macCompanion

iPhonomics

Masthead

Columns

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Hardware

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Letter from the CEO
iPhonomics or Status Symbol?
By Robert Pritchett

Did Steve Gillmor coin the term "iPhonomics"? http://gesturelab.com/?p=82

Did Dan Farber spread the iPhonomics Gospel? http://blogs.zdnet.com/BTL/?p=5301

Has Krishnan's Krishwords gone too far? http://www.krishworld.com/blog/mobile/iphonomics/

Who will be the first to provide a definition of iPhonomics on Wikipedia?

With Apple shares going through the roof because of the hyperhype over the iPhone, the whole series dedicated to it by Daniel Eran at Roughly Drafted – http://www.roughlydrafted.com and folks taking outrageous jabs at Apple saying that the opportunity costs are too high for buying an

 iPhone, and some folks having way too much fun writing and singing about it - http://www.surfbits.com/?p=1211 what are we to believe? Everything that comes from Apple is a godsend? As an Authorized Apple Professional and reseller, I still do not have permission to sell the device – and because I am not a direct employee of Apple, I will not get one as part of my "employment" either.

Others have had even more fun doing research on alternatives to the iPhone such as Scott Gilbertson - http://www.wired.com/software/coolapps/news/2007/07/iphone and MarketCircle with their iPhoney web simulator - http://www.marketcircle.com/iphoney/ and those who would aspire to being the next iPhone millionaire - http://applephoneshow.com/ and http://barcamp.org/iPhoneDevCampApps with their iPhone apps.
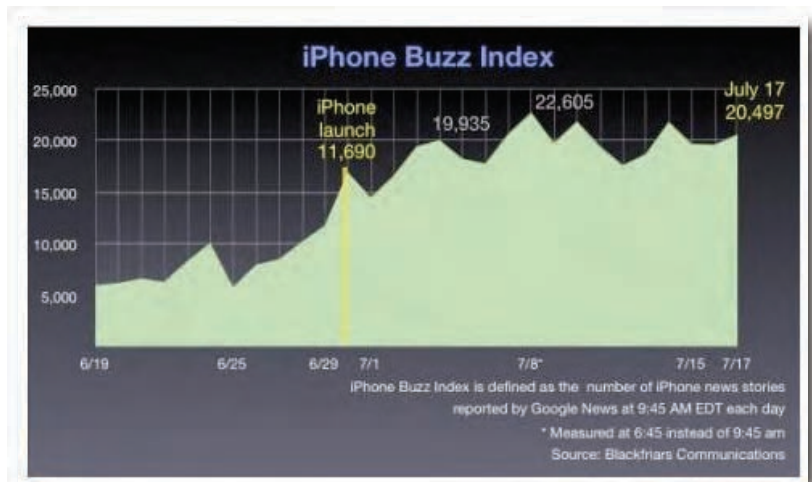
Okay, let me take a stab at it – iPhonomics are all the costs associated with using an iPhone. It is more than just the rate plans over 2 years plus the cost of the device itself - http://www.apple.com/iphone/easysetup/rateplans.html This electronic unit is the center of the peer-pressure and the coolness factor – it is an instant status symbol. I really believe it is like the way girls will go out with guys who have cool cars. (If you can afford an iPhone, you may be able to support me for life and help raise our future children.)

And all those folks who figured they'd get extra iPhones to sell on eBay were sadly disappointed when Apple flooded the marketplace with the unit. Talk about lost opportunity!

So when engineering development costs are amortized and the unit come down and the other telephony carriers can get a piece of the action besides AT&T, we will see iPhone 2 or by then maybe iPhone 3 and I can afford one. Now if I had put all my money into Apple stock a few years ago when I told everyone to buy it, I could afford one today – warts and all.

We have a new class structure – those who can afford an iPhone – and those who cannot. And that is what iPhonomics is really all about.

Perhaps one of the best discussions surrounding iPhonomics may be the Mac Roundtable podcast of 2007.07.16 - http://www.macroundtable.com/

We also were given permission to reprint Terry White's iPhone review in this issue of *macCompanion*.

Digging Deeper
CRMing on the iPhone - http://www2.etelos.com/iphone/
iPhone Atlas - http://www.iphoneatlas.com
Availability Lists
http://www.blackfriarsinc.com/Maps/iPhones.html
http://www.apple.com/retail/iphone/
http://www.insanely-great.com/news.php?id=7372
iPhone Chat - http://www.publictivity.com/iphonechat/
iPhone Fonts - http://daringfireball.net/misc/2007/07/iphone-osx-fonts
iPhone Matters - http://www.iphonematters.com/
iPhone The Missing Manual
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596513740/index.html
Remote Control
http://www.macobserver.com/tip/2007/07/16.1.shtml
http://code.google.com/p/telekinesis/
Reviews
http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=201200060
Skyping on the iPhone
http://blog.tmcnet.com/blog/tom-keating/skype/skype-on-iphone.asp
Tech Talks - http://developer.apple.com/events/iphone/techtalks/
Web Apps
http://www.wired.com/software/softwarereviews/news/2007/07/iphone_webapps
Widget List - http://iphonewidgetlist.com/

Rants, Raves and Revelations – August

Adventures in Recipe Hunting – You're likely still looking in the wrong places and missing great food!
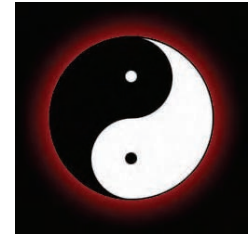
By Harry {doc} Babad © 2007 Food network

So you like to cook. In this my latest food related article, after a few twists and turns, I'll share an approach to recipe hunting that's both fun and rewarding. It is also obscure, adventurous and likely at times frustrating. For the most part what you'll find is either not kitchen tested or made with difficult to get ingredients. The later is true even if you live in New York, Quebec, Shanghai, London, Hong Kong or San Francisco. Read on and you lean about the world of food blogs and Google images, yes I said Google images, some of the richest recipe sources I found. But first let me take you for a walk down gourmet lane or we all burn the toast at times.

Getting Started in the TV and Internet Age — If you wander the web sites tied to cooking shows, subscribe to magazines about food or even homemaking (and their associated sites) or visit food products websites you are no longer taking cooking 101. Actually, from a cooking expertise point of view, you're a level deeper than most of us when we started. Your probably know the difference between boiling and baking, grilling and broiling and even understand the meaning of poaching. [No your can't climb over the wall and hunt for pheasant deer!]

I got hooked in graduate school, cooking for some guys who hated to in exchange for food costs and access to a car to go grocery-shopping in. [Hey New Yorkers for the most part don't need to drive. You just take the "A" train.] One of them, Pete is still my friend; I hope the others haven't died of food poisoning.

I and lots of folks with whom I swap recipes with, started cooking from wonderful books such as *America's Test Kitchen Family Cookbook*, *Betty Crocker Cookbook*, *Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook*, and my favorites the *Joy of Cooking* and the *Fanny Farmer Cookbook*. Then we drifted off to specially cook books to teach us our favorite foreign restaurant cuisines, or moved upscale to more fancy cuisines like those taught by the late Julia Child. Like many other foodies, we all collected and acquired and subscribed to cookbook clubs. One surprise when I married almost four decades ago, she's a better cook than I am, was that very few of our hundreds do cookbooks were duplicated

Remember this was all **BI**, the dark ages Before the Internet… you wanted to cook you either read a book or newspaper or magazine or took a class or three.

Previous Cooking Articles on macC — In my precious recipe related articles I shared the how tos of enhancing recipes download from the Internet (Check macC December 2006 and January & February 2007.) Along the way I provided you with a sprinkling some of my often searched sites, including those from food boards, grill manufactures, and the sites of many of the makers of the products you buy and use. But you've not yet gotten in very deep if you stick to those or the sites associated with Food oriented magazines and Food TV.

Magazines —
You may subscribe, as I do, to *Gourmet*, *Bon Appetit*, or *Food & Wine* magazine or to the more health oriented *Eating Well* or one of the vegan magazines. Each of these quality magazines, including *Sunset*, provides not only the clearly described (and often illustrated) recipes but also shares things about the people who created and the cuisine they're from. It's the extra zing that makes great cookbooks so much fun to read. It's now easy to read an issue of a magazine, at home or waiting for the dentist, and hop to the website to grab a recipe that catches your fancy. Or you can, skip the magazine, but I'm a born and born again reader, feeling naked without a book or magazine in my hand or briefcase. Now I don't pay much attention to *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Woman's Day* or *Family Circle*. My wife does read several of these, but I rarely do.

A ==WARNING== TO RECIPE HUNTERS: There's a risk of course, while you looking for that soon to be favorite dish, there's lots more mouthwatering goodies to catch your fancy.

However, on occasion they have something interesting to offer. Alas they're what I'm likely to find in doctors offices since other offerings are less interesting, I by default flip pages to the food section. It's not that there are no fine recipes in these homemaker-oriented offerings. However fighting my way though their websites — adds, more adds including popup offers, you pickem. There are weight loss products; uncertified natural aides for all my ills, youth restoratives, nick knacks and collectables, and other waste of my time *in my face* stuff that makes me avoid them. Also, for the most part, their websites, from the perspective of chasing recipes, try my patience since they seldom have a printer friendly version, and I hate scrubbing PDFs.

Food Network a Treasure Trove and a Then a Bit More Googling — We've talked briefly about books and magazines, but this is the year 2007 and we've got cable or satellite TV! That often leads you not only to shows but also their websites.

Perhaps you've got favorite chefs on the Food Network TV or by jumping straight to the Interne.

Perhaps its food created by Rachel Ray, Emeril "lets kick it up a notch" Lagasse, Alton Brown, Paula Deen, the elegant Giada De Laurentiis, Bobby Flay who never burns food while grilling, Nigella Lawson – whose kinky comfort foods are a turn on, Ina Garten (aka the barefoot Contessa), Sara Moulton who writes for Gourmet and Bon Appetit or talented Wolfgang Puck. The mouth watering and often rich treats created these fine cooks and others are all accessible from foodnetwork.com. If you downloading their recipes you can often find a matching image on Google to add to the PDF of your favorite download. And again you need blinders on not to get into a do loop.

Horray for the Internet, Let's play!

What a Wealth of Hits, Misses and Almost Misses — Type in the word *shrimp* or *seafood* in the Food Network search engine and you get 1,386 and 4,043 hits respectively. In goggle images you get 1,200,000 hits for seafood couple with both a thumbnail image and a link, or perhaps to a great new recipe of three. The search engine hits all kinds of sites: blogs, cookbook dealers sometimes with sample recipes in the book descriptions, dedicated cooking sites, restaurants with menus and short descriptions of dishes. Doing the same at the more focused Epicurious site, the home of Gourmet and Bon Appetit Magazines, gets you 654 and but only 91 for seafood, since their indexing system is different. Straight, unmodified googling (not Google images) for "shrimp recipes" gives 142,000 hits, while "oriental shrimp" recipes narrows my choices to a mere 3,450 hits.

The Wonder of Email Subscriptions — Perhaps you subscribe as I do to some of the experts at About.com. I live the Chinese food that Rhonda Parkinson shares as well as the great Thai food from Darlene Schmidt. I'm beginning to tune into Nancy Gaifylla's Greek food, but am less enamored of the Italian recipes emailed by Kyle Phillips.

I've also started checking whether "Gourmet Food" by Bredt Moore or Saad Fayad's Middle Eastern Cooking newsletter from About.com are worth reading, and preserving or even trying out. I also thoroughly enjoy and have started trading recipes with Ms. Lila Voo the Chinese food editor at BellaOnLine, a women's site. I've not played checked out Katherine Hunter's (Greek), Mary-Anne Durkee (Thai), Sandie Jarrett's (Cajun & Creaole) or Sadhana Ginde's (India) BellaOnLine offerings, after all I've got articles to write, money to raise for an acoustic music festival and even a textbook to complete.

Okay, my subscriptions tell you I'm into Oriental and middle-eastern including Greek food. What really has become fun, searching for hidden treasure, when I'm dragged out and can't write is to take random walks on food or occasionally foodie type travel blogs.

The Blogosphere and Flickr or Google Images — At this point things get weirder than usual in my articles. What follows is in not an either or experience. Rather it's a fine game of click around the Internet.

Images can lead to blogs can lead to more images to other websites to… and the World Wide Web keeps a turning.

Your choices are varied and there's no right way to play.
Do a Google search for a recipe name or major ingredient to cuisine
Do a Google images search for a recipe name or major ingredient
Do a Flickr images focusing on food, recipes and cooking
Use a blogosphere engine to chase food or cooking or perhaps recipes.

Even Forbes magazine has noticed food blogs, will Business Week or the Economist be next?

- http://blogs.salon.com/0001399/ (Julie/Julia Project)
- http://cook-chinese-food.blogspot.com/
- http://cookingwithamy.blogspot.com/
- http://deusexculina.robsama.com/
- http://foodgoat.blogspot.com/
- http://indianfoodrocks.blogspot.com/
- http://lilyng2000.blogspot.com/
- http://littleguykitchen.wordpress.com/
- http://mathomhouse.typepad.com/mommycooks/
- http://onehotstove.blogspot.com/
- http://www.lapingourmand.com/
- http://www.tigersandstrawberries.com/
- http://www.winterjade.com/delectation/
- http://www.cookwithkerry.com/wordpress/?cat=4
- http://eatzybitzy.blogspot.com/
- http://www.gastronomydomine.com/
- http://dapur.blogspot.com/
- http://www.stephencooks.com/
- http://onehotstove.blogspot.com/
- http://www.pinoycook.net/
- http://www.momcooks.net/

One Step Further into Strange — I pick a favorite food or ingredient and search for food image of that item. I usually use Google; and almost always find a cornucopia of foods ordinary or esoteric cooked in ways I'd not considered.

Pick a cuisine; let's say Turkish food and search for restaurants in Google. There are only, at least today, 2,230,000 of them listed. Or go directly to the Turkish Anatolia link http://www.anatolia.com/anatolia/ypages/restaurants.asp, which seems either somewhat selective or out of date so after a few clicks, I moved on. Pick a suggested restaurant, and read its menu. Then either Google or Google Images the result and start clicking. And found some real gems or should I say treats. Okay, you're not into Turkish, how about Chinese noodles, giant hamburgers, oriental crepes or Thai BBQ?

With respect to restaurants, I recently did this for the Thai restaurant called the Typhoon, which a friend recommended. Although I live in Washington State and these are located in WA and OR state, I don't wander much these days so checking out the real thing is not as much an option as when I was 10 years younger. http://www.typhoonrestaurants.com/

Then there's P. F. Chang Restaurant's, a favorite when I take occasional business trips to Tucson and Phoenix. I found some great recipes that only, damn, represented 10% of the menu. However, P. F. Chang is coming to the Tri-Cities so I won't have to travel to either Tucson or Phoenix elsewhere out of town to enjoy the food. I'm sure I could make an edible, perhaps even good version of many of their dishes, but why waste the effort when I can drive a few miles and get the real thing.

Finding a Foodie Blog – There are now search engines that will look for blogs related to… type in a topic and see what you get. I tend to use Google's Blog Engine http://blogsearch.google.com/?tab=wb/ because I like its interface. Searching for cooking blogs on Google, I got 383,08 hits a few dozen of which looked interesting because of their international flavor.

Curry Roma * Shrimp and scallop dumplings wrapped in a sheet of egg noodles, with a delicate green curry sauce. 15.95

Grilled Beef with Grapes ** Tender grilled beef served room temperature with fresh grapes and spicy garlic-lime sauce. 14.95

Eggplant Lover * Stir-fried Chinese eggplant with Thai black bean sauce and tofu, chicken or shrimp. 11.95 / 13.95

Royal Duck Curry ** "One of the best in the world," one globe-trotting reviewer raved. Red curry with pineapples and grapes. 15.95

Gulf of Siam Curry ** Crab, calamari, prawns, scallops and New Zealand mussels in a spicy red curry. 22.95

Fish on Fire ** Filet of halibut, drizzled with brown choo chee curry sauce and served flambé with rum. 19.95

Five-Spice Crispy Duck Served with steamed buns, cinnamon plum sauce, green onions and cilantro. 19.95

Pine Cone Fish * Generous filet of halibut lightly battered and flash-fried, served with zippy chili-lime sauce. Non-spicy sauce available on request. 22.95

Balinese Pork Tenderloin ** The dish was inspired from a trip to Bali - marinated medallions of pork tenderloin cooked in spicy gingery sauce. 16.95

Spicy String Beans ** Fresh string beans wok-fried in spicy chili sauce. 8.95

In addition to Google I've tried, always late at night, the always dependable Technorati Blog search engine http://www.technorati.com/blogs/ and the at times interesting http://www.blogarama.com/.

Most of the hits on Google blogs lead to book commercials, or sites with blab and pictures but no recipes. Also the hits are well represented with restaurants. All of this is okay! You're only a click or three away from instant gratification at least for the eye and imagination. But when you get a winner, there's much there to wet you're appetite. Remember, it's like picking ripe tomatoes or fresh of the tree fruit, blogs are ephemeral. Indeed over the last year, two of links I've used in previous macC cooking articles are dead, gone, vanished. http://www.stefmike.org/mtarchives/cat culinary html/. Not longer is a hit but I found a way to get to it at http://www.daxiang.stefmike.org/. However, a fine if strange site called http://www.femalebridesonline.com/ has become a high-class oriental bridal shop site — the recipes exchanges are gone. Find a site you like —harvest what pleases you, when you have the chance.

Google Images; Backwards Forwards and Sideways — In addition to the hit or miss nature of the search, finding an image that looks interesting and following the link only to discover the blogger has not provided the recipe for the dish. But think of it as an opportunity for a new Google search. On many blogs there a great pictures of, but, alas, no recipes. Foods that seemed interesting included Thai Chap Chye and Chye Poh noodles, rack of lamb oriental, chicken noodles four seasoning soup, bacon spinach pizza, and Gai Lan (Chinese broccoli). So I put a few of these images that had no recipes attached to their linked pages, labeled with the names of each dish, into a folder to chase on another day. Incase you get Google imaged out, there's always recipes at Flickr. Some Flickr pictures even come with a link to the recipe on the photographer's blog, so the hunt goes on.
http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=Recipes&w=36075285%40N00/

Enough said.

Enjoy he food images, and play. If you don't kike what I found, send me your favorite sites and I'll check them out. But always remember, there are lots more, less obvious, places to find food recipe favorites. You are only limited by the time you want to spend. The other virtue of treasure hunting is that with a hold the salt, cut down a bit of the fat and for me "hotten it up." The dishes are likely better for you than moms traditional southern fried or butter rich cooking, which I love but my arteries don't.

Bon chance and bon appetit! Doc

PS.
Every time I find a website with some interesting recipes I drag the link to a folder annotated, with a few descriptive terms if needed, with a few words. I'm up to near 1000 links while my recipe collection (electronic only) has grown to 1.67 GB (about 16,000 items). It beats hanging around bars or OD-ing on expensive toys for my hobbies. But if all of this is a bit too adventurous for you, check out your favorite cuisine at Wikipedia and flow the links to other links to…

Rants, Raves and Revelations – August

Application Deinstallers — Why Bother

By Harry {doc} Babad © 2007
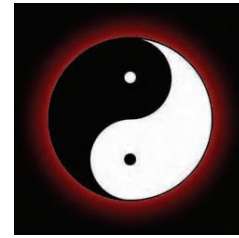
An Ignored Risk from Mostly Free Software Toys — As I was working on my review of CleanApp 2.3.1, for this issue, I noticed I'd spent a great deal of time explaining they why's what's and wherefores of using an application deinstaller. Most of us don't, which is not a good thing. It was good material; at least I thought so, worthy of sharing with you the reader but detracted from the review. So I'll rant about it here.

I'm sure you know about application proliferation. You get an email from a buddy and he found this neat of a software toy, you'd simply love. You're thumbing through *Macworld* or *Mac|Life* and there's an amazing sprinkling of gems, some of the just right for you. You might even be a shareware reviewer or worse yet junkie and you download lots of goodies from MacUpdate and install them, just to see how they play. Since most products these days come as try-before-you-buy mode; you do.

Six months later, having had a bit of fun, you've perhaps got 50-200 MB of new applications installed, many of them with expired demo periods. Yep, just lying around cluttering up your hard drive.

My keeper list for such download testing is about one item in 20 or 30. [Keepers are the items I both have licensed and use — the emphasis is on use!] What's your batting average?

Installing Applications

Installing an application is more than a drop and drag of a piece of software to your applications folder. The act of installing and launching the application adds not only that piece of software to your application folder (or wherever you dragged it.) It also, after booting it, installs other files that allow the application to function more effectively. Like what you ask? Well user preferences, your serial number, temporary files, activity log-files of various kinds, at times data, and other sometimes undisclosed stuff.

For example, PandoCalendar X, a really easy to muse functional desktop calendar scatters its components like dandelions in the wind.

Okay what do you with all this unused disk space hogging trash? Why it's obvious — trash it! Bad move, doing so only deletes part of the installed application. The dandelion seeds have taken root elsewhere on your drive.

The only way to strip out all of an application components in to use a de-installer. Tools like CleanApp and AppZapper find all the components of the applications and identify then for you to delete. The have some limitations, for the most part intentional.

- Deinstallers will not remove the documents created by the application you're removing. That good. If you are switching from MS Word to NeoOffice, you'd really not like to loose all the documents (that book, recipe collection and those love letters) you've written.

- If you delete an application, one that stores information inside the application itself or in its preference file, that information will be lost. I did that several years ago wit a corrupted version of PandoCalendar — fortunately I had a recent backup.

- Deinstallers, at least those that I've tested don't remove an application's alias files. I use such alias files as a means for launching an application with out putting it into my crowed dock.

Now not all developers make deinstalling as difficult as this article sounds. Microsoft, Adobe and Apple make life simpler. Most major commercial software comes with a deinstaller program. These programs can remove all of the applications components or selectively removal components as part of an update process. Again a risk, I had a custom dictionary that held five years of specialized vocabulary destroyed at a click of a mouse. (Yes it was backed up, and in the case of MSW, I even know where it was hidden.)

In Summary
Constant vigilance keeps the number of application on my drive to less than 150, but I am a software reviewer. *Lies all lies, CleanApp found 477 applications squirreled away on my hard drive.* If asked what I would toss if limited to 100 applications, I get rid of most the stuff Apple installed on my hard disk, likely breaking the system.

Keep asking your self:

- What do all those applications you've installed do?
- When had you used them last? The newest wasn't always the better.
- Are they a special computer maintenance or security tool that it's best to save even if you might not need it soon?
- Your replaced the old software tool with a new one, but haven't thrown the old one away. Why?

Pack ratting applications is a great way to waste valuable hard disk space. At times the unused odds and ends can even lay you open to software incompatibility based crashes. Do you really need three applications for creating disc labels or five browsers**?**

Deinstalling Major Software — If one of your once favored applications, like MS Word or Adobe Acrobat comes with a de-installer application, everything but the documents your created are removed. I found this out the hard way when such an uninstall flushed my enormous custom MSW user dictionary. Fortunately I had a copy on my last clone-based backup of my hard drive.

For the rest (ca. 99%) of your applications, tossing them for house keeping means using a de-installer. Try one, if you can get an extra year out of your hard rive by clearing g out the chaff, it's well worth the $10 0r so dollars such tools cast.

According to Hoyle...

Looking Forward to Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard, Part I

by Jonathan Hoyle
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August 2007
http://www.jonhoyle.com

Last month, we covered the 2007 Apple Worldwide Developer's Conference which featured the upcoming new operating system *Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard*. This month we will detail the changes that you will see with this new operating system. Since I believe pictures speak louder than words, I have tried to be very generous with screenshots.

Leopard Desktop

Several things can be seen about the new Leopard desktop. First note that the sidebar has been enhanced greatly. It is more visually appealing and has a hierarchical nature. Plus at the bottom, note the extremely useful new *Search For* entries, that allow you to see what has changed recently. The Dock has gone 3D, with reflections below the translucent shelf holding up the icons. Folders have been upgraded with subtle etchings on them, whilst new icons adorn the Finder windows with new functionality.
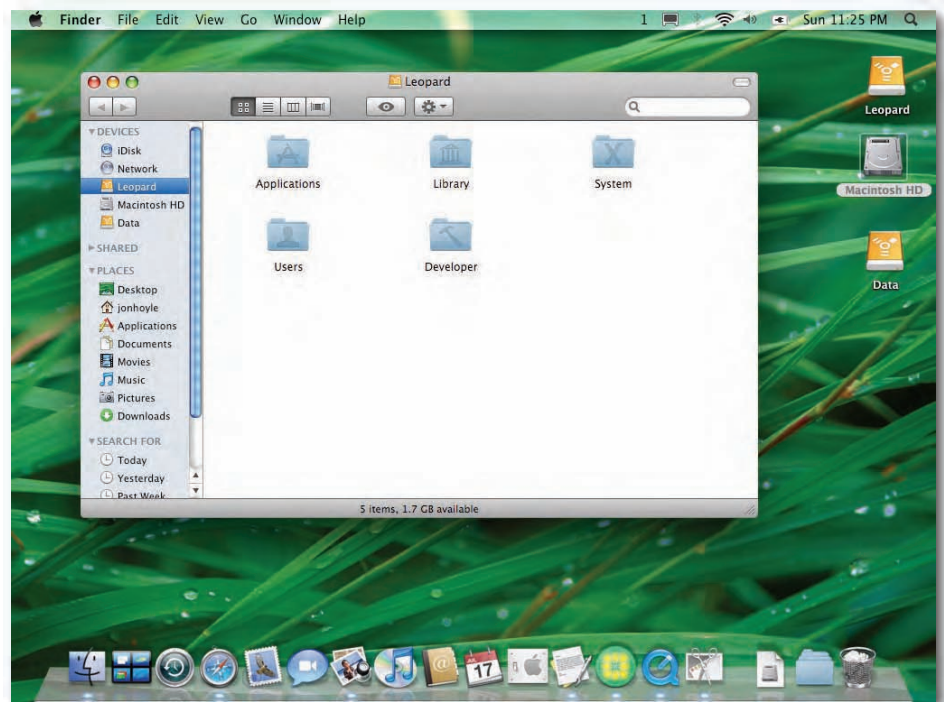
Finder changes include a consolidation of window types. Gone are the distinction between Aqua, metal and the iTunes-like window. Apple has chosen the best features of each and made all windows appear consistent. Apple also improved the distinction between active and inactive windows, with deeper shadows on the active one:
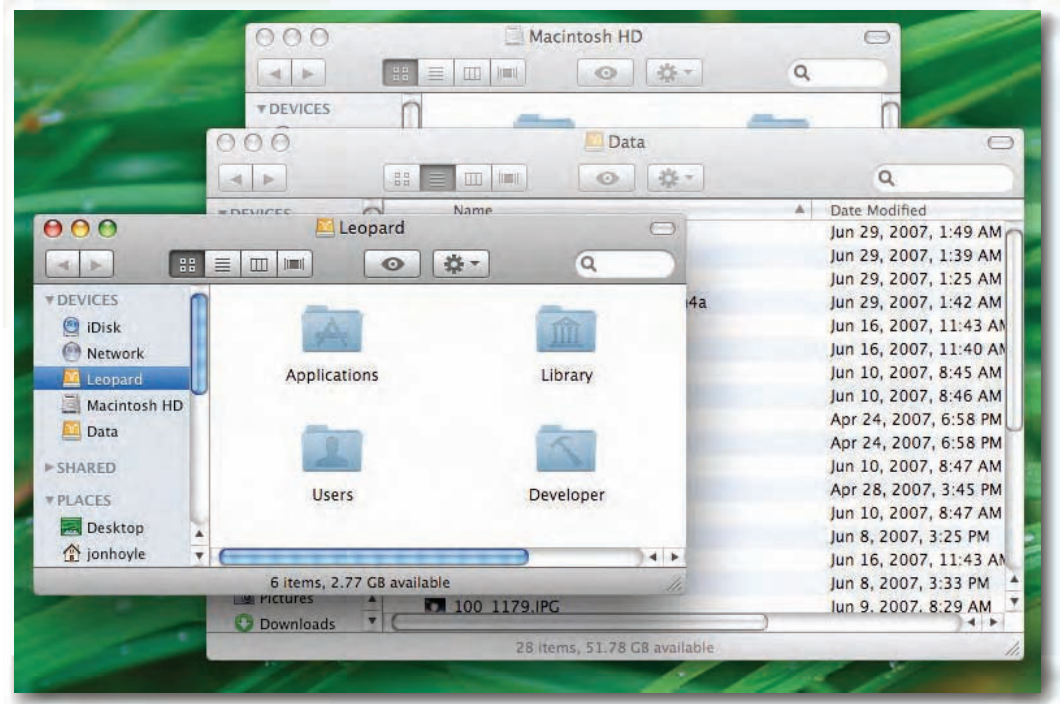
The biggest negative about the Leopard Finder is the return of the old 10.0 translucent menu. This is particularly noticeable when a menu with grayed-out menu items overlays a text document (as seen below). This was a major concern at the Aqua Feedback Forum at WWDC, so it's possible that this may change.
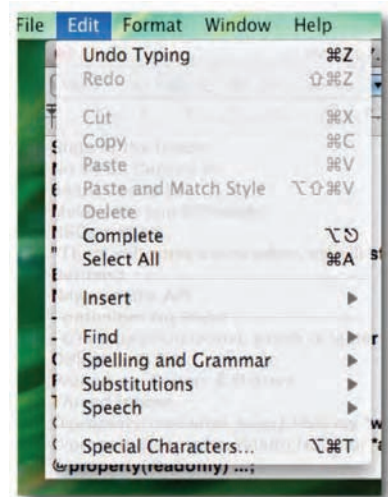
Cover Flow

Those of you who have used *iTunes* (and who hasn't?) have already seen the *Cover Flow* feature that allows users to pan through their music by album cover. This feature is now added as a fourth Finder view, allowing you to scroll through your applications by icon:
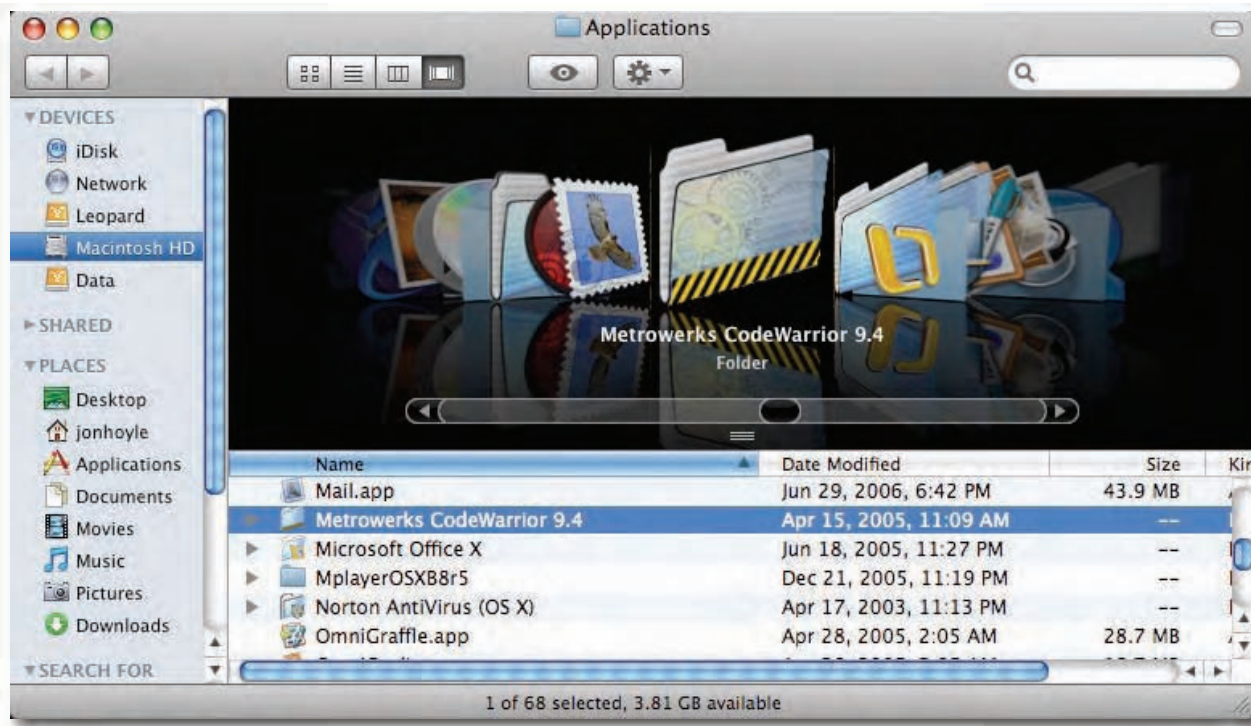
Application Compatibility

As you might expect, the preloaded Apple software seemed to work just fine. There was an occasional quirk with the new Safari, but I am confident that Apple is on top of the matter. As for 3rd party software, compatibility was fairly good for the latest software, but was hit and miss with older applications. Applications that ran without a hitch included: *FireFox 2.0.0.4*, *Graphic Converter 5.9*, *KeyNote 3.0.2*, *Acrobat Reader 5.1*, *LimeWire 4.9.30*, *REALbasic 5.5.5*, and even the now defunct *CodeWarrior 9.4* and *Windows Media Player 9.0.0* seem to be fine. The evil *AOL 10.3.7* seemed to work okay, although upon quitting I still got the *"unexpectedl quit"* crash that I get now in 10.4.10. To my surprise, *Microsoft Office X* failed to run, crashing during startup. (I do not have a licensed copy of *Office 2004* at home to try.) *FileMaker Pro 6.0v1* also crashed shortly after launch. Since there are newer versions of each of these, a fairer comparison would be to test with the latest. Strangely though, the latest version of *Google Earth* crashes upon startup as well. Why this should be escapes me, since *Google Earth* is a Cocoa application written according to the latest standards. Old creaky Carbon applications like *Office X* might have an excuse, but I cannot account for Google's stumble.

