



macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH

AlphaSmart Dana
Crossover Macintosh
Mellel
Apple TV
Podcast Solutions:
The Complete Guide to Podcasting
Final Draft 7.1.3

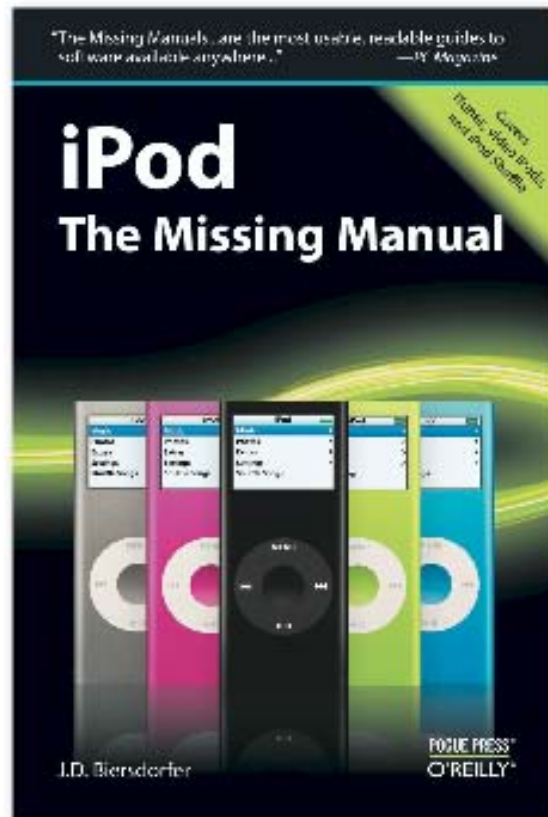


Writer's Edition

Part I

Volume 5 Issue 4 April

Empower Your iPod.



ISBN 0-596-52978-3
256 pages
\$19.99 US / \$25.99 CAN

With the new iPods, Apple has given us the world's smallest entertainment center. Sleek, powerful and somewhat addictive, these little gems can do far more than play music. To make the most of your iPod's capabilities, pick up a copy of the new *iPod: The Missing Manual*. This new edition thoroughly covers the redesigned iPod Nanos, the video iPod, the tiny Shuffle and the overhauled iTunes 7. Each page sports easy-to-follow color graphics, crystal-clear explanations, and guidance on the most powerful and useful things your iPod can do.

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macCompanion

April 2007

This is our first issue to focus on something the Mac excels at: writing. We have commercial and shareware software, hardware and book reviews on writing, as well as other types of products.

In February, it was rumored that Apple shipments would be delayed. In March we were finally able to get an Apple tv to review and we surprised and pleased how well the product performs.

Current rumors have an earlier release date than June for the iPhone, and there are numerous websites predicting that Leopard (and perhaps iLife '07 and iWork '07) will be released in the middle of April. We'll see...There are new rumors that Apple plans to release new iPods and iMacs - again, we're looking forward to that since we didn't get any new hardware that shipped at MacWorld Expo.

Enjoy - *macCompanion* Editors

NEXT MONTH

Our May issue continues to focus on writing. We'll cover more software (commercial and shareware) products that should interest you and make some writing tasks easier.

If you'd like to comment about writing with your Mac, send feedback to feedback@maccompanion.com, with WRITING as the message Subject.

And we're still waiting to hear from readers that bought new Apple products. Send feedback to feedback@maccompanion.com, with NEW APPLE PRODUCT PURCHASE as the message Subject.

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Enjoy the fruit Spread the seeds.....



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TeachMac

Letter from the CEO

By Robert Pritchett

Why Write?

Our “theme” this month – and next – is on some of the tools of the trade for writing in general and specifically on the Mac.

We asked some of our staff to reflect on why they write for macCompanion Magazine (fame, fortune, notoriety – and one more thing to add to a Resumé). Their thoughts on the subject might be of special interest to you, our readers and listeners.

We also think you might enjoy our write-ups on Final Draft, Glasswriter Pro, Mellel, Writer.app and others. Some articles are being pushed off until the next issue because we have a lot to cover, so keep reading!

After all, you too may think as we do, that the best tool for the job is the Mac for writing and some of you wanted to know what apps work well with the Mac.

Step inside to get our biased opinions based on our experiences. We review, so you don't have to.

Keep communicating your thoughts and feelings with us so we can spread the word. And by all means, please tell the world about us!

See you next month.

Robert

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Columns

Section 1 contains *macCompanion*'s regular monthly columns. Writers from the US and Canada offer their insight into a variety of issues affecting Mac users. These columns cover trends in the Mac community, Mac software, hardware and books.

This month's issue includes:

- Why I Write – by Mike Hubbartt, Wayne LeFevre, Michael Potter, Daphne Kalfon, Ted Bade, and Harry {doc} Babad
- Tools for Working With or Reading About Words - Harry {doc} Babad
- Views from the Ivory Tower – by Ted Bade
- Protected Airspace:Securing Your Home Wireless Network, Part 1– from AppleMacPunk
- Horace Before Descarte – from The Northern Spy
- Errata for March – from Mike Hubbartt

Why I Write for *macCompanion*

By Mike Hubbartt, Wayne LeFevre, Michael Potter, Daphne Kalfon, Ted Bade, and Harry {doc} Babad

To many people, a good book, a comfortable chair, a roaring fire in the fireplace, a bowl of popcorn and a beverage have the makings of a great day. That probably sounds strange to some people in this age of instant gratification, where computers, video games and movies vie for entertainment time and dollars. But, while those forms of entertainment are enjoyable, reading should retain a spot in your life. This article contains some reasons why a few of our staff write for *macCompanion*.

WAYNE LEFEVRE – Staff Writer

I both write and work at *macCompanion* because I want to make a difference. I want to prove to myself that I personally can still be productive after my many surgeries and illnesses. (Though lately it has been difficult.) I am willing to extend the effort and time to make *macCompanion* a name that everyone associates with Apple, Inc, quality reviews and articles, and a sharp looking magazine that can be produced without a lot of money. It all boils down to being a great opportunity to do something not a lot of people can say they have done, and have fun with it.

MICHAEL POTTER – Staff Writer

I've been offering advice on personal computers to family and friends for over 20 years. Though I also am a professional in the field, working one-on-one with folks is what I love best. Certainly I don't have all the answers, but I've been doing this long enough to pick up some great tips and tricks along the way. Apple computers have been part of my computing life in one form or another and now, with my podcast, *For Mac Eyes Only*, and the opportunity to write for *macCompanion* magazine, I've been given a place to share some of these tips with more people than ever before.

DAPHNE KALFON – Music Editor

I began writing for the *macCompanion* in October of 2005. Robert Pritchett, who already knew me because of a song contest the *macCompanion* had put on over a year previously, asked me if I would like to become a staff writer. I thought it sounded like an interesting opportunity, so I agreed. Up until that point, I don't believe they had much in the way of a music section to the magazine so I felt that I could probably fill that need at least somewhat. I began writing monthly columns covering all kinds of music topics, and eventually progressed to writing reviews – software, books, training videos. It is a learning experience each time, and I feel like I am giving back to the outfit that was unwittingly responsible for helping me to get my name out there as a songwriter and composer.

TED BADE - Consultant

Since I was a young child, I have been fascinated with technology and the solutions that advances in technology bring. I enjoy digging into these solutions, learning how they work and how they can be applied to real life situations. More importantly, I enjoy taking that information and sharing it with my friends; showing them how to simplify a task, resolve their questions, and generally offer the knowledge to let them take control of the technology. I guess that makes me an interpreter of technology. Like C3PO, I know both the language of “moisture evaporators” and humans and can bring them together to perform a task.

Writing for *macCompanion* allows me to to share information with many more people.

As I test a product I am reviewing, I discover how it adds value to my Macintosh experience, and can envision how it might help other people I know. This exposure to many products expands my knowledge base.

Writing the reviews lets me share this knowledge with readers. In the reviews and the columns I write, I try to simplify important information about a product, making it easier for readers to evaluate them. No one wants to waste their money on something that won't do what they need or expect. I get a lot of satisfaction being able to share my thoughts and experience with

the reader. Writing for *macCompanion* lets me reach many people, I like that. I sincerely hope that some people read my thoughts and find them useful.

HARRY {DOC} BABAD – Assistant Editor

I am torn between writing addiction and freedom. Now don't get me wrong, there lots of Macintosh aficionados out there who love or even are addicted to their computer of preference, but the don't write, blog or otherwise let themselves be heard. So why do I do 5-10 articles about books, software, things Macintosh and on occasion the Macintosh as a tool for my other hobbies? That's about 100 hour a month, at least is was in February. We'll go from simple to complex with the answers.

- I love to write, enjoy both playing with words and learning about things like food, Mac-thingies, and folk music and jazz. These are today's targets of my fingers a-keying.
- I love the freedom of letting you know what I think about a product or at times sharing my iconoclastic views. All the while not being limited to 1000 words or less.
- Testing new toys, hard or soft get me off at least mentally, and at 71, some of the alternatives I enjoyed (things physical) aren't quite as doable.
- I spent my career doing formal technical writing to rigid standards, 100 or so published technical documents, mostly in the third person imperfect. I did it well but yuck, no room for self-expression.
- I can't tell a joke, tell a cool story, or write fiction, but do love to write; so what left? And my fingers no longer do well on the neck of a guitar.
- With *macCompanion* I can usually pick my subjects and focus, and slanting the articles it "my way." Occasional to the chagrin of both Julie Willingham, my editor and "it's too long" from our editor-in-chief. And I get to pick the toys {software and books} which I can keep if they suit my needs.

MIKE HUBBARTT - Editor

When I was overseas while in the military, I wrote about my experiences to family and friends. I enjoyed the challenge of describing the various cultures and ports we visited, as well as life aboard a Navy vessel. After getting out of the service, I enjoyed literature courses in college and after joining the work force, I discovered that writing reports – status, project, and proposals – was a fact of life in corporate America. While many of my coworkers disdained this aspect of the job, I enjoyed putting the words together and seeing that neither content nor presentation posed a problem for the audience.

After we moved from the southern part of the states to the cooler north, I didn't know if I could make a living as a writer but decided to try covering technology – reviewing computer hardware and software products and writing how-to articles. After buying my first Amiga computer, I saw a magazine called AX that was looking for reviewers. Jay Gross - kind and supportive Editor of the magazine - not only accepted my first article, he gave me another assignment for the same issue. To get paid to write *and* use computers – what a concept. Writing reviews and tutorials was fun, educational, and a lot less expensive than having to buy the goodies myself. I leveraged my exposure in AX to get assignments at other magazines – some Amiga and some PC. I did this for five years, then moved on to Technical Writing. I wrote and desktop published a number of technical manuals, which was challenging but it was not as fun as writing for magazines.

After buying a new Mac a couple of years ago I decided to return to writing for magazines and have since published articles in MacWorld, MacAddict, MacWorld UK and *macCompanion*. I'm also working on travel articles for other magazines and newspapers, and have a novel in progress. I write for *macCompanion* because the Mac is fun to use, has excellent software for creative and business users, and has a dedicated user base that know what they like and expect: quality.



Tools for Working With or Reading About Words

The best of what we reviewed.

By Harry {doc} Babad

Introduction

In this, the second article will summarize the tools we've reviewed that fit the word processing tools categories I've previously defined and provide you a quick entrée into the commercial or shareware tools we both like and use.

In this my second article in this Word Processing Tools related issue, I focus on sharing those reviews, over the last year or so that we've shared with you.

I've only summarized those items that fit the word processing tools categories I've previously defined and provide you a quick entrée into the commercial or shareware tools we both like and use. The only changes to the original articles, I've made, are to provide you with the number of the latest version and the link in MacUpdate site. All of this material is of course available on our web site.



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Much to our dismay, we'd covered the area of tools to use words less thoroughly than graphics, computer security, and assorted wow utilities. Perhaps the April and May issues will restart that effort?

The Review Summaries

Point & Click OpenOffice.org! — Point & Click OpenOffice.org! a book by Robin 'Roblimo' Prentice Hall PTR. Miller Is an Open Source alternative to "professional" word processing, spread-sheeting, drawing, presenting and data-basing apps. Robin 'Roblimo' Miller is the editor-in-chief of the Open Source Technology Group. Reviewed by Robert Pritchett in January 2006 [5.0 macCs]

Just Say No To Microsoft: How to Ditch Microsoft and Why It's Not as Hard as You Think - Tony Bove, No Starch Press — It's for all readers with an interest in

computer history will find it worth reading. Moreover, some of you may take its contents seriously enough to start saying *No!* A book review by Harry Babad in January 2006 [4.5 macCs]

Readiris Pro X 11.0.3 — A Powerful OCR Application for the Macintosh - Readiris Pro 11, the most advanced OCR software for Mac, quickly and easily transforms your paper documents into electronic files you can edit into your favorite application. Readiris Pro 11 not only retypes the text but also reproduces the layout of your original documents until perfection. Columns of text, titles, fonts, bullets, tables, graphics, etc ... are *well* recreated. With the PDF capabilities of Readiris Pro 11 you will be able to transform the information locked in PDF files into editable text and *if desired*. Extremely powerful, Readiris Pro *almost* exactly recreates the original format of your documents and replaces columns of text, tables, and graphics in the output file. A commercial software product reviewed by Harry Babad in January 2006. [4.5 macCs]

Pop Char X - 3.0/3.1 - Find the missing characters you need and add them in a single click. A shareware utility reviewed by Harry Babad & Chris Marshall in August 2006 & March 2007. [4.5 macCs]

Typinator version 1.3 — Typinator enables users to rapidly insert text or graphics into any type of application, and does so easily and as advertised. Those familiar with the programs *TextExpander* and *TypeIt4Me* will be familiar with this product. *Typinator* is an easy-to-use automatic text software that helps you to quickly insert phrases or pictures into any type of document. If you find yourself needing to repeat the same text, formatted text, or pictures, over and over again, *Typinator* will be for you. A shareware product reviewed by Wayne Lefevre in August 2006. [4.5 macCs].

Accio 1.0 and Ultralingua 6 English Language Dictionaries — With Additional Thoughts on other Dictionary and Thesaurus tools. Shareware dictionary-thesaurus tools reviewed by Harry Babad in November 2006. [User experience dependant 4.0/4.5 macCs]



MacJournal 4.1/4.1.1 - For years, aspiring writers have used journals to record thoughts and ideas for novels and short stories. Keeping a journal not only keeps those earlier experiences available for later review, it also

forces the writer to do what they should: write. I've kept journals for many years, and read some of them when I need specific details or feelings when working on a story. So when I heard Mariner Software gave a sneak peek of MacJournal 4.1 at MacWorld Expo, I wanted to see if they improved it or just fixed a few bugs. Apparently they did both. MacJournal, as the name implies, is product you can use to create a journal, and you can use it for blogging and creating podcasts. All three areas are improved in version 4.1. MacJournal supports .mac syncing, so you can access your journal on the road as well as at home. A commercial software product review by Mike Hubbartt in February 2007. 4.0 macCs

Tools For Would-Be Literati Only

– The versions of the tools are outdated but these and other utilities and sites are still valuable to a would-be author. An article by Harry Babad in January 2004.



Views from the Ivory Tower

By Ted Bade - April 2007

Virtualization woes - Microsoft Corp. is always in the forefront of doing its best to make things hard for Apple and Macintosh computers. Now that Macs use Intel chips and there are a variety of ways to allow them to run Windows as well as MacOS X, Microsoft has come up with a means of limiting how this works.

According to several sources, the Licensing Agreement that comes with both the Home and Home premium edition of Vista ban the use of this software

in virtualization engines. A virtualization engine would be a program that lets you run Windows on your Macintosh at the same time as you use MacOS X, that is creating a virtual computer.

These two versions are both the least expensive versions of Vista as well as ones that would be most likely purchased by people who would want to use virtualization. What Microsoft is saying here is, we don't want you to buy a Mac and then buy Windows as an afterthought to run a few programs. If you want to do this, we want you to pay for an expensive version.

This doesn't mean there aren't less expensive options open for Mac users. I don't think the virtualization clause affects using Vista with a program like BootCamp, where the machine becomes A PC (with all its faults) to allow a Mac user to run Vista. It also doesn't affect a program like Crossover Mac that doesn't require any version of Windows. What it does affect is the very popular program Parallels which allows a Mac user to run any variety of Windows and the MacOS X at the same time.

My question here is, what are they trying to prove? Do they not want to sell copies of Windows? It is not like people who buy the home edition of Windows are getting anything special. Most likely they need to run some program that isn't written for MacOS X or they moved from the Windows world and don't want to upgrade every piece of software right away. Perhaps they are thinking that if they make it expensive enough, people will dump their Macs and buy a Windows only machine. I hope we find that they are mistaken. It just might cause fewer people to buy copies of Vista. Perhaps going instead with pirated versions or settling with Linux or just buying Mac versions of everything they want and learning to live without a particular program until the Mac version comes!

We knew it, but we finally have evidence - Some one released a copy of an internal Microsoft Memo that discusses hurting Apple and the Macintosh by not releasing Microsoft Office back in 1997 when things were going poorly for Apple. It is the kind of dirty business one expects from Microsoft.

I have no idea if this document (http://macnn.com/rd/72568==http://edge-op.org/iowa/www.iowaconsumercase.org/122106/PLEXO_6060.pdf) is real or fiction. Read it yourself and see what you think.

DOT trying to ban Microsoft? - The US Department of Transportation (commonly called the DOT) recently stated they are considering banning the use of Vista and certain Microsoft products. In an article found at this location (http://blogs.business2.com/beta/2007/03/us_government_b.html), they point out that the US DOT has decided to not move to Vista and instead research moving to either MacOS X or to Linux.

There is a lot of controversy as to whether this means anything or not, but I look at it like a first step. At least someone has actually said they might move away rather than upgrade.

By the way, the source article associated with the above blog entry can be found by visiting: <http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=197700789>.

Apple making waves in the music industry - As usual, now that Apple has put buying digital music into the mainstream, there is a lot of controversy surrounding the whole matter. It seems everyone, including Steve Job is complaining about Digital Rights Management. Over in Europe they are constantly battling Apple's DRM policy.

I have always enjoyed getting an import CD, that is a version of a CD that wasn't created in the US and not controlled by the RIAA. Companies in Europe deal with selling music in a less controlled way then we are forced to in the US. An artist might choose to include two different versions of a particular piece or release different versions of the same set of songs on two different CDs. By bringing the Apple Music store to Europe, Apple had unwittingly brought the rules and regiments of the US RIAA there as well, and apparently they don't like it. Mostly it is about the DRM. Sure they blame Apple for trying to sell iPods by require a iPod be used to listen to musing containing their DRM. Perhaps at one time that was the major reason for making the protected music work only on an iPod. But I think we are well past that now. The iPod is the largest selling digital music player, it is easy to use, pretty dependable, and the coolest thing one can find! Apple doesn't need to pus the iPod, people demand it.

I wish the people in Europe a lot of luck in getting the DRM removed from digital music. It is an annoyance to everyone. Not because I plan to trade music, but

because it limits how I use the music I do own, I have complained before about how I cannot play any of the music I bought from the Apple Music Store through my Tivo to my stereo system, although I can play any of the music I ripped from CDs myself. It also prevents me from burning audio CDs using a program like Toast which can add features to an audio CD.

Recently the Wall Street Journal said that Apple has become an unexpected power broker of music. This is because the means record labels have used to promote a particular group is to publicize the group in a variety of ways such as playing it on the radio, and posters and promotions with music stores. With the Apple Music Store being so popular, Apple now also has the ability to promote a particular artist. They can place information strategically on their web site, so people searching to buy will easily find the music. Recording companies find it hard working with Apple on this.

Apple apparently doesn't follow the "rules" of traditional music retailing. From reading the article I get the feeling that the WSJ writer believes that Apple promotes music that is not fully in the mainstream. I guess this annoys the traditional music industry, probably because they are loosing control of sales. Apple also trades promotional space for concessions from the artist such as exclusive releases, special discounts, and interviews for their customers. Yup, they are shaking up the traditional music industry.

Dump the mouse - use your brain - According to a recent article, there is a company that is developing a means of controlling a computer with brain waves. According to the article (found by visiting: http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20070309/tc_afp_usitgameconferencebrain), sensors are placed on the users head, they measure the user's mood and this is translated by hardware to data that performs some action. This device is being marketed as a toy controller. In the article they mention a demo with a person tuning on and off a Star Wars Light saber using this controller.

Apparently the technology for doing this has been around for a while, but has been very costly. NeuroSky (<http://www.neurosky.com/>), the company developing this device say they have figured out how to reduce the cost to around \$50 USD.

There was no mention in the article about the controller being brought directly into the computer world, but I expect we will see that soon. Perhaps as a method for people who cannot use a mouse for various reasons. I might also expect the people at the Wild Divine project to possibly incorporate a device like this into their games of relaxation and meditation. In any case, I think it is a cool thing and would love to try one out myself!



<http://www.applemacpunk.com>
applemacpunk@cox.net

Power from Radio Waves - While we are speaking about interesting technology, I also read of another very interesting item. A device that can charge a rechargeable device using radio waves! From what I can tell, the company Power Cast, (<http://www.powercastco.com/>) is developing a device that can “harvest” radio waves and uses this energy to charge the battery in a portable device. (Go to the web site above and watch the movie!)

Their device consists of a transmitter and a receiver. The transmitter transmits a powered radio wave and the receiver converts this to energy that charges your portable device. While their equipment works on a specific frequency, my imagination goes wild thinking about the possibilities....

This is a thing from Science Fiction novels. Rather than sending energy via wires, it is sent via radio waves. With all the radio waves we are bombarded with on a daily basis, I find it a really cool concept that there might be a way to convert them into usable power! While I don't think their device will convert every radio wave, I can definitely see someone developing a device that will harvest popular radio waves! I wonder what it will do to reception?



It sounds like a cool idea. A truly portable device that doesn't even need to be plugged in to charge!



Protected Airspace: Securing Your Home Wireless Network, Part I

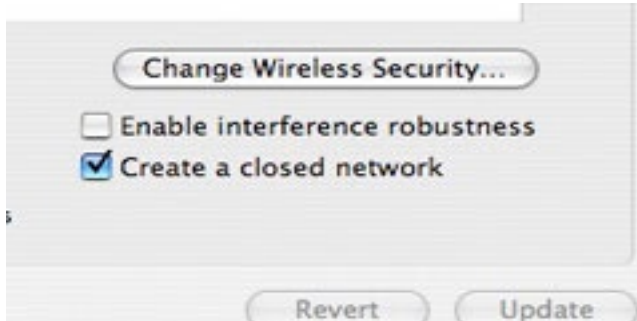
In the modern world of wireless communications, almost everyone is using wireless networks on a daily basis. From cellular phones to 802.11 (Free Internet) Hot Spots to Bluetooth headsets, wireless is all around us every day. Most laptop users have a home wireless network so they can have the freedom to move around their living space and still reach the Internet. Apple's Airport is the preferred network device for most Mac users because of its easy setup and tight integration with Mac OS X. The Airport is a great wireless networking device, but with a few easy steps, it can be secured to greatly reduce unauthorized access. This article is Part I of a two-part series focused on securing your home wireless network. Part I will cover configuration (software) changes, which can be used to secure the network, and Part II, will cover hardware changes that can be used to secure the network.

For this article, I will use an Apple Airport (non-Extreme) running version 4.0.9 of the Apple Airport software, and version 4.2 of Apple's Airport Admin Utility. The newer Airport base stations have a few additional options, but the general theory is the same. This theory can also be applied to non-Apple products made by vendors like Linksys and Netgear.

1. Close the Network

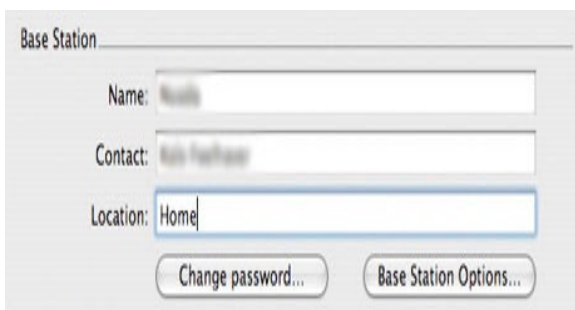
The first thing to do is to create a closed wireless network. A closed network is one in which the Service Set Identifier (SSID) is not broadcast. Have you ever walked into a Starbucks, opened your laptop, and seen a wireless network pop up and ask you to join? That means the SSID is being broadcast. If you create a closed network, the SSID will not be broadcast, and users will have to know the network exists in order to join it. They will also need to know the network name (see Section 3 below) Using the Apple Airport Admin

Utility, select the “Create a Closed Network” check box.



2. Change the Defaults

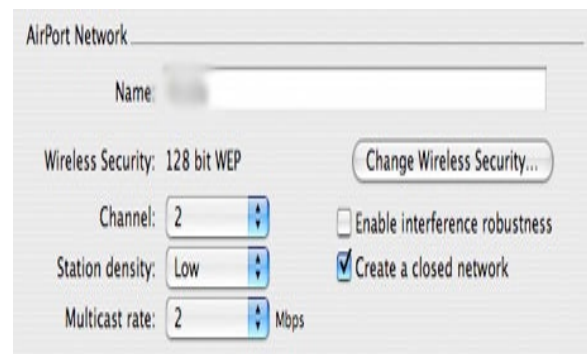
The next thing to do is to change the default device name, username (if it has one), and password. No matter what type of network device you are using, this is a good security practice. Keep this in mind... every Linksys router ships with the same default network name, username, and password. Therefore, anyone who has ever purchased one knows the defaults. There are lists of default passwords that are downloadable off the Internet. If a hacker finds out what type of device he's connecting too, he may already have the default username and password. The same is true of every Netgear router, and every Sonicwall Firewall, and every Apple Airport Express, and so on. Always, always, always change the device name, username (if available), and password on EVERY network device you purchase. Using the Apple Airport Admin Utility, the name and password can be changed in the Base Station section.



3. Enable Encryption

Next, we want to make sure that we change the network name (NOTE: network name is different from base station name above) encrypt the network traffic with a password. This means people will need a password to join the network, and the network traffic

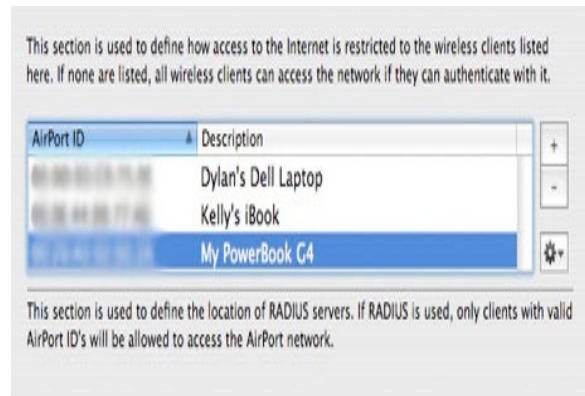
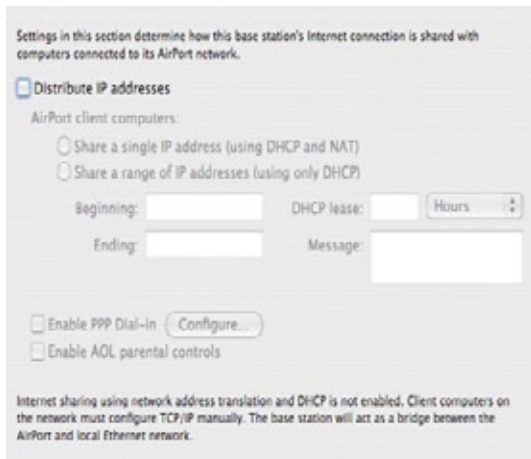
will be encrypted to and from the base station. They will also need to know the network name (SSID) of the network as discussed in Section 1 above. There are several types of encryption used on wireless networks. Among them are Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP) and Wi-fi Protected Access (WPA). WPA is much more secure than WEP, but many older base stations do not support it. WEP is a relatively easy encryption to break, but it is still better than no encryption at all. As a general rule, you want to use the highest level of encryption that your base station will support. In the screenshot below, this base station is configured for 128-bit WEP. This is configurable in the Airport Network (Wireless Security) section of the Airport Admin Utility.



4. Disable DHCP

If you are comfortable with TCP/IP Networking and IP addressing, you may want to proceed with this section. If you are not comfortable with these things, you may want to skip this section. Dynamic Host Configured Protocol (DHCP) is used to dynamically distribute IP addresses to hosts on a network. DHCP allows for little configuration from the end user, which is why it is so popular. However, this can be a bad move from a security standpoint, because anyone can

automatically gain an IP address on your wireless network (NOTE: This setup works best when the base station is not configured as the Internet router, which will be covered in part II). By disabling DHCP (Distributed IP addresses), in conjunction with the suggestions above, you have now forced users to enter an SSID, password, and IP address to gain access to your network. You can further restrict the IP address pool by using classless subnetting. For example, you can restrict the address pool to only a handful of addresses, limiting the potential for several concurrent connections. This is beyond the scope of this tutorial, but I may go into it in a future article. Again, if you are not comfortable with TCP/IP Networking, you may want to skip this section. This configuration is done in the Network section of the Airport Admin Utility.



Once all these steps are completed, a user must know the SSID, password, IP address, and MAC address (of an approved machine) to access your wireless network. Even with these precautions, your network is still hackable. A properly trained person can break into any wireless network. That is the nature of wireless... it's quite hackable. However, the object is not to make your network un-hackable... the object is to make your network less hackable than your neighbor's network. There are plenty of unsecured wireless networks out there... a hacker is not going to target a secured network, when there are unsecured ones within a few blocks. Using these techniques, along with some hardware techniques, which will be discussed in Part II, you can make your network secure enough that hackers will avoid it.

5. Restrict Access by MAC Address

This section also requires a little knowledge about TCP/IP networking. If you are not comfortable with networking, you may want to skip this section as well. Every computer has a unique hardware address called a Media Access Control (MAC) address. A MAC address is a series of six two-digit identifiers separated by colons. A typical MAC address looks something like this: *00:2e:0a:ef:22:1c*. You can find your Mac's MAC address in System Preferences under the Network pane. Then you can use the Airport Admin Utility to restrict access to just the MAC addresses of the systems you've approved. All computers have MAC addresses, including Windows computers. Using this method, you can restrict access to the hardware addresses of your computer, and your friend's/family's computers.



Has your home wireless network been compromised? Do you leave your wireless network up 24/7? What about your Mac - do you leave it up and connected to your wireless network 24/7? Let us know by email at:

feedback@maccompanion.com, with WIRELESS as the message Subject.



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By Rick Sutcliffe

Horace before Descartes

April 2007

2007 04 01: Exclusive to The Northern Spy

Following a long plane ride, a session with lost baggage (you know how these foreign airlines can be) and several passport checks, I arrived precisely on time for an interview so secret even governments knew nothing of it.

I was met by a burly couple who both looked capable of dismantling me for spare parts with their bare hands on an executive suite whim, or just to get their jollies. The not-so-gentleman on the left must have massed a hundred forty kilos. He moved with glacial caution, as though some sudden movement might tear him apart from the sheer force. The Amazon on the right was taller, leaner, catlike in a predatory way, obviously the more dangerous. Both wore sunglasses darker than their suits. Neither had nametags. I hung the mental monickers “Sasquatch” and “Cougar” on the pair. Perhaps the latter was prescient, but I won’t suggest that idea aloud.

Cougar did the talking. “Name and business.” There was no “please” or “thank-you” to this one.

“Rick Sutcliffe, the Northern Spy,” I replied.

“We don’t respond well to that word around here,” she gruffly informed me, and for a moment I wondered if my will was in order.

“The Northern Spy’ is the name of my syndicated column. Started scribblin’ it in 1983. Here’s my press pass.” I held it out, but she declined to touch it. Perhaps she was concerned about viruses.

“Walk in front of me to the green door to the left of the store,” she instructed. “No sudden moves.”

Then, once I had complied, “Pass face down on the scanner. Should it answer back with a green light, follow with your left thumb and right index finger. Should those happen to be accepted, step

forward and look into the camera for a retina scan.” Her voice was as friendly as a greenie chatting up an oil industry exec.

There was a slight sigh of disappointment behind me when the third test showed green and the door clicked open. I idly speculated on how she would have disposed of my remains had I failed the credentials check.

“When the door closes, strip completely. Leave all your clothes and belongings in the locker. Walk through the second door, pause until you see a green light, then put on the coverall you’ll see hanging at the opposite end. Drape the lanyard beside it over your head so the card is visible from the front. Should you still be in our system we will meet you thirty-one spot two seconds after you exit via the green door. Otherwise, and when your business is over, you’ll run an undo on the above steps. Do not under any circumstances attempt to pass through a red door with that lanyard around your neck, or a green one without it.”

I gestured at the computer I was carrying, a certified genuine laptop I hoped was the right brand to not give offence in this place. Religious zealots have to be treated with kid gloves. “Will I be permitted this to take notes?”

“No electronic instruments of any kind may be transported by visitors on the site. Leave it with your clothes. Rule five, paragraph three, bullet one, subpoint iii,” she shot back. “If you are granted an interview, you will be told how it will be recorded.” She sounded like she believed no such thing was possible, so recording was of no moment.

Two more scans, a strip search, and three interviews later (security lieutenant with a dossier going back to what my grandmother liked for breakfast, psychologist probing my mental stability and preferences in politics and explosives, and a dentist), we three formed a procession across the interior lawn of the installation, they still in their anonymizing suits, me clad in a shapeless bright orange garment that fairly screamed “security hazard.”

I dared wonder aloud about the dentist, but Cougar tartly informed me that some peoples’ mouth chemistry reportedly allowed dentures to receive radio signals. They were just making sure. I didn’t dare turn around, but a reflection in a glass sculpture showed me Sasquatch following several paces behind Cougar, just in case their scanner and local shrink were both wrong about yours truly as a potential terrorist threat.

“We stopped at three more doors, took an elevator several levels up, then traversed two corridors. At every transition, my lanyard tag was

scanned, as were my guards' thumbprints. I saw so many dark suits and sunglasses I began thinking they were all clones of Sasquatch. For a while I was blindfolded, and by the time this was removed, I'd lost track of distance and direction, and found myself passing through a thick steel door like those in bank vaults into a sterile and windowless hallway. This joint looked proof against an attack with bunker breaker missiles. More to the point, I'd neither be able to guide anyone here nor relate what part of the installation I'd entered.

Two more security checkpoints later I stood before a desk bearing no name, merely the designation "executive secretary". No need to ask whose. I wondered to myself whether anonymity was to protect her, or if the position had so short an average tenure there was no point in wasting money on names. I glanced around. No inner office door was apparent.

"Ah," she announced brightly, "you must be the nine-thirty. If you will allow me to scan your campus credentials, Sir."

"I extended my lanyard yet another time, and felt considerable surprise as she rose to take it, for by contrast to my "companions" she was barely (oh, go for the old imperial units, why not) five feet tall. Quite a looker, too, if you liked spiked purple hair and lip rings. I looked away to hide my distaste, spotted the calluses on the sides of her hands, then took in the karate trophy atop the filing cabinet. Ah.

"Very good, Sir," she disarmingly continued. "Now for a procedural matter or two. You will have twenty minutes in the office, not a second more. Our escorts will accompany you. You will make no sudden movements. The entire interview will be recorded by our equipment and edited by our staff and company lawyers for any errors before being emailed to you at your address of record in approximately one month. We trust this will ensure accuracy, and of course we disclaim any transcript you claim to produce by memory or some other means you have that we might have missed on your way in. Neither may you disclose any facts not in the official record, or write about the interview until after the product release date. Will that be satisfactory?" I think you'd call her expression a smile, but....

Any "yes" I might have essayed was apparently redundant. "Sign this release," she said, disdainfully awaiting my reply.

I complied, barely noting the part about civil and criminal penalties. At least the document didn't lay claim to my firstborn. He's about to be married and, despite that most weddings these days could take place with a cardboard cutout and a tape recorder standing in for the groom, a foreclosure might unduly

inconvenience the bride afterward.

"Hood him, Three." For my edification, or the lack thereof, the guards were apparently numeric rather than patronymic.

A large dark hood was thrust over my head, and tied loosely around my midriff so I couldn't even watch floor tile patterns. These people were thorough. No interview with Osama could have been more secure. I was turned several times, walked about a few minutes through more changes of direction than you'd find in a bag of pretzels, then halted. About another minute passed, then a buzzer sounded.

"Right," announced the perky secretary with the deadly hands, "the nine-ten has just left with One and Two. Let's do this one."

A whine followed, and I imagined a portion of wall sliding aside. Urged forward, I finally entered the room to which I'd spent so many influence chips to secure a visit. Moments later my hood was removed, and to my utter shock, I found myself facing, not the iCEO here at One Infinite Loop, but wSteve instead.

He favoured me with a warm smile. "iSteve was busy off campus, and I Woz available, so rather than disappoint your readers, I'll be conducting your briefing," he advised, bouncing around the desk to greet me with an enthusiastic handshake. "I don't spend much time on campus, but the technology we're showing you this morning is something I tinkered up working after school hours in my own basement then perfected in my Apple Fellow office down the hall once my old buddy iSteve got a loo at it."

"It's good to see you after all these years," I enthused in return.

"Last time was Vancouver, mid eighties, he recalled."

"You addressed Apples BC," I agreed, "and afterward some of us inducted you into S.A.G.E. as member number, oh, it was either six or seven as I recall."

"Serious Apple Group, Eh? An exclusive Canadian club. What's your number, if I may ask?"

"One. We went by age to start with, and Archie was older so he got zero."

"Of course. Well, let's get down to business." He removed three locks from and opened a cubical case on the desk, extracting from it a striped skullcap surmounted by what seemed like several limp tinfoil leaves and a central metal pole. I caught a glimmer of wire mesh inside as he turned it over in his hands.

“Ever heard of René-Prosper Blondlot?”

“The turn-of-the-last-century scientist? Of course.”

“His 1906 discovery that human beings gave off N-rays was heavily criticized at the time, but like many geniuses, he was merely unappreciated. I’ve done a follow-up.”

“You’ve done something with them?” I was astonished.

“Quite a bit, actually. Watch.” He donned the cap, and at once the loose metal leaves rose slightly into the air and began spinning around the little metal pole that stuck up from the cap about three centimetres. “Powered by body heat,” he remarked, almost absentmindedly, “saves the weight of batteries and helps keep the head cool in the summer. Now what’s the right thought pattern for the password to turn on iSteve’s screen? Ah, here we go,” he announced, as much of the wall behind him suddenly lit to display an OS X screen. The machine generating it must have been out of sight, perhaps under the great one’s desk. “Now, we’ll fire up iWrite....” As he spoke, the indicated application started, and soon displayed an empty document template. He hadn’t touched a thing.

He already had me hooked. “How does it work?”

“The mesh inside the cap detect and amplify the N-rays given off by the brain. The blades intercept the amplified signal and detect changes at intervals determined by their spin, then the circuitry in the post digitizes these and drops them into the net at the nearest AirPort. Takes a little training, but you can easily control a computer, hands off.”

“By thought alone?” This was stunning.

“Yes, of course. I called the system “Rene”, but iSteve wants to market it as ‘iThink’. It’s Leopard’s secret feature, the killer app that’ll obsolete word processors.” As he spoke, his words also formed on the screen, but then, even though he stopped talking, they were followed with, “especially Billg’s bilge”. A graphic of a certain dominant office product appeared, only to animatedly tear itself in two. This was followed by “He’ll probably succeed, too. iSteve’s an even better marketing genius than Billg, even if just as much a twit in person.”

“Whoops, I shouldn’t have said, er...thought that. Strike those words from the record, will you.” He glanced over my shoulder to the office minions, and the word “goons of his” appeared briefly on the screen, then were erased.

But before Ms. Karate could acknowledge his order, the screen has also displayed, “iSteve would kill me for that, but even if he’s the same guy who outed the Apple //x back in the eighties, there’s no need for some lamebrained reporter to.... Oops, sorry, did it again. No offence. Gotta adjust the sensitivity.”

This was followed by a momentary pause, then his stomach involuntarily rumbled, and what appeared to be a grocery list began displaying. He glanced up, frowned, and commented, “My wife wants me to make tacos tonight. They’re one of her favourites.” But the screen rendered this as “their” one of, and seeing it, he added, “thought recognition software needs a few tweaks. Gets the odd word wrong. Still, it’s my best piece of work since I wrote Apple][DOS in one sitting, way back in the day.”

Meanwhile, tacos, groceries, and wife had apparently kick-started further thought-word association, and before he could stop himself, a picture of a woman appeared on the wall. She seemed to be getting closer, eyes closed and lips pursed, as if for a steamy kiss. His wife, I assumed.

At that I had the inspiration that would both rescue his thoughts and simultaneously prove the interview’s undoing. “Say,” I brightly probed, “I don’t suppose you could comment on any Mac hardware releases the company has planned for the same date Leopard comes out.”

“Not a chance,” he shot back, but fast as thought, schematics, pictures and specifications snapped onto the screen. Expecting the automatic reaction, I struggled to memorize what I could.

8-cores over two processors, more speed, bigger drives, more and faster memory, bluetooth, blu-ray and HDTV combo drive, steel blue box and packing, built-in wide-range 802.11n, code-named iBlue, and bundled with.... I devoured the inadvertently disgorged info for all of three seconds before anyone could react, then was roughly seized from behind, spun about, re-hooded, and unceremoniously bundled from the premises. They didn’t even give me time to dress, just dumped me on the outer lawn by the store entrance, and tossed my things on top of me. My Targus bag with the Mac inside nearly took my breath away as it hit me in the solar plexus.

Worse, when the file of my interview with wSteve arrived in the eMail this morning, it was empty. Discrete enquiries were met with “We do not comment on unannounced products,” so, officially, and for a few more days at least, it’s a cast of “iThink is not”, and neither, I suppose are the shiny new blue boxes wSteve thought upon. Guess iBlue that one, but you read it here first. --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>
- The Spy's Laws collected: <http://www.thenorthernspy.com/spyslaws.htm>
- The Spy's Shareware download site: <http://downloads.thenorthernspy.com/>
- WebNameHost: <http://www.WebNameHost.net>
- WebNameSource: <http://www.WebNameSource.net>
- nameman: <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>
- p1: <http://www.awiedemann.de/compiler/index.html>
- BBEdit: <http://www.bbedit.com/>
- Nolobe: <http://www.nolobe.com/>



Errata for March

By Mike Hubbartt

LAST MINUTE NEWS

The Apple TV is shipping. Tell us if you bought one by sending feedback to feedback@maccompanion.com, with the subject "I BOUGHT AN APPLE TV." We'd like to know if you bought the product in a store or if you ordered it from Apple.



As of 4/04/2007, Apple's website lists a new 3GHz 8-core Mac Pro, and Apple confirms the June US ship date for the iPhone.

According to online sources, Microsoft just released a limited beta of Office for Mac 2008 .

RUMORS

Analysts and websites suspect Leopard (OS X 10.5) will ship in April, and that Apple intends to release a subnotebook with flash memory instead of a traditional hard drive.

Apple denied the late (October) release of Leopard rumor – posted on MacWorld UK's website on 3/26/2007.

CORRECTION

The Belkin Lighthouse Battery Backup reviewed in our March 2007 issue was renamed to Battery Backup with Flashlight.



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—Mike Hubbartt, Editor
MacCompanion magazine
February, 2007

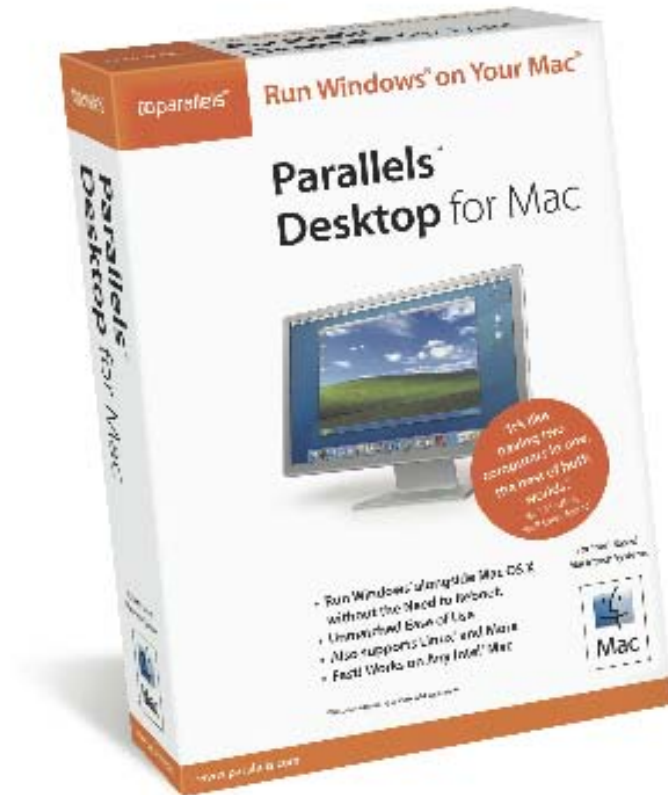
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Software

The section 2 software reviews in this issue of *macCompanion* are:

- Crossover Macintosh – run Windows apps on a Mac, reviewed by Ted Bade
- Contactizer Pro 3.1.2 – a product for personal and business contact information, by Wayne LeFevre
- Final Draft 7.1.3 – a quality screenwriting application, reviewed by Mike Hubbartt
- Finale Allegro 2007 – music notation software, reviewed by Daphne Kalfon
- GeekBench 2.0.0 – interesting benchmarking software, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- iGet 2.6 – inventive file transfer tool, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- LicenseKeeper 1.0 – one-stop-shop for licenses, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- Mellel 2.2 – multilingual word processor, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- OmniDazzle 1.0.1 – add flash to your screen, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- PrintFolio 1.0 integrated BeLight printing utilities, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad
- ScreenSteps – create visual instruction software for export, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- The TAB Kids– create comics the easy way, reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie
- TextExpander 1.4.2 – easy tool to add recurring data into documents and forms, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad
- Yep 1.5 – organize your PDFs, reviewed by Wayne LeFevre

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Crossover Macintosh

By Ted Bade



Crossover Macintosh

<http://www.codeweavers.com>

\$59.95 USD

System Requirements: Any Intel Macintosh



Strengths: Doesn't require you own a copy of Windows, Window's based applications run from the Finder.

Weaknesses: Works with only applications that have certified to work with it. Although the list is long, this means that specialty applications will be a long time waiting for support.

Previous Reviews: none

For a demo of this product: http://www.codeweavers.com/products/download_trial_macos/

CodeWeaver's Crossover Macintosh is yet another means of running Windows applications on your Intel Macintosh. What makes it stand apart from the other players in this field it that you don't need to acquire a copy of the Windows operating system to run an application. The Crossover application takes care of that. What you do need to do is have a copy of the application(s) you want to run. While this is an excellent solution, not every application written for Windows will work with Crossover Macintosh. But it is an excellent solution and there are many applications that have been tested to work with it.

There are now three solutions for Intel Mac users for running non-MacOS X operating systems on their Macs. The first is Apple's own solution called BootCamp, which allows one to reboot their Mac as if it were a PC and run XP and probably Vista. This solution is free although you need to buy a copy of Windows that will work. However, using Bootcamp requires that your reboot into Windows, which is a bother, since this limits one's ability to immediately share data from one platform to another. The other two solutions allow you to run Windows based applications concurrently with MacOS X. We already did a full review of Parallels for MacOS X, which also requires a copy of Windows (and an expensive copy, if you plan to run Vista). Today we are going to look at the new kids on this (Macintosh) block, called Crossover Macintosh produced by CodeWeavers.

Crossover Macintosh is based on a solution that has been in use by the PC Linux community for a while now, called Wine. (to learn more about Wine and what it means visit: <http://winehq.org/site/about>). What Crossover Macintosh does is provide the aspects of running Windows that an application needs, without the user needing to buy Windows. Think about it, if this solution will work for you, you won't have to plop down anywhere from \$200 - \$400 for a copy of Windows! That fact alone is worth making one take a serious look at Crossover Macintosh.

I won't go into the technical details of how this works. Since the Macintosh has an Intel processor and the application was written to run on an Intel based CPU, the only thing that is missing are a few (or perhaps several), calls to the Windows OS for some basic routines, such as fonts, window spaces, mouse controls and so forth. Crossover looks at what this application needs and provides code that fills in the gaps. So now, with Crossover Macintosh installed, you can click on the (Windows) icon of say, Internet Explorer, and see it run on your Macintosh. You will know it is the Windows version because the fonts will be harsh and scraggly, and the menus will be those of Windows.

Even the process of installing an application dips you into the world of Windows. You will have to go through all the agreements, warnings, and decisions that anyone accustomed to installing any Windows application are familiar with! You will be shocked and amazed as you watch your Macintosh pretend to be a Window's machine. Truly, it is an eerie sensation to see this!



Installing applications with Crossover Macintosh is relatively simple. To do this review I searched through the lengthy list of possible applications (visit <http://www.codeweavers.com/compatibility/browse/cat> to view this list yourself) and selected several titles that I was interested in. You will need the official CDs for commercial applications. There are several free programs (such as Internet Explorer) and some applications, which have limited demos that you can download to try. The first application I choose to play with was Internet Explorer, version 6 that never made it to the MacOS platform.

To begin the installation I had to select to install a new application from the Crossover Mac menu. Since this was the first application I had installed, Crossover Macintosh had some work it had to do to make things work. It first creates a "bottle" to contain the Windows workspace and the application. The concept of the bottle comes from the roots of this program. The original open source project was called Wine. So they carry forward the concept of creating a bottle (wine bottle) to fill up! Cute.

You can have multiple bottles in Crossover Macintosh. For instance you can create a bottle for an application that requires Win98 (one that wouldn't work in XP) and another for all applications that work well with XP. They recommend that you create a separate bottle if you choose to try an application that they haven't certified yet. However, you can have several applications in one bottle. Consider the bottle as a memory compartment, where the alien application and all the stuff it needs, is isolated from the rest of the applications on your machine.



Once the bottle has been created, the installation can begin. Crossover Macintosh prompts you to choose an application from the list to install. There are a lot of choices on this list. If the application you want to run is not on this list, you can choose to install an unsupported application. Let's stay with my example and choose to install IE6.

The next step in the installation process is to tell Crossover Macintosh where the installer resides. There are three choices here. This could be from a CD, an Internet site, or an installer file that is on your Macintosh. In the case of my example, IE6 is available over the Internet. Since it is a free program, the Crossover Macintosh application knows the location of a valid installer file. You then choose to download the installer via your Internet connection. The file will flow into your computer.

Once the installer file is downloaded, Crossover Macintosh will run the installer and the fun begins! You will recognize the various messages and windows that occur during a standard Windows application installation. When the installation process is complete, Crossover Macintosh tells you it is going to simulate a Windows reboot, which it does. Now the application you have installed is available to be used.

You'll find that during the installation process, Crossover Macintosh has created a folder called Crossover in your account's personal "Application" folder. Inside this folder you will find the icons for the applications you have installed. In the future, if you want to run one of these applications, you just double click on it's icon; this will call up Crossover Macintosh and all the stuff the application needs to run. You can even keep the icon for the Window's application in you dock. It's pretty cool.



The installation process is similar if you install from a CD or a file on your computer. You just tell the program where the installer file is located and it runs it. Once Crossover Macintosh is installed, if you insert a Windows CD it will recognize it and install the application. Unless you are a real pro, it's probably a good idea to accept all the defaults during the installation process.

While you can run an application that has not been tested, your results might be mixed. The CodeWeaver's people are constantly qualifying new applications to work with Crossover Macintosh, but their time is limited. To this end, they have a couple of methods to let the user get involved with getting an application working. First of all you can make a pledge. That is you can say, I will definitely buy the program or here is some money, so please do it. You can volunteer to help with the qualification process for a favorite application as well. Finally, if you are an owner, you can vote on applications to show your level of interest.

The people at CodeWeavers qualify those applications they believe are the most valuable to users and potential users. Their choices are based on information they get from users. While I was speaking with them, I mentioned that I was interested in Window Media Player, since this would open Window's DRM for media files to Mac users. Although this had come up before, they had never really considered Windows Media Player, since there are solutions that run natively for the Macintosh, but of course these solutions don't include access to DRM files. I am hoping we see Window Media Player 11 qualified in the near future!

