques of the digital darkroom
\# A photographer ™s digital journey
\# Photography, art and the future

This is a holistic work (and method for teaching) that embraces the state of photographic tools and techniques, blended with suggestions and experiences on why I make photographs, Johnson says. At its best, photography rides that crest where technology and art intersect. But the deepest engagement that photography can bring remains its ability to capture and hold a moment before the lens. In this age of digital manipulation, that fundamental fact must be remembered.

**What I say:** Never judge a book by its cover, even one with such a great photograph as this one ☺

I was excited at the thought of this book as I have been taking digital pictures with varying degrees of success for many years and I really fancied learning a few "tips and tricks" as to how I could improve. If that is something you after then stop right there, this isn't the book for you.

I should have known that, as with everything else in life there really aren't any short cuts. Once I had put that (inevitable) disappointment to one side and knuckled down to really reading and understanding the book I was hooked. I came out the other end of the journey knowing much more about the mechanics of photography, especially digital photography, and a lot more besides e.g. color spaces and printing, input and the light to silicon! I think that if it wasn't for Part 6: A Photographer's Digital Journey and Part 7: Photography, Art and the Future, I would have fallen before the finish line. As it was, these two sections brought some much needed clarity and confidence to the previous sections, and left me feeling very positive, excited and motivated about taking more pictures.

However, I am still trying to work out if I know how to take a better picture, or if my pictures are actually any better. Time, and this book, will tell, but as I said before, there are no shortcuts here. In fact I would say it has the opposite effect – it knocks you back a bit initially, when you realize just how little you (probably) know about the subject, and how laisez faire your attempts to date have probably been.

I read the reviews on the web site and was somewhat surprised that all the reviewers gave the book 5 *'s. I was concerned that my 3 *'s seemed overly harsh, until I dug a bit deeper into the other reviews. I should point out that I would agree with the reviewers (nearly all academic or experienced photographers) totally, if I were reviewing this book solely as an instruction manual. There is an argument that it is worth the cover price alone for its sections on Photoshop, but I can't see it as a manual instead of a book! I tend to agree with one reviewer who said "Reviewing Steve's new book on digital photography is like standing with your camera at the rim of the Grand Canyon...where do you start?". Although to be honest, I don't think he meant it in the way that I have taken it. For me though, it sums up the book – immense piece of work, breathtaking in its entirety, but a little to daunting to take on, on my own. Another reviewer said that they taught Digital Photography and would recommend the book as "the definitive text for my students", and I have to ask how many college textbooks do you have on your coffee table?

Don't get me wrong though, this is an excellent book full of invaluable historic background, and instructional advice. I just find it a little hard to place exactly in my own mind as to where it sits. Don't let that stop you buying it though, just be prepared to be confused and delighted at the same time!

**In summary:** A solid book that probably covers more ground that you would (initially) require, it is best "dipped into" from time to time to a) learn a new subject or b) refresh your mind on the detail that may have slipped away from you over time.

# Enemy at the Water Cooler: Real-Life Stories of Insider Threats and Enterprise Security Management Countermeasures
reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie Willingham, November 2006

**Author:** Brian T. Contos, CISSP
Syngress Publishing
http://www.syngress.com/catalog/?pid=4240
**Language:** English
Released: August 23, 2006
**Paperback:** Dimensions 8.9 x 7.1 x 0.8 inches
**Pages:** 302
$50 USD, $65 CND, £26.87 GBP, 41,72 € Euro
**ISBN:** 1597491292

**Intended Audience** — Corporate Senior Managers, Security Analysts, and Executives.

**Major Strengths** — Insider threats warrant being among the top concerns of IT professionals and managers of middle- and large-sized businesses. This book addresses the issue in a generally well organized and usually easy-to-understand fashion.

**Weaknesses** — The audience seems inappropriately identified. In addition, there is too much alphabet soup. Lastly, an incomplete bibliography of the references cited limits the book's usefulness as a stepping-off point to further reading.

Where appropriate the instructions in the book were tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8 Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

## Publisher's Overview
"Brian Contos has created what few security specialists can claim: a truly readable book about the threats to our businesses from insiders who know how to attack the critical components of modern business, the computers, applications, and networks that make it all work. During the last fifteen years, we have witnessed incredible strides in network centric business processes that have spawned the productivity of our workforce and the globalization of our supply chains. All of this progress is based on Information Technology advances that connect people and processes together to achieve more than our traditional approaches would have ever allowed…

"*Enemy at the Water Cooler* is a must read for Chief Intelligence Officers [CIOs] and security officers everywhere, but it is also part of the literature that Chief Executive Officer [CEOs] and government leaders should read to understand how their businesses can be threatened by lack of attention to the fundamental IT infrastructure and its vulnerabilities to the insider threat."—William P. Crowell, former Deputy Director of the National Security Agency (NSA)

The book "covers over a decade of the author's work with some of the largest commercial and government agencies around the world in addressing cyber security related to malicious insiders. It explores organized crime, terrorist threats, hackers, and activist groups. It then addresses the steps that organizations must take to address insider threats at a people, process, and technology level. Contos' book provides a new perspective to the growing concern over insider threats. Insider threats warrant being among the top concerns of IT professionals and businesses alike, but to date, there have been no other books that talk about the threat to businesses from insiders who know how to attack the critical components of modern business, the computers, applications, and networks that make it all work."
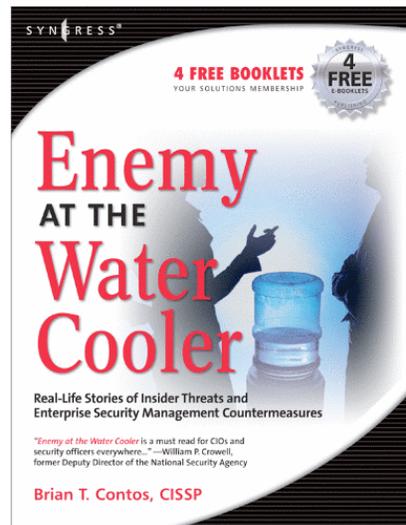
**Review Introduction**

"Insider threats are among the top concerns of IT professionals and businesses alike," said Amit Yoran, information security expert and former National Cyber Security Director at the Department of Homeland Security. Even after reading only the introductory material, I agree.

In the last 30 years, employed by or consulting for Department of Energy contractors, I have been exposed to a great deal of formal and informal security training focused both on operating security (protecting physical property) and systems and information security (IT-related hardware, software, and data.) The range of training for folks like me, a senior scientist, covered preserving not only federally owned systems and information, but also the company's confidential documents ranging from personnel records to proprietary technology, business strategy, and trade secrets.

Although insider threats were mentioned, with increasing frequency in our more recent training, the material seemed to focus more on deterring staff co-option and possible theft of both hardware and sensitive or classified information from outside or a combination of outside-inside activity.

Articles I came across in my everyday reading, like those below, further piqued my interest in learning more about this hot-button issue:

> *Top Execs Blind to Insider Threat*, in IT Week, James Murray, 12 Sep 2006, http://www.itweek.co.uk/articles/print/2164251;
>
> *Stolen Data's Black Market*, Dark Reading Website, SEPTEMBER 7, 2006, http://www.darkreading.com/document.asp?doc_id=103198;
>
> *ArcSight and Insider (or Inside?) Threat Management*, Nigel Stanley, http://www.it-director.com/business/security/content.php?cid=8861;
>
> *The Enemy's at the Water Cooler*, Peter van der Merw, 24 July 2006, http://www.itweb.co.za/sections/quickprint/print.asp?StoryID=164620

With that background, although not in a position to contribute to security management efforts, I still jumped at the chance to review this book. I knew from the publisher's PR that it focused on an area in which I had little or no experience, so here was my chance to learn more.

A Reviewer's Dilemma — This is one of the most difficult books I've volunteered to review, and has nothing to with either the subject matter or the manner in which it is presented. Indeed, I've had a love-hate relationship with the book from its the first chapter.

I had two concerns. The first was in identifying the audience to which the book was directed. Although both Contos and his publisher mention a wide range of corporate management and professionals as the book's audience, I was not convinced. If I *pre-select* a target audience from this large group, the book is either too detailed, or not detailed enough, to meet their needs. More about that later.

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I ask myself when reviewing a book:
(1) Who is the intended audience?

(2) As presented, will the author's information reach that audience?

Criteria, mostly mental checklists, allow me to deal with a combination of a book's organization, depth of subject coverage, clarity of examples and graphics, and the author's narrative style.

Finally, sort of:
(3) Are the provided references complete and does the index provide easy access to the detailed contents of the book?

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Without going into exhaustive details beyond those I mention in the section on discomforts, I must conclude that the book was really written for middle- to upper-, but not executive-level management. There is too much repetition that will try the patience of executive-level management. On the other hand, for more technically- and detail-aware middle and senior managers, there is a lack of specifics and detail.

**The Book Itself**
According to Brian Contos, "Today's headlines are littered with news of identity thieves, organized cyber criminals, corporate espionage, nation-state threats and even terrorists. They represent the next wave of security threats but still possess nowhere near the devastating potential of the most insidious threat: the insider. This is not the bored 16 year-old hacker. We are talking about insiders like you and I, who are trusted employees with access to information - consultants, contractors, partners, visitors, vendors, and cleaning crews.

"Anybody within an organization's building or networks *who is given access* possesses some level of trust. Some insiders are malicious to begin with, joining organizations with surreptitious motives from the onset. These malicious insiders may work for competitors, organized crime groups, activists, terrorist organizations, or even foreign governments. However, most insiders do not start with malicious intent, but become disgruntled or are motivated by financial gain. Other contributing factors can be fear, excitement, politics, or even general malice. Others simply make mistakes, having no malicious motive, but their actions nonetheless have serious consequences".

In a 2005 International Data Corporation study cited by Contos, "It was discovered that about 40% of large organizations felt that the greatest security risks stem from internal threats as opposed to external attacks. Around 30% of respondents felt that the threats were about equal.

"Because of these threats, not taking steps to address insiders can ultimately yield regulatory fines, legal fees, litigation penalties associated with class actions, public relations fees, a decrease in shareholder faith, expenses related to placating customers and ultimately lost revenue."

And there is an inherent bottom-line limitation to the actions management can take.

- "There is no security panacea.
- "There is no piece of software that one can install, no box that can be plugged in,
- No policy that can be written, and
- No guru who can be hired to make an organization 100% secure.

Insider threats are the hardest threats to prevent, most difficult to detect, and most politically-charged to manage. Security is a process that requires vigilance and awareness. It is a merger of people, processes, and technology. Finding the best combination of these variables to mitigate risk helps achieve a strong security posture. With vivid real-life cases, this book addresses the most difficult to manage and costly of all security threats: the insider."

The table of contents illustrates that the book covers all aspects of the problem of threats in a reasonably organized fashion:

"Never before has so much of our sensitive information been so easily accessible to so many. Our personal and financial information resides on systems and networks we don't control. Our employers, government organizations, and others house sensitive information that can be exploited," said Contos in a recent podcast. As IT professionals, "we have to remember that the larger an organization gets, the more it should be concerned with insider threats."

**Kudos**

The theme of this book, which concerns real world insider threats to our institutions, forms the backdrop to the case histories, which are narratives about the author's experiences during his long consulting and management career. These are a compelling read and well worthy of treatment in novels or cinematic rendering.

Chapter 1 (Part I) — I found the detailed descriptions in Chapter 1, *Cyber Crime and Cyber Criminals 101*, compelling and enlightening. The author clearly identifies the *perps* who gain by taking advantage of insiders. These include solitary cyber criminals and exploit writers for hire, black market sellers of data, hackers for fun or profit, script kiddies (e.g., teenagers with downloaded software), organized crime, identity thieves (phishers), and, of course, business competitors. They work for, as is obvious from reading newspapers, are locals, activist groups, nation-state threats, and of course terrorists.

Contos' description of Tools of the Trade blew me away. I've listed these below to illustrate the detail in chapter 1. [No, I'd not heard of some of these, but I'm a quick study.] If any of them intrigue you, buy and read the book.

| | |
|---|---|
| Application-Layer Exploits | Using Botnets |
| Forcing Buffer Overflows36 | Code Packing |
| Denial-of-service (DoS) Attacks | More Aggressive and Sophisticated Malware |
| Non-wired Attacks and using Mobile Devices | Password-cracking (show me the ways) |
| Phishing | Reconnaissance and Googledorks |
| Installing Rootkits and Keyloggers | Social Engineering Attacks |
| Voice-over-IP (VoIP) Attacks | Zero-Day Exploits (we've a panic situation here, Help) |

Chapter 2 (Part I) — *Insider Threats*, Chapter 2, is another compelling chapter. It deals with both recognizing the insider threat and establishing, within an organization, the means to deal with them. Although the material is provided in a chatty, narrative form, it nevertheless will catch your attention. I've annotated or modified Brian's titles, to better share the sections' themes— a reviewer's privilege. Although the chapter is at times repetitive, the tell, and tell me again mode is effective. This is especially true if the audience is folks with short attention spans.

The first four sections of the chapter focus on whom. Contos then goes on to deal with enterprise tools that can be used to offset insider threats.

- Understanding Who the Insider Is (check the next cubicle out and the guy that wasn't promoted)
- Psychology of insider identification (tick, tick, tick I've been wronged)
- Insider threat examples from the media (there wasn't enough room for these)
- Insider threats from a human perspective
- A word on policies (good, bad and unused)
- Understanding insider threats from a business perspective
- Identifying and evaluating risk, including cost-benefit analysis
- Insider Threats from a Technical Perspective (the meat)
- Need-to-know (most folks, despite their rank, don't)
- Implement a least privileges policy
- Separation of Duties (to assure ability to audit and test)
- Create Strong (IT system) Authentication
- Enhance and strengthen information access controls, and finally
- Implement balanced risk and cost sensitive incident detection and incident management systems.

The Rest of the Book — Although the other chapters were information rich, I found Chapter 3 on Information Security Management [ESM] both unfocused and confusing. More about that below.

The cases studies in Part II, Real Life Case Studies, were interesting, but were more of a synopsis than what business and law schools call case studies. They, in their diversity, held my attention, but little about them was compelling with respect to explicit and focused acknowledgment of specific insider threats.

**Discomforts**

I agree with the sentiments expressed by the author as well as with the details found in the book that support his thesis. However, as noted below, many aspects of the presentation, overall content, ESM system definition, and level of detail troubled me.

In a brief Internet search, I found an easier to understand treatment of the insider threat problems and their solutions at http://www.arcsight.com/index htm. The site contains many clearly written papers on the subject that I took the time to read. I especially noticed, not unsurprisingly, that this book's author had written many of them. Alas, I wish there hadn't been the logic disconnect in the book because Contos and his colleagues work is seriously important to the maintaining the safety of institutional information.

Audience Focus – I'm not convinced, having worked with executive management in a number of corporations, that this book is truly aimed at them. I'll illustrate the point with a tale from my past. Forty years ago, I reported directly to a research VP for a Fortune 500 corporation. When I wanted time to share what I thought was a critical problem, he explained to me:

> Harry, pretend you catch me in the hall when I'm getting ready to take a cab to the airport. If you capture my attention with the problem and I want to know more, I'll have you ride with me. But if it's really important (and a crisis) I'll cancel my trip. [This, of course, was long before cell phones, but you get my point.]

From my perspective, each chapter of the book should have had a page or two of highly focused facts to catch the attention of a busy executive.

ESM Internal Logic — Part III, The *Extensibility of ESM*, made me feel as if I were at a tennis match. The focus seemed to change not only between chapters but also between apparently related sections. Just when I thought I was beginning to understand how a portion of ESM fit, I got lost.

No ESM roadmap was provided, yet one would have helped. Folks, although I'm not a security analyst, I've done enough systems analysis in my career to feel comfortable with almost any system description and a listing of its functions, even if it is an IT system. This is the part of the book where I ran into the greatest problems with audience appropriateness and level of detail.

Assume I view ESM as a black box, with lots of interconnected black boxes inside. Some of these internal boxes have outside connections; others just take care of each other. Okay, I've described an ESM system; unfortunately the material in both Part III and Chapter 3 doesn't seem to do so.

Without getting repetitious, I could not find a common link between or even trace a systematic link in the various sections on ESM to frame its concepts or integrated function. (See the next comment.) Not even the author's figure, which I provide below, helped me frame the individual narratives on ESM into a coherent whole.

ESM Is a Unified System, Isn't It? — In addition to becoming aware of the extent of the insider threat problem, the most interesting, yet disappointing, part of the book was the author's treatment of Enterprise Security Management [ESM]. When dealing with slices of ESM, Contos' discussions were generally very interesting. However, nowhere in the book could I find an integrated detailed definition of, or description of the bounds of or overall scope of ESM. No, not even in Chapter 3, in the one-page section of ESM in a nutshell. Indeed, from that section I got the impression that ESM was "generally enterprise-level software". See the figure below.

But the material in succeeding chapters, including the case histories, immediately contradicted that thought. Alas, the focus immediately switched to software and IT solutions, rapidly narrowing the focus for the ESM activities.

Level of Detail In the Case Studies – While I'm not looking for a primer on how to be a malicious insider, I'd really like to have had the level of detail found when reading about such events in business magazines, or even the better weeklies. Instead, Contos used the major part of these



Figure 3.1

case studies as a platform for preventing or fixing the problem, something that could have been better integrated into a separate section of the book. Indeed, themes such as the explicit use of ESM should have been better detailed in part III of this book.

Incomplete References – The author does not provide references to the many external sources cited. One of many examples (page 29) is a paper entitled *Espionage by the Numbers: Statistical Overview* by Richard J. Heuer, Jr., (Defense Security Research Center), which I found by way of a Google search. And a reference (page 61) to *The Puzzle Palace: Inside America's Most Secret Intelligence Organization* by James Bamford, Penguin **ISBN:** 0140067485, although dated, would also have led me to some interesting future reading.

Acronym List Needed — Indeed, except where I could find a few of the acronyms accompanying their name in the index, I soon got lost in a sea of acronyms. More easily than going back and skimming pages in the book, I found some of them at the Acronyms and Abbreviations Dictionary site http://www.acronymfinder.com/.

Lack of Explanation for Some Illustrations — A few ArcSight ESM system images that serve as examples, see page 82, are not only hard to read, but difficult, if not impossible, to understand. This is troublesome in a book aimed at senior level personnel.

82      Chapter 3 • Enterprise Security Management (ESM)
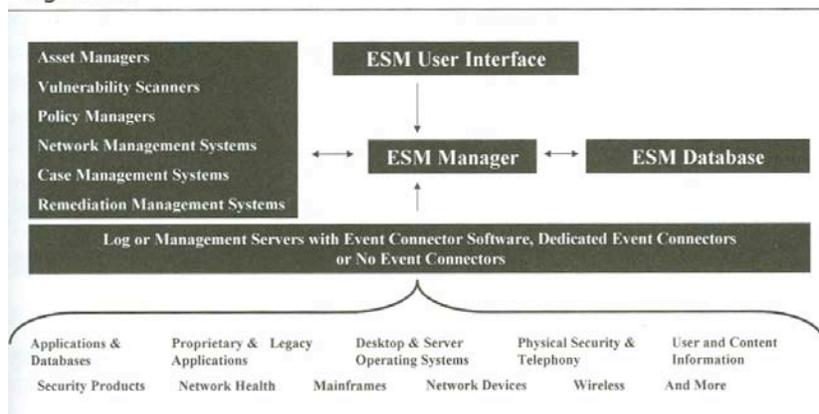
Figure 3.5
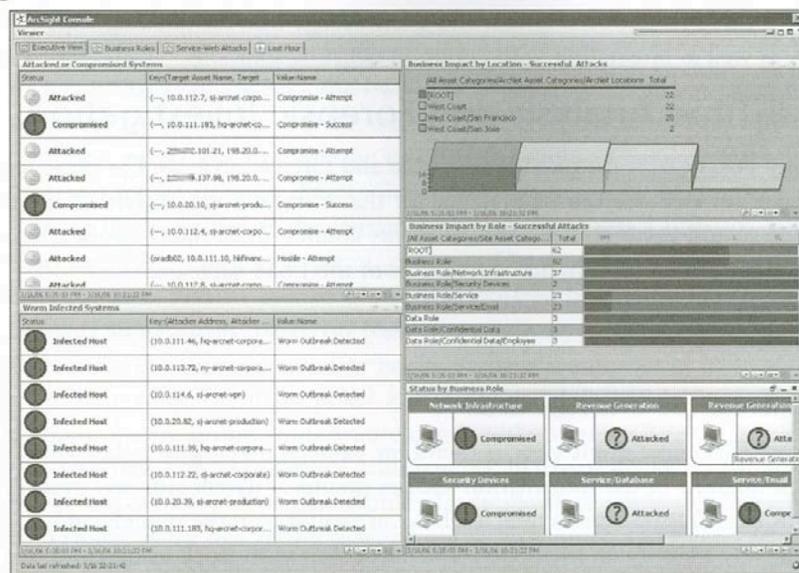


Source: ArcSight ESM v3.5

**In Closing**

An unidentified Amazon.com reviewer noted, **"**This book starts off nice and easy, giving a good introduction to cyber crime before getting into the more technical aspects of mitigating insider threats. I liked that very much, as opposed to the aggressive beginnings of most security books. I really enjoyed the real life scenarios that were described in this book. Sometimes the best way to learn is by looking at the mistakes of others. In the security world, it's often hard to predict what clever new method an attacker may use to get what he wants; by looking at examples of real world cases you can better equip yourself with the ability to prevent intrusions. Perhaps the part about this book that I liked the most was the writing style. It felt like a conversation. Very easy to read and follow." Your reviewer does not agree.