System Preferences

The new *System Preferences* look very familiar, although the window is cleaned up and the headache-inducing corduroy lines are finally gone. New panels for *Spaces* and *Time Machine* have been added, whilst a few older panels have been updated and improved. We will examine some of these preferences now.

Wither Classic?

For those still using the occasional Classic application, you may be wondering if *Mac OS 10.4 Tiger* will be the end of the line. This is a good question, and one I do not have a definitive answer for. As you can see in the new *System Preferences*, there is no Classic panel displayed. If you install this prerelease version of Leopard over top of a Tiger installation with Classic, Classic still fails to work properly. At a WWDC feedback forum, the question of Classic was asked directly to the panel, who honestly didn't know. They suspected it was gone but couldn't be sure. We will know for sure when Leopard is released in October.

Sharing Preferences

Leopard's *Sharing Preferences* has been cleaned up by making accessibility of shared folders a bit easier to understand:
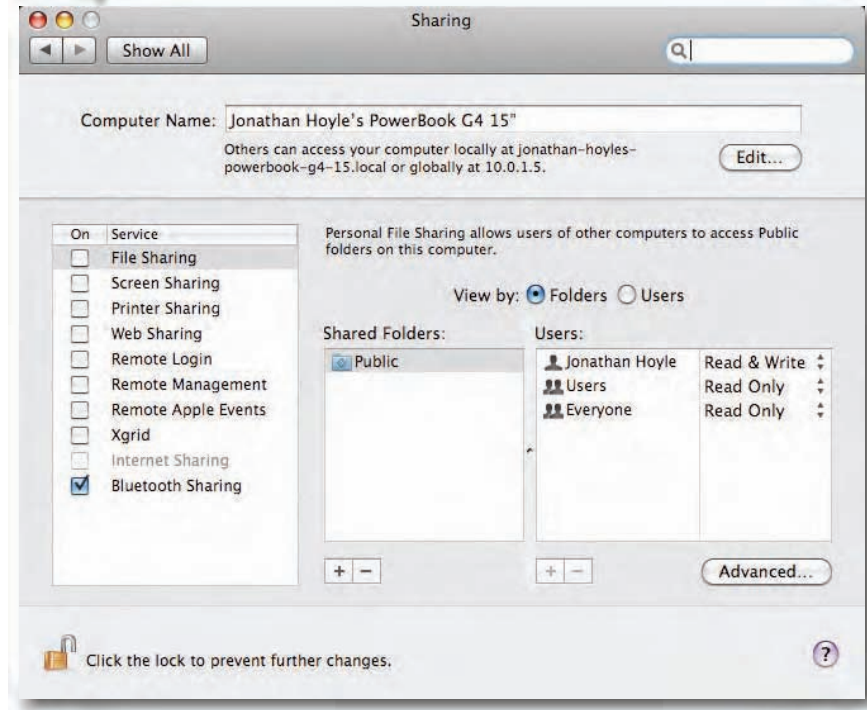
Spaces

Leopard's *Spaces*, the ability to create virtual desktops, is added to the Expose preference panel. With a simple and intuitive user interface, the user can quickly and easily add/remove spaces and configure how switching takes place:
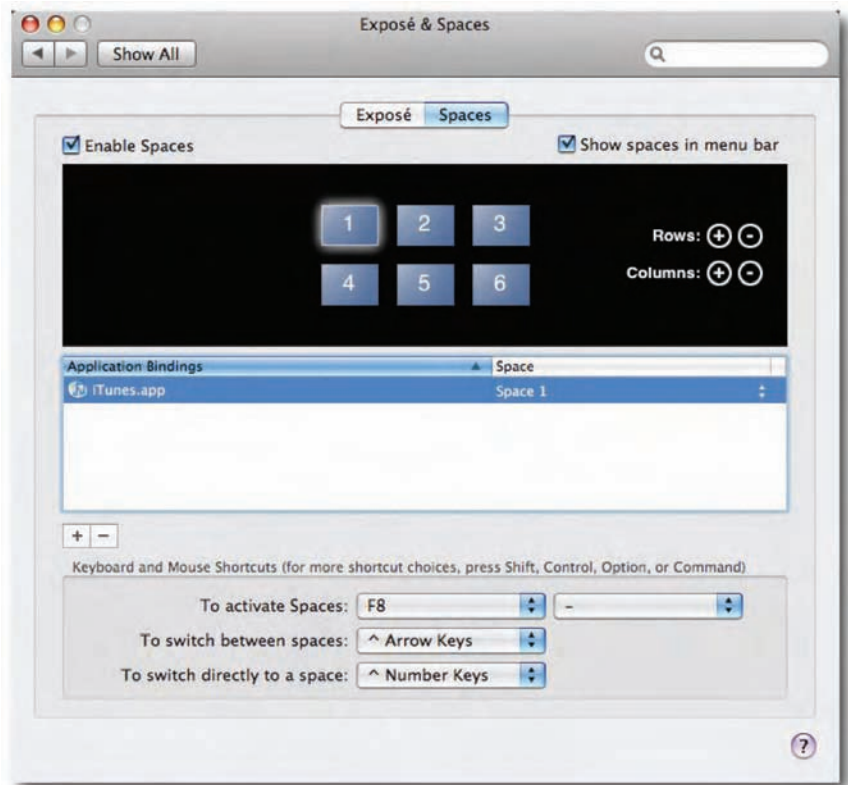
Network Preferences

The confusing *Network Preferences* from 10.4 Tiger has been completely overhauled in 10.5 Leopard. As you can see below, gone is the confusing **Show** popup menu, and replaced with a sidebar, allowing you to configure the network on a per-connectivity basis:

The right group box changes depending upon the selection of the left sidebar list, so that you can easily switch between, say, Airport connectivity to Ethernet.
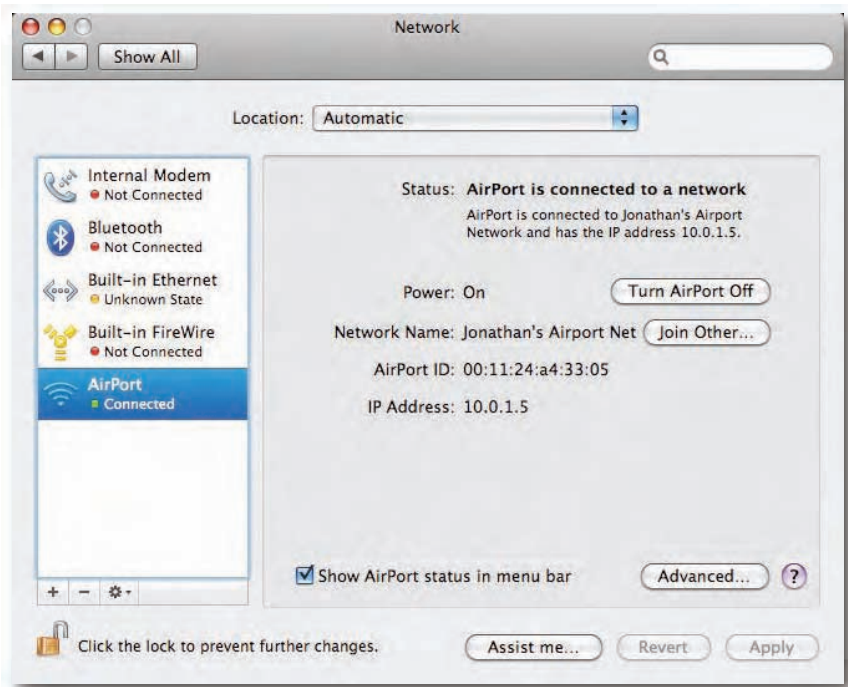
Coming Up: We continue our look at Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard. See you in 30!

Know How Network

Cross the Digital Divide and Get Where You're Going Faster
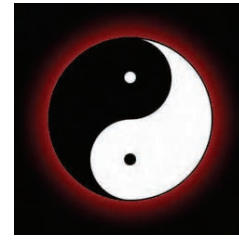
By Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, Chief Cheetah, Cheetah Learning

I was recently at a conference of women business owners and I attended a break-out session about blogging. By the end of the session, I was struck by how many of the women in the room were digitally illiterate. These were highly successful and intelligent women, but it seemed that many of them were fearful of technology. With technology affecting all aspects of our lives exponentially, I realized that their digital fear could become paralyzing and get in the way of their personal and professional success.

When we think of the digital divide traditionally, it focused on access to the Internet, computers, software and education. That division hasn't gone away. It has shifted, but it's still a critical issue – especially when we look globally at the developing world.

In the United States, there is an income digital-divide with more than 62% of households with incomes over $100,000 subscribing to high-speed broadband at home, while just 11% of households with incomes below $30,000 subscribing.
There is also a rural/urban digital divide: Only 17% of adults in rural areas subscribe to broadband compared to 31% in urban and 30% in suburban areas.[1]

Beyond the socio-economic factors, I think there is another digital divide that is perceptual. If you have the access to technology, but you don't use it to your advantage, you're throwing away your ticket to the great digital concert. You're wasting an opportunity that many people don't have and potentially affecting your ability to succeed in the future.

If you see yourself as a digital disaster, it's not too late to learn and take the digital dive.

Five Ways to Take the Digital Dive

1. Think of what technology or software skills would improve your performance. Sign up for a class online and experience e-learning.

2. Spend time with your IT friends or colleagues. Pick their brains. Ask them what they read online and what sites and blogs they visit.

3. Choose a topic that you're passionate about, do an Internet search and begin reading and participating in a blog that speaks to you.

4. Watch your children or the youth around you. See how they communicate. Text message your favorite niece. Build a profile on FaceBook or MySpace. Get in the groove with

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[1] According to speedmatters.org, a site managed by the Communications Workers of America

where the next generation is going.

5. If you're a project manager, make sure you're using technology to automate processes. Always ask yourself: Can this be automated?

In Project Management, being digitally proficient is a key part of your success. You can use web-based tools like the Wiki to manage your teams and projects or web meetings to bring a virtual team together. The more technology is working for you, the smarter your workflow will be.

How technology savvy are you? Try our technology crossword puzzle and see how you rate. No matter what you score, remember the game isn't over, it's just beginning. So, get out there and change your view. See yourself as part of the digerati, and you will be. See you online!

Managing Team Fireworks

Watching fireworks light up a summer sky awakens the wonder in us all. When fireworks light up a conference room and team members are ready to explode, it can be the true test of your Project Management and leadership skills.

Healthy vs. Destructive Conflict
The first thing to identify is whether the conflict is healthy or destructive. When team conflict is enthusiastic, challenging and results in a better outcome, it's healthy and a sign of a team that trusts each other enough to engage in debate and discourse. When the conflict is mean-spirited, personal and results in communication shutting down or barriers to success, it's destructive, and the team needs to get to the true root of the conflict and solve it.

Getting to the Root of the Conflict
If conflict is destructive and slowing your team down, here are some areas to focus on:

Expectations. Is the conflict or disagreement because team members had different expectations? This is where a Project Agreement is like the Holy Grail. When a Project Agreement is developed and when the entire team buys into it, everyone has a document that outlines expectations, roles and responsibilities, and deadlines.

Communication. How is the team communicating? Is there a regular time when they meet, have a conference call or go over the project status? Many times, conflict is caused by a lack of communication or silo communication where communication isn't making its way to all members of the team. If there's a silo, break it down and create a communication chain that connects all team members.

Understanding personality types. If your team has never worked with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®, it can be an illuminating exercise and can give team members insight and understanding about each other. As a team leader, it can give you ideas about managing your team and communicating with them.

Here is a simplified personality assessment based on the four key personality dimensions.

E or I – Are You an Extrovert (E) or an Introvert (I)
How are you energized? Do you get excited or animated around others (E) or do you prefer to be on your own? (I)

N or S – Are You Intuitive (N) or Sensory (S)?
What do you focus on in your environment? Do you look at what could be (N)? Or do you see "what is" (S)? People who fit the N classification are "Idea" people, and the people who fit the "S" classification are driven by "real" facts and data.

T or F – Are You a Thinker (T) or a Feeler (F)?
How do you make decisions? Do you make them impersonally with comments such as "I think…" (T)? Or do you make decisions based on your own values, prefacing comments with "I feel…" (F)?

J or P – Are You Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)?
How do you choose to live? Do you keep your desk neat and tidy (J)? Or do you prefer to keep it more spontaneously organized and flexible (P)? People who fit the J classification prefer an orderly life and are happiest when matters are settled. People who fit the P classification prefer to be spontaneous and are happiest when their lives are more flexible.

Tips for Reading People's Personality Types

1. **Notice their behavior around others.** Do they get excited and draw energy from others (E), or do they prefer to be on their own (I)?
2. **Where do they place their focus?** Do they look at what could be (N) or at what is (S)?
3. **How do they make decisions?** Do they preface their opinions with "I think" (T) or "I feel"? (F)
4. **Do the desk test.** Is their desk neat, tidy and structured (J)? Or is it more spontaneously organized and flexible (P)?

Communication Approaches

After you identify a personality type, then you need to know how to communicate with that person. Here are a few examples:

INTJ: Be brief and to the point. Acknowledge their work and thank them – especially in front of others.

ISTJ: They like details, so make sure you give them enough information to be comfortable. Be logical and clear, letting them know you understand their current challenges, and can help them find solutions.

ENTP: Let them share ideas and participate in the process. Be clear about the deliverable and what you need.

ESTJ: Engage them in discussion. Let them talk about personal matters. Ask them how they can help you with your problem.

Ground rules. If you see a pattern that keeps rearing its ugly head, such as a team member who is always negative about an idea versus building on it, break the pattern by establishing ground rules that make it unacceptable.

Both sides now. When you walk a mile in another person's shoes, you often get a different perspective. When team members who are opposed argue the opposite side, they are forced to see the other person's perspective, and it also may generate ideas that no one had thought of before.

Humor. When was the last time your team had a good laugh together? A real belly buster? Humor is one of the world's best tension breakers; if your team is too serious, it may be time to prescribe some laughter. A quick team-building exercise that can bring some laughs into the room is the "nickname" roundtable. Everyone goes around the room or takes a turn on a conference call and discloses their funniest nickname. It's a good way to bring some laughter into the room before you tackle a tough subject.

Learn More: To learn more about personality types and negotiation techniques, read Cheetah Negotiations.

About the Know How Network
The Know How Network is a monthly column written by Michelle LaBrosse, the founder and Chief Cheetah of Cheetah Learning. Distributed to hundreds of newsletters and media outlets around the world, the Know How Network brings the promise, purpose and passion of Project Management to people everywhere.

About the Author

Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is the founder of Cheetah Learning, and author of *Cheetah Negotiation* and *Cheetah Project Management*. The Project Management Institute, www.pmi.org, recently selected Michelle as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the World, and only one of two women selected from the training and education industry. She was featured in the October 2006 issue of PM Network Magazine, and also graduated from the Harvard Business School's Owner President Managers (OPM) program in March 2006.

She created the origins of the Cheetah Project Management methodology as an Air Force Officer in the mid 80's. In 1995, she prototyped the concept of accelerating learning using "virtual classrooms," to accelerate the way people learned and applied core business skills. As a corporate research scientist in systems engineering and adult learning for a large multinational

corporation, she later created and tested a one-day approach to teaching Project Management. This approach would later evolve to become Cheetah Project Management, a fast and effective way of launching projects.

Today, she is the leader of the course development team at Cheetah and sets the strategic direction for the company. Using the Cheetah Project Management techniques, LaBrosse has grown the company from three employees in 2000 to more than 100 in 2006. Cheetah is now the global leader in Project Manager Professional Development.

Her articles have appeared in publications such as: *European CEO Magazine, Plant Engineering Magazine, Industrial Engineer Magazine, Control Engineering Magazine, Journal of the American Association for Medical Transcription JAAMT, NSSEA Essentials Magazine, ASTN Network Magazine, Radio Sales Today, Sprinkler Quarterly & Technology Magazine, The Federal Credit Union Magazine Online, Business Quarterly Online American Society of Landscape Architects, ACRP Wire Association of Clinical Research Professionals, American Council of Engineering Companies Association* and more.

With a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering, and an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering, LaBrosse has done extensive postgraduate work with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Advanced Educational Studies and with the University of Washington Industrial Engineering Program in accelerating adult learning with respect to meeting core business objectives.

She lives in Nevada with her family and likes to rejuvenate in Alaska where you'll often find her kayaking, golfing or hiking.

The Northern Spy

iPhone, iRings, iPotter

by Rick Sutcliffe
Technology News and Views Since 1983
August 2007

Not since the debut of The Lord of the Rings back in 1954-1955 have we seen such a storefront frenzy for a new release as this season, first with iSteve's phone, then with the final Harry Potter book.

What creates such phenomena? In the case of Tolkien's classic, and a Dickens of a frenzy in an earlier century, there was surely an early recognition of classics in the making. Indeed, LOTR defined the whole modern Celtic fantasy genre. Such an event happens only once in English Literature, and its place in the hall of fame is secure as long as the language is spoken and read. (The latter may be an issue someday, but that's a topic for another time.)

Will either of this year's phenoms have the same level of impact? Yes, and no. Yes, in the sense that both will transfer shocking gobs of money to their creators. J K Rowling is already history's first author to become a billionaire on the proceeds of her craft--an encouragement of sorts for we legions of ink-stained wretches who toil away in classical garrets and ivory basements for an average writer's income of a few thousand a year and daren't quit our day jobs. Without doubt, she'll yet add a few more billions to her collection--a level of this world's possession tokens whose only purpose is scorekeeping. Likewise, the iPhone will sell multi-millions, transferring dollars beyond most people's wildest dreams to iSteve's little Cupertino operation, in the process raising its shares to more new daily highs for the foreseeable future.

But how much does this really matter? Nothing at all in eternity, of course, where all will be either equally wealthy or equally impoverished. Meanwhile, and in the here and now, iPotter will surely inspire both peripheral industry and imitators of a sort, though it would be difficult to write close enough to share in the buzz, yet sufficiently far away to avoid being sued for copyright infringement.

Moving beyond mere economics, the impact on literature and language going forward is more problematic. Like C.S. Lewis' Narnia, the HP books will surely be child favourites for decades to come. And in this, they do both writers and literacy a service, for until Rowling waved her wand, reading appeared to be dying out among the younger generation. However, only time will tell if the HP books become literary icons for reasons other than entertainment and money, though the Spy sees no obvious reason why they should. They repackage well-used themes very well, but don't appear to contribute anything groundbreaking in a literary sense.

iHarry does flag the near complete ascendancy of fantasy over science fiction, at least in North America, a development that may bode some ill for the future of science, as the two genres are as incompatible in their effects on thinking as they are in content. Science and technology that can be dreamed of can usually (eventually) be invented and deployed, but while fantasizing of magic, wizards, damsels, and castles may be harmless enough entertainment it's difficult to see generating much practical falldown from such a mindset. Its readers may be inspired to generate more fantasy, but they won't invent spacecraft, waldos, or nanotechnology because of what they read as children. Colour this pastel however, for the Spy is not among those who believe fantasy is ipso facto harmful, provided its users remain capable of distinguishing it from reality.

Likewise, even one who makes somewhat of a career of reviewing the technological scene must react in kind to the much-ballyhooed iPhone. Of course the view from the igloo boasts none of them, as they haven't been released in the frozen north, and may not be for a while. Still, as campy and revolutionary as the iPhone may seem, it won't install or remove roadside bombs, affect the environment more than any other electronic toy, feed the hungry, comfort the sorrowing, relieve the poor, change diapers, do what you mean, or substitute for faith and its consequences (hope and love). In short, it will not change either individuals or society much for the better or the worse; it merely represents a step along the way to some as-yet-ill-defined stable technological plateau.

Yes, the Spy does look forward to being able to use a PIEA (Personal Intelligence Enhancement Appliance) as his all-purpose phone, pocket computer, PDA, bookreader, and general MetaLibrary connectivity and local storage device, complete with ear, eye, and throat implants, as do the Hibernians in his own science fiction. Yes, FWIW the iPhone clearly brings us a step closer to this. Yes, the total weight of all such empowering abstraction technology does make life simpler, easier, somewhat more equitable. However, would he ever wait in a queue of more than five people to buy a gadget, a book, or anything else for that matter? Not likely. Will this one device change anyone's life for the better in terms that really matter? Is it really that important? Not any more than the Lord of the Rings in its day, or Harry Potter in ours, as much as all three are interesting diversions, and the iPhone (unlike the other two) a potentially useful tool.

Of course, from iSteve's point of view, all the iPhone buzz is a good thing. Like the iPod before it, this toy is not only an attractive piece of this world's goods in itself, but lends its cachet to the computer business in a big way. Macintosh sales are now 5.6% of the total market (more in some sectors) and growing at three times the industry's percentage rate. It also says something about the future that Apple has apparently now tied up some 25% of the entire world's supply of flash memory production for Steve's iToys. The transfer of this world's wealth continues apace, but these are only mildly interesting toys, it is only money, and someday both will be irrelevant.

Meanwhile, the Spy gets by without an iPhone for two reasons: First, they are missing features he'd need to persuade him to shell out that many clams--a developer's API, and the ability to act as a laptop modem top the list, though there are others. Second, they aren't available in Canada, and only will be if big changes come to the pricing regimen in the true north strong and expensive. The RO factor prices bandwidth up to ten times as much here, and unless this changes dramatically there is no way a provider like Rogers can sell iPhones with a reasonable (read near unlimited) data plan. At current Canadian market rates, the cost would be several hundred a month. OTOH, if they do price bandwidth reasonably here for the first time, it would prove the crack in RO solidarity that ultimately collapses prices across the board. It will be interesting to see how Rogers decides to balance short-term corporate greed against the long term variety. If they go long, it might even become possible to run a competitive data centre in this country. Isn't that a thought?

Speculation noted in passing includes:

- a nano-version of the iPhone (limited net functionality; more of a pod+phone), said to be in view for Christmas giving.
- that the ability to privately unlock the iPhone both for development and to allow alternate service providers is only a matter of time, and not much of that. No protection scheme lasts long. See the Spy's sixth law.
- an imminent revamping of the iMac line, now not only Apple's main desktop offering, but one that could simply replace the "professional" towers. After all, there's not much difference any more.
- possible security holes in the iPhone version of Safari. Users need to be careful that they know the entire URL being entered into the browser bar; it may not be entirely displayed. They also need to be cautious about clicking on (and therefore dialling) phone numbers displayed on web sites. Both features enable new phishing techniques, so it's important to know exactly what you are doing. As with any system, type urls into the browser bar, and enter phone numbers manually.
- that the slight MS server gains against Apache market share (which are certainly not be on the relative merits of the two platforms), can only result from serious pressure on major corporations. Given the recent gains by other browsers against IE, some wonder if a comparable browser campaign can be far behind. The Spy believes web designers should never include features that only work on a singe browser, regardless of the inducements. Such behaviour forces people to use inferior products, breaks the net, and produces only a monetary benefit and only for a single company.

Useful software of the month award goes to MAMP from living-e AG. Ever tried to develop and test a Web Site on your own computer? As long as the files are straight html, you can load them directly into your browser from your files partition or directory. But, if they use php, or employ Ajax to load components into page cells, you have to run the site from an actual server. Who wants to tie up bandwidth and the remote machine to do this? You could enable the Apache server that comes with your Mac, but you'd still have to install and enable php and mysql, then put all the files there--a royal pain if, like the Spy, you ordinarily keep them on a separate partition from the boot one. Then you're into duplicating files, and/or fancy code to allow loads from your file partition, yet pull some things from the local server.

Enter MAMP (Macintosh-Apache-MySql-PHP). MAMP runs as an application, setting up a fully configured independent Apache server on a port of your choosing (default is 8888) so your sites can run from MAMP's directory, yet have full php and mysql services. Use MAMP as a full-blown server to the outside world if you want, though its main utility for the Spy is testing, and the ability to kill off many lines of tricky workaround code. This thing works flawlessly, and is also well worth the $50 or so for the pro version that allows you to create as many virtual servers as you want, and to run them from any directory on any partition. Add MAMP to the must-have list for the Mac web developer.

If you own a .ca domain, make sure you follow the instructions mailed to you in recent months, get your membership updated, then vote in the upcoming board elections (Sept 6-13). In a repeat of his shameless plug, Rick Sutcliffe (a.k.a. The Spy) is running, and would appreciate your vote, but do vote in any case. There are few enough opportunities for hoi poloi to affect technology. Names and qualifications of candidates are on the CIRA site.

If the Spy seems preoccupied this week, it's because number one son and professional software developer Nathan is getting married on July 29 to fellow Trinity Western University grad (in music) Charlene Dyck. See their Web Site, referenced below. Time to get busy on the program.

--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://nameman.net
opundo : http://opundo.com
Sheaves Christian Resources : http://sheaves.org
Arjay Books: http://www.ArjayBooks.com
Booksurge: http://www.booksurge.com
Fictionwise: http://www.fictionwise.com
CIRA: http://cira.ca
MAMP: http://www.mamp.info
Charlene and Nathan: http://www.charleneandnathan.com

Raiders of the Apple/Macintosh Ark #1
Best free downloads, shareware and demos
by Dr. Eric Flescher

There is a wealth of free, shareware and demo applications out there that many of you don't know about. That's a shame, because you could be using some great software with little or no expense and enjoy a myriad of new applications, utilities and applications for fun and profit. Some of these may let you use your Macintosh as a better, lean, mean fighting machine. Here is the first installment of one that I have found. If you have found a favorite, let me know.

Safari 3 Public Beta

http://www.apple.com/safari/download/

http://www.apple.com/macosx/leopard/features/safari.html

Now the latest version is for Mac as well as Windows! Loading and drawing web pages up to twice as fast as Microsoft Internet Explorer 7 and up to 1.6 times faster than Mozilla Firefox 2 this latest version is a great browser.

Sound Studio 3.5.2
Demo

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/audio/soundstudio.html

This application is an easy-to-use and extensively AppleScriptable Mac OS X application for recording and editing audio digitally on your computer. Digitize tapes and vinyl records, record live performances, create your own mixes with cross fades, tweak the levels and EQ.

EyeTV 2.4.1
Free trial

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Mac OS X 10.4.9 or higher recommended; 500 MHz PowerPC G4 processor or higher; EyeTV hardware

This application lets you watch, record, edit, timeshift, and archive high-quality, MPEG-2 encoded television on the Mac. Has a new FireWire interface and state-of-the-art MPEG-2 video encoding. EyeTV offers a major upgrade in the quality of television you can enjoy on your Mac.

Sudoku Potions 1.1
Freeware

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/games/cards_puzzle/sudokupotions.html

A software for playing the popular Japanese mathematical puzzle.

Mental Case 1.0
Demo

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/home_learning/

This software is many things — a drop box for your thoughts; use the RSS for your head; an index of your knowledge — but ultimately, it's just a fun way to remember stuff.

Picturesque 1.0.1
Shareware

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/imaging_3d/

An Apple Design Awards 2007 Winner this is an application designed to male images look beautiful for web placement. Uses an animated drag and drop-style interface, Picturesque creates images with tasteful effects like reflections, soft glows, shadows, delicate curves, strokes, and fades

JetPhoto 2.6.1
Freeware

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/imaging_3d/jetphoto.html

JetPhoto 2.6.1 is a feature-rich digital photo software that creates Flash and web gallery, publishable web albums, geotag photos with GPS and more.

Image Tricks 2.3.7
Company: blight Software, LTD Version:

Freeware

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/imaging_3d/imagetricks.html

Software to edit and generate images. It uses Core Image filters that transform pictures to unimaginable extent. Various mathematical algorithms let you generate unique images. The artwork can be used as a background, web-design illustration, for print materials, and more.

Information about it includes:

- Easy to use and friendly Interface.

- 48 image effects and filters (54 in Pro version).

- 12 image generators (19 in Pro version).

- Import over 20 image formats, including TIFF, JPEG, GIF, PDF, and EPS.

- Export to TIFF, JPEG, PDF, PNG, and GIF formats.

- OpenGL acceleration supported.

- iPhoto integration.

- Universal binary version.

What's New in this Version

- Sobel filter added (Pro version).

- Localization improved.

- Minor bug fixes.

- Image Tricks

iSale 4.1.2
Demo

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Spotlight Plugins; System/Disk Utilities

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

The two-time Apple Design Award winner, is the ultimate eBay auctioning tool and solution for your Mac. Let's you style and customize your auctions to showcase your item(s) before submitting them to eBay. Track your drafted, running and finished auctions. Takes the hassle and confusion out of online auctioning. Can help increase your success and profit!

Includes Quick and easy creation of eBay auctions; iLife '04, '05, and '06 compatible; Import photos from your iPhoto library; Use iSight as a digital camera; Support for eBay gallery photos and supersize photos. In this new updated version includes: Issues related to eBay Stores on older Macs (PPC) have been resolved; Basic support for subcategories in eBay Stores

Tiger Cache Cleaner 3.2.11
Shareware

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/system_disk_utilities/tigercachecleaner.html

Award winning system maintenance, optimization, and antivirus.

yFlicks 2.0
Shareware

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/video/yflicks.html

This application is a movie player based on the Mac OS X QuickTime Framework. Watch your movies just like you used to do with QuickTime Player. But yFlicks offers the ability to play videos in fullscreen mode, organizing your videos in groups, search them, rate them, and browse them in preview mode.

Currency Converter
Widget - Freeware

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later Universal Binary

http://www.apple.com/downloads/dashboard/calculate_convert/currencyconverter.html

Company: Paolo Grifantini

Easily calculate currency conversions between more than 170 world currencies, plus all the old legacy European currencies. Among the features: automatically updated exchange rates; support for almost all the traded currencies of the world; support the old legacy european currencies (like Italian lira, Deutsch mark, French francs); support multi currencies conversions (you can add all the currencies you want to the conversion table); support multiple widget instances, so that you can keep open more than a conversion table, each with a set of preferred currencies; you can choose the desired decimal precision, from one to five decimals; localized in English, Italian, Portuguese, German, French, Dutch, Spanish, Swedish, and Japanese (all the currency names are localized, too).

New in this Version is: four new currencies added: CFA Franc (BEAC), Surinam Dollar, Uzbekistan Sum, Macedonian Dinar; Afghanistan Afgani and Lao Kip added to bloomberg currencies; now you can visualize on the widget currencies's labels the currency code instead of the currency name (just check on the widget's back); now if you place the mouse over the update badge (when it is visible) it tells you what's the latest version available and what version you are using now; a couple of bugs fixed.

Saft 8.3.12
http://www.macworld.com/weblogs/macgems/?lsrc=mwpvw

 Rob Griffiths

This Safari plug-ins, Saft (; $12) is a useful safari add-on.

Saft and other third-party plug-ins for Safari (and other applications) work by taking advantage of an Apple technology known by the name InputManager (Apple's very technical documentation). InputManager is an effective way for developers to add their own code to that of another program, providing features that the original program doesn't include

Starry Night Widget 1.1
Freeware

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later

http://www.apple.com/downloads/dashboard/information/starrynightwidget.html

Company: Starry Night - Imaginova

I've use Starry Night software for several years particular to find and hlp me photograph comets and asteroids. This is a tiny for of the this astronomical program called a widget that will let you see the sky (planets, constellations) for any location on Earth. Some of the nice features include: set your location by ZIP/postal code or by latitude and longitude, and the widget flips to show a view of the current sky; with a touch of a button, see the sky from all directions; it's easy to customize your view. Select and display constellations, the horizon, the ecliptic line, and labels for the celestial sights above. This widget refreshes your sky image every few minutes so you are always looking at something new.

In this New Version is: a Space/Astronomy news ticker; a live display of location and gaze direction (altitude and azimuth); star labels to more easily identify objects in the sky; live "panning" via the arrow keys. View in any direction and tilt up/down. This widget has easier access to the full-featured web version. Upgraded server back-end for faster image return.