Probably the biggest issue of using Crossover Macintosh is whether or not the application or applications you need to run are already qualified to work. If you have moved from Windows to Mac OS and have only a couple of very popular applications that you need to run then you might be in luck. However, if you just want to try out a variety of Window's Applications because your Mac gives you the ability, it won't be the solution for you.

I had absolutely no problem running any of the qualified applications I choose to try with Crossover Macintosh. Of course, I stuck with those qualified to the highest level. So I can say that when it works, it works very well.

They maintain a list of applications people are interested in. If users have tried them they can post comments to tell other users if it worked or not. The web site shows almost 3000 applications, including those that have been qualified.

Conclusion

Crossover Macintosh is a good product. It is the least costly of all the solutions for using Windows on a Macintosh because you don't need to buy a copy of Windows. I recommend that you look over the list of applications you want to run before you decide to buy this program. Of course, if you are like a lot of people who would rather not support Microsoft in any way, this is the route to go, even if one application you need to run isn't currently supported. If that is important to you, you will probably be willing to wait and even add your support to this project. Frankly, I think feel that non-supporting Windows is a good thing!

Recommendation

I recommend Crossover Macintosh for anyone with an Intel Mac that needs to run a couple of Window's applications. Just be sure to review the list of working applications before you buy. As a matter of fact, you can download a 30-day trial version and try your application before you actually buy Crossover Macintosh, what more could you ask for?

Contactizer Pro 3.1.2

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre



Objective Decision

<http://objective-decision.com>

Released: October 2006

\$119.90 USD, \$135 CND, £62 GBP

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later.



Strengths: A promising application and successor to OD4Contact 2. It is looking to be an all-in-one solution for managing, sharing and organizing personal and business information. It is a powerful PIM, that has a lot of room to grow

Weaknesses: Very, very little support documentation. No Tutorials. Confusing and nearly no iCal syncing except through iSync, but will import iCal in setup and .ics files. Not very intuitive.

Previous Reviews: None in *macCompanion*.

Getting Started

I was very excited to start using Contactizer Pro 3. After using Daylite, I thought that this simpler product with a lot of robustness was just what I needed. It seemed to do everything that I wanted. A fantastic Contact Manager, a great task manager, a descent calendar, and a Communications Center that brings it all together. What more could you want?

After bringing over my contacts and calendar, I was ready to get to work. I started with the contacts. You can add a number of fields and group contacts together in a much better and more intuitive way than with Address Book. Under each person, you can keep track of the Tasks, Events, all communication, any attachments and even maps. You can work these in any number of ways, put them into groups much easier than Address Book. It's nice to be able to find all information about the contact in one screen, (including how to say their name phonetically?) All of the new fields and information automatically sync to your address book the next time you open it, and whatever you change in Address Book will update the next time you open Contactizer Pro. It's a nice system that works well.

The next main screen is Tasks. The Task Manager shows all tasks by any filter you like. From all tasks to complete, tasks in process, etc. The tasks are prioritized by Priority, Due date, percent done, type and so on. It's extremely easy to see what tasks are repetitive, due, have alarms, overdue and percent done. Tasks can have Events, communications such as e-mails, file attachments and invitations connected to them. That definitely is one of the coolest parts of the program.

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Events, communications such as e-mails, file attachments and invitations connected to them. That definitely is one of the coolest parts of the program. The integration of tasks with e-mails and files. They will not sync with iCal, but it's a nice easy system.

The next main screen is the Event Manager. The calendar. It will initially grab information from your iCal, but that will be the extent of it talking with iCal. From then on it is silent with it's OS X brother. There has been much discussion on the Objective Decision website on iCal syncing. The companies decision on syncing is basically it will not sync right now, and that's that. I'm not sure if they have any future plans on syncing in the future, but they do have some interesting discussions on their forum boards about the proposal. You can read all about it at <http://objective-decision.com/forum/>. Again, the filters are fantastic, and can show only the filtered object like iCal. Events can also be linked to tasks, events, communications, files and invitations.

When I first wrote this, I was using 3.0.3 version of the software, and it is now up to 3.1.2. There are a few enhancements that I should expand upon here. For one, iCal will sync, but only through Apples iSync technology. It's a hit or miss, that for me, missed entirely and wiped out my iCal. Now, they say on their website, "Syncing with iCal is not our top priority since Contactizer Pro is meant to replace your iCal usage. We think that using 2 calendar application in parallel or at the same time is not handy or efficient." I have got to disagree. For one, there are many other programs, not the least of which is sharing that will only work with iCal. I suppose if everyone used Contactizer Pro, that would not be a problem, since it shares with itself on a local lan quite nicely. Even our local schools offer iCal sharing for sporting activities and even homework activities that you can subscribe to, but only for iCal. Now, If it was able to talk to iCal, I wouldn't even need to open iCal, but again, the company does not think that this is important. In a business environment, however, it would probably work great where you would not need iCal.



The last main screen is the Communications Center. Here is were You can see all communications In or Out with your contacts, and will show the linked tasks, events and communications. You can split it out into Chats, e-mails, faxes, mailings and phone calls. You can find communication by person, or date. Selecting on a person will show all communications with that person, including the entire text of the e-mail. Communications also includes the ability to send e-mail forms within the program, including merging documents and having templates. I mentioned before that the inclusion of tasks with communications with files was really made this application outstanding. You can have access to all your incoming e-mail from the communications screen, take that e-mail, make a easy task and event from it, and tie the whole thing in with a file attachment. I even use it for my workflow. I will receive a request to review a product, I create a task with it, then create an event that shows when the review is due, and ties in the actual review document in it into one package. Everything I need concerning that e-mail and review is right there for the asking. Nice.

What's not to like?

Well, this one is a tough one. I like Contactizer Pro. I like version 3.1.2 even more. Unfortunately, I don't use it to it's fullest. If you bring up the help menu, version 3.1.2 now brings up an actual Contactizer Pro help menu, unlike the earlier version that labeled the minimal help as OD4Contact 2. Like I said before, the help is minimal

and there is no tutorial for the program at all. Objective Decision has been promising for months that they will be posting some training videos on their site, but as of now, there still is nothing. A few screencasts would go a long, long way in explaining how to use the application to it's fullest. Communications with their staff has been great, and they seem to have answers for any of your questions, but my questions far outweigh what could be answered in a single, or even a few, e-mails.

Conclusion

Contactizer Pro 3.1.2 is a good PIM, that if you could learn to use it properly, could possibly be a great PIM. If there was a way to learn how to use the application like it should be used, I definitely would take advantage of it more often than I do. But for now, it's an expensive calendar, address book and to-do list, but they work together fabulously. Now, if it could truly take the place of iCal, that would be it for me.

Final Draft 7.1.3

By Mike Hubbartt, Copyright ©2007



Final Draft

<http://www.finaldraft.com>

\$229 USD

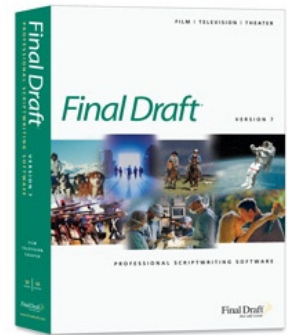
Contact resellers for sales outside US – see Final Draft’s website for a list.

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; Universal binary (PPC G3, G4 and G5); 256 MB RAM; 50 MB Hard Drive Space; CD-ROM/DVD-ROM.

Strengths: Mature, industry-standard product, support for multiple writer collaboration efforts, save content as PDF.

Weaknesses: none found.

For a demo of this product: [Demo download page](#)



Years ago, a couple of my favorite television series were cancelled by the networks. I was disappointed, because I cared what happened to the characters in these shows and wanted to know how the stories ended. I bought whatever fiction and nonfiction books were available for the series, but there weren’t enough books to tell me what finally happened to the characters and I wanted to know. I decided to try to write scripts to conclude my favorite shows, so I bought a few books on writing scripts and found the topic fascinating.

I was unaware how much economics affects a show. You see, the budget for a weekly series may seem like a lot, but television series and movies are a collaborative effort. Many people are involved with each show: the Producer, Director, cast and crew are important, and each person receives a paycheck. Costs beside salaries include sets, film, and special effects also come out of the budget, so these items influence what scripts are produced.

No matter how good idea for a script – television series or movie – it won’t see the light of day if it costs too much to produce. Yes, production costs influence what we see on television or at the movie theater. Regular television series have a number of stock sets that are easier (and less expensive) to use than constructing new sets, so a writer needs to know which stock sets are available for an episode, and how new sets affect the bottom line.

Another item that affects how a script is written is the characters. For weekly series, regular cast members need to appear in most episodes, so the writer must include them in one or more scenes of the main or secondary story plots. And the dialogue for each cast member needs to be tailored for that individual – key words or phrases each actor uses helps viewers identify that character.

As you see, you have to know a lot more than how to type to write a script. But speaking of typing, you need to know how to format a script to have a chance at having it read by an agent or a studio. Some writers use a word processor template that has styles to format the content, but that means you must be constantly conscious of material format as you write. I used MS Word to write my first script, but felt that format concerns somewhat interfered with the creative process. When I bought and started using ScriptWare, I loved how I could keep my hands on the keyboard and use a few key combinations to switch between different script elements (action, dialogue, transitions, etc).

Recently I reviewed Montage 1.0, a new Mac-only script package from Mariner Software that was good, but not as polished as more mature products. This brought me to Final Draft, considered by many as the flagship product of the script writing industry.

Getting Started

After installing the software, you have several options to create a new script: choose a new blank script or create a blank script based on a number of templates included with the product. There are templates for:

Scripts	Text Documents	TV Templates
BBC Screenplay for TV	Manuscript	24, According to Jim, Alias, Arrested
BBC Screenplay	Novel	Development, Becker, Bernie Mac
BBC Taped Sitcom	Outline	Show, Bones, Boston Legal, Casualty,
BBC Three-camera Show	Query Letter	Cold Case, Commander in Chief,
Broadway Musical	Text Document	Coronation Street, Courting Alex,
Half-Hour Sitcom	Treatment	Crossing Jordan, CSI Miami, CSI NY,
One Hour TV Drama		CSI, Days of Our Lives, Deadwood,
Screenplay (Cole and Haag)		Desperate Housewives, Doctors,
Screenplay (Warner Brothers)		Eastenders, Emmerdale, Entourage, ER,
Screenplay		Everwood, Everyone Loves Raymond,
Stageplay 1		Family Affairs, Family Guy, Fraiser,
Stageplay 2		Friends, Futurama, General Hospital,
US Screenplay (French)		George Lopez, Ghost Whisperer,
US Screenplay (German)		Gilmore Girls, Greys Anatomy, Guiding
US Screenplay (Spanish)		Light, Holby City, House, How I Met
		Your Mother, ITV, King of Queens,
		King of the Hill, Las Vegas,
		Law and Order CI, Law and Order SVU,
		Law and Order, Lost, Mad TV, Malcolm
		in the Middle, McLeod's Daughters,
		Medium, Monk, My Name is Earl,
		NCIS, Nip/Tuck, Numb3rs, One Tree
		Hill, Prison Break, Scrubs, Sex in the
		City, Six Feet Under, Smallville, South
		Park, Stacked, That 70s Show,
		The Bill, The L Word, The OC,
		The Office, The Shield, The Simpsons,
		The Sopranos, The West Wing,
		The Wire, The X Files, The Young and
		the Restless, Two and a Half Men,
		Will and Grace, Without a Trace

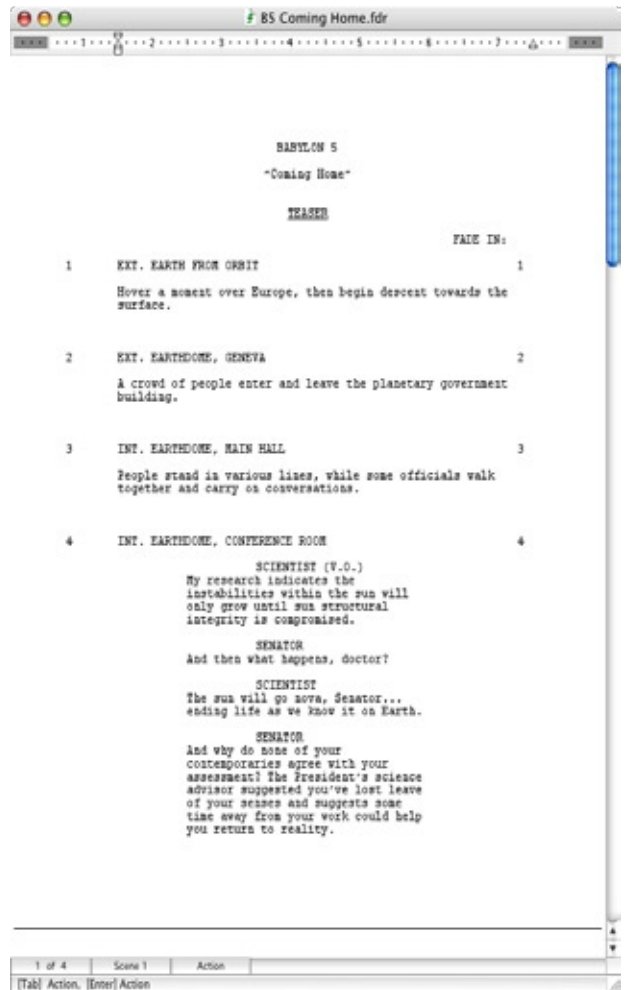
Final Draft does not include a TV template for Babylon 5, so I used a new ‘One Hour TV Drama’ script to test this product. The screen to enter a script is similar to a typical word processor, but one thing stands out. The text is formatted like a Hollywood script, so you see how your work of art will appear.

After creating my new script, I entered the series name, episode name and TEASER at the top, and began with FADE IN. I entered the scene heading, followed by the action, and entered the character. New characters are automatically added to a list, which displays when you start to enter a dialogue or action for a character. After entering the character name, I pressed the enter key once to move to the next line to enter dialogue, or press enter a second time to choose the element to use. The types of elements are: General, Scene Heading, Action, Character, Parenthetical, Dialogue, Transition, Shot, New Act, End of Act, Teaser/Act and Show/Ep. Title. It was easy to switch between different script elements (action, dialogue, transitions, etc), although not quite as simple as it is with ScriptWare.

The first book I read about script writing advised using index cards to list each scene to help organize and rearrange the scenes. I used paper index cards when I first started writing my scripts, as they did help keep things organized. After writing part of my test Babylon 5 episode, I switched to the Index Card views – Summary and Script – to see the story laid out using on-screen index cards. Very nice. I could drag and drop the scene index cards onscreen, which rearranged the material in the script. Easy. I like that I can compare and rearrange my work to more closely match Joe Straczynski’s own scripts, using his scripts in various volumes of *The Scripts of JMS* published by CaféPress.

Note: If you want to see scripts from a television series, JMS’ books at CaféPress are a good purchase. For older television and movie scripts, some people order them from Script City in California. I enjoy reading scripts, but not everyone feels that way...

Two features professional writers will appreciate in Final Draft are writer collaboration support and reports. Selecting the Collabowriter menu item lets a writer join or host a collaboration session over the Internet. To join, enter the IP address, screen name for the session, and port number. To host a session, just enter your screen name and port number. The reports available in Final Draft include Scenes, Locations, Characters, Cast, Script, ScriptNote, and Statistics. Valuable data when keeping production costs in mind.



A Professional's Comments about Final Draft

“Final Draft makes it possible to simply imagine the movie in script form. If you can think in cinematic terms, you can write in the terms of cinema.”

Tom Hanks – Writer / Director / Producer / Actor / Academy Award™ Winner
Cast Away, Forrest Gump, Philadelphia, Saving Private Ryan, That Thing You Do...

This quote was on Final Draft's website when I was researching this article. How can you beat having someone with Tom Hanks' credentials endorse your product?

Conclusion: It takes a little time to get comfortable switching between elements, but it is time well spent. This product provides word processing functionality as well as scriptwriting. There are a lot of TV templates, and the types of scripts that are available for series without a template are more than adequate for the needs of most writers. I appreciate the ability to save content as a Final Draft file or as PDF – PDFs are so convenient to email, and the recipient does not need a copy of Final Draft to read your script. I liked the user manual and the free issue of Script magazine in the box.

The previous release (7.0) had a number of troublesome bugs reported in other reviews of this product – I did not encounter them during my tests and was satisfied the newest version of Final Draft works well.

Recommendation: Although I own other screenwriting programs, I will continue to use Final Draft. If you enjoy writing fiction – short stories or novels – and considered trying your hand at screenwriting, look at this reasonably priced software. Definitely a good buy and recommended.

Finale Allegro 2007

Reviewed by Daphne Kalfon



MakeMusic!

www.makemusic.com

\$ 199 USD, \$234.00 CAD, £102.00, €149.00

System Requirements: G4 or higher; OS 10.3.9 and higher; 800X600 minimum monitor resolution; CD-ROM drive; Minimum 256MB RAM recommended; 250 MB hard drive space required for software and user manual. Universal Binary.

Strengths: highly versatile software; powerful notation tools;

Weaknesses: several glitches and bugs reside in the program which do make it somewhat frustrating to use at times.

Previous Reviews: None in *macCompanion*.

For a demo of this product: <http://www.finalemusic.com/downloads/demos.aspx>

Introduction

Finale Allegro is music notation software that allows you to compose, arrange, edit, print and share your music, as well as save as mp3s and create CDs of your final projects.

Getting Started

I inserted the install disc. The Read Me file came up, so I briefly read it. It tells of new features and improvements and other changes to the software, explains software authorization, as well as some additional info for those using notebook computers as opposed to desktop computers.

Then I double-clicked on the install icon and a new window came up asking me to click “Continue” to install Finale Allegro 2007. The material I read in the Read Me file showed up again, so I ignored it and clicked “Continue.”

When the Software License Agreement showed up. I clicked “Agree”. At that point you are asked to select a destination volume on which to install Allegro , so I did, and then I was asked to enter my password to authenticate. This launched the installation process. A window then showed up saying that I have 30 days to register before saving and printing are disabled, so I chose to authorize now. You then have to fill out a User Information form and very brief User Survey, click “Finish” and you can then proceed to the Launch Window.

I must say that this process was much faster and less hassles than I have had installing other software, so it was much appreciated this time around.

Using the Software

Allegro comes with a soft cover book called “Installation and Tutorials” which I will explain a little bit more about later, a “read me first” document, and a handy quick reference guide which contains an explanation of the main tool palette as well as a complete guide to all the keyboard shortcuts the program comes with.

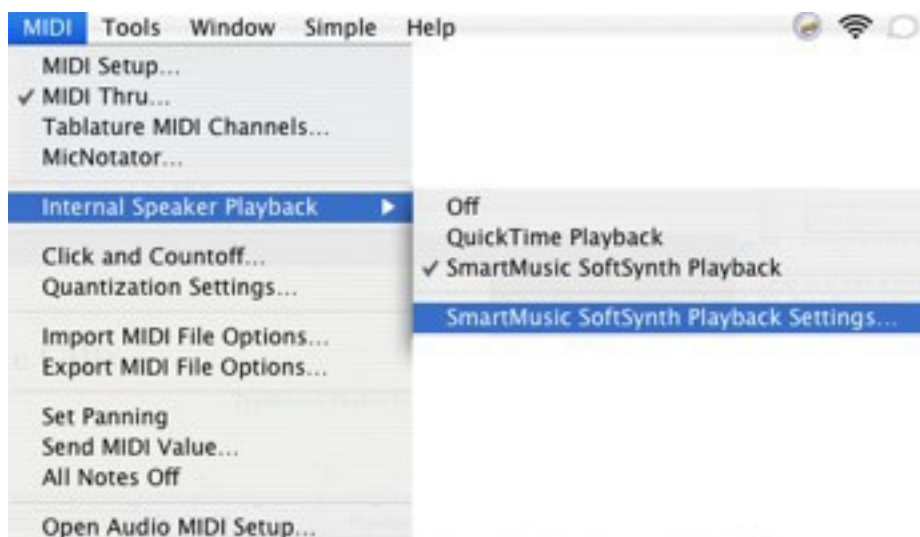
I should mention that in addition to the soft cover manual which contains installation directions and tutorials, there is a 35 chapter online User Manual which is installed directly to the hard drive when you install Allegro, a “QuickHelp” online guide, a “Help” feature which provides context-sensitive help within a dialog box when you are working within the program, and a series of QuickStart Videos. I decided to start with the videos.

After I clicked on “QuickStart Videos” a new window came up with a table of contents: Basic Skills, Getting Started, Adding Details, Measures and Staves, Editing Your Music, Wrapping Up Your Project, Playback, Education Tools, and Using These Videos. Within each of these chapters are several topics covered. For example, if you select “Measures and Staves”, a subset will then appear with the following contents: changing the key signature, changing the time signature, changing the clef, adding and deleting instruments, tablature, slash and rhythmic notation and percussion notation.

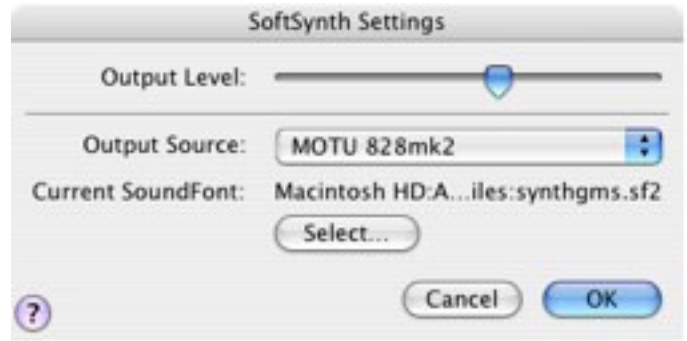
At the bottom of the tutorial video window, there are transport controls which allow you to go back, stop, rewind and fast forward through the tutorial. As the voiceover speaks, an active screenshot of what is being explained is shown. Also, as you watch and hear the voice over, an intermittent notice will pop up to indicate that the item being explained is only included with Finale or only with Finale and Allegro.

My only complaint would be that I felt the voiceover was much too fast. A slower pace would probably be much more helpful for the first time user trying to learn the ins and outs of this program. Other than that, the video tutorials provided with this program are a great learning tool.

There was no indication in the manual as to how to set up audio in order to hear playback through speakers. After some searching, it was found under the MIDI menu - choose “internal speaker playback”, choose “SmartMusic Softsynth Playback Settings” and there, choose the output source, which in my case is my MOTU interface.



It's very confusing to have to choose "Internal Playback" as the menu option in order to be able to choose an external audio device. "Internally" here happens to mean "from within the program", and not from a hardware standpoint, which can lead to confusion.



I decided to then try out some of the tutorials in the soft cover book, starting with the first section of the first tutorial, Tutorial 1a: Simple Entry. This first section is titled "Creating a New Document with the Document Setup Wizard." Following the directions, everything went fine and I ended up with exactly what was shown on the page in the manual.

Then I went on to the next section in Tutorial 1a, which takes you through the process of entering music using the Simple Entry Tool. There are directions to open a new project file, and once opened, each section of the window is explained further, such as the menu bar, the Main Tool Palette, the Simple Entry Palette and more. I like the fact that as you touch each different tile on the palette, a small description of what it is shows up. If you actually click on the tile, then something called the "Message Bar" explains what you have chosen and how to proceed using it. These quick dialogues are really helpful for new users.

Simple entry allows you to click notes onto the staff, enter notes with your computer keyboard, or with a MIDI keyboard. Following the instructions step by step, I was able to input notes using both the mouse and computer keyboard, but when it came to using my MIDI keyboard, I ran into several snags:

It seems there is a bug in the SmartMusic Softsynth Playback - it will occasionally just stop working, which means that no sound will be produced upon playback. The only way I could find around this problem was to choose the Quicktime playback option under the MIDI menu, or simply restart the computer.

So now that the playback problem was solved, I still wasn't able to actually input notes using my MIDI keyboard, or hear them on entry. In order to use my controller keyboard as input, I had to go under the MIDI menu and choose MIDI setup, and for channels 1-16, select my MIDI keyboard from the dropdown menu. Problem solved.

This along with the issues just previously mentioned, were not found in the manual, and if they are in it, they are not easy to find. In all fairness however, I must say that when it comes to MIDI input and playback, notation programs often seem to be rather problematic and/or buggy, so this was pretty much to be expected.

Be that as it may, Finale offers free technical support to registered users, and that contact info is included on the front of the Quick Reference Guide.

Moving on, I also tried out things like adding and removing accidentals, using the mass edit tool, creating tuplets, changing key signature and time signature, and creating chords. All these things seemed to work fine.

Tutorial 1b covers Speedy Entry. The manual indicated that Finale comes with over 30 different kinds of templates such as piano-vocal scores, choral setups, chamber orchestra scores, lead sheets etc. This can be a big help to get quickly started on a new project. For this tutorial, I was directed to choose the lead sheet template. Unfortunately, upon choosing it, a window came up that said "While attempting to access "Lead Sheet" the File Manager reported an error." So it doesn't look like I can use that template. I then chose instead a jazz band template, and that too resulted in the same window coming up. I'm not sure if it's me or another bug in the program. Several other attempts to access other templates resulted in the same thing, so that may be another bug in the program.

At any rate, I just chose to create a new project by using the Setup Wizard, and continued along with the tutorial. Following the instructions for speedy entry I could see why this might be the method of choice once you get the hang of it. What I did find annoying was that as I entered the notes for my B flat clarinet, they sounded as I played them. But on playback, they played not at concert pitch anymore but at the “official” pitch. I have come across this before and find it really unnecessary unless the piece is going to be played by an orchestra (unlikely). And even then, it doesn’t have to be notated at concert pitch.

The sounds I used for this project were B flat clarinet, acoustic bass and violin, and I would say that sound quality was quite good. Pressing the note harder once it has been depressed, for the clarinet sound for example, creates a type of vibrato, but I wouldn’t say that it sounds all that natural however.

I then tried the Hypescribe method of entry, which is where notation takes place as you play. It went okay but even the slightest discrepancy in my playing resulted in some very strange timings which I would have to go back in to correct.

However, I had much better results when I used the “tap” method indicated, so I would recommend doing it that way. Just to note, any velocity changes that I played as I recorded this hyperscribe session were not noted upon playback. This may or may not also be a glitch. I did see that changes in velocity from MIDI input was checked in the playback menu, so I have to wonder if this is another glitch.

I proceeded to the tutorial for articulations, following the instructions to open a new tutorial, and two things happened. Finale Notepad was somehow launched, and repeated attempts always resulted in the same thing. As well, once again I was no longer hearing sound out of my speakers but only internally. I can only assume that the articulations for Finale Allegro are at least as good if not better than what I found for my review of Finale Notepad, so I will leave it at that.

Note: the inadvertent launching of Notepad as described in the paragraph above turned out to be an error on my part. The manual does specify that Allegro has to be running, and from the file menu, choose “open” and from the drop down menu, choose whatever document you need, be it a tutorial or a template. Using this method, the tutorial opened in Allegro. However, the template problem as described earlier in this review, persists.

Conclusion

There are many more features of this software, too numerous to go into, but suffice to say that there are plenty of help menus and tutorials to get you well on your way to quickly using this powerful and versatile notation software. There do seem to be a number of bugs and glitches in the software so patience is key (no pun intended), but if you can get past them, this program has a lot to offer.

Recommendation

I would recommend trying the demo version as indicated at the beginning of this review. There are so many varying needs for those looking to use notation software, that the best way to evaluate whether or not something is going to fill that need, is to try it out first.

GeekBench 2.0.0

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Primate Labs

Developer: John Poole

<http://geekpatrol.ca/about/>

Released: March 6, 2007.

\$20 USD

System Requirements: 512 MB RAM; 80 MB hard drive space; Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Windows XP or later.

Strengths: GUI interface and results for some “quick” tests.

Weaknesses: \$20? No 64-bit version yet.

Results: <http://www.geekpatrol.ca/2006/01/geekbench-comparison/> (then)

<http://browse.geekbench.ca/> (now).



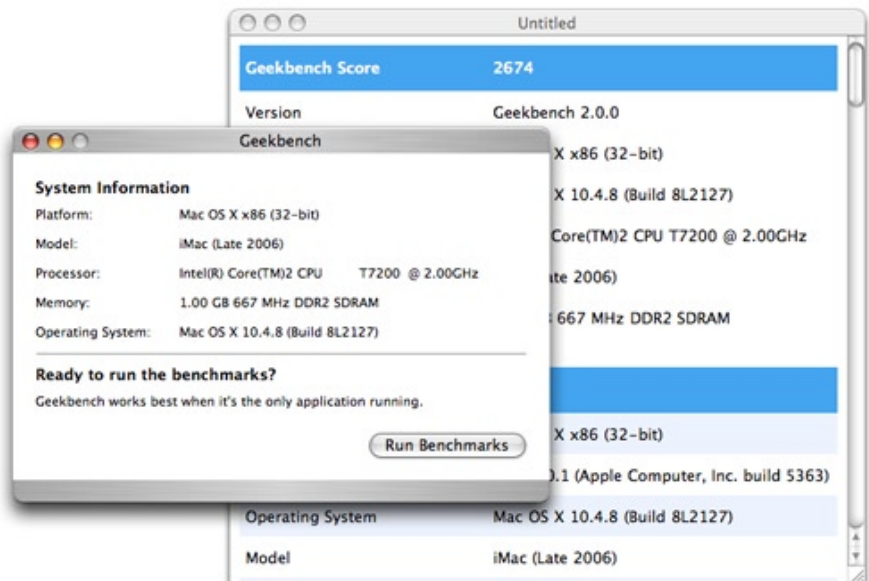
What They Say

John Poole wrote, “Geekbench is available as a free demo, so you don’t *have* to register each copy on each machine you test. Right now you don’t gain any additional functionality from Geekbench itself by registering, but that will change in the future. You do have to add your serial number to your Geekbench Result Browser account if you want to use some “registered users only” functionality.”

Benchmarks

Geekbench features a number of different benchmarks that test CPU (both integer and floating-point) and memory performance. Here’s a brief summary of what each benchmark does:

- mandelbrot (sqrt) computes a Mandelbrot set using the square root function for some of the calculations. mandelbrot (sqrt) is multi-threaded.
- mandelbrot (nosqrt) computes a Mandelbrot set without using the square root function for any of the calculations. mandelbrot (nosqrt) is multi-threaded
- blowfish (cache) performs Blowfish encryption on a dataset small enough to fit in a processor’s cache. blowfish (cache) is multi-threaded.



- blowfish (memory) performs Blowfish encryption of a dataset too large to fit into a processor's cache. blowfish (memory) is multi-threaded.
- emulate 6502 executes code compiled for the 6502 in a virtual 6502 processor. emulate 6502 is single threaded.
- memory (stdlib) fill fills a block of memory with values using standard library functions. memory (stdlib) fill is single threaded.
- memory (stdlib) sequential access accesses chunks of memory in a larger block of memory sequentially using standard library functions. memory (stdlib) sequential access is single threaded.
- memory (stdlib) random access accesses chunks of memory in a larger block of memory randomly using standard library functions. memory (stdlib) random access is single threaded.
- memory (stdlib) copy copies one block of memory to another using standard library functions. memory (stdlib) copy is single threaded.
- memory (stream) copy copies memory from one location to another using processor operations. memory (stream) copy is single threaded.
- memory (stream) scale, memory (stream) add, and memory (stream) triad all copy memory from one location to another while manipulating the contents of the memory. All three benchmarks are single threaded.

John Poole wrote;

“A 64-bit version for Windows is coming soon; I've got a bit more testing to do to make sure there aren't any 64-bit specific bugs. A 64-bit version for Mac OS X is coming soon, too, but won't be released until Leopard is released (since Tiger's 64-bit support is somewhat lacking). Note that there is no free demo for either 64-bit version; you'll have to have a Geekbench serial number to use the 64-bit versions.”

What I Say

This app is almost like a 1-shot thing unless you are a lab and you are making lots of comparisons and follow John Poole's advice regarding my question to him, “Do you need to register on each machine?” The answer was, “No”.

And it might be fun to see how my n machine stacks up against another, but I have to turn all apps off to get a “true” benchmark reading, but is it worth \$20? Well, maybe if you don't want to go to all the trouble of getting the tests separately (Mandelbrot, Blowfish, etc.)

This is a true geek tool for benchmarking CPU and memory performance. And you can compare your results to others on the Geekbench browser link above.

See how well it performs against Cinebench and Xbench when testing Mac Pros - <http://www.macintouch.com/reviews/macpro/benchmarks.html>

The previous version was command line stuff and this version gets GUI. You can try before you buy. What is on your computer today and how well does it perform?



Here's mine -

Integer Performance		Floating Point Performance		Memory Performance	
Blowfish single-threaded scalar	895 47.5 MB/sec	Mandelbrot single-threaded scalar	1110 905.6 Mflops	Read Sequential single-threaded scalar	977 1.30 GB/sec
Blowfish multi-threaded scalar	994 46.7 MB/sec	Mandelbrot multi-threaded scalar	1068 699.1 Mflops	Write Sequential single-threaded scalar	976 985.9 MB/sec
Text Compress single-threaded scalar	926 2.95 MB/sec	Dot Product single-threaded scalar	1109 536.2 Mflops	Sdlib Allocate single-threaded scalar	1051 332 MB/sec/vec
Text Compress multi-threaded scalar	808 2.65 MB/sec	Dot Product multi-threaded scalar	1093 498.4 Mflops	Sdlib Write single-threaded scalar	719 1.46 GB/sec
Text Decompress single-threaded scalar	915 2.78 MB/sec	Dot Product single-threaded vector	1096 1.31 GB/sec	Sdlib Copy single-threaded scalar	861 333.5 MB/sec
Text Decompress multi-threaded scalar	951 1.71 MB/sec	Dot Product multi-threaded vector	1084 1.11 GB/sec		
Image Compress single-threaded scalar	931 7.67 Mbytes/sec	LU Decomposition single-threaded scalar	1111 988.5 Mflops	Stream Performance	
Image Compress multi-threaded scalar	970 6.16 Mbytes/sec	LU Decomposition multi-threaded scalar	1113 975.8 Mflops	Stream Copy single-threaded scalar	980 1.34 GB/sec
Image Decompress single-threaded scalar	830 11.9 Mbytes/sec	Primality Test single-threaded scalar	1465 218.8 Mflops	Stream Copy single-threaded vector	968 1.24 GB/sec
Image Decompress multi-threaded scalar	827 11.5 Mbytes/sec	Primality Test multi-threaded scalar	1124 268.7 Mflops	Stream Scale single-threaded scalar	893 1.18 GB/sec
Crafty Chess single-threaded scalar	702 155.6 Knodes/sec	Sharpen Image single-threaded scalar	1058 2.47 Mbytes/sec	Stream Scale single-threaded vector	1011 1.17 GB/sec
Crafty Chess multi-threaded scalar	836 428.9 Knodes/sec	Sharpen Image multi-threaded scalar	1045 2.41 Mbytes/sec	Stream Add single-threaded scalar	908 1.17 GB/sec
Lua single-threaded scalar	754 280.3 Knodes/sec	Blur Image single-threaded scalar	1063 841.7 ops/sec	Stream Add single-threaded vector	953 1.22 GB/sec
Lua multi-threaded scalar	1049 414.9 Knodes/sec	Blur Image multi-threaded scalar	1056 830.7 ops/sec	Stream Triad single-threaded scalar	1000 1.16 GB/sec
				Stream Triad single-threaded vector	982 1.24 GB/sec

iGet 2.6

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Nakamura Informatics, Inc.

1 (888) 550-0505

<http://www.nakahara-informatics.com>

Released: March 12, 2007.

\$50 USD, \$300 USD 25-seat license. Free Demo.

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later.

Forum: <http://forums.nakahara-informatics.com/>

Tutorials: <http://www.nakahara-informatics.com/iget/tutorials/>

Strengths: “Remote in” without remote software installation at the other end. Very “Mac-like”.

Weaknesses: The Macs really ought to be using Mac OS X 10.4 as well (to use the Spotlight feature) at the other end.

Comparisons: <http://www.nakahara-informatics.com/iget/comparisons/>

What They Say

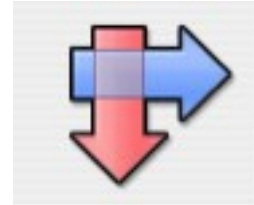
iGet is an inventive file transfer tool designed specifically for the Mac. It allows you to log into your account on any remote Mac and browse, find, and get the files you need. As easy to use as the best FTP clients, iGet is much more Mac-oriented: you can stop and resume file and folder transfers, and you see the real Mac icons and Finder labels for all your files as you browse. iGet can even put files into the Trash remotely.

With Spotlight searches that execute on the remote Mac, you can find anything quickly. Always-on strong SSH encryption keeps your data secure, and you never have to think about details like HFS metadata, resource forks, or unusual characters in your file names. With iGet, it just works. It’s designed to work well over virtually any kind of network connection, not just a fast LAN. This makes iGet a great tool for accessing your Macs over the Internet. And with it’s innovative “zero-setup” design, you don’t have to install any special software (not even iGet) on the remote Mac before connecting.

All this power is wrapped up in a smooth interface that is simple to use and supports all the great technologies that Mac users expect, including Automator, AppleScript, Bonjour, Spotlight, and the Keychain.

Product features:

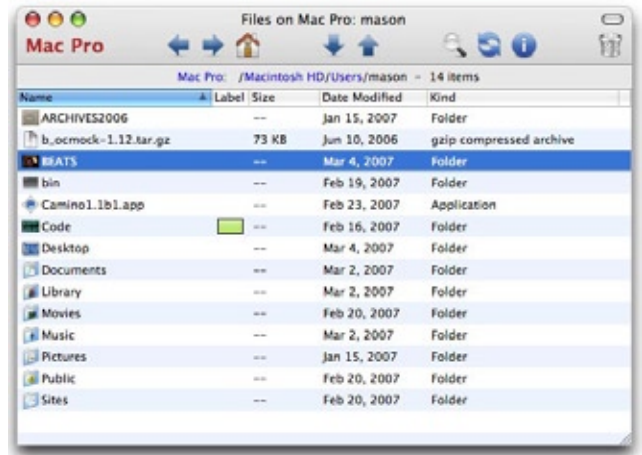
- Fully supports Mac file features (resource forks, type/creator, HFS metadata, Finder flags, file packages, etc.)
- Resumable file and folder transfers
- Remote Spotlight searching!
- Displays true Mac icons for remote files
- No server software required - just iGet on your own Mac
- 60 second learning curve
- always on strong SSH encryption (now supports public key auth)
- Bonjour, Automator, AppleScript and Keychain support



Optimized for excellent performance over real-world Internet connections, such as DSL, cable, and even dialup

Get has always had great support for Mac-like file listings. When browsing a remote Mac, application packages look like Mac applications—not like generic folders as they do in most FTP-type programs. Ditto for documents: iGet natively supports Mac metadata in its protocol, so that it doesn't need to rely on simplistic filename extensions to guess how things should be displayed.

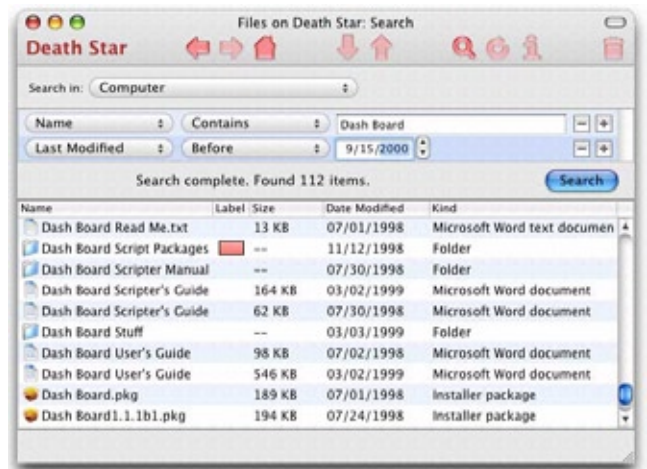
iGet also supports Mac color labels and even custom icons. So if you've taken the time to assign labels or your own icons to your files, you will see those when you connect remotely with iGet.



When Apple introduced Spotlight, they changed the rules for how you find files on your Mac.

iGet 2 changes the rules for how you find files on **any** Mac, whether it be across the room or across the world.

The new version of iGet has Spotlight support built in at the lowest levels, so you can search remote Macs in a flash. Your search results appear in iGet's super-intuitive GUI, just like regular file listings.

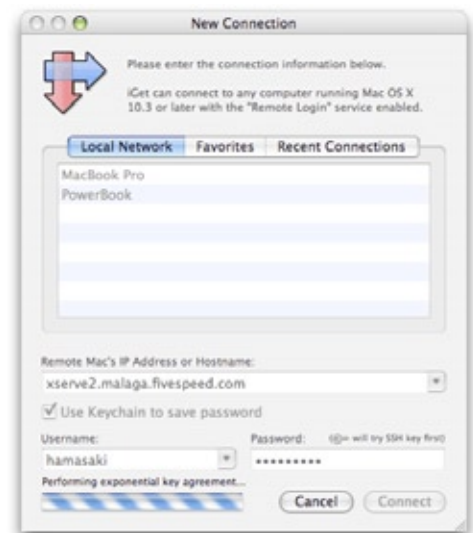


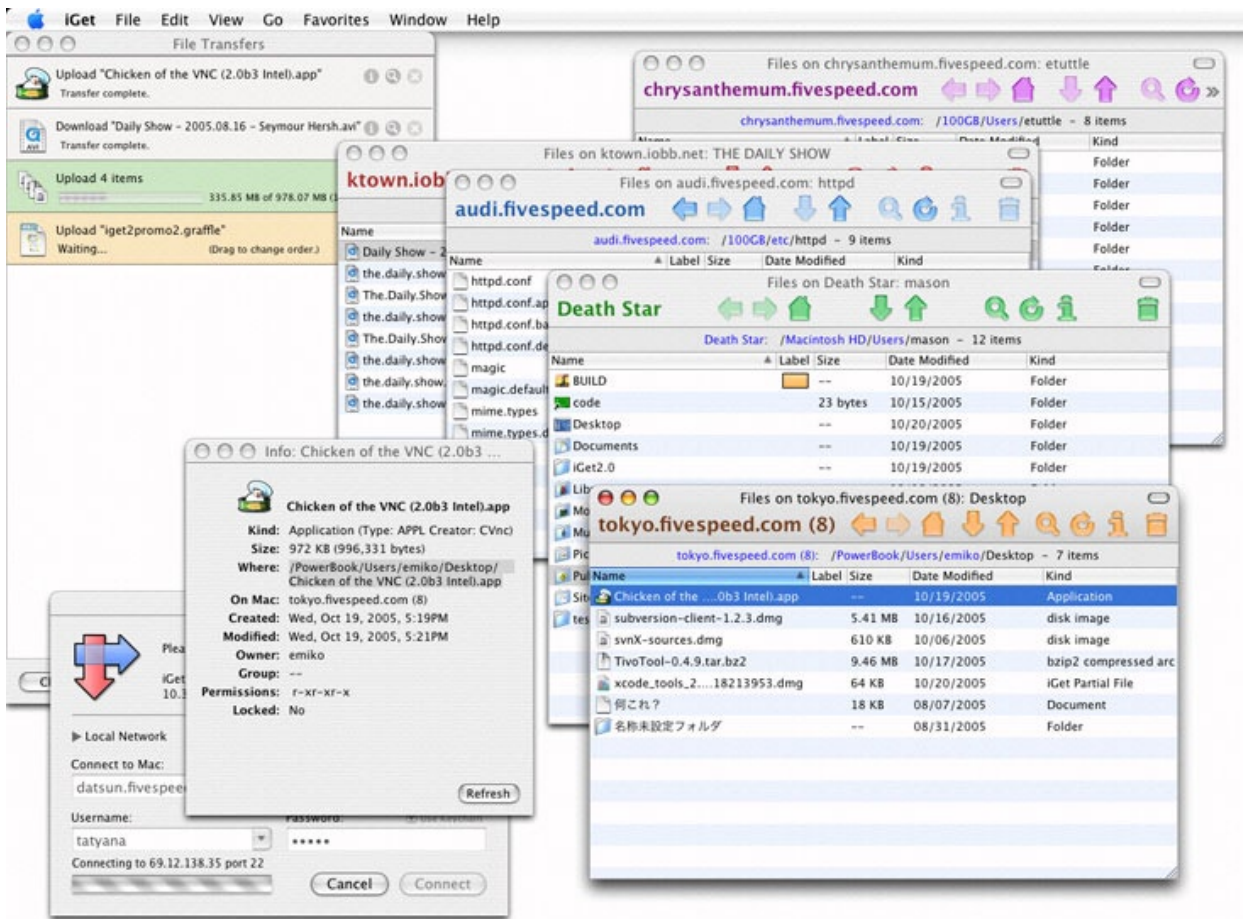
iGet starts making life easier from the very first moment you use it. Its smart connection dialog automatically remembers your connection history, so you don't have to maintain a bookmark list yourself (unless you want to).

Passwords are (optionally) stored in your system Keychain, and the Bonjour browser helps you locate nearby Macs. Once a connection has been made, you can make it again with two mouse clicks.

And you won't ever have to install special server software (not even iGet) on the remote Mac; all you need is a copy of iGet on your own Mac, and it takes care of the rest.

iGet's highly optimized network protocol and multi-stage directory listings allow it to display file lists instantly.



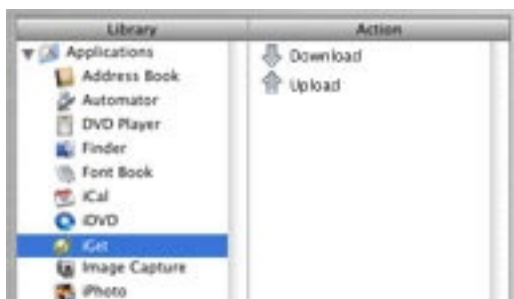


Even over a slow connection (such as a cellular phone modem), your file lists appear in just seconds!

And because we know that even a “fast” Internet connection like DSL or cable is still the slowest part of your workflow, we made sure iGet never makes you wait for it. It works around *your* schedule. Sleep your Mac, shut it down, pull the plug—iGet will pick up where you left off whenever you like.

With iGet, you never have to worry about any silly stuffing, zipping, or otherwise preparing your files before transferring them. Just click Download, or drag the remote files where you want them.

You can queue uploads and downloads, drag-reorder them, and get detailed info. Unlike a lot of other software, iGet handles multiple-item transfers intelligently, too.



iGet is a powerful tool for moving Mac files to and fro **without** having to prepare, compress, or care about them first.

With iGet 2 and Mac OS X 10.4’s new Automator, you can harness that power in your custom workflows.

iGet 2 comes with actions for uploading and downloading files, so you can chain it into your custom workflows with ease. It's a natural fit; Automator is the best way to chain together repetitive tasks, and iGet is the best way to move files between Macs, which is often a key part of that kind of process.

iGet can resume any kind of transfer: files, packages, folders, whatever.

But before resuming, it carefully verifies all existing files to make sure that they can be resumed without getting corrupted.

If iGet detects a conflict—a file has that changed, or is not really the same file—it prompts you and asks what to do.

While designing iGet 2, we spent a lot of time listening to our small business customers, and coming up with more flexible licensing and support solutions that meet real-world business needs.

Multi-seat business licenses can be applied on a per-Mac basis, or a worldwide per-user basis so that your staff can use iGet at home and on the road as well. More comprehensive support options are now available with multi-seat licenses, including telephone support. And we can now tailor custom support contracts based on your organization's specific needs, if necessary.

Conclusion

If you can remote in with AppleShare, Timbuktu or other apps, why get iGet? Okay, how about a 60-second learning curve? And if that doesn't seem feasible, how about the tutorials then? <http://www.nakahara-informatics.com/iget/tutorials/>

Or try the Support Forum: <http://forums.nakahara-informatics.com/> They are very responsive and have been a great help to those who use the product.

It would appear that they really thought about everything here. Remote Spotlight Search? Resume? Batch transfers? Mac file format integrity? Automator actions? No remote software to be installed? (iGet does leave an electronic paper trail of its visit, however with iGetTool over an SSH connection.) It installs automatically at the other end. It would also appear that they fixed a download speed (a code tweak) issue they had earlier.

Why is this not part of Mac OS X already? This isn't a "new" app. It has been around for a while. What is new is that iGet has been "acquired" and the new owners have a few more things up their sleeves, so stay tuned.

What was great back in 2004 is getting better! Version 3 is just around the corner.

Recommendation

And the try-before-you-buy function is in place, so go give it a whirl!



LicenseKeeper 1.0

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Outer Level Corp. □

Developer: Jon Trainer

<http://outerlevel.com/licensekeeper/>

Released: March 6, 2007.

\$20 USD

Trial Download: <http://outerlevel.com/downloads/LicenseKeeper.dmg>

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later.

FAQs: <http://outerlevel.com/licensekeeper/faq/>

Strengths: A one-stop-shop for licenses and supporting documentation.

Weaknesses: Does not import Emails from non Mail.app Email programs. No password protection for itself.

Other Reviews: <http://www.macupdate.com/reviews.php?id=24269>

What They Say

LicenseKeeper is the first and only license manager to store both serial numbers and license files along with receipts, email and other related files. Auto-scanning of Email eliminates tedious and error-prone data entry.

Protect your investment; software is expensive. Don't store your software licenses with your spam. There is a better way. If *LicenseKeeper* saves you one lost serial number, it has paid for itself.

Keep track of all your purchased software and games

Store serial numbers, license files, and registration information. *LicenseKeeper* organizes all your information in a straightforward, easy-to-find manner.

Auto-Scan email for serial numbers

Eliminate tedious and error-prone typing by Auto scanning imported email for serial numbers. *LicenseKeeper* scans Emails for serial numbers and conveniently places them in your clipboard for pasting into your software's registration form. No more hunting for typos in long strings of random letters and numbers.

Fast Spotlight-like searching

Your registration information is available, searchable, and ready when you need it most.



Auto-fill user information

Through Mac OS X Address Book integration, *LicenseKeeper* auto-fills your registration information for you.

Auto-Save your data

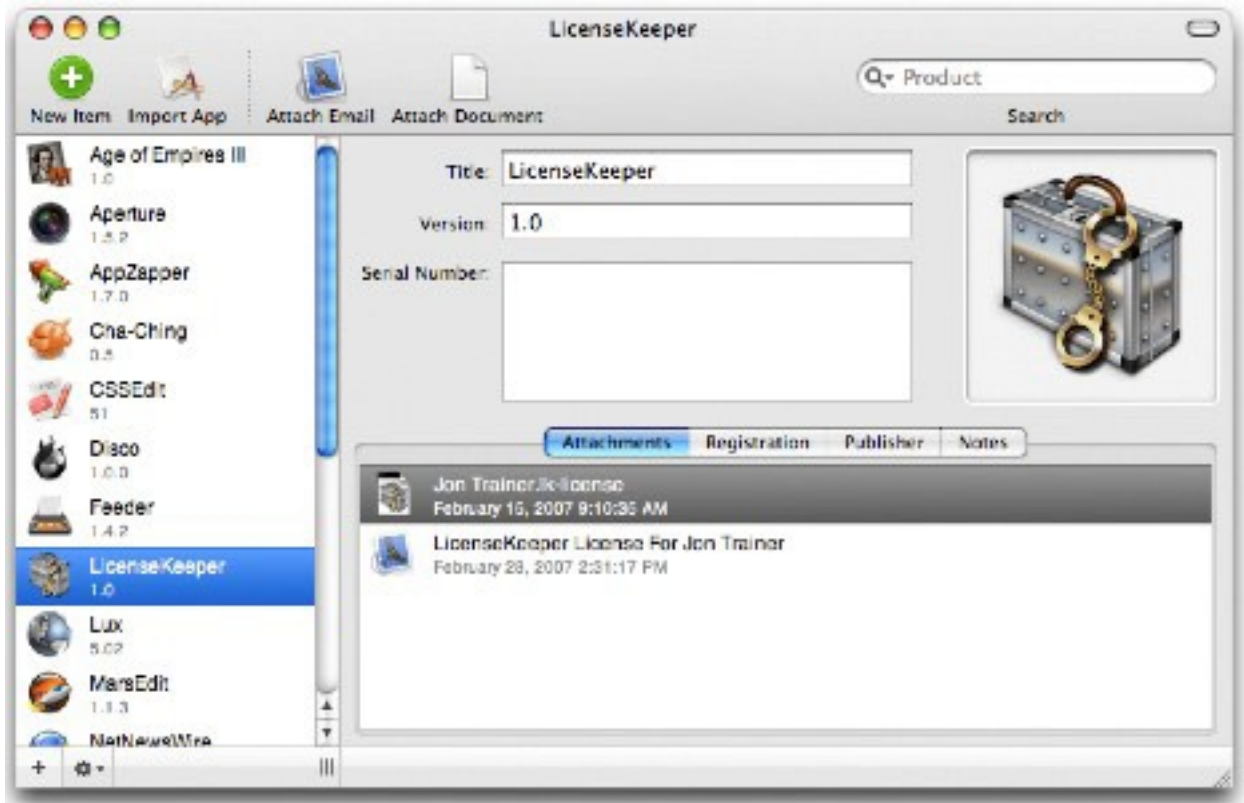
Your data is safe. *LicenseKeeper* auto-saves your data even when you forget to.