Good News — I universally agree with the sentiments expressed by the author as well as with the details found in the book that support his thesis, and the detail in the book opened my eyes wider to the insider threat than they had been. However, as noted above, many aspects of the presentation, overall content, and level of detail troubled me.

I do agree that "Brian Contos has created, based on my limited reading, what few security specialists can claim: a truly readable book about the threats to our business from insiders." As mentioned I the section on kudo, there is much to be admired in this book and myriads of lessons and narratives that heighten one's awareness of the insider threat. The folks who are responsible for our institutions, whether private, public sector or government, who still have their heads in the sand, should read this book.

Bad News — However I'm not sure, as claimed by both the publisher and other reviewers, that *Enemy at the Water Cooler* is the *definitive book* for Chief Intelligence Officers, Chief Security Officers, and Chief Executive Officers looking to battle the rising tide of security threats posed by their own trusted employees, consultants, and partners. *Enemy at the Water Cooler* is a book that intelligence and security officers, as well as those in charge of information technology, everywhere should read.

In summary, a yin-yang sort of thing — I remain troubled by the book's shortfalls. Much of the information is worthy of being understood and then acted upon, because the reality is that insider threats exist. Contos has provided readers with much food for thought about the enemy at the water cooler; but, alas, his poorly integrated treatment of the subject weakens its impact.   Rating 3.5 macCs

**Author BIO**

Brian T. Contos has real-world security engineering and management expertise developed in over a decade of working in some of the most sensitive and mission-critical environments in the world. For four years as ArcSight's CSO, he has advised government organizations and major corporations on security strategies related to Enterprise Security Management solutions and has evangelized the technology. He has delivered speeches, interviews, performed webcasts and podcasts and published countless security articles for publications such as The London Times, Computerworld, SC Magazine, Tech News World, Financial Sector Technology, and the Sarbanes-Oxley Journal. Contos has held security management and engineering positions at Riptech (a Managed Security Services Provider acquired by Symantec), Lucent Bell Labs, Compaq Computers, and the Defense Information Systems Agency.

# The Magic of Thinking BIG

reviewed by Robert Pritchett, November 2006

**Strengths:** One of the first "believe in your self" motivational books that is just plain positive!

Weaknesses: Never been updated since 1959, so the annual salary examples are laughable.
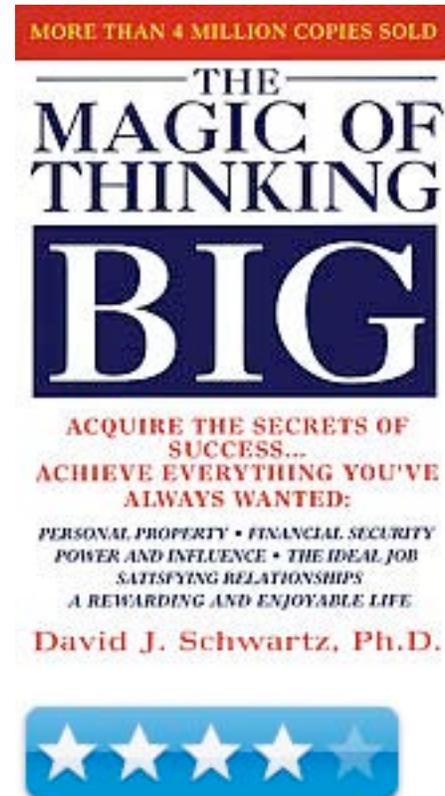
This book can be bought for less than a buck from Amazon.com. There are over 222 of them out there for resale, last time I looked.

The premise is that you don't have to accept mediocrity or bow to the wishes and demands of others who do not wish you to succeed in life, but rather be insanely miserable like they are.

This is such a saccharine-sweet "believe in your dreams and act on them" kind of book, that you just have to go out and get one for the holidays!

It is all just a matter of redirecting your thought-processes so accentuate the positive and avoid the negative. Remember this was published close to 50 years ago.

If you can get past the occasional annual salary guffaws, this book still packs a punch and points us in the right direction with a no-holds-barred approach to feeling good about yourself and believing that you can succeed if you really want to. And each chapter ends with a summary section and action items.

Think about it – no more excusitis, no more fear, go first class, make attitudes your allies, turn defeat into victory and learn how to let goals help us grow into thinking like leaders.

So go get an attitude adjustment on the cheap. Who knows, it really could turn defeat into victory. It is all a matter of thinking positive and this book shows us how.

# How to Cheat at Managing Information Security

reviewed by Robert Pritchett, November 2006

**Author:** Mark Osborne
http://www.loud-fat-bloke.co.uk/
Syngress
http://www.syngress.com/catalog/?pid=4110
**Released:** July 17, 2006
**Pages:** 315
$40 USD, $52 CND, £23 GBP, 33,37€ Euro
**ISBN:** 1597491101

**Strengths:** Take as a good hard look at security with a large dose of humor.

**Weaknesses:** Some typos.

**Other reviews:** Amazon.com – Ben Rothke
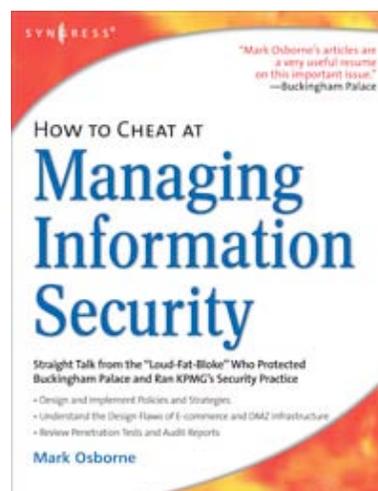
## What they say

"This is the only book that covers all the topics that any budding security manager needs to know! This book is written for managers responsible for IT/Security departments from mall office environments up to enterprise networks. These individuals do not need to know about every last bit and byte, but they need to have a solid understanding of all major, IT security issues to effectively manage their departments. This book is designed to cover both the basic concepts of security, non-technical principle and practices of security and provides basic information about the technical details of many of the products - real products, not just theory. Written by a well known Chief Information Security Officer, this book gives the information security manager all the working knowledge needed to:

Design the organization chart of his new security organization
Design and implement policies and strategies
Navigate his way through jargon filled meetings
Understand the design flaws of his E-commerce and DMZ infrastructure"

## What I say

Mark Osborne is on the prowl and going after auditors. It is plain to see he has had some nasty experiences with them in the past – and it shows. Perhaps there is running joke in the book as he keeps the topics on course with his decidedly British humor. It is refreshing to see someone from the professional computer security environment that doesn't take himself too seriously for a change. Sing with me; "A spoon full of sugar helps the medicine go down, the medicine go down, the medicine go down…"

And that is precisely what the book does. It provides a way of giving us some strong medicine with out feeling we've been over-medicated.

First off, Mark Osborne lets us decide where "Security" fits in, in an organization and provides scenarios for various "locations" along with what works and doesn't in each case. I enjoyed reading Ben Rothke's review over on Amazon.com as he fleshed out his excellent review of this book. You might want to go take a peek. I have a sneaky suspicion he to has "been there, done that".

What I learned is that if the department of high-tech security is subservient and not autonomous, it will fail and always be in the role of the first to be hit in the blame game when stuff hits the fan – and becomes the "single point of failure" just by being there.

I appreciated the façade of security he presented in an installation that showed more "out front" kinds of overdone security while the back door essentially was open. And I also loved his irreverent job interview scenarios where he pretty much puts idiots in their places they try to hire him into their organizations. Having been through a number of similar situations, I just kept laughing at the clueless human resource filters. The difference is that I wasn't in as secure a situation as he was. He has the knowledge, the know-how and the experience to put the so-called interviewers to shame. Simply wonderful!

The other gem in this book is how technology is used (or misused) – not to replace, but to enhance – and what happens if it isn't implemented correctly.

And perhaps the best way to cheat at managing information security is to get people who have the right chops in to do the job, instead of gathering "yes men" or pretenders who can speak the speak but not walk the walk.

The book does have one or two typos, but overall it works as advertise. And call the auditor's bluffs.

# Music Projects with Propellerhead Reason

reviewed by Daphne Kalfon, November 2006
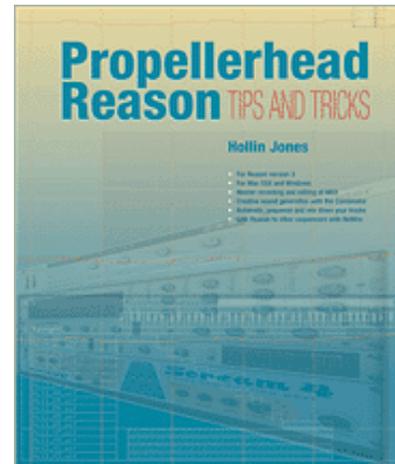
**Strengths:** The tutorials in this book provide a hands-on guided tour of how to go about creating the various genres of music for which Reason is best suited, teaching the user valuable tips and techniques along the way. Sample Reason project files give users a practical way to monitor their progress.

**Weaknesses:** None found.

First off, although it is not stated outright, this book assumes that one already has a working knowledge of Reason - in other words, that one has read through the user's manual to at least some degree, otherwise I would say that it may be somewhat, if not very frustrating, trying to fully understand and follow what is being done in the tutorials.

The book consists of 11 chapters. The first is an introduction. I really liked the candor of the author when he states that although Reason comes with orchestral sounds as well as synths, this software program is best suited for the creation of electronic styles of music such as trance and hip hop rather than acoustic, jazz or blues styles. The author explains that the book shows one not only how and why to use certain techniques, but specifically how to use Reason to accomplish them.

The author then goes on to explain that there are eight separate tutorials, one each for Hip hop, Drum 'n bass, Dub, House, Techno, Trip hop, Trance and Electropop. Each one is self contained and therefore can be done in any order of preference, and each is prefaced by a brief history of the genre in question, a list of notable artists of that genre as well as recommended listening. This serves as an excellent preparation for the ears before embarking on the tutorial.

The book then discusses how to use the sample project files as a guide to each successive stage of the tutorials. The author lets the reader know how the sample project files will be introduced at each stage so that the reader knows when to refer to them. The importance of experimentation, individual preferences and of course creativity is emphasized; the sample project files are only to be used as a basic guide.

In addition to the sample project files for each tutorial, there are a number of ReFills and REX files to which the tutorials refer. All of these files are available for download from the PC Publishing website. Making these resources available online eliminates the need for CD-ROMs and allows for updating of useful links and other information. The reader is directed to the URL on the PC Publishing website, and given the username and password required to download these files, which I did without encountering any problems.

Chapter Two is titled "Setting Up" and I think it is a very smart inclusion in the book. For those who have not yet decided what equipment they should consider purchasing for their music studio, this chapter offers some helpful advice on things, like what kind of computer one should buy and which features it should have. The author gives a very fair and unbiased comparison of Mac and PC, essentially leaving it up to the reader which route to go.

From there, the author explains how to install Reason for both platforms.

Chapter Three is Hip hop, the first of the eight tutorials in the book. As mentioned earlier, each genre is given a brief history, which I found very helpful in further understanding the nature of the genre. Recommended listening consisted of a listing of eight artists, such as Jurassic 5 - *"Jurassic 5"* (1998), Public Enemy - *"It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold us Back"* (1988), DJ Shadow - *"Endtroducing"* (1996), and Wu Tang Clan - *"Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)"* (1993).

This is the tutorial I tried and although hip hop is not my preferred style, it was interesting to actually learn some of the techniques used in this genre. The author is easy to follow for the most part, explaining each step in detail.

We start off by creating a mixer and setting the tempo and time signature. We then create a ReDrum and choose a kit from the Hip Hop Kits folder, followed by the creation of a basic drum track, add in some hits using the NN-19 sampler as well as some effects using Filter Frequency, Scream 4 Distortion and an RV7000 Reverb unit.

Next, a piano intro is added to the track using the NN-XT sampler, and to that is added a Dr. REX drum loop, using the "Change Events' under the "Edit" menu to change the latter up a bit. This was very interesting to know, as it is an easy way to add instant variety to your drum beat.

Next, we load up the Combinator and select a patch, which provides a fat bass as well as a lead line.

From there, the tutorial shows how to go about doing some drum editing in "Drum Edit" mode. At this point, I am at "File Stage 4", as indicated in the page margin. So what this means is that already in this tutorial, there have been three previous sample files for me to listen to in order to monitor my progress. I have listened to each one and they have really helped me to see if I was on track with what was being explained at each stage of the tutorial. Having something to listen to was very helpful in illustrating and teaching what goes into creating a hip hop style track, and I'm sure the same applies to the other tutorials.

At this point I should also mention that the book is full of screenshots of what is being discussed, be it a sequencer window, a menu or a unit in the Reason rack. Also, each screenshot is accompanied by a brief explanation of exactly what is being shown. I really appreciated having those as an additional handy reference as I moved along through the tutorial.

The tutorial continues on, adding more instruments and effects, and culminates in a brief guide on how to go about creating the final mix. Once complete, you can listen to the final audio sample file for the hip hop tutorial, "File Stage 10", and see how you compare.

The final chapter, titled "Exporting from Reason", shows you how to export, share and publish your tracks.

In conclusion, I would highly recommend this book especially to anyone who is a new user to Reason and who needs to learn the basics of how to put tracks together to create a piece of music in the electronic styles.

# Secrets of Podcasting: Audio Blogging for the Masses, 2nd Edition
reviewed by Chris Marshall, November 2006

Peachpit Press

http://www.peachpit.com
http://www.peachpit.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0321438434&rl=1

**Released:** May 30, 2006
$24.99 USD, $33.99 CND, £17.99 GBP, 26,99€ Euro
**ISBN:** 0-321-43843-4

**Audience**. Mac and Windows users with an interest in understanding podcasting or getting involved in podcasting.

**Strengths:** Well laid out, communicates extremely well. In depth knowledge of the subject.

**Weaknesses:** Nothing of any significance.

**What they say:**

Whether you want to create your own podcasts or just would like to locate and then listen to audio programs on your portable player, this is the book for you. In Secrets of Podcasting, Second Edition, author Bart G. Farkas provides real-world guidance and advice on how to:

* Download and enjoy podcasts with any MP3 player
* Create a script and set the structure and flow of your audio or video podcast
* Choose the right equipment-including the right microphone, headphones, and even preamp
* Use a digital recording device instead of your PC or Mac
* Pick audio editing and recording software
* Legally play music in your podcast or vodcast
* Distribute your podcast or vodcast

In addition, Bart includes tutorials on creating podcasts on Windows machines and on Macs. He also offers dozens of recommendations for software to use for finding and subscribing to podcasts.

**What I say:**

At 312 pages, this is an incredibly easy to read book, that covers all the important aspects of podcasting with a simplicity and clarity that is more than welcome.

Initially I was more than a little skeptical on two counts:

- how could a subject that is still so new warrant a second edition already?, and
- what on earth could be so "secret"?

If I am honest I still think that the use of the word "secret" is totally wrong! The whole area of podcasting, it can be argued, is about taking the secrecy out of broadcasting and opening up the world for us all! This book is certainly about making the mechanics and techniques of podcasting open to all of us, so why the word "secrecy"?

As for it being a second edition, well, that is easier to understand. This book is a very clever continuation of a journey that started only a short while ago, and without doubt has a tremendous way to go. This book helps you catch up with the pace, and maintains a steady pace throughout, exceptionally well.

A final observation before getting into the details of the book – Farkas does an excellent job of demonstrating just how much better a Mac is over a Windows PC for this type of activity. It isn't done intentionally, but every comparison; every range of options and every screen shot just demonstrates the superiority of the Mac.

Based on five well structured, somewhat long but easy to read chapters, the book has something for everyone who has heard of, listened to, or created a podcast.

1. Podcasting Basics
2. Jumping In
3. Creating a Podcast
4. Video Podcasting
5. Podcast Distribution.

Most of us are recipients of podcasts, so the background and history will probably fill in some gaps for everybody, and even the seasoned podcasters will probably enjoy a look back at the history they have helped to create. I certainly think some of them could do with reading this and fine-tuning their current 'casts.

I found the book an intriguing mix of a pleasant story and a friendly instruction manual. I was surprised to learn about the podcasting initiative at Duke University and was really impressed. I was immensely grateful for the way it gently took me through the basics of RSS programming in such a way that I actually felt stupid for not having understood it before, and I also came away with a pretty interesting wish list of new gadgets and applications to try!

The areas that I found really clear and useful?  The tutorial sections. Absolutely excellent!

Owning a Mac and enjoying gadgets, I have often thought that I "should" be doing a podcast. A number of things have held me back,\; lack of subject matter and lack of knowledge on how to create one. Now I just need to find subject matter. Part of my dilemma is that I contribute via interviews on a number of existing podcasts, and I am more than aware of the saturation that is taking place in the Mac 'cast land, so I will need to keep thinking of a subject. In the meantime, I am going to get hold of some of the equipment that caught my eye, and try and improve the quality of my current recordings for the existing podcasts, and maybe try out a few 'casts for friends and family ☺

I have little doubt that we will shortly be seeing the third edition – I hope so.

**In summary:** A great book to read, keep on the shelf and dip into from time to time for the stuff that you will invariably want to know about at a later stage as you get more and more into podcasting. I particularly liked the ability to register the book on their web site and receive additional information.

# Smarter, Faster, Better: Strategies for Effective, Enduring and Fulfilling Leadership
reviewed by Robert Pritchett, November 2006
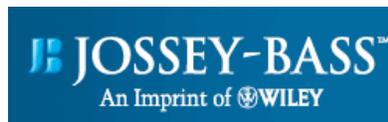
**Authors:** Karlin Sloan and Lindsey Pollak
http://www karlinsloan.com
Jossey-Bass – a Wiley Imprint
http://www.josseybass.com
http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787982687.html
**Released:** June 2006
**Pages:** 256
$25 USD, $32 CND, £17 GBP, 20,83€ Euro
**ISBN:** 0787982687
For executive wannabees who want to be leaders.

**Strengths:** Shows how to be effective practically.

**Weaknesses:** None found, really.

This is an executive coaching book designed to help with one-on-one training sessions from Karlin Sloan and Company.

## What they say

> "To meet the demands of a global marketplace, you've invested time and money to attract top quality leadership talent. How do you leverage, develop, and retain your most valuable resources?

> At Karlin Sloan & Company, we offer real-world solutions for business leaders and the organizations they inhabit. Our mission? Fostering greatness in organizations worldwide…

> In this groundbreaking book, acclaimed executive coach Karlin Sloan offers leaders a variety of self-assessments, habits, strategies, and sustainable practices that they can use to become what today's marketplace demands; smarter, faster, and better. Karlin Sloan shows what it takes to make the move to the next level to become a leader who both grows the bottom line and contributes to stakeholders and the world in a positive way. Based on research, study, and the author's extensive experience as a coach to leaders of top organizations, this book shows how to become smarter, faster, and better by examining these questions:

- What are your key strengths and what do you need to develop or leverage?
- What are you focused on now and what do you need to accomplish to really get ahead?
- Are your values in line with your work? What is the end you are trying to achieve?

## What I say

What kind of people do we surround ourselves with? Working "smarter" entails gathering more intelligent people around you and having enough confidence and trust in them by letting them work things out.

Do we handle overload well or thrive on stress? "Hurry up and wait" isn't necessarily the best strategy for improving business. Sometimes we have to slow down and think things through before rushing headstrongly into the future.

We can be better by serving others, instead of being serviced by them. This book is anecdotal in that it provides a number of "for-instances" we can learn from. And I'm all for learning from others, because I'm like the ancient Greek philosopher who once said that the older he got, the less he realized he knew.
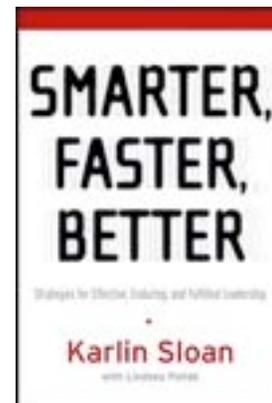
So this book's title is really an anti-title that by reading through the book, we can begin to use common sense and intuitive obviousness in bettering the lives of others thereby, bettering our own.

From my own experience, a leader is one who is out front and has earned the trust of his or her followers, because he or she cares about those being led with love. A manager manages to dot "I"s, cross "T"s and keeps the house generally in order while carrying a heavy stick of fear to get work done.

This book shows that if we follow our human tendencies to play nice and share, that we can get more done in less time and the work will be of better quality, because we show a genuine interest in those we work with from day to day, week to week and year to year.