Roughly Drafted

Phony Rage About iPhone Price and Profits

Reprinted with permission from
http://www.roughlydrafted.com/RD/RDM.Tech.Q3.07/28CE05EF-2E0F-4912-A62A-CBAB41E0D305.html
By Daniel Eran Dilger
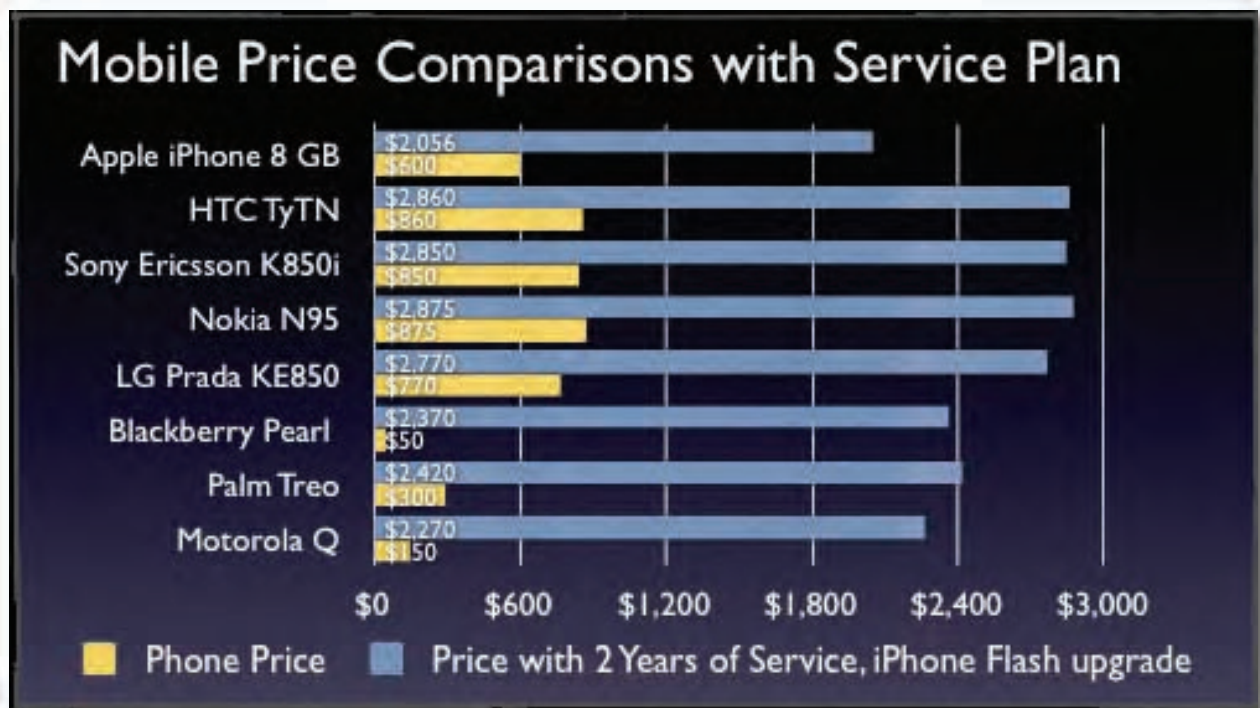
The tech analysts beholden to Microsoft have jumped at the prospect of creating a toxic party tray to welcome Apple's entry into mobiles, stopping only to ask how high publishers want them to pile the phony iPhone bologna.

Here is the first of ten fake scandals they've splashed across headlines and blog postings to create a wave of iPhone misinformation in their cultish attempts to shore up support behind the faltering, embarrassing mobile platforms they're paid to make excuses for.

Fake Apple Scandal 1: The Wild Profiteering on the Expensive iPhone!
This first invented Apple scandal that analysts have worked hard to establish is that the iPhone is not only very expensive, but also grossly overpriced in an effort to profiteer on the interest in the iPhone. Gizmodo likes to refer to the "iPhone Fanboy Tax" as a populist way to cater to readers who want feel better about their choice to own a phone that's not made by Apple.

Analysts take every opportunity to remind consumers that the iPhone costs at least $2000 over two years. The Street's leading jackass Brett Arends even insisted that the iPhone's real price was well over $17,000, because a young person could invest their mobile budget over a lifetime and earn interest on it. He failed to point out that his sensationalist, red herring iPhone warning also applied to every other phone on the market as well.

The problem with all the contemptuously feigned grief over the iPhone's price is that no analysts actually compare the iPhone to the actual price of other mobiles; they simply assign it absurdly scary numbers to instill a fear that the iPhone simply costs too much for a reasonable person to consider. Fear is not information.

[The Street's Flaccid Campaign Against the iPhone]

Three Price Tags to Compare.
As with nearly any purchase, there are three prices to consider in buying a mobile phone:

- Upfront cost on the day of purchase.
- Total cost of ownership over its lifetime.
- Resale value after it is replaced.

A nuclear powered car priced the same as other cars on the market--but which required millions of dollars in refined fuel to operate--simply wouldn't be a economical.

A $600 PC laptop that costs half as much as a new Mac Book--but which is worthless after two years of grief--isn't really a good deal considering that the Mac Book would easily command *more second hand after two years* than the "savings" offered by a generic laptop.

Prices don't exist in a vacuum. Here's how the iPhone's price and value compare to other phones in each respect.

upfront cost: The mobile subsidy shell game tries to make phones appear to be free or nearly free in an effort to get customers in their store and sign them to long term, expensive contracts.

[Apple's Secret iPhone Application Business Model: The Mobile Phone Subsidy Shell Game]

The upfront purchase price of the iPhone is higher than other subsidized phones, but it's not higher than the really desirable phones on the US market: those unlocked phones from Europe that all the analysts compare against the iPhone when they talk about features.

That's right, while comparing the iPhone *in price* to heavily rebated, featureless phones that often sell for $99 or less, they compare the iPhone *in features* to a selection of high priced imported phones that are often not available subsidized at all, and are typically significantly more expensive than the iPhone.

While the high end of competing phones do offer features the iPhone lacks, it is rarely pointed out that the iPhone similarly has key features unmatched *by any phone on the market*, including enough Flash RAM to make the iPhone usable without having to buy additional memory cards. The iPhone has 32 to 128 times as much RAM.

Some of the high end mobiles that defined the state of the art prior to the release of the iPhone offer features such as a better built in camera with flash or offer 3G UTMS service. However, they all have:

- half the battery runtime of the iPhone.
- a clunker design that's commonly twice as thick as the iPhone.
- less than half the iPhone's screen resolution.

They also include very little Flash RAM, typically only 64 - 128 MB, a large portion of which is already used the by phone internally. To match the iPhone's capacity, you'd need to add at least another $100 Flash RAM card.

[iPhone OS X Architecture: the Mach Kernel and RAM]
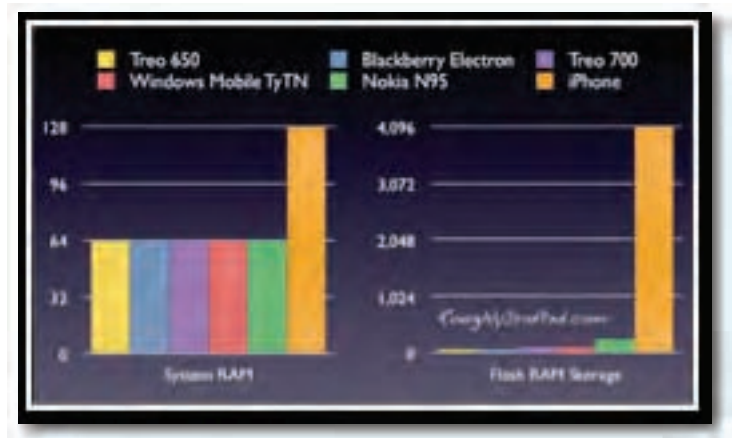
That pushes these phones' prices well beyond the price of the iPhone, and belies the myth that the iPhone is, as Microsoft CEO Steve Balmer falsely asserted, "the most expensive phone in the world." Among similarly featured smartphones, it's actually among the best priced in terms of competitive value.

total cost of ownership: The iPhone does require a two year contract, and analysts love to add the full price of the contact into the price of the iPhone. What they fail to ever point out is that *every phone requires service*, and that Apple's iPhone *pioneered a discounted AT&T plan* that costs about $500 less over two years than the plans required by other smartphones in the US.

That means that the iPhone is cheaper overall than other phones when considering total cost of ownership over its lifetime, even much cheaper phones with a subsidized upfront cost. Obviously, more expensive phones that compare to the iPhone in features are even more expensive when a service plan is included.
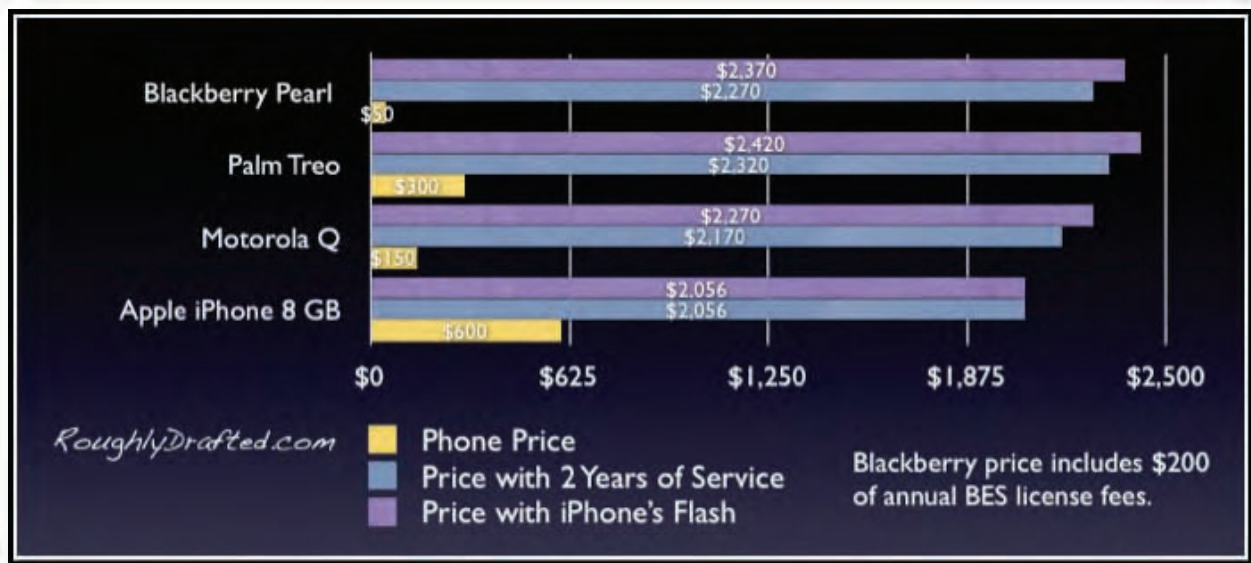
Add in the cost of enough RAM to make these phones usable--and the $100 annual licensing fee for using Blackberry push email service--and the total cost of ownership of even cheap phones rapidly outpaces the iPhone.

That explains the need for analysts' handwaving about the iPhone's "scary price." If they hadn't unleashed their misinformation campaigns, the iPhone's overall value would be painfully, embarrassingly obvious.

Pointing out the true cost of the iPhone makes their lack of credibility painfully and embarrassingly obvious.

[Apple: iPhone Now Costs Less than Ballmer's Lame Motorola Q]

resale value: One thing the analysts never bring up is resale value. That's because a typical second hand mobile is nearly worthless. After two years, even the fanciest mobiles look old and outdated. The frantic pace of technology advancement creates a short upgrade cycle that induces users to buy a new phone regularly. Since most mobiles are only phones with some mobile-dependent PDA features, and since there are so many discarded phones on the market, second hand mobiles have a resale value near zero.
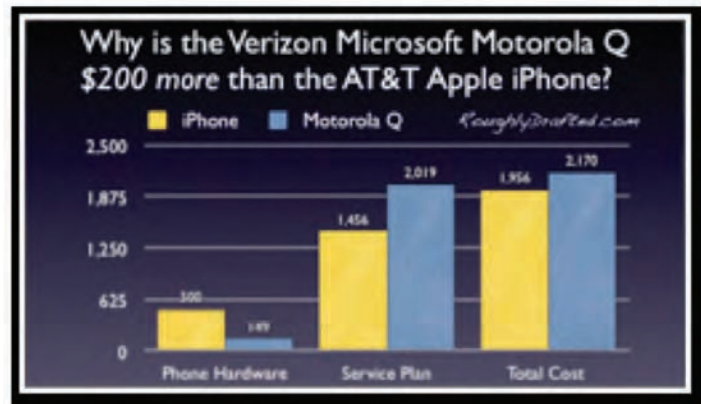
The iPhone is also a high quality iPod and WiFi web browser, making it useful even without mobile service. In fact, lots of people are interested in using it as a fancy iPod today at full price, and are trying to spoof activation in order to own it without a phone plan.

[Unlocking the iPhone: The GSM SIM and Activation]

When a user upgrades to a new iPhone in 2009, their original iPhone will still retain a decent resale value, just as Apple's iPods uniquely retain a high resale value. A 2005 iPod might only need a new battery, now commonly available for $20 or less in a DIY kit.

Even a broken iPod is worth significantly more second hand than competing MP3 players, particularly the PlaysForSure models abandoned by Microsoft, which are now largely worthless and obsolete. There was never any real demand for *new* PlaysForSure players, let alone second hand ones.

So despite analysts' hyperbolic claims, the iPhone is not only competitively priced against similarly featured phones, it's actually *cheaper* in the long run when compared *to any smartphone*, and it will retain more value after two years *than any other phone*.

Anyone trying to make the case that the iPhone is expensive is simply presenting carefully constructed but false information.

[The Two Faced Monster Inside Zune]

iSuppli's Faulty Profit Analysis.
The real reason analysts seem so upset about the iPhone's price is not that it's more expensive, but that it appears to be profitable for Apple.

The famous iSuppli parts breakdown gustimate purported to demonstrate that Apple has given the iPhone a price that includes a 50% profit margin, nearly double the cost of its parts. However, this is false for two reasons.

The first problem is that if the iPhone is grossly overpriced at $600, how is it that other high end phones from Nokia, Sony Ericsson, HTC and LG aren't similarly overpriced? They cost $750-950, and offer a poorer screen, uglier interface, bulkier package, and less battery runtime. Why should they cost significantly more?

[David Sessions Tries to Milk iPhone Battery Panic in Slate]

And what about the lower end phones from Motorola, Palm and Blackberry, which offer nothing comparable the iPhone's hardware features, but still cost hundreds of dollars?
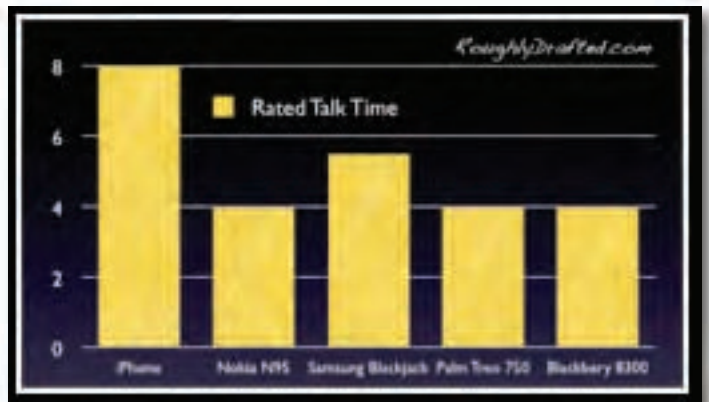
The second problem is that *everything* is marked up to cover overhead, shipping, and other costs. The iPhone's hardware markup is no different than other typical consumer electronics, outside of video game consoles and other categories where the hardware is sold at a loss in an effort to sell games. The company has also reported:

- the $200 iPod nano cost Apple $90
- the $500 PlayStation 3 costs Sony $805.85
- the $300 Xbox cost Microsoft $323
- the $400 Xbox 360 cost Microsoft $525

Little mention is ever made about iSuppli's teardown price estimates of other phones, although company spokesman Eric Pratt reported that he "expects similar margins" for HTC's TyTN and Nokia's N95. There were certainly no press covering iSuppli's guesswork on other phones' cost or profits. Why not?

While it's embarrassing that Microsoft and Sony appear to be losing money on their flagship game consoles, it is well known that the margins on the iPod nano were not over 50%. Apple sold tens of millions of them, and has not reported profit results that support the idea of 50% profit margins on the bread and butter of its iPod sales.

The idea that Apple's iPhone is unreasonably priced and has an unusually and excessively high profit margin is a fictional creation of paid-to-say analysts.

[More Absurd iPhone Myths: iSuppli, Subsidies, and Pricing]

The next time you hear a pundit referring to the iPhone's "$2000" price or its "50% profit margin," you can rest assured that ignoring the rest of their comments is probably the best way to avoid being mislead by the noise of their desperate astroturfing.

This is only the *first of ten* Apple scandals invented by fraudulent info-twisters. The next faux-scandal made it to the headlines in an even more painfully absurd and embarrassing way.
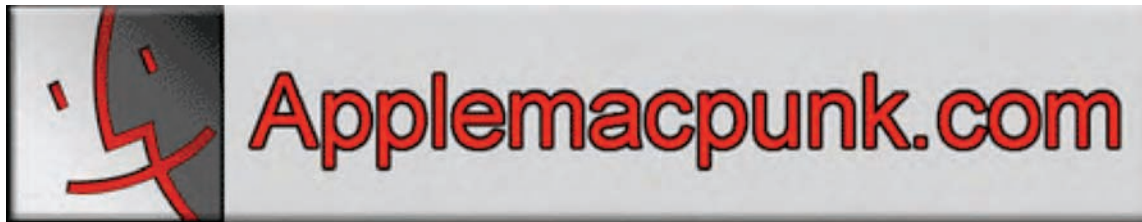
Mac Security 101

Get Your Laptop Back: LoJack For Laptops

By Kale Feelhaver

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applemacpunk@applemacpunk.com

For this month's column, I decided to focus on a great piece of security software, Computrace's LoJack for Laptops. This product is marketed as "Peace of Mind for $49." In reality, that is a pretty good description of the product. LoJack for Laptops is an invisible program that silently reports your whereabouts every time you use the Internet. If your laptop is ever stolen, you simply report it stolen, and the next time your machine connects to the Internet, the perpetrator is caught.

It's a simple concept, but an effective one. You purchase LoJack for Laptops, and install it on your computer. Then you register an account with Computrace via their website, and keep your contact information up to date. The software includes one year of service for $49, or you can get the extended plan, with 3 years of service, for $99. The software works on Windows XP, Windows Vista, and Mac OS X. Once installed, the software reports to Computrace's servers are regular intervals. If your laptop is ever stolen, you file a police report and call their 1-800 number to report it stolen. Computrace then flags your computer so it will trigger an alarm the next time it reports to their servers. As soon as your computer connects to the Internet, Computrace's servers will determine the physical location by Public IP address or dial up area code. Their software's logic will try to find the exact location of the laptop, and then notify the local police.

I used to think, "Who cares, the police aren't going to take the time to find my laptop", but the statistics show that 75% of computers with LoJack for Laptops installed are located and returned. Police departments across the country have found that stolen laptops lead to other stolen items. In most cases, the police show up expecting to find a stolen laptop, but end up also finding, drugs, other stolen goods, and, in a couple of cases, stolen cars. Needless to say, these statistics are very impressive. Computrace is so confident in their product that they have included a 30-day money back guarantee. If your laptop is stolen and you report it, they guarantee it will be returned inside of 30 days or they'll refund the price of the software.

So I know what you're thinking… if the thief steals the laptop and erases the hard drive, then LoJack for Laptops is useless… right? Wrong! LoJack for Laptops actually writes a program to the laptop's firmware. It will still send a panic signal, even if the drive is erased. Pretty impressive huh? The product can be purchased from directly from the LoJack for Laptops website (http://www.lojackforlaptops.com/), and also purchased from the Apple online store (http://store.apple.com). If you have a sizable amount of money invested in your laptop… peace of mind may be worth $49 to you.

The iPhone Review

By Terry White
Published online originally at http://terrywhite.com/techblog/?p=196 Terry White's Tech Blog
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Let me start off by saying that while I'm a fan of Apple's success and products, I'm not one of those people that blindly apologizes for their products no matter what. I'll be the first to say that something works or it doesn't. My friends and many of you come to me all the time because they want my HONEST assessment. So I wanted a couple of days with the iPhone to really take it through its paces and see if this new phone is what it's hyped up to be. You must also understand that there isn't a smartphone out there that I think is perfect. As a matter of fact before the iPhone there were basically 4 smartphone OS's, Palm, Blackberry, Symbian and Windows Mobile. I stuck with Palm because it was the lessor of the 4 evils or the one that sucks least. Palm has a UI (user interface) that hasn't changed much in several years. Basically zero innovation. However, there are thousands of apps to extend the functionality of the Palm OS. Blackberry doesn't have a touch screen or tap screen. You have to do everything via the keypad/thumb wheel. Also the Blackberry's I considered had no multimedia functions (camera, video, etc.) Symbian looked very promising, but I was frightened away mostly by EVERYONE saying how slooooooow it was and that there were very few apps for it. My friend Colin Smith's phone locked up on him just last week right in front of me. Windows mobile seemed to have stability issues. My Treo would lock up (needing a soft reset) at least once every other day. Palm didn't put enough RAM in the 650 and the Bluetooth implementation was pathetic (requiring special headsets to be compatible). I've complained about this for months. A PHONE SHOULDN'T LOCK UP! I was all set to dump the 650 and move on to a newer model back in January, but I decided to wait and go to the Steve Jobs Macworld keynote first. Well it's a good thing I did, because that's when the iPhone was first unveiled.
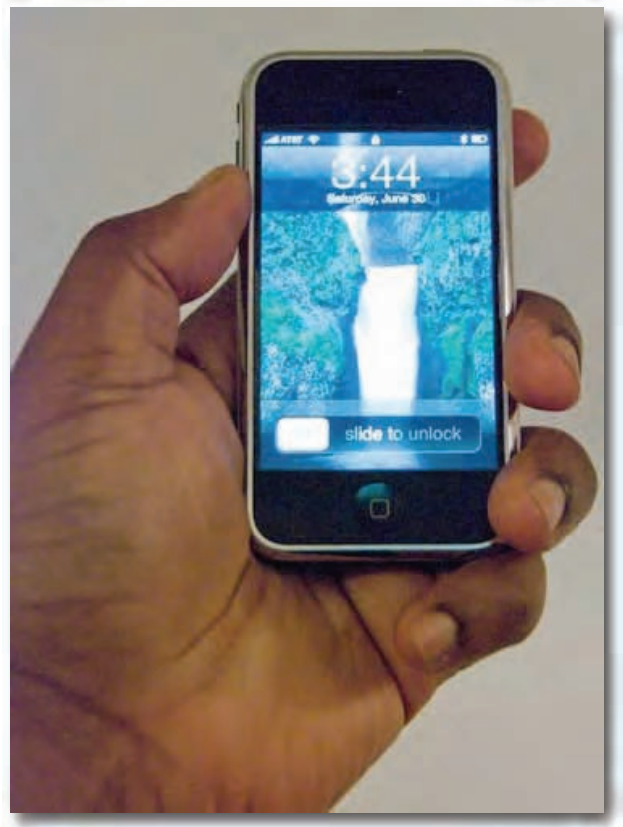
The reason that there is so much hype around the iPhone is simple. **Most phones suck today!** I don't know a single person who *loves* their cell phone/smartphone. Everyone is different and therefore has different needs. No one device will satisfy everyone 100%. Apple decided to step outside the box and create something unique and FUN. Apple has a long history of getting UI right and the user experience right. So of course the idea that they were going to create a phone got a lot of attention, maybe more than they deserved. With that said, the iPhone is NOT perfect by any means. No smartphone is. No regular cell phone is either. It's not the second coming or the cure for cancer. What I like about the iPhone is that it is BETTER than every other phone I've used and it's actually fun to use and navigate. People want to quickly discount eye candy. Think about it. We love eye candy. We love animation. We love video. Otherwise we'd be content just reading text with no pictures, never watching a movie or TV and seeing everything in black and white with no color. We're visual beings. So the iPhone is appealing because it uses and stimulates our sense of touch and sight. I love it when people yell, "it's just a phone!"

On to the full review…
I decided to do my review of the iPhone separated by the areas of the phone itself. So here's what I like and what I don't like about each area of the iPhone:

Phone

"It's the phone stupid!" The killer app on the iPhone has to be the phone. At the end of the day, it has to make and receive calls. It has to be loud enough and easy enough to use as a phone. One of the first things besides reception quality that is important to me is call volume. My cell phone has to be loud enough so that I can hear it in busy airports, walking down the street, etc. The Treo 650 was NOT loud enough which meant that I had to buy special software for the phone (Volume Care) just to boost the volume. So how does the iPhone stack up in this important area? So far so good. I've been making calls most of the day from the iPhone and the clarity and quality have exceeded my expectations. It's loud enough, thank you Apple. I can navigate to my favorites and place a call with one hand. It still takes more taps than it should. You should be able to hold down the Home button to get to the Favorites screen (are you listening Apple, that was a great idea I just thought of?). The iPhone comes with a set of white stereo earbuds with an integrated mic. The mic also serves as a button to answer calls, end the current call, decline and incoming call, and do the hold features of call waiting. It also allows you to advance to the next song that's playing and pause playback of audio from songs or movies. I don't like earbuds for extended use. However, since they ingrate the mic, I'll have to get used to them until a 3rd party solution comes out.

Navigation

For the first few hours I completely forgot about the "pinch" feature which is where you move two fingers closer together to zoom in and apart to zoom out. I kept double tapping on a Google map thinking there has to be a better way. Then I remembered this important finger gesture and it was MUCH EASIER navigating and zooming in on the display. The icons are easy to press. The iPhone is VERY RESPONSIVE. Apple does a good job of magnifying the screen where it needs it automatically like trying to select a popup menu item on a website. Other than a faster way to get to Favorites, I don't really have any complaints in this area. The User Interface is what lured me to the iPhone in the first place and it didn't disappoint in this key area!

External Buttons

There are physical buttons for Home, volume, ringer silence (which is GREAT) and sleep/power off. They only stick out just enough to be used without being obtrusive. Great design in this area. No complaints.

Virtual Keyboard

This has to be the biggest area of debate when it comes to the iPhone. The competition and naysayers say that this phone can't succeed because business users and PDA users are used to a keyboard with actual buttons for a tactile feel. Being a business user, I certainly had my reservations too. This is one of those areas that's going to vary by user. Everyone has different size fingers. So I'm probably one of the worse case scenarios and a good test subject. I gotta say that I don't love the virtual keyboard. It seems that so far I keep missing the keys on the right side. Nine times out of ten when I try to type an "o", I hit the "p" instead. So I have to adjust and hit the key a little more to the left. Unlike the Palm, there is no calibration routine. This would be helpful so that the iPhone would know where you're likely to hit the keys. The iPhone does offer to help by popping up the letters as you hit them so that you immediately see if you hit the right key or not as well as offering to auto correct/complete the word it thinks you're trying to type. In my experience thus far the auto complete feature is lacking. It almost always guesses the wrong word and when it does guess the right word it usually does so right before the last character. To accept the suggestion you hit the space bar, but since it's the last character anyway, you might as well just hit the last character.

The virtual keyboard is usable. It does work and I've banged out some emails and web forms on it. It's not as slow as I'm making it sound, but it's not as great as Apple would like us to believe it is either. Your mileage will vary. Apple suggests that after you get used to it you'll be able to type faster with two thumbs. While this may be true, I find the iPhone to be too narrow to hold and still have enough room for my two big thumbs to fit on the keyboard side-by-side. Luckily this is all software based and Apple can improve it with a free update. If you don't like the keyboard on other smartphones, you're stuck with it. I also find it odd that the iPhone doesn't have a copy paste feature or the ability to add your own auto complete words. For example, I would like to type mgd and have it automatically put in MacGroup-Detroit, Inc. This is the kind of functionality I would like to see very soon in an update. There should also be some standard replies for email and SMS messaging. At first glance the keyboard didn't seem to have a Caps Lock feature. However, thanks to blog reader Rich, he pointed it out to me in the Settings->General->Keyboard that you have to TURN IT ON! Not sure why you wouldn't want that turned on by default, but at least it's there. Lastly what I found a little disorienting was the fact that the virtual keyboard always displays as CAPS even though you're typing in lower case (when the Shift or Caps Lock is not engaged). Since it's a virtual keyboard, why not display lower case letters when typing in lower case and upper case letters when typing in upper case? This is especially important when typing passwords and you can't see what you're typing because it's displayed as dots.

Bluetooth

I've had such bad Bluetooth experience with the Treo, that ANYTHING would be an improvement. The first bluetooth device I paired my iPhone to was my car. My car has a 3rd party integrated bluetooth module in it that works extremely well. However, most smartphones don't have the smarts to download the contacts to the car's display. This was one thing that did work most of the time on the Treo. I could dial right from the radio's display without touching my phone. I could also see the caller ID and answer the phone as well. While the iPhone does pair with the Argos, it doesn't download the phone book. Argos does do firmware upgrades, so perhaps they'll make their solution 100% iPhone compatible. My wife's iPhone paired with her SUV and it DID download the phone book just fine. You usually have no control over this and it varies by phone/car. Most phones will download the favorites/speed dial list. Surprisingly the iPhone downloaded ALL of her contacts to her SUV. Since the iPhone is also an iPod it would be nice to have the music go over bluetooth as well. No chance of that currently. BMW announced that they will be the first automaker to fully support the iPhone in their vehicles. So you plug your iPhone into the dock connector in the glove box and you have access to your tunes on the stereo as well as your phone via bluetooth. Hmmm, I was thinking about getting a new car this year anyway, hmmm.

The iPhone's Contacts on the dashboard of the car via bluetooth!
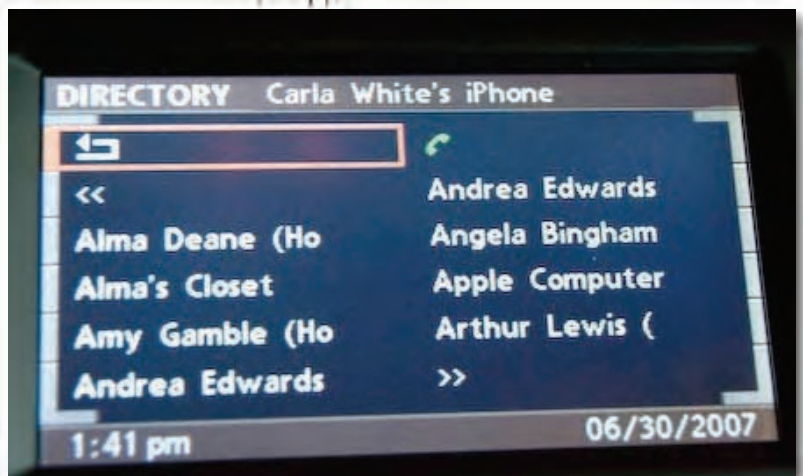
On the Headset Front - I'm VERY PICKY when it comes to bluetooth headsets. I've tried SEVERAL! I keep coming back to my Jabra BT500. I don't like the on the ear kind mainly because they're not comfortable to me. This means that I probably WON'T be buying the Apple Bluetooth Headset. It's the kind that goes in the ear and that's the only thing that holds it in place. I'd have to try one before considering a purchase as I've been disappointed so many times in this area. The Jawbone had promise, but it just doesn't fit well in MY ear either. So because it doesn't go all the way in my ear, there is a volume issue. It also feels like it's going to simply fall off sometimes. Again, these are my issues and you might be just fine with it. So I paired up my Jabra and placed a call. I called my sister and her first response was "you sound like you're on a land line!" I couldn't believe how clear it was. I would get static on the Treo if I simply moved the Treo to the other side of my body. The iPhone works GREAT with my headset. Get this, I was even able to adjust the volume on the iPhone and it worked over bluetooth. Keep in mind I'm scared and just not used to this working so well. I tried the unthinkable, after I hung up. I held the button down for a second on my Jabra and it redialed my sister. I passed out!

Ringtones

This would fall into the area of disappointment category. While the iPhone has 25 different ringtones built-in, they are kind of cheesy. Some are also not loud enough. I was really looking forward to using my own music which is already on the device as my ringtones. On my Treo I had different songs assigned to different contacts. While you can assign different ringtones to different contacts, the choices of ringtones supplied isn't very appealing. Hopefully the rumors are true and Apple will allow you to use your own or convert your own tones. You should also be allowed to assign ringtones to groups of contacts. This way you would immediately know if family is calling, vs. friends vs. colleagues. Even if they don't allow you to use purchased music, they should at least allow you to spin your own with GarageBand or other sound apps. Ringtones is big business, so I'm surprised that there isn't a way to buy more (yet.)

Visual voice mail

This is a very welcomed addition to the world of wireless. This is something that Apple and AT&T collaborated on and gives you the ability to see your voice mail listing on your iPhone and then skip around to listen the messages in the order you want them in. I'm not aware of any other phone/wireless carrier that offers this. It's really slick too. You can see exactly who called, call them back from the same screen and most importantly you can scrub the playback head with your finger to backup a message to hear something that you missed without having to go all the way back or some set interval.

iPod

The iPod portion of the iPhone is what separates it from any other phone out there. Sure your phone may play mp3s, but it probably doesn't play the ones you bought from the iTunes store or give you your iTunes playlists. Apple has completely redesigned the iPod interface on the iPhone. The famous click wheel is gone. You can customize the screen buttons to the areas that you access most. You can watch your movies, music videos and video podcasts. Music does actually play through the built-in speaker if you don't use the supplied earbuds/phone headset. The coverflow feature is pretty cool. My only complaint in this department is in the area of storage space. Storage on the iPhone is either 4GB or 8GB depending on the model you get. I have to say that while I can live in 8GB's of space, 16GB would have been much better. I actually can't believe that Apple would not offer a 16GB model. Especially considering how big video files and movies are. Perhaps they'll come out with a 3rd model that does 16GB just like they came out with an Apple TV after the initial launch that has a 160GB hard drive (as opposed to the 40GB hard drive in the first model). The iPhone like the iPod is syncs the status of the content you play back such as movies and TV shows. So if you start watching a video on your computer in iTunes and then have to leave, sync your iPhone and go. When you start watching it on your iPhone it will pick up where you left off. This works in both directions.