LicenseKeeper is safe to try

Export your data to XML at any time -- even if you decide not to buy it.

Help and Documentation

Full Help and Documentation available locally. No need for an Internet connection.



What I Say

I don't know about you, but I keep having to find and redo passwords for software and this becomes especially aggravating when I get to upgrade or replace my Operating System (my test and evaluation machine IS my production machine!).

Some of the companies are very good about having a place on their websites to reobtain the licenses once they are lost and others are what this application is necessary for, because they do not have that function available on their websites (hint, hint).

But this app goes beyond the Mac OS X Keychain function. It also captures in XML the original Emails (assuming you still have them) or other documentation regarding the software registrations. Not only that, but in some instances when the Email is added for an application *LicenseKeeper* may actually extract the registration information and add it in the Serial Number window automatically! Not all the time, but many times when I found Email artifacts, it really did extract the Serial Number for me so I did not have to enter it into the Serial Number field manually.

I prefer clean installs between operating system replacements. This app has been released just in time for Leopard. Now can I transfer all my paper-based stuff over and get it captured to disc.

The downside? It does not have a password protection for itself. For me, that is not a problem. For others, it could be. Here is a work-around – Turn on *Security* in Apple Preferences to encrypt everything or if you really need to or use the password lock on the external thumb drive you sent this app to.

The Help file is incredibly short, but this is so intuitive, you hardly need it. I found I was dragging and dropping and attaching emails like crazy as I discovered how easy this was to do. And I have a little more piece of mind now.

Follow-up: I never new I had so many apps on my machine before! And I discovered some that we had promised to review, but did not, so this app has been a real blessing to me, because now I can really find stuff that was “hiding” from me. Thanks, Jon Trainer, for making this app public.

Gee, I almost feel organized!

Mellel 2.2

Native Mac OS X Multilingual Unicode Word Processor

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Developer: Ori Redler

<http://www.redlers.com/index.html>

Released: March 2007.

\$49 USD Download, \$59 USD Boxed, \$35 Educational License.

Download: <http://www.redlers.com/download.html#>

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later.

Features: <http://www.redlers.com/mellelfeatures.html>

Strengths: Multilingual Native Mac OS X Unicode Word Processor. Clean, simple interface. In a word, elegant.

Weaknesses: It's hard to keep up with the improvements! But it seriously lacks a thing or two...like hypertext capability, scripting, indexing, change tracking, etc.

Other Reviews: <http://www.redlers.com/newsreviews.html>,
http://mac360.com/index.php/mac360/comments/is_this_the_best_word_processor_for_real_writing/

What They Say

10 reasons to Switch - <http://www.redlers.com/melleltopreasons.html>

Competitive Comparison - <http://www.redlers.com/mellelcompetitive.html>

Simply Write

When you first launch Mellel, it would look like the simplest word processor there is. It is. Every option you need is close by, but never get in your way.

- **Clean slate:** Use or create templates to get a “zero interference” working environment
- **No nags:** No nagging dialogue boxes, questions or intrusions while working
- **Easy switching:** When the time comes to go from draft to print, simply select a suitable style set and print (or save to PDF)

Stability

The first thing you want your word processor to do is work. No unexpected surprises, glitches, bugs or hiccups are welcome. Mellel is near-perfect in that respect. It just works.

- **It just works:** Mellel is programmed from the bottom up to work well under duress
- **It's tested:** We don't play games with software, we test it. Instead of "public beta" we run real beta testing with a 400+ strong beta testing group
- **Double-insurance:** You'll probably never need it or know it exists, but Mellel offers two layers of backup: auto-save and auto-backup

Work Efficiently

Mellel was designed to allow you to work efficiently, by offering you a simple, consistent interface, with all the options you need close at hand.

- **One click interface:** Every feature is one click or one menu selection away
- **All Look the Same:** Consistent GUI design allows you to use the same simple principle with every feature
- **Designed for work:** Windows, colour scheme, and icon design designed to reduce eye strain and allow you to work longer and more efficiently

Price

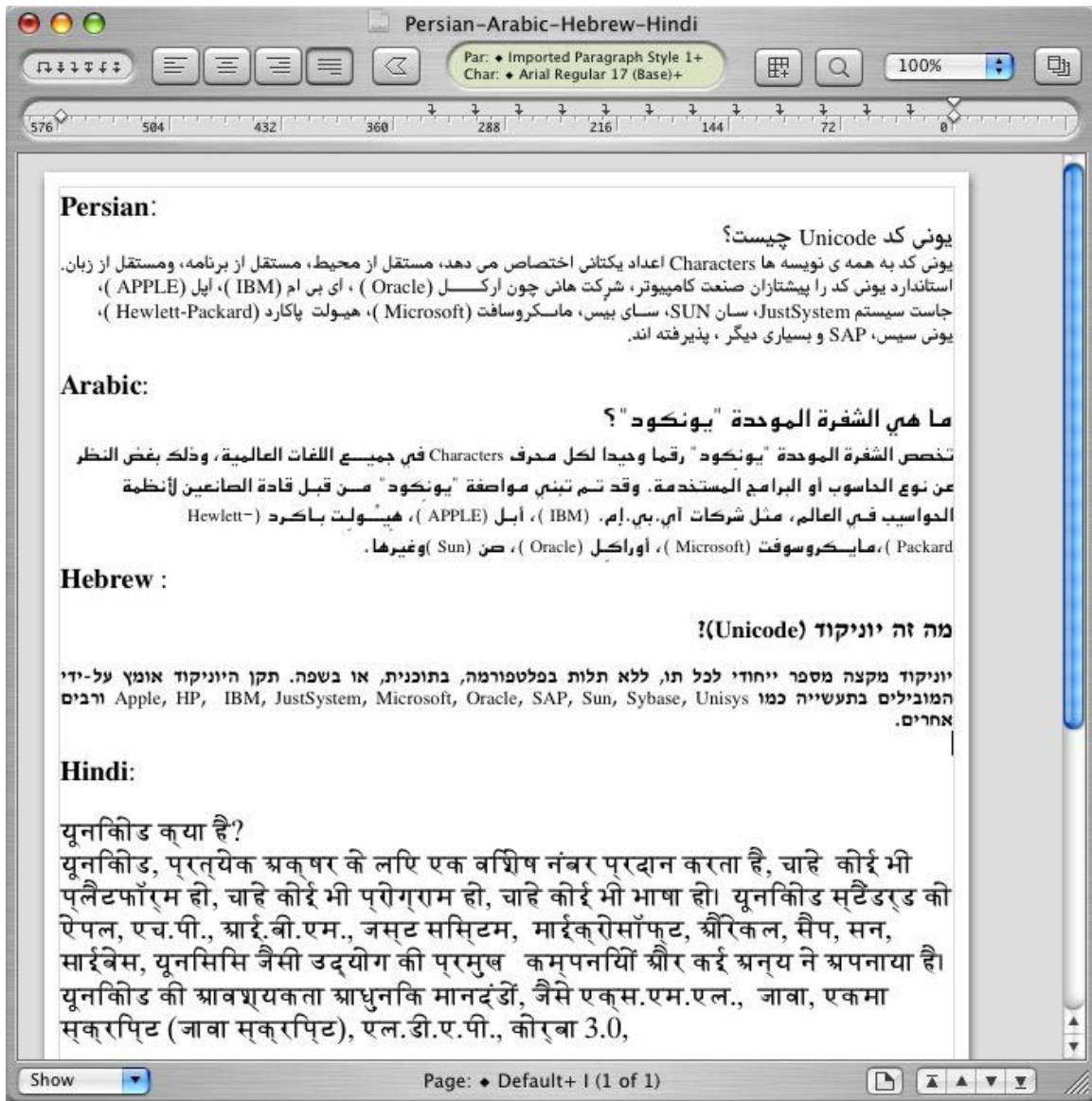
Mellel costs much less than comparable word processors, but gives you much more over a longer period of time.

- **It costs less:** Mellel only costs you less than all other word processors for Mac OS X, while surpassing most of them in terms of performance and features
- **It gives you more:** A Mellel license is good for two years of free updates, no matter how major the updates are
- **Education Pricing:** If you're a student, school teacher, scholar or faculty member, a regular license for Mellel will cost you 40% less

What I Say

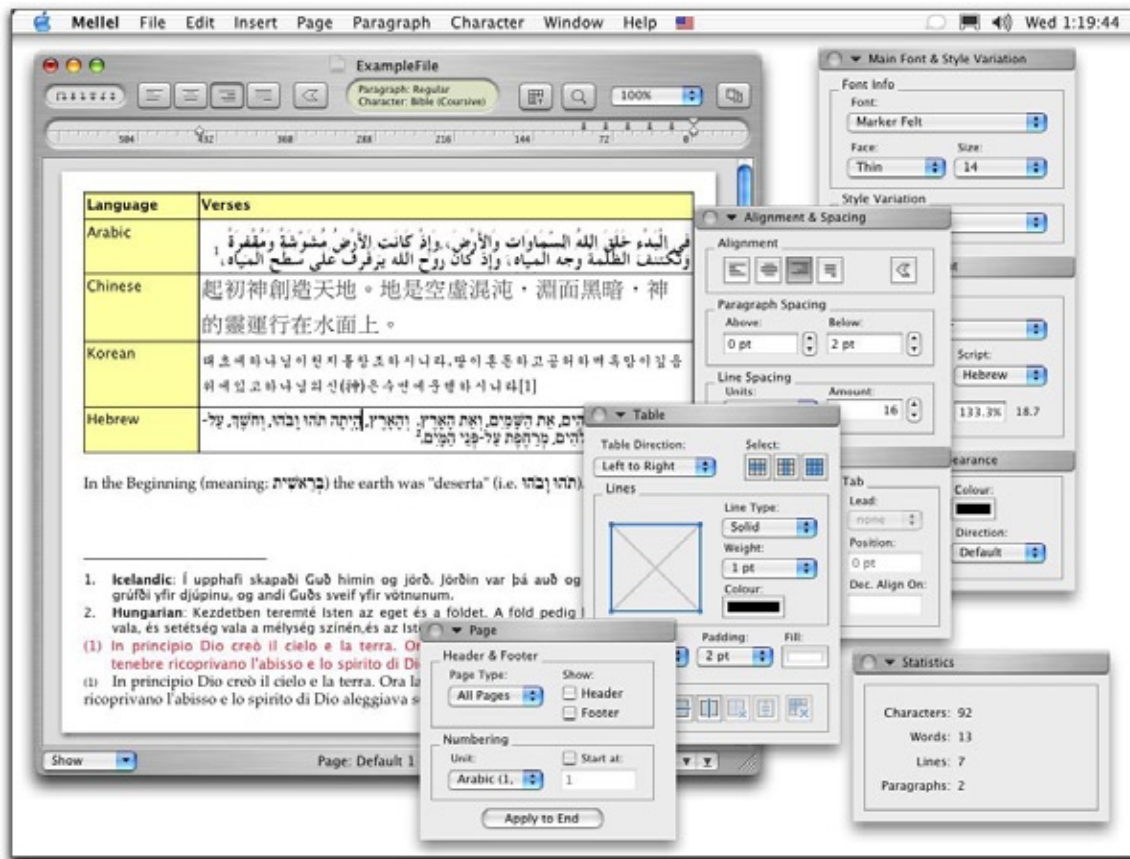
We keep hearing how nobody can compete with Microsoft without reinventing how word processing is being done. I think RedleX has been going down that path for some time now. Think locally, act globally. Everything from Arabic to Uyghur. Robust, rich, stylish yet minimalistic.

The last time we reviewed this app, it cost \$20 less. But it has a whole lot more in it now. I've been dinking around with the latest beta versions and the changes are constant, so Ori Redler and his team are busy making this app better all the time and the betas keep coming! I can't seem to keep up. It isn't just evolving, it is morphing. And that is a good thing. They gave this originally wimpy word processor steroids because they have been listening to their worldwide clientele without making the app go too deeply into feature-creep.



You can look at the lengthy comparisons between it and other Word processing apps here – <http://www.redlers.com/mellelcompetitive.html> They run page after page of comparisons against NeoOffice/OpenOffice, Nisus Writer Express and MS Word. Rather telling are the tables on launching behaviours, resource hogging, interface standards, language support, various style types, image handling, outlining, cross-referencing (bad grades for Mellel), Indexing (“No” in every row for Mellel), Line numbering (again “No” in every row for Mellel), Scripting (not supported either) or Tracking changes (not supported). They know they have a few areas to improve on if they want to “compete” directly with either MS Word, NeoOffice or NisusWriter, otherwise they would not have run those comparisons, because the other apps get better grades than they do in those areas.

How many languages are supported in Mellel? Over 30 - <http://www.redlers.com/mellellanguages.html> And you can see they support many, if not all of the non-Romance fonts such as Arabic, Cyrillic, Dari, Greek, Hebrew, Kurdish, Pashto, Persian, Syriac, new Turkish (Roman), Urdu, Uzbek, old (Ottoman) languages with ‘Open Type’ and ‘Apple Advanced Typography’ technology support. They also support what they call “CKJ languages” or Chinese, Korean and Japanese, but not vertically yet.



They also have called out for help with localizations, with many done, but others needing localization - <http://www.redlers.com/mellelocalisation.html>

The latest beta Mellel Guide is 306 pages in length. Yes, it is that big. And it was updated recently from being 333 pages long (version 2.1).

I really love this line, “You should not fear loosing your formatting when saving .doc files as RTF, because .doc is virtually identical to RTF”. The way to import and export MS Word is via the mid-step of RTFing the documents.

Mellel is multilingual Unicode-based word processor built for Mac OS X and is pronounced with the accent on the last syllable (mell-EL) and means TextMill, TextWorks, WordMill, Wordsmithy or WordWorks in Hebrew (I took Hebrew in college and had to bail, because it was too much for my brain to grasp). What sets Mellel apart for me is that it seems to have been developed with the intent of focusing on areas that are weak in other word processing packages.

There are both Hyphenation and Compiled Dictionaries that support Basque, Catalan, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, UK English, Ukrainian and US English using the Mellel Hyphenation Lab - <http://www.redlers.com/downloadhyphenation.html>

And there is more. There are supported keyboard layouts for Arabic-Uyghur, Etruscan, Hebrew, Romanian and Persian layouts - <http://www.redlers.com/downloadkeyboard.html>

There is even a growing list of templates available - <http://www.redlers.com/downloadtemplate.html>

Special attention has been given to how Notes are created. Notes (such as Footnotes, Endnotes, etc.) are also dealt with in style using a “streaming” mentality. Every note is part of a stream – like music. These handle Translator’s notes, Commentator’s notes, Out-of-Sequences notes and again, these too are treated as “styles”.

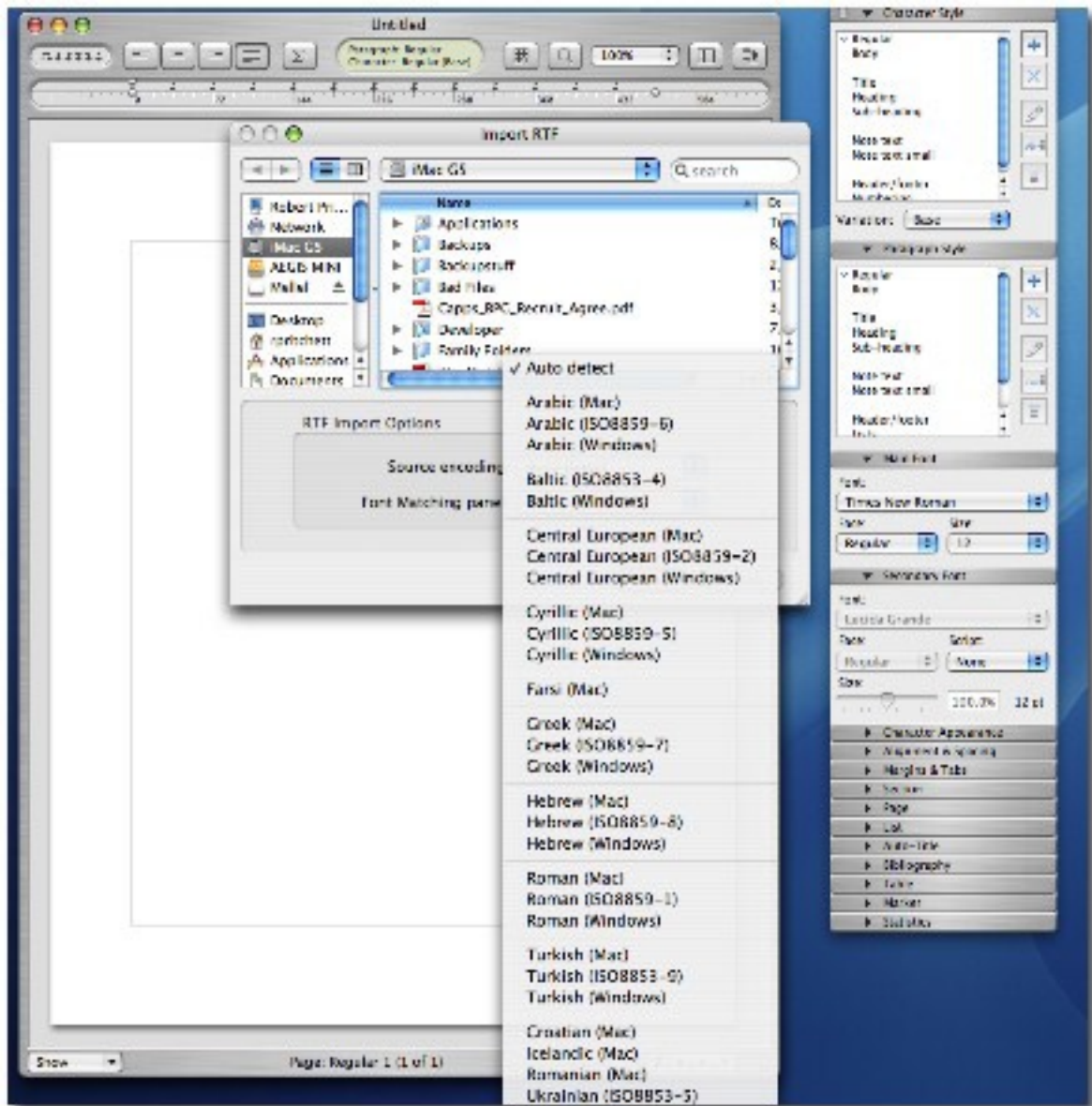
Lists are also treated as another style. And they too are rich with options.

Auto-Numbering is discussed. That is where elements can be automatically numbered, whether they are tables, images, figures or other objects. We segue our way from “streams” to “flows” with auto-numbering and these can be used to establish a hierarchy for a Table of Contents. There are also “Mentions” which are basically anchors that can be used inside headers or footers to dynamically references parts of documents.

Tables can be created and placed just about anywhere including headers, footers, footnotes and/or endnotes. The drop-down menu for Tables is almost too simplistic, but it hides a wealth of capabilities behind it and almost anticipates what you want to do with table setups. It gets pretty sophisticated pretty fast and even gets into such detail as cell-padding (distance between content and the border of each cell).

If you do any kind of research articles, more than likely you refer to Bibliographies and References as part of the document, right? RedleX has cooperated with SonnySoftware <http://www.sonnysoftware.com/> to include *Bookends* automagically handles reference formatting of citations on-the-fly. They also work with Third Street Software’s *Sente* - <http://www.thirdstreetsoftware.com/> This is done through a Bibliography palette. The Import/Export section deals with handling issues related to MS Word® and Excel®, and other Word Processor esoterica including how to send and receive graphics.

Are you starting to get the feel for how powerful Mellel *really* is?



Try Variables for instance. Variables are strings of text data that are used over and over, such as names, addresses, letterhead, etc. and are modified using a Document Info Sheet.

Mellel is bidirectional (right/left, left/right) and also uses Kashida justification (how Arabic and Persian characters line up) via the Character Appearance palette. For Hebrew, Niqud (Hebrew vowel markings and sounds nick-OOOD) is also fully supported (and if you didn't know, is also right/left).

Redlex treats special characters in such a way that they can be found quickly. They will need to work on the list, because it is not in alphabetical order (maybe in Hebrew, who knows), but the list starts with Currency, then Mathematical, Quotation, Accents, Hyphen & Dash, Space, Arabic, Hebrew and Other.

There are tutorials on styles, stationary, creating documents, using Auto-Numbering and numbering flows, working and designing lists, creating a mixed list, and starting to write in Arabic, Cyrillic, Persian and Hebrew. In the back of the manual, there is a long list of features and bug fixes since Version 1.2 up through version 2.1.

For \$50 USD, this is quite a robust, powerful, word processor that focuses on those areas most used by multilingual Word-Smiths. You really can't go wrong, since RedleX has given us the try-before-you-buy ability as part of downloading the program.

The app also includes tagging and XML coding. What isn't intuitively obvious is hyperlinking. For some reason, that has not been integrated yet and is what I use most. Hyperlinks become live, once files are exported to HTML or to PDF though.

Recommendation

Try Mellel now so you get used to this Word Processor. Maybe Ori Redler and his team will work on a universal translator option.

Digging Deeper

Unicode Resources - http://www.alanwood.net/unicode/utilities_editors_macosx.html

Wikipedia - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mellel>

OmniDazzle Version 1.0.1

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Omni Development, Inc.

1-206-523-4152 x0

1-800-315-OMNI x0

<http://www.omnigroup.com/applications/omnidazzle/>



Released: November 1, 2006.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.6 or later.

\$15 USD.

Demo: <http://www.omnigroup.com/applications/omnidazzle/download/>

Strengths: Some nice presentation ideas.



Weaknesses: I need more than 6 reasons to buy this. Some “plugins” are more fun than functional. I have to do what to get the configurations to work and be captured?

Other Reviews: http://www.oreillynet.com/mac/blog/2006/06/quick_omnidazzle_review.html

<http://www.macobserver.com/review/2006/10/26.1.shtml>

What They Say

Introducing OmniDazzle, a set of fun and useful enhancements that help you highlight certain areas of your screen, create visual effects, and track the location of your mouse pointer.

6 Reasons You Should Try OmniDazzle:

- You've got a presentation this week, and you want to hear both "oohs" AND "ahhs" from the audience.
- Your documentation could use some really great screen shots.
- You want to point out something on your screen, without actually pointing.
- You need to focus on specific tasks, like that one window over there, without looking at everything else on your display.
- You'd like to add some extra visual information to your screen, like arrows or boxes or...footprints.
- You've been working really hard all week, and frankly, you'd like to goof off for a while.

If you've ever used your computer screen to do a presentation, capture screen shots, or as a point of reference while someone looks over your shoulder...you, my friend, could have used OmniDazzle. OmniDazzle is handy for those times when you need to call attention to something on your screen ("...as you can all see, line 37 in this spreadsheet lists my proposed new salary: eleventy hojillion dollars. Any questions?"), and even helps you find your lost cursor (hey, it happens — especially when you're navigating across the four-million-pixels-and-counting landscape of a 30" Cinema Display).

OmniDazzle is designed to be both playful and practical; you can use a plug-in to professionally emphasize

a section of your screen, or you can turn your mouse movement into an area of focus that trails pixie dust (or waves, or a bullseye, or...) across your desktop. You can configure each plug-in to suit your own particular preferences: change colors, make objects bigger or smaller, or change the way you activate the OmniDazzle plug-in of your choice.

Call out your cursor or part of your screen real estate — or just add some visual bling to your display; either way, we think OmniDazzle's collection of tools and toys will put a smile on your face.

OmniDazzle Plug-ins

Pixie Dust

We have to be honest, this one might just eat your productivity for the entire day as you stare mesmerized at the, ahem, dazzling pixie dust cascading down your screen. Pixie Dust turns your mouse pointer into a virtual magic wand creating a spray of colorful sparkles wherever it goes. You can change your pixie dust to include only a few tiny sprinkles, or turn it into a giant firehose of awesomeness. The color range is up to you, too. Go forth and pixiefy!

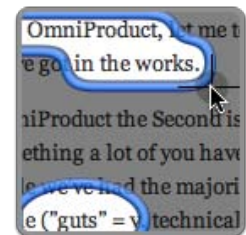


Flashlight

Illuminate your screen with a virtual flashlight that follows your mouse pointer wherever you want it to go. When triggered, Flashlight dims your background and turns your pointer into a helpful, shining beacon that lights your way. You control the size and quality of the light, the color, and the background.

Cutout

This allows you to highlight areas of your screen using different shapes. Pick a shape (circle, ellipse, rectangle, or window border) to start, then move your mouse to control the size of the shape. Watch and be captivated as everything outside your selection dims. This one's great for guiding an audience during a presentation, or creating an awesomely instructive screenshot ("then click THIS button RIGHT HERE"). You can customize borders, dimness, and fill.

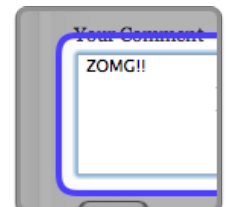


Sonar

"Y'know, I seen me a mermaid once. I even seen me a shark eat an octopus. But I ain't never seen no phantom Russian submarine." Ah, a great line from Hunt for Red October, and a fabulous segue into our description of the Sonar plug-in! Sonar turns your monitor into a, um, radar screen, which sweeps on a Hunt for Your Mouse Pointer, almost like we got mixed up about the difference between sonar and radar when we created this plug-in. (*cough*) You may not find a Russian sub, but your cursor location will show up loud and clear. You can change the ring radius, ping size, and speed of the sweep. Dive, dive, DIVE! Into the sky!

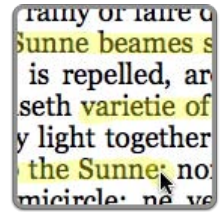
Focal Point

This one's similar to Cutout in that it helps you highlight part of your screen and dim everything else, but rather than drawing a shape around a window, Focal Point automatically selects whatever window you have active. If you set the plug-in to "Focus Under Mouse" mode, Focal Point highlights individual user interface elements - very handy for doing software demos or presenting very specific areas of your screen.



Scribble

So you don't want to draw on your Cinema Display with crayons — this is the next best thing. Trigger the Scribble plug-in to circle important thingies, draw arrows toward interesting doohickeys, or just satisfy your vandalistic tendencies. The configuration view allows you to change all kinds of settings like pen colors, outlines, and width.



Bullseye

Ready...aim...click! When you activate this plug-in, a bullseye will follow your mouse pointer around the screen. You control the size, number of rings, and colors. Target your cursor, or vent your frustration on Bob's email by taking precise aim on that delete button.

Waves

Your screen gets liquified with Waves, which creates a rippling radius around your cursor. Drop a rock in to watch your screen undulate and shimmer, without any nasty chemical aftereffects. You can rock the boat just a little, or hang ten until you're seasick with the wavelength options.

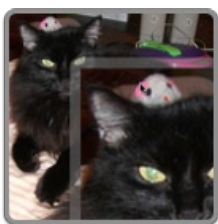


Comic

Turn your screen into vintage comic book pages with this admittedly silly plug-in. When active, Comic creates visual sound effects that Pow! Biff! and Zot! their way onto your mouse pointer. Comic has a default list of onomatopoeias, but you can add your own zany words (such as Bleem! or Snuh!), and configure the shapes' sizes and shadows...for JUSTICE.

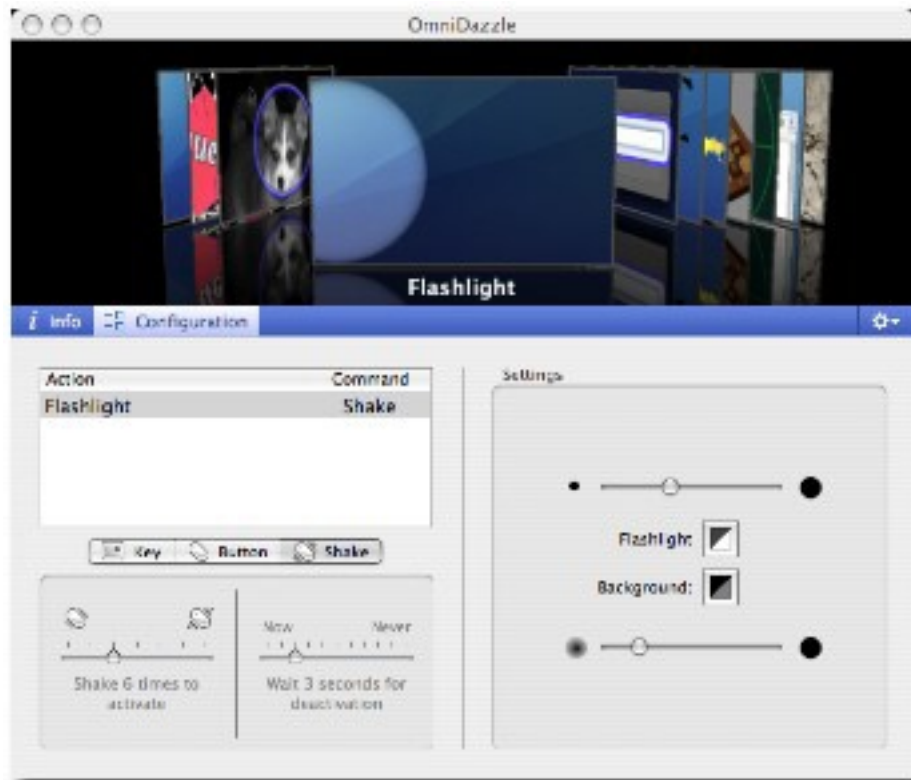
Footprints

Leave a trail wherever your mouse pointer goes with Footprints; this plug-in generates footprints that follow your cursor, then fade away automatically. You can choose from several varieties of feet, or come up with your own bizarre combinations (dog foot/pegleg, anyone?). Change the size, color, and footstep audio in the configuration view.



Zoom

The Zoom plug-in allows you to marquee around an area of your screen, then click to magnify that selection to the size of your screen. You can zoom in on documents, specific UI elements, text — whatever you'd like to see up close and personal. Great for presentations, screen shots, or just to help out that nosy coworker trying to read over your shoulder.



What I Say

Think ScreenCast (reviewed elsewhere in this issue of *macCompanion*) and try and add these effects. Or perhaps think Mouseposé for the same price that does the Flashlight schtick.

The only ones in OmniDazzle that I found “useful” and something I might try with presentations, were Flashlight, Cut Out, Focal Point, Scribble and Zoom.

But as cursor tracking icons? No thanks. I saw those kinds of things over in the PC world and didn’t like them there either.

I never could get the configuration functions to all work correctly. The hard part was in “capturing” the action for future use. That left me a bit frazzled and not dazzled.

Printfolio 1.0

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



Developer: Belight Software Ltd.

<http://www.belightsoft.com/products/printfolio/support.phpsupport>



\$85 USD Boxed, \$99 includes S&H USD, Academic-Nonprofit Discount (~25+%) \$60-72 depending on delivery mode.



System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later (Mac OS X 10.4 required for *Image Tricks*); Universal Binary.
Released: November 2, 2006

Audience: All user levels

Strengths: Printfolio is a the excellent integrated suite of all BeLight Software programs for creating various printing projects:

Weaknesses: I wish I could make the front end go away when I want to just want to select a previous project in one of the programs.

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

Printfolio: is a suite of 4 professional Mac OS X printing programs plus image editing program — Image Tricks. With the suite you can easily create: business cards, CD/DVD covers, labels, tray inserts, folded booklets, flyers, brochures, letterheads, newsletters, catalogs, etc. The program will also help you in designing and printing envelopes, postcards, address and shipping labels. These include *Business Card Composer*, *Mail Factory*, *Swift Publisher*, and *Disc Cover* and additionally *Image Tricks*.

Introduction

I had installed and used several of the applications now integrated into Printfolio. I use often *Business Card Composer* [BCC v.4.0.2] and *Disc Cover* [DC v.1.2.1], to the exclusion of other comparable products. I also have been getting more and more comfortable with *Swift Publisher* [SW v.1.3.2] to add grace to my MS Word documents that will become advertising and outreach pieces. I've owned *Mail Factory* [MF now 2.4.2] but had deinstalled it. Having read the macC review on MF and the information on the Belight website, it was time to reinstall it. Finally, despite not being a graphics manipulation buff I was nevertheless intrigued by *Image Tricks Pro* [IT, v.2.3.3]. So okay, Doc, lets do it— five for the price of two.

The difference between the downloaded version and the boxed set is about 22,000 clipart images and extra templates. For the extra \$5 and S&H, that's a lot of quality goodies. Upgrades and academic prices are available for all Belight products.



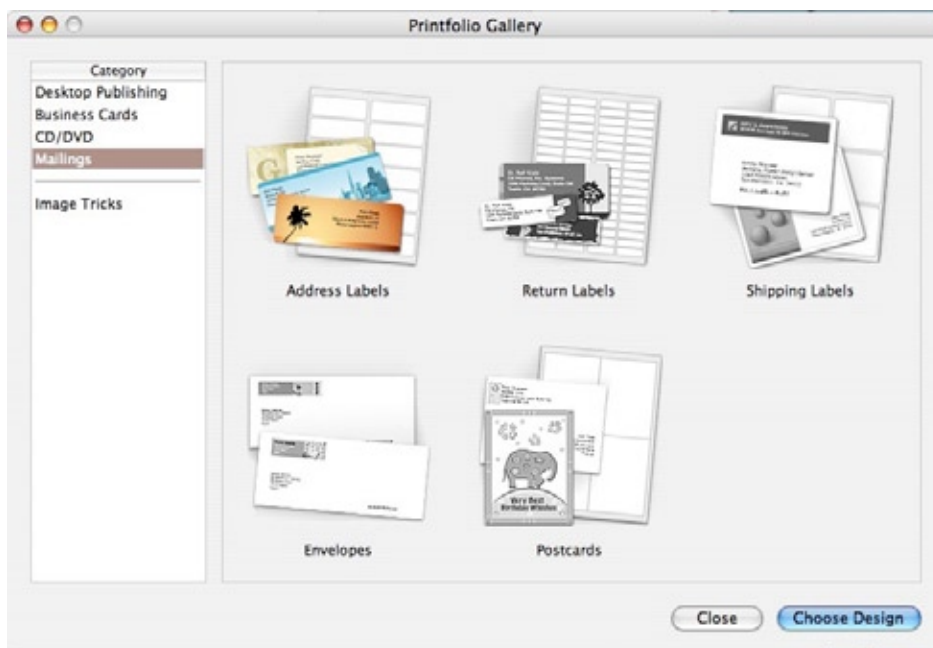
Now this is not your everyday doc_Babad review. Although *Business Card Composer* is now in version 4.0, the remaining applications in the set are close enough in version number to those we've previously reviewed in macC.

Product – Version Tested - Reviewer	Issue	Rating
Business Card Composer 3.0 by Robert Pritchett	April 2005	5.0 macCs
Disc Cover 1.0.8 by Harry {doc} Babad	July 2006	4.5 macCs
Mail Factory 1.1 by Ted Bade and Harry {doc} Babad	September 2004	4.0 macCs
Swift Publisher 1.3 by Harry {doc} Babad	September 2006	4.5 macCs
Image Tricks 2.3 by Robert Pritchett	October 2006	5.0 macCs
Art Text 1.0.3 by Robert Pritchett	February 2007	5.0 macCs

Note: I will be reviewing Mail Factory in a future issue of macC since it has been significantly upgraded since we last looked at it. We rated an early version 4.0, but other reviewers of the recent version rated it more highly.

About Print folio – The Details

Printfolio is a suite of 4 professional printing programs (Business Card Composer, Swift Publisher, Disc Cover and Mail Factory) plus an image-editing program — [Image Tricks](#). Each one is specially tuned for a particular printing project, thus is an expert in its field. Complete integration allows you to exchange data between the programs. Common interface helps to understand and work with each application. And a shared graphics collection helps your related projects to remain consistent.



Printfolio will help you to:

- Prepare unique business cards and update your card information, if your contact information changes.
- Create flyers, brochures and catalogs that are a great source of promoting your service.
- Make beautiful-looking CD and DVD covers for your music collections.
- Mark your backup discs in a convenient way to have all your backups in order.
- Maintain a corporate look of your business correspondence.
- Automate your postal if you have a large mailing list.

Now a snapshot of each included application:

Business Card Composer [\$35-\$49 depending on delivery mode] is a Mac OS X tool to design business cards, calling cards and badges. Thanks to prepared designs and image collections, making cards is easy and fast. The application allows printing cards on paper stock from major vendors as well as on custom paper, and has powerful capabilities for working with text and images.



Disc Cover [\$35-\$49 depending on delivery mode] is a modern Mac OS X tool to create professional covers and labels for CD, DVD and other media. Disc Cover imports data from different sources and offers a creative way to decorate your work. Pre-designed templates and clipart collection allow you to implement any design idea. With Disc Cover decorating your music and video becomes an easy and enjoyable task.

This intuitive Mac OS X software reduces the pain when creating labels and covers for CDs, DVDs and more. Variety of professionally made designs are just fine for a quick start. The program facilitates your design by allowing import of data and images from iTunes, iPhoto, Finder, iDVD and many other sources.

Mail Factory is an office tool for designing and printing envelopes, postcards, address and shipping labels on your Macintosh. It's flexible, intuitive, comes with ready-made designs, and gracefully implements merge printing for automating correspondence. It is an elegant application to design and print address labels and envelopes on Mac OS X. Addresses can be taken from Apple Address Book, Entourage or other sources. The program allows you to efficiently manage all your mailings and requires no learning curve. Mail Factory also works with Excel, Now Contact, FileMaker, vCard format and text files. You can print on most popular address label and envelopes.



Swift Publisher [\$35-\$49 depending on delivery mode] is an excellent Mac OS X page layout application for designing and printing impressive documents. Thanks to prepared templates the application allows you to create flyers, letterheads, brochures, newsletters and more without the need to undertake designer's course. Publishing good looking and informative documents for business, social and home activities becomes easy with the product.

Image Tricks Pro [\$15 as download – OS X only] is a low-cost image editing and image generating software. The program can create unique artwork you may use as business card background, for web design, print materials and more. The non-Pro version is free. It uses Core Image filters built into Mac OS X Tiger to apply visual effects to images. Mathematical algorithms are used to generate fantasy images in real time. It is surprising how easy it is to transform pictures, limited only by your imagination and your audiences' tolerance. Play, you to apply advanced visual effects without resorting to steep learning curve pricy products. After installation you can also use Image Tricks directly in other BeLight applications





Using Printfolio

From the perspective of an early adopter of several of these programs, the only difference I've so far found is that I can access the individual modules by way of the common Printfolio window. Indeed the Printfolio front end has no customizable user preferences. One sets the preferences of the individual application, in a manner identical to that, if the application is purchased as a stand-alone program. [Indeed, all of the preferences I established for BCC, DC and SP were retained when I migrated to Printfolio. Not having recently used MF, that application will need to be customized. This is something I will do when I review the product. The net result, so far, is that I only use one slot in my dock for frequently used software that previously required three.

Kudos to Belight

Some of the extras provided by Belight that none of the macC reviewers commented on is the availability of a series of informative and accurate articles that deal with:

Image and Font Collections — Want to create a document that doesn't look like all the rest? Then add some clipart or distinctive font to it! Read Belight's advice on how to find great clipart and font collections that will help you to unleash your creativity and create original and attractive flyer, brochure or business card.

Clipart Collections — In this article you will learn what kind of images can exist and the better way to use them. We will also tell you where to get images that will substantially improve your documents.

Font Collections — This article will help you to understand how different fonts can influence your documents. You will discover what kind of fonts exist and where you can get them.

Cards, Labels, and Envelopes — The quality of the cards and labels you make greatly depends on the paper you use. There are many varieties of special business card stock and labels available on the market. Which one is the best for your needs? Read the following articles.

Choosing Business Card Paper— Don't know what paper to choose for your business cards?

Envelope Styles and Sizes — Read about different envelope types and the correct formatting and address positions on an envelope.

Label Paper — Read about different types of label paper. Find here some printing recommendations and links to label paper manufacturers.

Printing Solutions — Read here how to pick the best printer for your needs, get the most from the one you currently use, prepare your card design to meet a print shop requirements.

Vector Clipart and Logos — Collections of vector clipart from GSICO bring you an enormous number of signs, logos, and icons, all of them in good quality and scalable to any size. Have these images at hand for using on your labels, envelopes and cards.

One Major Discomfort *EXPLAINED*:

I had only one complaint about this otherwise excellent product. As noted previously. I have installed and used several of the application integrated into Printfolio. I use Business Card Composer and Disc Cover often, and

have been getting more and more comfortable with Swift Publisher to add grace to my MS Word documents that will become advertising and outreach pieces. As a result I'd created a collection of documents associated with these programs; programs that I'd installed individually over the last two years.

I was concerned whether installing Portfolio would:

[1] add duplicate and redundant material to my already crowded drive, and

[2] where there any precautions or cleanup/delete procedures I needed to do to/with the individual products before installing Printfolio?

There was no information on the Belight website about installing over or around the previously installed packages. I contacted the publisher, via their PR contact HN who has helped get me fast-turnaround answers on other Belight products. I tried twice, but got, over two months, received no response. Strange! — The answer, I accidentally got spammed out during and after the MacWorld Conference.

Okay, let fly solo. I installed the new integrated product and then went ahunting on my hard drive. Here's what I learned.

All my individually installed applications were still in my applications folder. The newly installed set was now contained in a new *Printfolio Units* folder. When I manually checked, some of the previously installed versions were different version than those in the Printfolio Units folder. They were either older or a more recent to what *Printfolio* installed. Since they were all licensed products, I manually (drop and drag) made sure that my *Printfolio Units* folder contained the latest versions. Then I trashed what was left over so there was only one copy of a Belight application on my hard drive. Doing this had no negative effect on my using the individual applications. Wonderful!

In checking documents and or templates I'd created for these applications, prior to installing Printfolio, there was no problem in either accessing or modifying them. So far so good!

I then searched my hard disk for duplicates clip art files, checking the library folders both in my hard drive and in my home area. No duplicates... whew. With thousands of clippings and thumbnails maxing out at 1.88 GB so I'm glad there's only one copy.

In addition, I found duplicate copies of some of the individual product folders in my Tiger HD > Library > Application Support > BeLight Software and in the comparable folder Users > Tiger HD > Library > Application Support > BeLight Software folder. I consolidated these preserving their contents to the computer wide library rather than my individual user library folder.

I did not check whether there were duplicate .plist or of the 15 MB of individual program “.pkg.” files in Tiger HD > library > receipts folder. However, I could not however find the “Printfolio.pkg” mentioned in the readme file on my CD. Strange... But all will become clear, keep reading.

I with a little time invested, I easily resolved most of these minor questions/concerns and even liberated some disk space. *My concern remains*: There are many users of the individual products who should choose to update to the integrated product. Why hasn't Belight technical support provided a readme file for folks like me who are already users of some of the modules? If nothing else, we would gain more hard disk space by deleting older versions of the product, if we know what to toss. Belight Technical support sent me the following information a few days ago and all makes sense, but why wasn't the information in a readme file?

Feedback From Belight

Harry,

As you noticed your installed applications remained in the Applications folder. We made this way as there are bunch of possibilities about user systems, which we need to predict.

Image the situation when you had already installed and licensed BCC and want to see what's new in the Printfolio. So you download trial version of Printfolio and it writes over existing BCC new one, from it's package, the trial one. In this way you'll lose your legally bought working version. Then you uninstall Printfolio and you have no more BCC (unless you install it again).

Also we made them in the separate folder for cases when we'd make a Special Printfolio Edition of some products. This would be the same story - instead of legally bought product you'll got cut SE version.

This explains why we'd have a few packages in Tiger HDD > Library > Receipts for the same product.

Concerning Application Support folder I could notice only that in cases when many users share same Mac, they should have possibility to split their settings, templates etc. so we had to split system-wide and user-wide settings in these two different folders.

Best regards,
Y L — BeLight Software

Conclusion

These products and solutions will assist you in producing high-quality flyers, business cards, CD&DVD designs, newsletters, brochures, address and shipping labels. Among them you will find information and support for your printers, finding the proper paper and identifying graphics and fonts (software) if what Belight provides does not satisfy your needs.

And the price if the package is about what you'd pay for two of the four feature rich individual packages. Were the pieces just ho-hum, buying more than you needs would be a waste of both money and hard disk space. Buts as mentioned in our reviews, each of these programs is an outstanding product in its own right.

Recommendation

If you now need only one of these fine bundled products, and don't in the next year see a need for another, buy that one directly, preferably in hard Copy format. The extra template-clip art is worth the shipping and \$5 addition cost. But, if you can use any two, buy Printfolio, now --- don't wait.

Enjoy the fruit Spread the seeds



Learn What You Need

TeachMac is a searchable library of multimedia computer tutorials in the form of downloadable modules. View them with the **free** TeachMac application. With TeachMac you get:

- Inexpensive training for home, school and business
- On demand computer instruction for all skill levels
- Customizable lessons to meet individual needs

Teach What You Know

TeachMac is a powerful learning and teaching tool that becomes more powerful everyday as users share their knowledge. With the **free** Module Maker application and a screen capture utility, you teach what you know and share it with the world. Offer your creation for free, or charge a modest fee and earn 100% of the royalties from individual sales. Visit our *Module Authors* page for details and downloads.



www.teachmac.com

Download the free application and browse our growing library of modules for Mac and Windows.



ScreenSteps

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Blue Mango Learning Systems

(661) 775-8300 ☐

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/productivity_tools/screensteps.html

Released: February 16, 2007

\$40 USD

Free Trial: http://www.bluemangolearning.com/products/screensteps/download_screensteps.html

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later.

Strengths: ScreenSteps allows you to quickly create visual software instructions and then export them as PDF or HTML.

Weaknesses: No Spellchecker. It suffers from some code optimization issues.

Other Reviews: <http://mactheweb.com/software-review/screensteps-for-easy-documentation/>



What They Say

The easiest way to create visual product documentation. Once users launch *ScreenSteps* they can capture images while working in any application. *ScreenSteps* automatically grabs these images and organizes them in the order they were acquired. The user can then go back and add text descriptions to each image. Basic image annotation tools are also included. Once the project is finished the file can be exported to PDF or HTML. Users can literally create visual software tutorials in about 5 to 10 minutes.

ScreenSteps integrates with any third party screen capture utility that captures images to the clipboard. It also integrates with third party image editors.

With *ScreenSteps* you capture a screen shot of each step in the process you are trying to teach. As you capture each screen shot they are automatically laid out in order for you (1).

You can use either the Instant Capture or the Delayed Capture options (2) to do this.

Features

- Built in screen capture
- Crop Tool
- Annotation Tools: Circle, Square, Rounded Square
- Adjust annotations at any time (non-destructive annotation)
- Integrates with third party screen capture applications such as SnagIt (Windows) and Snapz (Mac).
- Integrates with any image editor
- Automatically sequences your captures in the order you took them
- Easily reorder or replace images
- Assemble your steps in **Thumbnail** view and then add text in **Preview** mode for a better view of your images
- Export to *PDF*, *HTML* or your own custom *HTML/ XML* templates



Why not just create a screen recording?

Screen recordings are great for product demos and introductions, but if used incorrectly they can become ineffective and cumbersome to create. They are also nearly impossible to update if your software changes. You almost always have to start over again from scratch.

So we suggest you do what we do; use screen recordings for what they are good for - product demos - but create your documentation in *ScreenSteps*. It will take you much less time and will be more useful to your customers.

Conclusion

In a word – “potential”. How many times have we had to copy a screen, point to something and send explanations to someone? Greg DeVore and company just made that whole process practically painless.

But the app does suffer a little from exporting issues and that is being worked on. This is a 1.x release after all. But for Quick-&-Dirty “how-tos” going to PDF or HTML, this is one of those, “Why didn’t I think of that?” apps.

The TAB Kids 3.0

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie

Digital Video S.p.A

<http://www.tabkids.com>

Released: March 6, 2007.

\$80 + S/H USD

Free 15 day trial

System Requirements: PowerPC® G3, G4 or G5, or Intel-based Macintosh; Mac OS® X 10.4 or later; 256MB of RAM; 70MB of available hard-disk space; 1024x768 or higher monitor resolution; QuickTime; Flash Player

Strengths: Fun and easy way to create comics. I liked it.

Weaknesses: I couldn't shrink the window to see the buttons at the bottom of the screen.

Introduction

There are many different animation programs out there but there aren't a lot geared towards kids. This is one that is geared towards kids and makes it easy enough for the kids to use. So, if you have a creative kid on your hands, you should check out The TAB Kids.

Getting Started

The TAB Kids is compatible with both Mac and Windows operating systems and it works well with both. It is Universal for those people with an Intel Mac. Although, I would suggest that you have more than the minimum requirements when running this program because it occasionally quit for no reason. I also would suggest that you have a tablet with you because it makes it a lot easier to use this. A mouse will work fine as well. It features a great user interface with all of the tools that you will need laid out in front of you so you don't have to constantly go up to menus.



There is a layers area on the right side of the window for you to put each character and the background. You can put more than one character or object in one layer so there aren't very many restrictions. In the top left corner of the window there is a place for you to click and it flips over to another window. This is like your media browser. You have access to pre-made backgrounds, animations and sounds. They are a lot of fun. Also at the bottom of this window you have a bunch of export options. You can export your animation as a Quick time file, a Flash file or even a 3GP file (that's the format cell phones use to display video).

Product Features

- Easy-to-use interface with icons and buttons
- Full set of drawing tools, including the brush to draw variable thickness lines
- Use stencils to draw shapes and text
- Model drawings by pinching, smoothing or pumping lines
- Paint your drawings with pattern, texture and other styles
- Change the color in the palette with no need to repaint drawings
- Organize your scene in up to four layers
- Repeat, copy and duplicate drawings to create your animation sequence
- Set animation by defining key position, size and rotation for your drawings
- Check the animation by using the onion-skin mode
- Import a soundtrack to complete the animation
- Load your own images and soundtracks
- Export as QuickTime or Avi clips
- Export in 3GP for mobile video output
- Export in Flash format for easy web publishing
- Print or save pictures from your animation



Conclusion

I had a lot of fun using this product but the window was too big for my screen and I couldn't shrink the window so I could see the buttons at the bottom of the screen. That became really annoying because you can't see the bottom of the color palette and other buttons. Also, there is no built-in instructions or help menu to show you how to use all of the tools. You have to go online to get the tutorials. For those who are on the run or those who don't have Internet access are going to have trouble learning how to use the software. The tutorials are very helpful for those who can access them. They explain each tool and function in detail so there isn't a lot of confusion.

Recommendation

The TAB Kids is definitely a good option for anyone looking for a good animation program for their kids. I enjoyed it a lot. Great work Digital Video!

TextExpander 1.4.2

By Harry (doc) Babad



for the Average User



for wannabe programmers or web designers.

Smile On My Mac [SOMM]

<http://www.smileonmymac.com/textexpander/index.html>

Available in English, German, French, Japanese and Italian.

Released: 6 March.2007

\$30 USD, Education Discount \$21 USD

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Universal Binary. **Note:** TextExpander 1.3.1 is still available for Mac OS X 10.3.9

Strengths: Easy to use means of adding routinely used information into documents, emails and forms.

Weaknesses: Lack of a detailed and current manual limit's the ability of a user to gain access to all of the software's more sophisticated features.