# World of Warcraft Dungeon Companion
reviewed by Derek Meier, November 2006

**BRADYGAMES**
TAKE YOUR GAME FURTHER

**Author:** Brady Games
http://www.bradygames.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0744006996&rl=1
DK Publishing, a Division of Penguin Group, Inc.
 800 East 96th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46240
**Released:** July 10th, 2006
**Pages:** 448
$25 USD $30 CND, £17 GBP,  20,87 € Euro
**ISBN:** 0744006996
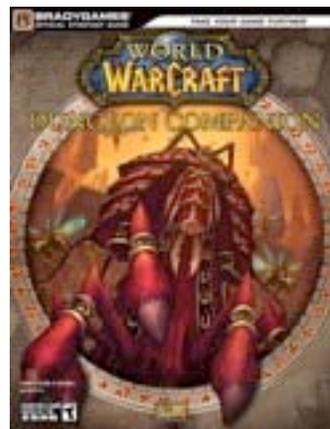
**Strengths:** Highly detailed information on the dungeons of Azeroth,
Complete quest descriptions and strategy.

★★★★★

**Weakness:** None Found.

I haven't written a review for *macCompanion* for quite awhile. You see I have a new addiction that has taken up most of my spare time-----World of Warcraft. I am a level 60 Warrior in the guild Inferno on the server Boulderfist. Bradygames is no newcomer to strategy guides, especially concerning World of Warcraft. My first strategy guide I ever purchased was their original World of Warcraft Strategy guide.

The *Dungeon Companion* is a 448-page strategy guide that provides an in-depth overview into all the dungeons of Azeroth, from the Stockades to the Molten Core.

The guide provides starting information. For instance, who to bring, what levels are recommended, how long to complete and where the instance is. Of course, you can complete the dungeon without going by these suggestions but they do help.

Also covered by the guide are detailed maps of the dungeons. Need to go straight to a certain boss?  Well, these maps help you make out the most direct path. Trust me, this comes in handy, since a lot of times you are not doing the whole dungeon and have certain bosses you want the drops from.

Speaking of drops, this guide tells what items drop from which boss. Need a Belt or Valor? Well, you can find this drops from Highlord Omokk, plus a list of more items he drops, as well as stats of the item.

Quests for each dungeon are also included with level, quest giver, goal and experience as well as the quest reward. This comes in extremely handy when going into a dungeon, so you will have all the quests you need in advance, saving that frustrating trip back in just to complete one more quest, especially if its part of a chain.
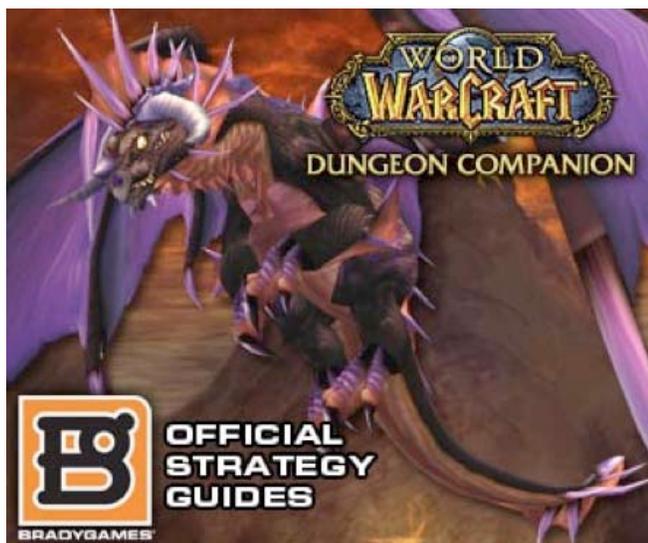
The guide also goes into strategies in each instance, some of which I already knew and have used before. Others I didn't and can't wait to try. The more complicated dungeon bosses require more than just hitting it with all you have and if you don't have a strategy you won't be taking them down.

Also included in the guild are coverages of some outside boss encounters such as Azuregos in SouthEast Azshara. Lastly the guide also contains the class armor sets which give you an idea of what your goal for your gear will be and where to get the gear for endgame.

All in all the WOW Dungeon Companion is a highly detailed tome of knowledge of the dungeons of Azeroth. It is nicely laid out and has very helpful maps throughout the guide. This is a must-have for any adventurer in the land taking you from the lowest instance to the 20 and 40 man instances. The only drawback is that dungeons like Naxxramas were not added, due to it being added after publishing. Also the WoW expansion the Burning Crusade is due soon. Hopefully we will see a mini dungeon companion with the dungeons added after publishing of the original, plus the new expansion dungeons. Also check out Bradygame's WoW map poster. It's a nice addition to any gamer's room.

# Hardware Reviews

## Disco iPod case for the iPod Video
reviewed by Ted Bade, November 2006



**Company:** Griffin Technology; 1930 Air Lane Drive; Nashville, TN 37210; USA

1 (615) 399-7000

**Fax:** +1 (615) 367-6468

http://www.griffintechnology.com/contact/email.php

http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/disko/

$30 USD

**Requirements:** iPod video

**Strengths:** Interesting visual effect, nice tough case, color coordinated with the iPod colors.

**Weaknesses:** No access to the port on the bottom of the iPod. Case is hard to open once closed.



The Disco iPod case by Griffin is a hard plastic case with a rather fun twist. This case responds to motion with a display of blinking LEDs that delight the eyes in a variety of patterns. It's a solid case, which is fun to watch, and might even impress your friends!

In the early 70's I made what was called a "light organ", a primitive (by today's standards), device that blinked Christmas tree lights based on the music that was input to it. It was a lot of fun to watch. I still have this fascination with blinking light today, 36 years later! I found the Disko case rather fascinating.

This case is a typical hard plastic case, with a clear plastic cover that protects the iPod's screen and a hole that gives easy access to the iPods wheel and controls. The top has slots giving access to the switch and the audio/video connection. It comes in two pieces that snap together to protect the iPod inside. The Disko box contains two back pieces, one larger for the 80GByte iPod and the smaller for the 60GB one. The Disko comes in two colors, black and white, just like the iPods you would place in them.

Around the circular opening that gives access to the iPod's wheel is an array of red, green, and blue-colored LEDs. The bottom of the case houses the electronics and the battery necessary to run the LEDs. Motion causes the lights on the Disko to do their dance. There are five flashing light patterns. You really have to see it to believe it! The lights create an illusion of dancing around the wheel opening, some times back and forth and some times round and round the circle, using one or all of the three LEDs. What can I say? It's pretty cool! It's not really practical, but it is definitely fun!

The bottom section houses the electronics and two small 3 Volt coin batteries. I asked the people at Griffin and they expect the batteries will last for about 5 hours of operation. That is 5 hours of light shows. Since each sequence lasts only a handful of seconds, I expect that the batteries will keep the Disko flashing on occasion for a long while. The bad news is that because of the electronics pod on the bottom of the case, you need to remove the iPod from the case to connect it to a charger or your computer.



There is a small access panel on the bottom of this electronics area that opens to give access to the batteries. Getting the batteries out is a little tough. Unless you have very nimble fingers, you might need a small screwdriver to pop them out of their holders.

As a protective case, the disko is really good. It is made out of a hard plastic that appears very rugged. The iPod sits in the case and is held solidly in place, once the back is on. Getting the case open is difficult, as it closes quite tightly, which is both a good and not so good thing. It is good that the iPod won't accidentally fall out, but when you need access to the iPod, getting the back off requires a strong fingernail or a small flat screwdriver or other similar device.

The Disko is an interesting case for the iPod. It protects the iPod and the iPods screen. It is a sturdy case, coordinated with the iPod colors, but most of all it is fun! The price is standard for an iPod case, which is a deal because you get the electronics as well. You'll have a hoot showing if off to your friends. Well, except those that think you are kind of crazy anyway ;-)

# EyeTV Hybrid

reviewed by Chris Marshall, November 2006

elgato

http://www.elgato.com
http://elgato.com/index.php?file=products_eyetvhybrid
**Released:** August, 2006
$150 USD, $210 CND, £100 GBP, 149,95€ Euro
**Audience:** Anyone that owns a Mac and watches TV.

**Strengths:** Simple, efficient, reliability, form factor.

**Weaknesses:** Maybe, just maybe the antenna could be a little more powerful?

**What they say:**

*Two-in-One TV for your Mac*

EyeTV Hybrid does the work of two EyeTV hardware products for the price of one. It delivers free-to-view digital terrestrial television (DTT, or Freeview) to your Mac in crystal clear digital quality, as well as analog TV via aerial and standard cable. EyeTV Hybrid also comes with a break-out cable for composite video and S-Video, enabling you to connect a set-top box for premium channels, digital cable or satellite.

*Made for the Mac*

With its classic matte aluminum finish and surprisingly small size for such a versatile product, the EyeTV Hybrid is a perfect complement to the Mac. It features a USB 2.0 interface for the streaming of superior quality, uncompressed TV content to your Mac. EyeTV Hybrid is USB powered and therefore requires no external power supply, and contains a built-in and full-size coaxial plug.

*Connect game consoles to your Mac*

Connect your game console and enjoy an excellent live play experience – EyeTV Hybrid's uncompressed analog video signals appear on the screen with zero latency.

*Navigate with an Apple Remote*

Tired of remote controls scattered around the living room? So are we. EyeTV Hybrid works with an Apple Remote. It will certainly work with an EyeTV IR remote control as well (not included).

*Superb quality digital TV recordings*

EyeTV Hybrid records Digital Terrestrial Television in one quality setting, Lossless. The DVB stream is recorded unaltered, and so you're getting full quality DTT content as encoded by the broadcaster. EyeTV supports DTT multilingual programming and Dolby® Digital sound. Analog TV can be recorded via EyeTV 2's software encoder, and the quality depends on the Mac's processor power (for more information, read the FAQ).

**What I say:**

I have written about eyetv 2 before, so if you aren't aware of what a great piece of software it is, I suggest you head on over to their site and read all about it.

Briefly though, "EyeTV 2 enables you to watch television on your Mac, record shows and burn them to CD or DVD, or export them to other programs. You can use the 'timeshift' feature to pause live TV, jump back and watch scenes again and again. EyeTV offers a fully integrated Program Guide (EPG, Electronic Program Guide), sophisticated channel management, simple manual (timed) programming, remote programming over the Internet or best of all, with a mouse-click in the Program Guide. Remote programming uses the web interface of the EPG – either tvtv in Europe or TitanTV in the USA. EyeTV starts the recording automatically; it can wake up a sleeping Mac to do so, if required and desired."

It is one of the most impressive applications around, and the eyetv hybrid just rounds of the whole experience in an amazingly elegant, simple and effective way.

First the form factor. It is simply gorgeous.

It fits into a USB port and sits there as if it had always belonged. Maybe it is the silver color, or maybe the fact that it is not a lot bigger than an iPod Shuffle (first generation) or a new Mac Remote, but it is equally at home on a Silver PowerBook or a white iMac.



Connectivity is easy. My main method was a direct feed out of the back of my Satellite box which has a limitation in that I can only control what I see on the Mac via the satellite remote, but all the other options worked just as well. Because I have a good TV signal here it was possible to use the external antenna to pick up Spanish TV, which was an added plus as I don't actually have an external antenna fitted but in an ideal world it would be nice to have a more powerful option, but heh, you can always go out and buy one!

I think the neatest feature for me was the compatibility with Front Row. I am a big Front Row fan on the iMac so to be able to use that ultra sexy Apple Remote to manage the EyeTV Hybrid to:



- Start/pause playback
- Increase playback volume
- Decrease playback volume
- Jump forward
- Fast forward
- Jump backwards
- Fast rewind.

The Apple Remote's menu key opens the full menu – it is as easy as that.

The combination of the Mac, the EyeTV Hybrid and EyeTV 2 is an unbelievably powerful and flexible solution. The look on my friends face when I took it round to his house with my PowerBook and hooked it up in seconds was priceless – just think, next time you are paying for a movie in a hotel on that business trip, just hook it up and record a copy! Did I really suggest that???? ☺

**In summary:** Seriously Buy It! No seriously, go out now and buy it!!!

I have used this on a PowerBook, and an iMac and I have no problems at all. It is great for either traveling or as part of your home theatre set up. I totally rate this product and really can't recommend it enough.

# Graphire4
reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie, November 2006

Wacom Technology Corporation
1311 SE Cardinal Court
Vancouver, WA 98683
USA
1-800-922-9348
1-360-896-9724
**Released:** November 15, 2005
http://www.wacom.com/graphire/index.cfm
The 4X5 is $100 USD, $114 CDN, £53 GBP, 80 € the 6X8 is $200 USD
$228 CDN, 108 GBP, 160 € and the 6X8 Bluetooth is $250 USD, $285
CDN, £135 GBP and 200 € Euro.

**Strengths:** Easy to use and get used to. Comes with software. Variety of
sizes and colours. Compatible with both platforms.

**Weaknesses:** Expensive.

Whenever you want to draw something on the computer or do some advanced photo editing it can be kind of hard to
do. I've had that problem until I tried this tablet. You couldn't make a good drawing for a school project on the
computer because it looked horrible. Now I can make something decent.

The Graphire4 tablet comes in two sizes; 4X5 and 6X8. You can also get the 6X8 in Bluetooth. All tablets come in
three colours; silver, white and metallic blue. The package includes a wireless mouse that doesn't require batteries.

You have to use the mouse on the tablet to get a response, but it comes in handy. Then you have your pen. This pen
is also wireless and doesn't need batteries. It comes with it's own little pen dock for you to hold it while it's not
being used. The pen has two buttons on one side, which you can program to do whatever you want it to do. The tip
of the pen is pressure-sensitive, so whenever you use a drawing program, you can change the thickness of the line by
how hard you press on the pad. Also, if you flip the pen over, it has an eraser on the other end. If you need to make a
quick change, just flip the pen over and you have your eraser. To go back to the regular pen, just flip it back over
and write with it again. Each tablet comes with it's own cover, which you can attach with slots that are built in to the
bottom. The tablet is compatible with both Mac and Windows, so everyone can use it. A software package comes
with it, which includes Adobe Photoshop Elements 3, Corel Painter Essentials 2 and others, which work with both
platforms.

The installation of the driver was easy enough and worked almost seamlessly and the software installed well. After the installation, it's literally plug and play. The System Preferences gives you a panel to program the tablet just the way you want it. Also, another tab shows up every time you plug your tablet into your Mac. It's called Ink. Ink is used to recognize you hand movements to execute a command. If you make a specific movement, it will copy or paste. It's really neat. You can set up all of these features yourself. You don't even need it on for the tablet to work.

Now, as good as this product is, it's really pricey; the 4X5 is $99.95 USD, the 6X8 is $199.95 USD and the 6X8 Bluetooth is 249.95 USD. Not to tell you not to buy it, but you should consider the purchasing of this product. I think it's based for designer businesses, but those of us who are consumers can still get a great deal of use out of this. If you are a photographer, this would be perfect, or as Christmas is coming, it wouldn't make a bad gift.

# ICY DOCK MB559UEA-1S
reviewed by Wayne LeFevre, November 2006

ICY DOCK USA
147 Puente Ave.
City of Industry, CA 91746
626.956.8800
626.956.8811
info@icydock.com
http://www.icydock.com
**Released:** October 2006
$70 USD, $78 CND, £37 GBP, €55 Euro
**Requirements:** Mac OS 9 or newer.
**Availability:** Newegg, Firewire Depot

**Strengths:** Compact, lightweight aluminum. SATA 3.5" Hot Swappable Hard drive enclosure. Fairly easy hard drive installation. Hard drive holding tray compatible with other ICY DOCK products. Can stack or stand on it's side, button activates side feet to open. Built in security slot for security cable kit. No fan, fairly quiet operation. Power button. "Luminous mini white activity L.E.D." bright enough to read by.

**Weaknesses:** "Luminous mini white activity L.E.D." bright enough to read by. Part plastic on side with heat vents. Allows a little more noise to be heard from hard drive. (Of course, you supply your own hard drive, so that can be compensated for by purchasing a quieter drive.)

### Ease of Installation
Comes with all cables and accessories (F/W 6 pin to 6 pin cable, USB 2.0 cable, power brick and power cable., screws). Simply use 4 screws to attach to tray, slide into enclosure, hook the locking bracket and snap closed. Mac immediately recognized drive and I was off and running.

### Manufacturer Interaction

Worked as advertised first time. Literally off and running in 5 minutes time. No need to call or e-mail support for help.

### Instructions

Instructions for use and installation included in pamphlet form. Easy to follow.

### Interaction

No training needed. Just plug and play, unless you wanted to set up anything special such as partitions.

### Effectiveness

Stayed cool after an hours worth of transferring files and playing movies. Heat dissipation seems to work relatively well.

**Recommendation**

This is the second ICY DOCK enclosure that I have reviewed, and this is the one I would consider purchasing as a second external hard disk. Not that the shuttle wasn't a fantastic enclosure, just that this one is for a SATA II 3.5" disk, and I have a Mac Mini that desperately needs more room. This enclosure certainly didn't disappoint with the packaging, either. So much so that I even took a picture of it before opening it. Check it out.



You get to see exactly what you are purchasing, it isn't hiding inside an obscure box. I can't tell you how cool I think all of ICY DOCK packages are.

There are two versions of this enclosure. This one has FireWire 400 and USB 2.0. The MB559US-1S is an eSATA / USB 2.0 and it includes an eSATA bracket. Both are fanless with aluminum bodies and a side with white plastic vents. The bracket is also made of aluminum and includes these spring tabs called Anti-Shank Technology that keeps the HDD secure and shock free. The enclosure used the latest OXUF924DSA chipset from Oxford providing a solid, quick interface with the computer. I could go into how fast the F/W drive is and the like, unfortunately this being just the enclosure, it all depends on your drive. I can tell you that with a WD 250G 7200 RPM HDD, drive Sequential average read speed was 40.6 MB/s for the FireWire, and 35 MB/s for the USB. Not too shabby! (Burst speed was a bit higher by about 3 MB/s.) Random access was 13.6 ms.

ICY DOCK has several different multi drive external and internal racks that is compatible with the drive tray, so one could technically pull a drive hot out of a multi rack, and place in this enclosure for transporting and sharing. ICY DOCK is also planning on selling just the drive trays separately in November.

ICY DOCK has really been impressing me with their offerings. They've got that attention to detail that I love so much. How many other companies do you know that put their product on display before you even open the package? If your looking to expand your desktop, and already have a SATA drive, or planning on purchasing one of your size choice, you really can't go wrong with the ICY DOCK.

## Intuos3 6x8 Pen Tablet
reviewed by James Meister, November 2006

**Wacom Technology Corporation**
1311 SE Cardinal Court
Vancouver, WA 98683 USA
800-922-9348
360-896- 9724
http://www.wacom.com/productinfo/6x8.cfm
$330 USD Go to their website for other parts of the world for tablet layout
and pricing.
**Tour:** http://www.wacom.com/productinfo/i3_tour.cfm

**Strengths:** Touch-sensitive stylus, Replaceable Nibs with various 'effects'.
Highly customizable Pen functions and Mouse Buttons.

**Weaknesses:** Push buttons instead of touch buttons add a "gunk factor" over
time.

For years, in fact most of college and into the professional world, I have been a slave to the mouse. Doing all of my photo retouching and illustration with a mouse, sometimes cursing its limitations and clumsiness. It felt a lot like painting and drawing with a brick. I have to say, just one month after making the switch to a Wacom Intuos3 Pen Tablet; I will never be going back.

What is a pen tablet you ask? Well to put it in simple terms a pen tablet is like an electronic mouse pad that you can draw on with a pressure sensitive pen to aid in a more realistic painting or drawing experience. The pen features 1,024 levels of pressure sensitivity as well as a tilt sensor. This allows for ANY writing style or any pen grip to be instantly recognized by the tablet as well as an insanely smooth transition from soft to hard pressure in applications like Adobe Photoshop and Corel Painter. Probably the coolest feature (and one I almost threw in the trash) is the replacement 'specialty' nibs that come with the pen. I say I almost tossed them, because they come tucked inside a tiny slot in the plastic case with the pen, so I didn't see them until I read that they were included on the box and went hunting. The Intuos3 Pen comes with a preinstalled white plastic nib as well as three replacement white nibs. Also included is a fiber nib that, when installed, feels as if you are drawing with a felt tip marker, as well as a spring loaded tip that, to me at least, allows for a smoother pressure transition when masking photos. Wacom's official explanation for the spring nib is that it is a brush stroke tip allowing for a more natural 'brush' feel.

Included on the back end of the pencil is something that looks a lot like an eraser on a #2 pencil. Well that's because it is just that. Make a mistake? Simply flip over the pen and erase it! By default the eraser end of the pen automatically switches to eraser mode. Along with the eraser, the pen is equipped with a rocker switch on the finger grip portion of the pen, allowing for customized controls. I have mine set to *Undo* and *Undo Again* in Adobe Photoshop so that I don't have to stop what I'm doing if I need an undo or two.

Regular Nibs          Stroke Nib   "Felt" Nib

Included with every Non-Display Wacom tablet (tablets that do not show your screen on the actual tablet) is a
Wacom 5-button mouse. The best thing about this mouse is that, like
the pen, there are NO batteries! So you get the benefit of a wireless
mouse without having to keep up with loss of performance due to
weak batteries. Another downside is that the mouse works only on
the tablet itself but that's really a given and it's not hard to get used
to. Each of the buttons on the mouse is configurable via a preference
pane allowing you to specify a function in any or all applications on
your Mac. At your disposal are the standard two mouse buttons and a
center click wheel, as well as a button located to each side of the
mouse.