GREAT NEWS on the multiple computer front! Blog reader John confirmed that you CAN sync the iPhone with more than one computer. For example, I want to sync the iPhone with my MacBook Pro for contacts, calendar and photos. However, I want to sync my music, video and podcasts to my iMac (which is our iTunes jukebox at home). I just figured this wouldn't work and I'm happy IT DOES! I used my wife's iPhone for this test. She doesn't have much music on her iMac. However, all her playlists are on the iTunes iMac. So when I plugged her phone into the iTunes iMac and went to iTunes none of the items were checked in the tabs for the iPhone which is GOOD. I checked off the playlists she wanted and then when I hit apply I got a scary message that said that the iPhone could only be sync'd to one iTunes library at a time and that if I proceed it would erase the iPhone and replace its contents. What the message didn't state was did this mean the music and video content or everything? So I did it because I could always re-sync it back to her computer if it didn't work. After a few minutes the new content was all there AND her contacts, calendar and photos were still there from her iMac! YEAH! I also had to choose the videos she wanted because it's all the iTunes content or none. You can't do videos on one computer and audio on another. Same goes for podcasts and audio books. Thanks John! You rock!

Camera

The iPhone has a 2 megapixel camera built-in. The shots are stored in the iPhone's flash memory (4GB or 8GB). There is no camera flash, there is no zoom. There are no settings. It's a point-and-shoot PERIOD. Cameras on phones haven't impressed anyone. Every time I see someone raise their phone to take a picture, I always think to myself, "what are you going to do with that crappy shot?" So I didn't really have any great expectations for the iPhone camera. As a matter of fact I often forget that my phone has a camera.

This image was shot with the iPhone's built-in camera. Click the above image for the full size un-retouched file. Scroll to the bottom right corner to close it.

The iPhone can take pictures and then automatically sync those pictures back to your computer on the next sync. I was stunned that the next time I connected the iPhone to my Mac, Adobe Photoshop Lightroom (my default digital image app) launched, detected the iPhone and offered to import the shots!

Photos

Apple did an excellent job in the photos area. It's simple, it works and it's beautiful. Although I'm not an iPhoto user, I set up a few albums of my favorite photos. You know the kind that you want to show when someone asks you how the family is doing? This way I can whip out the iPhone and go straight to the best most recent shots. When you rotate the iPhone, the display rotates to show the best orientation of the picture. You can flick through the shots or watch a slideshow with transitions. You can also use your photos for wallpaper and for your contacts. I really like having photos on most of my contacts because when the phone rings it displays their picture. I can SEE who's calling without having to read a name or number and think about who's calling. I can't really think of anything they should improve in this area other than making it work directly with Lightroom which isn't likely to happen.

Notes

This feature is almost useless because it doesn't sync with a notes application currently on the computer. I keep all kinds of notes on my Treo. However, I didn't create a single one on the handset. I typed them on my Mac and sync'd them to the Treo. I want the same ability on the iPhone. Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard adds notes to the Mail app. I'm sure that we'll see note syncing at that time. I just don't want to have to wait until October. If there was a copy paste feature I could at least email a note to the phone and then copy it into the the notes app. Alas Apple didn't allow for that either. Maybe this app should be called "Virtual Keyboard Practice" instead of notes.

Email

Email on the iPhone is very impressive. It automatically copied over my email settings for the 3 email accounts I selected (two were IMAP and one as .Mac - which is also IMAP). So there was nothing to configure. It worked and started bringing down my email instantly. It's all straight forward on how the app works and it let's me switch back and forth between all my email accounts. I wish there was a one click button that would allow me to get back to the account selection screen. Currently it takes 2-3 taps. While Address Book Groups show up, you can't actually email to a group of contacts. You have to add them in one-by-one. Also I haven't found the BCC feature yet. Incoming HTML email works as advertised. Links in the email can tapped on and phone numbers can be tapped on as well which will dial them. My current voice mail system at home send me an email when I receive a voicemail with the message attached. The message comes in as nice little 3gpp file that plays fine via QuickTime on Mail in Mac OS X, but so far hasn't played as an attachment on the iPhone.

Looks like I'll have to spring for the PhoneValet upgrade with their newly announced PhoneValet Anywhere for the iPhone when it ships. I also get my Vonage voicemail as an attachment that comes in as a .WAV file. The iPhone email app doesn't play those attachments either. The one area that would help the iPhone get adopted more quickly by the business community is Microsoft Exchange Support. Without it, IT departments will not let you use the iPhone to access corporate email because of the security risks. Microsoft does license something called Active Sync. Hopefully Apple will adopt this or some other solution that would work. When this happens the flood gates would open. Until this happens it doesn't matter how great the iPhone is or isn't, the business community will be sitting on the sidelines and buying other smartphones.

Web Surfing - Safari

Apple has been making a big deal about the web app Safari on the iPhone. After all I don't think any other phone (at least not any that I've seen) offer a full blown web browsing experience on a tiny screen. The implementation of Safari itself on the iPhone is well done! However, there are some flaws to this strategy. Most cell phone web browsers use WAP. WAP is a way for website designers to design a low bandwidth simple version of their sites. This works well on mobile devices. However, it's true you don't get the "full page" experience. Seeing that the iPhone doesn't support 3g and uses AT&T's Edge network instead, your pages could load painfully slow. Most commercial websites detect a WAP browser and automatically direct you to a lower bandwidth version of the site without all the frills. Since the iPhone uses a full version of Safari, that won't happen automatically. So you're going to get the regular site with all the graphics, etc. It was interesting that Apple used Fandago.com during the introduction of the iPhone. I hadn't really used this site much, but I wanted a good movie theater listing site to be able to call up movie times quickly from the iPhone. I went to www.fandango.com and found that while it works perfectly fine, it was too many clicks to get to my theater and too many unnecessary graphics. In this case I'm only interested in a text listing. Sure I could bookmark the page that has my local theater on it and that saves on the clicks, but it still loads a bunch of graphics that I don't need. Luckily Fandango has a mobile version of their site which if you go to mobile.fandango.com you'll see what I mean. It much more streamlined and loads much faster. So from the mobile version I bookmarked the two theaters I go to the most and they load very quickly. The same is going to hold true for www.nwa.com vs. mobile.nwa.com. Apple also did some clever things to help you get your URL typed faster. They give you the buttons you'll need on the virtual keyboard like forward slash, colon and there's even a .com button. They also do a much nicer job of offering to auto complete the URL in Safari than they do in the other apps. It offers suggestions from your bookmarks. However, what I wish it had was a cursor key. Sometimes I want to edit out part of a URL and it takes me a few taps to get the cursor where I want it.

While I certainly appreciate having a full blown browsing experience in my hand, I also appreciate the fact that it's not always necessary. Speaking of a full blown browser experience, one glaring omission is the lack of Flash support and gasp, Quicktime support in the iPhone's Safari browser. Over 98% of the computers on the internet today have the Flash player. This means that content developers can feel pretty assured that if they design a site that incorporates Flash, their content will be seen. Not having Flash or even Flash Lite on the iPhone is a serious drawback. It will be interesting to see which sites won't work on the iPhone because of this.

Rumor has it that Apple posted a job listing for Flash Lite programmers, so maybe we'll see this in an update at some point. I knew going in that the iPhone didn't have Flash, but I just took for granted that Apple would support their own Quicktime format. While I can watch the Quicktime clips linked to Apple's site, I haven't been able to get it to work on my own sites that have QuickTime streaming. I have some QuickTime movies using QuickTime Streaming on my sites and they don't play or even attempt to play when I click on them. I'll have to find out what's going on with this one. So this is to say that your Quicktime viewing experience on the web may vary depending upon how the site embeds or links to QuickTime movies.

Apple did an excellent job once again supporting my Safari bookmarks. They're all on the iPhone just as they are on my computer. Bookmarks (favorites) can be added on the fly from the iPhone as well and they'll be added to your computer on the next sync. The iPhone also has a VPN solution built-in. I haven't had a need to try it as my company doesn't support the native Apple client for accessing our home office. However, it's there for those who can use it or need it.

Google Maps

This feature is actually pretty cool! You can type in just about anything into the search and the iPhone will start dropping pin points right on map of where those locations are. You can tap any location to get details such as the phone number and address and of course you can dial the number with another tap. You can also get driving directions. However, since it's not a GPS, you have to punch in your current location. The other thing that's cool about this feature is that it takes into account and shows you current traffic conditions at no additional cost. My expensive GPS systems don't do that (without a separate attachment and service fee). It even has the satellite view which is pretty neat to have on a phone. Useful, not really, but cool - yes.

Widgets

The iPhone ships with two widgets. One for Weather and one for Stocks. You just plug in the city or zip and in a couple of seconds you see the current weather and forecast. You can have up to 5 different locations saved that you can flick through. The Stock widget works as you would expect. Put in your own symbols and track your favorite stocks. However, I want more! I definitely want a Movie Theater widget. The great thing about Widgets is that they bring just the pieces of a website that you want to see quickly. Therefore the iPhone should have MORE of them. A restaurant widget would be nice too. Yes, it can be done via Google Maps, but a widget would be faster.

PDFs, Word and Excel

The world is not just about HTML and email. So what happens when you need to view a document. Surprisingly this works quite well. I actually went to my user group's website and viewed our 16 page newsletter PDF on the iPhone and the experience was better than I imagined. I zoom it up to a comfortable reading level and the scrolling was manageable. This is the kind of thing I would have never attempted on the Treo. Word and Excel attachments can also be viewed, but not edited.

Calendar

The calendar app is adequate. It syncs from my iCal which contains all my personal calendars and since my work calendar is a Microsoft Exchange calendar, I use MS Entourage for work email and calendaring. Luckily the latest version of Entourage supports Mac OS X's sync services which means that my work calendar automatically syncs to an iCal calendar in the background. So I sync my home, work and wife's calendars to my iPhone with no problem. The only downside though is these 3 calendars show up as one calendar on the iPhone. While that's nice in most cases, I would an option to have them separated out or at least identified by colors like they are in iCal. For example, yesterday I had a work conference call on my calendar for 1PM and my wife had a lunch date at 1 PM. Both entries show up at 1PM on the calendar. It could get confusing if the entries aren't clearly identified as to which/who's calendar they belong to. The iPhone calendar has 3 views, day, month and list. Some complain that it doesn't have a weekly view and the list view for me serves that purpose.

SMS, not iChat (instant messaging)

This is another one of those, huh? type features. Texting is big on phones. There is no doubt about that. However, so is standard instant messaging between computers. Apple already supports AIM (AOL Instant Messaging) in iChat in the Mac OS. So it floors me and others that they didn't include this on the iPhone. The first thing my youngest daughter went to do when she grabbed my iPhone out of my hand, was to text her friend. I had to tell her, that's not going to work because SMS by default is only from cell phone to cell phone. She handed it back to me and walked away. Then she remembered that she could call her and ran back into the room. However, you see where the mind set is of our youth. They think texting first, voice second. We can't talk about SMS without talking about MMS. MMS is multimedia messaging. This is real handy when you snap a photo and want to immediately send the photo to a friend's phone. I've done this a lot. For whatever reason, Apple hasn't included MMS on the iPhone. Yes, you can snap a photo, but you have to email the photo to the person you want to send it to and most cell phones are NOT set up to receive email. This is just wrong! Sure it would be nice if everyone had an iPhone, then it would be a non-issue because you could just email to your friend's iPhone. However, that just isn't the world we live in and it never will be. Apple admittedly only "hopes" to capture 1% of the cell phone market. So they know that most will not have iPhones. Hopefully they will see the light and add this feature via an update.

Wi-Fi

I believe that the iPhone has a bug in it when it comes to logging on to a WEP encrypted Wi-Fi network. Neither my iPhone nor my wife's iPhone would log onto our home network via the network password. Also note that my home network is using Apple's own AirPort Base Stations. So it's not a 3rd party vendor compatibility issue. Only the HEX key would work. I've seen several others discuss this issue on the Apple's discussion board. Luckily the HEX key worked AND it remembers it or I would have been pissed! Wi-Fi works well. I've been on it since yesterday. I turned it off just to test the EDGE connection. The iPhone remembers the access points that you've already logged on to and logs on to them automatically for you. It also chooses Wi-Fi over EDGE whenever Wi-Fi is available. If a network shows up it will prompt you to log on to it. You can disable that feature if it becomes a pest.

Wi-Fi is actually usable on the iPhone because if a page requires you to log in, you can via Safari. I'm surprised that it doesn't support 802.11n. Not that it needs to as there would be no speed advantage for surfing the web. However, if you had an 802.11n ONLY network, the iPhone wouldn't even see it.

YouTube

It's nice to have, but not something I'll be using a lot. Over Wi-Fi it works well. It was even acceptable over EDGE which was a shocker. Early reviews claimed poor performance over EDGE. See more on EDGE below. I don't see a way to log into your YouTube account. This would have been handy as I already have some videos bookmarked. However, the YouTube app does allow you to bookmark videos and search on the iPhone.

AT&T

Love 'em or hate them, AT&T is the provider for years to come on the iPhone. It's no secret that this was an unpopular decision to many. Clearly Apple would have sold many more iPhones if they were on more carriers. Most of my east coast buddies HATE AT&T because the service is so poor in their area. The funny thing is that while I never hear any say they love their phone, I do hear people say that they love Verizon all the time. I have Verizon as a carrier for my data card (EVDO) and the service has been great. I've had AT&T (formerly Cingular, formerly AT&T) for years. So quite honestly I don't know what it's like to have Verizon as a carrier. However, I did have Sprint for a brief stint when the Treo 650 came out they were the exclusive provider for a while. I wanted that phone so bad (sound familiar) that I opened up a Sprint account just to get the phone. I can remember traveling with both phones on a trip to Arizona and there were areas that my Sprint phone worked and my Cingular phone didn't. So it's clear that AT&T doesn't have the best coverage everywhere. Rumor has it that because of the iPhone and the Apple relationship they've dumped millions of dollars into their networks recently. So we'll see if things improve or not. Here in Michigan and most places that I travel, the service isn't bad. Also because I do occasionally travel abroad it's important to me to have a GSM based phone that works in most countries. Before we beat up Apple too much on this point we have to remember that reportedly Apple DID go to Verizon FIRST and they turned it (the iPhone) down!

EDGE

Edge is AT&T's 2.5g wireless data network. This network sometimes makes you crave dial-up speeds. It can be extremely slow. So needless to say I couldn't believe Apple would put their new internet device on this network and not take advantage of AT&Ts 3g network. Apple claims that the iPhone would have to be bigger and battery life would suffer if it were 3g. That may be true, however if the iPhone has any hope for adoption outside the US, 3g is a must. Since you have to build it for them, build it for us too. Granted initially Steve said that the AT&T 3g network wasn't wide spread enough and I say, "SO"! When 3g isn't available phones step down to EDGE anyway. I personally think that the AT&T network just isn't ready for the volume of iPhones that would be surfing at 3g speeds. So this is probably a stop gap measure to give AT&T time to get their networks up to speed rather than having an immediate overload and outages.

How slow is it? This very blog (before this post obviously) took about 75 seconds to load. Over Wi-Fi it loads in about 3-5 seconds. I would have run my favorite speedtest on Speakeasy.net, oh but wait, that requires Flash. I did find one at bandwidthplace.com that worked. **My score was 188.6 kilobits per second!** So it would seem that the rumors of AT&T rolling out a faster Edge network on the eve of the iPhone launch are true. Speeds were at least 1/3rd of that before this week. While I'll take any speed gains I can get, 3g would have easily been 5 to 7 times faster. Now for the big test, YouTube. I was shocked! My video actually started playing in about 8 seconds after I tapped on it. Early reviewers stated that YouTube was unwatchable over EDGE. This was of course before the magical upgrade. The entire two minute clip played without skipping a beat. Edge is way slower than Wi-Fi and 3g, but it's not so slow that it's unusable. Also remember that many sites have mobile versions so in a pinch when you don't need the "full experience" you can grab the mobile version and get what you need a lot faster. My mobile version of the Fandango page loaded in 4 seconds as opposed to 47 seconds for the full fandango.com site with all the movie posters that I don't need to see when I'm just looking for a start time.

Activation woes

Although my activation went relatively smoothly on both phones (mine and my wife's), I've been reading about horror stories from others. I'm sure the servers were overloaded as thousands tried to activate their iPhones all at the same time. The one thing that did bug me though was the fact that I had to set up a NEW line for myself. My family is on a family plan with rollover minutes. However, my existing phone is on a corporate account through my employer. It's directly billed to them which is nice. AT&T is not currently allowing iPhones to be activated on a business account. I wasn't expecting my employer to buy the phone. However, I was expecting to keep my same number and service on the iPhone. So I had to add a new line to my personal account with my family and I forwarded the calls from my Treo to my iPhone. This way I don't have to give out the new number to everyone. However, I realized that in order to SMS me you will need the new number, so here it is… Yeah right!

Other Useful Apps

I was pleasantly surprised to see some apps that no one had mentioned before. There's a world clock that I need because I travel to different time zones all the time. There's an alarm clock. This will also be useful for me because I usually use my phone as my alarm clock when I travel. There's even a stopwatch and a timer. These apps are all under the Clock icon and work well. While I certainly appreciate having a calculator and will use it, it seems that this calculator is the same one from Apple's Mac System 1.0 back in 1984 and doesn't have a Clear Entry Key that I can find. So be sure not to make any mistakes or you'll have to start all over again.

Durability

Sorry folks, but I don't plan on dropping my iPhone purposely. Luckily the folks over at PC World did. PC World gives the iPhone some pretty practical and harsh testing such as purposely trying to scratch it with keys and they see how it survives several drops. Check out the video here. It survived all the tests!

Is it really smart?

The iPhone is pretty smart, but it could be smarter! It's great that when you have a phone number in an email you can tap it and it dials the number. Or if it's an URL tapping it goes to Safari and then the page. It's also cool that if you look up a business in Google Maps you can add it to your Contacts. I love it. However, there is a lot of room for improvement in this area if we're really going to call this a "smartphone." I want to see **MORE INTEGRATION** between the iPhone apps. For example, I go back to Macworld Expo when Steve Jobs first showed the iPhone. He did a demo where he was talking to Phil and telling him about a photo he had on his iPhone. He then proceeds to email to Phil. He finds the photo, taps the send button, it attaches it to a new email and then to address it to Phil he actually had to look up Phil's email address in the Contacts. Doesn't it know he's already talking with Phil? Shouldn't it offer to send it to the current caller as an option? Another example just happened last night. I was in the car with my wife and asked her to call the restaurant on her iPhone. She didn't have them in her contacts, but I did. I then realized that there is no way for me to send, beam or get the contact to her. You should at least be able to email a contact. How about bluetooth transfers? Nope, nadda.

Another example of where the iPhone could be smarter: I got an email from a buddy that contained his iPhone number. Great! I wanted to add it to his contact. Oh wait! There's no copy/paste function. There's no way to even save an email as a note. So I had to keep repeating the phone number to myself until I could get to his contact info to add it in manually. What if you get an email that contains event info. It would be nice to be able to "create an event from the email" message. This would merely create a new entry in the calendar (you would still have to key in the event date and time, but the details would be copied from the email into the notes area of the appointment.) While I'm traveling I generally keep my phone on for emergencies. However, while I'm sleeping I don't want to hear the sounds of incoming emails, SMS messages, etc. I know that I can turn these sounds off one by one, but then when I wake up I have to turn them on one by one. It would be nice to have "profiles" for the sound settings. Then I could switch to a "night time" profile. Since Apple/AT&T did such a great job with Visual Voicemail, it would really be cool if you could forward the voicemail as an audio attachment in an email. This way if someone leaves me a message that I need someone else to follow up on I could forward them the actual message instead of having to repeat it. I could go on and on, but these are the kinds of things that I consider to be "smart".

Missing Features

While it's true that the iPhone is a 1.0 product, there are some missing features that may be deal breakers for some. Some of these features can actually be added via firmware updates. Apple has said publicly that they plan to continue to update the iPhone with new features that you'll just download into the phone. As a matter of fact that was one of Steve's selling points and why they chose to go with a touch screen that could be reconfigured. It's also hard not to miss the fact that there is an empty row where 4 more icons could go. Nevertheless, these features are missing today and some of them are key and make me scratch my head as to why they are not there now?

3g support - This was almost a deal breaker for me. Thankfully it has Wi-Fi.

Flash support - C'mon Apple, talk with Adobe and get this done. Steve, I hear you have a cool new phone in your pocket! The number is 408.536.3993 in case you forgot it.

Video recorder - Actually it was someone else that pointed this out. I didn't really think about the fact that there is no video recorder on the iPhone. Even my Treo has one. Seeing how Apple is all hip and cool when it comes to movies, music, podcasts and more, you'd think they'd let you record and send your own little video clips. Perhaps this was going to be too painful over EDGE.

Voice recorder - I don't use one, but many of you do! There is no voice recorder either. Since the iPhone has a built-in microphone it seems like it would be very easy to add this in via software.

MMS support - Doh! You can see that great shot when you get home honey.

DUN - Dial-up Networking. This would allow you to use your iPhone as a Bluetooth wireless modem to your Mac Or PC laptop. Umm, Apple, you've been supporting this on other phones for years. Why not your own? Is it the EDGE thing again? I see.

iPod games - Apple you sold me some cool $5 games for my iPod with video, but you won't let me play them on my $600 iPhone. Not sure why?

iTunes ringtones - This is another one for the "Doh!" category. I'm sure this one will come because there is money to be made. Besides, the ringtones on the iPhone are so lame that you'll want to buy or make your own as soon as they make this feature available. So maybe this was done intentionally to build up demand. I feel like I have all this music already on the device and it's being held hostage.

Removable Battery - This one doesn't bother me as much as it does others. I guess because I've gotten GREAT battery life out of all my iPods and have never had to have a battery replaced. However, from a convenience standpoint it would be nice to have two batteries for those long flights when I want to watch content on the iPhone and play games, oh wait, scratch that last part. Once I land, I could then pop in a second battery and be ready to get back to work.

Missing accessories?

I didn't think about it till I got home that there's no Car charger! Nor did I see one at the Apple store. Granted, I wasn't looking for one in the midst of all the excitement either. However, one quick look at Apple's online store and the only one listed is actually not by Apple. It's by Griffin Technologies It's the PowerJolt for iPhone. So I will need a couple of those. The next item that is missing is a headphone jack adapter. While the iPhone uses a standard port, the port is somewhat recessed and your current headphones, earbuds, etc. may not fit all the way down. Luckily Griffin is on this too. They are working on an adapter.

The Bottom Line

The iPhone is a huge step forward in the right direction. The more I use it the more it makes me smile and I catch myself thinking "this is so cool!" The iPhone is not perfect by any means. Show me a smartphone that is. Some of the missing features just make me smack my forehead and say "how in the heck could they have left that off?" However, the iPhone is the most interesting phone I've seen to date. Like it or not, the iPhone HAS changed the world of cell phones forever. Apple has raised the bar and everyone else has to now step up. This is good for us all. I'm pleased with my purchase and my gauge is, "would I buy it again?" The answer is a resounding YES!

Sure I want iPhone 2.0 with all the missing features that I've stated above and then some, however, for a 1.0 product this phone lives up to the vast majority of the promises and even most of the hype. Oh how far Apple has come since the Newton 1.0
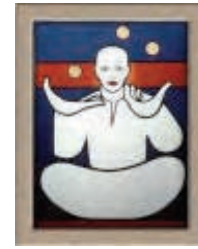
Apple has lots of great iPhone information including videos and the complete user manual in PDF on their site.

[Editor: And be sure to read the comments on Terry White's Blog.]

Doc_Babad's Macintosh Tips - A Macintosh Tip or Three...

August 2007 Edition

By Harry {doc} Babad © 2007

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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 10.4.10. 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.

Introduction

This month I continue sharing my occasional tip related finds with you. Most, but not all of the Tips I share come from — Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips column http://www.mac-hints-tips.com and are used with his permission. Paul, my apologies for having neglected your excellent column, I've focused elsewhere, including a few of my own discoveries, as you by now have realized.

Where I use any one else's tips for this column, I acknowledge both their source and their contributors. Many of the tips I enjoy, and find in Paul's column, are created by the staff of Small Dog Electronics, www.smalldog.com*, there are more goodies on the site than either Paul or I can pass on — check them out.* Another place for tips and how-tos is the MacFixit Site http://www.macfixit.com/. It is a richer site, but harder to find things on if your only searching for a tip or hint. On the other hand feedback from the Macintosh community about the postings is excellent.

A Thought in Passing — I use the tips I find, with only slight editing such as adding an illustration but I do feel free to adlib or add to the tips. My doc sez additions are clearly labeled so don't blame the originator of the tip if you don't like something Doc sez.

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

- **Special Folders** – Don't Mess with them
- **Discover More About Office Features** – Every tit and tat helps.
- **Getting More From Spotlight** — We need all the help it can get
- **Google Desktop for the Mac** — The wait is finally over.
- **God Checker** – Learn more about the Pantheon of Mankind's Gods
- **Drag & Drop** — A Primer
- **Quick Notes on Backup Strategy**

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Special Folders – Don't Mess with them
There are folders on your hard disk that shouldn't be moved or
renamed, for fear of creating minor or major havoc. In early versions
of Mac OS X, Apple made it impossible to do so but more recently,
you can sometimes do this by supplying your Administrator's name
and password.

Since most of us operate in Administrator mode, the likelihood of
doing something wrong is not inconsiderable. Fortunately, it's easy
enough to figure out which folders are the "special" ones — they
have little pictures on their folder icons.
In case you've added pictures {custom icons) of your own to other folders, or in case you have
small folder icons and can't tell which have pictures, here are the folders you should not move or
rename:

In main hard disk window: Applications, Applications (Mac OS 9), Library, System, System
Folder, Users.
In the Users folder: your Home folder (the one with your name on it and the little 'house' icon),
and Shared.
In your Home folder: Desktop, Documents, Library, Movies, Music, Pictures, Public, Sites.

A few more useful rules that can save you from greater or lesser disasters are:
Don't put anything into, or take anything out of, folders with Library or System in their names,
unless you are absolutely sure you know what you're doing. You could completely disable your
system or at least cause it to malfunction by fiddling round in there.

Don't move the iPhoto Library folder out of your Pictures folder, or the iTunes folder out of
your Music folder.

Don't move out of your Documents folder any folders bearing the names of programs you use,
such as AppleWorks or Eudora, or the Microsoft User Data folder. These folders are placed
where they are by the programs concerned, which will be upset no end if you move them
(which is to say that you may lose track of valuable data like your email.)

Don't add items directly to, or remove them directly from, your iTunes or iPhoto Library folders.
These actions should be performed using the application's own menu commands, or by dragging
files to and from the application's window.

All the above rules are subject to the "unless you're absolutely sure you know what you're
doing" provision, but then if you're in that position, you probably don't need to read this article.

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AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
April 2007 Taylor's Hints & Tips Column

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Discover More About Office Features – Every tit and tat helps.

When any of the Office 2004 programs are open, clicking File> Project Gallery and the Learn tab will give you access (on the left side of the window) to a document called "Discovering Office." This is a manual of over 150 pages, with a chapter devoted to each of the Office 2004 components.

It is a great place to learn more about the features and functionalities of the software. You may also gain some useful information on your Microsoft Product by accessing the following web sites for information:

http://www.microsoft.com/Mac/ (MS Office) and http://entourage.mvps.org/

Also, you can access the help files by choosing Help on your menu bar, selecting Entourage help, and typing any questions or key words in to the search engine bar.

I find, sez doc, that often I can get a better indication of what's possible, from the MS "discover" narratives, or in one of the office or office application s specific books we've reviewed in macC. But for solving particular, and I'm in a hurry, problems, the help files are invaluable. Having used the word *invaluable*, I must note that it may take one or two click to find the particulars you need; but better than trial and error.
JoAnne Chapman, Microsoft Technical Support

April 2007 Taylor's Hints & Tips Column

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Getting More From Spotlight — We need all the help it can get
Here are three tips for getting more out of Spotlight, OS 10.4's built-in search program. You access Spotlight by clicking on the blue magnifying glass icon in the upper right corner of your screen. You can access Spotlight's preferences in System Preferences.

1. Find all the files you created yesterday: To do this, simply type "date:yesterday" in the Spotlight search bar. You can drill down further, if you know the folder in which you saved yesterday's work.
For example, if it were your Pictures folder, you would search date:yesterday pictures.
(Note the space between "yesterday" and the word "pictures" for the pictures folder.)

2. You can exclude a word in a search. Let's say I wanted to search for correspondence with Hapy Mayer, but not Don Mayer. I could type Mayer(!Don) . I could also type Hapy(!Don), but the first method might be more precise. Simply wrap the name you want to exclude from the search in parentheses with an exclamation point — like this: (! word)

3. To quickly get info on a search result in Spotlight, highlight the result by clicking on it once, and then click the right arrow key. The query line will expand, showing more information about the file. You can even view photos and play movie clips directly in Spotlight this way. If Spotlight seems slow, or is not actually searching everything, you can easily reset it. There are two easy ways to do this.

First, you can remove your hard drive from Spotlight's index, then add it back. This web page describes how to do this, with pictures:

You can also download Onyx for 10.4 from Versiontracker.com. This great Unix utility includes an option to "Reset Spotlight". There are also UNIX commands you can type into the Terminal — simply search for that info on Google.

However, since I've already gone on record to note I avoid spotlight to a maximal; extent possible, you may want to use my search strategy which combines the use of DEVON Technologies EasyFind 3.9 http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/freeware/ combined with HoudahSpot 1.4.11 http://www.houdah.com/houdahSpot/ see my review in macC Volume 5 Issue 7 July 2007. The combination makes searching for documents and their contents easier than by using spotlight. [doc]

Apple Barrel, Ridgecrest, CA
May 2007 Taylor's Hints & Tips Column

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Google Desktop for the Mac — The wait is finally over.
Google (one of my favorite companies) is now offering Google Desktop for the Mac as a 45mb free download. It offers "fast and easy search for your computer " like Google offers for the web. Like Spotlight and Quicksilver, you can also use Google Desktop as an application launcher. Read more and download the application here: http://desktop.google.com/en/mac.

Read Daring Fireball's great technical analysis of the Google Desktop's installation and de-installation procedure here: <http://daringfireball.net/2007/04/google_desktop_installer>

Google Desktop has been available for Windows PCs for about two and half years. Mac OS 10.4 features "Spotlight," a similar tool for instantly finding programs, folders, and files and for launching applications on your Mac. In fact, Spotlight preceded Google Desktop by several months.

However, Google Desktop is occasionally a bit faster than Spotlight, and has some neat tricks of its own — for example, Google Desktop can "remember" deleted files, it ties in with Google's online search engine, and can even optionally tie into your Gmail account. Pretty cool.

In the blogoshere, most Mac users seem quite content with Spotlight, and only anticipate downloading Google Desktop to play with. However, Google is fairly clever about updating its free software offerings; it will be interesting to see how they develop Google Desktop for the Mac. ~ Ed

Doc Sez! Google desktop is on my macC review list, sooon, but try it out after you check the links provided by Small Dog Electronics and blog a bit to read the feedback from other Tiger-Google Desktop Users.
Small Dog Electronics

<div align="right">May 2007 Taylor's Hints & Tips Column</div>

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God Checker — Learn more about the Pantheon of Mankind's Gods
Doc Sez — You've read about them in history books, the classical literature, philosophy texts and books on religions, now for the rest of the details. www.godchecker.com.

"Welcome to Godchecker - your Guide to the Gods . We have more Gods than you can shake a stick at. Godchecker's Mythology Encyclopedia currently features over 2,850 deities. Browse the pantheons of the world, explore ancient myths, and discover Gods of everything from Fertility to Fluff with the fully searchable Holy Database Of All Known Gods. Godchecker's Mythology Encyclopedia currently features almost 2,500 deities. Browse the pantheons of the world, explore ancient myths, and discover a fully searchable Holy Database Of All Known Gods."

Lots of information *is available* on popular Immortals from Greek, Roman, and Norse religions, as well as on lesser-known Omniscient Observers from ancient African, Chinese, and Incan cultures..

Doc's only gripe with this cornucopia of information, an information source that out-wiki's Wikipedia, is that the site does not deal with the myriads of gods identified in science fiction, many of who are wondrously interesting.