Previous Reviews: None

For a 30 day full feature demo of this product: <http://www.smileonmymac.com/textexpander/download.html>

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Introduction

I am torn between alternative modes (paradigms) for accessing and inserting both text and images into my documents. The method I've been now using adds these snippets to a multiple function clipboard (shadowClipboard, now version 3.0.5) that lives in my menubar. See my October 2006 macC review (4.5 macCs) for details. The other, exemplified by SmileOnMyMac's [SOMM] TextExpander relies on creating system-wide text shortcuts that can be used as broadly as shadowClipboard.

Although I had previously glanced at various text-expansion tools, I'd never actually taken the time to work with them. A short list of such Macintosh tools for OS X, other than TextExpander, includes:

- Peter Maurer's *Textpander* (predecessor to TextExpander),
- Riccardo Ettore's \$27 *TypeIt4Me* [<http://homepage.mac.com/rettoire/ty2/TypeIt4Me3.0.html>],
- Ergonis Software's \$20 *Typinator* [<http://www.ergonis.com/products/typinator/>] and
- *RapidoWrite* freeware [<http://www.app4mac.com/>]

Okay, what's the difference? TextExpander is a system-wide preference pane, accessible from the menu bar that enables you to type efficiently and correctly by creating a library for frequently used text strings and image snippets with their associated user defined abbreviations. It focuses on using the keyboard for entering the information you've stored; thingies called snippets.

With shadowClipboard and related multi-clip software you create sets of clippings that you access from the menubar when needed. In such software everything you cut or copy ends up in an ever-changing systems clipboard list. Items you wan to keep, can be moved to permanent project specific clipboards.

In TextExpander, when you type an abbreviation (or select a snippet from the menu bar) TextExpander automatically inserts the snippet. By typing a simple abbreviation you can expand and insert long snippets, saving time and thousands of keystrokes. Essentially, TextExpander functions as an enhanced customizable key stroke logger, so when you type an abbreviation one you've setup, it expands the longer text (or image) snippet for you.

Which suits me better? I have no idea yet, so I'll work with both until I know which suits my computing style. Keeping these two tools with their content parallel is no big deal, although shadowClipboard is easier to load.

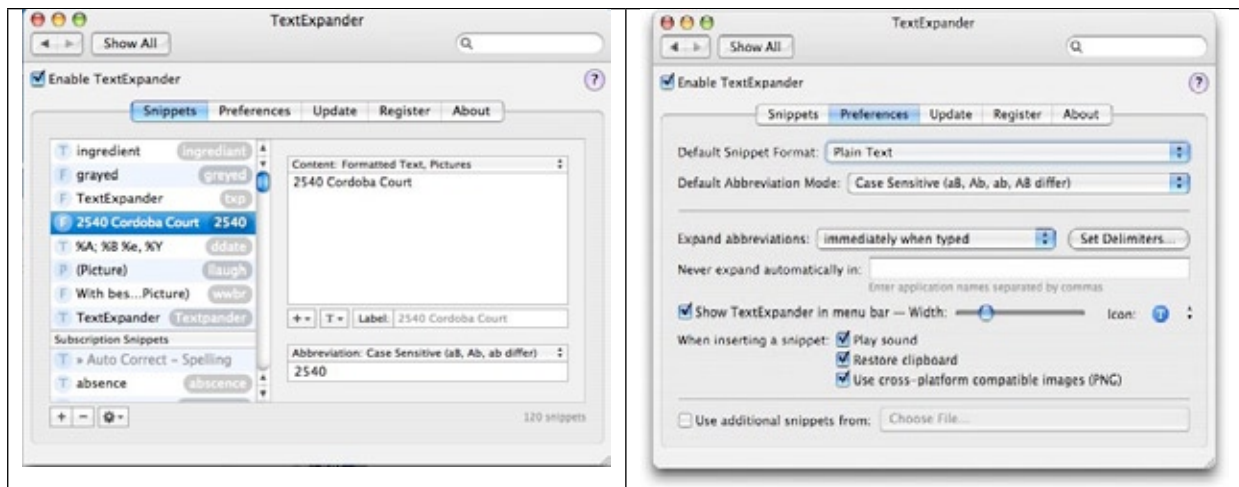
Getting Started

TextExpander installs easily. Just click on the program and it automatically installs itself. Then, open System Preferences, open the Universal Access pane and enable access for assistive devices. [[This is a critical step.](#)] Finally, open TextExpander's preference pane and start TextExpander by checking the Enable TextExpander checkbox. Note: TextExpander is installed in your Users > Your Name > Library > Application Support >TextExpander folder. To preserve your snippets I suggest you back it up.

TextExpander's icon will now appear on your Menubar, in every application you launch, even those in which it will not easily work (e.g., Adobe Acrobat or GraphicConverter.)

In addition to being located on the menubar, it is also added to the Services menu. In that location the only option you have is to create a new snippet, which alas is grayed out.

To add a new snippet, or TextExpander action, click on its menubar button. It then opens a window showing your snippets at the top and other items below. Next, click on the first line in the drop-down menu that is called *TextExpander Preferences*. The TextExpander window opens.



To add a new snippet click on the + at the bottom and go from there. You have a choice of plain text, formatted text, or pictures, or a combination. It's all pretty intuitive. In the content box you add what you want to spell out and at the abbreviation box at the bottom you type on the abbreviation.

If after some use, you no longer want that snippet you can delete it by clicking on the - at the bottom of the list. You also can edit a snippet to make it look right (e.g., changing formatting or content.)

[I suggest you check your content for both accuracy and spelling before committing to that snippet, but that's your choice.] Close the window and the new snippet is ready to use.

According to the developer, snippets can be accessed either form the keyboard (typing predefined string of letters or characters) or from the TextExpander list in your menubar. Remember, you trigger snippet expansions automatically by either (1) typing the abbreviations you specify, or by (2) using any one of over 30 delimiter characters as a trigger. You can then simply position your cursor wherever you want in an expanded snippet and keep working. You can even choose whether a unique delimiter character itself gets kept as part of your text insert or is abandoned (deleted).

Help, Where did the 30 come from? There are less than 30 variations/combinations of tab – space – return. Oh, brackets can be included as delimiters; that's not documented either.

Smart Abbreviations — One real issue with TextExpander is figuring out how best to use abbreviations to trigger snippets. Some are easy such as 2540 to insert my to automatically insert my street address, but others for variation of snippet contents are not so obvious.

A method I read about [Mainline Macintosh Users Group for dealing with multiple address of email footers is to use the abbreviations ad1, ad2, ad3 or ef1, ef2, ef3... Now all you need to remember is which is which. There is a great deal of information with examples in that review some of it manual quality. Check it out. Look for the TextExpander review on their site: <http://www.mlmg.org/SoMM.html>. There's lots of good manual quality tips there.

In creating a snippet that reads Harry {doc} Babad I was faced with using the abbreviation {doc} or {dc}. The later works fine. I'm not likely to use it my accident as I might DC. *Remember, A good abbreviation is: short - easy to remember - unlikely to be typed by accident - unique.*

Delimiters and their Use —I found much of the discussion of delimiters and their use, in the 15 page manual, unjustifiably abstruse and confusing. Examples would have helped! For example, the mini-manual explains, that typical delimiters include [Space], [Tab], and [Return]. But I use these *delimiters* all the time in typing. Then, in a discussion of TextExpander version 1.1 (see the manual) I found the following information:

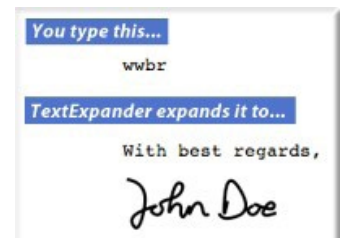
“If you have configured TextExpander to “Expand automatically when... a delimiter character has been typed after an abbreviation”, you can now choose whether the delimiter character that triggered the expansion should vanish on expansion (“keep delimiter”/“abandon delimiter”). To override this setting for a specific snippet, add a “Keep delimiter” specifier (“%+”, without the surrounding quotation marks) or an “Abandon delimiter” specifier (“%-”) to the very end of your snippet.” — *Alas without several re-reads, and some trial and error, this did not help much. (doc)*

So far, my control of snippets is entirely based on simple abbreviations. My head spins when I think of having to modify snippets with %+, %- or %|. So for now I’m avoiding trying to create *advanced* snippets, the kind needed by web developers or programmers.

Using the Software

The following is a list with comments of the way I used the product, based on vendor claims

Use different email signatures or message footers? – Easily insert a customized signature with a few keystrokes. Keep it simple or use as many variation as you need. You can even include a photo or logo! [Hmm — Consultant, macC contributor, Folk Music Columnist... yes they all work (e.g., ad1, ad2, ad3... or ef1, ef2, ef3...)]



Need easy access to boilerplate paragraphs? – Add them to your snippet library and insert them into your emails and contracts, forms or correspondence by typing a short abbreviation. Include standard greetings or content that includes formatted text and pictures. [I transferred a number of pieces of boiler plate from shadowClipboard, gave them a suitable abbreviation. They all worked.]

Filling out forms? – Make it easy on yourself by adding: your address, email, phone and fax numbers to your snippet library! [This is especially useful when I am using Firefox since that browser does not have an auto-fill feature.]

Keep making the same typos? – Add common typos as triggers – TextExpander automatically replaces them with the correct spelling! *Free!* [TextExpander AutoCorrect Snippet File](#) with over 100 common misspellings is available on the SOMM website. . [Tip: *When creating snippets, which are done through its preference pane, I created the shortcut option-command-shift N to speed me to the input window.*]

Need to insert the current date or time? – TextExpander comes with date and time snippets that you can format the way you want! [So far I’ve not tried this but it seems straightforward.]

Need a Special Character or Symbol? Type special characters without having to launch a special characters palette! [No way, I still prefer and will continue to use PopChar, reviewed in the March ‘07 months.]



Routinely need to add an image? – Click; add your photo, your logo or your scanned signature. [Sure thing, no sweat but make sure your images are sized correctly to fit their end use and location. This is especially true with scanned signatures.]

Want to Switch to TextExpander? — But you have snippet collections elsewhere. Export and import snippets from other typing utilities including Textpander, TypeIt4Me and Typinator. [Did not test.]

Special but repeated advanced snippet type needs?

- Create case-dependent snippets [a use I've not yet needed.]
- Create nested snippets. [Untested]
- Make editor-independent code templates, which is useful for programmers. [Untested]
- Reposition cursor on expansion of snippet, which is useful for writing HTML) [Untested]

Discomforts

I Need a Real Manual — Unlike disclabel with its elegant and accurate 80 page manual, TextExpander has a skimpy difficult to use 15 page manual. Now that SOMM has acquired Textpander, it's time for a real manual with examples.

Snippets An Endless Pulldown Menu List — I am uncomfortable with the way TextExpander deals with its snippets lists. I'd like an easier way to access the shortcuts as I continue add more items to TextExpander. I expect to reach the point shortly that I'll have more items than I want to memorize or in a senior moment, remember. This is a *primary* need other reviewers have also noted. PostIt notes on the edge of my monitor just don't cut it. In perhaps an initial bad move; I do type with two fingers, I added the *autocorrect* snippet file to TextExpander. Now my list, when I manually for an item search is now 100 items longer than what I started with.

The good new is that so far my new items such as the street address are at the top of the abbreviations list. The bad news is that I don't know whether this will always be so.

Now I realize I can sort snippets by content, abbreviation, date created or by date modified. But to do so I have to return to its preference pane. For now, that doesn't really help.

A reasonable solution to this user problem is to be able to create folders, or a way to organize an overgrown listing of snippets. After all the folks most devoted to the product will suffer first form long *listitus*.

From Nick Santilli including the feedback to his question: What would make TE worth \$30? There were a number of interesting answers a few of which I'll pass on as reinforcement to the vendor.

Temporary TextExpander Stop Action — Someone suggested was have SMOM “add a way to block an abbreviation from expanding, sort of a reverse delimiter. So if I have an abbreviation of my initials and I wanted to use ‘NLS’ instead of my full name, I could hold down something like the escape key (simply for explanation purposes) to force TextExpander to overlook my typing for a moment.” <http://theappleblog.com/2006/09/22/textexpander-improvements-user-input/>

Annotating Snippets [e.g., get info] — Let you include a comment for each snippet, as they can get complex.

Convert Selected Text to a Snippet — Include a contextual menu to create the snippet from selected text. [Mainline MUG]

Conclusions

As noted recently, in a musing by Adam C. Engst, when offering up a free copy of the product, months ago, on the TidBits site: “One of the most venerable categories of utility software is that of the abbreviation expander. It’s not surprising - computers are supposed to save us work, and who wants to type their entire snail mail address by hand every time when you could type “sm” and have a utility replace that with the full address?” See: MailBITS/05-Jun-06 [Not what I’d use Adam. When I write recipes I often want to tell folks to use a *sm* onion, or other ingredient.]

TextExpander is extremely easy to setup, modify, and use. After a short learning curve, the uses to which you can put the product are endless. Indeed they are limited only by your imagination and desire to experiment. Okay, you’re busy and don’t want to play. Just start creating snippets when you need them and you be surprised how fast your collection grows.

Recommendation

Try the free download and see how easily you get hooked on this great product. Although I’ve down-rated it for its poor manual, most users will not need the more advanced programmer-website developer features. Some folks, in their blogs or product reviews on download sites are complaining about it’s cost, but my time even as a volunteer is worth more than the \$30 asking price.

Note:

TextExpander: Essential Mac Shortcut Utility, Posted: Tuesday, September 5th, 2006

<http://www.43folders.com/2006/09/05/textexpander-review/>

Here’s some actual code for a few of MERLIN’s favorite snippets.

What it is	TE code	Abbr. I use	Notes
html image	<code></code>	imgg	As with many of these, I use an abbreviation that, by itself, is unlikely to appear anyplace but as a typo. And see that little “% “? That’s a placeholder that tells TE where to position the cursor after the snippet is pasted. Awesome.
html link	<code></code>	ahreff	Can’t even tell you how much time this saves me every day.
Generic URL	<code>http://www.%.com/</code>	urll	Ditto
Finder-friendly long date	<code>%Y-%m-%d_%H-%M-%S</code>	fdate	This “colon-free” format lets me mark versions of files in the Finder (and is also friendly for letting you <i>sort</i> those versions by date/time)
short date	<code>%Y-%m-%d</code>	sdate	Sometimes I don’t want all the flibbety-gibbety of a long date, so this snippet gets a lot of use for helping me remember when I created or changed something.

Yep 1.5

By Wayne LeFevre

Ironic Software

Yep version 1.5

www.ironicsoftware.com

\$34 USD, \$41 CND, £18 UK

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Universal binary. Scanner is optional.



Strengths: Organize your PDFs.

Weaknesses: Few, relegated more to wants than weakness.

For a demo of this product: [Demo download page](#)

Introduction

The paperless office. It's been the goal since the dawn of personal computers, but it's been far from a reality. Questions and obstacles abound when trying to reach this panacea. How to get actual paper documents into the computer, how and where do you store it, and what kind of storage capacity will you need? What format do you store documents in, and finally, how can you find what your looking for once it gets onto your computer.

Though Microsoft is trying to heat up the format war, the PDF has become the standard when storing and printing documents. No matter the computer; what the document looks like on one, it will look like on all. The only problem with the PDF is it 's only a file, obligated to sit wherever it was made or wherever you may place it after download. If one, such as myself, has many PDFs, it can become a nightmare trying to keep track of them all. You begin to lose track, eventually forgetting that they are even there to begin with, negating the whole purpose of having it. Usually you find it again when you start to clean out your system in the event of a new operating system coming out or the like.

There has, of course, been many programs to try and organize your PDF system. It wasn't until around PaperPort 7 or so for the PC when all scanned images started becoming a PDF as a standard import. Speaking of PaperPort, it did an all right job on the PC for organizing PDFs, and I haven't seen anything close to it for the Mac. Until now.

Developers Ted Leckie and Tom Andersen, the same that developed the astronomy program *Starry Night*, have now developed the "iPhoto program for PDFs." Named "Yep"(?), it scours your hard drive for all PDFs. It then lets you see and organize them by tags, allowing you to instantly sort, move, rename, find and more to any PDF, anywhere. Even on your network.

Getting Started

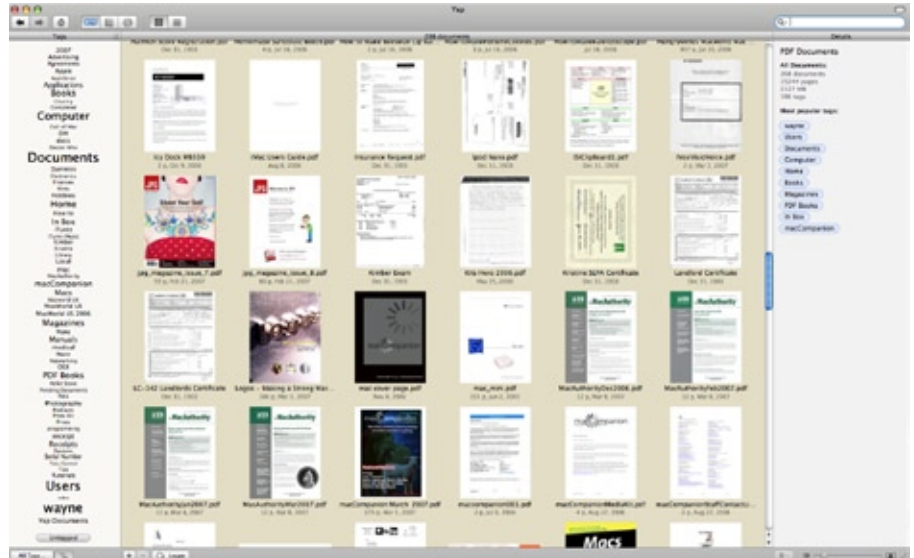
Currently, the application build number is 1.2.4. I have been using 1.5b beta with the understanding that this is a release build, and 1.5 will be released by the time we publish this issue. From the start, one thing impressed me

so much I have to mention it. The manual. Manuals and tutorials on new software lately have been abysmal, and I don't know who wrote *Yep. Manage Your Documents*, but it's the best manual I've seen in a long time. Short, to the point, and manages to cover every bit of the application and how to use it effectively. Obviously, it's a good indication that details are not overlooked.

After installation, there are two options to take when running Yep. The first is to have Yep copy and keep all of your PDFs in one folder. This of course is the easiest, especially when you don't have many PDFs to keep track of currently. Trust me, if you have a scanner, you'll start making more. The second option is to have Yep look where you tell it to. This is accessible through the preferences menu. It can be an entire hard drive or a specific folder, with or without all its subfolders. You can even make exceptions, looking everywhere but certain folders.

Using the Software

When using Yep, it's true what they say. It is like iPhoto for your PDFs. There are three options when looking at your files, but whichever one you select, you will see the selections of files in the main window. Yep will take and display a thumbnail of the first page of the PDF. You can, from these thumbnails, move the slide to make them larger or smaller. There is also a loupe you can turn on, magnifying a square that moves with your cursor. This will magnify any text or graphics on the front and makes it easy to find what you need without opening up the entire file.



The three options you can organize the PDFs are by tags, collection folders and search folders, which is basically all the Finder folders that hold any of the PDFs. Tags are the biggest part of Yep, and searching the "Tag Cloud" is very web 2.0 style, and magnify by passing the cursor over them. The larger the tags are, the larger number of PDFs are tagged with that tag. You can change all this of course, changing the size to actual numbers if you'd like. The tags narrow down your choices until you see only the documents you want. Click on Computer will narrow down the options to everything with the computer tag. Click on Book, now all that is left is documents with Computer and Book. You can also drag tags to documents, or have Yep Auto-tag them for you. Collections option are folders that you can manually make and place documents into, or you can make smart folders, saving your searches into live folders.

The central panel also has three views. Normal is like iPhoto and shows images. When the PDF is selected, it opens into a PDF viewer. There is also an option to open the PDF in another application, print or email the PDF from here. This is also where scanning images is done. You may scan images from a scanner using ImageCapture, or through the scanning software. There is also an option of creating a PDF by dragging images into Yep.

The details panel on the right let you add tags, descriptions, names, authors and more. It also displays most of the information about a document.

Conclusion

There would be some changes I would make in Yep. I would add stacks, akin to Aperture, where you could stack like PDFs on top of each other. I would also like to be able to combine or append PDFs to create just one. The last thing I would like to see is some sort of backup. I would like Yep to gather all my PDFs from all around the hard drive and back them up with their metadata. This would be an easy chore if you chose the option of having Yep copy and maintain all the PDFs in one folder, but not so easy otherwise.

Recommendation

Other than those few things that I would like to see added to Yep, I like the application and use it every day. I would also advise anyone needing a way to organize a growing PDF collection, or would like to start scanning all their paper into the computer, to at least try Yep. I think you'll like it.

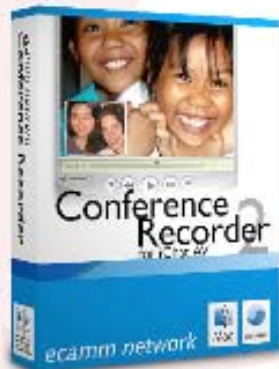


Hardware

The section 3 hardware reviews and articles in this issue of *macCompanion* are:

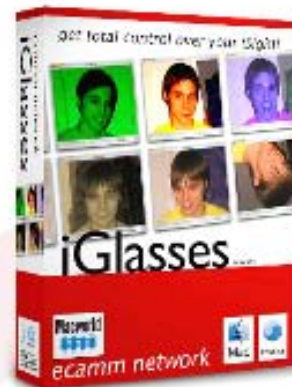
- AlphaSmart Dana – a laptop replacement, reviewed by Mike Hubbartt
- Apple TV – the next big thing from Apple, reviewed by Mike Hubbartt
- Belkin F5L – a new laptop cooling stand from Belkin, reviewed by Mike Hubbartt
- iControl – audio control panel for GarageBand, reviewed by Wayne LeFevre
- Kinesis Advantage – a pricy ergonomic keyboard, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- V-MODA VIBE – modaphones reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- V-MODA Bass Freq – different modaphones review by Robert Pritchett
- Wii – the new Nintendo game console, reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie

*use your USB webcam
with iChat AV...*



*record your iChat audio
and video chats...*

*adjust iSight settings
and apply effects...*



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<http://www.ecamm.com>

AlphaSmart Dana

By Mike Hubbartt, Copyright ©2007

AlphaSmart Dana

www.alphasmart.com

\$429 USD

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; Universal binary (PPC G3, G4 and G5); 256 MB RAM; 50 MB Hard Drive Space; CD-ROM/DVD-ROM.

We reviewed the AlphaSmart Neo in February, so now we take the Dana for a test drive.



Strengths: The large screen and keyboard, Palm OS and Palm applications support, Documents to Go, touch sensitive screen that works with the Palm stylus, wireless support, and the rechargeable batteries good for 25 hours. The AlphaWord word processor is very good and has an adequate set of features. The screen backlight is adequate and does not drain the batteries as fast as WiFi.

Weaknesses: AlphaWord does not check spelling as you type. You can Hotsync RTF documents on both Mac and Windows platforms, however you can't Hotsync MS Word documents unless you are using Windows. The FineType Converter software – used to add new fonts to AlphaWord – is only available for Windows PCs. Current battery charge level only available at Apps screen, some SD expansion card video options do not display properly.

Previous Reviews: None in *macCompanion*.

Introduction

Alphasmart sells an inexpensive laptop replacement called the Dana. This lightweight writer's tool is handy, effective and inexpensive, making it the ideal tool to take on a short holiday or on a two week dream vacation. And the Dana runs the Palm OS, so it supports the Palm applications and SD expansion cards I already own and use with my Palm T|X and LifeDrive.

I ordered the Dana and when it arrived it was apparent that the small footprint, light weight (around 2 Lbs), nice keyboard and easy-to-read screen make it ideal for travel writing, for keeping a journal or for taking notes in school. I charged the batteries with the AC adapter, turned it on and started testing it.

Getting Started

The screen is wider than the Palm LifeDrive – over twice as wide as the LifeDrive in Landscape mode. And the Dana screen is as tall as the LifeDrive screen in Landscape mode, so it displays 8 lines of text while in the built-in word processor – not great, but acceptable. The Dana has a backlight – off by default – although the batteries drain faster when the backlight is on (just like a Palm Pilot). I didn't use the backlight except in the evenings, as the screen was easy to read with ambient lighting during the day. And the Dana screen works like Palm screens: use the included stylus to select text or options or launch programs.

Using the Product

The Dana has the built-in AlphaWord word processor. It's not MS Word, but does support multiple fonts, formatting, word count, spell checking and has a thesaurus. I wrote an article using plain text and brought that over to Word on the iMac and only needed to highlight and change the font to Times New Roman to match the content already written on the iMac. Then I wrote an article with the font set to Times New Roman and brought it over to a Word on the iMac and no reformatting was necessary. Nice and simple. If you're worried about losing data because you forget to recharge the Dana, don't worry. Documents can be saved to the Dana or to an SD memory card plugged into one of the expansion slots at the back of the unit.

Getting the words off the Dana and into a Word document on the iMac is easy. After installing the Dana software, I connected the Dana via USB cable, opened the Word document on the iMac, opened the appropriate document on the Dana and pressed the 'send' button on the Dana. Simple. If your Mac is wireless, the Dana is too and you can transmit documents that way instead of using a USB cable.

Documents written on the Dana can be transferred to a Mac for printing, or directly to a print using the printer port on the back of the unit. It isn't difficult to install printer drivers as long as you've installed drivers on a computer in the past.

Since using the Dana is similar to using the Neo (reviewed February, 2007), let's look at product features.

Product Features Overview

Standard features – the nice tactile feel of the full-sized keyboard means your hands won't be cramped after a few hours of typing on the Dana. The screen is wider than the one on the Neo – about 104 plain 12 Pt (or 89 Times New Roman 12 Pt) characters fit across the 160x560 pixel screen in the AlphaWord word processor.

Wireless – The Dana supports 802.11b wireless technology, allowing access to a wireless network and the Internet. Only consider the screen is monochrome, so how many websites are going to look good rendered that way? I believe the best reason to use the wireless option is send email or to transfer content to a server or PC, not browse websites.

Palm OS – already in wide use with 50+ million Palm owners, the Dana runs the 20,000+ Palm applications including: Contacts, Calendar, Memos and To Dos. The user manual instructions for using Palm Calendar, Memo, Contacts, To Do List and Hot syncing are very good.

AlphaWord – supports multiple fonts, so you write What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG). I wrote this review using Times New Roman, one I prefer and the standard font for *macCompanion* magazine. I looked at text using Arial, Garamond and Courier fonts, but just prefer the look of Times New Roman. I would like to add other fonts, but AlphaSmart's software for adding new fonts does not work on Macs.

Expandability – the Dana has 16 MB built-in RAM, and it has 2 expansion ports for SD memory cards. I have several SD memory cards laying around, so I created a new document in the Dana and saved it to the SD card and was able to take it to my iMac using a card reader. Very nice! I tried the external Dictionary/Thesaurus (on SD) I use in my Palm in the Dana SD expansion slot – I could look up information, however the graphic-based option icons normally at the top of the screen were distorted and unusable.

Conclusion

I really enjoyed using the Dana to write two product reviews and a fiction short story. The unit weighs so little compared to many laptops, so it didn't feel like a boat anchor in my lap nor when I carried it around the house, and the full sized keyboard met my needs for easy data entry.

The rechargeable batteries had decent battery life between recharging, and the batteries are recharged by the AC adapter or when connected to a computer via USB cable. The wide screen, Palm OS and Documents to Go support, and wireless capability make up for the \$170 price difference with little brother Neo.

The only caveat I have is regarding wireless use. When enabled, wireless really pulls down the batteries. I'd suggest enabling wireless only when accessing email, then turn it off unless you have access to a wall outlet.

Recommendation

If you want a laptop but \$1,099 for the low end MacBook is more than your budget can handle, stop by www.alphasmart.com and look at the product specs for the Dana. At \$429, the Dana is getting close to discounted PC laptop pricing, but people looking for a lightweight laptop with good battery life will view the Dana as a great purchase. Highly recommended.

Experience True Writing Freedom

NEO
BY ALPHASMART™

Imagine writing what you want, when you want, wherever you want... then with the click of a button, transferring your work to your desktop computer. It's that easy. Let Neo set you free!

- Neo gives you up to **700 hours** of operation on just 3 AA alkaline batteries.
- Weighing just two pounds, Neo is a lightweight, go-anywhere computing tool.
- Easily transfer files via supplied USB cable to any text-accepting program!
- Neo's ergonomically designed, full-size comfort-stroke keyboard makes typing fast, easy, and fun!
- Neo's rugged design stands up to difficult conditions—even when it's dropped or knocked around.

\$249
plus S&H
Free Carrying Case Offer!

"If you're looking for a low cost laptop solution, look no further. The Neo is easy to use and is worth the money for people needing to write while away from their desktop computers."

—Mike Hubbartt, Editor
MacCompanion magazine
February, 2007

Neo is the perfect low-cost, low-maintenance computer companion. To learn more—including information about your free carrying case—visit www.alphasmart.com/lp/MacCompanion or call toll free (866) 558-8452, ref. #9918 (outside U.S. call 1-715-424-3636).

Apple TV

Reviewed by Mike Hubbartt, Copyright ©2007



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

\$299 USD, £199 UK inc VAT

Requirements:

Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; widescreen TV at least capable of 480p; wireless or Ethernet network; HDMI or Component cables; Internet access; iTunes 7.1.1; QuickTime 7.1.5.

Strengths: New; unique; very easy to set up; wireless.

Weaknesses: None found.



After a long wait, the Apple TV is here. Some industry analysts forecast this product will change the home entertainment industry, but even if it doesn't, it will be noticed and it will make more people aware of Apple, Inc products.

Getting Started

On 3/21, I called Apple to request a review unit, but was told they would not be able to ship until a week later and I would not get it until after the first of April, so I ran over to the local Apple store and bought my Apple TV. The sales people were just as excited as the customers – something I've come to expect – and the gentleman that helped me made sure I had all of the extra items to get my Apple TV up and running.

The items needed to use the Apple TV are:

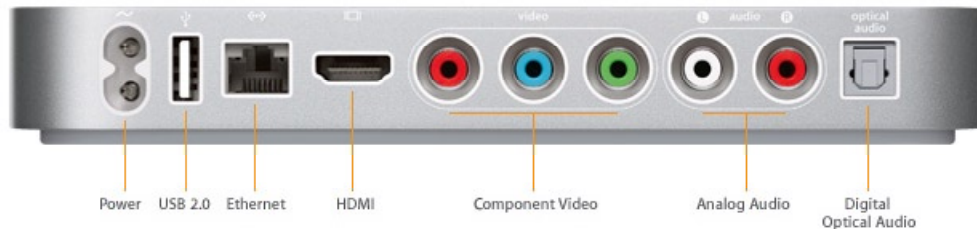
Hardware: a network (wireless or Ethernet), a television capable of at least 480p, HDMI or component cables, Internet access (broadband strongly recommended).

Software: Mac OS X 10.3.9, iTunes 7.1.1, QuickTime 7.1.5.

I already had the extras, so I gave the man my credit card and walked out with my evaluation Apple TV in an Apple backpack shopping bag. After returning home, I opened the box and found just a few items: the Apple TV unit, an AC power cord, a small remote, instructions and software. Not too complicated, even for non-technical people.

The Apple TV is small – thinner than my Mac Mini – so it was easy to find a place for it on the home theater stand. **Note:** It does get a bit warm, so I'd suggest placing it where there is airflow to help keep it cool.

I looked at the back of the unit and it seems hard to imagine anyone could misunderstand how to connect it to a television and stereo. I plugged in the power cord, HDMI cable and audio cables, then set it on the video stand.



I turned on the television and then there were a few things to do to get it set up: select language, resolution, and network. Again, very simple. I selected the name of my wireless router and then went to the main Mac I want to use to sync my iTunes content and configured iTunes, which starts the syncing. This can take a while, depending on the amount of iTunes content you have.

A nice feature of Apple TV is the ability to run with local content (put there when syncing) or using streaming content from 1 to 5 computers. I used the Apple TV setup to select a Mac and listened to music while my music and TV shows library transferred to the Apple TV. You can tell in iTunes when it is syncing, and you can initiate syncing from iTunes as well. Note: Use iTunes to select syncing options (the number of movies, which specific titles, and photos from a library or folder) for audio, video and photos.

After the sync operation completed, I listened to some music videos I bought from the iTunes store and they were excellent, then watched a couple of Lost episodes I bought last year. I wanted to check out movies of the unit, but have not bought any movies from the iTunes Store, so I downloaded and ran HandBrake to pull some content from a few DVDs. I used the H.264 and MPEG-4 settings and found the MPEG-4 videos were 3-4X larger than H.264 movies, but much better quality images and they finished processing faster than movies done with H.264. We were not impressed with the H.264 videos, so MPEG-4 videos will be our future preference. I tested using movies on the Apple TV and streaming movies from other computers – the streaming video was fine, except when HandBrake was running, which caused the movies to stop and restart. This problem did not occur when streaming content from computers not busy running heavy CPU-intensive software.

I almost forgot to mention trailers. A good reason to have Internet access is to see a one to two minute trailer for new and existing movies. Neat, and easier than using a web browser to locate the same material on the Internet. I do not know how often this information is updated, nor the criteria that determines which previews are available, but suspect the list is from companies with iTunes distribution agreements with Apple.



I like the small remote. It is easy to use – functionality is similar to the G4/G5 iPod control, and it lets you select from the same general music categories that are available under iTunes (Artist, genre, etc). While looking at a category, the album artwork scrolls to the side – a nice visual touch. I don't have a remote control Mac, so the remote to scan through and select music from our music library is useful. The album covers are displayed (but not lyrics) for a pre-determined amount of time (set in preferences), and then the screen saver kicks in – it can either use photos or album artwork. **Note:** I saw reports online that said photos did not work correctly with the Apple TV - I did not encounter any problems with photos synced to the Apple TV when testing, although I did not try to stream photos.

Conclusion:

I like the Apple TV. It is easy to set up and use, the music sounds good through the stereo, syncing content is easy, and videos looked good (when using MPEG-4). I liked that I could specify which photos and videos I wanted to keep synced on the Apple TV, and enjoyed watching slideshows with music in the background, as well as watching videos.

While \$299 isn't petty cash, I suspect Apple will sell a lot more Apple TVs than iPhones. By the way, I spoke with one of our writers about the Apple TV, and he was under the impression that movies needed to be in H.264 format to work on the unit. Not true – MPEG-4 videos work and the images were better quality than the same movies done using H.264.

Recommendation:

If your Mac lacks a remote control, if you want to enjoy your music on a home stereo instead of smaller computer speakers, if you have a library of music videos or movies from iTunes, you will like this product. Definitely Recommended.

Belkin F5L001 Cooling Stand

Reviewed by Mike Hubbartt, Copyright ©2007

BELKIN.

www.belkin.com/



\$29 USD

Requirements:

A laptop.



Strengths: solid, good for laps or desks, powered by USB port.

Weaknesses: none found.

How many writers use laptops? This one does, and yes, I know the MacBook (and MacBook Pro) get warm. Not as warm as a Dell laptop, but still quite warm. And that unnecessary heat is a distraction when writing, so what can you do? Try Belkin's new laptop cooling stand – the F5L001. This stand isn't merely functional; it actually looks good.

First impression of the F5L001: solid. It looks and feels sturdy. And the stand is slightly concave, so heat is channeled up and away from either side of the laptop. To test, I ran my laptop for three hours and the heat was never a bother. In addition to using this unit on your lap, the door on the bottom of the stand can raise the laptop for use on a desk.

And the fan is quiet – not whisper quiet, but less noisy than my iMac. The fan is powered by a USB port, which I prefer over bulky (and heavy) batteries or external power supplies. The unit is small, should fit within your laptop carrying case, and has a compartment to store the USB power cable when not in use. Only one color right now (white), but it looks nice when paired with any MacBook.

Conclusion

I like the F5L001. It feels sturdy, the shape of the stand allows airflow to move heat away from the laptop, and I prefer to use a USB port for power than batteries or an external power cord. The \$29 price tag is reasonable, and while it may not prevent a Dell laptop from bursting into flames, I highly recommend it for Mac or less flammable PC laptops.

iControl

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre



M-Audio

<http://www.m-audio.com>

\$179.95 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.4 or later; GarageBand 2.0.1 or later; USB port.



Truly plug and play with no software to install.

Strengths: Control delivers total tactile control over GarageBand. Dedicated transport buttons and jog wheel put record and playback functions at your fingertips. Its eight rotary knobs are easily assigned to track functions like volume and pan, or to parameters for effects such as GarageBand's EQ or any other Audio Unit plug-in. iControl also provides dedicated mute, solo and record-enable buttons for each track, plus a master volume fader. iControl is USB bus-powered, class-compliant, and automatically recognized by GarageBand, making setup a breeze.

Weaknesses: GarageBand only. Missing a couple of what I consider necessary buttons. Would have liked it to have a button to split a track, (⌘T,) then delete and join tracks would be an extra nicety.

Previous Reviews: None in *macCompanion*.

Getting Started

Does it require much training? Yes, well, some. It's pretty much exactly like GarageBand, but there is more functionality that you will need to have the manual handy.

Works fantastic doing what it is supposed to do. If you use GarageBand a lot, this would definitely be an add-on you would like to take a look at.

Most of the functions are straight from GarageBand. If you know how to use GarageBand, most of the buttons are a straight copy of them. There is however an Option button, and that is where you need to read the manual.

iControl for GarageBand is a new control interface designed for use with Apple's GarageBand from M-Audio. It's designed to look and emulate the onscreen controls of GarageBand in an easy to use physical controller. In fact, it looks so much like the onscreen controls, that the only thing included in the package is the controller, a quick start guide and a USB cable.

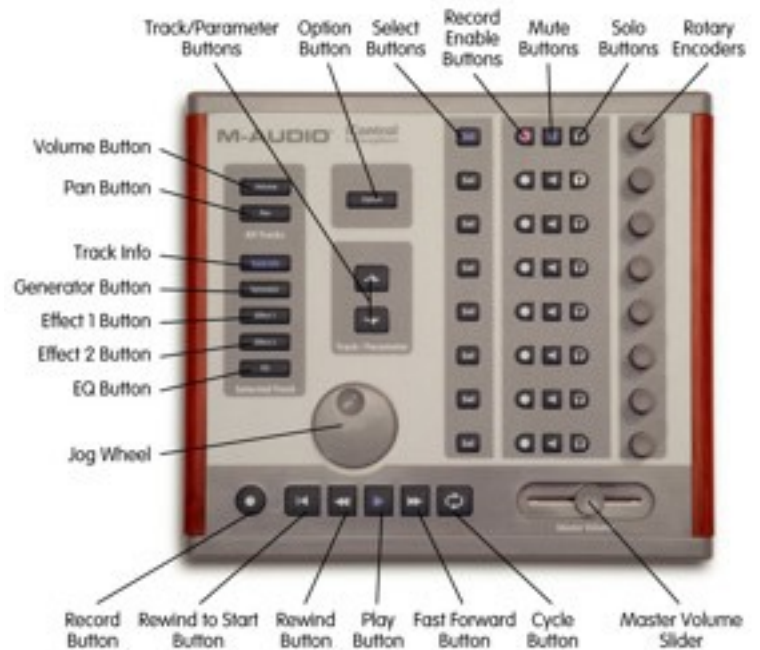
The product features include:

- 8 endless rotary knobs assignable to control volume, pan or effects
- 7 mode buttons assign knobs to control tracks or effects
- 8 sets of Mute, Solo, and Record-enable buttons
- up and down buttons assign the eight knobs to additional banks of eight tracks or effect parameters
- master volume fader

- dedicated transport buttons: Play, Stop, Record, Fast Forward, Rewind, Rewind to Start, & Cycle on/off
- jog wheel for easy song positioning
- Option button for extending functionality
- USB bus-powered-no power adapter required
- 5-pin MIDI input jack for connecting MIDI keyboards and devices to your Mac automatically recognized by GarageBand for easy setup

Now, understand that this product is designed just to work with GarageBand. In fact, it's basically dead until you actually launch GarageBand, then the backlights on the buttons start to light up. One thing I never noticed before using iControl, was that if you look at GarageBand's interface, it has the controls with wooden sides. Exactly matching the iControl. You can control up to 8 tracks at a time, with corresponding track select button, volume knobs, record enable, mute and solo buttons. If you are working with more than 8 tracks, there is a track selector button that if pressed, will select the next 8 tracks.

Most all the buttons and knobs on the iControl can control different parameters, depending on the settings of the buttons on the left side of the controller. If the Track Info button is selected, the select buttons for the tracks becomes specific functions of a selected track. Say Select 1 button will enable or disable the noise gate. Select 2 enables the compressor and so on. You can control effects, equalizers, echos, reverbs, etc. through these select buttons. The rotary encoders then become setting position knobs for the different effects, controlling the amount of noise gate, pan, echo level, etc.



The best features are the large buttons on the bottom and the jog wheel. The buttons include Record, Rewind to start, Rewind, Play, Fast Forward, Cycle and the Mast Volume slider. The jog wheel quickly scrubs through your track, greatly increasing the speed and ease that you can position the playhead.

The unit itself seems to be of top quality. It's weight is solid, and well crafted, with the caliber one expects of M-Audio. I've heard of one or two of the rotary knobs breaking, but haven't experienced any problems with the iControl myself. The buttons are quiet and have a great tactile feel. there is definite feedback so there won't be any accidental presses as, and if you are recording live there won't be the sound of a button being pressed, like you might hear the sound of a mouse click.

Conclusion

Having said all that, what's not to like? If you are a GarageBand musician, this is probably a must have controller, for it will make life simpler. All the different options will take some time to learn and get used to, but once mastered, you can save a lot of aggravation of trying to use the mouse at critical points while composing. Imagine just sliding the master volume, panning with a twist of a knob instead of trying to "twist" the onscreen knobs. Selecting and muting tracks instantly without looking at the cursor.

But if you are not a GarageBand aficionado, or at least a budding composer, than the iControl is a really neat toy

that will probably gain a little dust. As a podcaster wanna-be, there isn't a lot to offer except a one button push to record, and a nice scrubbing wheel. It doesn't work with my favorite podcasting software, Übercaster, so it's really not as handy as I thought it might be. It does do what it says, and well, though. And I can't fault it for that.

If there was one thing I would change, I would add at least one more button. That would be a Split Track button. As a podcaster, I use this more than any other button out there, and it would definitely be an enhancement.

Kinesis Advantage Pro MPC/USB Ergonomic Keyboard

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Kinesis Corporation

sales@kinesis.com

<http://www.kinesis-ergo.com/>

Released: October 24, 2002

\$359 USD Footswitch is \$30 USD.

60-day money-back guarantee.

Comes With: 1-single-action footpedal; Adaptation Exercises booklet; User's Manual; 2 palm rests.

Strengths: Addresses issues related to repetitive stress. Does Dvorak.

Weaknesses: May take up to 2 weeks to get use to! No mouse in the middle, which would have been nice. Poor tooling for the USB ports.

Other Reviews: <http://www.atpm.com/9.01/kinesis.shtml>

<http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,115898/article.html>



What They Say

Based on two years of research the Kinesis contoured keyboard was designed not only to reduce the known risk factors associated with repetitive stress injuries but also to provide a more comfortable platform than other keyboards. Its unique contoured design reduces the force and stressful postures that contribute to discomfort and limit productivity. Since its introduction in 1992, the Kinesis keyboard has undergone extensive independent testing and has proven superior in both comfort and productivity against traditional and other alternative keyboards.

The Kinesis contoured keyboard retains the familiar QWERTY layout while incorporating important ergonomic features, including:

- **Separate thumb keypads** - the thumb keypad includes often used keys such as “Enter”, “Space”, “Backspace”, “Delete” and the combination keys, “Control” and “Alt” on the PC (“Command” and “Option” on the Macintosh). This redistributes the workload from your relatively weaker and overused little fingers to stronger thumbs.



• **Separate key wells for each hand** - this separation minimizes strain and stretching by positioning your arms approximately at shoulder width and with wrists straight. This design reduces abduction and ulnar deviation (common symptoms experienced with repetitive strain injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis).



• **Concave Key Wells** - reduces hand and finger extension. Extension occurs when the joints in your fingers curl up and extend forward from your hands rather than relaxing down slightly in the direction of the palms. A flat typing surface assumes that your fingers are all of the same length, thus your longer fingers must arch up over the keys. The result is extension of the muscles and tendons in your hands. Your muscles do not operate at maximum efficiency and the result is more rapid muscle fatigue.

Concave key wells reduce extension by accommodating the various lengths of your fingers and placing your hands and fingers in a more relaxed and neutral position.



• **Vertical key layout** - keys are arranged in vertical columns to reflect natural motions of your fingers, and the keypads are sculpted and concave to fit the varying lengths of your fingers.



• **Closer placement of function keys** - soft-touch function keys are positioned closer to the alphanumeric keys to reduce awkward motions and stretches, particularly for key combinations involving thumb keys (Control and Alt, for example).



• **20-degree lateral tilt design** - the keyboard design places your hands so that your thumbs are positioned approximately 20 degrees higher than pinky fingers. This design helps to minimize stresses associated with pronation and static muscle tension while enabling maximum keying productivity.



• **Integral palm support** - the palm support with optional self-adhesive pads enhances comfort and reduces stressful extension of your wrist. This provides a place to rest your hands while they are not actively keying.



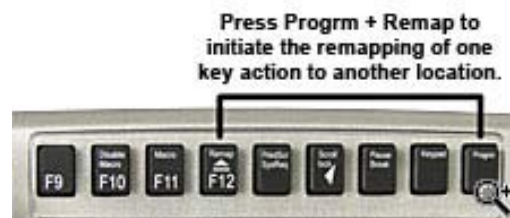
• **Low-force, tactile key switches** - the low-force (45 grams) mechanical key switches are engineered to provide both tactile and audible feedback. Their long travel (4 mm), with activation at approximately 2 mm, reduces the jarring impact of “hitting bottom”.



• **Embedded 10-key layout** - a traditional numeric (10-key) keypad is embedded into the right alphanumeric keywell, which provides ergonomic advantages for number-intensive operations. The 10-key legends are located on the front edge of the key caps. The 10-key can also be programmed to operate from the left keywell.



• **Key re-mapping** - individual keys can be re-mapped or copied to other key locations. As a result, you can customize the keyboard’s operation for your personal use to reduce stressful reaches and establish an optimal hand workload.



• **Macro programmable** - up to 48 macros can be programmed and stored in the keyboards on-board memory. Great for eliminating awkward key combinations or for individuals that type the same word or phrase repeatedly.



• **Optional foot switches** - up to three foot switches can be used to perform keystrokes, redistributing a portion of the workload away from your hands. For instance, a foot switch can be used to activate the embedded 10-key pad or “shift” key.



• **Smaller footprint** - the Kinesis keyboard is smaller than a traditional keyboard, and measures 16 5/8" by 8 1/8" by 3". This smaller foot print reduces the amount of reach necessary in operating the mouse by locating the pointing device much closer to the user.



Getting Started

Obviously the folks at Kinesis were motivated in their research due to issues related to Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) and Cumulative Trauma Disorder (CTD) brought on by such things as tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, etc. In fact, Kinesis devotes a whole chapter on what to do in case you are injured as well as an Appendix on *Ergonomic Guidelines*.

Ignore the contact info in the User's Manual, because it is from way before the area codes changed for the State of Washington way back when and the manual is for an earlier keyboard.

Apparently, the difference between the Kinesis Advantage MPC and the Pro is the included footswitch. It took me a while to figure out that the footswitch is defaulted to the number board, which is part of the right hand keyboard cup. Actually, another reason for the Pro version is that it can handle up to 142 different macros (you program) vs. 56 for the Advantage keyboard.

The most important part of the manual is back in *Chapter Five: Customizing Your Keyboard*.

And the cups (they call them keywells) aren't the only thing that has to be relearned. The keyboard has thumb keys. The left hand thumb is responsible for Backspace, Delete, Control, Alt, Home and End, while the right thumb handles Space, Enter (to the left of Space), Control, Apple or Windows, Page Up and Page Down. Whew!

If you are a touch typist, you will love this keyboard. If you are like me, you will need to relearn typing skills. For instance, I am predominantly left-handed, so now I have to use my right hand more now that the Space and Enter keys are right next to each other. And because I picked up the bad habit of looking at my fingers as I type instead of the screen, I notice that my eyes are getting really tired from moving back and forth between cups on this keyboard. And because the Space is right next to the Enter key, you can guess that I have a lot of Backspace and

Space redoes because I keep clicking the Enter instead of the Space key. Arrggh!

So my head, eyes, and arms get a workout while my wrists tend to be more relaxed. Tradeoffs.

They say it can take up to 2 weeks to get used to the keyboard...sigh...

But they thoughtfully included an Exercise booklet so I can relearn keyboarding. Not shown in the pics are the palm rests included in the box.

The silver keyboard is semi-heavy, yet rests nicely on my lap as I recline

And

Rest

My

Arms

On

My

Executive

Chair.

Got to watch the Space and Enter keys more closely! I moved the keytops around and reprogrammed the Backspace key to be where the Enter key started and the Enter key to be where the Space key was and the Space key is now where the Backspace key was originally. Perhaps that will make my left-dominated brain play nice with is keyboard. Instructions to reset, program and do macros is pasted on the underside of the keyboard.

Supposedly there is a Power key and an Eject key for the Mac– Not! At least not with this particular keyboard. And I tend to agree with Paul Fatula’s review from 2003 – I use the Space key a lot more than the Backspace key (well at least before this keyboard). Also, each key is a neat switch, so pressing all the way down is not necessary.

An audible feedback “tap” sound is hearable with each keystroke. Can it be turned off? It reminds me of the clicking sounds from the original IBM keyboard. Yep, it can be removed with *Progm* \. Ah, much better!

There is also an Appendix in the manual on *Instant Configuration Settings* discussing how the keyboard can be set for computer platforms and for common tasks.

Underneath the keyboard by the cable assembly are two USB ports stacked on top of one another. If I had a USB mouse I could use it there. The Dialog+ dongle is too long and the USB ports are at an angle, so that would break the lower port if the dongle was left there. It is a round hole with the rectangle USB ports attempting to fit. The lower port doesn’t really have quite enough clearance to be used. Now if it had been a square rectangular port hole, it would not be as much of a problem. Right now it is.

I wish there were a mouse or trackpad function in the middle of this keyboard. It just seems it ought to be there, right?

The manual refers to an included keytop tool for swapping keys around (found it!) – say I wanted to go Dvorak instead of QWERTY. However, if I want to switch between the two formats, it is simply a matter of doing *Progm Shift F5* to toggle.

I read where folks were having sticky key issues, but the manual has sticky key function that can be turned on or off with a *Progm modifier* (i.e. *Cntrl, Alt, Shift key*) *F6*, so that would resolve an issue, but the programmable keys that run at a 45-degree angle along the top of the keyboard are silicon-rubber keys and may be cause for concern over time. They are very chicklets-like and a bit wobbly.

Conclusion

Kinesis put an incredible amount of effort and research into this technology. A tweak here, a tuck there and this keyboard would be perfect. But two weeks to get used to it? I wish my brain had a reset and remapping function like this keyboard has!

Recommendation

If you suffer from either RSI or CTD, please take a look at this device. It has a 60-day money back guarantee.



V-MODA VIBE – Modaphones

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



V-MODA

<http://www.v-moda.com/>

<http://www.v-moda.com/our%20world/news/Vibe.aspx>

Released February 1, 2007

\$101 USD <http://www.v-moda.com/acquire.aspx>

Requirements: A device with a 3.5 mm stereo port.

Comes with: V-Moda earphones; Leatherette bag (imitation leather); b sizes, s, M, L); v-moda vip membership card with password; modawraj money back guarantee.

Strengths: Excellent audio range, great ear fit.

Weaknesses: None found.

News: <http://www.v-moda.com/our%20world/news/Vibe.aspx>

Other Reviews: <http://www.v-moda.com/Home/collection/modaphones/vibe/review.aspx>

<http://www.anythingbutipod.com/archives/2006/12/vmoda-vibe-review.php>



What They Say

Fashion-conscious style and audio enthusiast sound unite to form the most sophisticated electronics accessory in the world. Vibe's metal craftsmanship delivers the perfect balance of rich bass, superior audio clarity, and luxurious design. Unlike other uncomfortable and obtrusive in-ear headphones, Vibe *presents* essential active lifestyle comfort, security, and noise isolation for the discerning music enthusiast.