Previous professional versions of the Wacom tablet had a row along the top of the tablet of silk screened icons for
functions such as 'copy' 'paste' and 'undo'. Well, thankfully these have been replaced by a much simpler, yet far
more powerful feature… Express Keys. Along side the Express Keys is a touch strip allowing for similar function to
a laptop touch pad (scrolling, zooming, etc.).

These keys come pre-programmed to act as keyboard modifiers (control, command, shift,
alt/option) but they can be reprogrammed to do anything you want them to for any
application or system wide. The same goes for the touch strips. Take for instance
Photoshop. You can specify one touch strip for brush size, and the other for zoom, or you
can specify that one scrub through your history allowing for rapid undoes… the
possibilities really are endless for those little guys. Personally I don't find myself using
the Express Keys or the touch strip that often as I usually keep one hand on the keyboard
and the other with the pen, doing my business.

Overall I would have to give the Intuos3 Pen Tablet four and a half stars. It loses a half
star because, although the express keys are customizable, they could have easily used
touch sensitive buttons rather than keyboard-like buttons to cut down on the gunk collection factor. Other than that,
the Intuos3 is rock solid in its performance and visual appeal.

# Slimline 8x Dual Layer SuperDrive Upgrade

reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves, November 2006



FastMac
http://store.fastmac.com/product_info.php?products_id=274
$120 USD

**Requirements:** Mac OS 9, OS X 10.2, 10.3, 10.4

**Strengths:** 8x DVD burning; Dual-Layer DVD support; support for many disc formats.

**Weaknesses:** Physical installation not for faint-of-heart; Top speeds not attainable with all brands of blank media.

DVDs can hold six times as much data as a CD, but slow burning speeds mean it takes even longer to create them. FastMac's new internal slimline 8x Dual Layer SuperDrive upgrade enables users of Macs with slot-loading drives the ability to both burn DVDs faster and use the larger-capacity dual layer DVDs.

This drive replaces the slot-loading slim drives found in most PowerBooks, iBooks and iMacs, as well as the Intel Mac mini and the old Cube model. For a list of all the supported models, visit
http://store.fastmac.com/product_info.php?products_id=274

As regards installation, if you're comfortable replacing the drive yourself, go for it. FastMac provides installation instructions in a PDF on the included CD. But most of the models this drive can be used in were never meant to have their optical drive replaced by home users, and Apple's laptops are notoriously difficult to muck around inside.

I tested it in an original iMac G5, one of Apple's few consumer models designed for easy access to internal components. But because I didn't have the necessary Torx screwdrivers, I opted to let an authorized service provider make the swap. Consider the possibility of that extra expense before purchasing.

If you're running Tiger, the Finder will automatically support burning without installing any extra software. But in order to see its benefits in the iLife applications and others, you must run the PatchBurn 4 application to install new drivers.

PatchBurn is a freeware application created and maintained by Christian Möller and hosted on his web site in Germany. http://www.patchburn.de/

The installer application expires every six months, and the version on the included CD had done so, requiring a trip to the web site to download the latest version. Installing the driver is an extremely simple process that only required an administrative password and a restart. The driver can also be uninstalled using this application.

Once both the drive and the software were installed, it was fully supported by all the applications I tested, including Disk Utility, Toast 7, iPhoto, iTunes and Finder. However, it was picky about the media I used. Imation DVD-R discs rated at 8x speed would not burn above 4x, but I had no problem burning at 8x speed with Sony and Memorex branded discs.

The drive reads and writes to an extensive list of disc formats, including both DVD+/-R/RW and the dual layer, or double layer, DVD+/-R (at 4x speed maximum). It has faster DVD-RW (6x) and DVD+RW (8x) write speeds, up to two times faster than Apple's top-of-the-line slimline SuperDrives.
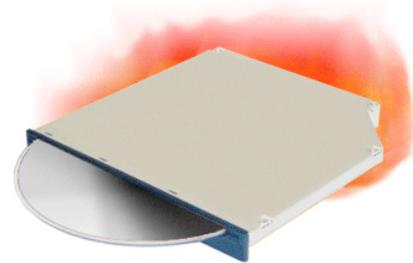
It can also read and write to DVD-RAM discs, if you have any of those left over from an old PowerMac G4. Just crack the disc out of the case and pop it into your new slot-loading drive. To see the read and write speeds of all the formats the drive supports, visit http://store.fastmac.com/product_info.php?products_id=274

A similar (though slower in some aspects) slot-loading SuperDrive upgrade sells from OWC for about $10 more, but includes 10 blank DVD-R discs and some 3rd-party software, so FastMac's is competitively priced.

If you like the Mac you currently have (one with a slot-loading drive), but are coveting the burning capabilities of the latest models, consider jumping ahead of the pack with FastMac's 8x Slimline SuperDrive Upgrade.

# iPod Video case by WaterField Designs
reviewed by Ted Bade, November 2006



WaterField Designs
US toll-free: 1-877-546-1040; Outside the US: +1-415-546-1040
askgary@sfbags.com
http://www.sfbags.com/products/ipodvideo/ipodvideocase.htm
**Released:** October 16, 2006
$29 USD
**Requirements:** An iPod.

**Strengths:** Interesting design, makes access to the iPod easy. Classy protection for the iPod.

**Weaknesses:** No access to display or controls while the iPod is in the case.



The WaterField Designs iPod case is a nicely made pouch that protects your iPod and provides a place to store the earbuds. It is not the type of case that protects while giving access to the iPod controls. However, its soft material design should appeal to people who don't fancy hard cases.

The design of this iPod protector is simple. It is a sleeve with an opening on the top and a slot on the bottom, which allows access to the iPod's port. The case is constructed of three material layers, outside it is a nylon material (Indium nylon, according to their web site, which I think is a trade name for a very tough nylon). The middle layer is plastic providing protection. And finally, the inner layer that touches the iPod is made of a very soft and velvety material. According to their web site this is: "cushiony neoprene with a silky liner". I'm sold! I like the style of WaterField case and way it caresses my iPod.

These cases come in five colors, all of them have a checkered type of design consisting of black and some other colored squares. WaterField Designs calls them: Blue (which I like a lot), Celeste (a lighter grey), Checkers (a burgundy pattern), Lead (a darker grey), and Taxi (yup, you guessed it, yellow and black).

The checkered design covers the outside of the pouch, except for a piece of black velvet-



like material on the backside. Opposite the velvet, there is an elastic band that can be used to wrap the earbuds around. I found this band can also serve as a handle of sorts. The elastic band isn't the best solution for the ear buds. You can wrap them around it, but then you need to unwrap them when you want to use them. The band isn't very tight, so if you make a bundle of the cord and ear buds and slip them under the band they might slip out. Something they did for me during my trial. However, most iPod cases don't have any place to put the earbuds at all, so this is really a nice feature. Personally, I would have been happier with a little pouch on the outside of the case.

Getting the iPod in and out of the WaterField Designs case is easy. I am the type of person who likes to keep my iPod tucked away. Whether I am taking a walk, doing yard work or cleaning the house, I usually select a playlist, press play, lock the controls and put it in my pocket. So this case works well for me. I am not the type of iPod user who is constantly manipulating the iPod's controls. However, when I need to operate the controls, it found moving the pouch out of my pocket and pulling out the iPod an easy task.

WaterField Designs video iPod case is an interesting case, does a good job protecting an iPod while still making it relatively easy to access the controls. Although some people won't like the lack of direct access to controls while in the case, others will be happy with this format. For me this is the best of solutions.

I also had a chance to inspect WaterField Designs iPod Gear Pouch. This iPod case is much more then a cover for your iPod. It is a pouch in which you can put your iPod and all it's accessories. It measures 7.75" x 3.25" x 1.2" and is light weight.



Take a look at the included diagram, as it gives a great idea of its construction and a recommendation of how it could be used. The center zippered area has three protected areas of different sizes. The larger is for an iPod that is in another case, the next smaller for an iPod without a case, and the smallest for the power brick or perhaps an armband. There are also mesh pockets for putting other accessories you might want to bring along.

The pouch is made of the same strong nylon as the above case and comes in the same colors and pattern, although the pattern and color only appear on the edge of the pouch. The sides are just black. The pouch feels very sturdy and seems to provide a goodly amount of cushioning for the iPod while still being a soft case and is a great addition to anyone's iPod gear.
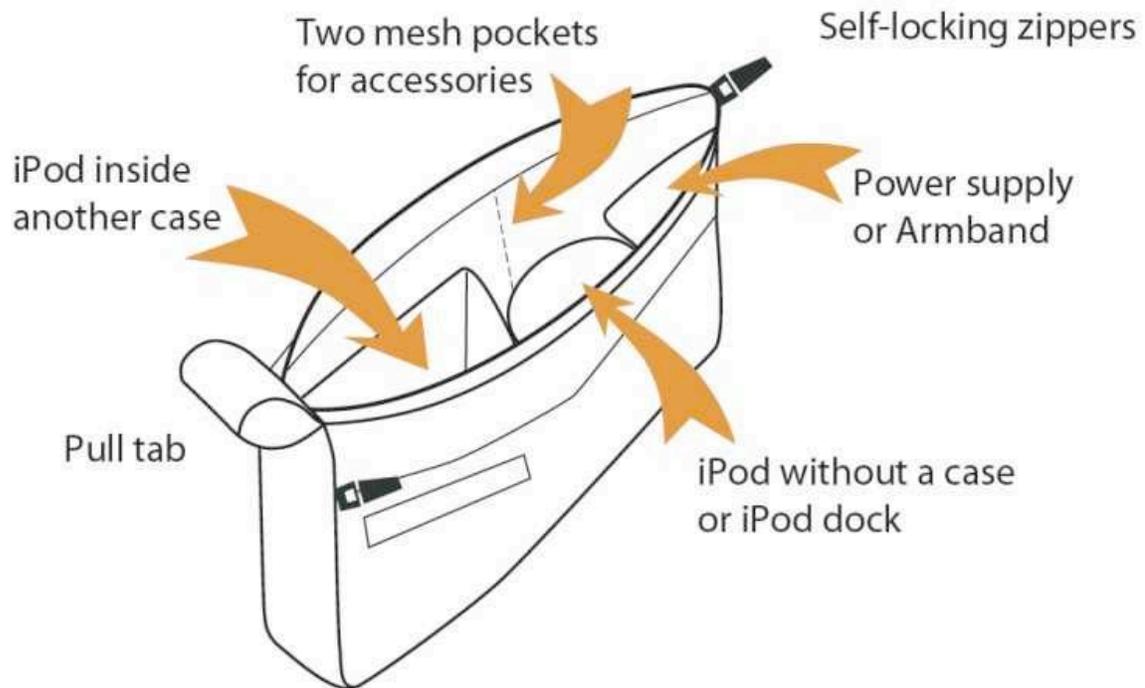
# WiebeTech ToughTech XE
reviewed by Wayne LeFevre, November 2006

WiebeTech, LLC
8200 E. 34th Street North #1404
Wichita, KS 67226
866-744-8722
support@wiebetech.com
http://www.wiebetech.com/products/toughtech.php
**Released:** August 2006
$119 USD enclosure only, $252.95 250 GB HDD,  $455.95 500 GB
HDD, $784.95 750 GB HDD.
Requirements: Mac OS X

If you are shopping for an external drive, but are a little wary about
Apple's port standards, The ToughTech XE enclosure is the one for you.

**Strengths:** All aluminum, no fan, 3.5" eSATA 1 or 2 HDD enclosure.
Sports FireWire 800, (400 compatible,) USB 2.0, eSATA ports.
FlexMount™ attaches drive to case ensuring shock protection. Speedy
Oxford 924 chipset.

**Weaknesses:** None. Only weakness found was that of Apple not
including eSATA from its products. Difficulty in daisy-chaining FireWire
400 devices.

### Ease of Installation
Installing a drive demands tools, but are provided. To install the drive, if not purchased already with a hard drive,
you must remove 3 very, very tiny #4 countersunk screws. Surprisingly, included with the drive was it's own
screwdriver. After removing the screws, the top slides off exposing the mounting brackets and bridge circuit. Simply
place the included mounting screws through the FlexMounts™ and attach the drive. Place the two cables onto the
drive and reverse the process to close.

### Instructions
Instructions, manual and photos,
including icons, are included on a CD.
Very easy to follow.

### Effectiveness
An excellent external drive, worthy of the
WiebeTech name. Built like a tank, but
lightweight and fairly portable.
Dimensions are 9"x5.25"x1.5". Includes
an on/off switch to prevent port blow-out. Speeds concurrent with what you would expect. F/W 400 averaged in the
mid 30's.

Includes everything needed to be up and running in minutes. Cables included are a FireWire 800 cable, a FireWire
400 cable (?), a FireWire 800 to 400 connector cable if you do not have F/W 800, an eSATA cable, a USB2 cable,
and the AC Adapter.

### Ease of use
Requires 9-pin to 6-pin (800 to 400 F/W) cable if you do not have a FireWire 800 port.

**Note:** Mac Pro's are the only Macs able to take advantage of the eSATA port, if an external port is purchased.

**Observations**

FireWire 800 seems to be having a tough time of it lately. It used to be only on very high-end Apple hardware, and seemed to be on the way out. It then appeared on the larger, then the smaller, MacBook Pro. The Mac Pro and 24" iMac followed. Does this bode well for FireWire 800? Should it? No matter the camp your in, if you happen to have a FireWire 800 port on your Mac, or think that perhaps one day you will, definitely take a look at this enclosure.

First off, WiebeTech is well-known for quality enclosures, RAIDS and forensic tools. You can order these enclosures by themselves, or with drives installed. The drive included with the review ToughTech was a Seagate Barracuda 250GB, 7200 RPM and 8MB cache. The 500 and 750 Gigabyte drives come with 16MB in cache.

The ToughTech XE is just as the name implies. It is a full aluminum heavy-duty case. The sides are rounded, so it cannot be stacked vertically. There is an LED bar on the front that very subtly lets you see that the drive is on or being accessed. The enclosure is fanless, and exhausts through vents on the bottom.

For shock absorption and drive protection, the SATA drive is held in place by four FlexMount™ anti-shock rubberized mounts. This combined with the all metal enclosure and no fan makes this a nearly silent drive.

All ports are covered with this drive, and includes an 800 to 400 adapter cable, if you do not have a FireWire 800 port on your Mac. Why Apple is not moving toward eSATA, I do not know. FireWire 800 has had a bit of a black eye ever since 2003, when the infamous move to a new release of Mac OS X wiped out many FireWire 800 drives. Since then, and a few updates in firmware and software, it has been relatively stable, but not moving forward. However, eSATA seems to be the up-and-coming standard in external storage standard. In any event, this enclosure has it all.

**Recommendation**

In conclusion, this drive/enclosure is well worth purchasing. It is ready for any port you may have, now or in the near future. The Oxford 924 Chipset ensures that your data will move as quick as any external drive can, no matter if your using USB 2.0 or eSATA. There is also shock mount protection to keep your data safe from any accidental bumps, and a premium aluminum housing to protect it from heat and also keeps it silent.

# Shareware Reviews

## FolderControl 1.60 — So you can automatically size and arrange the Finder's folder/directory windows into a configuration you define
reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, November 2006

**Developer:** Shaun Derman of Derman Enterprises, Inc.
http://www.derman.com/Contact/AboutUs-Contacts.jsp
http://www.derman.com/FolderControl/FC-Overview.html
**Released:** May 19, 2005
**Shareware:** $22 USD
**Download Size:** 2.8 MB
**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later. Tiger compatible, and that you activate *Enable Access* for assistive devices on the *Universal Access Preferences* panel.
**Audience:** All user levels

**Strength** — The product does what its developer advertises

**Weakness** — It takes a bit of tweaking if you are a perfectionist; most of us don't think in pixel when looking at screen locations.

**Developer's Note:** Due to the likelihood that Leopard/OS X 10.5 will introduce more fundamental changes in the finder, it's unlikely that there will be any more releases of FolderControl.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8. Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

**Publisher's Summary**
FolderControl is a utility to automatically size and arrange the Finder's folder/directory windows into the configuration you define. Set up your folder windows with the placement and appearance you want them to have! If you like an orderly desktop, you'll love this product!

**Introduction**
Years ago, under the so-called Classic environment, there was a shareware product that allowed you to control the location of and behavior of a hierarchy of folders. The program was called *NeatNik*.

If I remember correctly, its interface was graphic and simple. On opening the program you were greeted with a window that had windows that were meant to represent your initial and nested folder, on your screen. These could be moved wherever you wanted to create a format for your folder placements. Once established, you could then run a nested set of folders through the process and voilá, you were done. That application died of neglect about the time Macintosh OS X was released therefore I've been checking FolderControl as a replacement ever since.

I had previously reviewed FolderControl 1.30 in the November 2003 Volume 1, Issue 5 macC, but for reasons I don't remember, it was not a keeper. I'd deleted the application from my drive within a few months of testing it. This, despite giving it 4.5 macC rating.

I passed the developer's snicker test. So taking the developer at his word, I agree I am in need of this kind of product.

If even one of the following is true...

- You've spent more than an hour arranging Finder windows
- You've often been frustrated while fighting with OS X's
- Finder windows by (1) trying to get folders to look the way you want them, (2) trying to setup a large number of folder styles or (3) trying to get settings to "stick"
- You hate the "messy desktop" paradigm
- You publish software/data CDs/DVDs and want professional-looking folders
- You only use one Column View window (or List or Icon), but the spring-loaded folders often pop-up in some other view and you'd like them to be the same
- You like to see where you are by looking at the window title-bars
- You used *NeatNik* and/or *Finder View Settings* with Mac OS 9

... You might be a candidate for *FolderControl'*.
The developer says … "*Trust me you are one.*"

**Abstracted from the developer's website**

As with all information junkies, alas, my sets of nested folder related to macC, articles on the world that were too good to toss, unforgettable (to my hard drive) humor, shareware and recipes had gotten deeper. Often each folder when opened appeared randomly on my desktop. Therefore, I decided to again try the product, now version 1.60.

**Working With**
To install *FolderControl*, simply drag the application from the disk image to your Applications folder. [Stuff Installed: Other than its preference files (located in your home folder's *Library/Preferences* folder and the */Library/Application Support/LicenseControl* folder), *the software* does not install any files outside it's own application/package structure.]

The first time you use *FolderControl*, it will ask for the Administrator password. This is required in order to create a "LicenseControl" folder and to set the file permissions on both the "/Library/Application Support/LicenseControl" folder and its contents and the *FolderControl* application package and it's contents. These operations are required so *the software* can operate properly.

FolderControl provides preference sets (I call them *templates*) so you can easily use different folder configurations. Each of individual items in the sets provided (template) gives you unique control over:

- Which folders on your hard disk participate in the processing. Selection can be done by drop and drag.
- How folder windows are sized, both vertically and horizontally.
- Where folder windows are anchored, both vertically and horizontally.
- How sub-folder windows are arranged, relative to their enclosing folder.
- How various folder-window attributes, such as sorting and view kind, are set.
- Allows the setting of individualized permissions on the files that control these capabilities.
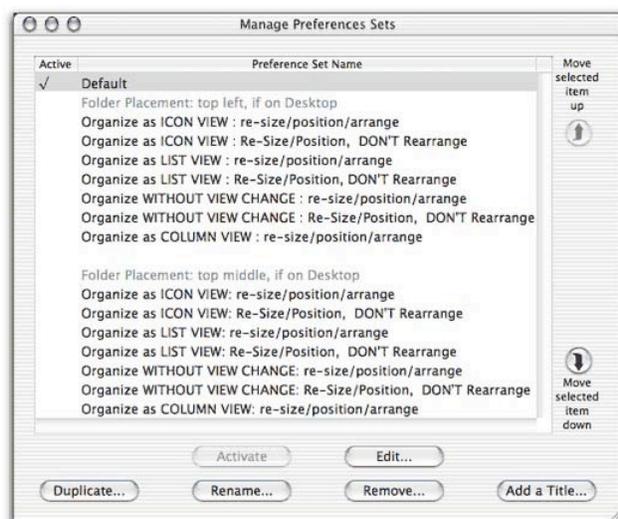
FolderControl has, according to the developer, the most popular setup configurations pre-defined. I agree. Most users will be able work with them without any need for custom configuration. [Alas, the developer has not provided an illustration for the 14 templates provide and their naming is a bit abstruse.]

To customize my templates, after taking a few smartness pills, I used the provided sets (*templates)* as tutorials. That allowed me to more easily tweak custom templates and better suit my design needs. Tuning the provided templates is easy. Duplicate the rename template that is closest to your need, edit in suitable changes — Save the result, you're done.

When completed, using you new template is straightforward. However, when reordering a 1.45 GB, shareware folder that contained 100 downloads, the process took a long time; I forget to time it. So get yourself a cup of coffee and spin a disk. The good and undocumented news is that the reordering process work when you drop and drag its alias.