Patrish Blackstock, Mouse Droppings, Corvallis, OR

<div align="right">May 2007 Taylor's Hints & Tips Column</div>

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Drag & Drop — A Primer

Introduction — *Over the last six months I've been surprised at how many otherwise knowledgeable Macintosh users don't know about using drop and drag to ease their reorganization of the purple prose they write. I was thinking of writing s short article about the subject when I came across the AUSOM News article. Indeed I feel so strongly about the usefulness of drop and drag that it that capability is absent from a program I review such as a ToDo list, Outliner or Notepad software, I ding it at least a half point. (Yes I know the images is of a windows screen, so what! Are you prejudiced? Doc.*
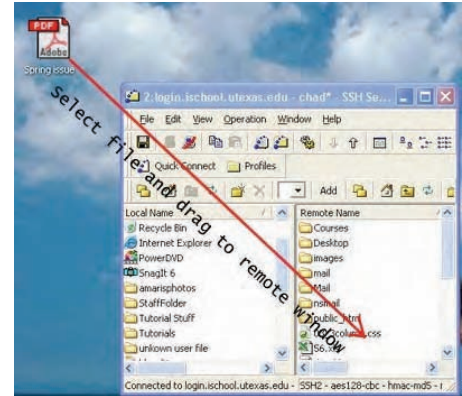
When you're working with a computer mouse, the term "drag" means to hover the mouse pointer (arrow) over an object, press-and-hold the mouse button down, then move the pointer (with the object of interest "in tow") to a different location on the screen before finally releasing the mouse button. So what's "drag & drop"?

It's really not much different, except that the phrase implies that the item being dragged is finally "dropped" in a specific spot, such as a folder icon or an icon in the Dock.

Just to confuse the issue, the terms "drag" and "drop" are sometimes used on their own to indicate a "drag & drop" action; for instance, "Drag the file into the window," or "Drop the file onto the Apple Works icon in the Dock." With the semantics behind us, we can look at the real reason for this article — the fact that many folks don't realize how many things can be accomplished by the "drag & drop" method, rather than using a series of menu commands.

Try the following to get your hand in, noting that the success of some of them may depend on the particular programs you're working with:
- Select (highlight) a block of text in a word processing document. Then, drag it to a different location in the document (noting that you need to pause a moment after first pressing the mouse button and before starting to drag across the screen). This can be quicker than cutting and pasting. It works with cells in a spreadsheet, too.

- Drag a picture from a Web page onto your desktop — no need to go through any Save or Download menus. Then drag it onto the icon of iPhoto in your Dock. iPhoto will open and import the picture.

- Drag an attachment from an email message onto your desktop — again bypassing the Save dialog. If there's more than one application capable of opening it, drag it onto the Dock icon of the one you want to use.

- Open two document windows belonging to different applications, say Apple Works and Pages. Select a block of text in one document and drag it across into the other. This also works between two documents belonging to the same application.
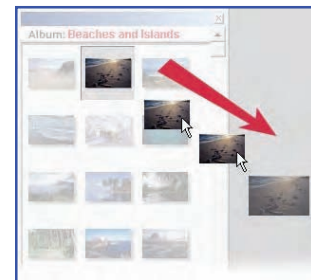
- If the above doesn't work with your application(s), try an intermediate step — drag the text block onto your desktop, creating a special file called a "clipping." Then drag the clipping into the second document. You can have picture clippings, too. Note that you can't actually do much with a clipping except drag it into a receptive document — you can't edit it directly, for instance. It's made by and for dragging.

- In Safari, while viewing any web page of interest, locate the little icon just to the left of the website address. Sometimes it's a globe; other times it's a special icon connected with the page's content. Drag this icon to the desktop where it appears as a larger icon with an @ symbol on it. Some time later, simply drag that icon into an open Safari window and you'll be taken straight back to the web page from which you originally dragged it.

- Alternatively, drag that icon with the @ symbol into a word processing or similar document, and it will appear as the web address of the page in question.

- Open a word processing document in such a way that you can also see a picture document somewhere on your desktop or in a Finder window. Drag the picture into the word processing document.

The possibilities of "drag & drop" are bounded only by the cleverness of application developers. Once you have the flavor of it, you'll soon find plenty more places where you can use this technique.

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AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
May 2007 Taylor's Hints & Tips Column

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Quick Notes on Backup Strategy (I know we're harping again; do you know when the last time you backed up your Macintosh? I you don't you could be the looser, big time!)

Having a backup strategy is essential for every Mac OS X user. When issues arise due to disk corruption, a problematic incremental Mac OS X or Security update, or other unforeseen factors, having access to vital documents and applications is essential. There are essentially two practical strategies for backup: Cloning your Mac OS X startup disk to an external volume, providing a bootable drive that is virtually identical to your current set-up; or simply duplicating your Home user folder to another volume or an online repository then relying on other methods for restoring your applications and various settings.

Option #1: Cloning your Mac OS X startup disk

Cloning your current Mac OS X startup volume to an external FireWire drive or another bootable disk is a superb option for backup, because it provides an instantaneous solution for getting things up and running in the case of drive failure or system inoperability. There are a number of freeware and shareware utilities that offer this functionality. Among the best are Carbon Copy Cloner [http://www.bombich.com/software/ccc.html/] and SuperDuper http://www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper/SuperDuperDescription.html.

Doc sez, I've been using the later without any problems for years even checking the backups occasionally as boot up volumes..

Super Duper offers the useful capability of "checkpointing" your system. Essentially, this means that you can run off your bootable, (almost) cloned backup, while preserving the user documents and other information on your current startup volume. Providing your original startup drive is not completely inaccessible, this will allow you to have access to information that has changed since your last backup.

Before using one of these cloning utilities, make sure that the destination disk is formatted (erased) with Apple's Disk Utility. This helps to ensure that no pre-existing disk conditions affect the new installation.

In fact, you can use Disk Utility itself to perform a disk clone if you are using Mac OS X 10.4.x. (or 3x). Simply select the Restore option, then drag your current Mac OS X startup volume into the appropriate field. This option does not provide some of the advanced features available through Carbon Copy Cloner and SuperDuper, but is free, relatively quick and straightforward.

Apart from Carbon Copy Cloner and SuperDuper, another back-up program ought to be mentioned. That program is SilverKeeper from LaCie http://www.lacie.com/silverkeeper/. It is *also* completely free-of-charge and works perfectly with Tiger.

Option #2: Backing up your home user folder
Simply backing up your home folder is a much faster process than cloning your entire drive, and may be more desirable in some ways than the former option.

One advantage of using this method is that if your previous Mac OS X installation had significant issues caused by corruption of certain files, they will likely be resolved when you are forced to install a clean copy of Mac OS X on the original drive, or a new one.

Duplicating your user folder (/Users/username) will backup most of your important personalized information, including bookmarks for most browsers, Mail.app e-mails, iTunes music, your Desktop folder, and other system settings.

Using this method will, however, result in the loss of various system add-ons, such as Contextual Menus and additional Preference panes, some user-added fonts and more.

A drawback (and a significant time drain associated with this method) is the re-installation of applications, which will all be lost in the fresh Mac OS X install process. You will have to re-install applications from their original media or online source. It is also essential that you retain any serial numbers or other registration information required for re-authorization after the restoration takes place.

Another point of consideration involves updating of the installed applications. Downloading updates for each installed application can be a time consuming process. In order to avoid this process, you can keep archives of updater packages stored on the same repository where your backed-up home user folder resides. This includes the most recent Mac OS X Combination Updater, available from Apple's Software Download page.

Doc sez there's an almost painless Option 3 as a belt and suspenders means of staying safe while working on an important document. This works best if you have a spare or can get a small capacity leftover hard disk to install in a spare slot in your tower computer. Alternatively, you can use a 500 MB to 2 GB USB flash drive for this. The later works on any computer you own.

As you work, particularly on long documents, save each revision with a slightly different name. For example for this review I'm using August Tips macC_1.doc to now August Tips macC_3.doc; eventually the file will be August Tips macC_Fnl.doc. I drag each revision to the spare/external hard drive. Instant gratification and I've lost little if my system blinks.

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MacFixIt via LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY
June 2007 Taylor's Hints & Tips Column

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That's all folks…

Harry {doc} Babad

Views from the Ivory Tower -August 2007
By Ted Bade

I truly never thought I would see the day when Apple's market share approached double digits. I wasn't being unfaithful to my favorite computer company, but being what I thought was logical. Most people don't buy computers (or just about anything else for that matter), because it is the best of its type or the most sensible one to use. They do what their friends or those people they follow do. So many people bought Windows. That was my logic. I figured Apple's market share would stay low.

Then came the iMac, which revolutionized the form of a computer. No longer was the machine a boring beige box; it became an elegant piece of artwork. Next, Apple created the iPod which is very popular. What began to happen and is still going on is that people are buying Apple products and finding they are not only elegant must have products, but they are very easy to use. One thing leads to another and an iPod buyer buys a Mac!

Recently USA Today reported in an article concerning the iPhone, that Apple's computer market share in 2004 was about 3.2%, but in May of 2007 it was 7.6%. It seems like the iMac and the iPod have brought a lot of users to the Mac. So now I wonder, will the iPhone be a big enough hit to bring another couple of percentages to the Mac?

Perhaps the dream of Apple returning to above 10% of the market share will be seen in the next couple of years. I hope so. Back in the days when Apple was a bigger player there was a lot more activity in the Apple computer related markets. It would be nice to see that again. Lets hope!

iPhones selling like.… - Has Apple done it again or are people just purchase happy? It appears that Apple's iPhone, released June 30th shattered AT&T's sales predictions. Apparently, over "700,000 iPhones sold in the first weekend after it's release. To compare "Apples" to other phones, the Motorola Razr which also had a lot of marketing expectations and excitement didn't sell that many units in its first month.

According to a report found on the Bloomberg site, many stores sold their entire stock over the weekend. Apparently 95 out of 165 stores selling the iPhone sold out their entire stock.

All I can say is, "Wow"! Let's hope these phones perform and goggle people as much as the iPod did.

More good news for Mac Gamers - I discovered another major announcement concerning games for the Macintosh platform. There is a company, GameTap, that provides an interface allowing people to play games via their web site. From what I can tell, this site gives members access to arcade and other types of PC games, which you play through the site (you don't have the game on your computer.) In early July they released the "lite" version of their interface program for Mac OS X (Intel Macs only), and promise to release the "premium" version later this year.

GameTap offers over 500 titles to play. You can either play "free" games that require only downloading the lite player and creating an account or pay for a premium membership which gives access to more games (and probably the better ones!). Take a look at their site if you have some time, it looks like there are a lot of interesting titles there to enjoy!

Great old software returns - Some of our older readers might remember Roger Wagner's HyperStudio. For those who don't remember, this application along with Apple's own HyperCard, was based on the concept of sharing information before the Internet was so easily accessible. With it a user could meld the information they wanted to share with graphics, sounds, animation, and anything else that fits in the digital domain. The program was originally released for Apple's IIGS computer and became a real hit with Schools because it allowed both educators and students to easily share complicated forms of information. When Macs started offering colors (yes, Macs were originally monotone!), they released HyperStudio for MacOS. Over the years, I would guess thousands of HyperStudio based stacks of information were created. Most of them were free for downloading and enjoying. It was a truly great product.

Recently, MacKiev bought the license to sell and upgrade Roger Wagner's HyperStudio and will be making it available sometime this summer. Check out their web site for the latest details. http://www.mackiev.com/hyperstudio/index.html.

Another Apple Quarter ends and more good news - Apple posted the results of their third quarter for this year, and the results are good news for Apple fans and investors according to the information posted on the Apple web site concerning financial news.

To summarize the results: Apple posted a revenue of $5.41 billion and net quarterly profit of $818 million, which is $.92 per diluted share. Since the "market" had predicted a $5.28 billion profit and $0.72 per diluted share, this means Apple did better then the market prediction, which is always a very good thing! Apple's gross margin was 36.9%, up from 30.3% in the same quarter last year.

They shipped 1,764,000 Macintosh computers representing a 33% growth over the same quarter last year and 9,815,000 iPods, representing a 21% growth. They also expect to have sold over 1 million iPhones by the end of the next quarter.

It appears that more and more Macs are being sold along with the iPod and the iPhone. These results are good news because it means that Apple is a strong company and that people continue to purchase their products. All Mac fans should be happy with this, because it means the Mac will be around for a long time to come!

Around the same time, Apple's stock prices were teetering because things haven't been going as well as expected for the iPhone. Apparently although Apple sold close to 1/2 million iPhones, AT&T only activated about 146,000 in the first couple of days since the iPhone release.

You know what I think? I think that people are more interested in the iPhone as a PDA and iPod with a nice screen then as a phone. I have felt, since the early days of the iPod that Apple needed to make one that included a larger screen for viewing images and movies. Many other people have thought Apple would do well to once again enter the PDA market. This lack of activation indicates a couple things.

First of all people might not be interested in the iPhone as a phone. Considering there is a hack that unlocks the iPhone features without activating it as a phone, I get the impression people are happy with that. There are probably a number of people who might be interested in the iPhone who would rather not leave their cell carrier. Another thing it indicates is that there were some issues with AT&T handling the activations. Apparently their equipment couldn't handle the surge.

But it appears the iPhone is somewhat of a hit and it does appear to be a really quality piece of electronics. The biggest problem with a device like this is that it is tied to a particular carrier.

Perhaps Apple or someone else will resolve this issue and there will be more sales in the future.

Until Next Month, keep on enjoying your Mac!

Dreamweaver CS3 – The Missing Manual

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

POGUE PRESS™
O'REILLY®

Author: David Sawyer McFarland
O'Reilly Media
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596510435/index.html
Released: June 22, 2007
Pages: 1020
$45 USD, $59 CND, £32 GBP €34.38 Euro

Requirements: Adobe Dreamweaver CS3 and a system
running it.
ISBN 10: 0-596-51043-8
ISBN 13: 978-0-596-51043-5
Missing CD Tutorial:
http://www.sawmac.com/missing/dwcs3/tutorials/index.php

Strengths: It really is the "Missing Manual" for
Dreamweaver CS3!

Weaknesses: The publisher wrote that they are
recalling/recalled the misprinted copies: Chapters 6 & 8 of
this missing manual were ironically missing two pages. In
their place were pages 210 and 320 from Varieties of
Religious Experience by William James. My book didn't
get replaced.

Introduction

From Amazon.com we read –

> "Welcome to Dreamweaver CS3. This new version of the popular web design software
> offers a rich environment for building professional sites, with drag-and-drop simplicity,
> clean HTML code, and dynamic database-driven web site creation tools.

Moreover, it's now integrated more tightly with Adobe's other products: Photoshop, InDesign, Flash, and their siblings. But with such sophisticated features, the software isn't simple.

So say hello to *Dreamweaver CS3: The Missing Manual*, the fifth edition of this bestselling book by experienced web site trainer and author David McFarland. This book helps both first-time and experienced web designers bring stunning, interactive web sites to life. With jargon-free language and clear descriptions, this new edition addresses both beginners who need step-by-step guidance as well as long-time Dreamweaver users who need a handy reference to address the inner-workings of the program.

Dreamweaver CS3: The Missing Manual teaches designers how to construct and manage web sites by examining web-page components and Dreamweaver's capabilities through "live examples". With a complete A-Z guide to designing, organizing, building and deploying a web site for those with no web design experience, this book:

- Takes you through the basics to advanced techniques to control the appearance of your web pages with CSS
- Shows you how to design dynamic database-driven web sites, from blogs to product catalogs, and from shopping carts to newsletter signup forms
- Teaches you how to master your web site, and manage thousands of pages effortlessly
-

Witty and objective, *Dreamweaver CS3: The Missing Manual* is a must for anyone who uses this highly popular program, from beginners to professionals. Altogether, it's the ultimate atlas for Dreamweaver CS3."

In this book…

Since we use Dreamweaver CS3 to do the *macCompanion* website, I was eager to see what I've been missing – Forms, Spry Effects, Snippets, generating dynamic page and manipulating databases. But 1,020 pages? Wow!

In spite the 2 "Missing Pages" ™, I liberally bookmarked pages. And the "Missing CD" tutorials are such a nice touch!

Conclusion

David wrote the book to be brief (really!) Perhaps he could have beefed up the section on extensions – but those could be a topic for another book.

Recommendation

Of course it may be too much of "War & Peace", but it should be a good read for those who use Dreamweaver for a living. It was for me.

Head First PMP – A Brain-friendly Guide

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Jennifer Greene and Andrew Stellman
O'Reilly Media
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596102340/index.html
Released: March, 2007
Pages: 692
$50 USD, $65 CND, £35.50 GBP €38.20Euro
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596102340/index.html
Requirements: Adobe Dreamweaver CS3 and a system running it.
ISBN 10: 0-596-10234-8
ISBN 13: 9780596102340
Forums: http://www.headfirstlabs.com/phpBB2/

Strengths: Excellent approach to Project Management education.

Weaknesses: The link to the Headlabs page in the book is wrong. The correct link is - http://www.headfirstlabs.com/PMP/ The PMP Exam had errors and has been updated - http://www.headfirstlabs.com/PMP/free_exam/index.php

Introduction

"A PMP certification is more than just passing a test. It means that you have the knowledge to solve most common project problems, and proves that you know your stuff. Once you're certified, your projects are more likely to succeed because you have the skills and knowledge to make them successful. Not only that, it can mean a better job, more money, and greater respect from your peers…

Head First PMP offers 100% coverage of The PMBOK® Guide principles and certification objectives in a way that's engaging, not tedious. This book helps you prepare for the PMP certification exam with a unique method that goes beyond answers to specific questions and makes you think about the big picture of project management. By putting project management concepts into context, you will be able to understand, remember, and apply them--not just on the exam, but also on the job."

In this book…

Like, wow! A book that makes Project Management easy to understand and easier to prepare for the project management certification.

Those of us that have practiced PMPing, know that usually we carry a large roll of toilet paper to clean up messes while babysitting projects. This book follows the PMBOK Guide outline and asks that we use the PMBOK Guide with this book in preparation or the exam. The book doesn't link to http://www.pmi.org/info/default.asp and to get access to the PMBOK you need to go here instead -
http://www.pmibookstore.org/PMIBookStore/productDetails.aspx?itemID=358&varID=1

Carol Steuer *PMP and PMBOK(r) Guide, 3rd Edition* Leadership Team, wrote;

> "This looks like too much fun to be a PMP study guide! Behind the quirky humor and nutty graphics lies an excellent explanation of the project management processes. Not only will this book make it easier to pass the exam, you'll learn a lot of good stuff to use on the job too."

You can't get a better recommendation for a book than from a "competitor" who helped write the "original" for what has become an industry for Project Management – a.k.a. – certification.

And I should have taken the exam early-on when I had the chance 15 years ago.

One good thing is that the Headfirst team has managed to provide an online Forum for PMPers and PMP wannabees.

The book has 14 chapters covering different aspects of management from process, integration, scope, time, cost, quality, human resources, communications, risk, procurement and even professional responsibilities and a last-minute review that summarizes everything learned in the book

Conclusion

Even though there are a few printing glitches in the book, the content engages the whole brain and far outweighs the occasional errors. Thankfully, the website listed above obviates reprinting and obsolescing the print version.

Recommendation

If you have any inkling about going into Project Management as a profession (PMPing and not Pimping), I highly recommend taking this path using this book to help master the process.

The Online Advertising Playbook: Proven Strategies and Tested Tactics from the Advertising Research Foundation

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Joe Plummer, Steve Rappaport, Taddy Hall, Robert Barocci
Publisher: Wiley
http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470051051.html
Released: April 27, 2007.
Pages: 320
$30 USD, $36 CND, £20 GBP, €23,24 Euro
ISBN-10: 9780470051054
ISBN-13: 978-0470051054
Audience: Online Advertisers

Strengths: Provides proven strategies and tested tactics for online advertising.

Weaknesses: Reads like a college textbook. No online links listed. Doesn't like to capitalize the word "Internet".

Introduction

This book is the benchmark for best online advertising practices, according to the Advertising Research Foundation.

In this book…

The authors have organized 9 chapters, an Appendix and a Glossary on targeting, reach and frequency, leads and acquiring customers, brand growth, rewards and loyalties, online formats, rich media, searching marketing techniques, retail sales and E-Commerce and routes to the cash register, word-of-mouth and Email and a look ahead at the future, The Appendix lists measurement tools and the Glossary identifies advertising lingo.

Each chapter ends with a summary called "Winning Plays" and ties the book together with the cover that looks like a football play.

The book looks like it was created as a master's thesis research project and put into book form.

And for whatever reason, the word "Internet" is not capitalized.

Conclusion

The book confirms what most of us who have worked online for years already know, yet it also opens up areas we may or may not have known about an doffers ideas and tactics that are working in the online multi-trillion dollar advertising industry worldwide.

Recommendation

If you have an advertising and marketing department dedicated to this filed, this book may be of some use. The online tools listed for analytics is a nice touch, but there is no online links printed in this edition. I guess we will have to search keywords to get those using Google or the other search engines online.

Elgato turbo.264 Video Encoder

By Wayne LeFevre

Elgato Systems, LLC
900 Kearny Street
Suite 750
San Francisco, CA 94133
Elgato Systems GmbH
Nymphenburger Str. 14
80335 München
Germany
http://www.elgato.com/
Released: May 2007
$100 USD, € 100 incl. VAT
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Universal binary; 512 MB RAM; QuickTime 7.1.5 or later; iTunes 7.1.1 or later; USB 2.0.

Strengths: Very quick h.264 encoding with QuickTime or Any application using QuickTime export, Older the computer–more advantageous to use.

Weaknesses: ffmpeg software encoding just as quick on newer computers, slow driver updates, not able to tweak files. No HD.

Introduction

Turbo.264 is a powerful video encoder in the form of a compact USB 2.0 stick. Use the included software to convert your Mac videos one at a time or in a batch; The application drops the converted file(s) into iTunes for you, ready to synch automatically with your iPod, Apple TV or Sony PSP.

Alternatively, plug in Turbo.264 while you use the iPod or Apple TV export command of popular Macintosh video applications. Turbo.264's hardware encoder jumps in to take over for your Mac's processor, and does the hard work of encoding the videos to an H.264 format. Not only does Turbo.264 help get the job done faster, it frees up your processor for other tasks. Think of it as a "co-processor" for your Mac.

Getting Started

Installation was quick and easy. Truly, the older PowerPCs take huge advantage of the turbo.264. It will take approximately the same amount of time to encode a video with an older PPC as a new Intel Core 2 Duo. Unfortunately, my PowerBook Titanium has a USB 1.1 on it, so the turbo.264 is basically useless. Had it a USB 2.0, I would have been a great platform for encoding.

Using the Hardware

After plugging in the turbo.264 and installing the software, the actual encoding is as simple and quick as you can get. Simply drag and drop a video or videos into the interface window, pick Apple TV, iPod Standard, iPod High or Sony PSP, then press start. There are no other options to choose, and you cannot change the name, nor change or add to the queue once it has started.

Apple TV will encode to H.264 Main Profile, 3 Mbps max., 800×600 max.,(No HD.) 30 fps max. Audio: AAC-LC, stereo, 128 Kbps, 48 kHz. If the source movie is larger than 800×600 it will be scaled to fit within 800×600 preserving aspect ratio. Resolution is maintained if 800×600 or smaller. Frame rate is maintained when 30 fps and smaller.
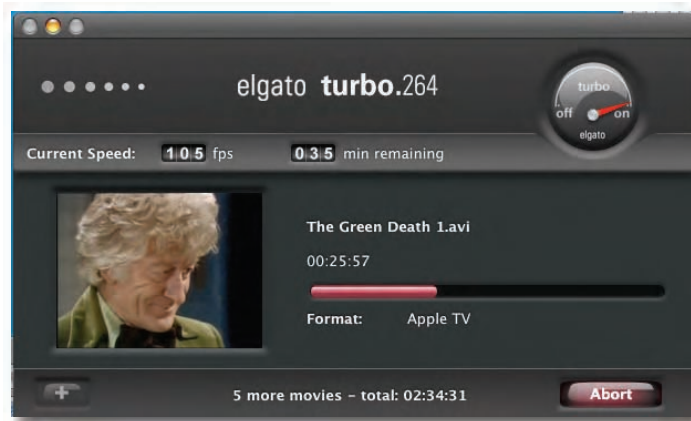
iPod Best will encode to H.264 Baseline Profile Low-Complexity, 1.5 Mbps max., 640×480 max.,(No HD.) 30 fps max. Audio: AAC-LC, stereo, 128 Kbps, 48 kHz. Same scale down as Apple TV if larger than 640×480.

iPod Smallest will encode to H.264 Baseline Profile up to level 1.3, 768 kbps max., 320×240 max.,(No HD.) 30 fps max. Audio: AAC-LC, stereo, 128 Kbps, 48 kHz. Same scale down as Apple TV if larger than 320×240.

Sony PSP will encode to H.264 Main Profile, 512 Kbps, 368×208/320×240, 30 fps. Audio: AAC-LC. Stereo. 128Kbps, 48 kHz.

Conclusion

The turbo.264 works as advertised, quickly converting all your video that would convert with QuickTime and QuickTime applications, (iMovie, FCP, QuickTime Pro, etc.) with little strain on your processor. Average fps encoding was anywhere from 40 to 50, with speeds reaching well over 100. In this episode I reached 136 fps and the next reaching 105 fps, not too shabby. Processor never went over 40%. For ease of use, it's definitely a 5 star product. However, because you cannot change any options, you cannot convert .mkv files, and it's not quite up to snuff with cheaper alternatives, I'm dropping the rating down a bit.

Recommendation

The show on the left was encoded with VisualHub 1.24 with the one on the right encoded with Elgato turbo.264. Both took approximately the same time on an Intel Core 2 Duo iMac. I would have to give a slight edge to VisualHub, one for its quality, two for being approximately $100 cheaper. VisualHub using ffmpeg for encoding seems to have slightly smoother gradations, with the Elgato making the movie slightly darker than the original.

Elgato has beta software in the works for this encoder, as they have for months now. No difference I can tell using beta 1.0.2b9 from the latest release of 1.0.1 on the website. I truly hope they can improve a bit on their software, making it more interactive and encode better. Otherwise, unless you are still using a PowerPC, I see no reason to stop using VisualHub and jump to the more expensive Elgato.

Future Sonics Atrio™ Series model m5 (Black)

Reviewed by Michele Patterson

Future Sonics Incorporated
416 Green Lane • Suite 2
Bristol, PA 19007 USA
877.FSI.EARS (877-374-3277)
Outside the USA: +01(215)826-8826
Fax: (215)826--8814
http://www.futuresonics.com/atrio/index.html
Released: January 2007
$200 USD

Included: 1 pr. Future Sonics Atrio Series™ model m5 (Black Onyx); 1 Contoured Carrying case; 1 pr. L, 1 pr. M, 1 pr. S - EarFIlls™ silicone sleeves; 2 pr. L, 2 pr. M - ComfortFit™ foam sleeves; 1 Loop cleaning tool.

Strengths: TrueTimbre Technology allows you to really hear the music, there is no bass boost, and you don't have to turn the music up to hear it. The single dynamic min speaker & studio monitor allow the real feel of the music to hit you. Soft silicone ear pieces designed for comfort and fit come in 3 sizes and are all included so you don't have to get a custom fit for them to work like they do for the pros. Incredible sound quality.

Weaknesses: I hate to say the price but, $200 is high for your 16 year old to get these for his ipod. But for you it's worth it! It was difficult to figure out how to get the fit right, but not so much that I gave up on it. I just wore them wrong for a minute and realized that wasn't right!

Introduction

The Atrio Series earphones are brought to us by the same people who brought the professionals the innovative Ear Monitors®. Ear Monitors brand custom miniature loudspeakers; use an industry leading technology that allows the user to hear themselves' sing. According the article I read[2], Marty Garcia, who is the inventor of the Ear Monitor®, stated, "Ear Monitors® have continued to lead the industry because they incorporate a single, full-range, custom-made dynamic driver," said Garcia. "Other companies have tried to improve on the concept by using armature drivers--the same technology used in hearing aids. The problem is that these kinds of drivers can't effectively or accurately reproduce frequencies below 150Hz. You'll never hear the full audio signature or 'timbre' unless you use an earphone that can generate the lower frequencies without resorting to audio tricks like 'extended bass' or 'bass boost'."

The product as a whole

[2] http://www.prweb.com/releases/futuresonics/earphones/prweb527764.htm

But what does all this have to do with the Atrio Series Earphones? They know music, and they know how it should sound. There's a phrase I keep seeing, "TrueTimbre". But to me that meant nothing, until I spoke with David East Director of Marketing and Artists Relations at Future Sonics. Basically "TrueTimbre" will allow you to hear all the instruments like they were intended for you to hear. You'll hear all the characteristics of sound, tone, frequency response, audio signature. Everything has an audio signature but because most headsets use 2 or 3 drivers and they cannot produce below the 150Hz as effectively, so anything very low, like bass has to be boosted to make it have a "feel". With the Future Sonics Atrio Series Earphones you don't need a boost or equalizer because they use one single dynamic mini speaker and drivers developed by them for their products.

If you spend a little time reading some of the reviews of this product you'll see phrases like this, "…..no electronic or comb filtering artifacts, no phase issues, and no crossover dropouts in Atrio Series earphones[3]. All the listener hears is perfectly balanced, natural and realistic sound with a sense of "feel."   Again, basically this means that when you listen to music with these earphones on you'll hear nothing but music, no static (unless it's from a bad download to your iPod) & no extra noise. The music is tangible and realistic, making you want to really dig down deep and enjoy, maybe for the first time, tunes you thought you have always been listening to. You'll hear the fingers on the string of an acoustic guitar, you can hear the drumstick tap the side of the drum, you can hear the footsteps of your favorite live performer. All these things make the Atrio stand out above the rest. It was not developed for iPod users; it was designed for professionals who understand that they need to hear everything as clear as possible, because they know what they are looking for. It's like giving an artist a drawing by a child and telling them that Degas did it. He'll look it over and tell you in probably 2 seconds there is no way. Give a professional a typical headset and ask them to record and they will laugh at you, they know music, and they buy from Future Sonics.

My Impression

One of the first things I noticed about the earphones was the odd shape and all the different attachments. I didn't know what they were for and nothing came with my package to tell me. Normally they do come with an instruction sheet, but these were sent without because they were still new. It only took a minute to figure out that these were different pieces to make the fit right. I tried them all out, and really for me only one pair of silicone sleeves worked well for me, the others were too big or hurt my ears.

My daughter had to use a different sleeve and again my son used another. And as it turns out they are meant for just that, my daughter is 9 and my son is 17, there is no way they would need the same size. Surprisingly, it also took me a minute to figure out how to wear them, once I wrapped them around the back of my ear they worked even better.

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[3] http://news.harmony-central.com/Newp/2007/Future-Sonics-Atrio.html

The outside noise just disappeared, the technical term is, "ambient noise rejection". But for that to really happen the set has to fit just right, you absolutely have to get them on your ear right with the right piece. Once I got to where I was comfortable with them I tried these out with some music editing software at a friend's recording studio. Then I put on a pair of typical over the counter earphones and it was like night and day. I was able to actually hear the difference.

With the Atrio I could hear all the different tones, I could hear the treble as well as the bass, the mid levels were just as easy, it was wonderful! I felt as if it were occurring right in front of me in a sound booth!

Overall

All in all this set is worth the price if you enjoy your tunes and want to feel like you're at the show all alone. It takes some getting used to the feel of them on, but once you do it's hard to go back. One thing I would recommend to them is to offer them in a traditional earphone style, full cover similar to Bose. Some people prefer the comfort of the full set on their ears. Other then that, if you use them with your iPod turn off the EQ, turn off the Sound Check. You do not need them and they will do more harm then good. Just listen to the music and you'll never go back to traditional headsets. I guarantee you will be hooked.

Product Specifications

>   drivers future sonics proprietary mg5pro™ dynamic
>   frequencies 20 Hz - 20,000 Hz truetimbre™ response
>   impedance 32 ohm
>   sensitivity 112 dB @ 30 Hz / 1 mW
>   rejection up to 26 dB ambient noise rejection ™ (A.N.R.)
>   cable 1.3 m quietcables™ with reduced micro phonics
>   connector standard 3.5mm stereo mini-plug (gold)

Warranty Information

http://www.futuresonics.com/warranty/index.html#atrioseries

Jawbone – Bluetooth Headset

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre

Aliph
150 Executive Park Blvd. #450
San Francisco, CA 94134
http://www.jawbone.com
Released: April 2007
$120 USD, $125 CND, £59 GBP

Requirements: Bluetooth version 1.2 enabled phone or computer.

Strengths: Incredibly accurate noise reduction, DARPA grade, Lightweight. Works with Apple iPhone.

Weaknesses: Some may not like the "Cheese grater" look.

Video: http://www.jawbone.com/meet.html

Introduction

The Aliph Jawbone is not new to market. It's been around for a while, but perhaps it has become more prevalent lately because of the iPhone. Though I have yet to see an iPhone, or even a display; if you do, you will probably notice the Jawbone next to it on the shelf. Of course, I happen to live in one of the states, Vermont, that will not see the iPhone any time soon. At least not in it's present incarnation.

It does give you a quick idea of the quality of the Jawbone to be given such a prominent status, however. In testing, it's done everything asked of it, as advertised and exceeding expectations.

The Jawbone technology was developed by Aliph for DARPA (The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) to enhance communications the most hostile and rugged environments. Jawbone's Noise Shield technology adjusts and optimizes both incoming and outgoing sound so you can conquer the problems in your own noisy, unpredictable world. Hopefully, you won't need to test the headset as it was designed for, and just use it in the local war on city noise, the high volume of sound associated with yard maintenance, or even the annoying noise on your daily commute in the car or train.