Modaphones Hearwear

alluring alloy elegance

- sophisticated design accentuates the modern individual
- handmade premium metal craftsmanship

hi-definition sound

- vibrant bass, vivid mid-range, and vivacious highs
- alloy metal enables sculpted sound curve fashioned for discerning music enthusiasts
- rich and precise bass levels accentuate bass-enhanced music
- V-MASQUE dynamic driver provides natural and warm soundstage

essential sport ergonomics

- three sizes of ultra-soft silicon fittings (S,M,L) provide comfortable, quick, and secure fit
- weighs only 12 grams, world's lightest earphone in its class
- micro-size and flush-fit for active lifestyles and relaxation
- durable even-length cables optimized for sport

noise isolating bliss

- bass level isolating soft silicon (BLISS) technology comfortably reduces noise and enables deep bass
- unlike bulky active noise cancellation, BLISS introduces no artificial sound into your music and requires no batteries

leather pouch and modawrap cable manager

- gold leather pouch and provides effortless storage
- modawrap provides convenient cable management
- VIP card access to exclusive "V-MODA modcasts", music and gear

specifications:

- Compatibility: all iPod, Zune, MP3, DVD, computer, and CD players
- Included Accessories: gold leather pouch, modawrap, six pairs (S,M,L) of clear and two pairs (S) black silicone fittings,
- V-MODA VIP Card Frequency Response: 12 Hz – 22 kHz
- Speaker Driver: V-MASQUE dynamic technology, 9mm neodymium rare-earth magnet
- Cable length: 32" plug to y-connector, 13.5" even-length earphone cables
- Cable diameter: 2.2mm optimal for sport Plug: 24k gold-plated, straight 3.5mm (1/8") stereo plug
- Weight: 12 grams (0.42 ounces)
- Impedance: 16 ohms
- Sensitivity: 92 dB (at 1kHz 1mW)
- Rated Input Power: 2mW



precision engineering:

v-modas products are inaugurated with a passion for precision engineering, materials, and leading edge innovation. Our work begins by architecting the core out of the finest technology & materials available. Unlike other companies that lock users in with proprietary connectors, expansion cards, software, and plugs – v-modas is dedicated to bringing standards and innovation to the masses. V-modas aspires to make ergonomic technology for the people by transforming innovative & advanced functionality into a seamless tech bliss.

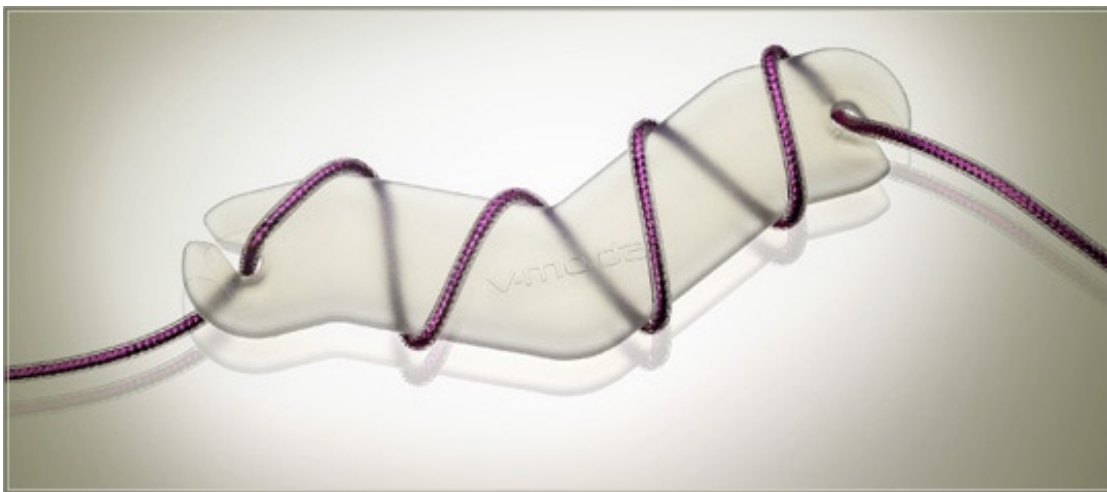
Philosophy - <http://www.v-modas.com/Home/collection/modaphones/vibe/philosophy.aspx>

What I Say

Class. Style.

What caught my eye was the fact that these earphones are metal and not plastic and cover the frequencies from 12 Hz up to 22kHz, use a 9mm neodymium rare earth magnet and have a 24k gold-plated stereo plug and have these really neat silicon pieces in 3 sizes to fit my ear. And the VIBE rests gently in my earlobe without getting in the way or falling out. No over-the-ear or hang-around-the-head mechanism. And if the 32” plug to y-connector cable that hooks to the same-length earphone cables is too long, they thoughtfully provided a “modawrap” to take up the slack.

It took me a while to figure out how to use the modawrap, but I didn’t have access to this page when the package arrived - <http://www.v-modas.com/collection/modaphones/modawrap.aspx>



I used the red roxx unit (it kind of matches my hair) with my iMac G5 optical audio port and had to turn down the volume immediately, because it pulled in the audio feed so strongly. Yes, there is a warning included in the box that you should protect your ears from high volume. The same thing happened with the iPod my wife uses for running (the Nike kit). The sound was truly vibrant with bass being really bass and the highs really being high, but once again, the volume on the iPod had to be turned way down.

Now to hear what music sounds like, plug in and tune into the V-Mode website. It has a music section which no doubt will bother the RIAA, unless it is all original new-wave music they can’t touch and streaming with their demand to have sites pay for airing music, just like they did in ruining the radio industry. (Intentional snarky remark.)

I thought it was funny that these classy, stylish earphones were \$101 USD based on where they are located in Hollywood Hills, CA (near Highway 101). What if they had been located next to Highway 66?

They provide a credit-card-like plastic unit with a password that is intended for registering at <http://www.v-mod.com/vip> for future podcast “modcast” uploads.

The cabling is plastic-encased tinsel-like covered cable that remind me of scales on a snake, but I’m sure they were thinking more on flash and less on function. The cable is essentially, shielded.

q: Why is the cable so important?

a: Modaphones were created to be used on the go, as I wanted to audition music at the gym and everyday activities. I tested every cable diameter from 1.8mm to 3.2mm, and every length from 40”-52”. After jogging 6 miles with every combination, I determined that the main cable diameter of 2.2mm and overall length of 44”-46” work best to prevent “earphone fallout”. Our cables are rigorously real-life and tested with weights to withstand abuse. Other details are of course their aesthetics such as metal braiding, “tactile feel”, and the ability to wear it around or straight from the ear.

Val Kolton (founder) and Joseph Bucknall (designer) at V-MODA did a great job marrying fit and function with flash and BLISS (Bass Isolating Soft Silicon), along with the dynamic V-MASQUE driver. The metal earphones really make a difference in sound quality. Simply amazing!

q: What is “V-MASQUE” speaker technology on VIBE?

a: V-MASQUE is our name for the combination of speaker technology and fanatical commitment to quality. We heavily believe in a natural and warm sound signature, and our R&D is focusing on using micro-sized metal alloy housings with dynamic speaker drivers to produce high clarity with a warm, rich sound. Many of the other high-end companies are using “balanced armature transducers”, which can produce clarity well when put into the ear deep, yet lack warmth and have a “mechanical” sounding midrange and highs that make sound earphones sound “flat” and “cold”. The sound stage of vibe is very “sweet” or even “juicy” in the lows and mid-range yet produces very precise his.

q: what is a “sculpted sound curve”?

a: We call our frequency response our “sculpted sound curve”, as our engineers have specially crafted the curve for over a year to perfect the final sound. It is designed to actually mimic the sweet and warm sound signature of my favorite hi-fi stereo speakers costing thousands of dollars a piece. As one can see, the curve is amazingly straight and there is no bass roll-off which produces extremely detailed basslines. The slight “smiley face” in the 500hZ to 2kHz range is designed to slightly accentuate the bass and produce the warm soundstage. The gentle dropoff in the high-range was carefully designed to not sound to “harsh” or “clinical”, and is actually very good for in-ear-monitors.

q: What is BLISS noise isolating technology?

a: BLISS is the acronym for “bass level isolating soft silicon”, which by itself is not unordinary for in-ear headphones, yet extreme attention to detail is critical because of the fittings effect in both comfort and sound. The exact thickness of the silicon make all the difference in the world. Many of the “softest” silicon fittings on some brands are too thick in our user test panel. BLISS also is made to not only be the extremely comfortable, but also the easiest headphone to take on and off quickly. This way one can rock quickly in a matter of seconds, take an intermission before another encore.

The shape of the fitting is also extremely crucial to prevent them from popping out too easily and provide a proper seal. One of the interesting things that we found out is that the smaller the fitting, the better the fit for some users since the smaller fitting fits slightly deeper to prevent fall-out. However, many people may try only “larger” fittings thinking it would be tighter when the opposite is true. This is why we put the small fittings on by default in the packaging and users should try a few sizes for optimal sound and comfort.

BLISS is also an ideology of how far deep the fittings lie in the ear and the level of noise isolation. In our user test groups, many users found other high-end headphones required a fit too deep and intrusive to get the best sound and comfort. We feel our BLISS fittings are “just right” for everyday use and the amount of noise isolation they provide.

What is not shown is that each earpiece is labeled as either R (Right) or L (Left) on the metal section next to the silicon and the little black buds are strain-reliefs for the cable.

And then there is the weight. Not much 12 miligrams. These just sit in the ears quite comfortably and do not irritate the skin or put pressure on the ear canal. When running or jogging, these stay put and don't fall out either. Sweet!

The pouch is not really made of leather and the specs they provide are not quite right about the number of silicon earpieces (the bags contain the same amount of clear and black silicon pieces – 3 sets each and not 6 clear and 3 black), but they can update their website accordingly.



Conclusion

Do you want to wear earphones that make you stand out in a crowd instead of appearing like another white earbud person? These come in Gunmetal Black and Flashback Chrome as well as Red Roxx.

Recommendation

These “modaphones” are truly a keeper!

V-MODA Bass Fréq Modaphones

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



V-MODA

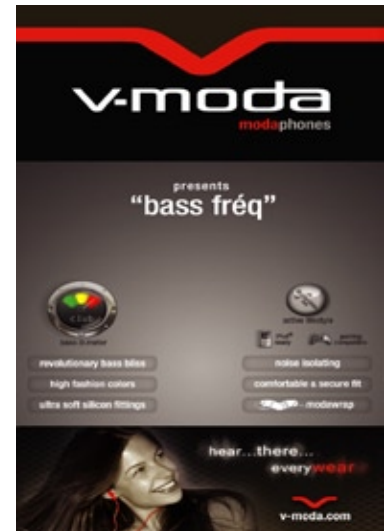
<http://www.v-moda.com/>

<http://www.v-moda.com/collection/modaphones/bass%20freq.aspx>

Released June 6, 2006

\$50 USD <http://www.v-moda.com/acquire.aspx>

Requirements: A device with a 3.5 mm stereo port.



Comes with: V-Moda earphones; clear silicon earpieces (3 sizes, s, M, L); modawrap, 1-year replacement warranty, 30-day money back guarantee.

Strengths: Excellent audio range, nice ear fit.

Weaknesses: Range apparently is not as good as the VIBE modaphones. Metal and chamber curve makes a big difference.

Other Reviews: <http://www.gadgetnutz.com/modules/news/print.php?storyid=229>

What They Say

LOS ANGELES, CA – (June 6, 2006) – Music lifestyle brand V-MODA today announced the launch of Bass Fréq modaphones, specifically designed for listeners who want to experience the deep bass sounds of the world's premiere clubs and sound systems wherever they go. With eight vivid color options, a solid build, and ultrasoft fit, these high-fidelity earphones are designed to coordinate with iPods and other portable music players, as well as modern fashion apparel and accessories.

Incorporating BLISS (Bass Level Isolating Soft Silicon) technology into the design, the earphones reduce outside noise to produce a stronger and more natural bass response. Unlike bulky active noise cancellation technologies, BLISS noise isolation introduces no artificial sound into the music, and requires no batteries.

As a result, Bass Fréq modaphones provide unrivaled sonic clarity across the full sound spectrum, producing warm mids and crisp highs that blend seamlessly with the vibrant bass.



"Club music without incredible bass is like candy without sugar—they're both missing a critical ingredient," said Val Kolton, founder and CEO of V-MODA. "Bass Fréq modaphones complete the recipe for superior sound with deep yet precise bass levels that you can actually feel, just like at a club."

Built for the modern active lifestyle, Bass Fréq earphones offer a comfortable, light weight, and secure fit during any activity. They come with three sizes of soft silicon fittings that fit snug into any ear and help to block out unwanted sound. The included Modawrap cable manager also makes it easy to adjust the length of the Bass Fréq cables and store them without tangles or case winders.

Bass Fréq earphones are currently available in eight cool colors including Blue Steel, Orange Camo, and That's Hot Pink. Their vogue design and vibrant bass place them alongside V-MODA's Remix m-class modaphones as the next "must-have" fashion accessories of 2006.



PRICING AND AVAILABILITY Bass Fréq modaphones are now available for \$50 (US) at Shop V-MODA (shop.V-MODA.com) and within 30 days at select US retailers including Virgin Megastores. Please visit V-MODA.com for more information on pricing and international retail store availability. The frequency response curve for Bass Fréq can also be found at V-MODA.com.

ABOUT V-MODA V-MODA is a music lifestyle brand based in Hollywood, California. The company designs and markets innovative products that combine high-fashion and high-function, while paying homage to a rock-and-roll and house music lifestyle. The Modaphone Hearwear Collection is the first in a series of music-inspired products, apparel, and DJ compilations to be unveiled in 2006.

Founder Val Kolton, together with designer Joseph Bucknall, leads the innovation and creative nucleus responsible for transforming the music lifestyle vision into an inspired reality. More information about V-MODA and its progressive products can be found at



Bass Fréq Level: 122dB at 20 Hz (view response curve)

Frequency Response: 8 Hz – 22 kHz

Speaker Driver: 10mm neodymium rare earth magnet

Cable length: 30.5" plug to y-connector, 13.5" even-length earphone cables

Plug: 24k gold-plated, straight 3.5mm mini-plug

What I Say

This is kind of unfair, because I received the VIBE modaphones first and I can really tell the difference between the \$50 Bass Fréq modaphones and the \$101 VIBEs – it most definitely is in the fidelity and depth and these are more inner-ear instead of lay-down-in-the-earlobe modaphones.

Conclusion

I also had to turn up the volume a bit to get the volume I was getting with the VIBEs (that made me turn the volume controls down to a comfortable level for my ears).

But it is true, you can "feel" the bass frequencies more than you hear them with these Bass Fréq modaphones.

Wii Game Console

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie



Nintendo Corporation
<http://www.nintendo.com/>



\$359 USD Footswitch is \$30 USD.
60-day money-back guarantee.



Strengths: Wireless remote, two USB ports, memory chip to store game data, internal hard drive, wireless Internet access.

Weaknesses: no built-in Ethernet.

With the console wars still going on and there hasn't been a clear winner yet. The Nintendo Wii is defiantly a strong unit but it's not perfect. There are a few flaws with the unit but nothing that couldn't be expected with all of the new technology they put into it.

The first time I played it, I was impressed. It was so easy to play. A lot of people would think that using the remote would be difficult but it's just like a T.V. remote. The only thing wrong with the remote is that there are two buttons at the bottom of the remote and when you need to use them, they are very hard to reach. Especially when you have both hands full. A handy feature is that a power button is built into the top of the remote. You don't have to stand up to turn off the system. Also, by pressing the home button you can find how much battery life is left in all of the remotes that are connected. They really did a good job.

The console has two USB ports, ports for SD flash cards and other memory cards and Game Cube controller ports. The Wii remote has a built in memory chip that lets you store game data and files. This is for when you take the remote to another Wii, you will have all of your files with you. Also the Wii itself has a hard drive to store channels, game data, photos and more. It has a built in wireless card for people with wireless Internet. I used it and I had no problem setting up the Internet. For those who don't have a wireless network, you must buy Nintendo's USB adapter - there is no built in Ethernet port. The video output is still the regular RCA cables, and every unit comes with Wii Sports, a remote, and all the manuals you will need to get started.

When you start the console, a dashboard where you add your channels, which are things you can do with the Wii. There is a Disc Channel for games, a Photo Channel, a News Channel, a Shopping Channel and even an Internet Channel. There isn't much to say about the Disc Channel, except it is where you launch Wii and Game Cube games. I didn't play much with the Photo Channel, but know you can use the Wii to edit and store digital photos. You can only use the News and Weather Channel if you have access to the Internet because it needs to access the forecasts and the news feeds. You also need Internet access to use the Shopping Channel, where you can buy stuff like old N64 games.

The Wii allows downloading new channels and system updates. You must download the Internet Channel from the Internet. Nintendo is continuing to develop more channels to make to Wii more enjoyable. The graphics are also impressive. Nothing like the PS3 or Xbox 360, but better than the previous generation of game systems.

They looked great on a standard TV.

Conclusion

All together, I think this is a great machine, especially for those people that aren't hard core gamers and just want to have fun. Although, with the growing game selection this console is beginning to appeal to the hard core gamers. The game developers will take a while to get used to developing for the wireless remote, but that's expected. Awesome job Nintendo!

You need a
QUICKY!

Introducing the Quicky
Wireless USB Transceiver
exclusively from QuickerTek!

- Be iTV Ready
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- 15 x's More Power than Apple's AirPort cards
- Works with Mac OS X 10.3-10.4
- Works with International AirPort cards
- Compatible with 802.11 b/g access points
- Works with all Macs

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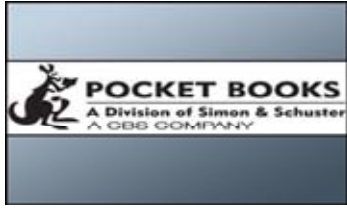
Books

The section 4 book reviews in this issue of *macCompanion* contains:

- 55 Ways to Have Fun With Google – Google tips and tricks, reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher
- PodCasting Solutions: The Complete Guide to PodCasting – more coverage of a good book on this current subject, reviewed by Wayne LeFevre
- On Writing – Stephen King’s excellent book on something he knows oh so well - writing, reviewed by Mike Hubbart
- Windows Seat: The Art of Digital Photography – check out this review from Contributing Guest Author Chris Marshall

55 Ways To Have Fun with Google

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Phillippe Lenssen
<http://blog.outer-court.com/>

Publisher: lulu.com
<http://www.lulu.com/content/296615>

Released: June, 2006

Pages: 220

\$16.50 USD (lulu.com), \$19.66 USD (Amazon)

ISBN: 978-1-4116-9341-8

Strengths: Fun, lighthearted and informative.

Weaknesses: Needs a category index of the ideas (for example games 2, 4 ...)

Audience: Google novices



I like Google, Google Earth and the other tools as do many others. So when I received the book and saw the title, I had a hunch this might be an interesting read to describe Google and whether they found it useful to “shell out” \$20 to read related Google information. As I read information on the cover “a cabinet of search engine curiosities, riddles, games, and a little bit of usefulness,” I wondered how useful could the 55 ways be? I found out to many some and to most a lot.

The author is known for his (if it is so wildly popular how come I never heard of it) Blogscoped (<http://blog.outer-court.com/>). Basically this book is a compendium of notes and ideas posted from his blog since 2003.

As I started this process, I did notice the index listed by number. But what I really thought about but there wasn't any was an index of categories that there are many times in blogs. Browsing through I could see small cartoons, screenshots of google and curious ways to feed google into your Internet workings on a daily basis. As I rummaged through the book, I tried first to find ideas that would be useful for me and just not idle stuff that was not immediately useful.

I found ideas that I would not be interested in, like several Google Games (#2 *Snake Game*, #4 the *Google Irritation Game* and #5 *Googling Proverbs*). Other ideas were not particularly new to me #8 *Browsing Images of a Site*, #8 *What is Google and what do I consider fun about it?*, and #9 *How much item Google Saves Us*. Then I found one I could love.

#10 *Google Cookin' a Lemon Chicken* is an interesting take off on how to find other recipes in the internet world. While I already have thousands of recipes logged there are still more to find. This includes dozens of

recipe sites bookmarked as well as the food channel etc.,with hundreds of recipes I want to try and have tried. I still found this tidbit of information, this “idea” a possible way to use google in the future.

I found out what #32 *Googlebombing* is (I won't tell, you will have to find out on your own), #33 *Google Ads Gone Wrong*, #37 *What Googlefights* , #55 *Googledromes and the many Google parodies*. By that time, I found it was easier to find and search for the titles for the ideas better by thumbing through to find the page numbers of the ideas in the index as opposed to finding the numbers of the ideas.

Conclusion

I am sure that I will found some really interesting aspects in this book as time goes on. But for now I have not found any I can't live without and sparked my imagination to go wild. But then again, I have used Google Earth, Google (I have known how to use search engines the right way since the 90's before Google) and exploring on the internet for many years.

Recommendation

For the novice “Googlers ” I think it is helpful and might expand your ideas how to find and search for information on the Internet. The book has some interesting ideas for many. Whether it t is worth \$20 I am not so sure. Look it over in the bookstore first and then decide. This book may help you find enough of the 55 way to make it worth your while.

Podcast Solutions: The Complete Guide to Podcasting

By Wayne LeFevre originally reviewed on MyAppleStuff.com 1/07

Authors: Michael W. Geoghegan and Dan Klass

Publisher: friendsofED

www.friendsofed.com

Released: August, 2005

Pages: 240

\$24.99 USD, \$29 CND, £13 UK

ISBN-10: 1590595548

Audience: Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced



Strengths: Perfect for anyone wanting to start or have a podcast.

Weaknesses: None.

So, you'd like to take a try at podcasting, but not really sure where to start? Have I got a book for you. It's called Podcast Solutions. The Complete Guide to Podcasting by Michael W. Geoghegan and Dan Klass, with a Foreword by Adam Curry, a recognized leader of the podcasting movement.

Published by friendsofED and costing \$24.99 I found this book easy to read and follow. There are a few podcasting books on the market today, with more coming in everyday it seems. The authors of this one, however, really have their act together. Michael Geoghegan produces the Reel Reviews Radio podcast as well as Grape Radio. He also has produced podcasts for Disney and taught the very first Podcasting 101 class. Dan hosts two podcasts, New 80s Music and The Bitterest Pill, so they do have a lot of experience between them.

The first chapter of the book devotes itself to a brief history of podcasting, followed by finding and listening to podcasts and finally to the meat of the book. The How-To's.

It delves, deeply I may add, into Podcasting tools. The mics, mixers, headphones and every piece of hardware and cabling one might need. From simple setups to thousands of dollars worth, it's all here. But before they even go into the tools needed, they ask a simple direct question of "Who are you and why should we listen?" This chapter focuses in on Planning your podcast, and may be one of the more important chapters in the book! From why you want to do a show to formatting, structuring, using music, (legally,) and show length. I think that this is very important in an age where people are touting the benefits of podcasting and everyone can do one, but not asking if you really have a plan or concept.

Of course, everything else is included in the book, and in great detail. Recording, Putting it All Together, Preparing your File, Serving it up. I want to stop here for a second on this chapter. Serving it up helps with everything from registering your own domain to creating the podcast website, to choosing whether it's a blog

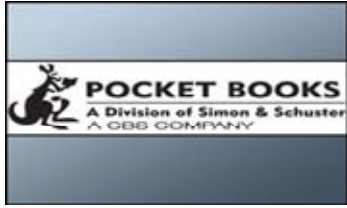
or HTML. It explains how to enclose and create the XML file to using a different platforms such as Blogger, FeedBurner LibSyn and WordPress. The real boring, but extremely important stuff for the success of any podcast, past those that you post with your .mac account. (Which really couldn't be easier.) The final chapters are devoted to getting your podcast heard. Using iPodder.org to iTunes and promoting everything in-between. Finally ending with the Holy Grail of the industry, Making Money.

The book also contains a CD that includes dozens of software applications from podcatchers to editing software.

So, I can highly recommend this to anyone that is thinking of creating their own podcast, but doesn't quite know where to start, or just wants to make their current podcast better. Part of the authors summary can sum it up the best when they say that the book covers "audio production, voice-over techniques, advertising and marketing, media relations, and news writing....Podcasting has changed the way content is delivered, Let's keep pushing forward to see exactly what that can mean for everyone."

On Writing

Reviewed by Mike Hubbartt, Copyright ©2007



Author: Stephen King

Publisher: Pocket Books

<http://www.simonsays.com/content/destination.cfm?sid=33&pid=427726>

Released: June, 2001

Original hardcover published by Scribner in 2000

Pages: 288

\$14.95 USD, \$22.95 CND

ISBN-10: 0-671-02425-6

ISBN-13: 978-0-671-02425-3

Audience: Stephen King fans, writers – published and unpublished, and people with family or friends working in the craft of writing. Pretty much everyone.

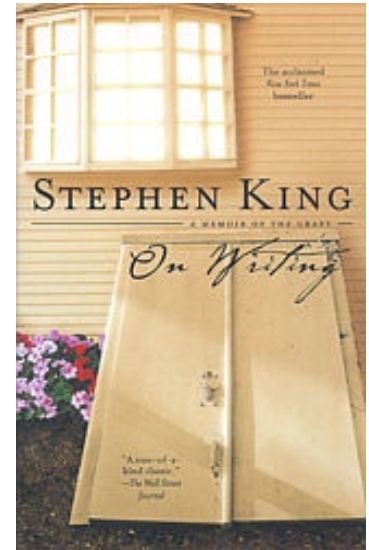
Strengths: Powerful, intense, revealing – an important insight to one person's life experiences working with the craft. Great instructions on things to embrace and avoid as a writer – excellent reference book.

Weaknesses: Not a trip to Candy land, King reveals his personal demons.

Why does Stephen King write? Pick up *On Writing* to hear his story in his own words. The book starts with King's childhood and covers the experiences at school, work, and home that influenced him as a writer. His writing career started as a child, when he wrote and sold short stories to his family and schoolmates. He later tried his hand at journalism – he wrote pieces for his older brother's home press newsletter *Dave's Rag*. Later, he wrote for the school newspaper, then landed a job (okay, was directed to take a job by teachers he'd lampooned in an edition of the newspaper not meant for widespread distribution) as a sports reporter at a local newspaper. During these times his voracious reading habit was only offset by his desire to write and submit fiction.

Influenced by his mother, he attended college where he met his future wife (and mother of their two children) He continued writing and submitting short fiction works, when he started writing *Carrie*. After beginning the story, he decided to scrap it because it was too long to be published as a short story, but his wife found the crumpled copy and insisted he finish the story. King wrote and submitted *Carrie*, earning a \$2,500 advance for the hardcover. Later, he earned \$200,000 for the paperback rights. Pretty big money for a kid brought up by a single mom doing whatever she could to pay the bills.

His mother was ill when *Carrie* was published, although a relative read the book to her before she passed away. King said she always believed he'd be a writer. Throughout the book he talks about family issues, as well as



drug and alcohol abuse issues that affected his writing and could have ended his career. It takes a strong person to stand up and admit they have a problem, and King does that so others will see the things that can affect a writer. King's fascinating memoir in *On Writing* alone is worth the price of the book.



In the next section, King explains what writing is – and yes, knowledge of grammar is important. King endorses Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, and that is one of my personal favorites. If you even think about trying your hand at writing, pick up a copy of Strunk's 'little book' and you won't be disappointed.

King has a few things he condemns: "leaving a trail of pulsing adverbs, wooden characters, and vile passive-voice constructions behind them." Other books on writing (including *The Elements of Style*) agree with all three items. Adverbs should be removed as they weaken the story, wooden characters are boring and the product of lazy writers, and active voice is shorter and easier to read than passive voice.

King advocates that writers need to read as well as write. He says "reading is the creative center of a writer's life." Reading is fun, it regenerates the soul, and is a good way to learn which techniques to embrace and avoid than by reading work from other authors. While I enjoyed the first section of the book because it gives so much insight into Stephen King the person, the second section provides invaluable writing style tips.

Then I read the third and fourth sections. These two sections get into the tools and techniques of the writing trade. King says a novel has three parts: narration, description and dialogue. Narration "moves the story from point A to point B", description "provides sensory reality" and dialogue "brings the characters to life." A brief yet clear explanation that I wished my professors used in Freshman Comp I and II in college.

King does not like plotting. He says "Plot is, I think, the good writer's last resort and the dullard's first choice." Doesn't pull any punches, does he? King feels stories reveal themselves and writing with "tiresome tyranny of the outline and the notebook filled with 'Character Notes'" produces a story that feels artificial and labored. I must confess I've used outlines, as I don't know a better way to deal with new worlds for science fiction and fantasy. But, while I want to create the background places of other worlds, I want to try King's approach to use situation to develop the story instead of plot. He provides a simple exercise for people to try to let the situation reveal a story, and I highly recommend you make the effort. It is fun.

I enjoyed King's explanation of description in a novel. His explanation how to use enough – not too little nor too much – seems a bit vague, but he says experience will teach a writer how much is the correct amount. And something he brought up escaped me when I read his books. He does not like a lot of physical description of people or clothing. He says "locale and texture are much more important to the reader's sense of actually being in the story than any physical description of the players."

His tips on dialogue are excellent. He says "It's dialogue that gives your cast their voices, and is crucial in defining their characters..." Not that this is new. Other how-to books on writing say the same. What I like about King is his specific examples of who does and does not write good dialogue. If you're truly serious about writing fiction, at least he gives a list of good and bad examples of dialogue.

His other insights on dialogue are useful as well. He says, "that writing good dialogue is art as well as craft." I'm not wild about people who use the 'art' thing to explain without defining – kind of the rage in the 60s and 70s (if you don't know something, say 'it's art, man'). King is better than that type of person and follows this by saying that "the key to writing good dialogue is honesty," and that is a tip a writer can and should use.

Another thing I'll quote from the book: "every book – is about something." He goes on to talk about *The Stand*

– my personal favorite King novel – and how he suffered writer’s block after writing the first 500 pages. He spent time figuring what the story was really about, then finished the first draft nine weeks later. How many books do you read that are 500 pages long? And he didn’t have a problem until that point? How can you argue with his belief that situation is more important than plotting?

I’ve read a number of books on writing, and everyone has a different opinion on the revision issue. King writes two drafts and does one last pass to polish the story. He doesn’t let anyone see his work until after the first draft, and sets it aside for six weeks before looking at it again. He then reads the draft in one sitting (when possible), correcting misspellings and inconsistencies, then does the second draft. He gets a few trusted advisors to read the draft then adds the polish and sends it off to the publisher.

Regarding back story (background that affects the novel), he says “The most important things to remember about back story are that (a) everyone has a history and (b) most of it isn’t very interesting.” I found this difficult when considering the needs of most historical, science fiction and fantasy stories, but King refers to JK Rowling as someone very good with back story and recommends reading her work. Since fantasy and science fiction are my two favorite genres, I think I’ll look at one or two of her ‘Harry Potter’ stories.

King also addresses some common myths about agents and publishers – they are human, are not part of a conspiracy to only represent friends and friends of friends, and they truly want to find and publish works from new authors. King also suggests buying a copy of *Writer’s Market* (from Writer’s Digest Books) - my copy is beside my desk, in easy reach and I agree it is well worth the price for new or experienced authors.

The final section is titled *On Living: A Postscript*. In 1999 while walking near his home, King was hit and injured by the driver of a blue van. It took months of care and physical therapy to recover, and something he did while recovering was finish this book. He had started it in 1998, but set it aside, and although his injuries affected how long he could write, his wife Tabby knew he needed to return to writing. The result? A powerful and honest guide to the writing life that can only help improve your fiction.

Conclusion

I learned a lot from this book – more than I expected when I bought it at Barnes and Noble. While I was reading King’s memoirs, I enjoyed the information but didn’t think this book would help improve my writing. I was wrong. After finishing the book, I believe it will become a classic writer’s reference. King tells the reader what he does, how he does it, and, most importantly, why he does (and does not do) things.

Some people choose a career because they love the idea of being something, while others choose a career because they love doing the work. King’s upbringing was not easy, and the common vein throughout his life is the drive to write. There are several ways to measure success in literature: awards, peer recognition, and sales. Stephen King’s books sell well, but he writes because he loves to write. He will be remembered long after his critics are gone, and that is success.

Oh, and before I forget – King wrote this book on a Mac. Is that surprising?

Recommendation

If you enjoy King’s work, write, want to write, or know someone that makes a living with the craft, buy this book. Buy a copy for yourself and buy another copy for a friend. Everyone writing fiction should buy a copy and periodically re-read it. Highly recommended.

Windows Seat:

The Art of Digital Photography & Creative Thinking

Reviewed by Guest Contributor Chris Marshall

Originally published at <http://MyAppleStuff.com>

O'REILLY®

Author: Julieanne Kost

Publisher: O'Reilly Press

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

Released: February, 2006

Pages: 152

\$39.99 USD, £28.50

ISBN-10: 0-596-10083-3

ISBN-13: 9780596100834

Strengths: Three great books in one, essential reading for photographers and artists.

Weaknesses: None encountered.

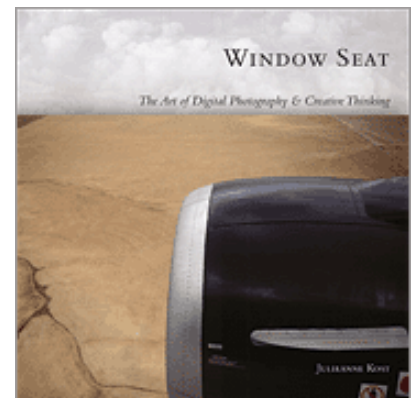
I had read the details about the book on the site and as you can see they give a pretty good insight into what to expect:

Window Seat: The Art of Digital Photography and Creative Thinking is a complete view of a creative project from the artist's perspective. Julieanne Kost, a Photoshop and creative thinking expert, has taken her own experience shooting images out of commercial airplane windows to create a unique creative seminar.

The first section of the book, *The Art of Creative Thinking: The Principles*, outlines Julieanne's method for staying creative in an increasingly complicated world. In her personal stories, advice, and philosophies, you'll find inspiration if you're stuck or just can't get started. You may recognize some of your own less-than-productive thought processes as she describes her own struggle to let go of the everyday flotsam of life to find a quiet mental space in which she can think, dream, and create.

The second part of the book, *Window Seat: The Portfolio*, is a collection of images culled from over 3000 photographs Julieanne shot from commercial airplane windows over a period of five years. The photographs are accompanied by brief commentaries addressing various aspects of the process, from the original inspiration to issues of control, subject matter, image selection, and manipulation.

The Appendix contains technical information: a discussion of the equipment and media Julieanne used to shoot the photos; how she processed the photographs using Adobe Camera Raw; the Photoshop techniques she employed to correct, retouch, and manipulate the images; her personal file management system; and how she prepares her files for printing.



This book is essential reading for photographers and artists looking for ways to stay creatively awake, aware, and alive.”

So why the surprises?

First, I am skeptical of anybody that thinks they can tell me how to be creative, or how I can follow a few simple guidelines to become a different person. My view is best summarized by “Why should what works for you work for me?” BUT, I really want to improve my photographic skills and to do that I realize I need to improve a number of things, including:

- my technique
- my technical skills
- my ‘vision’

So back to my first surprise - the 18 guidelines made sense. Not just from a ‘photographic’ perspective but as a general lifestyle guide. Things like “Visualize first, Photoshop second” may appear to be directed solely at the photographer, and isn’t really that different from “think first, act second” but I have been writing a consultancy document recently and found myself visualizing the document before I started editing it, i.e. capturing the RAW data first, rather than trying to construct each section as I went along.

Second Surprise? Not the creativity of the subject matter. Sure taking 3,000+ photographs out of airplane windows over a 5 to 6 year period is amazingly creative (in 2006 I took 42 flights and only took one picture as I flew over the Grand Canyon), but the way it made me think in terms of developing my own skills. I can’t really explain this next bit without some self-promotion so apologies, and if you want to skip ahead and take my word for it I will understand. Part way through reading this section I came up with the idea to set up an online account at <http://smugmug.com/> with three friends so that we could share our experiences, comment on and suggest ways to improve our photographs, provide the motivation to take more photographs that differ from our norm, and to be more creative. <http://www.4framesofmind.com/> is the result and we are all finding it very challenging and very rewarding.

I recently attempted to <http://www.4framesofmind.com/Dudes%20Frame/295976> through a series of photographs, which isn’t something I would have considered prior to reading this book. I also had my first “paying gig” at the weekend to take some photographs and found a quick re read of parts of this book very helpful before I started.

Conclusion

So the third surprise? What a great, simple overview of how to use Photoshop, and develop a Workflow. I am little like the rabbit caught in the headlights when it comes to Photoshop. I really want to know how to use it fully, but I am scared to delve too deep for fear of getting out of my depth. The more I have read the more my emotions have fluctuated between these two positions. One section of 24 pages and I feel much less dazzled by the prospect.

Recommendation

So there you have it, not only a great book, but three great books in one - in fact make that 4. It was as easy and enjoyable to read as a novel. You may have guessed already, but this book gets two thumbs up, 5/5, a gold star - whatever measure you want to use I rate this book extremely highly. Oh I nearly forget - it has some absolutely stunning photographs in it as well!

Shareware

The section 5 shareware reviews in this issue of *macCompanion* are:

- GhostAction – keep track of To-dos, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- GlassWriter Pro 2.5 – shareware writing software, reviewed by Michael Potter
- Freeware of the Month – Tim Verpoorten’s excellent monthly rundown on things you should try
- Spell Catcher X 10.2.3 – a **spell checker**, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad
- Writer.app 1.2.4 – a word processor that acts like a typewriter – for those who miss the good old days, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad
- WriteInOne 1.3 – good text editor, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

From Assistant Editor Harry {doc} Babad:

macCompanion Help Wanted

Shareware and freeware reviewers for *macCompanion*

Motivation - There’s so much out there to share

Rewards - Seeing your name in print

- Sharing new toys with soon to be friends

Contact – Robert Pritchett, and CC Harry

Expected salary - The product is yours all yours.

macCompanion is looking for a few good people that want to write informative reviews of shareware products. Writing experience is useful, but not an absolute requirement.

GhostAction

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Ghost Park Software

<http://ghostparksoftware.com/>

Released: February 17, 2007.

\$20 USD

Blog: <http://ghostparksoftware.com/blog/>

Strengths: Cocoa-based (made for Mac) GTD.

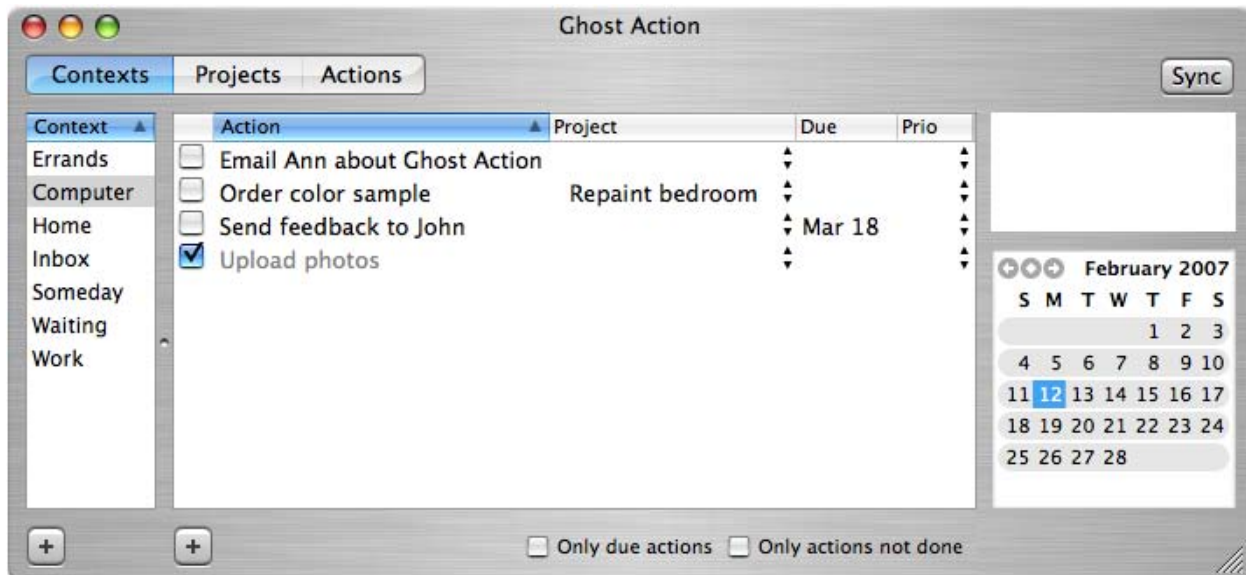
Weaknesses: There are a few more betas since 1.x



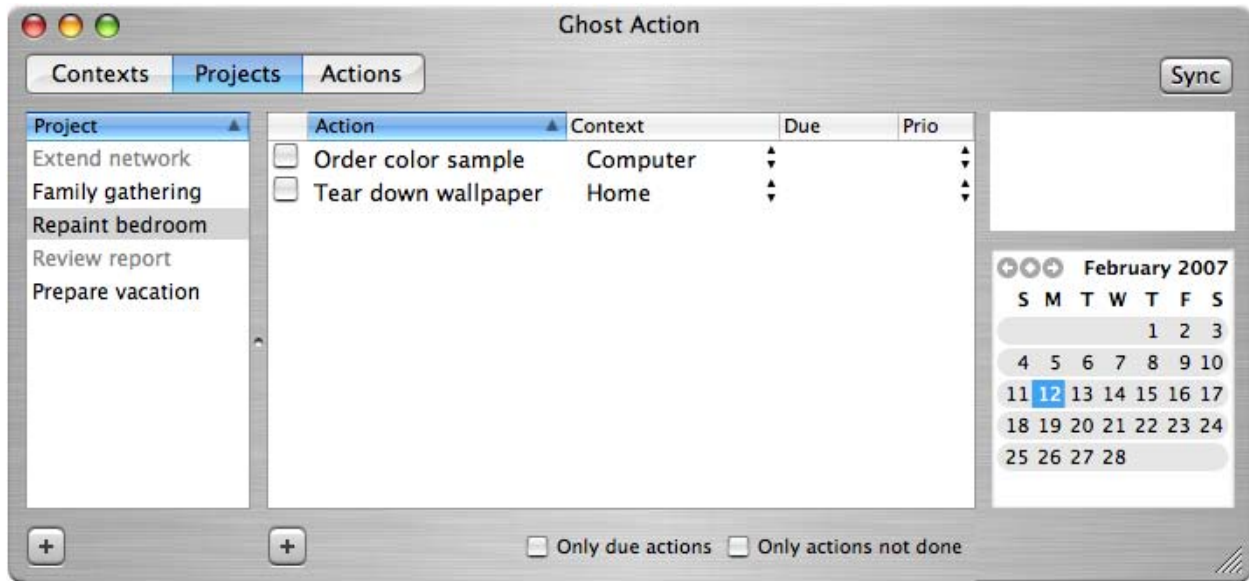
What They Say

Ghost Action is a new Mac application for keeping track of your to-dos using the simple and stress-free “Getting Things Done” method.

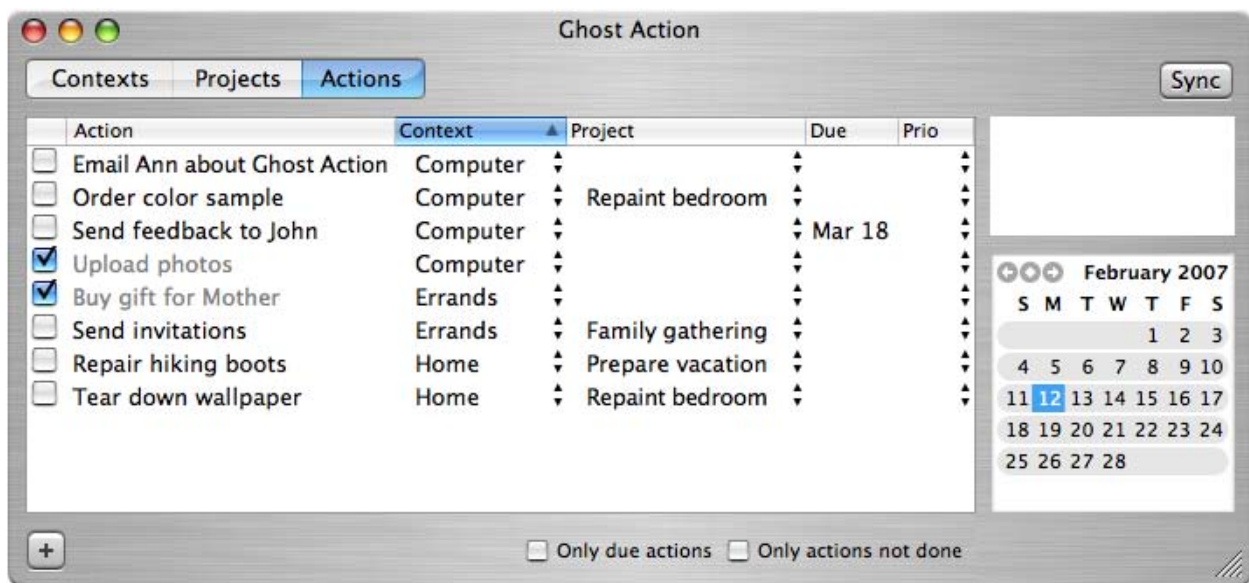
- Group to-dos according to project or context
- Synchronize with any iSync compatible device such as a PDA, an iPod or a phone
- Both contexts and projects are synchronized
- Full two-way synchronization with iCal and .Mac without iCal running
- Attractive and easy to use Cocoa user interface
- Full keyboard navigation
- Printing of to-do lists
- Developed for Mac only



Instead of having a single list full of unrelated to-dos, Ghost Action gives you different views of your to-dos, grouped according to context or project. You will use the project view when planning the next action for your projects. A project can be, for example Repaint bedroom or Review report. You will use the context view to get an overview of what can be done at the current context. A context refers to locations or situations, such as Home, Computer, Work and Errands, that are suitable for doing a certain kind of to-dos.



Ghost Action features full two-way synchronization with iCal, which enables synchronization of your to-dos to any iSync compatible device such as a phone or PDA, so that you may access your to-dos even when you are on the move. Users, who don't use a portable device, can achieve the same goal by printing their to-do lists.



Getting Things Done® (GTD) is a simple method for managing your to-do lists invented by David Allen that recently has become very popular. Everything you need to do is listed as actions. Unlike many other methods *Getting Things Done* doesn't emphasize priorities. Instead, actions are grouped according to the context they can be performed at and the project they belong to. Possible future actions are typically ignored until they can be acted upon. This makes GTD **stress-free**, simple, and attractive even to people who normally wouldn't use a time management method.

What I Say

Did you even know there was a genre of software known as “Getting Things Done”?

<http://macupdate.com/search.php?os=macosx&keywords=gtd&button.x=0&button.y=0>

<http://www.tuaw.com/2007/02/16/what-todo-gtd-yet-again/>

Here is a quick-and-dirty to-do list application made especially for the Mac provided as “Shareware”. It synchs with iCal or any PDA. It does it well.

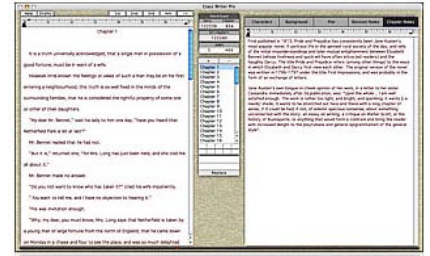
Precise. Oh, and when things are due, they go red.

Glass Writer Pro 2.5

Reviewed by Michael Potter

Glass Writer Pro 2.5

www.glasswriter.com



\$ 19.95 (30 Day Free Trial available)

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later; PowerPC / Rosetta (Universal version in the works); 128 MB RAM; 2.2 MB Hard Drive Space; 1024x768 or higher display resolution

Strengths: Dual-screen workspace, central log window, running word counts, can track multiple drafts, clean and simple interface, bookmarks, extensive notes and “stickies” are a plus, great price.

Weaknesses: limited export capabilities, fixed window size, intrusive backdrop, no spell check, manuscript is stored within the application.



Introduction

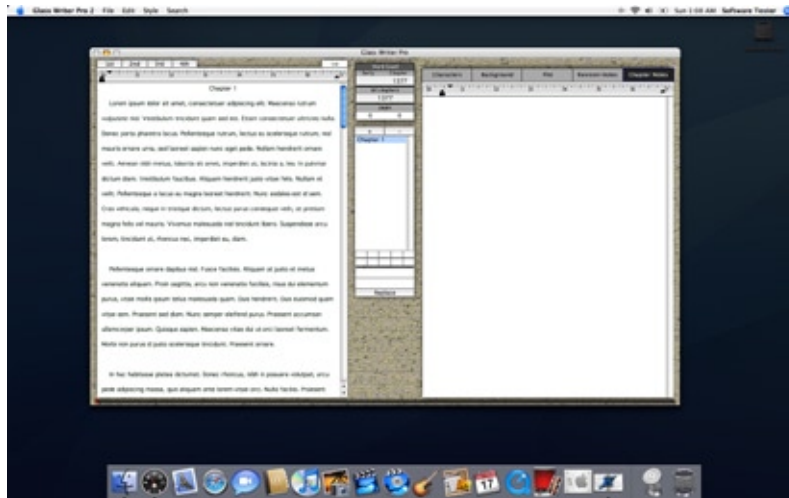
Programs are written to scratch an itch, to solve a problem we encounter when the tools already at our disposal don't cut it anymore. If you think back on the paradigm shifts we've gone through with personal computers, each was brought on by a new way of thinking to accomplish a task in a fraction of the time previously required. It should be no surprise, then, when an application like Glass Writer Pro surfaces, developed by novelist Glen Bledsoe, to solve his own, unique, needs.

Throughout the user manual, Bledsoe refers to problems he encountered as a writer – the inability to view more than one page at a time, the lack of bookmarks and no convenient place to keep track of things like character and plot. Bledsoe argues that novel writing is a special case, requiring special tools and Glass Writer Pro is the result.

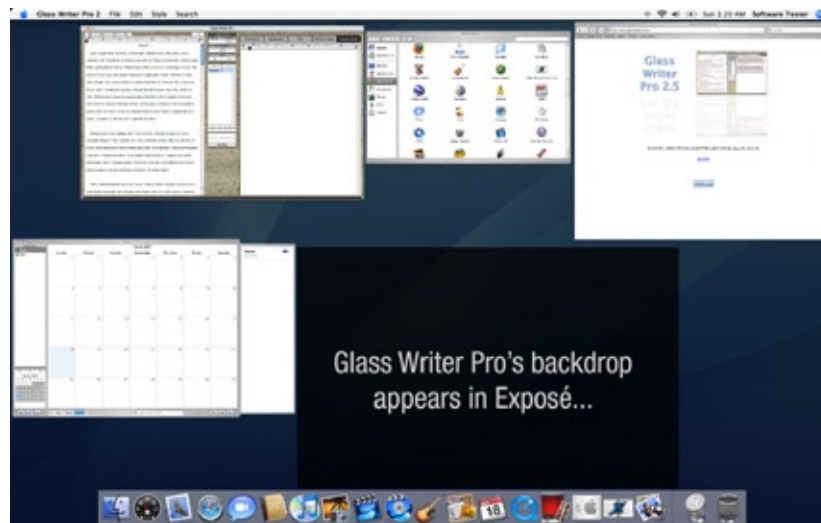
Getting Started

Installation of Glass Writer Pro is as easy as you might expect. Drag and drop the program to your Applications folder and double-click to begin. Those simple installation steps so familiar to Mac users may come back to bite you with potentially hazardous consequences, however. More on that in a bit.

There are two versions of Glass Writer Pro; one for smaller MacBook and iBook screens and one for larger MacBook Pro and desktop Macs. The reason for this oddity lies in the way Bledsoe coded the application window. Because Glass Writer Pro uses bitmap images, it's a non-resizable window and the two different versions provided are supposed to accommodate the different screen sizes found in the Mac world. As you can see in this screenshot, even with the version designed for desktops, Glass Writer Pro is easily dwarfed by the larger display found on my MacBook Pro. More than one time I found my mouse cursor groping for a non-existent resize handle to make the display window larger. I can't help but think this application feels very much like an OS 9 program running in Classic mode.