**My Steep Learning Curve on Creating Customized Templates**
The lack of detailed tutorials or specifically labeled explanatory figures, made customizing templates made life harder for me. I did not want to simply use one of the predefined template sets. If a user is content to use one of the templates provided this is an easy product to use. What you see below was all the information there was.



| General Preferences Window-Loaded with configurable setting | Setting List View Preferences – More choices |
| --- | --- |
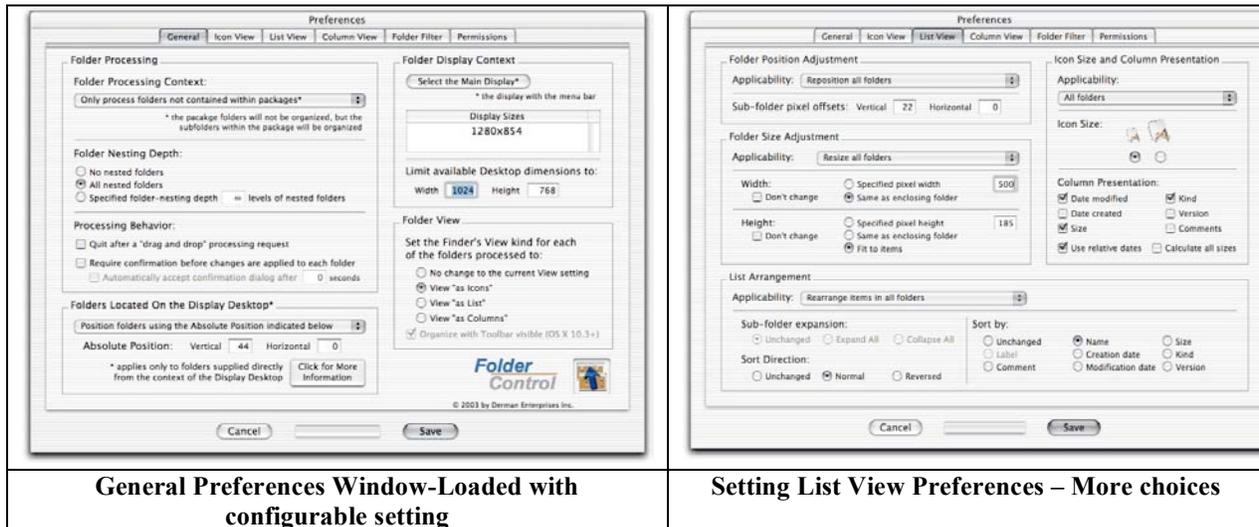
I started my experimentation out with only the information provided by the vendor. I found six template illustrations in the overview files. In addition, I read and re-read the cryptic message "the *application's* "Preferences present a window that provides the ability to create and manage a collection of named and titled preference sets. The named preference sets can then be reused to quickly select and apply a particular foldering arrangement, sizing, etc. The preference sets can be duplicated, edited, removed, renamed, rearranged and titled."



 I did indeed, when creating my first custom list view settings, spend more than an hour checking the arrangement of Finder window that result from my template modification.

**Hint:** Use a short set of three-nested folder to practice with.



Success was actually achieved when I remembered that I could find the closest template example, among those provided, duplicating it, and minimally tweaking it.
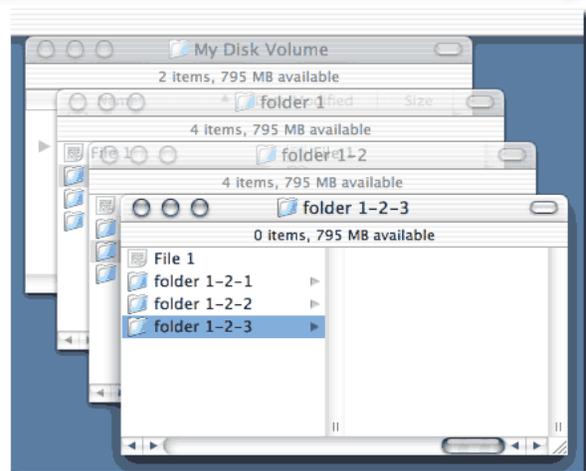
Nevertheless, creating custom template took more trial and error than I'd either remembered from version 1.30 or bargained for. Without explicit definitions for the various elements in the template editing windows (see the illustrations above) I needed to guess what some of the location and window size settings (in pixels) actually controlled.

 As mentioned in previous reviews, I prefer *List View* to all others, therefore wanted to create two staggered offset list view templates that did not show toolbars at the top of the window. The first anchored the list on the left-hand side of my screen and other moved the anchor point to the middle of the screen. In addition I wanted the vertical window size to be no larger than in the top-level folder window. With some rechecking, I was indeed able to tweak several of the templates to meet my needs. My goal was a tighter version of the previous image, which (1) whose size was not controlled by that of the top-level folder window, and (2) had a larger horizontal frame then the template provided.

Repeating the process, to create an off set icons view templates was easier since I gained some understanding of the necessary input parameters. What would have really helped is having a real physical ruler calibrated in pixels with which I could have measured screen details. Unfortunately, I still have not take the time to figure out the effects of changing some of the functions or the setting numerics.

**Other Package Features**

The ReadMe File — This was a very good piece of documentation and serves to easily orient the user to both installing and getting started with the product. If my memory serves differences in documentation detail, compared to version 1.30, are effective and dramatic. My kudos to the developer.

Enhanced Customizing Folder Control — For the technically inclined, FolderControl supports user-created AppleScript plug-ins. FolderControl can be customized via user-created, plugin-in AppleScripts. For more information, see the ReadMe document in the "FolderControl Scripts" folder included on the distribution disk image.

No Universal Version Ever — FolderControl uses both Java and AppleScript and cannot be released in Universal Binary form—but most of its work is done via AppleScript, which does run natively on Intel-based systems.

A Good Upgrade Policy — I disagree with a user called *jackthegiankiller* who noted, in a VersionTracker review: "I bought this a while back and it has been a really helpful program, but then I upgraded to Tiger which broke my version 1.4. So I downloaded the 1.60 update and now I find that I have to pay half the original price just to license it again, with no new features. Sorry, but I'm not going to pay again for a bug fix. Guess I'm back to doing this stuff manually."
Please note that $5-10 dollars for an upgrade is reasonable. Developers have to eat too. If doing it oneself, even allocating ones time at minimum fast food joint wages, seems to be a lose-lose proposition, but at 70 years of age, my time is valuable and at times is shared grudgingly.

**Discomforts**
(I know there will likely be no upgrade to this product, but I'll list them anyway. Perhaps they'll serve as an addition guide for someone creating a FolderControl-like tool for Leopard)

The Manual Is Still Weak — I was less than enamored with the manual, since it provided no details on how to edit the various templates provided to meet a finicky user's needs. Neither did it define the terms in used the general and view panes used to customize a template. If a user is content to use one of the provided templates this is an easy product to use.

Sidebars Stamp Them Out — I'd have welcomed a setting that allowed me to close (disappear) all sidebars in nested folder windows for list or Icon view.

<u>Getting the Look I Wanted</u> — As noted above, to create my initial set of four new preference definition sets, I had to do a significant amount to trial-and-error testing. [This despite using several of the developer's templates as a starting point.] It's not that using trial-and-error doesn't work! In particular, I struggled when I wanted to anchor a particular set of folder in the center of my 21" monitor. [I accidentally used the wrong stating template for this effort.] I hadn't noticed that there was an offset setting in one of the templates that could anchor the top-level folder to the middle or even two-thirds across my screen.

Manage Preference Set > Folder Placement: top middle, if on Desktop > Organize as LIST VIEW: re-size/position/arrange > General (*Absolute Position*)

<u>Pricing</u> — I thought the shareware fee for this otherwise useful product as higher then most non-compulsive users will be willing to spend. However, what is mere cost to a *neatness* junkie?

**Conclusions**

Setup your folder windows with the placement and look you want! If you like an orderly desktop, you'll love this product! Assuming a user is comfortable with the templates provided by the developer, this is an absolutely simple tool to use. Cleanup your act! Ban helter-skelter windows whose nested folders (list view of course) open in random places. Once you created a custom template or two, they're yours to keep, and always available for use.

Both as a tinkering type person and as a reviewer — okay I'm a nitpicker — choose to customize some list view template to better suite my aesthetic sense. Even with a leaning curve, that was harder to do than I'd expected. The lack of detailed images of alternatives, and the failure to define the detailed software preference functions and the terms that describe each preference template mar this otherwise feature-filled, useful, and stable software. I therefore rate this product a 4.0 macCs.

# FontNuke 1.0.5 — Zap your font cache, free your fonts

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, November 2006

**Developer:** Jake Pietrykowski
psnake@gmail.com
http://homepage.mac.com/jpietry/apps/fontnuke/
**Released:** September 12th, 2006
Freeware/Donationware
**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4 or later. PPC version only.
**Download Size:** 2.3 MB
**Audience:** All user levels

**Strength**: It works, invisibly and completely.

**Weakness**: Nothing worthy of note.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8. Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

## Introduction

Sometime your fonts start behaving weird, as do you word processing applications. FontNuke's simple interface clears your font cache with a single click. Clearing your font cache isn't an end-all cure for application problems, but it is an often-overlooked fix that's always worth a try. Using this one-trick-pony application, FontNuke clears your font cache and restarts your Mac with one mouse click.

"The applications we rely on every day work fine most of the time, but occasionally they get temperamental and crash almost randomly. Even worse, sometimes they don't launch at all. In some cases, the problem really does lie in the application, but many times, your font cache is to blame. Mac OS X keeps track of the currently loaded fonts on your Mac, but if that cache gets damaged, your applications may suffer. Clearing your font cache can fix many application stability issues, and it's easy to do." [MacObserver – Jeff Garmet May 3, 2006.]

## Publisher's Summary

FontNuke is a utility application for Mac OS X Tiger that removes corrupt/troublesome font cache files. To grant individual non-admin users the ability to remove font cache files, without network administrator was the reason Jake Pietrykowski developed this little gem. I don't have a network but on occasion my fonts do weird things. I'm not much in to more elaborate font tools, limiting my self to those Apple provides and to Unsanity's FontCard 1.3.2 Haxie and on occasions Lemke Software Font Book 4.4. These three applications support easier viewing of fonts but are not really font management tools. I created this application as a tool for my personal use at the office, and it has become very useful for me. To grant individual non-admin users the ability to remove font cache files, without my involvement--is HUGE! Not to mention intelligent application quitting, plus a GUARANTEED reboot, makes my life easier.

Having dealt with font cache issues in every versions of Mac OS X, Tiger seems to have topped them all. So I made a tool to make my life easier.

## Working With

Install it, and then fast as 1-2-3, open the application, clean up your font cache and wait until your Macintosh restarts. Of course, as soon as you restart the computer new font caches are created anew. To verify this, make a note of the sizes and creation dates of the cache files before and after running FontNuke.
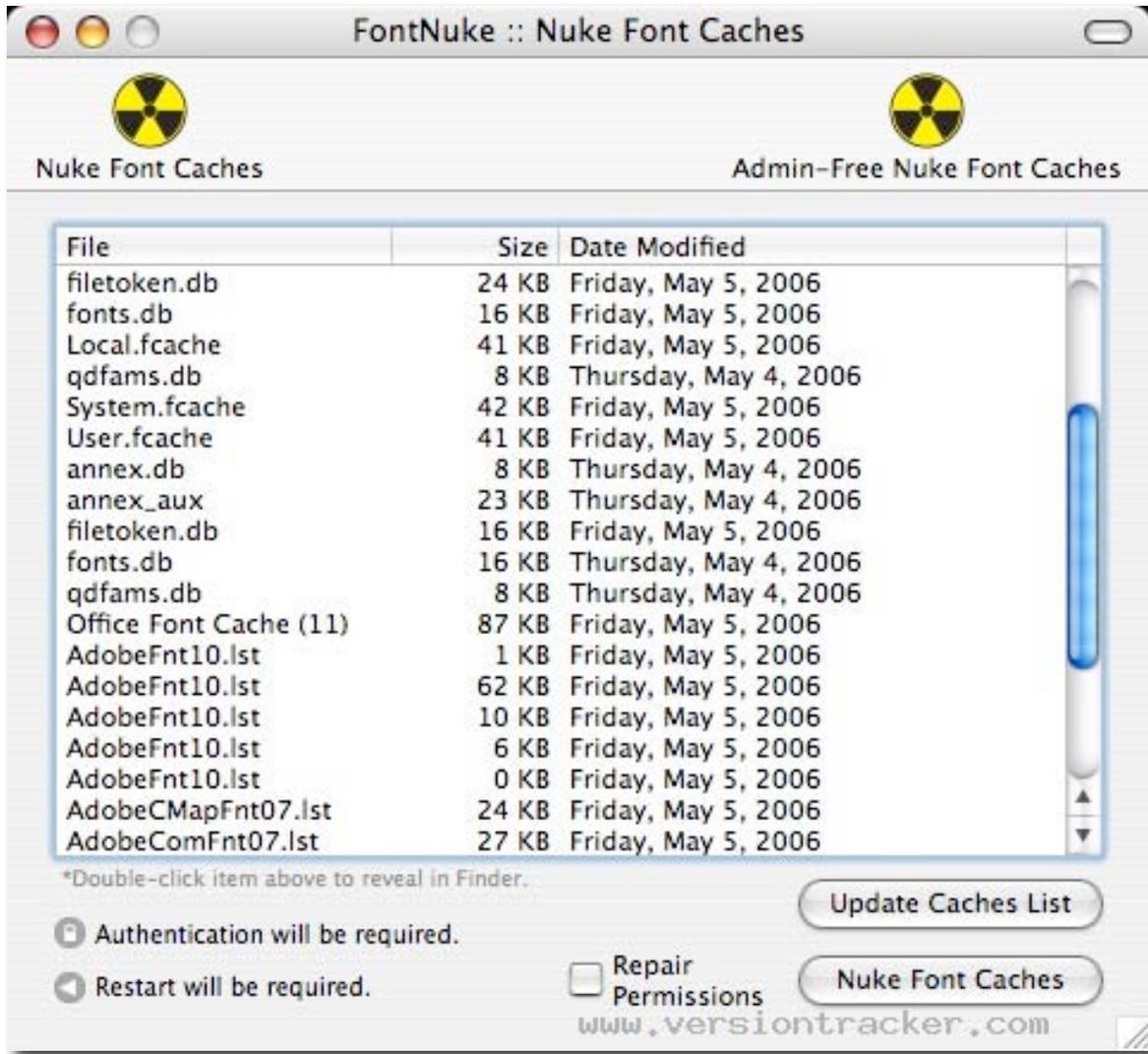
The font cache file can be found in the *Top Drive Level > System > Library > Caches*. I also read that a Finder find search will not reveal all of the Adobefnt*.lst files, so I use EasyFind instead. [Note: Alas, I didn't capture the reference, but since I love EasyFind, I though I'd add the information.]

**Definitions of Terms — A Minor Issue**
I would have like a definition of *font cache*, a well as a more complete description of the software's function.

I found the following description of what's going on in the product description for *FontFinagler,* software that is still in beta form, developed by Mark Douma. This product serves the same function as FontNuke. I've taken the liberty of tweaking Mark's comments so that they fit this review. Most of the words are Mark's. — Mark, I'd be delighted to test your product when it outgrows its beta stage.

"If you're having problems like in the image below, it could be caused by corrupt font cache files. What appears to be happening is that incorrect or corrupted encoding vector information is being used when mapping the character codes as input by your keyboard to the glyphs they represent in the problematically cached font.

"You can use the software to purge these cache files in an attempt to restore normal behavior, and to help rule out a font cache corruption as the sole cause of the problem. If, however, you use the software but the problem remains, then it could be caused by a font conflict, by a corrupt or less-than ideal-quality font, or by an underlying OS X font-handling bug. Try removing fonts to isolate the problematic fonts that are causing this behavior."

There are lots of both shareware and commercial applications listed on the MacUpdate and Version Tracker sites that handle font conflicts with a panache. These are usually called Font Managers.

I also discovered, when searching the web, that damaged font caches can both slow up logins, and also interfere with Suitcase's 10.1's previewing of fonts. [But that's another story.]

**Conclusions**
It was absurdly easy to use FontNuke to clear my font cache. I know there are more elaborate tools like *Tweak Freak* 2.1, but FontNuke works and has saved me a bit of grief that my other presently installed tools were unable to handle. [I have no font tools other then those previously mentioned installed on my computer.] I rate this product 4.5 macCs.

I'll review the more complex set of tools found in like Tweak Freak 2.1 next month.

PS:
The closest I got to a definition of "Font Cache" is:

Cache — A temporary storage area for frequently accessed or recently accessed data. Having certain data stored in cache speeds up the operation of the computer. There are two kinds of cache: internal (or memory cache) and external (or disk cache). Internal cache is built into the CPU, and external cache is on the motherboard. When an item is called for, the computer first checks the internal cache, then the external cache, and finally the slower, main storage.

Obviously we're dealing with a software cache, so you folks can read between the lines.

# ToDo X 2.1 and more — Thoughts on ToDo and other useful tools for stashing and accessing stuff I use while I work

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, November 2006

**Developer:** Kelvin Delbarre of Omicron Software Systems
support@nomicro.com
http://www.nomicro.com
**Released:** 31 August 2006
**Download Size:** 541 KB
$15 USD
**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later. Tiger Compatible and Universal Binary.

**Audience:** All user levels

**Strength** — It's easy to install and use and it works. The developer provides an extensive free trial.

**Weakness** — None that I can find.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8. Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

**Adapted from the Publisher's Summary**
ToDo X is a native Cocoa to-do list application for Mac OS X. Its user interface is deliberately, almost ruthlessly simplified, yet it provides plenty of power under the hood. It allows you to maintain multiple, prioritized lists of to-do items, each with unlimited attached notes. The list and notes can contain clickable links to web locations, documents, folders and address book entries. You can link items to multiple lists and use drag & drop to copy, link or move items between lists. You can search, display or print the union (combined set) of selected lists. You have instant access to your to-do lists from the dock or the menu bar. Last but not least, you can create a to-do item from selected text in any application that supports the Services menu.

ToDo X can import from iCal, from other Mac or Windows applications that generate .ics files, and from the classic Mac OS desk accessory "ToDo!"

**Introduction**
I'm using DEVONnote as my primary place for storage of odds and ends of information [March 2006macC review.] I however, have lived without a ToDo tool for about ten months and decided that not using a stand-along ToDo list was a mistake. I guess either being 70 years old and getting smarter, or in weak moments agreeing to too many "yes I'll do that for you…" has caused me to have a minor case of ToDo overload. Part of the problem is that I usually document these To-Dos on scraps of paper that I shove into my shirt pocket or in the margins of meeting agendas — such a system!

I went back as far back as August 2004 and checked almost bakers half-dozen of my earlier checklist software reviews. I decided to again work with Kelvin Delbarre product still it seemed most suited to my present needs. Since I have no need but to track the items I promised folks, or to do myself, I was following the Keep It Simple, Stupid [KISS] rule. Although ToDo X has more features than I need right now. But I was and still am comfortable with its interface and the extra capabilities remained invisible to me, until I might need them.

ToDo

**Categories:**
- Things I Promised People
- Items To Followup on Time T
- macCompanion & Music ToD

**Things To Do:**
- ❷ Send Bruce a Copy of Front Row Seat
- ❸ Do Hawkeye Project
- ❸ Finish CD from Mary H's Tapes
- ❸ Get a 1 GB drive as a X'mas gift for my son
- ❺ Update the mmmRecipe DVD for Julie

As noted in my earlier reviews, there are alternatives to using specifically focused and to-do or checklist software but almost none either met my specific needs or temperament. Why temperament you ask? Simple, if you don't automatically reach for a software tool to capture your ideas or action lists, it doesn't happen. I remain convinced, for most of us, no matter how many bells and whistles a product provides, it does will not serve your needs.

As a result, I've never taken to either highly touted sophisticated calendar and Personal Information Manager [PIM] based tools. After all, all I want to do is find places to stash and heretically organize my stuff and to list my to-dos. [E.g., Bookmarks, software tips, focused vendor lists, focused organized web links, magazine subscription data, shareware SNs, or a graphic or two].

> As an aide, for stuff I need to continuously paste into my work I still keep items in shadowClipboard [MacC October 2006.]
>
> Readers, no flaming me about ToDo alternatives — I'm aware that there are at least 17 new and updated (2005-6) OS X compliant *ToDo* list products on the MacUpdate, but that's for future reviews. Note that looking for *check list* on MacUpdate only find two suitable items; aren't search tool wonderful.

**Working With**
To install the application, simply copy it to the Applications folder on your hard disk (or to another location if you prefer). To uninstall, drag it to the Trash. I prefer to use AppZapper for deinstalls, but had I done that for the earlier version I tested, I would have lost its SN, stored in it preference file, and would have had to reenter it. [Much to my surprise my old ToDo lists were still there, but of course I'm well beyond all those now.]

The software provides a simple to-do list metaphor with a clean, easy to use interface. It has the ability to create Color-coded priorities and provides you with unlimited attached notes. The individual To-do items can be linked to multiple lists (categories). You can Display, search or print items from selected lists, with ease, and after all it's a Macintosh product.