Getting Started

The packaging for the Jawbone is especially nice. Though it won't win any "green" fans, for it comes in a largish plastic box, it literally is in it's own display case (which my son immediately took over for some of his Lego projects). The stand, which the headset rests upon, can be used as a permanent home when the Jawbone is not in use. Included with the headset is a set of four different ear clips and ear buds. The ear loops are left and right specific, with large and standard included, and can be used to optionally reset the headset if needed. The ear buds are of various shapes to fit your ear. The charger plugs into any powered USB port, but does include a switching adapter so you can plug it into a normal wall outlet. It takes about 2 hours to completely charge the headset. Advertised talk time is 6 hours, with an additional 120 hours of standby time.

Pairing to the Jawbone was quick and easy, with no problems encountered. It paired up to both a mobile phone, then was able to pair up to my iMac. The iMac was especially slick. I was able to

use the Jawbone with Skype, and many mentioned how well it sounded. The real trick to the Jawbone, however, and its claim to fame is the noise reduction. It worked very well when presented with a constant noise stream. Yard tools, wind, car, all was blanked out when in use and conversations where made without much difficulty. The person on the other end did not have any problem understanding, though of course, it was a little more difficult to actually hear while in the noise stream. The noise shield is optional with the press of a small button. The only time when I ever had any trip ups with the noise shield was with random noise, which was to be expected. Sometimes sounds like fast changing music and the like will occasionally interrupt the shield.

The microphone is highly directional and does a fantastic job separating your voice so no shouting is needed, though for some reason I still find myself raising my voice unnecessarily. Old habits, I suppose. The volume is also adjustable.
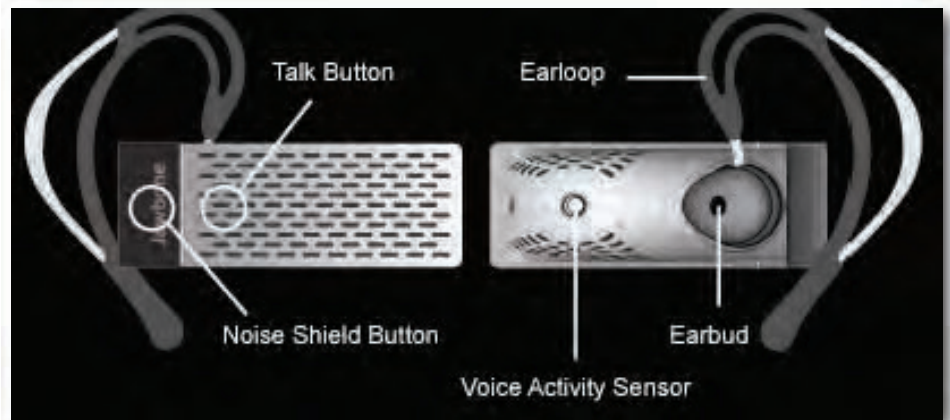
Conclusion

The Jawbone works as advertised, and well at that. In over a month of use, I have never had to reset, troubleshoot, or call upon support. I have read that some have thought that the unit was not very sturdy, but I find just the opposite to be true. It has been accidentally dropped a couple of times, and has still functioned normally. You can get the Jawbone in 3 different colors, red, black and silver. I'm still a bit on the fence with headsets, as you can look a bit odd sitting there looking like your talking to yourself, or walking around like your on the set of Torchwood, but the Jawbone works well and pairs great with your new iPhone. (Or other devices. There are still other phones out there, aren't there?)

Jawbone featured in red.

LapWorks Aluminum Desk Stand Review

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie

Lapworks HQ
7955 Layton Street
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 971730
corporate@laptopdesk.net
877-527-9675
http://www.laptopdesk.net/aluminumstand.html#
$60 USD $62.78 CND £29.44 GBP €43.53 Euro

Strengths: Comfortable, lightweight, travels well.

Weaknesses: Rubber pads make the surface slippery.
Other Reviews:
http://www.laptopdesk.net/aluminumstand.html#reviews

Introduction

In a previous issue I had done a review of a lap desk from LapWorks and I was disappointed. It was hot and uncomfortable. This laptop desk is much better. The position it puts your hands in is quite comfortable and ergonomically correct. I have enjoyed it.

Getting Started

The product comes assembled so you don't have to build anything. There are 6 different inclines to a maximum of 45 degrees. You can adjust it to so everyone should be kept happy. The desk stand is to be placed on any hard surface and then the laptop onto it. If your laptop doesn't have rubber pads they have included four rubber pads which can be placed anywhere on the metal surface. Then you can place your laptop on the stand.

Using the Hardware

I found it quite useful. My iBook fit onto the surface with no problems and I didn't need the extra rubber pads because the iBook has four built-in. But after I put the pads on to test them, the laptop wouldn't stay on the stand. The rubber pads made the surface more slippery! Now, it may just be the material that my iBook is made of. The bottom is rather slippery to begin with. Some other laptops are made of materials which may provide more traction.

Anyway, some of the other features have come in handy. At the bottom of the stand there is a swivel which allows the stand to rotate 360 degrees. It is useful if you need to show someone something if they are on the other side of the table. A Neoprene carrying case is included with the product. It fits the stand perfectly and doubles as a mouse pad if you have an external mouse. The case keeps the stand clean and dust-free. Also, the way the laptop is lifted off of the stand helps improve air circulation and reduce the temperature of the laptop.

Conclusion

Overall, I feel this is an excellent product and can be useful to anyone who has a laptop used for typing on a desk. The swivel on the bottom is useful for showing clients and customers things. The only thing I think they should improve is to make the rubber pads more effective. Other than that, it is an excellent product.

Recommendation

I would recommend this to anyone who types on a desk with a laptop and anyone with a laptop with built-in rubber pads.

QuickerTek nCard

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre

QuickerTek
http://www.quickertek.com
Released:
Prices start at $99 USD.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.8 or later;
Airport Base Station Extreme.

Strengths: 802.11n capabilities for older Macs
for optimal networking.

Weaknesses: Price can be as much as Airport
Extreme Base Station itself.

Introduction

I am a switcher. I purchased a Mac mini last year when it first went Intel. Therefore, I was very
disappointed when I found out that the 802.11n backwards compatibility with the past Macs did
not extend to the non–Core 2 Duo machines. You can imagine the excitement I had when
QuickerTek was expanding past antennas and transceivers and actually moving into Airport
cards.

The nCard replaces your current Airport card installed inside your computer, though QuickerTek
has the PCMCIA card in the wings due in July for your PowerBook. My Mac mini kit included
the nCard, an external antenna, external antenna cable, a screwdriver and instructions. The
802.11n standards need a second antenna for the MIMO to operate correctly.

QuickerTek describes MIMO as Multi-Input Multi-Output, meaning both the Base Station (or
Router) and the Mac (or PC) must have multiple antennas to employ something called "spatial-
multiplexing". This is most important in the speed department, think of it as having a 4-lane
highway instead of a 2-lane highway, and having plenty of traffic for the former!

Getting Started

Installation - Not for the faint of heart. Your present Airport card will need to be replaced. Luckily, QuickerTek has professional installation for just a few dollars more. Otherwise, tools are included, though a putty knife will be needed for the Mac mini. The nCard is a direct replacement for your present 802.11b/g card, and QuickerTek has an nCard for all your older Macs including the mini, iMac, Mac Book/Pro and even a PCMCIA card for older PowerBooks.

I had only a few trip–ups when installing the card into my Mac mini. After replacing the card, I initially forgot which connector the original antenna connected to. The QuickerTek instructions could be a little more informative, as they are simply photocopied, difficult to view the pictures, and do not have a lot of detail. I called tech support and was informed which connector to connect the original antenna and which one to connect the newly provided antenna. The next problem I had was installing the support software to turn on the n capabilities of the card. The software provided on the CD needed the original Apple "n" upgrade software in the root directory in order to install. Whether or not the QuickerTek software needed to be installed or not, it was included and the instructions told me to run the installer. I had to extract Apple's upgrade software out of the Base Station Extreme installation package, place that into the root directory, then run QuickerTek's CD in order for everything to install correctly. Now on the QuickerTek website, it states "Since this wireless upgrade uses standard parts, no drivers or other changes need to be made, nor are additional steps required to use the higher speed 'n' upgrade." So, I'm not quite sure if they still include the installation software or not.

Using the Hardware
After everything was sorted, I placed the ABSE into "n" only mode and the Mac mini connected right up. What surprised me was the poor readings I was getting in iStumbler when in 5 GHz mode. I was getting a signal of around 35%, and the Base Station was only about 12 feet away, behind one indoor wall. I understood that putting the Base
Station into 5GHz Wide mode and you would get twice the distance and a lot less interference than the 2.4 GHz mode. I spoke with Rick Estes from QuickerTek and was quickly schooled differently. When I put the Base Station into 2.4 GHz "n" only, I get a signal of 80%+. Unfortunately, every time we use our portable phone the network drops off.

Throughput with the nCard is terrific. If you are interested in the 802.11n and have, or have been looking into getting the new Base Station, than you know about the speed increases and advantages. So this reviewer will just tell you that the QuickerTek nCard works as advertised and works just as well as the card in my Core 2 Duo iMac. With the new PCMCIA card, and now I see that they are offering a PCI card and a USB solution, there is now a way for all older machines to be on the "n" bandwagon.

The only drawback I see is the price. The nCards are not an inexpensive upgrade and can cost as much as the Airport Base Station Extreme itself. However, if you need or want to be on a fast, wireless network, of all the same bandwidth and type, the QuickerTek nCard is the perfect solution for older Macs.

CleanApp 2.3.1 — An enhanced variant of an application removal tool

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2007

Synium Software GmbH
www.vendorwebsiteURL.com
Released: 13 July 2007
Shareware: $10.00 USD
Available in German, English, Japanese, French, Italian and Dutch.
System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Universal binary Hard Drive Space 3.4 MB.

 Strengths: As fast and easy to use applications deinstaller.

Weaknesses: If there was a way to prevent uninstalling application you want to protect, I could not find it.

Previous Reviews: links to previous *macCompanion* reviews on the same product.

A demo that works for five backup-archives and deletions is part of the download. Then you have to purchase a license: http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/21453/.

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The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.10

Disclaimer: When briefly reviewing share-freeware I will often use the developer's product, functions and features descriptions. All other comments are strictly my own and based on testing. Why need I rewrite the developer's narratives, if they are clearly written?

Review Introduction
As a reviewer, I need to rid my computer of the stuff I don't want to use; and after a few months the rest of the items I'd thought to use but haven't. My usual clue to what has to go is taking a scroll in my application and utilities folders, and seeing what Item I no longer recognize. It's a

little like the gifts we give our kids for their birthdays and holidays. A few become favorites the rest end up in the back of the closet. Check out the last used dates in the image below.

Sometimes I only barely recognize the application but remember it's important. On such instances I assign it a flag – tagging it as a rarely used application. For those select tools, the space they occupy is less of a concern then having to reinstall the application when I again need it.
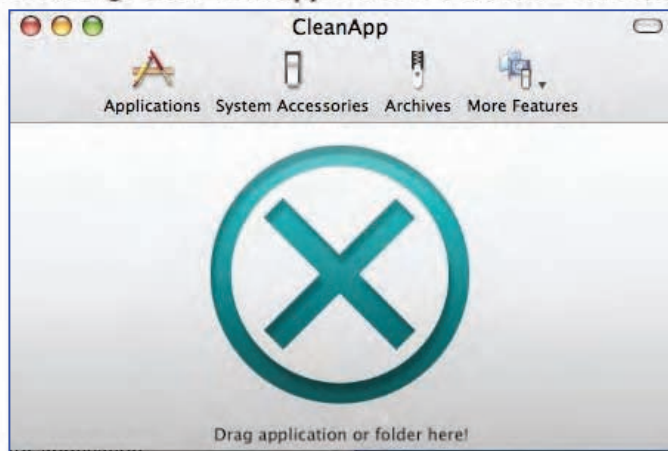
Items that fall into that category include *Cocktail* (a systems utility, *Disable Tiger Features*, *Extensis Port*folio (a graphics cataloging tool), Mindjet's *MindManage*r (mind mapping) and *Tweak Freak* (a System's Utility.)
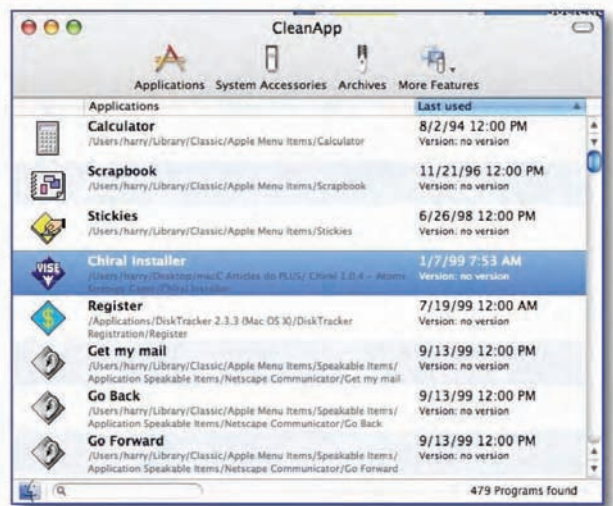
For removing unneeded clutter, an application de-installer is the route to choose. [Check out the reasons why in my 3Rs column in this issue.] My requirements are KISS; to uninstall applications and its components, with a simple drag & drop; and an okay mouse click.

Prior to finding CleanApp, I alternated such cleanup tasks between AppZapper — Shareware $10, now version 1.8 (http://appzapper.com/) or the now unsupported uApp (both reviewed in macC March 2007). They flawlessly made unnecessary the need to track down where all an application's pieces were squired away. *Why two applications instead of one?* … Because! I also use two browsers, two graphics programs.

Then along came CleanApp, which promised a more efficient interface for application deletion or in addition to archiving it. In addition it comes with a collection of tools that allow searching for things other than applications that often clutter up your driver. No I don't mean you purple prose and puce pictures. CleanApp's window will look familiar to users of AppZapper and uApp. However, the engine that runs the software is more sophisticated. The improvement claimed by its developer is a journaling feature that better keeps track of an application's pieces.

Now I don't know specifically what *journaling* features are or how they enhance removal of unwanted application pieces. But I figured journaling was a better cataloging system. I decided to take the plunge. Such an enhanced deletion feature was a plus. The software also the unique ability to archive an application and all its parts. [You did know passwords as well as use preferences are usually stored in the application's .plst file?]

The application seemed sufficiently unique those I user, that my sense of curiosity won out. This despite the fact that I had two perfectly good applications (4.5/5.0 macCs) for trashing applications and their accompanying clutter.

Publisher's (*paraphrased***) Summary**
The usual application removal tool finds associated files and folders by using identifier-key, apparently defined by the application's developer. All items associated with that key are offered up for deletion as part of a deinstallation process. According to the folks at Synium software, without such ID methods application associated files could not be identified for deletion. But using journaling makes things better!

CleanApp now offers a journaling-tool that makes it possible to track and remove all associated files for a selected program. The developers claim, that the journaling techniques are more thorough that simply deleting items identified by an applications {coded} signature keys. This, according to Synium the makes CleanApp a better solution for completely removing applications from your Mac OS X, or for archiving it for later use.

Getting Started
All it takes is the usual drop and drag, no special installer program needed or provided, double clicking on the application and adding you password — your good to go. If no password is entered you've five deletions with CleanApp before it dies. Then you'll have to find another tool to delete it from your hard drive.

Trouble in Mine — Well, not quite! On my Macintosh what was installed was German Version of the software. This was true whether I downloaded the product from the developer's web site or from Version Tracker or MacUpdate sites. Okay, I read German, but that would not help the rest of you who prefer English.
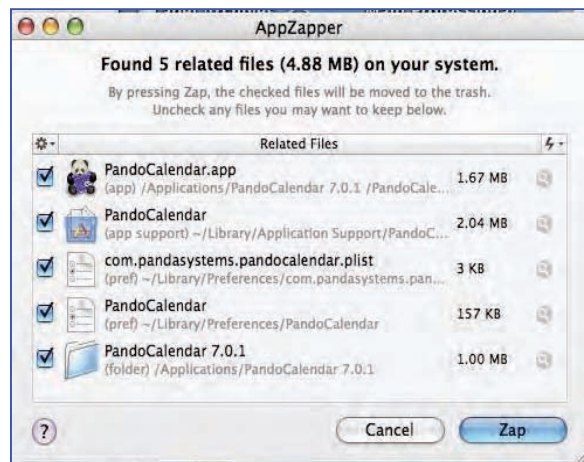
I tried to contact the developer, but had not received a reply when my publisher's deadline crept up on me. It was time to turn to friends…

 I asked Derek Caudill, a sometimes contributor to macC, to download the software and see what he'd see. English, said he! Derek suggested I check my *Systems Preference > International* (pane) to see what order I had arranged the languages. Needless to say dragging English to the top of my list solved the problem. I don't know why none of my other application were so affected. Derek deserves some well-deserved thanks and I'm looking forward to reading his next article.

Back to the Deletion Game — Want to get rid of unused pesky apps once and for all? Use an uninstaller, one that lets you drag and drop programs to its interface. It lists al of the components the application installed and their location (path). I was appalled by the amount of stuff my favorite calendar, PandoCalendar, used and how widely stashed the pieces are. I have no idea why the CleanApp software included pieces of several Unsanity haxies. Were I to delete the application, I'd ignore them. The AppZapper screen did not show any extraneous finds.

CleanApp – PandoCalendar   **AppZapper - PandoCalendar**

You can leave all the pieces check, marked for deletion, or save an item or two. This allows you, on the rare occasions when it makes sense, to only delete a part of what the application has installed. I use such selectivity to delete preferences files when an application, occasionally acts up.

CleanApp offers some useful access extras across its toolbar so you can zero-in on the specific types of items you want to uninstall. Its Applications button displays all of installed apps and lets you know when they were last used. Try, you'd be surprised. A System Accessories button lets you sift through files like widgets, plug-ins and screensavers.

Under the More Features button you can quickly find and remove unused files, language packages, and old cache files. One of my favorite tools, under the More Features Tool, is a way to chase unused files.

There a Good and A Bad Of This — I had 816 of such files but since most of these were document's I'd not yet moved to a technical archive DVD. I did not have the patience to check all 816 of these for things to trash, all I wanted was the flavor if the thing.
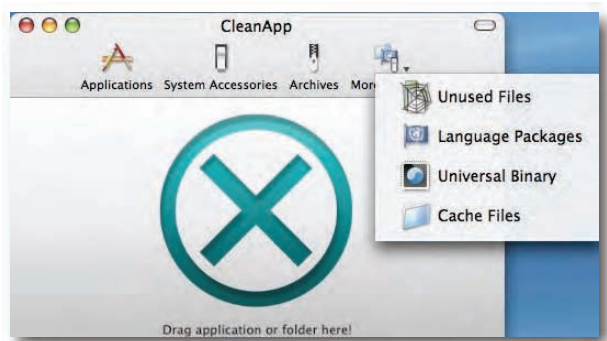
There is also a feature that allows you to trash part of a Universal Binary application's parts that you don't use on a non-Intel Macintosh. [Not for me, readers that feature makes me makes me truly nervous.]

An excellent feature of CleanApp, which I've not seen before, is the ability to turn on a feature called Install Logging. This appears to be tied to journaling, but the information provided by the vendor does not say so. This background task records when you install new software, so you (and CleanApp) can be absolutely sure all associated files get trashed when you perform an uninstall.

Anyone searching for an easy way to get rid of unused Mac applications should check out this program.

Using the Software
To quote the ReadMe file - "Drag the application you want to archive or delete into the blue cross hair on the CleanApp window. If the circle turns green you can drop the application and CleanApp will search for program files automatically. After that, use the checkboxes to select the files you like to archive or delete. Pressing "Create Archive" will create an archive and saves them to your User-folder (e.g., *Users > harry > Documents > CleanApp).* To delete an application press *Delete Files*. To reverse an archiving process, double-click the archive or drag it to the green cross hair in order to restore them. You can use the toolbar item *Archives* to browse the created archives.

I tested the latest versions of both AppZapper and CleanApp, to evaluate them when setting up to "perform" five identical deletions. How many items did they find and what were the differences if any were notable. The "fully dead" applications on my hit list were:

- Discuss — The least used of my three disk label creation applications,
- ConceptDraw 7 Professional — A mind mapping tool I liked but never used
- Image Capture — A great screen capture utility I never used because I found its timed capture inconvenient.
- Transmit — An FTP tool I've never mastered
- Visual Thesaurus 3, a tool I loved at first sight but never ever used after initial installation. I prefer Ultralingua or Roget's New Thesaurus II On the Internet.

Application	CleanApp 2.3.1	AppZapper 1.8
Discuss	Found the application only	Found Application and parts folder including clipart
ConceptDraw Pro	The application went into a do loop-Had to be force quit. CleanApp would not then restart properly. I had to restart my Macintosh, which required another forced quit of CleanApp, before I could again access this tool	Found not only the application and its related items but *also* my review notes folders. I unchecked those since I was not ready to toss their contents
Image Capture	Found the Application and also a preference file associated with Apple's *image capture abilities*. I took the coward's way out and only deleted the application.	Found the Application but no preference file.
Transmit	The application and all of its components were found	The application and all of its components were found
Visual Thesaurus	The application when into a do loop when I dropped the application folder into it. {See Concept Draw discussion.) When I open the application	Dragging the application folder into AppZapper, he application and all of its components were found.

folder and just dragged the application icon to CleanApp it worked. All the pieces were found ready for deletion.

Test Results
In all instances the removed application was either deleted (if delete was chosen for CleanApp) or moved to the Apple trashcan. Although you cannot reverse the delete operation to put all components back where they belong, you could at least check your trash to see if something you needed got accidentally deleted.

First in all instances where an application existed in a folder, I attempted to delete the entire folder. This worked universally in AppZapper, but caused several lockups in CleanApp. However, trashing the application (nested in its folder) using CleanApp deleted both the application, the folder and all related parts.

Neither program finds alias files; but EasyFind does so with ease.

An Other World Point of View — Our friends from musing from mars tested version 2.2.2 of CleanApp and preferred it to AppZapper. (http://www.musingsfrommars.org/index.php?p=784&postcat=25)

Some of the cons our muse identified are not relevant to the way I use uninstall tools. I've too many hot keys already and therefore not being able to assign one to AppZapper is a never no mind.

A Bit About CleanApp's Features
By having its functionality geared to its tool bar, CleanApp make it a bit easier to find special installed files by category.

*   *Applications* — creates a list of your applications
*   A Dashboard Widget — Its serves the same purpose as the application. I did not test the widget.
*   *System Accessories* — creates a list of all installed Preference Pane
*   *Unused Files* **—** helps you to find old or big unimportant files in the system. The developer's notes were not helpful in lettering me know whether the files in question were documents created by one of my applications, or the application related materials.
*   Language Packages — Using the feature you can remove all installed language modules for a given application to free up disk space. Of course, at least for the English language localization, the English language modules are not shown.
*   *Cache Files* — creates a list of cache-files and -folders. Cache files listed whose application are running cannot be deleted. (Sensible) Although there are other cache deleting tools, having one integrated into CleanApp is a useful feature. The bad news is that there or so many of these on my drive, I have no idea what to delete.
*   *Archive* — Show a list of your previously created archives, feature I did not test. Note that archives, which exist in a compressed form, can be burned to a CD/DVD for further

of disk storage. I did not the applications' archive function being a form believer of the *clean install* principal.

- *Delete Protection* — If this feature existed, I could not find it. In other uninstallers like AppZapper, it is possible to protect applications against deletion, at least until you, as the administrator, allow it to happen.

Discomfort

Needs Better Finder-Like Item Selection Ability in List Views — I agree with an unnamed reviewer that In the software's applications window, on my computer produced a very long list of applications, doesn't respond to my typing in the initial keyboard letters of the applications name. In a normal finder window, especially in list view, typing the initial letters will jump to the first file starting with those letters. This seems like an obvious feature to add to the CleanApp views, which appear as lists.

No Shift Click Selection Mode — In addition when working with the applications list there was no way to either directly delete an unwanted item and as importantly, to click-shift to capture a group of such items to delete. To delete an item from the application list I *first* had to search for dependent files and the delete the application, one at a time. I recommend a trash icon be added to the toolbar that automatically gathers up the application and dependent files and then simultaneously trashes them. For safeties sake the author could make this an option in the preferences pane.

They Call it a Numbers Game — Check out the sizes of the items "collected for disposal in NeoOffice. No I did not trash the application, I was just playing around. Nevertheless, I'm glad I don't have to count on the sizes.
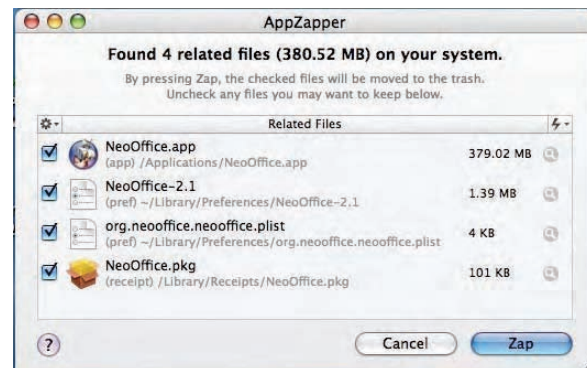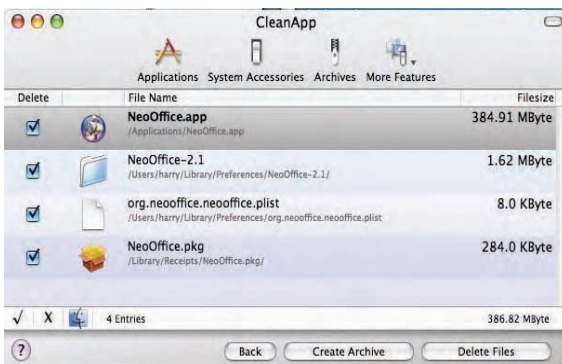
Conclusion

Keep your Mac clean! The sooner you use an tool such as CleanApp, the easier it'll be for you to keep your system free of unused applications and their accompanying chaff. CleanApp's user interface is straightforward and easy to use. Just drag and drop the program you no longer need onto the CleanApp window.

Drop an application into the delete window; X marks the spot. After a few seconds you will see a list of files and folders that have been created by that program. Now choose, whether to delete, or to archive the program including all it's associated files and folders. That's it! You can also selectively delete some of the installed items, if you're trouble shooting that application.

I found a few places where the CleanApp could not handle deleting a application in a developer designated and installed applications folder (ConceptDraw Pro and Visual Thesaurus.) The problem became more of an issue when I could not restart the application after a forced quit.

Which tool, CleanApp or AppZapper should you spend $10 on? Try them both. It will take me about six months, if I chose to keep careful track, to determine which tool I like better. Hopefully an update will be provided that fixed the "App in a folder problem." Meanwhile uApp goes and I still have two alternate deinstallers installed on my drive. I shall continue to work with CleanApp but at this time prefer AppZapper for my needs.

FilePathCM 1.0 — A contextual menu for copying the path of a file or folder to the clipboard

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2007
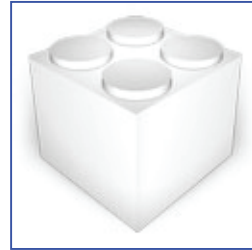
Limit Point Software
Joe@limit-point.com
http://www.limit-point.com/Utilities.html
Released: 16 January 2007
Cost: Freeware, buy all the vendors utility products with a small donation.
Installation Size: 56 KB
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Universal binary

Strengths: The easiest way I've found to capture the path (relative location) of a file from the file itself.

Weaknesses: It works, what more is there to say.

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The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.10

Introduction Including Publisher's Summary
Why should I check out this gem when I have the more functional, but complex, Path Finder, EasyFind, HoudahSpot or Spotlight installed on my hard drive? Although there are other means, including the tools I listed, to do a top-down (Finder) path search, this bottoms-up method is just right for both reviewers, computer related authors and teachers.

Oh you don't know what a find path is or does. Well Wikipedia tells it all, albeit a bit technically. *"A path is the general form of a file or directory name, giving a file's name and its unique location in a file system.*

Paths point to their location using a string of characters signifying directories (folder to us Mac-heads), separated by a delimiting character, most commonly the slash "/" or backslash character

"\", though some operating systems may use a different delimiter. ..." see
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File_path /. Examples follow, just keep reading, you're almost there.

> From a tech talk perspective Parent-Child direction are depicted in a tradition left to right manner. [This is what you'd see in a nested folder or even nested volume relationship. You know if you're searching for the path of a partition on your hard drive.

Examples

For example, I've stored this article at — /Users/harry/Desktop/This Months Stored Reviews/SUBMITTED for August/FilePathCM 1.0/FilePathCM_1macC Review.doc

The installed FilePathCM is located at — /Library/Contextual Menu Items/FilePathCM.plugin

The backup copy of the first draft of this review is stored in — /Volumes/Document BkUp 20GB Disk/FilePath CM_1macC Review.doc

Now I could locate the file by command licking on the document's menubar and I see the path and could even capture a screen shot of what I found, but doing it the FilePathCM way is easier.
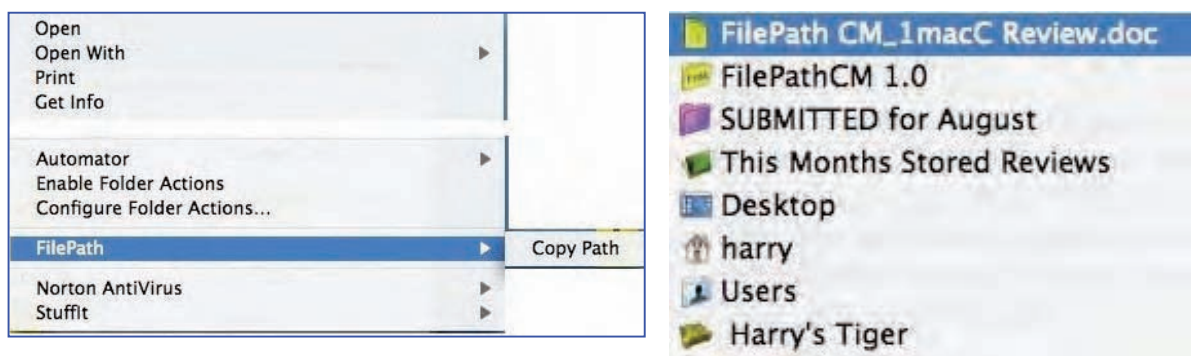
Option-Click or Right Click => The File Path is on your clipboard!

Now wait until I either write this down or OCR the image.

Getting Started

To Install the Contextual Menu — Place the plugin into your "Contextual Menu Items" folder located in your Library folder, creating the CM folder it if necessary:

> /Library/Contextual Menu Items/FilePathCM.plugin

Then logout and get back into your account to automatically load the plugin.

To Use the plugin — Control-click on a file or folder in the Finder and *select FilePathCM > Copy Path.* The CM copies the file path to your clipboard from where you can paste it into reviews like this one.

Conclusion/ Recommendation

Is there any thing else I need to say! If you need to use file paths in your purple prose, this is the tool for you. Instant gratification, no fussing at all.

Whether you're interested or not in the other utilities Joe developed, send him $5.00. Talent needs encouraging. Five bucks is just a bit more then your favorite espresso and but perhaps less of you leave a tip for the smiling barista.

The author's WordDump software also looks interesting, perhaps you'll read about it in a future macC - http://www.limit-point.com/Utilities.html#WordDump

MoofMenu 1.7 — A menubar add-on that allows serious thinning of your docks clutter

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2007

Lobotomo Software
http://www.lobotomo.com/products/MoofMenu/
Support: mailto:supp.ort@lobotomo.com/.
User Forum: http://www.lobotomo.com/cgi-bin/yabb/YaBB.pl?board=MoofMenu

Released: 12 March 2006
Shareware: $ 5.00 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later; Universal Binary; xx MB Hard Drive Space, Download Size 1.8 MB.

For thinning out your dock

Strengths: menu bar add-on that provides fast access to applications, folders and documents.

Weaknesses: There wasn't enough information provided by the developers to allow me to maximize my benefits of this product. In particular, how I cold access the full contents (hierarchy) of folders that contained multiply nested information. A prompt clarification from the developer resolved this problem.

Previous Reviews: links to previous *macCompanion* reviews on the same product.

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The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.10

Disclaimer: When briefly reviewing share-freeware I will often use the developer's product, functions and features descriptions. All other comments are strictly my own and based on testing. Why need I rewrite the developer's narratives, if they are clearly written?

Introduction
For individuals with relatively simple computing lives, a combination of a few core applications and apples Dock can keep their work organized. Others, with a myriad of interests and an ever-changing project list need some assistance; tools to facility access the items that form a complex mixture or applications and documents that accumulate on their hard disks. I have over the years; see the after thoughts at the end of this review, picked some favorites.