The grey background Glass Writer Pro throws up behind the composition window is a tool intended to help the writer stay focused on the task at hand, but I find it too distracting, especially for someone like me who uses Exposé to access my running applications. When Exposé is activated, the grey background appears as an “active window” taking up valuable space that should go only to the windows of the programs I’m using. Fortunately the “backdrop” can be turned off in preferences.



Using the Software

Glass Writer Pro’s greatest strength is the unified dual-screen dashboard, which includes a running word count per day, per chapter and for the entire manuscript as well as a page count and a quick-click list of chapters. This, combined with the ability to set up to 10 bookmarks throughout the manuscript, is a great way to quickly jump to different places in your novel to compare dialog, scenes or perform simple consistency checks.

“Reminders” are a neat feature that allow you to post “stickies” along the side of your composition window – over 80 according to the manual. The manual implies these notes can be placed anywhere you like, but I found that if I try to drag the reminder to my text, it simply disappears behind the window. Oops! Still, reminders could be very useful for temporary storage of a neat turn of phrase you might want to utilize later on. I’d like to see something similar to what Adobe Acrobat does: allow you to place a small, yellow, “sticky” within your text and expand the note from there. Perhaps in the next release.

Continuing our tour of Glass Writer Pro's composition window, the right side provides spots to keep the information most important to a novelist at his fingertips: Characters; Background; Plot; Revision Notes; and Chapter Notes. Unfortunately, these sections don't provide any organization to the information typed in. I would like to see Glass Writer Pro impose structure on the information entered to make it easier to find later. For instance, an outline mode would be very handy when laying down the details of the plot, and a searchable database of characters would be more handy than a running list. Granted, I could make up my own formatting and structure, but that defeats the purpose of an application like this – to give time back to the author.

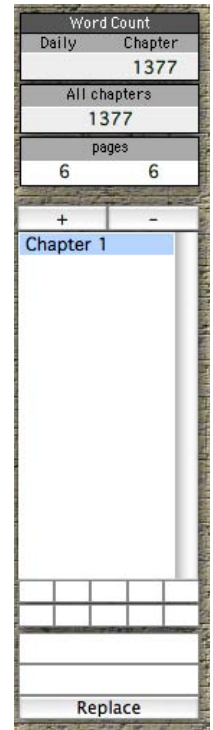
Basic text formatting in Glass Writer Pro is held to normal (plain), bold, italic and underline and you can choose from four basic fonts, Geneva, Helvetica, Times and New York. This selection of typefaces should be sufficient for most people and, from a small press editor's perspective, I'm glad to see this limitation. For those who need to, the size of the type can be bumped up to a point size greater than the default 12pt.

Unless I'm missing something, Glass Writer Pro does not take advantage of the Mac's built in spell checking – nor does there seem to be any internal spell checking tool. I find this to be a huge nuisance as even the most seasoned writer will make common spelling errors in their writing and shouldn't be forced to export their document to another application to run a spell check.

Rather than save each project as a file and open it via the File menu, Glass Writer Pro simply maintains the state of the current project *internally* each time you close the application. Because everything you do in Glass Writer Pro is contained within the application, if you want to maintain multiple projects at once, you need to have multiple copies of Glass Writer Pro installed on your Mac. Unfortunately, this means re-naming each installed copy to the name of your novel and tweaking each copy of Glass Writer Pro to your preferences when you start a project as there are no centralized preferences (including your registration information) stored in your user Library. In addition, it seems to me that each novel you write will forever be locked to that version of Glass Writer Pro – how could you upgrade the program short of exporting your manuscript and then importing it again to the new version? With these limitations, you can imagine the tragedy of treating Glass Writer Pro like any other program on your Mac – as I did in testing – when you suddenly find the novel you've worked on for months gone in an instant (all that *Lorem Ipsum*, *sob!*) because you forgot it was contained in the program itself and you copied a new version of the program over it! Bledsoe's answer to that may be "RTFM", but I find that a poor excuse for not providing a means to save the content separate from the program.

Lacking the ability to maintain separately saved projects outside of the application, the export capabilities of a program like this becomes *critically* important. I would not want my novel locked up inside an application with no way to get it out should something change in OS X that would prevent the program from running. With Glass Writer Pro, you're limited to exporting in Rich Text Format (RTF). The export process works smoothly, and there is an option to export your notes – though not as individual files. There is one strange anomaly when exporting the entire manuscript: Glass Writer Pro automatically inserts the non-intuitive phrase "[Page Break]" in between *chapters*. This is done, as explained in the manual, to provide an easy to search for phrase when inserting actual page breaks in your word processor. It could lead to confusion down the road when the manuscript is handed off to an agent if the author fails to swap out this text. I suppose I might not be so critical if it was more accurate - say "[Chapter Break]."

To get a good feel for how Glass Writer Pro might serve a real-world novelist in day-to-day life, I turned to my father, Robert Potter and sought his opinions on Glass Writer Pro vs. Microsoft Word, and this is what he had to say:



“The most obvious feature of Glass Writer Pro is dual screens: Bledsoe claims that novelists need to be able to compare two pages at the same time, presumably to ensure the protagonist isn’t climbing out of his paramour’s bed on page 238 when she committed suicide on page 185. I suppose I can buy his logic, but I would be more likely to use the second writing surface as a bulletin board, for notes about the characters, an outline of the plot—that sort of thing.

“Other features, while not essential, are nice to have if you are using Glass Writer Pro anyway. All chapters are listed in the center of the screen; click, and you are in Chapter Eight or Ten, or whatever. A continuous word count is also displayed. You can insert bookmarks ... if you wish. You can easily import and export text. In other words, Glass Writer Pro is yet another word processor—feature-poor compared to Microsoft Word if you are running an office, but with special features tailored to the novelist.

“Perhaps most satisfying, for an under appreciated writer, is the proofreader feature. When I highlighted a section of text and clicked TALK TEXT on my MacBook, a voice, sounding much like that of an international graduate teaching assistant, read the text aloud. Finally, someone spoke my words!”

Conclusion

Many of the my annoyances with Glass Writer Pro exist in the program because that’s how Glen Bledsoe the novelist works ... and I certainly can’t fault him for that. Glen wrote the program *for* Glen and then was kind enough to share the fruits of his labor with other novelists by releasing the program as shareware. While I appreciate that Glass Writer Pro was written to scratch one particular novelist’s itch, itches aren’t always in the same place, so I wonder if, in future releases, other styles and methods of writing will be taken into account and folded into the feature set now that the program has matured to version 2.5.

Recommendation

With the need to drop into a more full-featured word processor to complete many simple tasks such as spell-check, I find it hard to give a wholehearted recommendation to Glass Writer Pro. On the other hand, the interface is clean and simple – though perhaps overly so – and Glass Writer Pro might be perfect for someone who’s looking to better organize themselves as they mentally prepare to tackle a first novel. Twenty dollars is not a lot to spend on a specialized word processor and sometimes it’s the little things that count the most. As author Robert Potter said about the proofreader feature of Glass Writer Pro, “Finally, someone spoke my words!” This feature, alone, has the potential to endear Glass Writer Pro to any budding poet’s heart.

Freeware of the Month

Tim Verpoorten

March 2007

March, another month closer to spring but don't think the hope for warm weather will keep me from reviewing freeware. So as I shovel out from what we hope is the last snowstorm of the season here in the great midwest, let's snuggle up near the fireplace and dry out those wet socks as we look at the freeware of the month.

Slife

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

Do you ever wonder where all the time in the day went? Have you ever sat down on the computer and then look up and saw that it was time to leave and you didn't get a thing done that you intended to do when you first sat down at your Mac? I do all the time, and rather than blaming it on ADHD, I decided to try Slife.

Slife is a new application for the Mac OS X that lets you visualize and organize your computer activities like never before. Slife observes your every interaction with applications such as Safari, Mail and iChat and keeps tracks of all web pages you visit, emails you read, documents you write and much more.

All activities observed by Slife are graphically displayed in visualizations that make it easy for you to understand where and how you are spending your time. You don't want to know where I waste most my time, but with Slife around, I catch myself falling into these digital ratholes and my time on the Mac has become much more productive. At least that's the story I'm sticking with.

Home and Away

http://maccrafters.com/home_and_away

If you take your laptop to work, or to the coffee shop or to a friends house, and back home again, you've found that for each location, you normally want to launch specific apps that you use in that location. Network volumes, maybe iTunes, or Word, or Excel, maybe a business specific app, but no matter what it is, Home and Away can automate this task for you by allowing you to set up different networks. The network you are connected to will determine which volumes are mounted and which applications are launched. Even if you don't have a laptop, Home and Away can still provide an easy way to mount volumes and launch several applications on login. It's very nice app for everyone to have, especially if you have a laptop and use it at different locations.

Mulberry Mail

<http://www.mulberry.com>

Mulberry is a powerful, easy to use electronic mail (email) and calendar program that allows you to send, access, and manage email and calendar data. Mulberry also helps you manage contact information used in conjunction with email and calendars. Mulberry is designed for use with email servers that support (IMAP) and (POP3). It also uses http, WebDAV and CalDAV for storing and retrieving calendar data. I am impressed, the application is very Mac-like in appearance and is easy to setup and as far as I can tell, very full-featured.

iWebSites

<http://mistergregg.com/cocoadrillosoftware/iWebSites/index.html>

What is iWebSites? It is a program that enhances iWeb by manipulating the website files that iWeb creates to enable a user to create multiple websites that are completely independent of each other. iWeb 1.01 shipped without this capability, but anyone who wants to use iWeb for more than a single web site can benefit from iWebSites. This is especially true for users who utilize File Transfer Protocol, or FTP, (instead of .Mac) to publish their iWeb creations.

iWeb really was not designed with the power user in mind, but it does enable a user to quickly create beautiful web sites. With iWebSites, separate websites are kept independent of each other, and when sites are published to a directory (for uploading via FTP), only the site you are currently working on is published.

iWebSites new version now has the ability to merge two sites together. This is an extremely functional update, as there has been no way previously to move sites in and out of iWeb. Now, users have the ability to share web sites and compile websites together. The interface has been enhanced, so you can now drill down and look at the headings for each site in iWebSites. So if you use iWeb, but you want to have more than just one website, download and install iWebSites. It makes the whole process simple.

GTDGmail

<http://www.gtdgmail.com>

GTDGmail is a Firefox extension that integrates the highly effective “Getting Things Done” into the popular email service Gmail. I like Gmail and use it all the time. As you can tell from my email address, surfbits@gmail.com. GTDGmail discreetly integrates into Gmail making it even more suitable as a GTD tool. Labels are now structured into Contexts, Status, Projects and References; making it easier to read and use. Labels can be applied much more rapidly than in standard Gmail. Quickly review outstanding GTD tasks that are over a few days old. Searches can be created and saved that enable precise queries over your GTD tasks. If you need or want to try Getting things Done in your online world, this is a nice first step to try.

Crop

<http://www.imovieplugins.com/plugs/crop.html>

This comes from a website full of nothing but iMovie plug-ins. Crop is a tiny, but effective plug-in for iMovie to cut your clip to size. since a plug-in can't alter the size of a clip (a limitation from iMovie), those parts of the clip that you cut off are set to a color of your choosing.

Since all plug-ins at this website are just a little bit cooler than other plugins, you can set the transparency of the obscuring color, so that the cropped parts shine through. You can use this plug-in to remove unwanted parts of a clip, or to produce areas free of footage where you can place a second (or third) source. you can also use this plug-in as a high-lighter, where the parts that you don't want to highlight are obscured by black (or, if you like, any other color), but the cropping color is slightly translucent. Use your imagination, the possibilities are many, as with all the plugins on this website. Check it out for yourself.

iGTD

<http://bargiel.home.pl/iGTD>

We all know that the hottest idea in the online world today is GTD, Getting Things Done. Well here's another application that offers you the ability to arrange and organize your busy life into a simple plan to get your things done.

The idea is this. Just divide your tasks by contexts - where they have to be done, maybe at home, or at your office? On your computer when you access the Internet? Then organize these by projects. Some of your tasks are related to your life projects. If you're a student, divide your school tasks by subjects. If you're a developer, organize your tasks and ideas by your software projects. You can also treat projects as categories for your tasks.

You can drag all your browser links or Finder files to iGTD window. New task will be added immediately - with an adequate link. Just click 'open' - and there you go! Copy your URLs, your Finder files, your Apple Mail e-mails. And paste them to iGTD - there's no better way to integrate with Mac OS X. Thanks to the integration with Mac OS X iCal and iSync you can easily synchronize tasks from selected contexts with your mobile device. Stop putting down your shopping ideas on stickies - iGTD will help you. It can synchronize your tasks to iCal. Moreover, it will run the iSync to push and pull your tasks from/to the mobile device. Turn on the menu bar item of iGTD in the preferences panel. You will be able to add a new task to the given context or project. You can also open any browser or file link quickly. If you're using the GTD method already or if you feel it's time to add a little organization in your life, give iGTD a try.

Mainmenu

<http://www.santasw.com>

We all know of, and probably have several apps for the mac that are classified as maintenance programs for the Apple. They repair permissions, or clean caches, and many other useful tasks. I've talked about several freeware ones on the podcast before. They are all good apps, but the big problem is that they get downloaded, run once and then forgotten about in your apps folder. Mainmenu app is different because it sits in your menubar and with a single click of the mouse you can make it happen.

Rebuilding your Spotlight library for faster searching, repairing permissions, cleaning caches to improve application performance, and even more advanced settings Ñ such as enabling and disabling the Dashboard Ñ are no more than two clicks away. MainMenu is full of powerful maintenance tools to keep your Mac running like new, within a slick, simple interface. You can run batch tasks, it works with both PPC and Intel macs, and it has growl support. If you try Mainmenu, you'll always remember and it makes the maintenance so much easier.

Well the fire is dying out and it's just snowed another few inches. Time to shovel again. See you next month.

Tim Verpoorten

tim@surf-bits.com

Editor: Surfbits.com

Producer: MacReviewCast.com

Co-Producer: The MacRoundtable.com

Spell Catcher X 10.2.3

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



Developer: Rainmaker Research, Inc.

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

Support: support@rainmakerinc.com



Other Help – A set of detailed FAQs

Shareware Price: \$40 USD

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9, or Mac OS X 10.4.3 or later. Older version available for Mac OS X 10.2 through Mac OS X 10.3.8.

Release Date: November 22, 2006 **Download Size:** 9.5 MB

Audience: All user levels

Strengths: A powerful, available-everywhere as-you-type (interactive) and after-you've-typed-it (batch) spell checking that is fully integrated with the standard Mac OS X Spelling Panel. And in addition, trivial but great, Apple's spelling panel doesn't work on finder document or folder titles, Spell Catcher does!

Weaknesses: The lack of a batch dictionary import support weakens its usefulness for those who have invested heavily in setting up large-detailed individual custom user dictionaries for their key applications

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

Spell Catcher X [SCX] is the powerful writing tool preferred by educators, students, writers, and bloggers - anyone who writes on their Macintosh. It's the all-in-one writing solution for those who need standardized custom dictionaries for use in all their applications, those that write in multiple languages, and anyone that simply wants to be a faster, more effective writer. Use it in Mac OS X applications such as email, web browsers, instant messaging, Microsoft Word and other word processors, graphics programs such as Adobe Photoshop, video and movie programs, databases, spreadsheets and more! It is available-everywhere both as-you type (interactive) and after you've-typed-it (batch) spell checking. Fully integrated with the standard Mac OS X spelling functions.

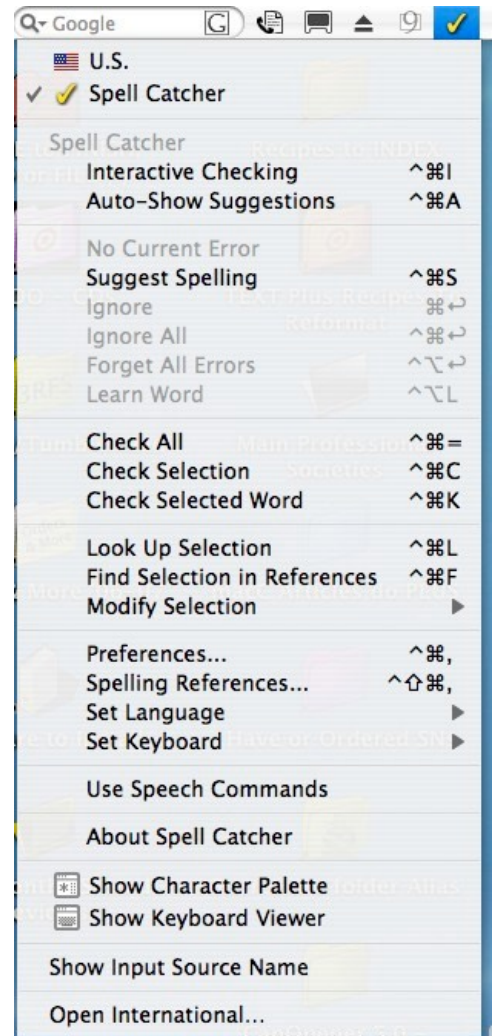
Introduction

You might ask, doc_Babad, why should anyone need another spell checker? After all there's one in MS Word, Adobe Acrobat, DEVONnote, ToDo X, Eudora my disk labeling desktop publishing programs and of course FileMaker Pro. Apple's programs such as Text Edit, AppleWorks, Pages, Keynote and even Safari contain a spell checker. For many of Apples applications, their spell checker is integrated across many of the applications so you need only one dictionary and one user dictionary. Other developers have also taken advantage of the Apple operating system's spell checking functions to add that capability to their programs.

Two guys and a Jack Russell Terrier, somewhere in Toronto, Canada, develop the product. I started using the product in the mid-late '80s (then it was called Thunder) even before it was distributed by Canady &. I stopped using it when I switched to OS X since there was, at that time, no Macintosh OS X version. My motivation for its use was simple: Spell Catcher worked in every program I used — databases, spreadsheets, address books software, calendar programs, and many other kinds of programs that don't have spell checking abilities.

Working With

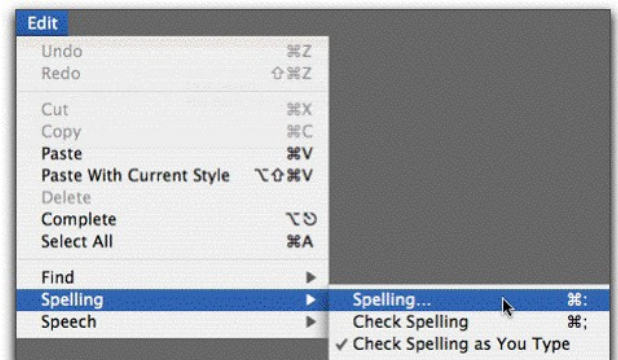
Installing this application is simple. Open its .dmg, and drag it you're your applications folder. Go through the registration and preferences setting steps and you're ready to use the product Indeed using the product to spell check everything from finder names to typo PDFs.



The way to check with SCX — its not genetic engineering	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ignore the typo-keep typing• Correct the mistake yourself• Teach the word to Spell Catcher,• You can also set up the typo to correct itself from now on. This is comparable the MSW's autocorrect feature• Get more information about the word (dictionary or thesaurus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check a word• Check a selected section• Check a whole document

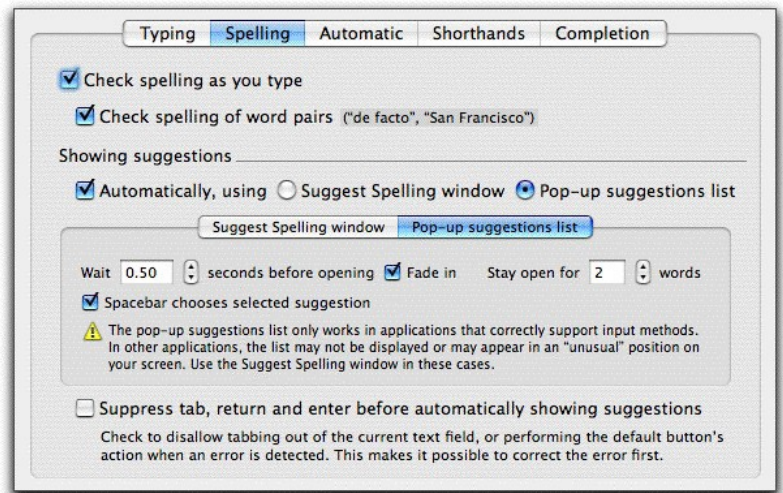
Reduce Need to Mouse Around — There are lots of keyboard shortcuts available; almost all can be customized. *These I Ignored.* If I make Spell Catcher my universal default spell checker, I might systematically learn these. For now, I've chosen to use the program only for those application in which spell checking is either awkward or unavailable.

For example, by having SCX available beats the heck out of my, usually hurried, typing feedback or a problem description into a box on an Internet form. Then copying it to MS word for spell checking and then having to paste it into the form. [No folks, most of the time I don't try to outguess what vendors want when filling out trouble shooting requests or asking for product information.



Dictionary and Thesaurus — I make less use of the dictionary thesaurus features since my hard drive contains specialized software to deal with those needs, both on and off-line. I would take little to move entirely to SCX for these functions, but the old and familiar isn't easy to discard. All of my dictionary and thesaurus tools, overall, generally provide the same information, only the interface is different. [Check out my Ultralingua 6 review in the November 2006, macC.]

The biggest decision you have to make is *determining* when you'd like Spell Catcher to point out your mistakes. SCX can check your spelling at two different times:



While You're Typing (In Interactive Checking mode) Spell Catcher is always watching your typing. Whenever you type something that isn't in the SCX word lists, or whenever you make a punctuation or capitalization error, the program beeps. At this point, you can summon a list of suggested replacements for the misspelled word; select a replacement, and then go on typing. Note: Interactive features are only available if you have chosen Spell Catcher to be the active input method by selecting it from the input menu.

After You're Finished Typing — Spell Catcher can also work like the spelling checkers you're probably used to-it scans your entire document (or your current selection) at once, looking for mistakes. SCX will then bring up the *Check Selection* window, where you can go through the errors and correct them.

WARNING — Unlike my usual practice, a short time after I installed and spell checked a number of items in the product, I decided to take the Spell Catcher Crash Course. Why, because when reading the details about the product on its MacUpdate page, there were discussions about features that had not existed in the OS 8 and 9 versions I'd previously used. These include both the ability to significantly customize the interface to meet your needs, to other features that existed only in either standalone shareware application of in MS Word. Learning how to use SCX's word-completion, auto-correct, customizable Shorthand glossary features.

The product provides a rich environment for proofreading and text manipulation. Such SCX tools are comparable to ones in MS word and in shareware items I've added such as Selznick Scientific Software's *SmartWrap* <http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/3816> and Ergonis Software's *Typinator* <http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/18028>.

Some of these added features are not usually ever found spell checkers. They are summarized below; for the rest of the swag such as Ghostwriter support, go to the developer's website.

Product Advantages —

- You maintain only a single word list. When you add new words to the SPX's dictionary- say, your last name, or words specific to your industry-you do so only once. You don't have to teach the same words to every other program that has a built-in spelling checker.
- You maintain only a single spelling dictionary file. Once you've installed Spell Catcher, you can throw away many megabytes' worth of dictionary files from Microsoft Word, America Online, AppleWorks, InDesign, and so on. You regain huge swaths of hard drive space.
- You have only one piece of software to learn. From now on, checking your spelling involves exactly the same keystrokes and menu commands in every program.

Product Features

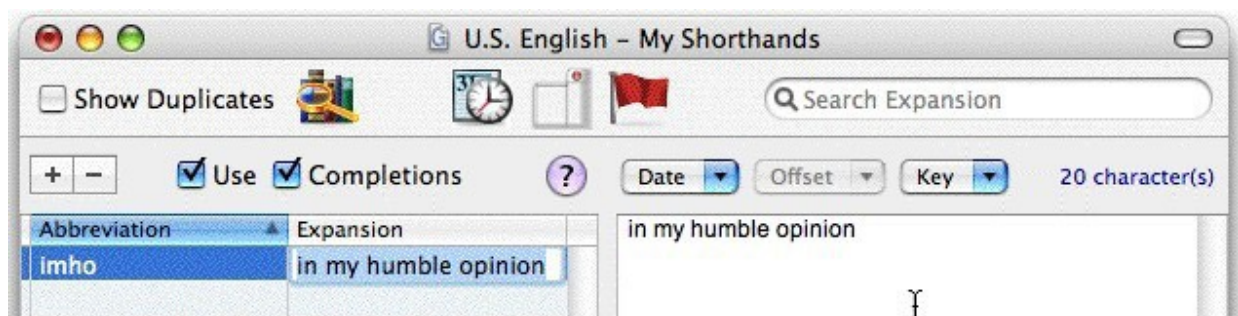
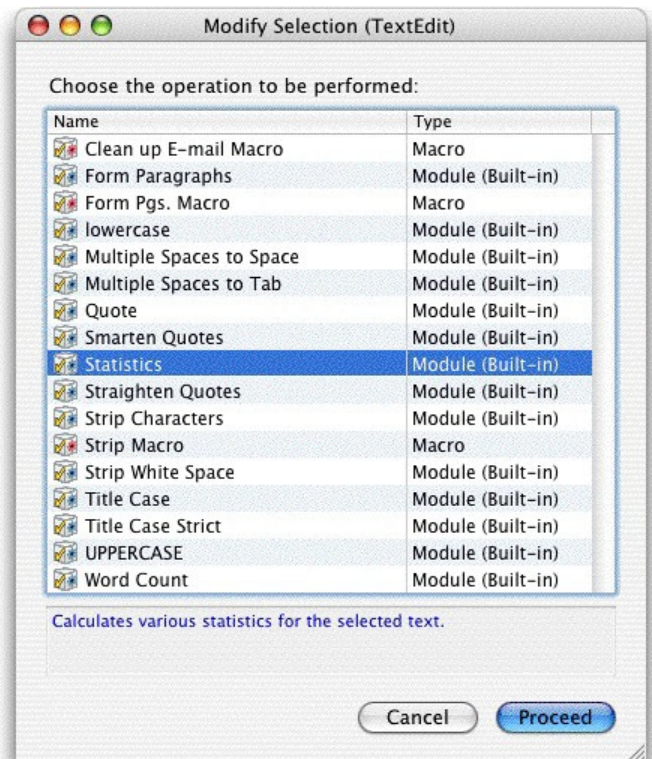
Completion — Spell Catcher X's completion feature finishes what you're typing for you. Not just dictionary words are offered as completions, but it short-hands, your personal learned words, thesaurus synonyms, and (saving the best for last), names, email addresses, phone numbers and address information from your Address Book! With SPX's Address Book completions, your Address Book is available everywhere.

Proofreading And Text Manipulation — SPX also replaces an assortment of add-on proofreading software. For example, it can automatically turn the typographically incorrect straight quotes (“like this”) into the proper curly quotes (“like this”); convert double hyphens (--) into actual long dashes (-); automatically correct DOubled CAPitals that you type when you're in a hurry; capitalize the first letter of every sentence.

If you're an Internet user (and who isn't in today's world), you may also appreciate SPX's Macros, which can, in one fell swoop, clean up hard-to-read, irregularly formatted e-mail and bulletin board postings from the Net.

Modify Selection: For the Professional Writer or Editor — Sometimes you need a more powerful assistant to help you whip some text into shape. Spell Catcher's Macros and Modify Selection commands may be just what you need. They can massage enormous chunks of text in seconds, converting mangled e-mail text to neat paragraphs, converting pages' worth of ALL CAPS TYPING into normally capitalized writing, making straight quotes curly, and so on. Using the Modify Selection command does all of this. In addition to prevent repetitive stress syndrome for major editing tasks you can use SCX's macros functions.

Create Customizable Shorthand Glossaries — Spell Catcher can expand abbreviations that you design (such as *macC* and *yrdb*) into frequently used phrases (e.g., *yrdb* = your reviewer, *doc_Babad*). This expansion takes place automatically, on the fly, as you type—you don't have to press any special keystroke or do anything special to expand these phrases. . Creating such shorthand entries can be done either while spell checking or in a stand-alone manner.



Although the developers note that over your working career, these shortcut expansion features can save you hundreds of hours of typing, I was under impressed by that capability. For repeated items (e.g., boiler plate, I use stupidFish Programming's shadowClipboard <http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/10540>. I have enough stuff to memorize, including keyboard shortcuts, without creating lists of shorthand entries, which would be useful primarily during word processing.

You Don't Always Write in English — Comprehensive dictionaries are available in fourteen different languages, with thesaurus look-ups for ten of those languages. Nine spelling languages and most of their associated thesaurus databases are included for free with SCX! They are just a download away. [Readers: These are not for things my editor Julie accuses me of.]

Review Limitations

I make no attempt to compare the effectiveness and ease of use of features provided by Spell Catcher with comparable features in the programs I daily use. Why not? First it's too time consuming. Second, I me and you're not. So anything I could say may not work for you.

Discomforts

Need Batch Loading to Import Custom User Dictionaries — May users have created extensive user dictionaries in their word processor programs or other text using design tools. A one-click import method would facilitate changing over to Spell Catcher.

Switching Entirely to Spell Catcher — I'm still thinking about which applications, I use daily, shall I use with SCX. I'm not sure I want to give up using my custom dictionaries created over the years in MS Word. That custom dictionary contains over 2300 lines of words. My custom dictionary in Eudora is much smaller, as is the one provided in apple applications and I'm in the processes of imputing most of those items into Spell Catcher. I know I can extract the words in the MSW dictionary by changing the file extension to .txt and spell checking the new text document with the program but that's a real drag. Teaching Spell Catcher new words as is done on a one-at-a-time basis.

Conclusions

Spell Catcher X is writing tool that's a must for anyone from professional writers, support personnel to instant messaging enthusiasts. It is used to catch your spelling errors, capitalization errors, punctuation mistakes, and repeated word errors. If you deal with text — typing it, manipulating it, proofreading and or sending it to others — Spell Catcher X has something for you. [If you don't send anything out, you don't need the product.]

I love the fact that with the product, I'm always in Control of its interface. As its developer notes, If you'd prefer that Spell Catcher keep its nose out of your punctuation, capitalization, and double words, you can turn off these forms of checking by choosing Preferences from the input menu; in the Preferences window, click the Spelling icon, and select the Checking tab. From here, you can control the program's checking behavior. There is also a Spell Catcher X *Lite* version, but the extra features more than makes up the \$10 difference in price.



Writer.app 1.2.4

By Harry {doc} Babad

QI Software

<http://supertart.com/qisoftware/Writer.html>

Freeware –

Support at software@supertart.com.



System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Universal binary.

Download Size 2.7 MB

Released January 26, 2007



Strengths: A word Processor that behaves like a typewriter.

Weaknesses: I like typewriters, especially IBM Selectrics — Is that a problem? But this application is not one I'd likely use since I spell too poorly

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

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.9.

Introduction in Including Publisher's Summary

Writer.app (sometimes pronounced 'Writer dot app' is a very simple word processor that is much more like a typewriter than a nice Cocoa-ized text editor.

This typewriter-line word processing application is, to quote its developer, “sort of based on Khoi Vinh's Blockwriter (<http://www.blockwriter.com>) idea. This is a quick and dirty implementation of a word processor that behaves like a typewriter. It'll work to block out all those distractions and get *you* writing.



Writer is an interesting *{text}* processor designed to get your first draft banged out and on its way to the editing table or your word processor. Beat writers block distractions that are in part the toys built into that great computer you use, your Macintosh. What distractions — let me count the ways. Your email, chat sites, browser, audio casts, downloaded movies from *YouTube*, or creating the new CD sampler in iTunes... or just that desktop picture of your significant other.

Download it and then get started. Make sure you have your coffee or tea made already, so you have no more excuses to avoid writing that great... whatever.

Using the Software

So I dragged the application to the appropriate folder and then read the readme file. Why, I haven't used a typewriter in a while and it avoided my having to start writing this last review of a busy month.

The readme file carefully explained: “You can only go forward in Writer. You can select things to delete (like,

say, the inevitable typos you're going to make because you rely on spellcheckers and the quick cut-copy-edit of word processors), but there's no correcting past striking something out. Export the result, minus the strikethroughs, to a text file, or save your entire file as RTF, so you can open it in Writer again or TextEdit. Print it out to make it feel like you've just gone out and bought a Smith Corona." You can even import it into your word processor if you like.

The Setup Challenge — I chickened out

The setup RTFD file, in the installation package, is more important than the readme file so don't forget to pay attention to it. I'm serious, otherwise the product will not work the way the developer suggests and you'll keep getting, well, *somewhat* distracted.

Alas, although the task would only have to be done once after reading some of the details I reproduced in the sidebar, I said no way. [There were lots of screen shots in living color, and those I tried worked seemed to work when I tried them, virtually of course but just peeking at the appropriate windows. Why, there was noting in the setup instruction to tell me how to get back to having my network connections work the way its supposed to. I'm guessing the new connection only works, is err inactively-active for Writer.app, but why take a chance. This review is due to our editor tomorrow, and getting it there is a network function.

NOTE:

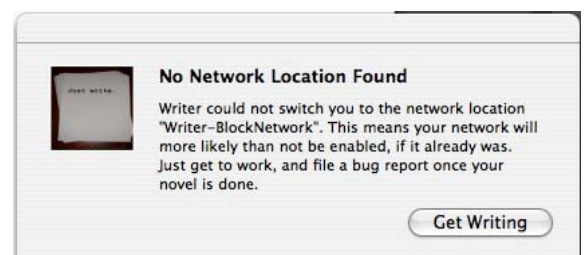
Here's how the thing works — One way Writer.app keeps all that other computer stuff out of your way is that it tries to switch you to a network location that has none of its interfaces enabled. [If you don't have one of these, you can create one, and Writer will attempt to switch to it when it starts up.]

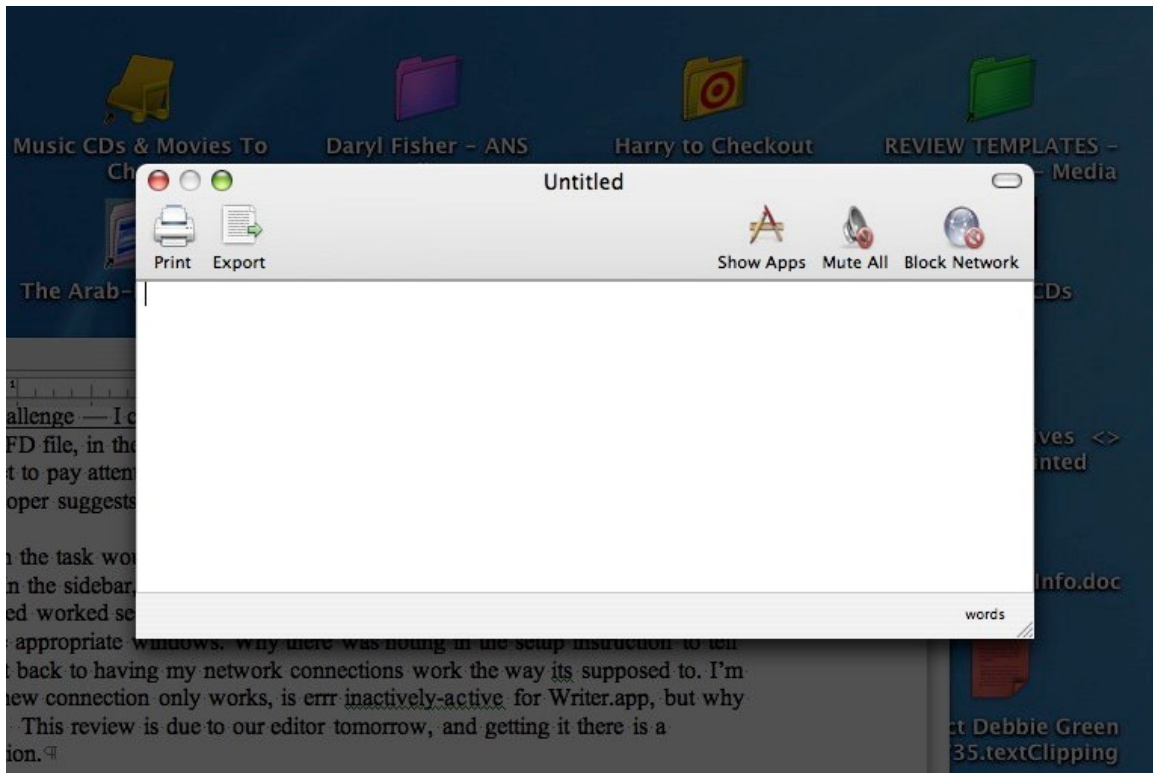
This is how to create a new network location. — First, open the Network Preferences. You can access that quickly via the Apple menu. From the Network Preferences > Location popup menu, you should choose the option to create a New Location... If this option is grayed out, you will need to click the lock at the lower left hand corner of the window and authenticate as a user with privileges for this sort of thing. Type in the name for your new location in the sheet that drops down, something like "Blockwriter-BlockNetwork. Okay there's more, that why you must read and follow the instructions in the setup.rftd file. And so on for about five illustrated pages.

So I tried the application without setting up a network location that has none of its interfaces enabled. Oh joy, it booted up. But it politely told me off for not following instructions. No matter, my desktop was in the background sort of muted out. Okay on with using Writer.app!

Testing Writer.app

The first thing you notice when opening up Writer.app is a nice white window to type onto, think sheet of paper, and the rest of you screen grayed out.



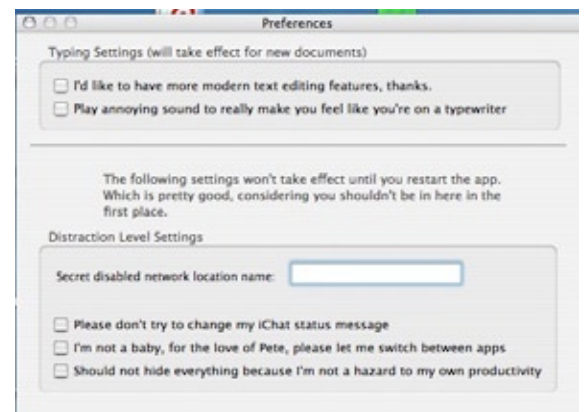


Look harder, zoom broader; adjacent to the working window, there is a small X in a circle on the left hand side of the screen that removes the muted or black background and lets you see and access your desktop.



There is also a slide bar on the upper right hand side of the screen that controls background opacity. In addition, you can neither view the dock or the menu bar when Writer.app is being used. Therefore to see the application icon and therefore access its preferences you must move your cursor to that spot where your menu and its application icon would be and all becomes visible.

You can use Writer.app in two modes, as a typewriter complete with sound if you like. Or by selecting the preferences for more editing features, it becomes like a very limited TextEdit. In that mode, you can now go back and make corrections. Words can be italicized (Command-I) or underlined (Command-U), but not made bold. Selecting Command-B brings up the network dialog box and the undo command does not work (command-Z). Alternatively by going to the Edit menu you gain most the usual TextEdit options. Curiouser and curiouser.



Okay, let's have at it. Unlike a typewriter, the words you type do wrap around the page. Also, I found by accident, if you have anything left on the clipboard from your last cut or paste, it would be pasted into the document.

One of Writer.app's core features is like a typewriter, you can't go back to correct errors no matter what. When in typewriter mode, the up/down and right left arrow keys work but only to navigate you to another place in the text for purposes of strikeout. So you can go back select an item to cross out by backspacing a word, phrase or even extra-unneeded space. Another fascinating feature, in this case a limitation, is that you can't just use the space bar to move the cursor to the end of your text and begin typing again. To bring your cursor back to life, you must first use the right arrow key, moving a space after your last letter. At other times, when you've used the enter key to jump to the next line on your page, use the down arrow key get the keyboard working again.

You've Typed Your Epistle — Once your document is created you have three choices: Save it, export it or print it. The later get me back to what my typewritten copy used to look like, but otherwise seems to serve no purpose.

- **Exporting:** When you export a file it becomes a text document, with all strike-through items deleted. You've no other choices.
- **Saving:** Although there are no menu bars you can save or save-as in the usual manner [command-S or shift-command-S.] Under these circumstances your choices are to either save as an .rtf file or a blockwriter (.bw) document. The file saved still contains all its text including strike-through elements. However, I'm not sure why anyone would chose saving to .bw format. More about my problems with .bw files below.

Blockwriter Documents, Humbug! — I saved a copy of my first document as a blockwriter file { .bw } but the finder did not recognize it despite it as a Writer.app document despite its .bw file extension. Resetting its default application (e.g., in get Info) to Writer.app., worked but sometimes just returned a black document. Everything I'd typed was gone. So, I had to redo my example. One strange behavior occurred when I'd save as .bw file.

After all that I found I could not reopen a .bw-formatted document, no matter what I tried. In one instance I got a blank Writer.app document not the material I'd saved. In other tries, even after rebooting, the application or computer the application would startup but, after the usual message of network, nothing labeled .bw would open. Nor could I create a new Writer app file.

Discomforts

Initial Setup Details — I almost gave up, but persevered anyway. But the developer promised that “in the future, this stuff will all be taken care of for you. Not the writing part, but the creating a new location part. Until then...” I do not know whether any of the problems were due to not creating the new “network file” or whether, in this version, I was experiencing systems incompatibility. But nothing crashed, so I kept testing.

Conclusion

Okay, I make too many typing error to do meaningful work with this application, but if you're a blocked facile typist this application should work well for you. Just avoid saving as a blockwriter file.

There's only addition, but not minor problem. To use the product you must take a mind trip and change paradigms. You must learn to work the way you did when just *plain* typing, a frustrating experience for those who now only routinely process words.

Recommendation

It's free, and you've you an hour or two play with this application and need to avoid computer based distractions when writing, Writer.app might be just what you need. However, the *doc* is waiting for the next major update before putting Writer.app back on his hard drive.

WriteInOne 1.3

By Harry {doc} Babad



WriteInOne 1.3 – Version Dated: 07 Sept 2006

Developer: MacXEagle, the folks who gave us uApp.

<http://www.eagle-of-liberty.com/writeinone/>

Software Type: Freeware

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4; Universal binary Download 241 KB,
Download

Strengths: A One-window text editor that maintains a list of items added so that you can easily access them again. The product presents users with a more useful version of Apples TextEdit application.

Weaknesses: First, if I close the application window I can't reopen it until I first quit the application and then restart it. Second the developers notes on the website are only in French.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.9.

Introduction

“A text editor is a type of program used for editing plain text files. A text file (or plain text file) is a computer file that contains only ordinary textual characters with essentially no formatting. Text editors are often provided with operating systems (e.g., Apple's TextEdit) or software development packages, and can be used to change configuration files and programming language source code.” [Wikipedia]

As noted on the Softpedia website “Many people, *like me*, feel that they cannot write in a simple ‘text editor’, because they think it's not good enough for them, which is an arguable point to say the least. Apple includes in OS X a small application for writing text that has been aptly named TextEdit. It is not a word processor and, for this reason, many avoid it like the plague, because they feel it is not good enough, and it usually tends to only be used when viewing the read-me of various applications.

“Of course, there are people who prefer the simple functionality of such a program, and although TextEdit is quite simple, there are other programs out there that take after it, going a bit further, but not by much... such as WriteInOne [WIO].” <http://www.softpedia.com/reviews/mac/WriteInOne-Review-35370.shtml>

My interest in the program was alerted by the following description I read somewhere on the Internet.

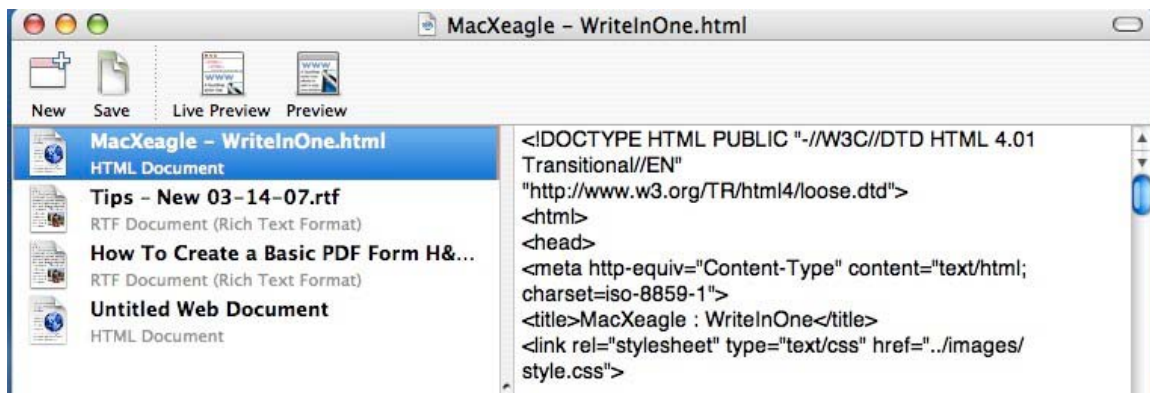
“WriteInOne is a simple text-editing program, with almost identical in features to TextEdit. It does however have a bit of a different approach to handling multiple documents. While it cannot match up to a word processor in terms of features, it is a simple tool that can be used without any hard disk or memory bloat. It is not a replacement for a dedicated program for web designing or software coding.”



Getting Started

Drag the application to your applications folder, click on it and you're ready to use it. To add the files to work with to the application, just drag them onto WriteInOne's icon, in the dock. Bingo, a new entry is added to the left side of the application's window. It's a shame that you can't add files directly to the left hand pane in the main window, but I'm being nit picky.

Many Documents – One Window — When it comes to plain text documents, WriteInOne has almost the exact functionality of TextEdit. Feature for feature, even the menus are the comparable. The one big difference is that in WriteInOne is that everything takes place in just one window. If you want to work on a second document, you just click on it in the left pane of WriteInOne's main window. [It's like the sidebar in apple finder windows. I was a bit surprised that there was no preferences pane, but then realized I did not need one.



As you can see above, I added a number of files to the application, edited them (no you can't see that in the image) and saved the revised copy. I was able to print, print to PDF or otherwise use the resulting edited document in the normal fashion.

Features

WriteInOne can serve as an editor for both software or web text content [e.g., HTML and PHP]. The formats supported are HTML, PHP, TXT, RTF(D), and doc. In addition, you will be able to open an endless number of documents. [*I only tired a half-dozen, I don't need endless.*]

One useful aspect of this program is that you don't have to routinely save your documents. You can save your documents when you want! The application automatically memorizes your document's data. It also allows a preview of your web documents. Considering how messed up MSW's auto save features are, this in itself is a huge benefit.

- MSW — For example, need a small edit to be made on your Word document? No need to bother with launching Microsoft Word. Do it in WriteInOne. However if you make more than minor edits, you'll like mess up some of the document formatting. [Yes, but my MSW is always open since it's my main productivity tool.]
- RTF(D) — Editing support for RTFD implies the fact of being able to integrate images in your text. This too worked, wonderful. On the other hand when I imported MSD Word documents containing images into the program, the pictures were lost. But then, a RTFD is not a .doc.

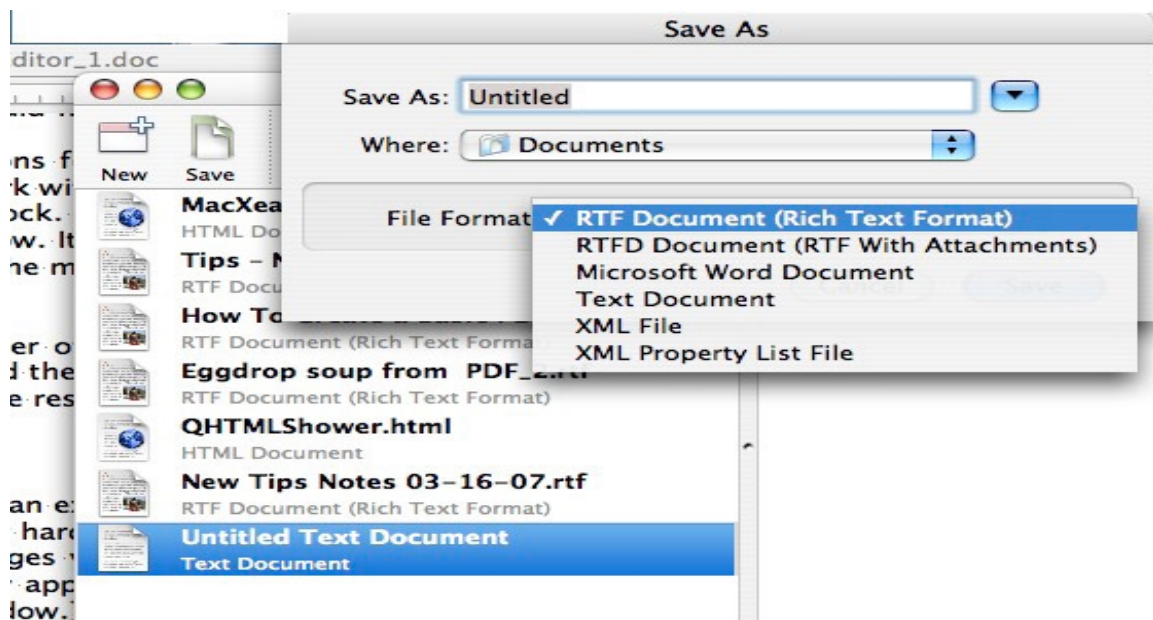
A Few Peculiarities of this Program

- Working With Existing Documents — When you add an existing document to WIO, it remains where it originally was on your hard drive, Apparently WriteInOne links or perhaps shadows it. Any changes you've made become part of that original, when saved. [Saving only applies to a document, not the entire contents of the application window.]
- Creating New Documents — These are created in your application folder and show up as an untitled text document. When you save that item, you have the chance to appropriately name it, locate it and establish the file type. You can move the save file to another location, WIO keeps track of where it's found.



Okay, so what happened when you move the selected files to the trash? It tells you so. Then WriteInOne gives you a saving feature.

And even if you've trashed the items, you get like magic, to save the deleted files [Save As] to a new location.



As noted in the Softpedia review, “A major difference between WriteInOne and TextEdit is that it can edit HTML and PHP files. This goes beyond simply opening them up and typing in them, although admittedly not by much. It does not color-code the tags, or have smart auto-completion options, or anything else that a dedicated application does, it just has a simple Live Preview function that lets you view the resulting text you are typing, as you type it.”

One Problem and Two Wishes

The Problem — As I mentioned above, if I close the WriteInOne application window I can't reopen it. To get it back I must first quit the application and then restart it. Voila, it reappears. So just shrink the window, don't close it.

I got a quick note from Louka its developer to the effect: “I have to inform you that I’m going to sell all of my Application to <http://www.app4mac.com> Those application will still be free. I’m sorry, you have to wait” *for fixes*.

Multi-Document Find and Replace, Please – I’m sure many users would find a universals reach and replace function useful This was noted in a Softpedia review on Version 1.1, but is not yet available in version 1.3

A Help or Read Me File — It was no problem for me in a few hours to figure out how to best to use WriteInOne’s features and learn its idiosyncrasies. But for the rest of us, a bit of help would be welcome. I’d be pleased if the developer extracted what was needed from this review, to create such a file in English.

Conclusion

Tiger users should love this lightweight and fast text editor. It supports TextEdit-like text formatting and edits both rich text and Word formatted files. This simple to use application is more functional that TextEdit and costs the same. It’s free! The file browser with content preview is a welcome addition to the features of TextEdit.

I’ve given this application a 4.5 macCs despite, not being able to reopen it because what it does, it does simply and with elegance. It also stops me trashing a file accidentally and I never have to save anything when using the product.

I don’t know what I’d use it for, but I don’t either program or create web pages. I don’t use text edit now, nor have I ever used any of its predecessors.

Recommendation

If the functions of the product work for you download it and enjoy its interface. After all it’s free.

Goodies

The section 6 extra goodies in this issue of *macCompanion* are:

- According to Hoyle – Moving from CodeWarrior to Xcode, continuing the excellent coding tutorial by Jonathan Hoyle
- Application Installation Standards – some nice links as well as standards, written by Robert Pritchett
- The Best 5 Applications I Use All the Time – Dr. Eric’s five favorite apps, by Dr. Eric Flescher
- Doc Babad’s Macintosh Tips – a really good group of useful tips compiled by our own Assistant Editor, Harry {doc} Babad
- Troubleshooting the Mysterious “Right Earphone Failure” – good headphone tips from Robert Pritchett
- March Updates of Interest – Some software updates, plus shameless book *and* Astronomy plugs, by Mike Hubbart
- Market Share Myth – a reprint of an excellent article at RoughlyDrafted Magazine, by Daniel Eran Dilgar
- Four Lynda.com Courses – four CBT courses reviewed by our Graphics Editor, Michele Patterson
- Myriad Ways to Work & Play with Words – the scope of tools for creating and processing words, by Harry {doc} Babad

According to Hoyle...