It is easy to define you list categories, think of them a task specific buckets or folders. However, I suggest that you check out the preferences pane first and pick you working mode. I'm finding on screen font size maters more these days than a few years ago.

Most importantly you need to take a minute or two to define the categories into which you'd like to post your things to do reminders. I found that a pencil and paper work well for this, especially if I do this an item at a time over a day or two. I find it results in less shuffling and tweaking later. Who reads endlessly long lists anyway? So KISS and make up!

This time I kept it simple by limiting my self to three items. (1) Things I promised people, (2) ideas for article on music or Macintosh, and (3) items to chase when I get to them. Previously, I'd used a baker's dozen categories including shopping lists, which when I discovered them again, I found to be mostly empty of notes. As an aside, since my wife doesn't use the computer, we still do grocery list on paper; the computer is in my office and the grocery list is in the kitchen. All the other pack-rat stuff goes into *DEVONnote*.

The product's help menu accesses the developer's web site to links and additional information, including release notes and answers to frequently asked questions. The product's developer excellent FAQ also defines its hidden details, all but one of which most users will not need.

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How do I change the font?
In the ToDo menu, select Preferences and then click on the Fonts tab of the ToDo Preferences window. The font that is used for the Categories and Things To Do lists in the main window is the topmost of the eight you'll see listed there (most of the others are used for printing). Click on the corresponding Set button, and a font selection panel should pop up.

---

| ToDo Preferences |
|---|
| General   Fonts |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lists in ToDo window: | Lucida Grande 14 | Set... |
| Notes in Edit windows: | Lucida Grande 14 | Set... |
| Page titles in reports: | Helvetica Bold 18 | Set... |
| Category names in reports: | Helvetica Bold 16 | Set... |
| Category notes in reports: | Helvetica 14 | Set... |
| To-do names in reports: | Helvetica 14 | Set... |
| To-do notes in reports: | Helvetica Oblique 11 | Set... |
| Page footers in reports: | Helvetica Bold 11 | Set... |

Reset                                                                     Close

Finally, an item of importance, if you back up items individually is that ToDo X currently saves your to-do list in its preferences file, *com.nomicro.ToDo.plist*.

**Basic Feature and the Newly Updated Features**
For a more detailed overview of the product's many features check out my previous review of version 1.9.1 [January 2006, Volume 4 Issue 1]. In my earlier review I describe the software's rich features and provide a more detailed description of them. Built-in, but not changed, features include the ability to Linking ToDo X Items, tools for Searching ToDo X, enabling easy Drag and Drop, and an interactive spelling-checking feature.

Now in version 2.1, document margins used in printing can be changed, and page headers and footers can be suppressed. Selecting ToDo from the Settings pop-up menu in Page accesses these preferences
Setup. You can now also import a to-do list from a text file, as described in the
Help file. And from my point of view, a feature I did not miss until I read about it. Holding down the command key while launching a URL will cause it to be launched in the background.

**Conclusions**
This is very nice, clean, unobtrusive app that I can access from either my menu bar or my dock! It remains extremely simple to use and although feature rich, I can use only those that are really essential to my needs. After all, as a shareware reviewer I continuously find new toys that with which I sometimes replace the tools I already use. But, often, after a while, the new grows old and I go back to an old favorite such as To Do X, now version 2.1.

Unlike many shareware developers, based on the products release notes and my personal experience, its developer takes and active interest in maintaining and upgrading the features of the fine product.

I agree with the MacUpdate reviewer 2005 named Anonymous — "This little gem keeps getting better and better! It was always 100% reliable, and I relied heavily on it even before, but the developer has fixed a couple of minor inconveniences and made it even stronger. Now I cannot find anything wrong with it, minor or otherwise. The shareware cost was an insignificantly tiny price to pay for something so valuable to my productivity."

Buy it! Trust your to-dos to this clean, unobtrusive application. It is extremely simple to use and just contains the features that are essential to its function. Feature-itus for its own sake, take heed Microsoft, is completely absent. I'm still not sure I want to use the product to replace my simple PandoCalendar X 6.0.4, but if you were importing items into use staying synchronized would be easy.

I rate this product 4.5 macCs. Why so low? Well, I don't believe in perfection.

# Software Reviews

**Accio 1.0 and Ultralingua 6 English Language Dictionaries — With Additional Thoughts on other Dictionary and Thesaurus tools**
reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, November 2006



Accio Dictionary 1.0

Developer: Ultralingua Inc
contact@ultralingua.com
http://www.acciodictionary.com/index.html
**Released:** 15 June 2006
**Download Size:** 9.9 MB
$20 USD for each additional language module.
**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.3 or later. PC/Intel Computer Compatible, Available for Windows and Pocket PCs.
**Audience:** All user levels

**Strength** — Simple interface that is easily accessed with a user defined hot key.

**Weakness** — No thesaurus function, but that's why it costs less.

★★★★☆

Ultralingua 6.0 Dictionary and Thesaurus

Developer: Ultralingua Inc.
contact@ultralingua.com
http://www.ultralingua.com/english-dictionary.htm
**Released:** 14 September 2006
**Download Size:** 18.5 MB

$30 USD for each added language module.
Upgrade $20 USD.
**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.3 or later. Versions are available for Windows XP and Pocket PCs
**Audience:** All user levels

**Strength** — Easy access and a powerful database of word definitions and synonyms.

**Weakness** — An antonym (opposites) dictionary would make this a perfect tool.

★★★★½

**Publisher's Summary**
The Accio English Dictionary is a convenient and powerful dictionary, AND a great value. Now you can get definitions and synonyms quickly while you are reading on your computer. Simply point at a word in nearly any application or text window. When you click a hot key, a window pops up with definitions from our extensive language databases. Accio dictionaries include up to 80,000 [4.6 MB] indexed definitions with the vocabulary you need for everyday usage, including common expressions, and much, much more.

**Doc's Take on the Publisher's Summary**
The Ultralingua English Dictionary [ULD] is a convenient and powerful tool that can be effectively used from within any text capable or word processing program. It is aimed at writers whose needs go beyond just looking up definitions and synonyms, but is never-the-less highly effective for definition/synonym use.

The ULD includes thousands of colloquial terms and common expressions, complete verb conjugations, the ability to interact with other applications (via a simple click), and much, much more. It comes with a powerful dictionary [9.7 MB] and synonym databases.

**Introduction**

A few years ago reviewed the Ultralingua dictionary in a detailed article in *macCompanion* on must tools for writers. I have used Ultralingua dictionary [ULD] as a beloved writing tool to supplement the built-in MS Word Dictionary since that time.

As readers may recall, I do have the free Nisus Thesaurus 1.0.5 http://www.nisus.com/Thesaurus/, the free Omni (online) Dictionary 2.0.4 www.omnigroup.com/applications/omnidictionary/ installed ion my computer. I more recently added think-map style "word-map" oriented Visual Thesaurus 3 www.visualthesaurus.com/ to that collection of tools.

 I've also set up a dock-based folder of online reference books. These allow me to access Roget's II Thesaurus www.bartleby.com/62/ or more rarely, www.dictionary.com, or the unabridged online www.hyperdictionary.com/dictionary/Unabridged.

Now why might you ask with two free dictionary-thesaurus tools installed on my computer and a wealth on accessible online reference books available, should I want to pay for one or more of the Ultralingua packages? First of all, I like the interface and the way I can use it in all my applications that are text-capable. Second, it stands up well to subjective testing, but more about that later.

Therefore, I welcomed an opportunity to review the Accio Dictionary dictionaries, and to compare them with the English language Ultralingua dictionary and Thesaurus. After I had asked to review the Accio English Dictionary, also by Ultralingua, I was delighted to find that a version 6 update to the Ultralingua Dictionary and Thesaurus was available. Therefore, this review deals simultaneously and in parallel with both new products.


**Working With**

The Accio Dictionaries — Download the program for Macintosh from www.acciodictionary.com. To install the dictionary, simply drag its folder to your *Applications* folder.

Once installed, you can use your Accio dictionary by launching it directly or from the dock, or by using the Accio hotkey: place the cursor over a word, and press the hotkey. Clicking the hotkey button of the interface, or in the application preferences can set the hotkey. For this review, I selected  -F11 because the default F1 was my hotkey and F11 cleared my screen of open windows. According to the developer, the provided Accio dictionaries include over 80,000 entries!

Accio will also automatically recognize most conjugated forms, plurals, etc. and does a credible job at handling (e.g., guessing at slightly misspelled input.)

The Ultralingua Dictionaries — Download the program for Macintosh from http://www.acciodictionary.com. To install the software, simply drag its application folder to your, you guessed right, the applications folder.

Once installed, you can use your Ultralingua dictionary and Thesaurus by launching it directly or from the dock, or by using the software's hotkey feature. As in the Accio product, place the cursor over a word, and press the hotkey to quickly access its definition. This is a seamless all-in-one interface that I found addicting.

| **Stubborn— Accio vs. Definitions** | **Stubborn — ULD Thesaurus** |
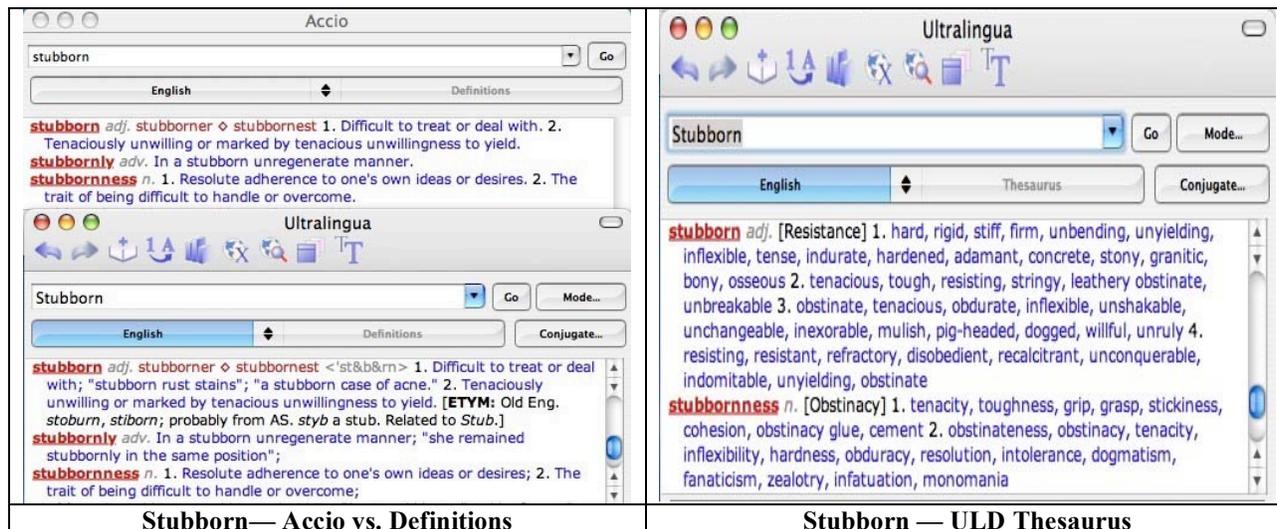
Clicking the hotkey button in ULD window the interface, or in the application preferences can set the hotkey. Pressing he hotkey shows the definition (also for Accio) or synonyms in a popup window when that preference is checked. Translations, if such packages are used, and definitions appear next to your cursor, displayed in a pop-up window. You can use the pull-down menu to switch from definitions to synonyms. Read or copy the definition or thesaurus entry in ULD. Return to your original document, and the ULD window automatically closes. Note that you can apparently only get a full window, with tool and active menu bars in the application itself. This interface limitation caused me no problem.

> For this review I selected  -F12 as the hot key because F1 was already my expose shortcut and I wasn't sure to what else I had hooked into an F12 short cut. This matters since a ULD is a universally-available application. When using the ULD hotkey feature the window opens without a toolbar.

Ultralingua will also automatically recognize most conjugated forms, plurals, etc. and does a good-to-very good job at handling (e.g., guessing at slightly misspelled input.) This is a function I dearly need, one that complements the *guessing* ability of the built-in MS Word Dictionary.

| **ULD Dictionary-Thesaurus Interface** | **Verb Conjugation – A writing tool** |
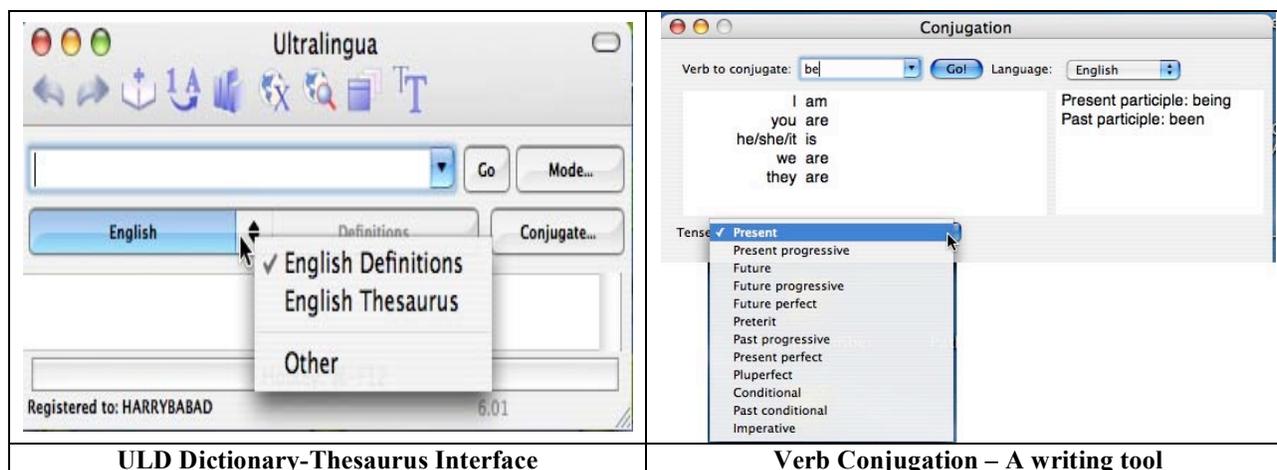
The developer claims that they have augmented the databases in version 6, but I was unable to verify that. I was unable to find statistics on the number of words in the ULD dictionary in the posted material on the developer website. Suffice it to say that my tests prove that the vendors English Language module is a robust product and in my experience exceed the capabilities of version 4.x and 5.x that I'd previously used. In this review, as noted in the article title, I deal only with the English language tool.

**Unique Features in the Ultralingua Dictionary**
- Both the Ultralingua English Dictionary and the Accio Dictionary contain American and British English terms
- Ability to changing the definition/synonym window font and its associated characteristics,
- Float the ULD window in the foreground — a nice feature
- Search for examples of word usage on the web,
- Further check for Definitions with DEVONagent, if installed – An Apple services function
- Use Google's free translation feature from within the application
- Check an Ultralingua reference documents to, for example, obtain Information on English grammatical usage.
- Provides automatic recognition of inflected word forms
- Simplified navigation via arrow keys, but I prefer to mouse around.
- Useful and complete help accessed manual, which I did not need.
- Powerful verb conjugation, especially useful when dealing with the irregular verbs that English abound.
- Number-to-text converters appropriate to each language, and
- Extensive language references (such as full grammar manuals for several languages including English).

One other undocumented feature I liked in this product, was that it kept the list of the words I'd checked over several sessions. I don't remember whether earlier versions contained the feature. Wouldn't it be fine if that list could be automatically alphabetized? [**Note:** I have no idea how many entries such a list holds.]

**Testing — Testing**
Focus — It's all about how an interface feels as well as the specificity, applicability and usefulness of the definitions or synonyms. Since I have access to or have already installed a number of dictionary-thesaurus tools, I decided to run a side-by-side subjective assessment of the two Ultralingua Inc. software packages against the Omni (online) Dictionary 2.0.4, Nisus Thesaurus 1.05, the new Visual Thesaurus 3 and Roget's (online) Thesaurus.

In all of my installed applications, I checked definitions and synonyms for chagrin, claustrophobic, exorbitant, myopic, obstreperous, perambulate, perceptive, stubborn and the word systematic. I used scoring factors of 5 (excellent) to 1 (not found) to evaluate each search word-tool combination. I chose not to score the online Roget's Thesaurus because the interface irritated me. Although detailed the ling sting of subtly different synonyms made me impatient.

> **The scores were:**
> Accio Dictionary (34 points), Ultralingua Dictionary (42), Omni Dictionary (40), Ultralingua Thesaurus (36), Nisus Thesaurus (31) and Visual Thesaurus (39).
>
> The average score for the Ultralingua dictionary-Thesaurus combination was 39 points.
> Good people, remember that scores within three or four points of each other are statistically meaningless, since my sample word list was too small.

One caveat, the scores do not reflect the extra, and at times useful to me, additional features of the ULD.

Check the Post Script [PS] portion of this review for a more detailed assessment of the other tools used in this test, as well as my complete numerical test results.

**Discomforts**
Hotkey Assignment Limitations — When I consider how many of the function keys are either assigned to the Finder or when using MS Word, to that application, I feel severely restricted by ULDs assignment capabilities. Although there was no conflict with my choice of command-F12, I would prefer to be able to assign something like Option-Control F12 as my ULD hotkey.

<u>Ability to Use on PDF Files in Acrobat</u> — In a perfect world I could click on a word in a downloaded PDF (not a graphic file) opened in Acrobat Pro and hit my Ultralingua hot key and grab either a definition or synonym of that word. Considering how badly I spell, such a feature would also be useful for checking finder document titles. Perhaps in the next major update - hint, hint.

<u>Antonyms</u> — Sometimes I want to Search for Opposite Meaning For a Word (e.g., an antonym) — If wishes were motorcycles, beggars and I would ride.


**Conclusions**
Overall both sets of software have smooth and user-friendly interfaces. Their mode of operation is intuitive. The choice of which to use depends on whether you want a reading dictionary or one to use when writing.

Accio is actually closer to the new Ultralingua version 6 than to the older ULD versions I have used. It is, in the words of its publisher, a kind of "Ultralingua 6 Light". It includes, as my testing demonstrates, lighter dictionary databases. In addition, the Accio English dictionary is not bundled with the synonyms module, and it includes no searching for proper nouns. This more limited feature set was amply demonstrated by my test results. Basically, Accio is a tool for use when reading (on-line), but one that is less helpful for helping on when writing and being at loss for an appropriate word. You know the one at the tip of your tongue, or when searching for a synonym to avoid using the same word 5 times in a paragraph or two.

The more full-featured Ultralingua dictionary, a writer's tool, has extra tools that have proven useful to me. (e.g., a verb conjugator, grammar manual, number converter, ability to add new entries).

The new version of the Ultralingua dictionary appears faster than the previous versions that makes using it, via a hot key, more seamless. If memory serves, Version 6 also appears to contain both a richer set of definition and synonyms and more of them. The ULD add/delete feature has also been enhanced, according to the developer, but so far, I've not been brave enough to use it. After all, when tempted to use the add/delete function (new in this version of ULD), I think about all the misspelled words I've added to my MS Word custom dictionary.

Therefore, if you need a more robust dictionary than Accio provides, as well as the ability to conjugate verbs, convert numbers, and much more, consider Ultralingua. When comparing it to either free or shareware alternative, I prefer the use interface and extra features in the ULD products. It's what I use and shall continue to use to augment MS Word's more limited dictionary or thesaurus capabilities.

Accio rating: 4.0 macC's; ULD rating: 4.5 macC's.

Doc_Babad

For those readers and my colleagues on the macC staff who are bi- or trilingual, I've read that the Ultralingua Translation dictionaries are as robust and as easy to use as the English language dictionary. It would be nice to read about those modules, tools I'm not competent to review. Alas, I've forgotten most of my French, do badly but persist in German, and bombed my Russian courses.


PS:

**Test Results and My Thoughts on Dictionary Thesaurus Alternatives**:
<u>Omni Dictionary 2.0.5</u> — It provides access to an enormous list of online resources. I used, by default, the English Monolingual Dictionaries for these tests. All other choices were not specific to my test needs. The only alternative to my choice of source dictionary was the 1913 public domain edition of Webster's unabridged dictionary. The former provided both better definitions as well as well focused entries containing synonyms gleaned for the Moby Thesaurus II. I found the choices provided by the Moby Thesaurus, when searched separately, too broad and unfocused for my purposes — again a subjective judgment. Also note the Omni dictionary does not remember previously defined words between sessions.

Nisus Thesaurus 1.0.5 — Despite its name, the application does provide definitions for the search words. However, all too often the category of "similar" was grayed out — *hmmm* no synonyms. Also, although the program appears to have the built-in capability of displaying words of the opposite meaning, on testing I found no antonyms were provided, none – not even for the word antonym. I then randomly checked an additional dozen or so other words but still no antonyms.

Visual Thesaurus 3 — I found that if one was comfortable with its logic diagram (mapping) type interface, that this tool was indeed a powerful and flexible thesaurus. This is a thesaurus that goes far beyond the flat-file linier choices metaphor found in other synonym seeking tools. I'm glad I own it, but it's not my first choice of tools. On the other hand, the interface features associated with word definitions were difficult to read, unless I expanded the screen to cover most of my 22" monitor's territory. Definitions were terse, and appeared somewhat limited. [I've not done a lot of work with this product, beyond a bit of fooling around when I installed it and the reported tests. I did however not ding the program for its ability to define words in an easy to read manner. I only scored it as a thesaurus.