My Access and Launch Tool Choices — I have long been addicted to Unsanity's *Fruit Menu* haxie now 3.6.4, now since 2005, coupled with X Menu 1.8. These are my present "keepers". I combine the use of these two tools, with a minimal dock set that include some ongoing project folders, to remain sane or at least stay in apparent control, of *where what is* for instant "replay" or "retuning."

These tools allow me easy access to whatever projects or hobby pursuits I'm working on. Better yet they allow quick access to the often, but less routinely, used application that are part of my computing routine. After all I don't create custom Icons more than twice a week, totally trash applications with a full deinstall, or design business cards or CD/DVD labels every day. But my applications and utilities lists are sooo long!

  FOLKS - my choices as keepers are not a sign of disrespect of the other applications I reviewed
  or read about and did not adopt, these and others — they just weren't me.

But since the grass is always greener, when I read about MoofMenu, I knew I had to put it though its paces. The developer's short software description reminded me of Fruit Menu, but I did not let that dissuade me for playing this new tool. After all a bit of fruit(menu) might *taste* better with a bit of moof!

Publisher's Summary
Do you have a cluttered dock because you have a lot of applications and documents you use every day? Would you also like some tidiness and have your dock items organized by topic? MoofMenu cleans up your dock - by moving all items into a small system menu.

You probably have the same experience as we do... you keep on putting items into your dock because you don't want to click your way through folders and subfolders every time you want to open an application or document. Then you suddenly you realize that finding the item in the dock. All those micro sized icons gets as difficult as finding them on your hard drive.

MoofMenu adds a small icon to your system menu bar, right next to your Airport and Sound controls. Clicking on the icon opens a menu, in fact your menu - because you were the one that put the items in and organized them into hierarchic order. Just like your Apple menu items in Mac OS 9.

Getting Started
Just copy the MoofMenu application from the disk image to your Applications folder (great) or any other location on your hard drive (dumb).

  Installation Note: If you are upgrading from an earlier version you need to quit MoofMenu
  before you overwrite it. You can quit MoofMenu by opening the Configure window and then
  pressing Alt-Cmd-Q.

In order keep MoofMenu accessible, running continuously in the background, open your *System Preferences > System > Accounts > You >* select Login Items and drag the MoofMenu icon from your Application Folder into the list of startup items. If it's not always available you won't use it. Once you started it (or better, it has been started as a login item), a small menu will appear in the menu bar, just to the left of the standard Mac OS X menu bar items like volume and the clock.

Working with MoofMenu
I used the KISS principal to configure MoofMenu, by dragging the most used items from by FruitMenu and XMenu folders into the application to see how it would play. While doing so, I also thinned the accumulated unused items from FruitMenu and XMenu, a quick bit of house keeping. There is a Babad's version of the second law of *computer* thermodynamics (maximization of chaos) that *states you always add more files to your computer than you remove*. But you knew that since you keep buying bigger hard drives.

Software Features
They're just what you'd expect. You can access Your Files via the Menubar From Within any Document or application. Other features include:

MoofMenu is Easy to Add Items To — You can indeed add applications and documents by simply dragging them into the MoofMenu configure window that, when open, always floats on top of everything else. The good news, for most of you, is that there are a few items already in the folders called Applications, Utilities, Internet, Entertainment and Documents. The serve both as access tool and a quick guide too what goes where.
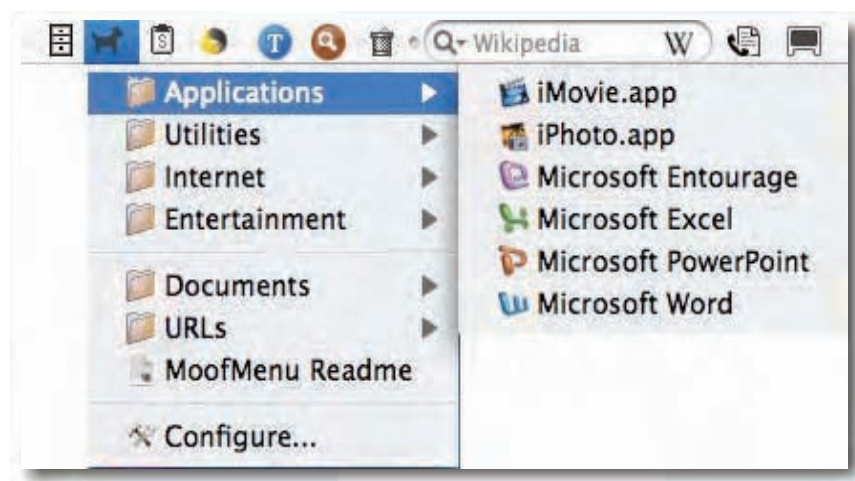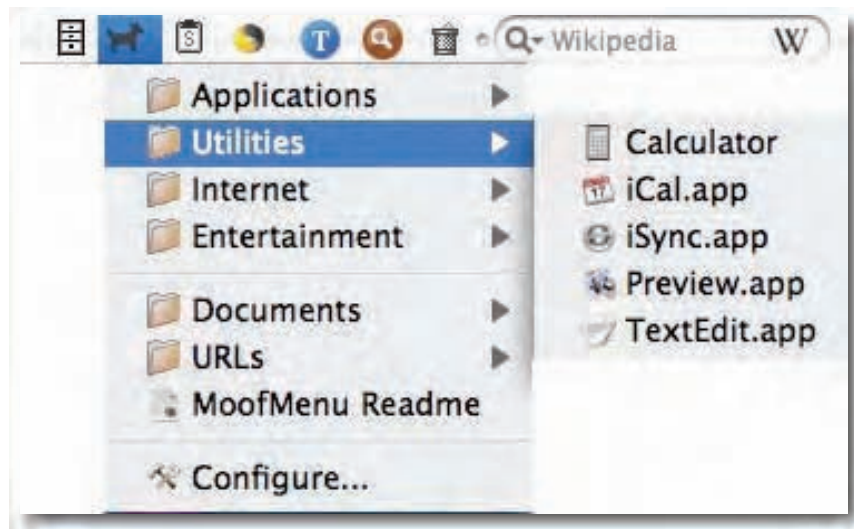
The bad thing, but only from my personal organization needs, is that the folders were preconfigured in a manner useless to me. But that didn't take long to fix.

Order the Items Your Way —You can change the order of items or place them into a different folder by simply dragging them wherever you like them to be. Non-alphabetical lists are a nice feature, one that's harder to achieve with *Fruit Menu*.

No Item Number Limitations — There is no limit on the number of folders or subfolders you can create, letting you keep your applications and documents in your very own organization.

It's Fast, Unlike a few File Management Utilities We've Previously Tested — According to the developers MoofMenu is fast. The software has been optimized for performance, yet another reason for its clean and simple design.

Discomforts
A Major Configuration Limit — The inability to add new groups (folders) that contain accessible nested folders containing files troubled me. Feedback from the developer potentially solved that problem, but despite a bit of work, I've still not mastered the "nested folder" learning curve. Here's what I learned:

I quote and in part paraphrase Christoph.
 "There are two possible ways to have hierarchies in MoofMenu.
One is by using groups, which can be nested. These are mainly a tool for building a custom hierarchy with items like URLs or files, that can have a different hierarchy on disk. *[This is the alternative I tested that did not quite meet my needs — Doc.]*

The second possibility is the ability to add folders and whose contents is shown as is on disk. If the recursive option is switched *off*, only the top level items are included in the menu - if recursive is *enabled*, the whole folder hierarchy is visible in the menu and submenus (please see the attached screenshot). Changes to the on-off of the recursive mode are detected automatically the menus are updated accordingly."

Everything worked, as one would expect for the developer's description. But there was one major PROBLEM. Unlike either FruitMenu or XMenu, MoofMenu could only initially create a one level deep Hierarchy of folders. [Look at the lack of filled in triangles.]
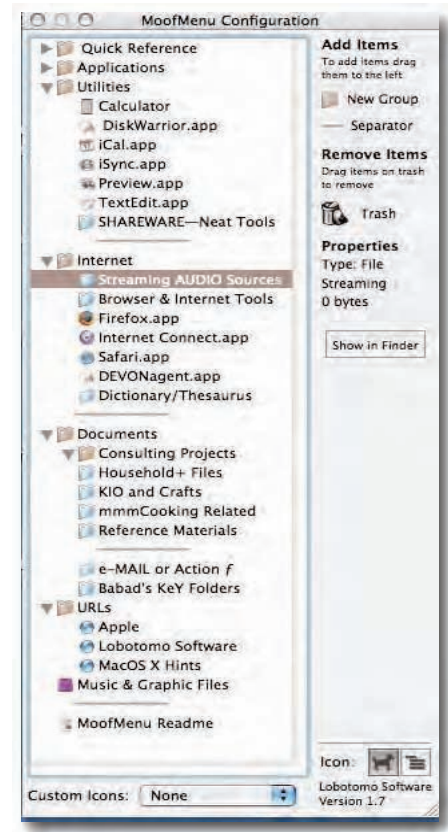
If, as I do, your needs including quick access to series of nested folders containing with documents or a mix of documents and subfolder, the solution works, it's just a bit harder, less intuitive, to implement. An illustration of the developer's fully recursive fix, of the solution, when properly mastered, is shown below. I'll keep trying — I've run out of time – but am encouraged – This one is definitely a keeper.
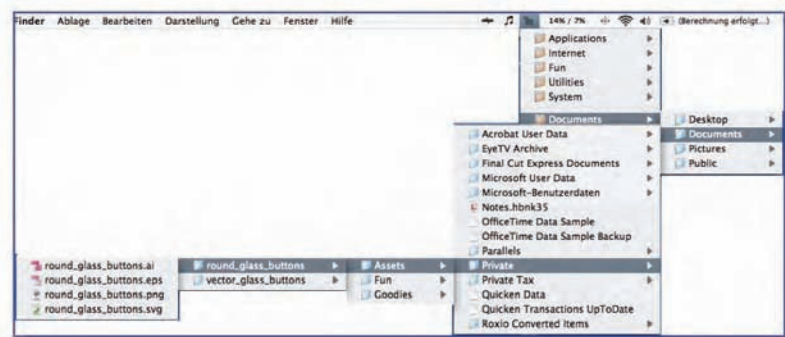
<u>ReadMe File Limitations</u> — The readme file did not provide a list of and location of items installed by the program. A feedback email from MoofMenu's Christoph indicted that All information is stored in your user library, not the systems level library.
/Users/harry/Library/Preferences/com.lobotomo.MoofMenu.plist

Conclusion
This is a good product that could reach greatness if it were able to handle hieratical folders. It does what it claims and at $5.00, the price it right. Even if you save, at minimum wage a few minutes here and there, it adds up soon both from a cost perspective an from the point of view of reducing both eye strain (micro-images in your dock) and the clickety-clickety-clack of mousing for documents you need to work with. If a straightforward easy to use took to quickly access your documents and application meets your needs, at $5.00 MoofMenu is a bargain.

\# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊ \# ◊

Review After Thoughts

If I weren't a shareware tester for macC, my hard drive would be even more disorganized than it is at present.

That's all the more true since I use alias' of folders as my launch platform for hot button items, all over my desktop. During any given month, I chase software/shareware and do my macC thing, collect and write about recipes and recipe hunting. I write about acoustic music and raise funds for a music festival. And if that were not enough, I consult (when lucky) or otherwise keep-up in the field of nuclear energy with an

About 33% of my working Desktop

emphasis on nuclear waste management, and do volunteer things for a number of local professional society chapters, and last if not least support an international conference on the waste management and environment.

And that's in my spare time after having done my "honey do" chores.
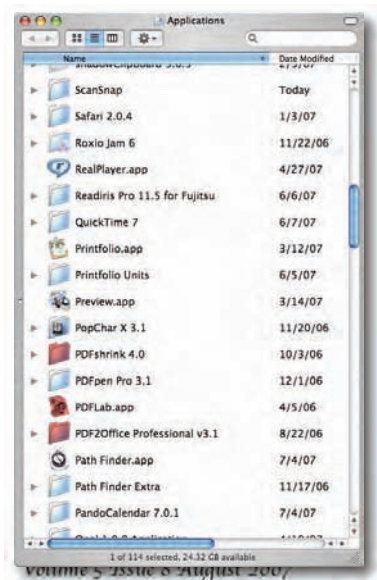
So between consulting clients (paid) and macC articles (volunteer) and volunteer work (free concert tickets and an occasional artist's CD) project folder come, grow and get archived. And of course there is my core 220 or more applications, Apple's and those I've added including keepers from my reviews. There's, at any given time a floating dozen software tools that live on my hard drive that float in and out of my computing life.

So, aside from a very organized, but imperfect file system and good find files tools, how do I survive? [macC has done several articles about hard disk organization as has have the major pint magazines. My comfort level is to use my desktop, on a 22 in monitor, as the launch pad for hot projects (via their alias') but a combination of file access/management tools keeps the rest of what I need at my finger top, or least mouse click.

A Search for the Holy Grail of File Managers and Launch tools — I need a product or three that offer direct fast access to any application, folder, document or file; it should be fully customizable and be structured by hierarchy. Sound familiar?

Yes such functionality is promised by a variety of application launchers, file managers and dock function enhancement tools. These range from the Apple dock and dock enhancement tools, to menubar based "organizing" applications.

> *I really believe that some day its like a dream of winning the lottery, a perfect product will be created just to meet my needs... someday!*

Meanwhile the hunt goes on. I've reviewed a number of so called file management programs in macC, as have some of my colleagues.

My efforts included (current version number provided) *LaunchBar* 4.2 (macC August 2004); *DockExtender* 3.1.3, *dock Doubler* X 1.1, *Fidget Menu* 1.5.9 and *DockSwap* 2.2.1 (all in macC June 2005); X Menu 1.8 (macC December 2005); and perhaps I can even count *PathFinder* (June 2007 macC). I'll also, in the near future, be reviewing other such products such as *Butler* and *A Better Finder Launcher*.

I have long been addicted to Unsanity's *Fruit Menu* ($10) haxie now 3.6.4, now since 2005, coupled with DEVONtechnologies free XMenu 1.8. These remain my present file access management and launch services "keepers." I combine the use of these two tools; with a minimal dock set that include some ongoing stereotypical project folders. Using these tools allows me to remain sane (nuts say my friends) or at least under-stressed when I bounce from project-to-project roping in helper applications. In that way I remain in apparent control, of *where what is stashed* for instant *replay* or *retuning*.

Truly these tools allow me easy, at most a mouse click, access to whatever projects or hobby pursuits I'm working on. Better yet they allow me quick access to the often, but less routinely, used application that are part of my computing routine.

After all I don't create custom Icons more than twice a week, totally trash applications with a full deinstall, or design business cards or CD/DVD labels every day. But my applications and utilities lists are sooooo long!

FOLKS – my choices as keepers is not a sign of disrespect of the other applications I reviewed or read about and did not adopt, they just weren't me.

NoteMind 1.5.3 – A Notepad Database combined personal Information Manager

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad   © 2007

Synium Software GmbH
notemind@synium.de/
http://www.synium.de/notemind/index.html
Released: 09 July 2007
Shareware: $20 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Universal binary; ca. 5.5 MB Hard Drive Space; Download Size 5.3 MB.

Strengths: NoteMind helps you to better organize your notes, URLs, To-Do lists, images and many other kinds of documents. Once organized the results can be displayed as a mindmap, which you can further organize.

Weaknesses: The developers only provide minimal help and examples to help you learn the use this non-traditional product. When searching for either your hard disk, or for a 7.9 MB NoteMind document, the software is both extremely slow.

For a 30 day demo of this product:
http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/23339#descContainer_link/

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The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.10

Disclaimer: When briefly reviewing share-freeware I will often use the developer's product, functions and features descriptions. All other comments are strictly my own and based on testing. Why need I rewrite the developer's narratives, if they are clearly written?

**NoteMind: An Annotation of the Publisher's Summary**
NoteMind is one of a group of applications for the storing, organizing information collect and perhaps make sense of your documented thoughts and ideas. NoteMind first allow you to collect information in a variety of formats. Then using a built-in folder metaphor to organize those pieces of information centrally in one place. The product is designed to learn the way you organize your documents, and in the background tries to find a matching folder for new information you've added to your initial sets.

With NoteMind you can also graphically display your collected documents (information snippets) as a mind map. Each individual piece of information represented in iconic form. You can move these icons around and change the linkages so they more accurately represent how the information snippets relate to one another.

The product enables you to manage information in a broad variety of formats. You can drag text information, pictures, PDFs or web links into the product, and store them in your NoteMind-database (document), where they'll remain easy to access, especially since your can park your notepad at any chosen locations on your screen.

An Information Junkies Introduction to PIMs
Searching for the Tools of the Trade — I'm always interested in tools that can help me harness and discipline my creative processes. When starting a project (e.g., a review, a book, organizing a music festival or a technical session at a conference) I need a way to organize the packrat heaps of information I gather. When I first started working with a computer, my first was an Apple LISA, my favored tools were a combination of outlines and hand-drawn logic diagrams and logic trees. As Moore's law and my budgets moved into the present, my tools became more sophisticated, but at times not worth the trouble.
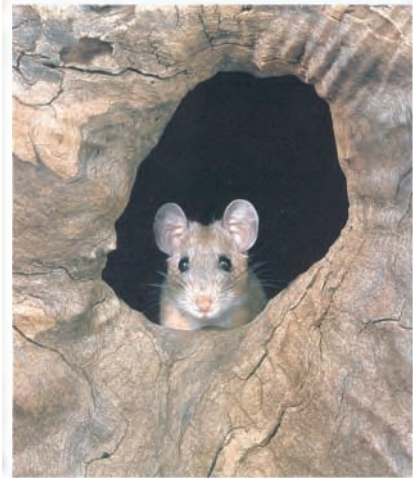
As a result of this ongoing need to organize and make sense of an ever-growing pile of information, I've chippied with the general class of project information management software. I've worked with, at times overcoming a steep leaning curve, a variety of graphically oriented mind map, brainstorming, ToDo List and note taking products. But after my review effort was complete, I seldom adapted such products for routine use. Such tools are by their nature different from straight databases, although a database engine may drive them.

Classical Database Software —Tools such as FileMaker Pro and the engine in TheRecipeManager (TRM) are database-generating software. However purists and reviewers don't consider them to fall into the information management (e.g., PIMs, brainstorming, mind mapping and todo listing) category.

Classical databases organize specific sets or kinds of data in a manner that can be searched by a variety of predetermined (built-in) criteria. The books in my SciFi database can be searched by: author, book series, book title, genre, wish list, and more. Were I more dedicated I could have added publisher and publication data, form factor (paperback, hardback or trade paperback) and a synopsis book's contents. I'm grad I avoided that because adding such information to the ca. 6,000 SciFi Book records is just a bit too much. But such a database is great for keeping a list of the SciFi books you want to collect (buy).

With tools like TRM, to which you taken the trouble to add your favorite recipes, your collection, can be searched by ingredients, cooking method, cuisine and health factor. The beauty of a classical database, unlike the index cards that were used in pre-computerized libraries, is that you can search categories at one, even constraining your search with simple Boolean search criteria. (E.g., Chinese stir-fry duck and asparagus with no 5-spice.)

General Information Managers — The category were exploring today have the ability to catalog and relate the contents of your photo collection, index cards of proverbs, technical references, links to the usual and the obscure — yeah, the kitchen sink.

Tools and More Tools — Although I am not by nature a visually oriented person, a program that not only stores a variety of information but also visually presents its relationships can be helpful in understanding that information. We at macC have reviewed a variety of products in the class of visual information managers.

Software developers identify their products by their function [e.g., brainstorming, mind mapping] but in essence all the tools in this class manage information. As the bard said "A rose by any other name…"

Information managers (PIMs) I've reviewed include Inspiration Software's *Inspiration* (February 2003 macC) Eastgate Systems *Tinderbox* (September 2003 macC), NovaMind Software's *NovaMind* (December 2004 macC), and Mindjet's *MindManager* (January 2007 macC). This program is still on my hard drive; perhaps I use it to get organized.

In addition, there are reviews of such software by others on our staff available on our site www.macCompanion.com/. Wayne LeFevre reviewed *Contactizer Pro* by Objective Decision in October 2006. Last month Robert Pritchett reviewed Computer Systems Odessa's *Concept Draw*, which falls in the information management category.

Compared to many of the other visually oriented PIMs, NoteMind seemed to both simpler to use and less expensive than the competition. That is why I was drawn to test it. But to put things into perspective, the tools I like and use. Almost as often as MS Word and Acrobat manage information, but do not visually relate the snippets you've collected. Each information item, for the most part is treated like an island unto itself.

NoteMind is a nontraditional snippet manager (PIM), which uses an empirical graphical interface to display related the information in a schematic form. [Wow the fog rolls in.] The tool takes your from the more usual grab-bag of snippets in a folder or data collection to one in which the relationships between items are highlighted in a mapped format.

Semantics Information and Data — I use these terms almost interchangeably; but in reality they mean "meaningful (to me) stuff. Rigorously speaking, data is qualitative, likely measurable; and information may be either quantitative or qualitative, the later including things visual in nature.

Getting Started

After a standard installation, and entering the serial number, the product was ready to use. Although there are preference panes that let you tune the product, I was able to work in NoteMind in the default setting.

Inserting Documents into NoteMind —
According to the developer, to insert new text into NoteMind, simply select (highlight) the desired passage in any application and hit the "F1" key (on Laptops, the "FN" key has to be pressed along with "F1").

Not on my Macintosh

In Macintosh OS X Tiger, F1 is the expose access keyboard shortcut. But drag and drop of selected materials works just fine, thank you. According to the publisher, when adding material to a NoteMind document, it automatically tries to find an appropriate name and folder to paste the new text passage into. I could not make this function work, perhaps I've created the wrong test cases.

Another way to add data to you collection is to press the "F2" key to open the *QuickAdd* window to add Notes and To-Dos even when NoteMind is in the background. This worked, but I could not figure out how to make effective use the function. Perhaps finalizing my testing on a Friday the 13th got in my way. Finally you can use the add feature and with the finder interface gather what you need from your hard drive
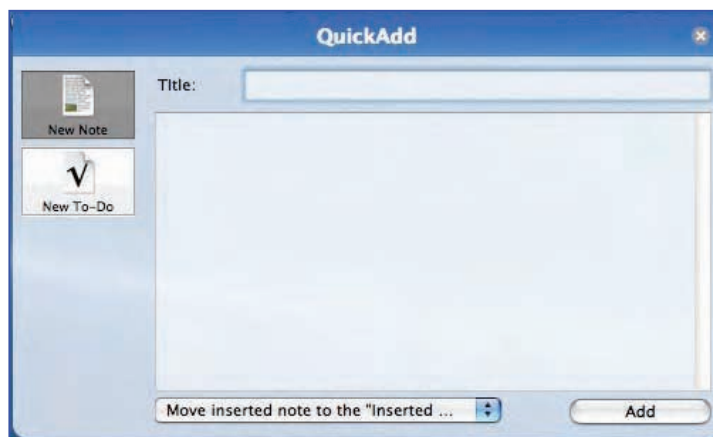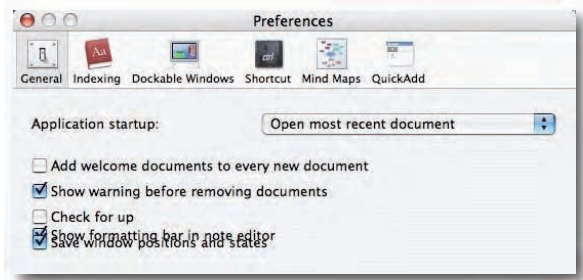
Adding Information to NoteMind
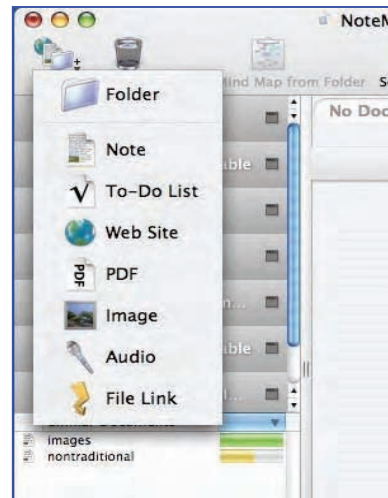
Using the Software

My initial test was done by extracting the more important bits and pieces of this macC review and used NoteMind to aggregate them both for easier access and perhaps to organize them in folders, a *Finderish* thing to do. Easier that what you may ask? Two or three 20 page sets of notes in MS Word and a folder full of images that are my usual "shoe box" of stuff, prior to logically integrating the important pieces into my review.

The information I selected varied from text dragged from my draft notes, paragraphs of interest from PDF files printed of a website, and directly from the websites themselves. My only selection criteria was — Is this snippet likely to be important to my review or project? I also gathered up appropriate images from Google, screenshots of my tests results and software interface images from the developer's website.

I selected several dozen pieces of the *rough* information I'd gathered and dropped them into the left hand side of the main NoteMind window. The resulting file was about 5 MB in site, considerably less information that the 30 MB size of my collected review information.

Alas, this first experiment with NoteMind was a disappointing experience. Yes the information I selected became part of my NoteMind document. It was, by default, installed on the top database layer where its contents were easy to view. All it took to see their contents was double clicking on them. However, I could not create a mind map of those pieces. More on this later, there is indeed a non-intuitive solution.

In addition, nothing I tried could meaningfully extract other information related to my review from either my hard disk or the Internet. All the items "collected" had minimal if any relationship to the subject of the snippet. I could have done better with a poorly phased search in HoudahSpot.

Back to the Drawing Board

I reread the product descriptions in the readme file, the developer's website and in the clear but limited user manual I learned two things therein, neither of which were explicitly mentioned in the software's *instructions*.

Mindmaps, a Deeper Look — First, searches and mindmaps require the core information be stored in a NoteMind folder. The topmost layer of the information collection doesn't either count or work. When I created a new folder, and filled it with appropriate items, I could visualize the contents as a mind map.
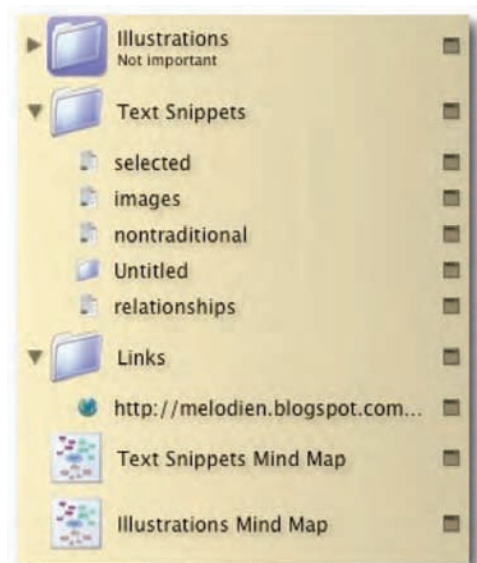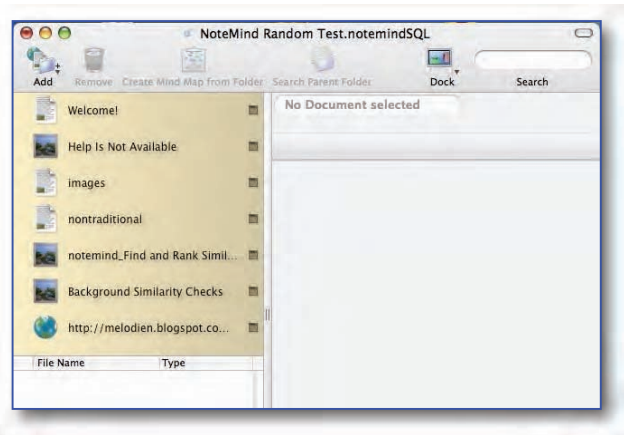
Having learned this trick, I experimented with the results. One exercise, still in my original "NoteMind Review.notemindSQL" document was to create a folder set organized by information type. You know, text, images, links and complete PDFs. Moving my stuff into the new folders was fast. However, the resulting mindmaps were dull, but elegantly constructed.

Okay, I then regrouped the individual snippets into folders I called background, PIMs as a Tool, Test One Study, and Other Reviewer's Opinions. When I redistributed my snippets into these new folders, they now contained information in a variety of formats. Not only were the resulting mindmaps potentially more interesting, but also I could by reorganizing their contents start to identify meaningful relationships among the items.

Making the Find Function Useful, Perhaps — My second find, using my secret Batman ring, was that the program is not psychic.

> *I'm guessing that the search function depends not on the contents of the text snippets, but rather the single word name the program assigns to that snippet. Also, its AI engine is not very smart and has no way for a user to train it.*

By changing those individual words (see the image above) to something, hopefully, more appropriate than those names auto selected by the program (e.g., selected, images, nontraditional, untitled, relationships and… duh) the software hit list of relevant found items got better. Better, but not my much —as a trial and error method for searching either my drive or the Internet, the NoteMind *find* feature sucks.

More Testing
Have learned a bit, I also used the program to store and begin to organize information associated with my new book. This second test was more immediately fruitful. After all I had swallowed some of those smartness pills.

I collected a large combination of text snippets; links to reference documents, PDF formatted documents themselves and images for a book I'm writing. I extracted 7.9 MBs of material; from the 500 MBs of raw information I'd gather or created while researching and then writing an edit draft of the book. I did not try to add audio files to my collection… the book requires none. I organized the materials into folders by book chapter, adding an extra folder for *asides and to be remembered*. The later is an old brainstorming trick that prevents the process from being sidetracked.
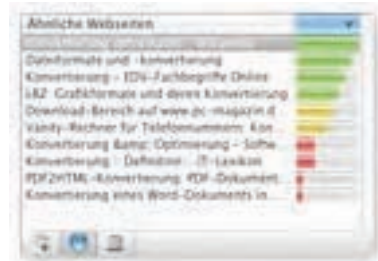
Using the *find* feature at a Folder Level — I was able to find some additional related information to supplement a few of the items I'd already found by using the program's find functions.

<u>Caveat emptor</u> — the buttons for doing so are almost invisibly small.

Creating a Mindmap of my Data — I was then, using the mindmap function, perhaps was better able to organize my collections of notes.

NOTE: This test evaluation test is not fair, although my intuition about the software is accurate.

After all I'd written the chapters, whittled long-winded 30 page chapter versions to less than ten pages long. Then I reworked them so that the information they contained was easier to understand.

No matter, I was beginning to like this program better than when I initially started working with it, at least until I tabulated my discomforts. As an illustration, the mindmap for the technical chapters of the book is illustrated below.

Veni, vidi, vici; "I Came, I Saw I Conquered" — I compiled information collections and created mind maps associated them for both this review and my book. They looked attractive, albeit low in resolution. Alas, having done the exercise, climbed the learning curve, walked the walk, and hopefully talked the talk — *I have absolutely no use for the visual output I created with this program.* Poor doc!

More Discomforts Than I Would Prefer

Insufficient Documentation — This product defines a new metaphor for organizing and relating bits and pieces of information. Despite the program's unique and potentially useful feature set, its developers are negligent in their lack of documentation or tutorials with examples. That shortfall makes it almost impossible for potential new users to determine how NoteMind could facilitate their workflow.

For example it took me over 17 hours to figure out how the features described by the developer (1) worded, and (2) how best to make use of them. Neither the readme file nor the 17-page manual teaches the reader how to explore the potential benefits in managing information with this otherwise useful and unique program.

A Flawed Slow Search Function **—** In principal, NoteMind indexes your documents and finds similar entries for you that will be displayed below your list of notes. [Its not clear from what I've read, what is searched.] The program can also search your hard drive-using Spotlight, to find any related files. It is even possible to find relevant material by searching the Internet. Under those conditions, NoteMind shows you related websites, which you can explore or download.

Although I got the *find* function to work, the *search* function was tediously slow. Did I say slowly? The process, in my book related document, was slow enough for me to go downstairs to my kitchen and pour a cup of coffee, add my sugar and creamer and return to my office. All this before the search results were completed. In addition, at that point, the program sometimes crashed, losing all unsaved data. [Auto save anyone — after all this is a "database" program.]

I spent much of the effort testing the *Find* function working with my 7.9 MB book related document. I not only had an in depth understanding of the subject matter but was well aware of the relevant contents of my hard drive. I've been after all, collecting information on the books topic for 30 years. After grinding away, the search results were not what I'd expected. A large number of relevant document on my hard disk, were ignored. <u>Bottom Line</u> — I could get more focused results, related documents, by searching for information on my drive using EasyFind (titles) and HoudahSpot (contents.)

Snippet Names — It is easy to add text items (snippets or excerpts) to the database, as visualized in the image of the software's working window. The program gives each text snipped so entered a name; but any relationship between that name and the snippet content is purely coincidental. Of course you can rename the item, but why not let the user do that initially while adding the information to the database.

To Folder or not to Folder — By default, adding new data to the database by way of the program's main window, places that information into the topmost level of a data hierarchy. Alas, nowhere do the developers not that one can only create a map of material within a folder and that top level is NOT a folder. Nor is there any explicit acknowledgement both at you can created nested folders with the database AND that by doing so you can better display relationships when "projecting" that list as mindmap.

There are other less serious issues with this seemingly incompletely developed product, some of which are detailed on reviews posted on the Internet. Good developers, Google on. Fixing some of the more serious problems could quantum leap the products usefulness.