Moving from CodeWarrior to Xcode (Part I)

by Jonathan Hoyle

jhoyle@maccompanion.com

April 2007

One year ago this month, Metrowerks ceased all development and support of its CodeWarrior product line for the Macintosh.

The Rise and Fall of Metrowerks CodeWarrior

Back in the days of 68K Macs, Metrowerks was a small education market compiler developer, known principally for its Pascal and Modula-2 products on the Macintosh and MIPs. With the advent of the Power Macintosh, all of that changed. Metrowerks introduced CodeWarrior by 1993's year's end, the only user-accessible development environment that could create native PowerPC applications. CodeWarrior offered three front end languages, Pascal, C and C++, and had two back-ends that could either 68K or PowerPC. Later versions of CodeWarrior would offer additional language and processor support, such as Java and Win32 development. Metrowerks also introduced the PowerPlant C++ class framework, In less than two years, Metrowerks went from niche to market dominance, completely changing the face on Macintosh software development. For the next decade, no other tools developer (including Apple) could touch Metrowerks.

Metrowerks grew, adding support for a number of new environments, went public and was eventually purchased by Motorola for its innovative compiler technologies. Throughout this time, Metrowerks remained a faithful Apple partner, even during the fiascos of Copland, YellowBox and Rhapsody. With the evolution of Mac OS X, CodeWarrior evolved with Carbonized versions of its compiler and PowerPlant. However, in 2003, the face of Metrowerks began to change. Motorola was in its initial stages of spinning off portions of the company to Freescale, a company which had no respect or understanding of Metrowerks.

For the first time in 10 years, Metrowerks failed to even make an appearance at Apple's Worldwide Developer's Conference in 2003. Things went from bad to worse in 2004 when Metrowerks was absent again from WWDC, and for the first time in CodeWarrior history, failed to deliver its annual Macintosh release. In early 2005, Metrowerks sold off its Intel compiler technology such weeks prior to Steve Jobs' announcing Apple's move away from PowerPC and to Intel. The trickle became a flood as Macintosh developers abandoned CodeWarrior to switch to Xcode. At MacHack 2005, Metrowerks announced that they were cancelling their Macintosh product line, effective March 31, 2006.

Migration to Xcode

Today, all new Macintosh computers are built with the Intel processor. To take advantage of this processor's speed, applications must be built as Universal Binaries, that is, containing both PowerPC and Intel-based compiled code. With Metrowerks' departure from the Macintosh (and Windows) development market, only Xcode can be used to create these Universal binaries. Most Macintosh developers have already begun the process of migrating their projects from CodeWarrior to Xcode. Apple has provided a document free to download describing this process:

<http://developer.apple.com/documentation/DeveloperTools/Conceptual/MovingProjectsToXcode/MovingProjectsToXcode.pdf>

The purpose of this article is not to duplicate this documentation, but rather to go into greater detail from a CodeWarrior user's perspective. Although some information in here may be repeated from that document, I will also offer some of my personal recommendations, as one who has had to port a few projects of various sizes and vintages.

I will be making the following assumptions about your project for this article:

1. You are currently using CodeWarrior Pro 8.3, 9.x, or 10.
2. You are building your application on Mac OS X 10.3 or higher.
3. Your project is already Carbonized and is generating a Mac OS X native executable.
4. Your project is written in C/C++.
5. You are interested in porting your project to Xcode 2.4 or higher
6. You wish to build your application as a Universal Binary to be run on Mac OS X 10.3.9 or higher

Pre-Flighting Your CodeWarrior Project

Many of the compatibility problems that exist between CodeWarrior and Xcode can be avoided by making changes in your CodeWarrior project prior to importing it into Xcode. Simply importing your CodeWarrior project as is without modification will increase the debugging burden in Xcode. This is an acceptable solution if your knowledge and experience with Xcode is greater than that of CodeWarrior. However, most developers have had many more years of experience with CodeWarrior as compared with Xcode. It is easier to leverage your own experience and knowledge in the platform you know for those things you can, so as to reduce your difficulty on the new platform.

Don't Mach Me

If your project is anything like the typical CodeWarrior project, yours is probably a CFM-based Carbon application. This is likely because your application began as a traditional Classic app and evolved with time. Its most recent overhaul would be the Carbonization effort making it native to OS X. Mac OS X on PowerPC supports two native executable types: PEF (for CFM applications with compatibility to Mac OS 9) and Mach-O (a Mac OS X-only file type). Mac OS X on Intel, however, natively supports only Mach-O. As you are probably already aware, PEF applications run fine on Intel-based Macs, but only under Rosetta emulation (with performance being about 1/3 of what it could be).

Since an Xcode 2.4 version of your project will be built as Mach-O only, you can begin making preparations for this migration with CodeWarrior now. The first step is to create a Mach-O target in your CodeWarrior project (if you haven't already done so). The benefit to doing this is to identify any compatibility problems you are likely to find when interfacing with other libraries, plug-ins and other executables. If yours is a simple application, this will be a straightforward process. However, more complicated projects often have tanglings of inter-dependencies with other compiled code. For these projects, this can be a very involved step on the way to a universal binary. By creating this separate Mach-O target, you can still deploy the PEF target as you always have, until the transition is complete.

Even if you already had the foresight to create a Mach-O target for your project, you were likely to have created the wrong kind, as you will soon see. In your project's *Target Settings* panel, you will find among in the Linker popup menu these linkers options (among others):

Macintosh PowerPC
Apple Mach-O PowerPC
Mac OS X PowerPC Mach-O

Although all three are for “Macintosh PowerPC”, you probably have guessed that only the first one is a CFM/PEF linker, due to its lack of *Mach-O* reference. Of the remaining two, which linker should you use? Aside from the arbitrary reversal of *Mach-O* and *PowerPC* in the name, what is the difference between them? With only this text before us, we are left with the bewildering conclusion that one is for *Apple* and the other is for *Mac OS X*.

As it turns out, these are two separate Mach-O linkers created independently of each other. The *Apple Mach-O PowerPC* linker is the one Apple uses in Xcode, while *Mac OS X PowerPC Mach-O* is Metrowerks’ own designed linker. This confusion in naming is one of the few areas where Metrowerks really dropped the ball with regard to ease of use. It would have been far clearer to everyone had Metrowerks simply populated this menu with more informative text, such as:

Macintosh PEF Linker
Apple Mach-O Linker
Metrowerks Mach-O Linker

Both Metrowerks linkers are far superior to Apple’s in features, most notably offering dead code stripping capabilities. Apple’s version, in addition to contributing to code bloat, is only a single pass linker, making it a bit more fragile. If you already have a Mach-O target in your CodeWarrior project, you are likely to be using the Metrowerks linker. Sadly, you will need to switch this to the *Apple Mach-O PowerPC* linker to better prepare for potential link errors which Xcode may generate. This linker will also give you an early preview of the overweight file sizes Apple’s Mach-O will be creating for you.

For more information on Mach-O target creation, visit: http://developer.apple.com/documentation/DeveloperTools/Conceptual/MovingProjectsToXcode/mig_bef_converting/chapter_3_section_4.html

wchar_t and wstring’s

The move to Mach-O may generate errors for projects using the **wchar_t** or **wstring** data types. There can be a couple of reasons for this. Firstly, the **wchar_t** data type is defined to be two bytes wide in CFM/PEF and Windows projects but four bytes wide in Mach-O. This discrepancy is due to changes in Unicode. The original Unicode specification was able to fit all of its symbols within 65,536 characters, which is why the original **wchar_t** data type was only two bytes in size. As later versions of Unicode outgrew this threshold, many Unix-based compilers, including gcc, changed **wchar_t** to be four bytes wide. This is a particularly ugly incompatibility for cross-platform projects, since Microsoft has refused to update their **wchar_t** size.

Another possible area of conflict is due to the support of **wchar_t** and **wstring** on Mach-O is available only with the Mac OS X 10.3 Panther SDK and higher. This is the default for CodeWarrior 9 and higher, but CodeWarrior 8 used the 10.2 Jaguar SDK which had no wide character support. Those requiring wide character support in their projects ought to upgrade to CodeWarrior 9 prior to porting to Mach-O.

CodeWarrior Settings

The CodeWarrior C/C++ Language Settings preference pane contains a number of settings which can significantly aid you in your code cleanup work. GCC 4, the internal compiler used by the Xcode 2 development environment, is more ANSI-strict than previous versions of GCC, as well as more strict than earlier versions of CodeWarrior. Thus, making your code as ANSI-compliant as possible from the beginning is extremely beneficial. You can help enforce this by making use of two of the C/C++ Language Settings: *ANSI Strict* and *ANSI Keywords Only*. By turning these checkboxes on, non-ANSI compliant code within your project will be immediately flagged at compile-time.

Another important selection in this settings panel is the *Require Function Prototypes* checkbox. Errors generated by this setting indicate that you failed to declare the function's prototype prior to its definition. For functions which exist within a single file only, you can avoid this error by defining the function as **static** and position it within the file prior to its first use. To remain ANSI compliant, you will also want to turn off *Legacy for-scoping*, as this setting allows for non-standard for-loop behavior called out by the *Annotated C++ Reference Manual*. For full C++ conformance, be sure to check ON the *ISO C++ Template Parser*, *Enable C++ Exceptions*, *Enable RTTI* and *Enable bool Support* settings, while checking OFF the *EC++ Compatibility Mode* and *Use Unsigned Chars* settings.

Two other compile-time selections are worth noting here: *Enable C99 Extensions* and *Enable GCC Extensions*. My recommendation is the reverse of what some writers have suggested: that is, I say to turn ON the former and to turn OFF the latter. C99 is an ANSI/ISO standard of the C programming language, and any of its extensions are now legitimately available to you the programmer. By turning it on, the Xcode importer will see this flag associated with your CodeWarrior project, and it shall turn this flag on for your converted Xcode project as well. GCC extensions, on the other hand, are *not* standards-compliant. Although it may appear to be a *freebie* from the perspective of a language feature, it sets a bad precedent. Just as you are now having to remove Metrowerks extensions from ancient code, you do not want to have to do the same with GCC extended code many years from now.

The C/C++ Warnings Settings pane is also a treasure chest of preventative medicine. Make it a point to turn on as many warnings as possible to identify all potential problems. I recommend turning on one at a time, and then modify your code to remove the warnings. In particular, casting warnings and undefined macros are likely to come back as errors in Xcode.

Bool Me Once, Shame On You...

The C++ standard does not specify how many bytes **bool** and **enum** types should occupy, but compiler writers have to select some size during memory allocation. CodeWarrior, presumably with a mind to memory optimization, chooses the smallest number of bytes required for storage for an **enum**, and 1 byte for a **bool**; Xcode, on the other hand, knee-jerked the size to be the same as an **int** (4 bytes). For properly written code, this difference should never matter. However, poor code can be found in the most innocuous of places. Examples of bad programming practice that would be affected by this include the imbedding of an **enum** or **bool** type within a structure, or the exporting of functions using one as a parameter or return type. Its use in normal coding, such as a local variable, or non-exported method or function, would have no impact on your application.

For **bool**, the correct solution would be to replace the improper instances with a compatible size-specified type, such as **uint8_t**, and perform the usual conversion to **true** and **false**. Alternatively, these instances can be replaced with the archaic Macintosh type **Boolean**, which is coincidentally one byte long and has the added benefit of communicating its intentions of being a boolean type. Either of these solutions, however, requires the programmer to examine all instances of his use of **bool**, which may be impractical for a large codebase. If debugging is expected to yield faster results than searching, try temporarily turning off the *Enable bool Support* language setting, and add the following macros to your headers:

```
#define bool int
#define true 1
#define false 0
```

If no problems arise with these macros while running your unit tests, then you are probably safe in your **bool** usage. You can then remove this temporary code and remember to recheck the *Enable bool Support* language setting checkbox.

Fortunately, the solution is a bit easier for **enum** types: turn on the *Enums Always Int* checkbox. This will instantly make all the enumerated types in your project 4 bytes long in CodeWarrior. You will still, of course, need to test this to ensure that you are not making any improper uses of them, but the risk is likely to be much smaller than will **bool**.

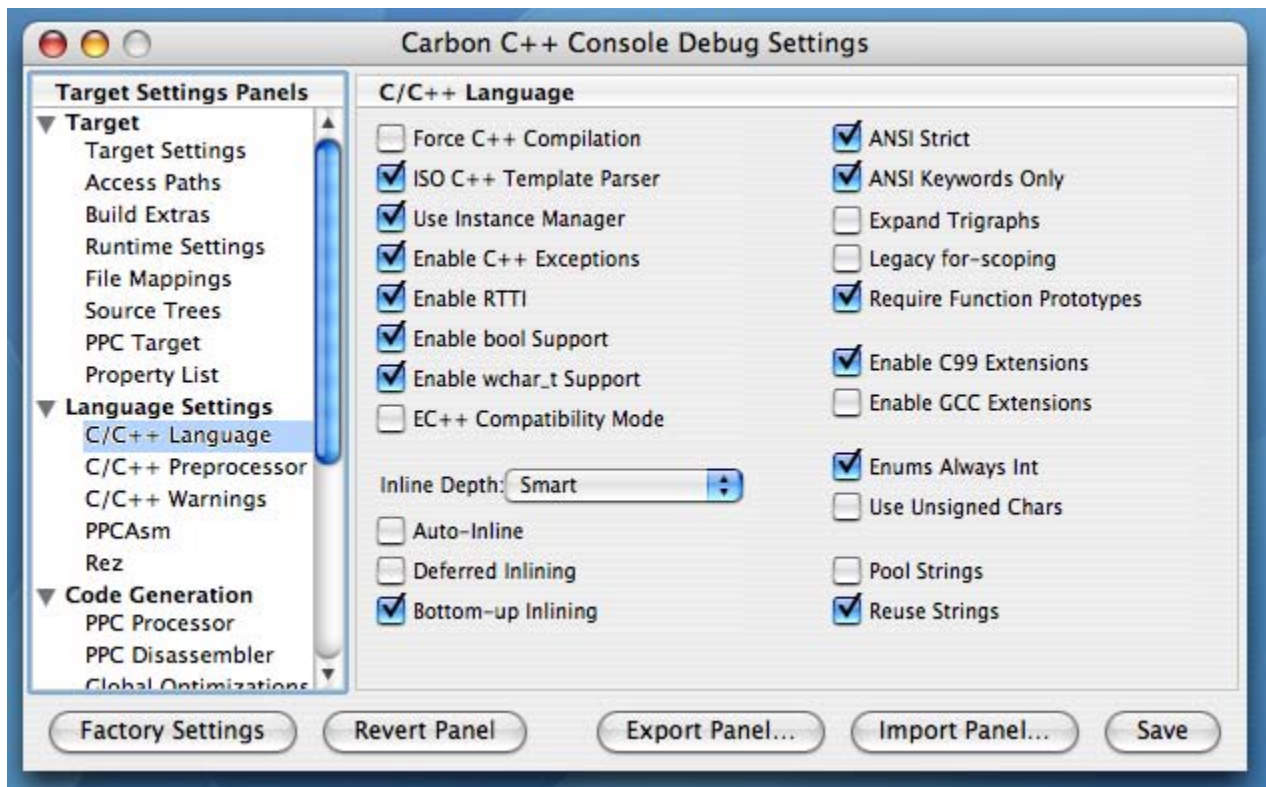
Source File Changes

Your C and C++ files will typically have **.c** and **.cpp** (or alternatively, **.cp**) extensions, respectively. Although CodeWarrior does not enforce this convention, Xcode honors the file extension more closely, so you should ensure that each of your source files has the appropriate ending. For completeness in testing, turn off the checkbox *Force C++ Compilation* from the C/C++ Language Settings pane.

For Carbon development, CodeWarrior allowed the continued use of old style Macintosh includes, such as **#include <MacHeaders.h>**. These should be replaced by the frameworks style includes, such as **#include <Carbon/Carbon.h>**.

Standard C++ header files deprecate the C-style **.h** file extension. CodeWarrior provided duplicate versions of these header files which contained the **.h** extension. Furthermore, it added the convenience of including the directive **using std;** inside these deprecated headers, so as to allow the global use of the included functions. Since these deprecated headers do not exist in Xcode, you will need to replace any that exist with the standardized equivalents.

Below is an example of what your CodeWarrior C/C++ Language Settings should appear like:



The Pragmatic Programmer

A very useful feature of the CodeWarrior development environment was its offerings of **#pragma** options. A **#pragma** is a capability provided to you by the specific compiler vendor. Metrowerks supplied them for

everything from warning suppression to function exporting. Unfortunately, gcc is rather anemic in this regard. If you use **#pragma** for anything other than informational convenience, you will need to search and find each one and replace it with appropriate code.

For specific details on **#pragma**, visit: http://developer.apple.com/documentation/DeveloperTools/Conceptual/MovingProjectsToXcode/migration_differences/chapter_2_section_9.html

Align in the Sand

One of the most insidious errors awaiting you has to do with struct and memory alignment differences between Xcode and CodeWarrior. If your code writes structured data out to disk or to a separate application, you are in severe danger of crashing your application. The devil is certainly in the details here, and the details are specific edge cases that appear as innocent code.

For specific details on memory alignment issues, visit: http://developer.apple.com/documentation/DeveloperTools/Conceptual/MovingProjectsToXcode/mig_after_importing/chapter_5_section_5.html

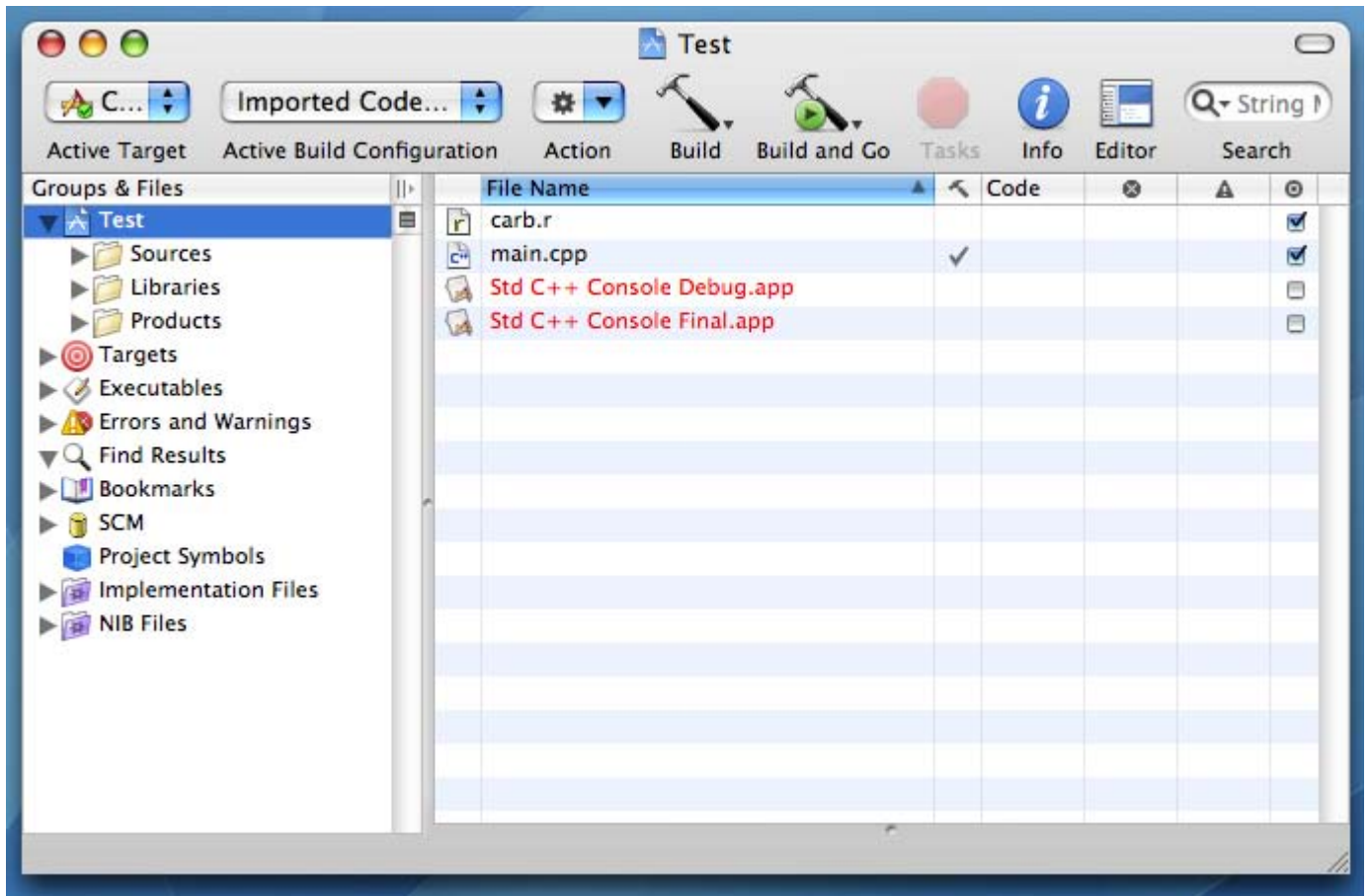
Flight Attendants, Prepare for Take-Off

You are nearly ready to import your project. There is one final caveat that Apple's documentation doesn't make very clear pertaining to CodeWarrior 10 users. CodeWarrior 10 projects can be optionally saved in a newer text-based XML format in addition to the standard format compatible with CodeWarrior 8 and 9. The Xcode Project Importer does not support new CodeWarrior 10 project file format, so you may need to re-save your project using the older format before proceeding.

At this point you are ready to throw caution into the wind and import your CodeWarrior project. Launch the latest version of Xcode available to you, preferably 2.4, and under the **File** menu, select **Import Project...** This will bring up the *Import Project Assistant*. Click on *Import CodeWarrior Project*. The next pane will allow you to select the CodeWarrior project file you wish to import. This file is typically one with a **.mcp** extension. Click on the **Choose...** button to make your selection. The Assistant should look something like this:



Click on the **Finish** button and Xcode will do its thing. Upon completion, a new project file with a **.xcodproj** extension will be generated, and a somewhat alien window will be presented to you, looking something like this:



For more information on importing a CodeWarrior project into Xcode, visit: http://developer.apple.com/documentation/DeveloperTools/Conceptual/MovingProjectsToXcode/mig_importing/chapter_4_section_3.html

Next Month: Our work is only half over. We will continue our discussion of porting your project by examining the Xcode side of the equation, as well as how to set Xcode preferences to make your development environment more civilized.

Application Installation Standards?

By Robert Pritchett

It's all about packaging.

First some levity - iPod Parody

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=36099539665548298>

Dan Frakes wrote these “Rules for the Distribution Road” over 3 years ago - <http://db.tidbits.com/article/07167>

And this may appear a bit dated by Scott Knaster - <http://www.mactech.com/articles/mactech/Vol.20/20.01/DistributingYourSoftware/index.html>

Followed by this from Peter Hosey in 2006 –

<http://boredzo.org/blog/archives/2006-01-16/how-to-distribute-your-software>

And of course, Apple had a few choice words on the subject -

http://developer.apple.com/documentation/DeveloperTools/Conceptual/SoftwareDistribution/Introduction/chapter_1_section_1.html

Disk Imaging - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disk_image

In the non-Mac environment there are a lot of different Disk Imaging tools –

<http://disk-imaging-software-review.toptenreviews.com/>

<http://www.programurl.com/software/disk-image.htm>

For the Mac - http://guides.macrumors.com/Disk_image

<http://www.pure-mac.com/compen.html>

From <http://www.xvsxp.com/files/compressed.php> we read this old article-

“In addition to ZIP, OS X supports a wide range of compression formats, including:

- bzip2 (.bz, .bz2)
- cpgz (cpio gzipped)
- cpio (.cpio)
- gz (.gzip, .gz)
- tar (.tar)
- tgz (tar gzipped)
- tbz, tbz2 (tar bziped)
- compress (.Z)

Since ZIP is one of the most common formats, OS X makes it extremely easy to create a ZIP archive that contains any file or files. Simply select the file(s) and choose **Create archive of...** from the contextual menu:

Unfortunately, this is essentially the extent of OS X's ZIP abilities. For example, once a ZIP archive is created, you cannot add additional files to it — instead, you'll need to delete the archive and create a new one from scratch that contains the additional files. OS X also lacks the ability to create or decompress encrypted ZIP files:

Aside from the above compression formats, OS X also has its own disk image format called DMG. DMGs can be created through Disk Utility in the Utilities folder. Specify a certain filesize and Disk Utility will create and mount an image of that size, allowing you to add files as you would any disk. You can then convert the image to a compressed format. Alternatively, you can create a disk image from a folder and save it as a compressed disk image. Disk Utility also allows for the encryption of disk images using AES-128 encryption.

Disk Utility can also be used to create Internet-enabled disk images, which greatly simplify the process of downloading software from the Internet. Such images will automatically uncompress themselves (when downloaded via Safari) and throw away their original compressed file, saving the user the trouble of having to do so manually.”

If security is an issue, create an encrypted image - <http://www.securitytechnique.com/2003/11/macencdisk.html>

Now it's our turn to go over the topic of distribution:

We aren't so much talking about disk imaging as we are about distributing software in the most efficient and economical way. How do we reduce the painpoints? Less keystrokes make happy Mac-folks. Keeping the installation of the application “out of the way” requires a level of trust between the developer and the purchaser of the product.

We could start with one of these tools for creating packages for distribution –

FileStorm - <http://www.mindvision.com/filestorm.asp>

DropDMG - <http://c-command.com/dropdmg/>

DMG Enabler - <http://zwei.gotdns.com/zweisoft/>

DMG Packager - <http://freespace.virgin.net/jeremy.dronfield/skoobysoft/skooby/products.html>

InstallGadget - <http://www.sweattechnologies.com/InstallGadget/>

Giles Turnbull asks for more intelligent installation processes for Mac OS X

http://www.oreillynet.com/mac/blog/2007/03/designing_disk_images.html?CMP=OTC-131V03560550&ATT=Designing+disk+images

And I'm not even going to go down the tempting *StuffIt* road.

The usual method of installing an app on a Mac follows this process - http://guides.macrumors.com/Installing_Applications_in_Mac_OS_X#Disk_images

DMG VS. ZIP

Do we ZIP or DMG? Over on Adium, the consensus is that DMGs are wrong - <http://www.adiumx.com/blog/2006/11/is-dmg-confusing.php>

Yet Apple says that DMG is the way to go. And when Apple speaks, we need to listen. Developers have been burned before because they didn't pay attention to the strong suggestions by Apple.

http://developer.apple.com/documentation/DeveloperTools/Conceptual/SoftwareDistribution4/Concepts/sd_disk_images.html

Internet-enabled Disk Images (IEDs)

Discussed at great length on the *Macintosh Business Software* Forum... some like it hot and others like it cold. Some ZIP and others DMG and most like to distribute their products via Internet-enabled Disk Images or IEDs.

Apple calls them “Product Containers” - http://developer.apple.com/documentation/DeveloperTools/Conceptual/SoftwareDistribution/Containers/chapter_3_section_1.html

John Siracusa wrote back in November 2004 - <http://arstechnica.com/reviews/apps/delicious-library.ars/2>

“In short, this is truly the age of downloading. On the Mac platform, that means disk images. Apple’s disk image format supports all of the extended features of the Mac OS (resource forks, custom icons, stateful icon sizes and positions, etc.) as well as optional encryption, compression, license agreements, and even auto-expansion and clean-up.

Just as physical packaging makes an important first impression for hardware, so too can downloadable software packaging be elevated from utilitarian to a delight. On Mac OS X, the first test of quality downloadable software is this: does it come as a disk image, or is it compressed or packaged using some other standard? While StuffIt, zip, and even tar and friends are all technically compatible with Mac OS X, disk images combine the best features of all of them and have the nicest user experience.

Apple has extensive guidelines for packaging and distributing software for Mac OS X. For disk images, there are two “best practices”. The first is what Apple calls Internet-enabled disk images. When an internet-enabled disk image is downloaded, it is automatically mounted, its contents are copied out of it, and then the disk image is unmounted and moved to the trash.

Since most Mac OS X applications can and should be single-icon, drag-installed bundles, the user experience of internet-enabled disk images is nicely transparent. The user clicks a download link in a web page, waits for the data transfer to complete, and then finds a single, uncompressed, ready to run application icon in the download location. From there, he’s free to drag it anywhere he wants, or even run it from its current location (usually the desktop).

But while that’s efficient and straightforward, it’s also essentially the total *elimination* of packaging. What if a software developer wants to make an impression? By foregoing the auto-copy-and-clean-up features, the developer has the entire contents of the disk image window to play with. Thanks to the OS X Finder’s ability display custom image backgrounds in windows, the results can be quite attractive.

Issues with Internet-Enabled Disk Images

Apparently today IEDs only work with the Safari browser and no others and also apparently you need Mac OS X Tiger or later. If your app is designed for Mac OS X 10.4.x or later, then this is not an issue. However, if you ZIP, you have a greater potential purchasing public.

Another issue is that with IEDs, the installer goes away automagically and if something goes goofy, the app has to be re-downloaded and reinstalled.

I use *Speed Download* <http://www.yazsoft.com/> as the archiving function, so reinstalling the app is not an issue after dragging the DMG to the trash, because the package is still harbored in the *Speed Download* application.

Watch Leopard and see how installing apps are handled. Apple usually has a reason to ask developers to “follow the recommended procedure”. It will be very interesting to see how the Apple readdresses the issue..

Like Giles Turnbull’s request for standardized ways of installing, I too would like to see consistent behavior between apps from developers. I like to know where apps are located instead of guessing where they might be and I like them to clean up after themselves, so I don’t have to.

The Best 5 Applications I Use All the Time: Part 1

By Dr. Eric Flescher (dmeric1kansas@aol.com)

A computer is a multifaceted instrument. I use my iMac for a myriad of needs at home, at work and for writing and other business ventures. In this column, I present five applications I use on a daily basis. Look them over and see if you can use them, want to try them out or give me feedback what you like or dislike about these applications. Or let me know if you have an application that is better for your purposes.

My top five for this Part 1 are: QuicKeyes, SnapProzX, GraphicConverter, FireFox and Blogger.

QuicKeyes (This version: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later but other version for OS 8 to 10.4)

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

If you use your computer often, you usually repeat the same type, set of keys, commands or other functions, over and over again. There may be certain words, phrases, key codes or special information or website addresses you must repeatedly type in documents or emails and with other software. Wouldn't it be nice if an application let you find, produce and replay many of these repetitious tasks requiring the same keystrokes? If you have the need, try a macro program.

So what is a macro program anyway? Macro programs are mini-programs that actively engage a task through the use of one or more keystrokes. I started using another macro program called Keyquencer, to help with repetitious operations that I needed when using OS system 9. I loved using it, but this program was not supported when OS X was released, so I had to search for an alternative.

I found out about QuicKeys X2 and installed it - relatively easy to use, it was very versatile. I was pleased to hear when QuicKeys X3 was available (since then updated to version 3.1), and was eager to try it out and see the improvements. There are many.

Version 3 is easy to install. I was afraid that I would lose my "old" trigger commands if I installed version 3.0.2, so I contacted the company and was told that older triggers are preserved and integrated automatically upon installation. I was happy about that, as I did not have to start all over crafting new commands.

QuicKeys X3, is now made for Mac OS X 10.4 and is Tiger ready. This new version has a number of new features that make the macros even more flexible, manageable and easier to use than version X2.

Once installed, the interface opens up. In the toolbar there are several options. Click on a QuicKeys word at the left to see several options in the pulldown menu: About QK, preferences, check for updates, provide feedback, hide QK, hide others, show all, quit QK.

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

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

The triggers, the keys that can be set to “trigger” the various actions at your command, are much easier to use. The display is more easily seen as it is all laid out for you. New Speech, Time Range, Application Event and Device Shortcut Triggers are also improved.

The new visual look provides an all-in-one way to inspect the key parts of this macro program. Less clicking and better visual looking editor makes this version of the program even handier to use. Logic and Variables options provide greater power and control to sequences. Improved Recording and recording hints make shortcut creation even easier. There is a better look-and-feel of the whole set-ups. In the editor, you create and save shortcuts, and you can delete the ones you don't want or modify existing shortcuts.

There is now a Devices window for controlling which devices QuicKeys uses for triggers and for recordings. Users can now control the devices used by QuicKeys instead of QuicKeys using all devices present and this helps address several issues with USB devices which are attached to the computer. There is an added feature to Manage Files actions to “not wait for an action to be completed.” An issue fixed in version 3.0.2 is where QuicKeys previously would not see some application switches. Also fixed where problems where the QuicKeys menu could not be clicked if QuicKeys is a Startup Item, and an issue where some shortcut steps could not be reliably selected by clicking. An improvement in version 3.0.2 is how QuicKeys waits for modifiers to be released when playing certain shortcuts.

Sometimes Third party software that hack or modify Mac OS X system behaviors may interferes with and/or crash QuicKeys, or just prevent it from functioning. The following QuicKeys related issues are due to limitations:

- If you include QuicKeys in your Startup Items list, it is recommended that you place QuicKeys last in the list.
- In some instances if QuicKeys is not the last item, other startup items may not launch properly.
- Command-Space and Command-Option-Space should not be used to trigger shortcuts.

More QuicKeys issues and Mac OS X known issues can be found in the QuicKeys Help areas.

I rate this program as a best buy for its flexibility and recommend this application for anyone who wants to increase their speed and efficiency in accomplishing repetitious tasks. And for those with different types of OSes, there are versions as well as the OS X version. With constant updates, the company is doing its best to make QuicKeys even better.

Snapz Pro X 1.0.7

<http://www.AmbrosiaSW.com/utilities/snapzprox/>

800-231-1816 (orders only)

Price: \$49.00, upgrading from Snapz Pro 2 to Snapz Pro X costs \$19; upgrading to Snapz Pro X w/ movies costs \$39 (both are \$10 off the normal price).

Have you ever wanted to capture images or short movies of your favorite games, application, documents or pictures? Mac OS has the ability to take a snapshot of your whole screen (Open-Apple shift 3) or part of the screen (Open-Apple shift 4). While OS X offers the capability with the Grab function that is capable of taking full screen snaps and saving the grabbed screen in pdf format, you may want more options. Have you wished your Macintosh had the ability to create sharper screen capture pictures or capture screens from your DVD? Possibly you want to be able to save the captures in different formats without a graphics editor program or need to turn your screen frames into QuickTime movies? If so, your wish may be answered by using Snapz Pro X 1.0.7.

This utility offers flexibility for capturing shots of your monitor's screens. This versatile application allows capturing the whole screen, selecting an object on the screen, capturing part of the screen as an image or making a movie. Selecting the full screen, an image is captured immediately while selecting object mode, the image is captured when you click the mouse inside the window or menu. If you use the selection tool, once you've highlighted the area you want, the image will be captured when you hit either the return key or press the Snapz Keys again.

No matter the mode you choose, Snapz Pro X uses "ClearScale," to automatically make your images look better, producing clearer and sharper images, fonts and colors - when the images are scaled to a smaller or larger sizes. The screen captures look crisper and clearer than normal screen Mac OS captures.

Other options (palette, the color, border, file, type or changing the quality of the saved image) can improve the final image appearance. Alterations to your final image include scaling, cropping, dithering, adding borders, generating thumbnails and overlaying a watermark/copyright notice. The graphic settings can be changed along with specifying file-naming options and the new "Fatbits" tool lets you zoom in on the pixels on the screen for doing close up work.

More capabilities under the Preferences tab help speed up your ability to customize the final image and allowing for several other options. Screen captures can be triggered with hot keys (which you can set up), and there is a script in the extras folder to take a picture at a special time or after a certain period of time.

Instead of saving an image in just one mode, the graphics settings format can be changed to insert another name of the picture and then take snapshots in one of many graphic formats (ex. .bmp, pict, .gif, .jpg, .png, tiff, .pdf, Photoshop, etc.). This helps speed up your work, since a graphic editor does not have to be launched or used to convert the files.

There is the option to view the captured image within 12 applications (including Appleworks, Photoshop, and QuickTime), and there is an option if you want a prefix appended to the image name. Miscellaneous settings allow choosing and changing the border type, thumb nail size, quality of the image, the background color, and the opacity (how clearly the graphic shows) of the background and copyright symbol.

Video capture is also at your fingertips. Movie options include fixed capture, following a cursor, capture via a smooth panning of the screen, and choose the frame rate. There is also a microphone option for use of a Macintosh audio track. During my tests, capturing as a QuickTime movie was simple.

GraphicConverter

www.graphicconverter.net/

Most computer users have heard about graphic programs that allow the manipulation of graphics and photos. While there are many graphic programs on the market for Macs and PCs, the one known to most is Photoshop, which is at the top for graphics manipulation. Photoshop has more "bells and whistles" than most people ever need, but most novice or intermediate users will never use even half of the options. Besides, the software is very expensive and even smaller sibling Photoshop Elements is not as pricey, but still has more features than most people want or need. Expense and useful features are good reasons to try shareware and freeware programs, and one of the best is GraphicConverter.

GraphicConverter is shareware, so you get to try the product without obligation and free of charge. The shareware price for GraphicConverter is just \$30 when downloading the application, while a CD is available as an option. I think once you try you will find it not only easy to use, powerful, reliable and worthy of using for

Macintosh users for many years.

Import and export over 80 graphics formats (one I need for astronomy work is called FITS images, which can't be converted by Photoshop). You can also use this program to import pictures (including RAW format) from your camera, as well as using interface TWAIN for scanners.

Slide show functions, batch conversion, and basic and advanced picture editing are all supported as well. Enhance pictures with color and use Photoshop -compatible plug-ins for other graphic modifications. This software works with Mac OS 8 to OS X, as well as the new Intel-Macs. Different versions for computer type and operating system are available and useful when you move to a different computer.

What more could you want for \$30? Over 1.5 million users world wide can't be wrong. I use it, and believe the price is right for you to start to improve your graphics editing capabilities now.

FireFox 2.0 for OS X

<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/products/>

I was looking for an alternative to IE when I learned about FireFox from a friend . I did not like IE primarily because of it is a Microsoft product and it lacks innovative features. I wanted something besides Safari, which I liked but was unable to import my bookmarks or use tabbed folders. After finding out more about the first versions of Firefox and reviewing a book Firefox Secrets by Cheah Chu Yeow, I saw what I liked and progressed to version 2.0.

Firefox is free for Mac and PC.; it is easy to download and install. Once installed, you place a FireFox icon in the Mac OS X dock or on the desktop. Firefox brings you a flexible product beyond Internet Explorer.

One nice feature ares I preferred over Safari were tabs to display different websites without opening a new browser window. The entire FireFox screen can be customized with freeware and shareware extensions to customize the product for many personal preferences. Before I knew it, I had added a number of add-ons that are seen when the Firefox interface opened up.

Try Firefox, Opera or another browser to get better versatility, and don't let Internet Explorer hold you hostage.

Blogger!

<http://www2.blogger.com/home>

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

I started creating websites before 1998, then recently learned about Facebooks, Flickr and Blogs. I saw that web logs had more to say regarding almost any subject. They were very much like scrolling files that could be added to nearly any subject of your choice. The different between websites and blogs was that instead of linking content on multiple pages, a blog positioned additional information on one continuous writing area.

I tried Blogger and found it was intuitive, easy to install website addresses in the blog, and was tied in with Google. I found the Blogger dashboard has a nice interface that is a "one stop shopping" for customizing, view different blogs, or other options. I also liked that I could look for photos on my desktop or on my iMac, then upload them into the weblog area. Cool and easy.

In addition, Keyboard shortcuts can be used and work in Internet Explorer 5.5+/Windows and the Mozilla family (1.6+ and Firefox 0.9+), and might work in other browsers. Also a series of keywords can be posted at the bottom of the blog, which send out messages to people on the web (about your blog) if you have signed up for Google Alerts.

Try it for yourself and see what you think. Blogging with Blogger is fun and is also another way to communicate, think, and really say something. And that's no bad.

Doc_Babad's Macintosh Tips - A Macintosh Tip or Three...



March 2007 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. Many, 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:

- Changing from Safari to Firefox
- **Function Key Assignments in OS X**
- Reduce Wasted Menubar Space
- Safeguarding Travel Documents
- MS Word Tips - Indispensable Tips for Word Users
- Make Pasted Text Match in MS Word
- *Save Document Images imbedded in MS Word*
- MS Word Customization and Preferences
- *Fixing Icons That Go Generic*
- Top 10 Troubleshooting Tips

Changing from Safari to Firefox

Q: I have been using Safari for a number of years and have been very happy with it as a browser. That said Firefox has the ability to use some web pages that Safari cannot completely render. Is there an easy way to move bookmarks from Safari to Firefox, and similarly, can bookmarks be synchronized between the two applications? ~ Jonathan M

A: The first time you launch Firefox; you'll be able to import your Safari bookmarks. After that, you can import bookmarks through Firefox's Bookmarks Manager. Choose Bookmarks > Manage Bookmarks, and then choose File > Import. You'll be able to choose Safari, Microsoft Internet Explorer, Opera and From File. Choose Safari and click Continue, and your bookmarks will be imported. And if you want to synchronize bookmarks between Safari and Firefox, consider using Everyday Software's Bookit 3.7 (\$12; www.everydaysoftware.net/bookit).
From: macHOME HotTips

January 2007 — Hints & Tips website address: www.mac-hints-tips.com

Function Key Assignments in OS X

Q: In OS 9, it was a simple matter to assign the Function keys. I haven't been able to figure out how to do it in OS 10.4. I would like F1 to open Safari. ~ Gene Reffkin

A: Apple has inexplicably left this OS 9 feature out of OS X. Thankfully; there are a number of shareware utilities that will do the trick. Beniot Widenmann's AliasKeys (\$15; www.widemann.net) is one of the best of the bunch. It allows you to assign any keystroke to files and folders (not just Function keys), so you can launch Safari with F1, Command/F1 or even Command/1.

macHOME Journal

March 2007 — Hints & Tips website address: www.mac-hints-tips.com

Reduce Wasted Menubar Space

Way back in Mac OS 9, you used to be able to tell what application you were in by looking at the application menu, which lived at the far right of the menubar.

But in OS X, this menu is gone. Instead, the full name of the active application displays in the menubar, between the iconic Apple logo and the File menu. Usually that's no big deal. The File menu's onscreen position might jump around a bit if the application name is particularly long or short, but most people probably don't notice this at all.



You might have noticed, however, if your screen real estate is limited. On a 12" PowerBook there's usually plenty of room for short application names — BBEdit, Finder, Safari, iChat — but launch Photoshop Elements (or any other app with a longwinded name) and prepare to lose fully 15% of your menubar space — nearly 150 pixels from the 1024 available!

If you use even a few menubar icons and the menubar clock, you'll quickly discover that the name Photoshop Elements causes icons to vanish. There's just not enough room to display them, and the application menu has priority. If you could just shorten the application's name somehow, you could recover a significant amount of menubar space.

No, you can't work this magic by renaming the application in the Finder — all that will do is change the program's name in the Dock and Command/Tab application switcher. You have to change the displayed name from within the program.

The easiest way to solve this problem is to purchase Unsanity's \$10 FruitMenu. This program not only lets you customize the Apple menu (another OS 9 feature that went the way of the dinosaurs with the release of OS X) to your heart's content, but you can also choose to show the application's icon in the menubar, in lieu of its name. This is a great space-saver that still provides you a visual clue as to the active application.

What are the downsides? Well, it's not free, and you'll have to install a preferences panel known as APE, or Application Program Enhancer, in addition to FruitMenu. APE, which installs itself in all running apps on your machine, lets FruitMenu (and the other Unsanity applications) do its thing. Some people don't like running such extensions, though Unsanity has shown that APE is a stable, mature technology. ~ Rob Griffiths

LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY

February 2007 — Hints & Tips website address: www.mac-hints-tips.com

Safeguarding Travel Documents

Going on a long trip? What happens if you lose important documents en route? Well, one way of keeping copies handy wherever you may be is to save scanned or photographed copies of them on your iDisk.

From any Internet-connected computer you can go to www.mac.com, log in, and click the “iDisk” button. This reveals the contents of your iDisk and you can download and print whichever items you need. This may be just the justification you need for getting a .Mac account.

AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia

February 2007 — Hints & Tips website address: www.mac-hints-tips.com

MS Word Tips

Indispensable Tips for Word Users

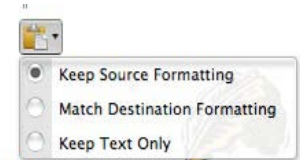
- Instant AutoCorrect — Right-click on a word that’s flagged as misspelled to display the Edit shortcut menu. If Word has a suggested alternative, AutoCorrect will appear on the menu. Choose AutoCorrect and then select the correct version of the word from the submenu to create an AutoCorrect entry.
- Marker display — Work with paragraph markers and tab marks displayed. Simply click the Show/Hide J button on the Standard toolbar. Displaying those normally hidden characters helps you avoid inadvertently deleting objects or changing formatting; it also helps you figure out funky alignment and extra white space problems.
- Clear a table — If you need to delete the contents of all the cells in a table, just select the table and press *delete* (not *backspace*).
- Jump quickly between documents — If you work with a lot of open, overlapping documents, here’s a quick way to cycle between them: Press Control/F6 to jump from one to the next; Control/Shift/F6 will jump you backward.



TMUG Insider, Pleasanton, CA

March 2007 — Hints & Tips website address: www.mac-hints-tips.com

Make Pasted Text Match in MS Word — When you, paste text from Web pages into Word, you’d probably like the pasted text to match the text in your document. In Word X, select: Edit > Paste Special > select Unformatted Text, and click on OK. This pastes the text without any formatting; it should therefore pick up the formatting of the location where you pasted it.



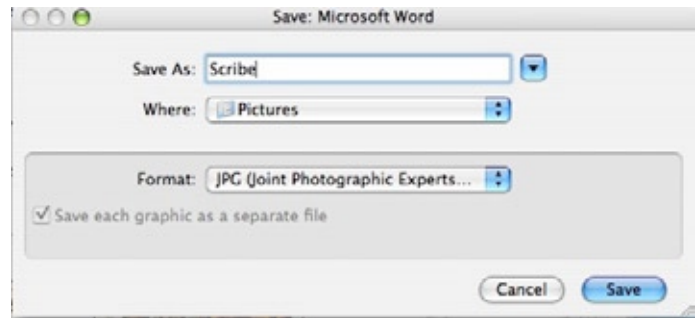
hat’s menu. If I appear on

If you use Word 2004, paste the text and then click on the Paste Options button that appears below the pasted text (it looks like a clipboard). Select Match Destination Formatting in the resulting menu.

Kirk McElhearn **Rule the Office** (MS Word Hints Only) MACWORLD October 2006

Save Document Images imbedded in MS Word —

If your Word 2004 documents contain graphics that you want to use elsewhere, you can drag the images to the desktop or to a folder, but they're saved as picture clippings, which aren't easy to share. Instead, just control-click on an image in a document, select Save As Picture from the contextual menu, and choose a file format from the Format menu.



Kirk McElhearn **Rule the Office** (MS Word Hints Only) MACWORLD October 2006

MS Word Customization and Preferences —

It is very easy to customize the toolbars, the menus and the shortcuts in MS Word. It is also easy to bring those back to the default settings created by Microsoft. No this is no a place for a tutorial on customizing the application, the MSW help files do that wonderfully well. --- You can make it happen by going to MSW Menu > Tools > Customize toolbars/menus. Really, check out the MS Word Help files. The files provide clear simple but explicit information on customization of both menus and toolbars. Hmmm. When was the last time you said something nice about Microsoft?

A word to the wise — If you share your computer with others, and MS Word is available to all users, you drive the crazy if as administrator, you do a hatched job on the shortcuts they're used to. Toolbars can be visually checked, but shifting menu items around is also a pain to other users. Since I solo on my computer, I could care less. I've drastically customized my tool bars but only made a few shortcut changes. Another user checking the slightly modified dropdown windows in my MSW menus can decode these.

By the way, the preference file is where information for most applications store the details on how you've customized the user interface in MS Word also stores your registration information. In MS Word preference files are where all those custom toolbars and shortcuts live. [Users > Harry > Library > Preferences > Microsoft > com.microsoft.Word.prefs.plist]. Restoring your settings can be tedious if you toss them. So to remember all the stuff in my custom tool bars, I save a screen shot showing my customization. [Its crowded but you can also take multiple clips to allow a large images.]

Fixing Icons That Go Generic —

Most experienced Macintosh user know the drill. Icons not appearing on the desktop, graphic icons turning generic, your finder actions or application gets twitchy... bad vibes from either the OS or an application. In OS X, there are a couple of simple things you can do to try to make things right, in order of simplicity.

- Restart the Finder [Option-Command Escape] – Most generic icons will revert back to their graphic, application related form.
- Restart your computer – If that fixes thing, good deal.
- Toss the Finder.plist in the Trash — [Your computer > Users > You > Library > Preferences > com.apple.finder.plist.] Each time you reboot an application including the Finder, It rebuilds the preference file. You will not be able to delete the old preference file until you reboot but a new replacement gets

built in place of the one you removed.

- Toss the affected Application's.plist in the Trash.
- If all else fails, delete [uApp or AppZapper] reinstall the application.
- If thing really go bad, alas you need to bother reinstall the OS and all your applications, but I really don't want to think about that now on a lovely spring evening.

Top 10 Troubleshooting Tips — I hope you never need to you more that the top four. [doc_Babad]

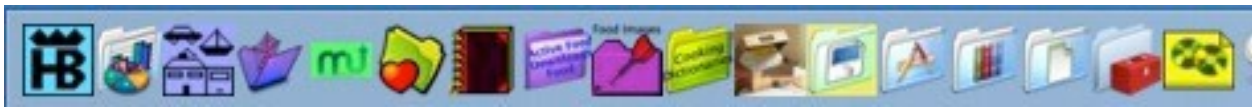
1. Make sure you have the latest version of the software available. If you have older software, it may not work with newer versions of the Mac OS X operating system. Never trust anything that comes on a CD — even a new program or printer you haven't even taken the shrink-wrap off yet — may have buggy software, so I always check www.versiontracker.com or the manufacturer's own website for a software updater.
2. Preference files can get damaged rather easily. The program usually can rebuild a fresh one at startup. Under Mac OS 9, these were mostly stored in the System Folder > Preferences folder. Under Mac OS X they can be found in ~/Library/ Preferences (where “~” is your home folder). They are now mostly called “.plist” files; before they had names of the program plus Prefs, Preferences or Settings.
3. You may have installed some conflicting software that opens at startup. Under Mac OS 9, you would use the Extensions Manager control panel, or better yet, the now discontinued Conflict Catcher, to find out which was the problem. Under Mac OS X, I'd suggest creating a new administrative user and log out and back in as the new test user and see if the problem is resolved. If it is, the problem is not system-wide, just user specific, so you can look in the Home Folder > Library for the culprit rather than the Root folder/Library folder.
4. Permissions for various folders and files can get set wrong, sometimes by the installer of the program itself. It's a good idea to run Repair Permissions with Disk Utility to clear up any problems. As a precautionary procedure, before and after you install an Apple System update, say from 10.4.2 to 10.4.3, repair permissions before installing and again after. Also because of limitations of the smaller delta updates like this, it's recommended strongly not to allow Software Update download and install the update, but instead to download yourself the larger combo update and install that. The delta update might miss some things.
5. Restart your Mac to clear a memory leak. That is caused by a poorly written program that does not release memory after it's done using it. This does not fix the problem permanently; only a program update can do that. Remember that programmers are human, too. But they need feedback, so send them an e-mail alerting them to their errors.
6. Rename bad files with generic icons to give them the proper file name extension. Mac OS 9 users have not gotten in the habit of using file name extensions. Assign programs to open specific file types by getting info on a sample file and change the “Open with:” pop-up menu and then clicking the “Change All...” button and confirming.
7. If an external device stops working, check to see if the computer even recognizes that it's connected. Do this by going to the (Apple) System Profiler found in your Applications/Utilities folder. (Mac OS 9 users will find it in the Apple menu) click on USB, FireWire, or SCSI category to get a list of recognized devices. You can refresh the list as you check the plugs. Sometimes you need to unplug and reconnect

the device to get it to be shown. Sometimes, particularly for some printers, you have to actually pull the power cord to reset the machine — just using the power button is not enough.