**Dictionary and Thesaurus Test Results**:

| Word Checked (Points) | Accio Dictionary | Ultralingua Dictionary | Omni Dictionary |
|---|---|---|---|
| chagrin | Good (4) | Excellent (5) | Excellent (5) |
| claustrophobic | Good (4) | Excellent (5) | Excellent (5) |
| exorbitant | Good (4) | Excellent (5) | Good (4) |
| myopic | Acceptable (3) | Good (4) | Good (4) |
| obstreperous | Acceptable (3) | Excellent (5) | Good (4) |
| perambulate | Good (4) | Good (4) | Good (4) |
| perceptive | Good (4) | Excellent (5) | Good (4) |
| stubborn | Good (4) | Excellent (5) | Excellent (5) |
| systematic | Good (4) | Good (4) | Excellent (5) |
| Totals | 34 points | 42 points/39 Ultra Average | 40 points |

| Word Checked (Points) | Ultralingua Thesaurus | Nisus Thesaurus | Visual Thesaurus |
|---|---|---|---|
| chagrin | Not Found (1) | Excellent (5) | Excellent (5) |
| claustrophobic | Not Found (1) | Limited (2) | Good (4) |
| exorbitant | Excellent (5) | Good (4) | Good (4) |
| myopic | Good (4) | Good (4) | Excellent (5) |
| obstreperous | Excellent (5) | Limited (2) | Limited (2) |
| perambulate | Excellent (5) | Good (4) | Good (4) |
| perceptive | Excellent (5) | Limited (2) | Excellent (5) |
| stubborn | Excellent (5) | Excellent (5) | Excellent (5) |
| systematic | Excellent (5) | Acceptable (3) | Excellent (5) |
| Totals | 36 points | 31 points | 39 points |

**Notes and Scoring Factors**:
Not found = 1, Limited = 2 Points, Acceptable = 3 Points, Good = 4 point, and Excellent = 5 Points.

Scores within three or four points of each other are statistically meaningless since my sample word list was too small. Without doing the math, and having setting up more rigorous numeric scoring criteria, I estimate checking a hundred words might make my testing more rigorous. I do consult folks, any takers?

A Nit — In addition, I could not find claustrophobic or myopic in Roget's online Thesaurus.

# AKVIS Chameleon
reviewed by Chris Marshall, November 2006

Creative Tools For Digital Camera

AKVIS
http://www.akvis.com/
http://akvis.com/en/chameleon-tutorial/index.php
**Released:** October 2006
$69 USD, $78 CND, £37 GBP, 55€ Euro
**Audience:** Windows and Ma c users who have the time and inclination to play around with their digital pictures.

**Strengths:** Great tutorials. Very simple to use.

**Weaknesses:** Somewhat limited compatibility with editors, especially on the Mac[4]

**What they say:** AKVIS Chameleon is an efficient tool for photo collage creation. It automatically adjusts the pasted object to the target image color range and smoothes the object's borders.

The tool is very easy to handle as it does not require precise selection of objects. You copy an object, insert it into another picture, press the button and the object adjusts to the new background as chameleons do - adapting to the new color range and blending with the environment.

Note! The software does not have an interface. It is found in the Effects list of your photo editor and is applied as an effect or filter.

AKVIS Chameleon is a plug-in. You can use Chameleon 10 days free of charge! It is the evaluation period. When the evaluation period is over you have to enter a registration key to continue.

The new version fixes the bugs on Macintosh. Besides, the Help files now show how to work with the program in Paint Shop Pro, Corel Photo-Paint and Ulead Photoimpact.

Creating photo collages can be a lot of fun. Especially if you use AKVIS Chameleon. This ingenious software makes the process easy and entertaining. As the name of the program suggests, the plug-in pastes a copied object into a picture in such a way that the object adapts to the new color range and blends with the background, the way chameleons do.

The tool does not require precise selection of the copied object and can be helpful to home users who are not very experienced in image editing. You can create customized postcards for your loved ones; make a wedding album using all kinds of photos and backgrounds; correct closed eyes (by implanting open eyes from another photo of the series), change the appearance of a person, etc.

Designers will appreciate this tool as it allows them to combine images with entirely different color ranges or to create the effect of drawing on a texture surface (crumpled paper, wood, etc), and all that with only a mouse- click.

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[4] http://akvis.com/en/compatibility-software.php

Two modes of collage creation are available, Standard and Snapshot. In Standard Mode, AKVIS Chameleon implants the pasted object into the background; while the Snapshot mode adds dimension to a collage, layering the blended components so that the texture and relief of the primary image can be seen through.

AKVIS Chameleon V. 4.3 for Windows runs on Microsoft Windows 98/ME/ 2000/XP/NT and the Macintosh version runs on the Mac OS X platform.

**What I say:** When will I ever learn??!!!

Despite the fact that I knew this was a plug in I still spent several minutes hunting around for the application icon ☹. That wasn't the real problem though. Yet again I got over enthusiastic as what I was going to do. I am permanently thinking I should improve the thousands of pictures that I have stored on my Mac. Unfortunately it is a bit like the rainy day good intention to clean up the closet - sounds good in theory, but when it actually comes down to it after about 10 minutes the door gets shut, the TV goes on and the beer gets opened!

The application really is pretty easy to use. I have borrowed these pictures from their web site to give you an example:

This is a copy of the original object to be transferred to the primary image.



This is the primary object



And this is how it ends up ☺

I did have fun with the application, but not $69 worth of fun. This is no doubt down to me though, rather than the application. It does what it says it does very well and very efficiently, so if you think it is something that you will use a lot ,than this will be a great product for you.



**In summary:** A neat Plug-In that does what it says it does, so if that is you thing you will no doubt enjoy it ☺

## CoverScout 2.2
reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves, November 2006


equinux
1-888-equinux (1-888-3784689)
http://www.equinux.com/coverscout
**Released:** October 10, 2006
$20 USD
**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.3.9 or higher, iTunes 6.0.2 or higher, Internet connection.

**Strengths:** Searches both Amazon and Google; Shows dimensions of current artwork; Can transfer proprietary Cover Flow artwork into ID3.

**Weaknesses:** Search results are unreliable, often inexplicable; Doesn't work well with soundtracks and compilations.



Prior to iTunes 7, it was possible to add images to songs in your iTunes Music Library, it just wasn't easy. And equinux's CoverScout application helped make it easier. Now that automatically downloading missing album artwork is built into iTunes, equinux has had to make a few changes to CoverScout to keep it relevant and useful.

CoverScout loads your iTunes Library and determines the cover status for all your music files. It then labels each album as having complete, incomplete or missing covers. You can set the left pane list to show all albums or only those with missing or incomplete covers.
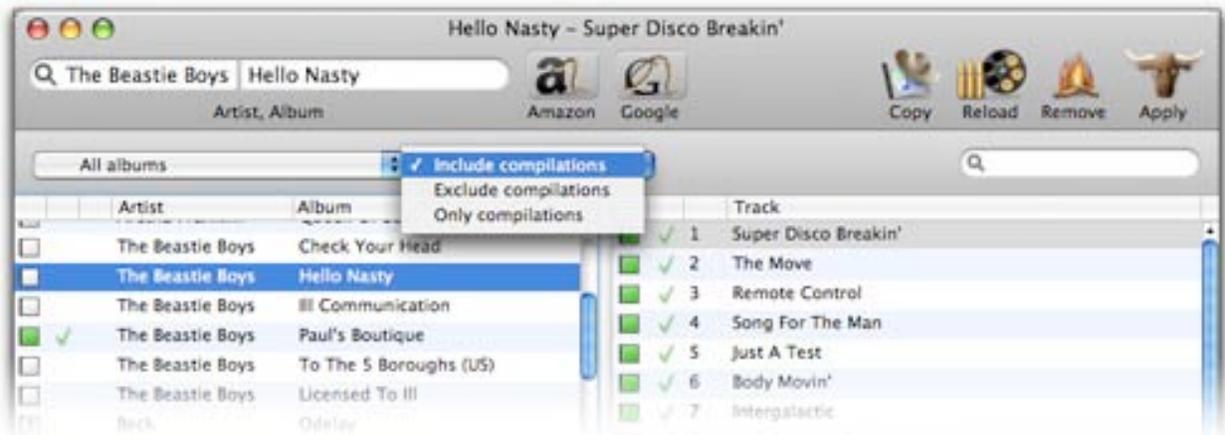
If you select an album in the left pane, CoverScout will show you the existing artwork in the bottom pane, including the size of the image in pixels. If individual tracks are missing the artwork, you can drag the existing art to those specific tracks.

Two locations can be searched for missing or replacement cover art: Amazon and Google Images. You can set the application to automatically search one of those two sites simply by double-clicking on an album and to automatically apply the art found if there is only one result and the album name matches. Most of the time this works, but it's frustrating when it doesn't work. For instance, when I tried to get art for Peter Gabriel's album Us, it found an import version with foreign language stickers and automatically applied that. Granted, you can then remove the cover with a simple right-click, but it's an unnecessary step that happened often enough to make the auto-apply feature not worthwhile.

Prior to iTunes 7, CoverScout could also pull cover art from the iTunes Music Store and apply it to your tracks. Apple has since altered the store so that is impossible. It's not a big loss, though, because it could only grab the smaller, 170x170 pixel images instead of the 600 pixel wide images.

It would seem that iTunes 7's Auto-Download Missing Album Artwork functionality would make CoverScout useless. But anyone who's actually used the iTunes functionality knows there are limitations. First, it's based on the iTunes Store's selection, which, though large, is not complete, and The Beatles are one of the obvious exceptions. Second, it can be awfully picky about how your tracks are labeled.

Unfortunately, CoverScout's searches are not reliable enough. For instance, I hit the Amazon search button on the album Magical Mystery Tour by The Beatles and got zero results. Yet if I go to Amazon.com in a browser and type the same query, it immediately loads that album. Conversely, when I hit the Amazon search button on The Beatles album A Hard Day's Night, I get 9 results, none of which are the correct album. Again, typing it into Amazon.com gave me the correct album immediately.

Soundtracks and compilations are also problematic for CoverScout. I selected the soundtrack to the movie The Avengers and the only results it found via Amazon were Moulin Rouge 2, an album by the group Bond and the Japanese version of that same Bond album. Again, typing The Avengers into Amazon's search box brought up the correct result in the first page of listings.

Searching Google Images in CoverScout is different than searching via Amazon because it uses an integrated browser window instead of the artwork inspector pane on the bottom. When you find an acceptable cover in the browser window, you right-click on it and choose "Apply cover".
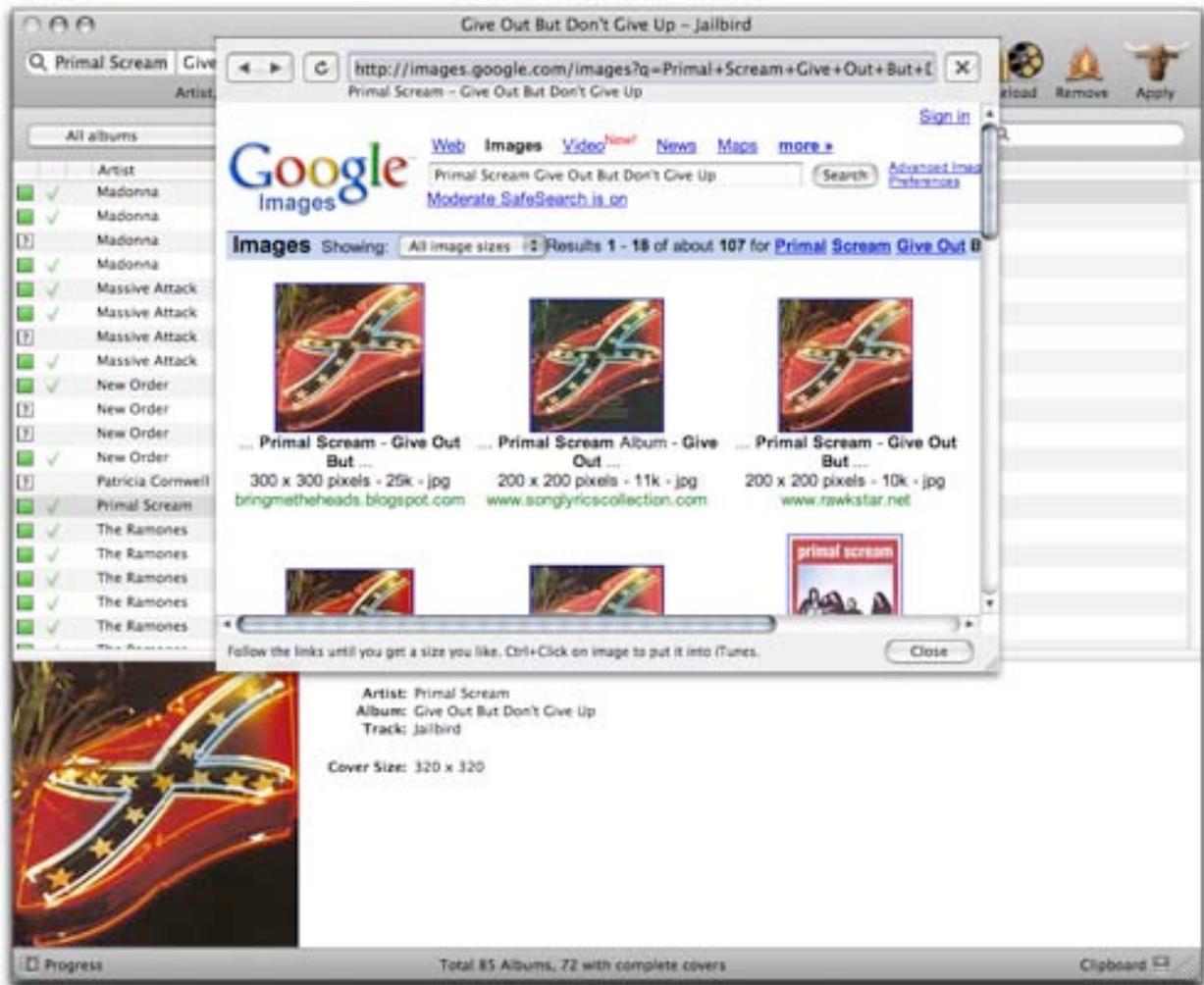
The integrated browser is not limited to Google Images. You can type in other URLs if Amazon and Google Images have not located the cover art you're looking for. Of course, by that point, you're basically performing the same task you would be if you hadn't purchased CoverScout.

Another change brought on by iTunes 7 is that the artwork downloaded from the Store is not stored in each individual music file, but in an Album Artwork folder outside of the iTunes Library. This is helpful for reducing file size, as an album cover is only stored once on your disk. But it also means if the file is transferred to another program, it is missing its accompanying artwork. CoverScout shows you which albums are using the proprietary iTunes 7 covers and allows you to copy them into the corresponding music file.

equinux has labeled CoverScout as "the ideal complement" to iTunes 7. And considering the flaws of Apple's solution, it has the chance to surpass it. But unless it gets smarter about its cover searching, it's going to be passed by for good reason.

# iSpeak It 3.0
reviewed by Wayne LeFevre, November 2006

ZappTek
support@zapptek.com
http://www.zapptek.com
Winnipeg, Canada
**Released:** July 2006
$20 USD, $22.28 CND, £15.74 GBP, €15,74 Euro
**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4 or newer.

**Strengths:** Built-in support for PDF, Word, Pages 2, AppleWorks, RTF, HTML or text.

**Weaknesses:** Technology that iSpeak It sometimes surpasses.

## What is it?
Take any document or RSS feed and convert it into an MP3/AAC track in iTunes using your Mac's built-in text-to-speech capabilities. Download news, weather forecasts and driving directions. From there, it's a quick sync to your iPod.

## How it works.
First, it's absolutely amazing, when paired with the right voices. The web site recommends using Cepstral voices, which are great on their own. But the software can really use any voice that is in your Speech-to-Text pane in your system preferences. Personally to my ear, that meant Acapela's line of High Quality voices were incredible. I am told that Cepstral voices sound great on a Power PC. On my Mac Mini, they where a little choppy. Perhaps with a faster processor?

## Internal Workings
What happens on the inside is you can either import, or write your own text in a familiar TextEdit type environment. From there you can have it speak back the text, using whatever voice you have picked in System Preferences/Speech/Text to Speech setting.

Sometimes, and it really all depends on which voice your using, it just cannot handle the word phonetically. This is odd, because it's not as if Cepstral Voices or Assistiveware, (the company that distributes the Acapela voices through InfoVox iVox program,) handle text differently. It all depends on the individual voice. For example, some voices from both companies can handle the word 'iPod' correctly, and some say it like it was saying the word 'epod'. The beauty of iSpeak It is that you do not have to go and change the internal pronunciations of Mac OS X's System Preferences. It has its own replacement structure and commands that work similar to a word processors ability to "find" and "replace" words. You simply input that whenever you see the word iPod, replace it with the term "I Pod", or even "eye pod", and it will then translate and speak the word correctly. Now this is a physical change, so it doesn't help much if you also would like to print the dialogue out.
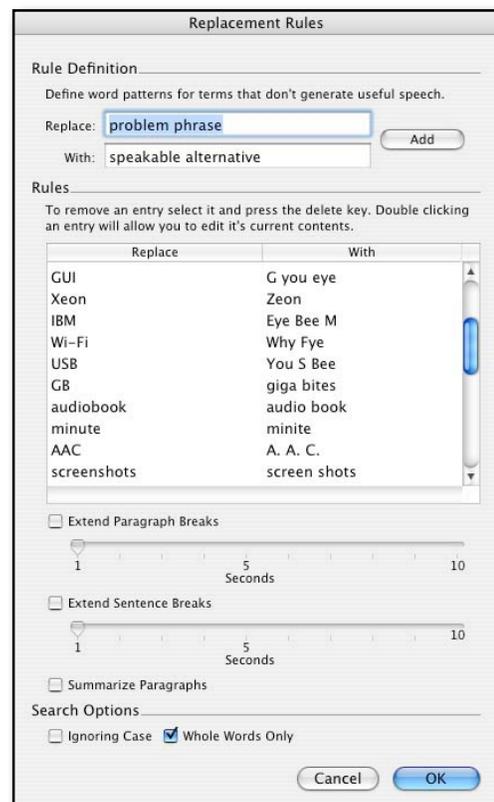
Other really neat features are the icons on the toolbar. There is Download News, Download Weather Forecast, Download Driving Directions, Download RSS Feeds and Web Pages, and lastly, import document. One click on the Download News brings up all the days news from Google News with options to download the complete article. Other options include different world regions, Top Stories, Sports, Technology, Business, etc. And, of course, reading them aloud.

The same features are included with weather, driving directions, etc. There is even an option to take you to Project Gutenberg, the online book catalogue.

There are two options for saving your audio, if desired. There is Transfer to iTunes and Save Document as AIFF. When saving to AIFF, you save your document in AIFF format wherever you like on your hard drive. There are no options besides where to put it. In Transfer to iTunes, you can assign which encoder you would like, name, artist, album, genre and playlist. You can also have the choice of splitting the document, either by every *X* number of paragraphs or lines or text.

One feature I was unable to try is the ability to use Xgrid. Xgrid allows you to use multiple Macs (and/or multiple processors on a single Mac) to speed up processing. iSpeak It uses Xgrid to take the individual sections (defined by splitting the document) and convert them to audio on all available Macs. This helps to process documents faster, which is definitely an asset when trying to convert documents such as entire novels from Project Gutenberg.

**Conclusion**
I've been using iSpeak It to convert the *macCompanion* PDF into audio using voices from both Cepstral and Assistiveware. I've been very happy with the conversions, and it's a very easy application to get used to and learn quickly. There are options that I have not even begun to learn, such as rate control, emphasizing and de-emphasizing words, putting in pauses and volume control. That will all come in time, and hopefully make my work sound even better for the listener. I would not hesitate to recommend this application and will continue to use it. I'll be reviewing the  second text-to-speech application VisioVoice next month. We'll see how it stacks up then.
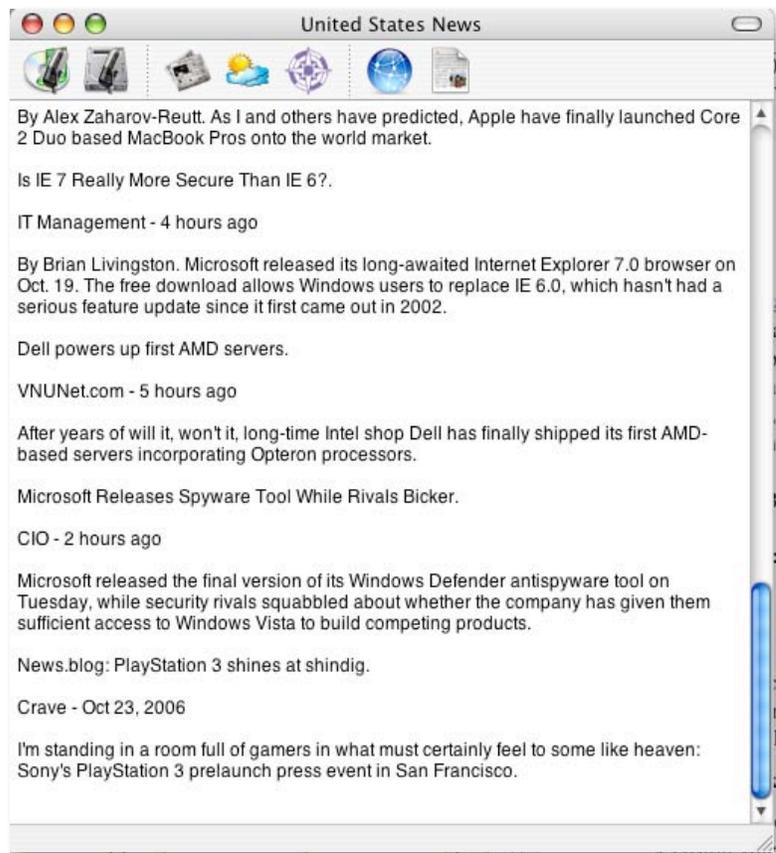
# Spamnix 3.0.28 for Eudora — Out Darned Spam!