8. You probably know about the Force Quit window, from the Apple menu or invoked with Command/Option/Escape. It only lists major applications. To get to the nitty gritty of what is running, you need to go to the Utilities folder for Activity Monitor. Make sure it's listing "All Processes" in the pop-up near the top. You can force quit almost everything there, but be careful — you could force quit something important and lock up your Mac. I'd view the list by % CPU to see what is hogging your resources, but listing by real memory can be a real eye-opener too.



9. Internet Explorer has been discontinued by Microsoft, but people still use it. It recently developed a nasty little problem that is really not its fault. The default home page



is www.msn.com. The problem is [msn.com](http://www.msn.com) recently changed its programming which no longer works with the last Mac version of Internet Explorer. As the program hangs up as it starts up, you can't seem to do anything. Deleting preferences or re-installing the program won't help. You need to disconnect from the Internet by pulling your Ethernet cable or changing your settings in System Preferences > Network. Then it can't load the home page and gives up. So you can then go to the preferences and change the home page to something that does work, like www.google.com/. Quit the program and restore your Internet connection and startup IE for a test. Problem solved.

10. There are so many things that can go wrong that can be fixed by the free OnyX, software you'd be amazed. You may have problems like duplicates in your Finder's contextual menus, so use OnyX to reset the LaunchServices database. It can even do a quick check for damaged .plist preference files. You can do the daily and weekly (cron) maintenance scripts assuming your computer is not on at midnight when they are set to run. You can clean all kinds of caches not included in the above scripts. It's worth real money, but it's free from Titanium Software.



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February 2007 — Hints & Tips website address: www.mac-hints-tips.com

PS: Also Checkout the, November 2005 *macCompanion* Issue: "The Mac Attack" - Mac Tips, Tricks, and Hints" Keeping your Mac running it's best by Steve Stanger. Steve covers comparable ground from an equally valid but different perspective. <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/november2005/Columns/MacAttack.htm>

That's all folks...
Harry {doc} Babad

Troubleshooting the Mysterious “Right Earphone Failure”

By Robert Pritchett

Did you replace your earbuds because the right ear failed to function?

It starts out as a crackling sound in the right unit for a while and then it goes dead, never to be resurrected. If you are deaf in the right ear, this is not a problem. For the rest of us it is noticed immediately. And it only occurs with cable-based stereo headsets that use the mini-jack standard “cell phone” 2.5 mm audio jack. So let’s explore why...

Now if you have those cheap earbuds that are mono and not stereo, this apparently is not an issue. Nor is it an issue for wireless headsets. It becomes an issue when you lay down some pretty good money for tethered stereo earphones and they fail.

From recent reports, this is not isolated to Apple’s iPods alone. It is an industry-wide, any-player, cross-platform issue. Those legal beagles and high-tech ambulance chasers planning to sue Apple on this issue can stop right here. It is not an Apple-only phenomenon;

Hundreds of right-ear failure reports according to *MacFixIt* - <http://www.macfixit.com/index.php?date=2007-03-05>
<http://www.macintouch.com/readerreports/ipod/topic1974.html>

There were 270 comments, last time I looked in iLounge - <http://forums.ilounge.com/showthread.php?threadid=144425>

From *MacFixIt* – <http://www.macfixit.com/article.php?story=200703021112569>

“We are still in the initial stages of positing theories regarding the cause(s) of this issue, but some hypotheses include:

- The construction of the female mini-jack receptacle on various iPods is such that the right channel section of the male audio jack is more prone to some type of damage. The tip of a male audio jack is generally used for left channel sound, while the thicker part of the jack beneath the tip is used for left-channel sound...It is possible that the right-channel section of the audio jack is receiving some sort of adverse contact from iPods, causing this issue.
- Undue pressure on one side of the earphone jack causes strain, and eventual right-channel failure.
- Sound delivery to the right channel differs from delivery to the left channel, resulting in blown or otherwise damaged right earphones.”

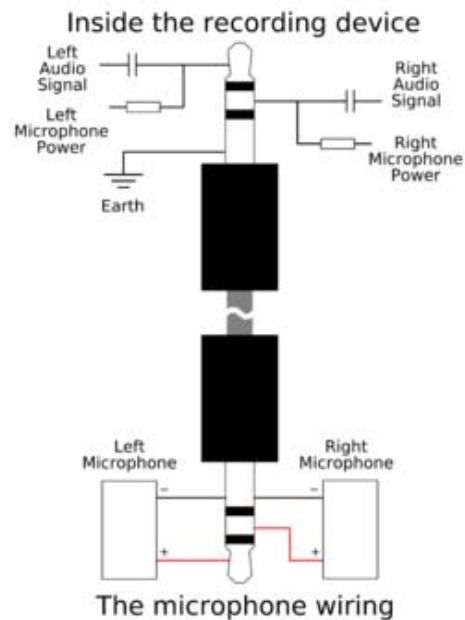
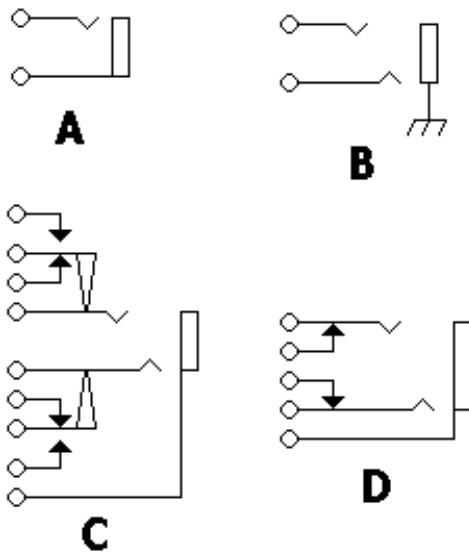
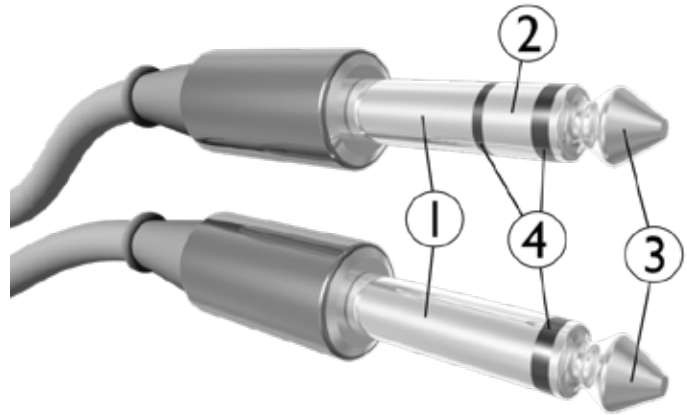
Usually issues like this are a result of a physical contact failure. From years in the field as a tech, my first knee-jerk reaction was that it has to be something in the jack/plug connection being the culprit;

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phone_plug Switch Contacts.

From *Wikipedia* -

“Numbers indicate:

1. **Sleeve** - usually ground
2. **Ring** - Right-hand channel for stereo signals, negative phase for balanced mono signals, power supply for power-requiring mono signal sources
3. **Tip** - Left-hand channel for stereo signals, positive phase for balanced mono signals, signal line for unbalanced mono signals
4. **Isolating rings**



These examples are meant to illustrate each possible component of such jacks, but many other configurations using these basic components are available.

A. A simple two-conductor jack. The connection to the sleeve is the rectangle towards the right, and the connection to the tip is the line with the notch. Wiring connections are illustrated as white circles.

B. A three-conductor, or TRS, jack. The upper connector is the tip, as it is farther away from the sleeve. The sleeve is shown connected directly to the chassis, a very common configuration. This is the typical configuration for a balanced connection. Some jacks have metal mounting connections (which would make this connection) and some have plastic, to isolate the sleeve from the chassis, and provide a separate sleeve connection point, as in A.

C. This three-conductor jack has two isolated SPDT switches. They are activated by a plug going into the jack, which disconnects one throw and connects the other. The white arrowheads indicate a mechanical connection, while the black arrowheads indicate an electrical connection. This would be useful for a device that turns on when a plug is inserted, and off otherwise, with the power routed through the switches.

D. This three-conductor jack has two normally closed switches connected to the contacts themselves. This would be useful for a patch point, for instance, or for allowing another signal to feed the line until a plug is inserted. The switches open when a plug is inserted. A common use for this style of connector is a stereo headphone jack that shuts off the default output (speakers) when the connector is plugged in.”

Italics were added by me.

The Long and “Short” of it

Rick Auricchio wrote the following in *MacFixIt* with his understanding of jack/plug technology –

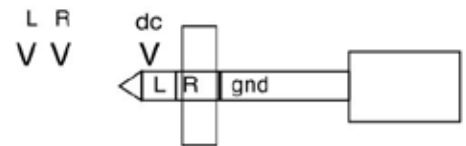
“This begins to make sense now, assuming the player runs the DC power ground through the sleeve (ground) portion of the phones plug.

1. When the plug is fully inserted, there would be a contact that touches the sleeve portion of the plug. The sleeve conducts power from that contact to the ground contact of the jack, completing the power circuit for the player.

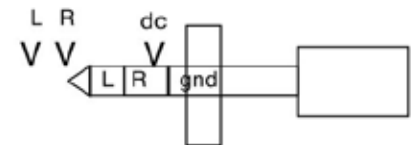
2. When a plug is inserted a little bit, the tip (L) and ring (R) “hot” leads bridge the power contact and ground. But since L and R phones are not connected (except through their grounds), there is no current flow. (The ground/sleeve hasn’t yet been inserted far enough to be a factor.)

3. When the plug is inserted further, however, the tip clears the power contact but the ring touches it. At this point, the sleeve has contacted ground. The right earbud completes the circuit between the power contact and ground, and DC flows through the earbud to ground.

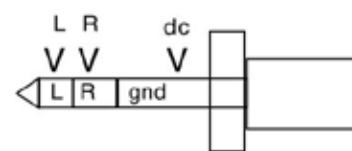
This begins to make sense now, assuming the player runs the DC power ground through the sleeve (ground) portion of the phones plug.



initial insertion of plug: no DC current flow



further insertion: DC flows through R earbud



full insertion: DC through ground, audio to LR

I am in total agreement with Rick on this one, but there could also be other factors involved besides possibly a less-than-optimum design. Call it the law of unintended consequences –

- If this earphone failure happened to you, what were you doing when the right earpiece failed? Were you working out and dripping perspiration all over the place and possibly getting the moisture into the hole where the plug is sitting? Perhaps the body-salt enhanced the electrical characteristics, such that arcing occurred from one part of the plug to another. It happens.
- Is there any corrosion?
- Did you disconnect/reconnect the earphones while the unit was running?
- Are the plugs nickel (silver) or gold-plated? Gold seems to hold up better, but we’d like to get a better statistical sampling just to be sure.
- Are the plugs clean or not (metal molecules that eventually created a path across the thin black insulator rings)?
- Did the wires separate (cable cover pull out) from the earpiece?
- How are the headphones treated? (Wire, even braided, can only be bent so much before it breaks, so don’t wrap them into a small ball or squeeze the loops tightly against each other.)

Trust Your Ears

If you hear “crackling” in one ear and not the other, more than likely, the braided wire is coming apart somewhere along that cable or the connection(s) at the need of the cable is/are going bad due to a mechanical failure of some kind.

And the issues of the plug/jack short-circuit activities between ground (earth) and the “mic” circuit is a common issue discussed at great length (okay, not so much) among electronics hobbyists. Unfortunately it happens quite often.

The rule of thumb for troubleshooting circuits is that usually 80% of failures are mechanical in nature (broken wires, bad solder jobs, opens, shorts), so we start there until they are ruled out.

This is almost funny – “Sudden Cable Death Syndrome” by Jens Moller, but he makes some excellent points about cable failure. Go read what he wrote a long, long time ago –

http://colomar.com/Shavano/audio_cables.html

Impedance Issues

This might be of interest regarding Impedance vs. Frequency - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electrical_characteristics_of_a_dynamic_loudspeaker

Some theories point to impedance levels and earbuds at 16 ohms that get “blown out” vs. 32-ohm systems that seem to have not experienced this. More inexpensive earphone sets have experienced failure than more expensive units.

Who know if the impedance really is the weak link here? We don’t know at this point, but there does seem to be a correlation of less expensive earbuds/earphones having right-ear failures more than the over-\$100 earphones having an issue. Then again, it could be that folks who paid up to \$1,000 (yes, that much!) for their earphones, are more careful with how they handle the units.

Personally, I’m not buying the notion that the issue is caused by overdriving the earphones where the right earphone is failing and the left is not.

Apple Shuffle - <http://www.apple.com/ipodshuffle/specs.html>

Etymotic - <http://www.etymotic.com/ephp/epcomp.aspx>

Shure - http://www.shurestore.com/earphones/eseries_comparison.html

Fixing the Issue

Remove the earphones when the machine is off and plug them in prior to turning the machine on. Apparently the power shorts out the electronics in the stereo earphones predominately for the right ear.

Perhaps the Tip-Ring-Sleeve design that works so well for larger form factors (6.35 mm) needs to be re-engineered for the smaller form factor (2.5 mm)?

Treat your earphones with kid gloves (those soft, dainty, white leather gloves ladies used to wear)! Don’t yank the cable out of the jack! Pull it out gently. I’ve found that if I’m good to my equipment it is good to me. Be respectful. And get the earphones replaced when they go bad. If they are still under warranty and enough folks turn them in, the “this never happened before” excuse will fade away and something will be done about it.

Digging Deeper

Inside iPod - <http://www.elecdesign.com/Articles/Index.cfm?ArticleID=9500&pg=2>

Fixit Guides - <http://www.ifixit.com/Guide/iPod/>

Pinouts - http://pinouts.ru/pin_index.shtml

Apple iPod Jack Pinouts - http://pinouts.ru/Devices/ipod_jack_pinout.shtml

iPod Schematics - <http://members.chello.nl/~m.heijligers/ipod/Engineering/engineering.html>

<http://ipodlinux.sourceforge.net/techdetails.shtml>

Wolfson Microelectronics headphone Driver chips –

<http://ipodlinux.sourceforge.net/techdetails.shtml> and <http://www.wolfsonmicro.com/products/WM8721/>

Apple Audio Protocols http://www.ipodlinux.org/Apple_Accessory_Protocol

March Notes of Interest

By Mike Hubbartt, Copyright ©2007

1. Apple Updates general site: <http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/>

- Apple TV – finally shipped (see the review in the hardware section of this issue)
- iTunes 7.1.1 – 28 MB – provides Apple TV support, fixed stability issues in the new 7.1 release distributed earlier in March, released March 16, 2007
- QuickTime 7.1.5 – 41 MB – provides bug fixes and addresses security issues

Two Apple updates of interest are:

- Airport Extreme 2007-001 – 6.5 MB (improves MacBook and MacBook Pro compatibility and addresses a security issue): [AirPort Extreme Update 2007-002](#)
- Mac OS X 10.4.9 incremental update, released 3/13/2007 – [PPC \(72 MB\) Update](#), [Intel \(160 MB\) Update](#)

2. Project 3.1 (Released March 9, 2007) free upgrade from ConceptDraw Project 3.0

Website: <http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/>

Download the update: [ConceptDraw Project 3.1](#)

The recent update to Project 3 contains a lot of improvements, fixings and additions:

* Fixed:

- Tasks multi-selection;
- Special symbols adding

* Improved:

- Appearance of dialogs, including Task Info;
- Network Diagram renewal mechanism;
- Dialogs closing by Enter pressing (Mac);
- Selected tasks highlighting;
- Dialog Import/Export appeared at import/export;
- Complete zooming

* Added:

- Tasks adding at Enter pressing;
- Resources adding in Assign Resources dialog at double click (at 100% assignment);
- Quick switch to Resources view from Assign Resources dialog using Show Resource Sheet context menu;
- Network Diagram print;
- Notification messages appeared if Assign Resource dialog is inactive, informing the user about the reason of the dialog inactiveness;
- Quick switch to Project from Project view by highlighting the project and choosing Show Project from the context menu;
- Native grid (Mac);
- Views and floating dialogs interaction;
- Buttons Select All/Deselect All in dialogs Column Customization are added;
- Shortcut Option+Cmd+N on Network Diagram is added (Mac).

3. Microsoft Word 2004 for Mac

For some cool templates for Word 2004, go to [Word 2004 Templates](#)

4. Adobe

A. Check out Adobe's color selection dashboard widget – [download here](#)



B. Creative Suite CS3 released

Largest Software Release in Adobe's 25-year History Revolutionizes Creative Workflows

SAN JOSE, Calif. — March 27, 2007 — Adobe Systems Incorporated (Nasdaq:ADBE) today announced the Adobe® Creative Suite® 3 product line, a revolutionary offering of tightly integrated, industry-leading design and development tools for virtually every creative workflow. Adobe's new Creative Suite 3 line-up unites the best of Adobe and Macromedia® product innovation to provide designers and developers with a broad spectrum of creative options for all facets of print, web, mobile, interactive, film, and video production. There are six all-new configurations of Adobe Creative Suite 3. These include, Adobe Creative Suite 3 Design Premium and Design Standard editions; Adobe Creative Suite 3 Web Premium and Web Standard editions; and Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium (see separate releases). Rounding out the product line is Adobe Creative Suite Master Collection which combines 12 of Adobe's new design and development applications in a single box—the most comprehensive creative environment ever delivered.

5. Shameless Book Plugs

A. *The Children of Hurin* by J.R.R. Tolkien is due out this spring. This book was started in 1918 and LOTR fans should pick up the HarperCollins book when it hits the shelves April 17th. Alan Lee contributed 25 sketches and 8 painting to the book, so it will look familiar to fans of the Middle Earth movies from Peter Jackson.

B. *On Writing* by Stephen King. This book is reviewed in this issue of *macCompanion* and is well worth the price to get a little insight into the world of Stephen King.

6. Shameless Astronomy Plug

A. March 2007 issue of Starry Night Times

B. Hexagon Weather pattern on Saturn – check this out.

http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/070327_saturn_hex.html

C. Websites of interest

Check out Virgin Galactic recently updated website – <http://www.virgingalactic.com/>

The Starry Night widget downloads are considerable - <http://www.starrynight.com>

To see Starry Night online – <http://www.space.com/snservers/snweb.html?zip=55311>

D. Pending Eclipses

* 2007 Aug 28: Total Lunar Eclipse

* 2007 Sep 11: Partial Solar Eclipse

And don't forget to download that new Starry Night widget - it is nice!



RoughlyDrafted Magazine

Market Share Myth 2007: iPod vs Zune and Mac vs PC

<http://www.roughlydrafted.com> Copyright ©2007 Daniel Eran Dilger danieleran at mac.com



Analysts and reporters like to talk about market share statistics, but the conclusions they draw are often misleading. Here's a look at how those numbers are used to paint grossly inaccurate portrayals of the market share of the Zune among iPods, and alternatively the Mac among PCs.

Market share simply refers to the portion of a vendor's unit sales compared to the overall market. However, most large markets include specialized niches that each act as a market. For example, within the overall market for vehicles are passenger cars, and buried within that major segment is the small but profitable luxury car market.

BMW doesn't compete against ship and plane builders, nor even the entire line of cars built by GM. It would therefore be absurd to talk about BMW's small share of the "vehicle market". or even to compare its market share among other car makers. It's simply pointless and irrelevant.

Why is market share so important in the PC world, particularly for Apple?

The Slippery Numbers of Market Share

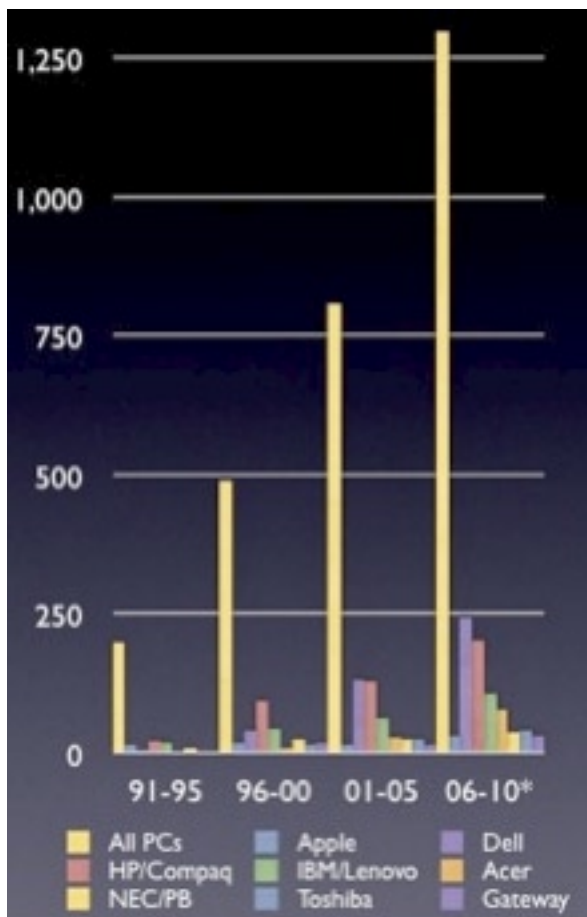
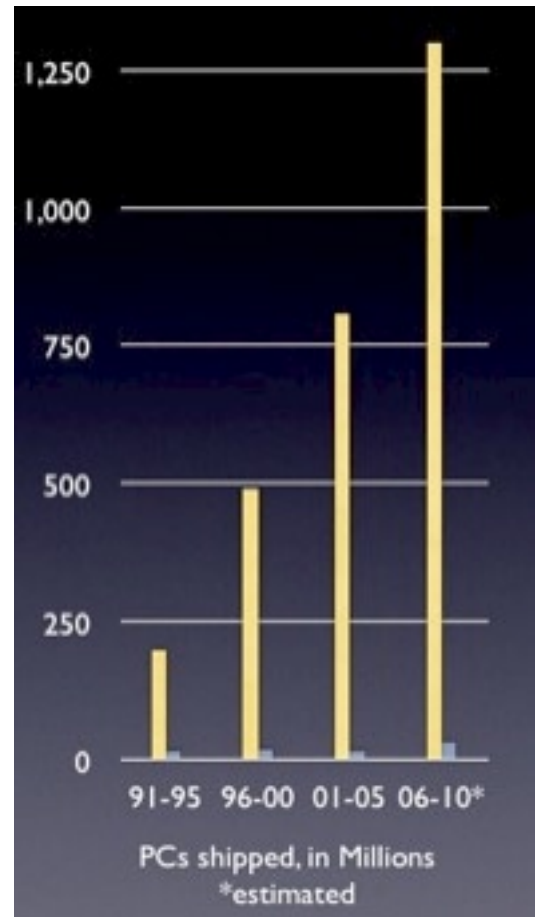
Microsoft-enamored analysts have long been titillated to report Apple's small Mac market share in comparison to all PCs sold worldwide.

They are not as quick to mention that the definition of "the PC market" ballooned as PCs makers pushed into markets unrelated to Apple's business, resulting in a commensurate decrease of Apple's share as the overall PC market rapidly expanded into unrelated directions.

By referring to Apple at every opportunity as having "less than a 3% share of the market". it enables them to casually suggest that a \$77 billion company with the world's hottest consumer brand is really just of little consequence.

Gartner reported in January 2007 that the worldwide PC market in Q4 2006 grew by 7.4% over the previous year to 67.3 million units. Apple sold 1.6 million Macs in that quarter, giving it a mere 2.3% of that global market.

Charting Gartner's sales numbers for PCs since 1991--including its estimated sales through 2010--provides Apple with an embarrassingly tiny bit of blue next to the towering yellow bar representing the entire worldwide PC market, even when the chart is expanded vertically to flatter Apple.



However, in the same January 2007 press release, a Gartner analyst also stated that "the PC industry battled for wallet share against other consumer electronics products, such as games consoles and flat panel TVs." In other words, the vast PC market is but part of a larger market: consumer electronics.

Additionally, Gartner also breaks out the US market as distinct from the worldwide market. Worldwide, Lenovo, Acer, and Fujitsu place third, fourth and fifth, while in the US market, they don't show up in the top five at all. Further, while HP leads worldwide PC sales, it is second to Dell within the US. How is that even possible?

Clearly, market share isn't a subject where numbers "speak for themselves." The more contextual information one has, the less relevant a specific portion of the entire world's market share appears to be.

In fact, if we throw all of the top eight brands Gartner tracked since 1991 into our chart, they *all* look rather unimpressive next to the overall, worldwide market, graphically demonstrating the fallacy of relying upon PC market share numbers to "speak for themselves".

The Slippery World of Percentages

Comparing a half to a seventh to a thirty-third is difficult to conceptualize. With everything in hundredths, a portion of the overall pie is easier to fathom.

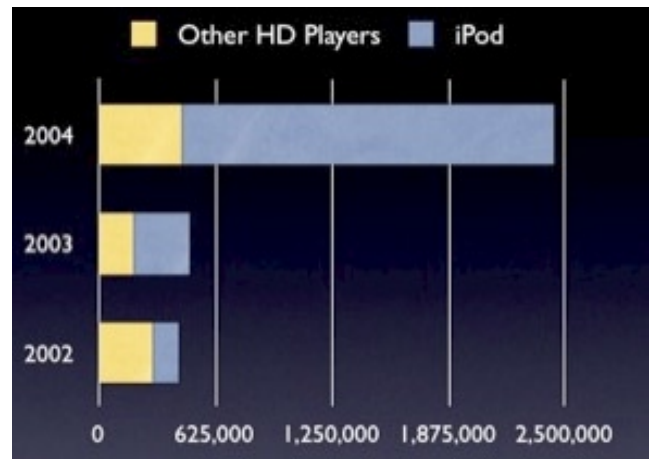
Even with percentages however, it is easy to set up comparisons that are very misleading. A vendor selling 100 units in a year and 200 the next year could be accurately described as having “200% of the previous years sales” or “a 100% increase over last year,” or alternatively only having sold “50% as much” the prior year.

That variety in phrasing, combined with variations in the definition of a market, can be used to tell remarkable stories that entirely misleading, but which appear to be supported by logical and accurate statistics

Zune, or How I Learned To Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb

When Microsoft announced it would abandon its PlaysForSure partners and take on Apple’s iPod with its own Zune music player, analysts were careful to point out that Microsoft had taken over markets before.

Since Apple had sold lots of iPods, it was assumed to be an easy feat, and since Microsoft had outsold the Mac a decade ago, it logically followed that history was about to repeat itself, or so they said.



Apple’s iPod *has* experienced phenomenal growth since its 2001 unveiling. Like the Mac, the iPod largely created a new market rather than displacing an existing one. In 2002, Apple had 33% of the hard drive music player market with 4th quarter sales of 140,000 iPods. A year later, it had 64% of that market selling 304,000. Apple more than doubled its sales, while the rest of the market failed to grow at all.

A year later, Apple had 82% of the hard drive market with sales of 2 million in its winter quarter, meaning that all its competitors were selling less than a half million units combined, a minor increase over the previous two years.



Apple wasn’t eating into other players’ sales, it was greatly expanding the entire market for hard drive audio players.

That was just what Microsoft had done in the computer world the early 90s: it didn’t sell Windows to the existing market of Mac users, but rather sold Windows PCs to a broader market around the Mac, replacing dumb terminals and DOS boxes, and putting Windows PCs on desks that had never had a computer before.

Microsoft didn’t replace the Mac; it pioneered new markets outside those Apple was targeting. In doing so, Windows helped impede any major new growth of the Mac platform, but sales of new Macs remained fairly consistent at around 3-4 million per year over the last decade and a half since 1991.

If we pull the yellow bar “of all PCs sold” out of the above chart, it demonstrates that Apple continued to sell roughly the same 17 million Macs every five years since 1991. Gartner estimates that Mac sales will roughly double between 2006-2010.

Analysts Get It Backwards

While analysts once liked to say that the Zune would take over the music player world in the same manner that Windows PCs engulfed the Mac, the situation was really not even remotely similar. Analysts had things entirely backwards.

With the Zune, Microsoft would not be selling a cheaper version to a different audience, but rather introducing a device of the same price to compete against an established brand.

Microsoft was attempting to eat into the high end of iPod sales, not roll out a cheaper version of the iPod to cube dwellers who had never heard of music before.

However, as predicted in Myth #8 of *10 iPod vs Zune Myths*, the only sales Microsoft could easily displace with the Zune were its own partner’s PlaysForSure devices.

Microsoft gnawed off its own foot, which while technically an achievement, only managed set the company back in its efforts to expand in the overall market and to push the adoption of Windows Media in place of the QuickTime-based iTunes.

It will be very difficult for Microsoft to grow that foot back. As for the prey it had intended to eat in its feeding frenzy: the iPod--in the same quarter--grew dramatically larger by extending its appeal to new buyers rather than just resorting to cannibalizing itself for some quick sales.

The tables have turned 180 degrees since Copland. Microsoft is now the one trying to bite into an established market but only eating itself up, while Apple’s iPod is growing rapidly by broadening its appeal to new customers. How well will Microsoft continue to fare in a market with real competition?

Billionaire Ballmer Blows Beaucoup Bologna

In the same CNBC interview where Steve Ballmer erroneously referred to Apple’s iPhone as “the most expensive phone by far ever in the marketplace,” Microsoft’s CEO also flamboyantly presented bogus market share numbers for the Zune which were also grossly exaggerated for dramatic effect:

“We took, I don’t know, but I think most estimates would say we took about 20-25% of the high end of the market. We weren’t down at some of the lower price points, but for devices \$249 and over we took, you know, let’s say about 20% of the market.”

Actually, the difference between 20% and 25% of the music player market is around four hundred million dollars of revenue. No doubt Ballmer has a lost his grasp of the value of money, but that’s still a lot of cash to toss around as a rounding error.

Ballmer also took the liberty of inventing his own concept of what the “music player market” is: when talking about Zune market share, the market only includes music players *that cost as much as the Zune*. In reality, Ballmer’s reported market share for the Zune was off by an order of magnitude, *more than a billion dollars*.

Using Ballmer's "make it up" market share methodology, what is Apple's market share of PCs costing more than \$1000? Dell and HP dump out massive numbers of PCs, and have an average selling price of around \$740.

If we can simply define our own "market" to fit our own needs, we can come up with whatever percentage we want. Off the top of my head, I believe Apple's share of the \$1100 white Core Duo laptop market is around 90-95%, and I didn't even have look for actual sales numbers.

NPD's Smoke and Mirror Market Share Numbers

The best sounding news about Zune sales came from NPD. It reported that the Zune had taken 10.2% of the market in December. That would represent a dramatic and impressive first showing, even if it only represented a rush of early adopters. In reality however, NPD's numbers were grossly misleading for a number of reasons.

Data Source: First, NPD only reports on subset of retailers, mostly big box stores. That section of the market would represent the majority of Zune sales, because Microsoft lacks major direct sales channels; it has no retail stores, nor does it operate a web store selling lots of Zunes.

Apple, on the other hand, has a series of web stores serving education and the general public; a significant retail presence of its own, with over a billion in sales last quarter; and lots of school campus stores selling lots of iPods. Apple also sells a lot of its iPods through other direct channels, including mail order and other web stores.

Defined Market: Even more disturbing about NPD's 10.2% was that it was based only on the "market for 30 GB hard drive players." In other words, NPD gerrymandered a Ballmeresque "market" based on the Zune's description, comparing it only against Apple's smaller capacity, full sized iPod model.

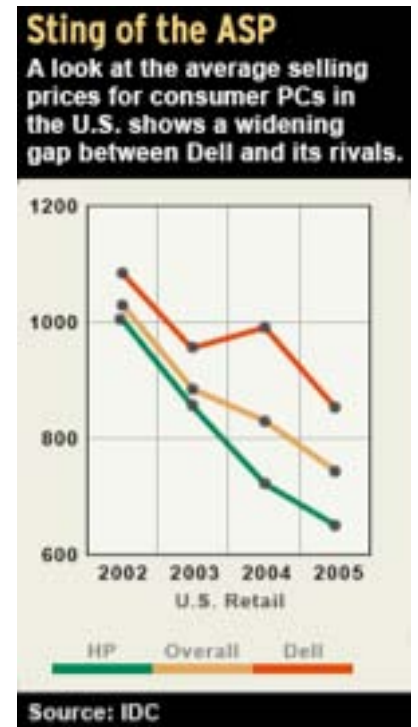
Users buying a full size iPod are tempted to spend another \$100 to get nearly three times the capacity in the 80 GB model. Why cut those buyers out of the "Zune market?" To create an intentionally false story, of course.

Sales Period: When counting all music players, NPD only reported 2.8% market share for the Zune. But it was still only able to do that by creating a special five week period that added in the Zune's debut week in November with the rest of December. How convenient, because Zune sales imploded after its initial debut week.

Once again, NPD's numbers excluded the Apple Stores' billion in sales, and all of the direct iPod sales, including popular online sources such as Amazon; recall that it was Amazon's popular sales reports that documented the rapid freefall of Zune sales after its debut week.

NPD simply pulled out all the stops in trying to define a set of circumstances that would suggest that Zune sales amounted to anything worth mentioning. It even appeared to invent the concept of *weekly* market share reports, and only abandoned them after it became clear that the tactic wasn't helping to flatter the Zune.

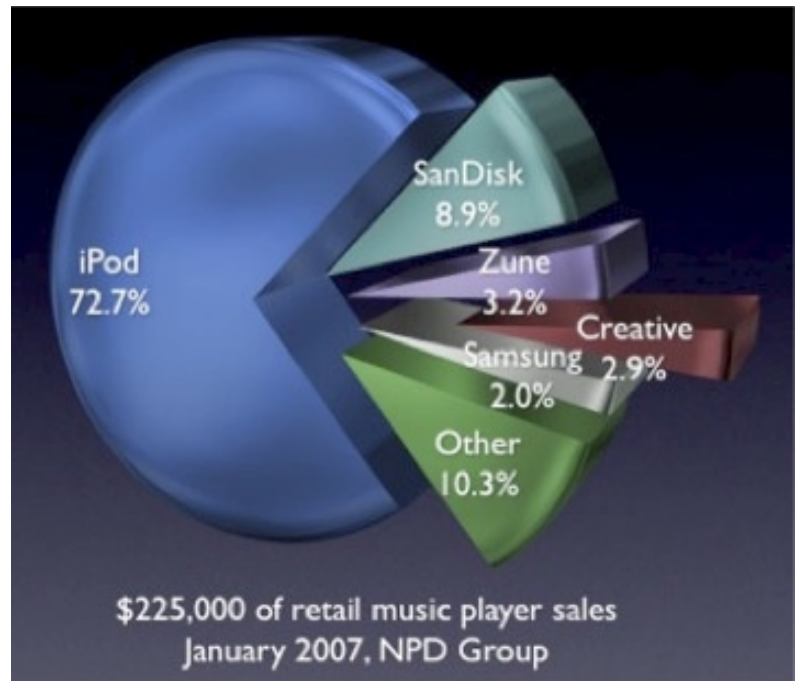
Growth Segment: At the same time, NPD initially reported that Apple's overall share of the entire market for music players had actually increased substantially over the previous year, from 42% to 57%. Again, that excluded all of Apple's retail stores and other direct sales.



Obviously, the Zune didn't eat into iPod sales at all, but only cannibalized the sales of its PlaysForSure partners, primarily SanDisk and Creative, the two brightest luminaries of the PlaysForSure universe.

Apple's share had continued to grow, even when only considering NPD's subset of numbers from general retailers. The iPod ate up 17 new percentage points of the market pie, compared Microsoft's debut at just 2.8, nibbled out of the share formerly owned by Microsoft's capriciously jilted partners.

Later in the month, NPD reported new revised numbers that still gave Zune 2.8% for its magic five month period, but assigned the iPod 72% of the entire market for the overall quarter, rather than the preliminary figure of 57% for that odd five week period that was most flattering for the Zune.



This Just In: Pac Mac Still At It

Just three days ago, NPD reported figures for January 2007, reporting on a quarter billion dollars of MP3 players:

- **Apple** 72.7%
- **Sandisk** 8.9%
- **Microsoft** 3.2%
- **Creative Labs** 2.9%
- **Samsung** 2.0%

Once again, NPD's numbers only cover retailers that supply it with data, which excludes Apple, Costco, online sales, and mail order outlets.

Based on NPD's numbers and my math, it would appear Microsoft sold \$7.2 million in Zunes in January via retail outlets, which at \$250 each would be just short of 29,000 units, making its Dr Evil goal of "one million Zunes!" by June 2007 a bit of a joke.

Is There a Better Way to View Markets?

Given the near worthlessness of NPD's absurd market definitions and carefully cut out statistics--all based upon an unclear subset of the overall market--is there a more accurate way to look at markets than consulting heavily massaged market share numbers that jump around erratically in a dance that appears to be performed for the benefit of Microsoft?

Yes, and it says a lot about both the market for the Zune among iPods and the Mac among PCs. It just isn't as flattering for Microsoft, so it would only appear on a website supported primarily by reader's donations.

The links in the article - <http://www.roughlydrafted.com/RD/RDM.Tech.Q1.07/FFE4A8E2-9816-4344-9FB0-61BED246674C.html>

Four Lynda.com Tutorials

By Michele Patterson



InDesign CS2 Beyond the Basics-Brian Wood
Photoshop CS2 Channels & Masks-Deke McClelland
Dreamweaver 8 – Garrick Chow
Fireworks 8 – Abigail Rudner

www.lynda.com

\$25/month USD (unlimited tutorials)

System Requirements: Mac OS X Broadband Internet connection (ISDN/DSL/CABLE); QuickTime 6.0 to 6.5.2 or 7.0.4 or better to view movies with closed captioning; Safari 1.0 or later or FireFox 1.0 or later web browser; 1024x768 or higher screen resolution.

Strengths: Unlimited use of tutorials, tons of programs to learn, Windows and MAC versions, well organized and, in most cases, easy to follow.

Weaknesses: Very large & confusing downloads, a little hard to find what you are looking for.

Previous Reviews: None in *macCompanion*.

I work in graphic art and always want to learn about creative software, and found that Lynda.com provides everything that I could want and more. Lynda Weinman - the creator of the site - is a Web graphics and design veteran, and wrote the very first industry book on Web design, *Designing Web Graphics*, in 1995. She is a prominent educator and the author of dozens of best-selling books, was a faculty member at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA, in 1989, and has worked as an animator and motion graphics director in the film special effects industry.

Getting Started

I logged into my account and found a tutorial I wanted to view, so I selected the download link and then went to an area that was more than a little confusing. I downloaded all the files for the first tutorial - three zip files in all - but encountered errors when I went to open them. The message I saw indicated that I had a corrupt or incomplete file. I deleted and again downloaded the files (very time consuming), but still saw the same error message. I emailed Lynda.com for help and got the following prompt and courteous reply:

“Delete everything you have downloaded so far. Instead of using Internet Explorer to download the files, use Firefox. That is the quickest way. If you’d like the instructions for Internet Explorer I’d be happy to get them to you. Internet Explorer has recently started treating the naming structure of our multi-part file downloads in such a way that causes these errors. This is why I recommend Firefox instead with your time constraints.

Best Regards,
Ryan Hannington”

I really appreciate the information, and if I had ventured to read all the download instructions I might have understood to do this the first time. However, I - like many others – sometimes fail to read instructions and would have preferred to find an attached ReadMe file so I couldn't miss this VERY important information. Once I got all that sorted out the program opened right up and viewed without any further complication.

Testing the Software

After viewing several tutorials and following along I have to say that this is a great site. Most of the speakers/instructors were very knowledgeable and went slow enough to follow easily. While not every single one of them was the best ever, I was able to get the idea and progress to the next step with relative ease.

One thing that should be noted, if you are the teacher, remember to clearly note what you are doing and why you are doing it that way, do not assume that every viewer will fully understand. The instructor for the Fireworks tutorial tended to jump around, name the wrong tutorial and make mention of moving on to the 2nd tutorial when in fact there wasn't one. She also didn't explain why she was doing certain things nor did she make it obvious what she was doing to get to the next part. That is the type of thing that will keep people from purchasing more, in fact in the past it was the reason I didn't download from certain other sites. I have to note that she was the exception rather than the rule and every other tutorial was so well versed I think I had to rewind once or twice if I got distracted. The programs are well worth the price.

Conclusion

Great program and I would recommend it to friends, in fact I have!

Myriad Ways to Work & Play With Words

The scope of tools for the creation and processing of words.

Rants, Raves and Revelations – April 2007

By Harry {doc} Babad



Introduction

This article, *one of two* I'm writing for this issue will introduce you to the large variety of tools work working with words, Identify both sources of lists of such tools and speak to their purpose.

My second article will summarize the tools we've reviewed that fit the word processing tools categories I've defined and provide you a quick entrée into the commercial or shareware tools we both like and use.

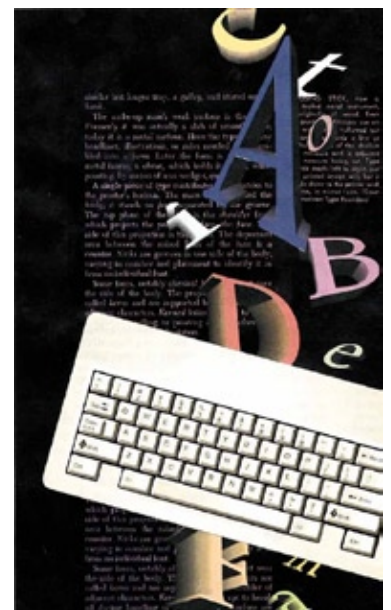
For those of us at *macCompanion*, there has always been elusiveness in the meaning or scope of tools for word or text processing software. This vagueness occurs in part because there are so many ways to process plan or formatted text, and a bunch of reasons to do so. Our confusion is also fostered by the number of ways developers identify the function of their products, despite the fact that differently labeled products have comparable functionality.

Note: In my articles, I often refer to both the MacUpdate, now newly reconfigured to be more accessible, and the Version Tracker sites. I use these to troll for software product to test and perhaps keep. I'd like to add a newly discovered site, called Pure Mac <http://www.pure-mac.com/> that tabulates and gives a brief description of "all the software you really need." The site does not however rate the software products, for ratings you have to search elsewhere.

Word and Text Procession Thoughts — When you think of word processing software, what's the first thing that comes to mind? Words? [Section below quoted from Cindy Krushenisky's article At The Office, August 1993 • Vol.4 Issue 8: <http://www.smartcomputing.com/editorial/article.asp?article=articles/1993/aug93/93n0815.asp&articleid=5937&guid=%5D/>.

"Well, they shouldn't. Word processing programs no longer mean just words. Many high-quality programs can do more for your computer than turn it into a glorified typewriter that allows you solely to type letters.

"Besides letting you create, manipulate, format and print text-based documents, many word processing programs let you separate text in columns, add unique fonts and colors, as well as create or import drawings and clip art for your reports, newsletters and correspondence. In addition, many word processing programs have their own dictionaries, grammar checkers and thesauruses to make sure the text that you have composed is properly spelled and applied."



In addition, there are a large number of both integrated [MS Office and Open Office] stand-alone tools [See Image] that allow you to use words better for focusing your documents, letters and other word containing products. Do these products belong in out focused editions? It depends! Your choice, don't like my categories, pick your own. The information for you to explore further is provided on page 184.

Bibliography	OCR	Spell Checkers	TeX	Text Editors	Text Utilities	Viewers	Word Processors
BibDesk	Readiris Pro	cocoASpell	CMacTeX	Alpha	Cyclone	Adobe Reader	AbiWord
Bookends	VueScan	Excalibur	Equation Service	Aquamacs	SimpleText Color Menu	Chamonix	AppleWorks
EndNote	WorkingPapers	Grammarians	i-Installer	BEdit	SmartWrap	Chmox	Letter Star
Reference Miner	PDF	Grammatica	iTeXMac	Carbon	textSOAP	eReader	LightWayText
Sente	Acrobat	Nisus	iTeXMac	Emacs	textSOAP	icWord	Mariner Write
Creative Writing	Combine PDFs	Thesaurus	LaTeX	jEdit	Typelt4Me	MacGhostView	Mellel
Avenir	Formulate	Spell Catcher	Equation Editor	Jedit X	UnicodeChecker	Tofu	Microsoft Office
CopyWrite	Jaws PDF Creator	Spelling Corrector	LaTeXIT	QuoEdit	Unicode Converter	Tubby	NeoOffice
Final Draft	PDFClerk	SpellMe	LyX	skEdit	WordService	xCHM	Nisus Writer
Final Draft AV	PDFLab		OzTeX	Smultron			OpenOffice
Jer's Novel Writer	PDFpen		TeX FoG	SubEthaEdit			Pages
Montage	pdf-Recover		TeXMaker	Tex-Edit Plus			Papyrus
NovaMind	PDF Shrink		TeXShop	TextMate			Publicon
Scrivener	PrintToPDF			TextWrangler			Ragtime
SuperNotecard	PStill			VIM			
Ulysses	Trapeze						
WriteRoom							

Category Questions - To Include or Not to Include?

- Should we include dictionaries, thesauri and grammar checkers in our focus on word processing? I believe so.
- How about mind-mapping software, to-do lists or information organizers? For the sake of the April and May issues of *macCompanion*, no not really. However, if you'd like to gain an appreciation of the broad variety of such software checkout the Personal Information Manager [PIMs] category Pure-Mac Site <http://www.pure-mac.com/pims.html>.
- Word puzzles and games, think Scrabble or Crossword Forge, fall outside our focus.
- Typing Tutors fall outside my focus but software that *auto corrects* or *auto completes* you words does not.
- How about software that allows you to make business cards, label CDs or generate great posters or layouts. Doc says no.
- I was torn by the question of whether outliners belonged in this word-text processing category. I decided yes, but without a strong rationale. Pure Mac site whose table I've provide above, lists outliners under PIMS, but I use these tools for setting the logic for complex documents and usually when using a stand-alone version, port the outline in to MS Word. [Perhaps more important, I'm reviewing OPAL, the grandson of ACTA Outliner for this issue, and simply wanted to belong.]

The Categories of the Beast — The best of two compendia e.g., list collections] of the software that interests us in this April and the upcoming May editions of macC can be found at <http://www.pure-mac.com/textword.html> under the heading *Text Editors & Word Processors*. The categories included in the Pure Mac listing include products that provide support for Bibliographic software, OCR, PDF, spell checkers, TeX [See the end note], text editors, text utilities, text viewers, and word processors.

The second source of information, other than googling for items in each category is the discussion in the Wikipedia, but of course they include software from those other platforms.



Some of you may be uncomfortable that I've excluded page layout programs such as Adobe Illustrator, BeLight's Swift Publisher, Adobe InDesign or QuarkXPress. However, many authors I know create the copy they want to layout in other programs that are both easier to use and more focused on getting the words down right! These are programs that add the prettiness factor design to catch the eye of the reader.

Finally, with the advent of Web 2.0, whatever that turns out to be, there are many tools such as word processors, dictionaries and thesauri found on the web. [E.g., Google Writely www.writely.com, the dictionary.com or dict.org sites.]

And a Bit of Enlightenment From Wikipedia

[Most of what follows in this section is directly quoted from the source (link) provided. Some of the material was reformatted to meet the needs of this article.]

Word Processing — The referenced Wikipedia site contains a bare-bone list of word processors all provided with links to other Wikipedia articles. Note: Documents created by a word processor generally contain file format-specific “control characters” beyond what is defined in the character set. These enable functions like bold, italic, fonts, columns, tables, etc. These and other common page formatting symbols were once associated only with desktop publishing but are now commonplace in the simplest word processor. The word-processing categories that Wikipedia lists include Free/Open Source software, Proprietary (e.g., commercial) products, freeware, and online products. The article also includes a lengthy list of historical products that are mostly unsupported or perhaps even unused. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_word_processors This list, which I both scanned and randomly clicked contains a few errors (e.g., Word perfect 3.5e for the Macintosh is not included) but serves as a good overall departure point for any word processing user.



In addition to the clickable list for each software title, there is there are tables that provide general information about 36 selected word processors and their characteristics. The feature comparisons (characteristics) are confined to the availability of grammar checking; graphic editing, mail merging and spell check capability. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_word_processors/.

Operating systems related information for the selected programs is provided for Windows, Mac OS X, GNU/Linux, BSD, BeOS/Zeta, MorphOS, OpenVMS, ReactOS, SkyOS and UNIX. Finally this excellent resources provided details of both the import and export capabilities of AbiWord, KWord, LyX, MS Word, OpenOffice.org Writer, Papyrus, Ted and Word Perfect.



Text Editors — A text editor is a type of program used for editing plain text files. Text editors are often provided with operating systems [e.g., TextEdit for Macintosh OS X] or software development packages, and can be used to change configuration files and programming language source code.

In a manner comparable to the Wikipedia treatment of *Word Processing Programs*, the articles tabulates and provide information for a large variety of Graphical and Text User Interface products. Checkout http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_text_editors/

If you want more information on the general capabilities of Text Processors, checkout: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_text_editors/. The article contains details information on:

- The Differences — Plain text files vs. word processor files
- History of and types of text editors.
- Finally there is a good discussion of typical features of text editors. The later includes: Search and replace, copy, cut and paste, undo and redo, as well as Importing and filtering.

Office Suites — The ability to work with text in a variety of ways, as compared to either numbers (spreadsheets) or graphics is often an integral part of office suites, integrated collections of software that serve a variety of functions. In computing, an, office suite, sometimes called an office application suite or productivity suite is a software suite intended to be used by typical clerical and knowledge workers. The components are generally distributed together, have a consistent user interface and usually can interact with each other, sometimes in ways that the operating system would not normally allow. Typical kinds of application sets may include a: word processor, spreadsheet, presentation application, and an email program. Other modules released by developers also may contain flowchart tools, drawing (bitmap/vector), or formula creation: mathematics/chemistry. Then there are suites that may focus on data management, project management, desktop publishing, web design or just the act of collaboration.

The tables in the article compare general and technical information for a number of office suites. The Wikipedia tables only include systems that are widely used and currently available. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_office_suites

Other Processing of Words Related Tools — I've chosen not to add discussions, from Wikipedia or elsewhere on the categories:

- Bibliographic (reference management) software http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliographic_Software
- Optical character recognition tools [OCR — http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optical_character_recognition/
- Portable document format (PDF) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PDF/>
- Spell and grammar checkers, or text utilities such as thesauri.
- Nor have I dealt here with outliners but Wikipedia has: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outliner/>

But the few links I've provided should tide you over spring's rainy days and provide you with added choices to express your self in the *printed* word.

In Closing

There are some great and not so great tools out there for dealing with words. [That's why you read *macCompanion* and the download sites that publisher product reviews.] In this article I've attempted to give you a broad first look at the tools of the trade and provide you with Internet links to information that helps you explore further. No one site whether print or solely electronic can give you everything you want in support of using the best writing tools for you. Explore alternate tools to those you're are now using. Be brave, the results my pleasantly surprise you.

You can certainly gain additional insight about such writing tools by googling say perhaps Macintosh *Spell Checkers* [1,260,000 Hits] or Macintosh *outliners* - 494,000 hits which includes Ted Goranson's fine articles at, <http://www.atpm.com/>. You can even study the history of such tools and their underlying principles by googling [e.g., history of word processing.]

If you just looking to find out what tools exist keep these categories and their associated links close. The linked articles will help you check whether you'd like tools other than those that came with your operating system or computer. Or perhaps for home use, tools other than those that were chosen by your school or company. If your present spelling checker or thesaurus sucks, there are lots tools more out there that play nice with your Macintosh.

Harry doc_Babad

TeX – An end note — TeX is a typesetting language. Instead of visually formatting your text, you type your text combined with commands in a plain text file. That file is your TeX source. You then use TeX to produce the final layout. Contrary to a normal word processor, the source and the output are basically separated in two different files. For more information check out <http://ii2.sourceforge.net/tex-index.html/>

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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.

We also provide monthly book, hardware and software reviews at [macCompanion](http://macCompanion.com). 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 and consulting efforts, we also create *macCompanion* as a freely available PDF-based monthly. It averages about 100 pages per month. July 2006 was the 4th-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](http://macCompanion.com) 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 PDF 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”.

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