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, November 2006

Spamnix Software
support@spamnix.com
http://www.spamnix.com/
**Released:** February 07, 2006
**Download Size:** 4.4 MB
$30 USD,
**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later, Eudora 5.0 or later. A Windows version is also available.
**Manual:** 14 Pages plus an Installation Wizard.
Audience: All paid or advertisement accepting Eudora users levels except for those using version 3.x.

**Strength:** After a small amount of tinkering, teaching the software to read my mind (e.g., mailboxes in Eudora) to know what I label spam, it worked flawlessly.

**Weakness:** Why have I waited so long to try this fine product?

**Publisher's Summary**
Spamnix is the leading spam-blocking solution for Qualcomm Eudora email. It is presently the only spam-blocking product designed specifically for Eudora and that is integrated directly into the Eudora user interface. Spamnix supports Eudora 5, 6, or newer on Mac OS X. Spamnix for Eudora is a plug-in for Qualcomm Eudora that blocks unwanted spam email.

**Introduction**
Okay, Stop; Cease, Desist - Enough for now! Not only was I getting about 60-70 spam messages a day total, but the combination of my IP providers and Eudora's built spam filters [called *SpamWatch*] were working poorly. The Eudora filters passed an average of 15-30 messages that were obviously spam every day. Spam remained an in-my-face, three-times-a-day or more, irritation. [Okay Not True — The filters at my IP were working fine. I never got to see those items unless I logged on to check, but that's a nit.] After all, it's the indignity and invasion of privacy of getting spammed.

Of these emails gifted by the %$#@#$, about a third showed up in my Eudora *In Box and had to be manually transferred as Junk [e.g., Spam]*. Folks, that's every day including Sundays.

After researching alternatives, only two credible span filter packages were still on my list. Products that I thought that could credibly handle my Eudora 6.2.3 email client software. They were Spamnix and SpamSieve, now v. 2.4.4. I chose to test Spamnix, because anyone dedicated enough to support my favorite email client, deserves attention, consideration and in this case, recognition.

I made this decision despite the years it's been [June 2005] since a Eudora update. There's a beta posted, Eudora X 6.2.4b4, but I haven't yet tested it.

**No Robert, I won't give up Eudora for Apple Mail or Entourage. Eudora's familiar interface and the ability to archive mail in nested folders meets all my complex email archiving and cataloging needs. [Editor: They just Open Sourced it.]**

I did of course go back, before making my decision, and re-read Robert Pritchett's excellent review of SpamSieve 2.1.2 in the March 2004 macC, as well as those published in MacAddict and Macworld, but it didn't convince me.

This is going to be a SAS-backwards review, starting with the result, positive, of using Spamnix and then my sharing details of its use and filtering features.

> Before I share the rest of the story, I want folks to understand that reading the developer's information and following instructions exactly, is necessary to get this fine product to work. Forget that you're an "install software and instantly work with it" type of Macintosh user. This product only works optimally when properly trained, just like a good hunting or guard dog – so train it!
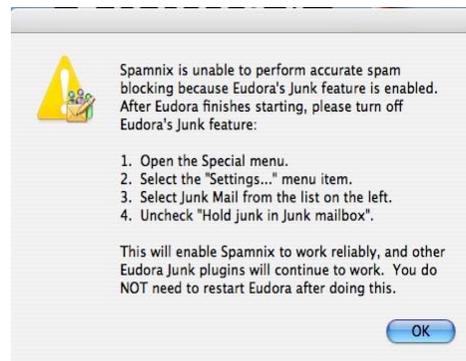


I'm further assuming that if you follow the manual, you won't have the problems I found in described in reviews on MacUpdate and Version Tracker update sites. Or perhaps folks were just having problems with earlier versions of Eudora, Spamnix or their OS.

**Instant Gratification – My Results**
I installed Spamnix, and trained it late one night (Tuesday morning actually) at about 1:00 am.

Prior to training the software, I made sure, yes item-by-item, eye rubbing work, that all the messages in my *Junk* mailbox [box] were really spam — that was slow, 3-4 minutes shot. [*Junk* is where Eudora, by default, puts Spam]

> **Sometimes you and I do click *Junk* when we mean to delete a message as *trash*. This is especially true, prior to my second cup of coffee or late at night. I accidentally do this, despite creating a maximal separation of the *Trash* and *Junk* buttons on Eudora's toolbox.**

Training took only 4-6 minutes, just classifying my email folders. It's all about defining which mailbox was all spam – my *Junk* mailbox. My *In box*, rated unclassified designation. The rest of my mailboxes including the Eudora *Out Box* are not spam.

Why did it take so long? — Well, I was tired and was fumbling around. Remember, prior to training, Spamnix has no idea which items in your mail folders it should designate and treat as spam.

> **It's all part of a new disease called the Repetitive Mouse or Spontaneous Click Syndrome. --- Think of it in fencing terms. If I keep lunging the same way, my opponent will kill me on the spot, having figured out the pattern I use. For that same reason, I avoid activating Eudora's  –J shortcut, since too much mail accidentally became spam.**

However, there are some occasional messages I receive that I'd like to designate as spam and never have their author darken my doorstep again, but that's another matter.

Okay, today Tuesday morning October 10th at 7:13AM, day one, I logged into Eudora and there was NO spam in my *In Box*. Messages YES, Spam, NO.

A few of the items in my *Junk* box, however, were NOT spam. As predicted by both the Spamnix Manual and the excellent Getting Started Wizard it is possible to over-train the application. I did. I found that two items that were not spam had been identified as spam and moved to *Junk*.

Yep, training Spamnix on my 735 item *Junk* box, and several large mail-filled folders with only about 200 non-spam messages, did — an obscure Bayesian result, cause a few message to be labeled spam, which they were not.

Easy fix, using the message menu, show Eudora it's not. [*Selected Message > Message Menu > Not Junk*]. Voila, Spamnix retunes its rules the next time you restart Eudora. What fun! For the next week, I retuned a few messages each day, in order to allow Spamnix to narrow its errors. Overall, only about a dozen tweaks over a two-week period.
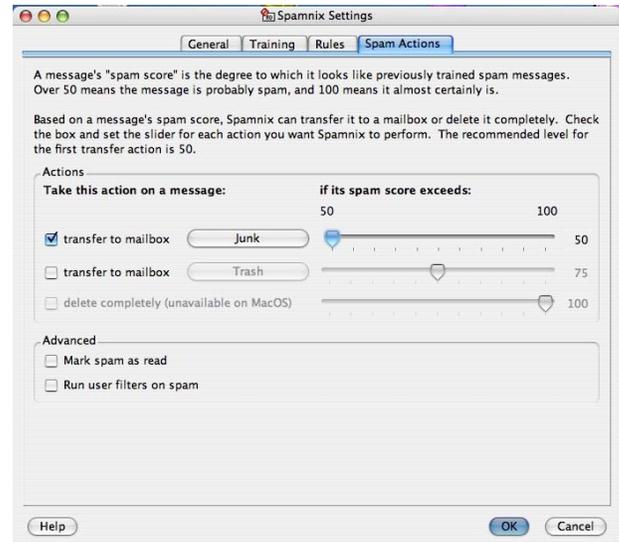


**Training Spamnix**                    **Found Spam Actions**

The Ultimate Final Test – I tuned Spamnix off in the preferences and again had Eudora hold spam "Hold in *Junk* box", and for 24 hours before my patience ran out, there I was with lots of spam in my *In* mailbox. I reverted back to Spamnix control and so far that's the end of my spam problems – at least until spammers come up with a new gimmick.

A Hint for Tracking Incorrectly Spam Rated Messages — All items, by default in any Eudora mailbox are arranged in list view. Like any list view you can sort them by date. When Spamnix places items into the *Junk Box*, they will automatically appear in dated order. However, be aware that spammers can and do put arbitrary time/date stamps on their messages. [I got several yesterday dated November 11, 2006.] Therefore, where in the date-sorted list a new spam message appears, is slightly unpredictable.

As noted earlier, I read mail several times a day. When I check my *Junk* box after each mail messages download, I label the messages (e.g., change the text color of the item) for that days spam with a different color. That make is easy to only identify new span, since the text remains black.
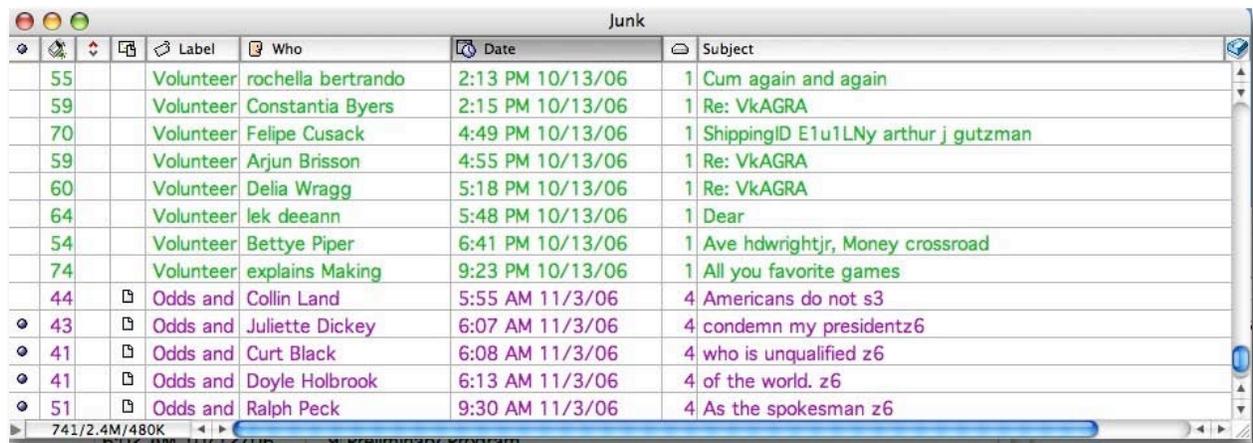
**To assign a label to an existing message in Eudora**

1. Choose the message or range of messages in the message summaries you want to label.

2. From the Message menu, choose Change then Label. The Label submenu appears.

3. Choose the label you want for this message. It happens.

Working With Spamnix, The Rest of the Story — *abstracted in part from the publisher's manual*:

"Once you install Spamnix, it works automatically whenever Eudora runs.

There are no separate programs to worry about or additional windows cluttering up your screen. Spamnix comes pre-configured to block almost all of the spam email you receive *once you train it*. Spamnix checks for spam automatically each time you download mail.

To make everything work effectively, you must carefully train the software to recognize those thing you call spam. It's a no-brainer but needs a minute of attention every time you check your email over a week or two period. [Yup its personal - my spam may be someone's treasure.]

The developer notes that (after training), at your leisure, you can then review the blocked spam and delete it all at once manually, but during training I (doc) suggest you do this after each mail download. Keep doing this until your happy with Spamnix's choices.

In routine use, this is much faster than having to deal with your pre-Spamnix junk mail it every time you read new mail." Alternatively, if you want, you can configure Spamnix simply to delete all spam immediately.

Doc  Babad's Way — I do neither! — I prefer to keep my accumulated messages for 13 days on average to assure that I accidentally haven't missed something I value. That's done in the Eudora preferences [*Eudora > Preferences > Junk*] that I've set to 13 days. After 13 days, increments of your junk folder junk get automatically transferred to the *trash* mailbox whenever you download mail.

I chose to manually delete my trashed items, randomly, whenever I remember to, but do so at least once or twice a week. [Again that's a precaution, because sometimes I'm too quick to delete items to trash, and later want to recover them.] But then, email is my most important communication tool, so I'm careful with it.

Since Spamnix's spam recognition is not based on specific email addresses, you can get started without configuring it in any way. But no spam-recognition system is perfect, and Spamnix will make mistakes. It will virtually never mistakenly block a personal message from any individual to you. It will inevitably let through some spam that it does not recognize. Also, some highly commercial-looking messages (such as promotions or newsletters from companies you have legitimately signed up for) might be blocked. In this case, you can use Spamnix's Accept/Reject feature to create a rule to recognize such messages in the future. I describe this capability in the next section.

**Other Package Features**

Spamnix Manual Filter Rules — Once properly trained, Spamnix almost always correctly identifies both spam and non-spam. Sometimes, however, you want to override Spamnix's learning system with a specific rule. To tell Spamnix to always block certain messages, use the button to create a *Reject* rule. To tell Spamnix that to always allow certain messages, use the *accept or reject* buttons in the Eudora tool bar to create a new rule for that and similar messages. Both of these buttons open the *Accept or Reject Message* dialog, which has two sections:

> **1. Accept or Reject. Indicate whether this message should have been Accepted  (not blocked as spam) or Rejected (blocked as spam).**

> **2. Message Recognition. Indicate whether you want to teach Spamnix about this message by Training the learning system or creating a *broadly applicable* static rule.**

Select this option to train the learning system on a selected specific message. No new unique and separate *accept* or *reject* rule will be created. This option is recommended by the developer to correct occasional normal false positives and negatives. It is the method I used to correct minor spam assignment errors during training the product. As noted earlier, using the not junk command simplifies such spam assignments.

Create a new and Unique Rule — Select this option to create a static and broadly applicable *accept* or *reject* rule based on the message's sender, recipients, or subject. [This is similar but more powerful, than designated {spam} messages as trash by using Eudora's filters.]

This option is recommended for messages that Spamnix consistently misses or for "spam-like" messages that you nevertheless want to receive (because training Spamnix to Accept one spam-like message is likely to cause it to accept others). The users manual provided explicit details for creating a rule, a more powerful method that so far I've not needed to implement.

Spamnix also uses Bayesian filtering — This is statistical machine-learning technique that analyzes the words in sample training spam and non-spam messages and uses that information to identify which category new messages belong in. Spamnix's Bayesian system can be trained either on individual messages or entire mailboxes at a time. Once trained, Spamnix becomes even more accurate at detecting what you consider spam.

Reject Messages Containing Executable Attachments  — A feature I did not activate was to block messages containing executable attachments, reducing your risk of computer viruses. These affect files that, contain an attachment with any of the following extensions: ade, adp, bas, bat, chm, cmd, com, cpl, crt, eml, exe, hlp, hta, inf, ins, isp, jse, lnk, mdb, mde, msc, msi, msp, mst, pcd, pif, reg, scr, sct, shs, url, vbs, vbe, wsf, wsh, wsc. For the most part, these are Windows related. With current virus definitions of Norton AntiVirus protecting my email, blocking executable attachments seemed redundant.

**Minor Discomforts**

Manual Errors — Although the getting started Wizard was accurate, I found Errors in the Spamnix manual. For example, in Eudora 6.x, disabling SpamWatch is done in the Eudora preferences pane, not in the Spamnix setting dialog.
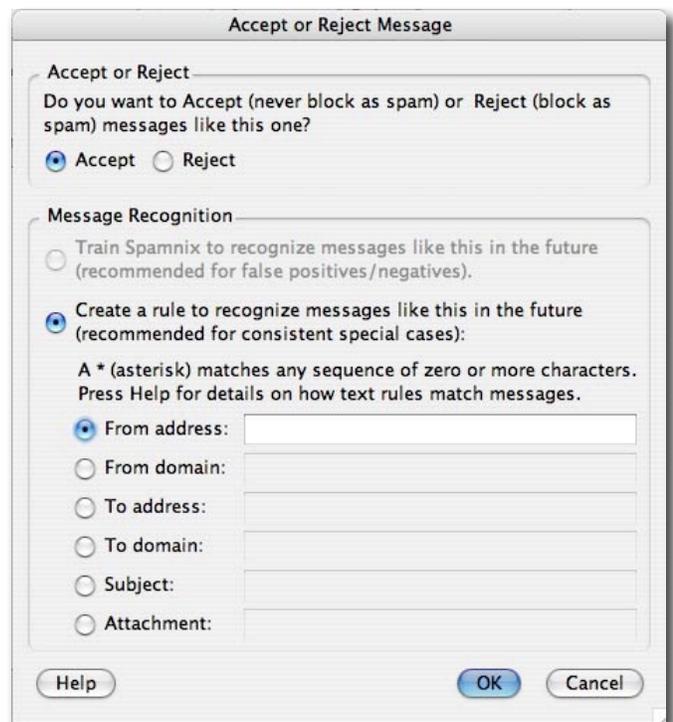
<u>Disappearing Spamnix Menu Buttons</u> — If you are using Spamnix with Eudora 4 or newer, there should be five Spamnix buttons on the Eudora toolbar: (Accept), (Reject), (Settings), (Report), and (Help). *It didn't for me when I glitched the first install by doing something that manual said not to and had to do a reinstall.*

Spamnix asks Eudora to put its buttons on the main toolbar, but Eudora does not always comply. In particular, the first time you upgrade to a new version of Spamnix (i.e.: the second time you install Spamnix), Eudora may remove the toolbar buttons and you will have to put them back manually. That was easy, I just followed the instructions provided in the Spamnix Manual. The process was no different then that which I'd used initially when customizing my Eudora toolbar.

<u>Eudora's Retain Mail in Junk Mailbox Feature</u> — Prior to installing Spamnix, I had set the Junk preferences in Eudora to keep items in the junk box for 13 days. I ended my testing before I found whether this feature still works. Also I never-never use the  –J feature to allow keystroke designation of a message to junk. It's too easy to fall victim to the Spontaneous Click Syndrome.

**Conclusions**

I get up to 100+ emails a day, probably 75%+ of which is spam. Spamnix is catching almost all of that spam so far, after less than a week of training. This compares to Eudora's SpamWatch missing about 15-30 a day at a setting that did not turn messages I wanted to receive into spam.
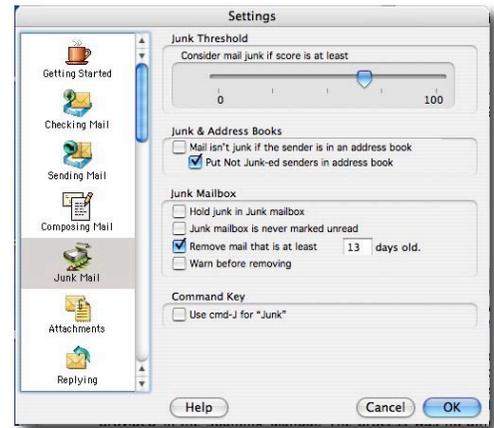
<u>Spamnix is well worth the $30 price</u> — It makes Eudora 6's filter look as if it's gone out for coffee. Alas, I thought the built-in SpamWatch was all that was available that worked with Eudora, a frustrating live-with-it situation, until I tried Spamnix. [No folks, I'm not forgetting SpamSieve.]

According to Spamnix software they have archived a 99% accurate spam filtering when the user takes the time to train and maintain the software. Although I did not keep statistics, that certainly was my experience with the product. I can believe the developers claims. I hope Spamnix Software will update their product when Eudora releases its version 7 for the Macintosh. I rate this product 4.5 macCs, a low grade only because I'm a perfectionist.

# Advertising

*macCompanion* Gear Shop

**Amazon.com**
http://www.amazon.com/gp/homepage.html/002-5842389-7443202

**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

**Apple Store for Businesses in the USA**
http://store.apple.com/AppleStore/WebObjects/BizAgent?qprm=126559

**Lionshead Studios Limited and Feral Interactive - Black & White 2 & The Movies**
http://www.feralinteractive.com/

**DigitalMediaTraining**
http://www.digitaltraining.com/ispecial/maccom

**Ominex**
https://www2.lsmsecure.com/ominex/registration/?type=c&domain=betterthanstaples.com&refid

**Xooma Extreme – X20 and X20 Blast**
http://www.xoomaworldwide.com/macCompanion

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http://www.ecamm.com

**Parallels**
http://www.parallels.com

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Contact Wayne Lefevre, our new Ad and Marketing Director for working through the process of advertising with us.

wlefevre@maccompanion.com

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.

## 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.maccompanion.com/bazaar/bazaarindex.html

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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.

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