Conclusion

A is an information organizing tool that can serves to organize personal information as well as research information. It is inexpensive and once figured out, easy to use. In NoteMind's case, it has a special feature allows you to create visual mind maps of information. Using it, unfortunately, is not as easy or effortless as it should (could) be.

Indeed by the time I was done experimenting, and taking notes of what I learned, I could have doubled to tripled the size of its *Users Manual*. This is a flaw that significantly degrades the usefulness of an otherwise well-conceived application.

With better documentation, NoteMind could be a boon to writers, bloggers, students, teachers, and budding data analysts as well anyone else who needs to organize related data. However version 1.5.3 just feels unfinished. Between (1) German language illustrations in an English language user manual, (2) mangled overlapping check box narratives in the preference panes to the (3) poor documentation, I kept wondering how much more useful the product would be if someone spent a day or three just cleaning up documentation and interface flaws.

Recommendation

I would encourage anyone/everyone to try out the product and see if it can facilitate your making order of the chaos of the bits and pieces of information in your life. How one identifies needs, organizes and relates information, whether for a project such as a book or for a major event for your church, is a highly individualized thing. So is other software designed to facilitate those tasks. I've worked with a variety of PIM, project management and mind map tools. Tools that other reviewers and users loved often left me cold. The reverse was also true. Try NoteMind; if it works for you, after 30 days at $20, the product is a bargain. If not, do as I continue to do — keep looking.

Review Afterthoughts — Organizing Tools I Like and Daily Use

My favorite tools are one-dimensional… essentially a flat file enhanced listing tools. Omicron Software Systems *To Do X* is such a product. [November 2006 macC.] Another tool I depend upon daily, *DEVONnote* [March 2006 macC], falls into that category. These two tools differ primarily in their approach in the mechanics of information collection and retrievability of my data. To Do X is by driven by an outline generator compared to a more sophisticated database engine that underlies DEVONnote.

Some tools of this kind of software are more powerful than the so-called one-dimensional tools I use because they add a strong visual element to the organizing function. In English… you can link pieces of information together, to show their relationship to one-another. As a result, such information managers can create and display a hierarchy of topic/information from your stuff lists. They are harder to learn, but with a little bit of practice, are more powerful.

Such tools transform a collection of file boxes or clipping stacks such as those we all used in our youth, to a more accessible and we can hope orderly array of information. By their nature one-dimensional card sets often contained identical pieces of information in different format. [In a library the set of cards do a book would include, Author, subject, title and ID number.] Using modern software one has tools that were able to point to a piece of information in a wide variety of ways, without any need for record duplication. The functionality was all in the search engine.

A even more recent approach to information management is based on the premise that if you can relate pieces of data to each other, you gain a better understanding of what the information really means. If your snippets of data can be optimized by assigning a degree of relationship between the snippets of information, the sum of its parts becomes greater than the pieces. In reality, that means that any given piece of information may belong to various sets of data and function in a variety of roles. It also acknowledges, like in classical databases, that there are a myriad of ways to search for that snippet of data you need. [But you who've googled, know that!]

Jeff Gamet View of NoteMind — The most penetrating review of the product and its features I'd read was written by MacObserver's Jeff Gamet. Overall, Jeff was less frustrated by the product than I was. But remember picking a PIM is a personal thing like picking a fragrance or a word processor.

I agree with Jeff Gamet of the MacObserver "Computers are great at creating and storing information, but without a way to organize and sort that information - to build data relationships - it's not really of much value. NoteMind from Synium Software aims to bridge that information gap and help you discover the relationships hiding inside the data on your Mac." I disagree with Jeff that NoteMind is the tool I shall want to use.
http://www.macobserver.com/review/2006/12/19.1.shtml/.

Macintosh information organizing software comes is a huge variety of forms and metaphors. I've referenced two fine articles on the subject for you convenience. These and other things I've read clarified my not inconsiderable knowledge of such tools. Read these articles before you test NoteMind. They provide the orientation that developers left out of their readme file and product manual.

- *Litter Sorters: A Personal Evaluation of Mac Organizer Software.* An article dated March 5, 2007 - http://melodien.blogspot.com/2007/03/litter-sorters-personal-evaluation-of.html
- *Organize those Documents, Notes & Thoughts*, jennsbl's gems, by Jennifer Landefeld, May 5, 2007 - http://www.jennsbl.com

Corporate Identity Creator 1.5

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Laughingbird Software, LLC
2510 Worth Way
Camarillo, CA 93012
1-805-386-1616
http://www.laughingbirdsoftware.com/
http://www.cicreator.com/
Released: December 2006.
$40 USD
Forum: http://www.logodesignforum.com
Tutorials: http://www.cicreator.com/tutorials.html
Audience: Corporate Identity Makers

Strengths: Cross-platform. Stable. Functional.

Weaknesses: Relies heavily on Macromedia Director Engine and Flash technology. Not a lot of font choices. Seems to be a work-in-progress.

Working on the next phase of using tools for establishing a corporate image, we now go to Laughingbird Software for the Corporate Identity Creator to establish some quick&dirty stationary.

At first I figured this would be nice to have, since we are working on the Ever-Green Renewable Energy Resource Center project. And the app met expectations.

Laughingbird Software agreed to advertise in our magazine for both June and July of this year and I just happened to notice that besides the Logo Creator, the Web Graphics Creator, they also have the Corporate Identity Creator.

If you read my experiences with the Web Graphics Creator, you already know that I discovered that they like to use Macromedia Director MX 2004 as the base engine on which to develop apps and they rely heavily on Flash technology.

Sure enough, when I went to *Get Info*, I was not surprised this time to see the same thing.

And just like *The Logo Creator*, the application is found not under *Corporate Identity Creator* but rather, *The Corporate Identity Creator*.

After importing graphics and adding them to one of around 94 different templates for stationary design, I then was able to go in and tweak the text, color and then save as either JPEG, TIFF or PDF.

To print, the program menus give options to go online and use Internet services for printing stationary. Inside the program itself, there are other options.
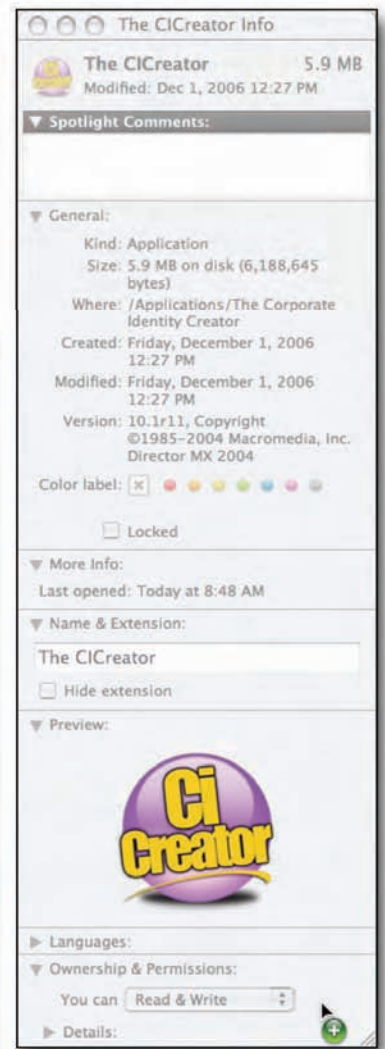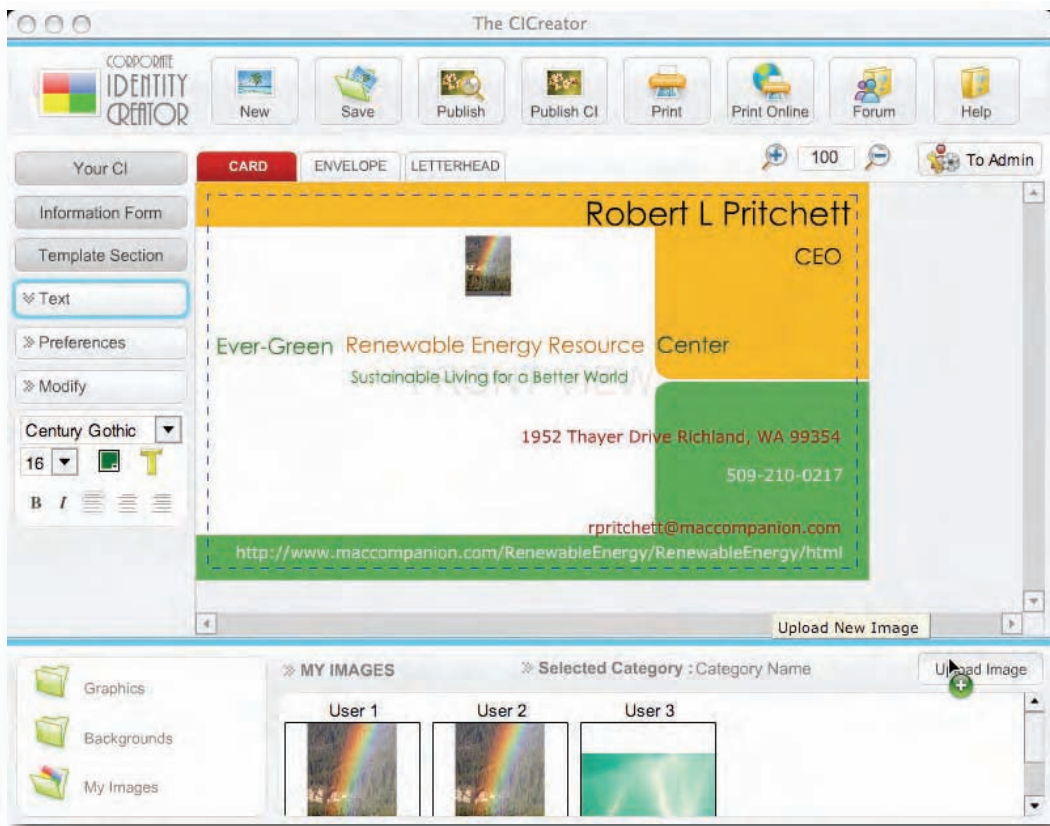
For fonts, there are not a whole lot of options. I wanted Apple Chancery, but this is a Flash app basically and the fonts are rather basic. I would have liked the program to access my font library so I have a consistent look and feel. Each field is all or none regarding color.

To begin, the red *Make a new Corporate Identity* button needs to be used. Or if you have existing Corporate Identities, the *View, Edit* or *Delete* icons can be pressed. I had to start over with the EGRERC stationary because the app kept shutting down when I tried to edit it. I don't think it liked the way I named it by adding a dash in the name and it got confused.

I may be wrong, but that seems to be what happened to me.

The *Preview Area* doesn't give you a whole lot to look at and it is not expandable either. To "Publish" one of the three pieces of stationary, the choice is to click on each one and Publish or do the Publish CI to have three separate files appear with a file extended of *FrontCard_All, RearCard_All, Letter All* and *Envelope_All.*
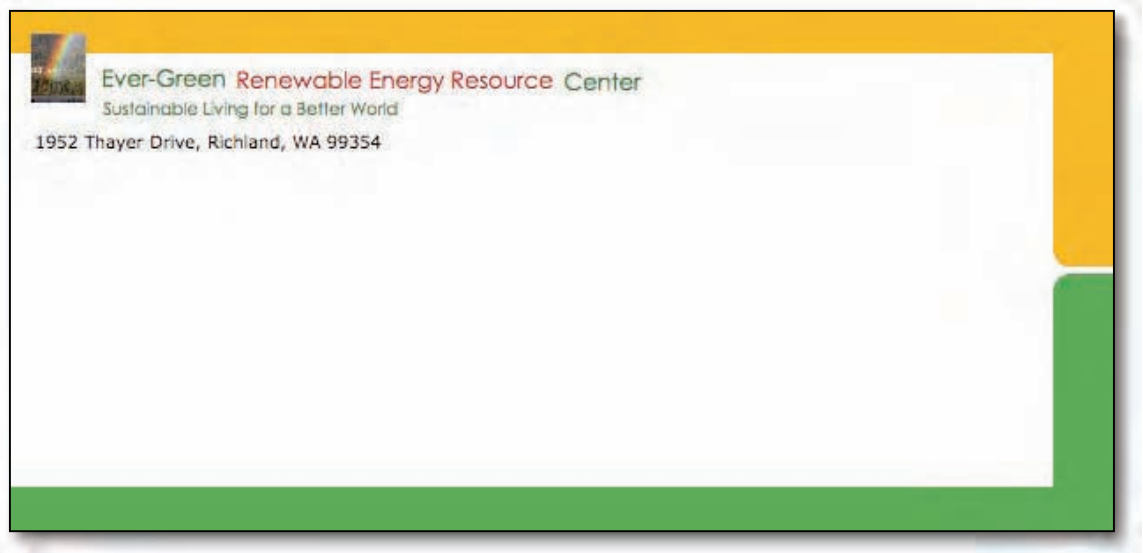
To do PDFs, it uses the program *makePDF* instead of using the *Print* function in Mac OS X. With a Mac, why bother with a separate PDF program?
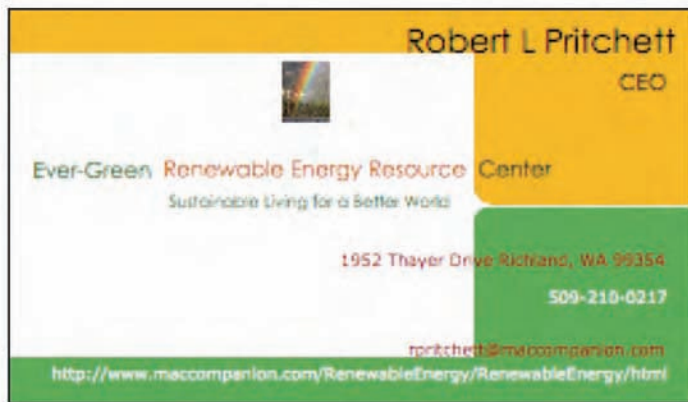
In this particular instance, the back of the card is blank because of the template I picked.

After some tweaking, the envelope looks like this;

And after some more tweaking because the PDF "What you See is What You Get" was not what I got (website address bleedover), the Letterhead now looks like this;

Now when this project gets real, I can change the address and Email info once and it should be good to go with this program.

The Admin.osx part of the program could use some tweaking of its own as well. When it first comes up, the text is stacked on itself until the program reformats and sorts itself out. It seems to be a work-in-progress.

It won't take long to become proficient with this program. It just needs to learn to play nicer with the other apps from Laughingbird Software and perhaps recognize Adobe CS3 when that is also installed on a machine.

CSSEdit

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie

Developer: Jan Van Boghout
Space Carrot BVBA
Rodestraat 10 B-2000
Antwerpen Belgium
http://www.macrabbit.com/cssedit/
Released: April 2007
$30 USD.
**Blog:** http://www.macrabbit.com/blog/

Strengths: Easy to use, OS X design, lots of features.

Weaknesses: None.

Introduction

I am relatively new to web design and I wanted to check out some applications. I hope to start my own web site design business but I needed to learn the languages. CSS was one of them. I stumbled upon this application while I was on the Apple website and it caught my attention. It is great! It's an easy way to make Cascading Style Sheets a lot faster.
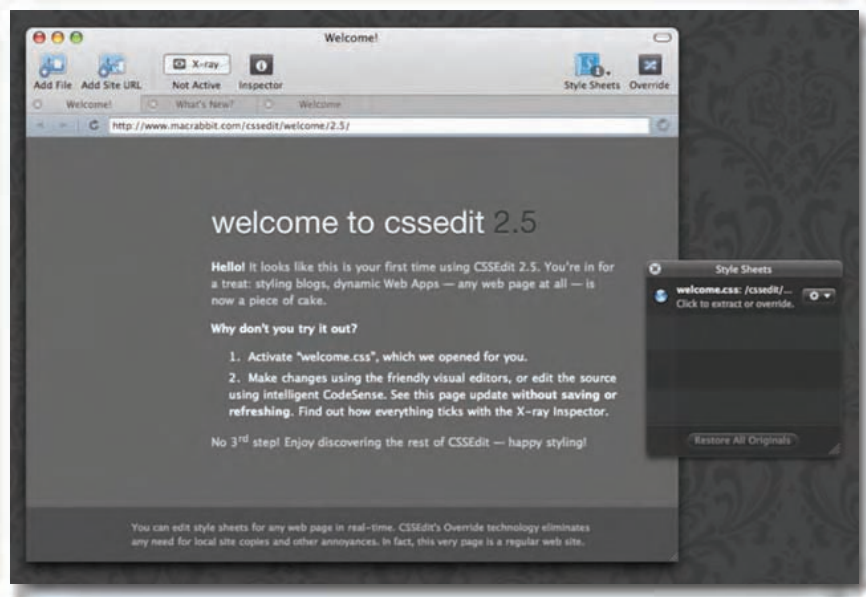

Getting Started

The installation, like most apps these days, was just dragging it into the Applications folder. Nothing else to it. The first time you start the application, there is a sample CSS sheet of which you can play around with. A preview screen pops up which is tuned to the sample CSS sheet so you can edit it and see the changes.

Screenshots: http://www.macrabbit.com/cssedit/screenshots/

Using the Software

There are two main parts of the program; the preview window and the main programming window. Lets start with the main programming window. There is a programming window which lets you type in CSS codes manually or edit the things the program puts there. On the left of that, there is a lift of all of the different parts of the style sheet. On the right, there are buttons which you can click and the program automatically puts in the attributes. It makes constructing style sheets a whole lot easier. You have many options at the top of the screen. Create a group of styles, a new comment, a new style, etc. You also have the option to export the style sheet into multiple web documents at the same time. It work seamlessly. I put in a couple of HTML documents and hit OK. No loading period, it was just there. Very easy to use. Another feature is the Milestone feature. If you reach a certain point in your project, you can use this feature to make a save of the file at that time. If something goes wrong, you can revert back to it. It's like a backup. There is a built-in validation system to validate your CSS. It is base upon the W3C standards for CSS. It works and looks beautifully.
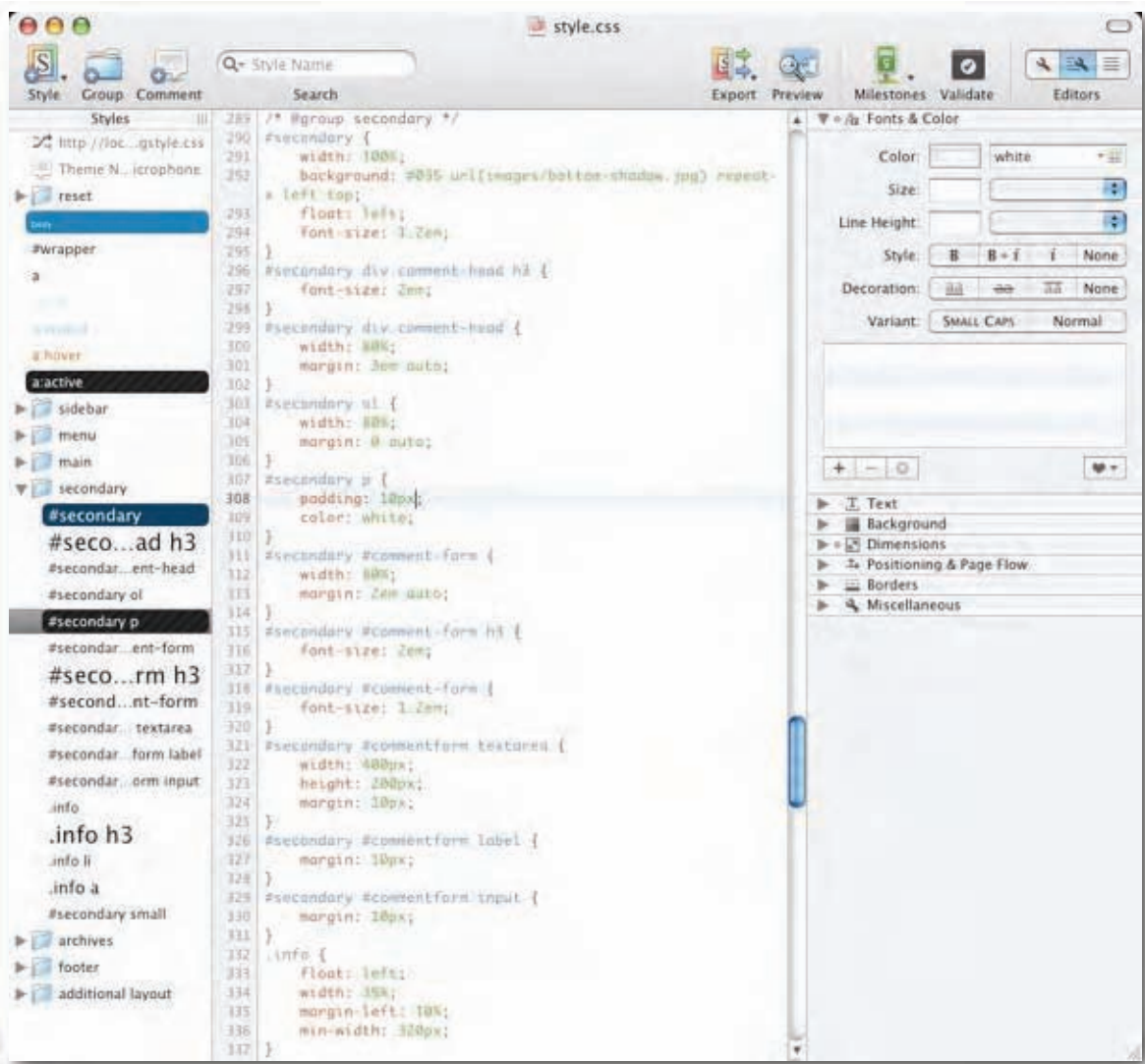
The second window is a preview window. With this window you can load and examine any HTML document on the web or on your hard drive. This preview window lets you view multiple pages using tabs, lets you know how many style sheets each page has and an X-ray mode. This mode lets you examine each component of the site without using the source code. At the top, when you click on an element, there is a list of the elements that are associated with that component. It's just another way to look at something.

Conclusion
This is an excellent product. All of these features make it a lot easier to create style sheets. Anyone who uses or creates style sheets would benefit enormously from this product. Excellent job, MacRabbit!

Recommendation
Anyone who creates style sheets should check out this application.

GarageBand 203: Podcasting in GarageBand

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre

PO Box 93598
Vancouver, BC
V6E 4L7
(604) 357-3118
FAX: (778) 786-1331
http://www.macprovideo.com
$20 USD, $30 CND, £14 UK
Released: March 2007
**System Requirements**: Mac OS X 10.4 or later;
Universal binary; QuickTime 7.

Strengths: Learn how to record, enhance, and
distribute podcasts using GarageBand. Easy to follow
and easy to learn. "Hyper Learning."

Weaknesses: A bit short. Having to use the N.E.D.
system a bit odd, but understandable after you see the
advantages.

For a demo of this product: http://www.macprovideo.com/tutorial/PodCastingGB

Introduction

Paul Garay is Apple's main Podcast trainer, so he knows a thing
or two about Podcasting, and using GarageBand in particular to do
it. He has his own podcast, Inside Home Recording Show, and
uses it as well as this tutorial to give you a boost when learning
about the ins and outs of podcasting, including recording and
editing podcasts, using GarageBand's built-in DSP effects to
compress and EQ your voice to give it that big podcast sound,
making enhanced podcasts with images and URL links listeners
can click, and publishing your podcast on iTunes or through
iWeb.
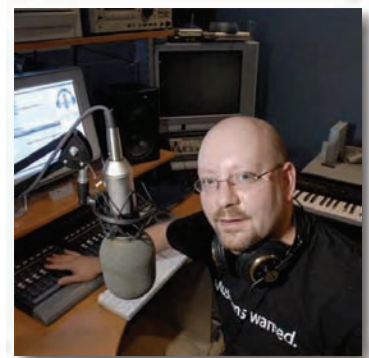
Of particular note, there's also a detailed section on recording remote interviews with people
over the web, via Skype.

Getting Started

Starting the online tutorial requires the installation of N.E.D., or Nonlinear Educating Device. This is a Mac or Windows exclusive video player for all of macProVideo content. N.E.D. features a revolutionary integrated download manager that incrementally and progressively downloads your tutorial videos. Start watching tutorials immediately while the rest download in the background.

The software includes a menu system to list chapters, sections, etc. on the tutorial. You can search videos using keywords, resize videos including full screen. One of the features I like is the Hyper Learn, which speeds up the replay of the video.

Using the Software

There is plenty to learn in this tutorial. This is actually the second video in the GarageBand training series, the first being GarageBand 101: Mastering GarageBand, reviewed in the February edition of the macCompanion.

There are 7 different sections, totaling about 2 hours total of video tutorial. The entire table of contents is as follows:

Section 1: What is a Podcast?
01: How Podcasts Work
02: Subscribing to a Podcast
03: Other Podcast Directories
04: Other "Podcatching" Software
05: Useful Websites About Podcasting
06: Apple's "Podcast Recipe" Seminar

Section 2: Setting Up to Record
07: Setting Up Your Playback System
08: Configuring Your Audio Hardware and Mic
09: Configuring a USB Microphone
10: Creating a Podcast Episode in GarageBand
11: Making a Test Recording

Section 3: Recording Your Podcast
12: Recording With a Single Microphone into GarageBand
13: Recording With 2 Microphones into GarageBand
14: Recording a Remote Interview via iSectionat
15: Remote Interviews via Skype and Audio Hijack
16: Using the Built-in Sectionannel Strip Presets
17: Using the Sound Effects Software Instrument

Section 4: Editing Your Podcast

18: Cut, Copy, and Pasting Regions
19: Deleting Audio Regions
20: Tightening Up the Pace of Your Podcast
21: Adding Built-in Jingles, Stingers and Sound Effects
22: Adding "Podsafe" Music
23: Using the Ducking Feature

Section 5: Mixing and Bouncing Down

24: Adjusting Volume and Pan Settings
25: Adding Volume and Pan Automation
26: Adding EQ to Your Voice or Music
27: Adding Compression to Your Voice
28: Adding Reverb to Your Voice
29: Adjusting the Overall Volume

Section 6: Creating an Enhanced Podcast

30: What is an Enhanced Podcast?
31: Adding Episode Info and Artwork
32: The Media Browser
33: Adding Images to the Podcast Track
34: Adding Markers to Your Podcast
35: Editing Marker Regions
36: Adding URL Titles and URLs
37: Adding Section/Chapter Titles
38: Deleting Markers

Section 7: Publishing Your Podcast

39: Sending a Podcast to iWeb
40: Sending a Podcast to iTunes
41: Exporting a Project as a Podcast Episode

Conclusion

As you can see, there is a lot to learn in a relatively small amount of time. The information is put straightforward in an easy to learn manner. The lessons are progressive and watching it being done is a lot easier than trying to read about it.

For the money, it's a great tutorial that you can not only watch, but download and backup to CD or DVD for the long haul.

Live Interior 3D 1.1

Reviewed by Ted Bade

BeLight Software, Ltd
PO Box 47
65005, Odessa
Ukraine
+380 48 738-08-49
info@belightsoft.com
http://www.belightsoftware.com
Released: April 2007
$80 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; Universal binary;
600 MB Hard Drive Space; CD-ROM drive.

Strengths: Great Mac-like interface, terrific 3D rendering at a click of a button, A good-sized database of objects to work with and access to the Google 3D Warehouse.

Weaknesses: The objects in the database are mostly generic, not specific and Object filename descriptions are terse. There is a learning curve in getting to understand the program's interface.

Live Interior 3D is a home design program. With it you can create a digital version of a room, then modify it to get an idea of what it would look like if you changed certain parts, such as the color scheme, the furniture, or even moving the rooms light sources. It is a good program that is relatively easy to use.

It has been a while since the Macintosh platform has had a home design program. There are several programs for Window's users, but until now, other than using a generic Computer Aided Design (CAD) program, there were few real choices for the Macintosh. Leave it to the great people at BeLight to be the first to bring one to the Macintosh platform!

What Live Interior 3D does is offer a set of tools designed to simplify the task of creating a digital rendering of a room. Once the room is created, you can then furnish the room using items from the provided 1000+ database of objects, or pull them from Google's SketchUp database.

I have played with a number of programs like this and a few CAD programs over the years. They are usually difficult to learn and don't generally produce exactly what you really want. While Live Interiors 3D fits right into this definition, I have to admit it has one of the better interfaces I have yet dealt with. It is definitely one of the most Macintosh-like programs of this genre I have ever seen, which should be taken as a seriously positive comment.

These programs tend to be CAD programs with a toolset that benefits a specific task, in this case, creating a room. CAD programs tend to have rules and requirements that seem unnatural to the way the average user thinks. An easy example of this is that you would never try to place a large cabinet in a room upside down or a coat rack 3 inches off the floor. A CAD program has no concept of what the object is, so there needs to be a way to define which side of the object would naturally touch against another object, such as the floor or a wall. Live Interiors 3D provides ways to manipulate and define objects so they take their natural place in the room.
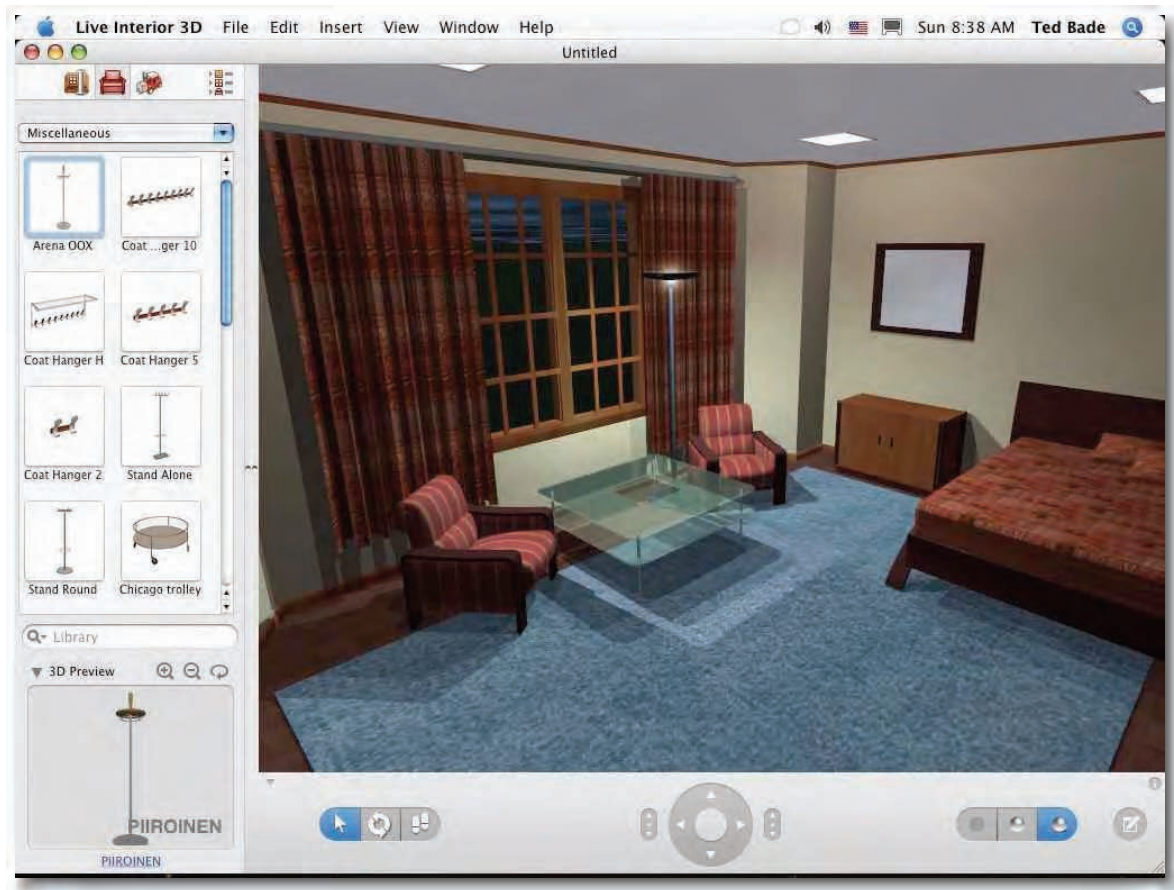
(This is the 3D view of a sample room)

When you first look at a program like this, it is always best to play with some of the provided finished products to see what you can do, once you learn how to use it. Live Interior 3D offers a handful of completed rooms which can be used to learn about the 3D walk around aspects of this program. Let me say that the rendering this program provides it really nice. You can turn on or off light sources and shadows. If your Mac has the power, turning everything on gives a really nice view of the room.

While the image is nice, I find that the perspective one gets in the program is not anything like the perspective I would get if I stood in the room, (or at least what I think I get). When viewing a room with this program, I get the feeling that I am a man trying to view a tiny Hobbit's space. If you have ever tried to take a photo of a small room with a standard camera lens, you will probably know what I mean. The resulting images never truly represent the room.

I also found the navigations tools in this program a bit difficult to manage. There are three means of moving. The footprint icon gives you QuickTime VR type controls. I found the controls acted too quickly; it was difficult to get the perspective I wanted. Another control lets you spin in place and a virtual iPod-like click wheel can be used to maneuver about. In the real world, you can back up until you hit a wall. In the virtual world, you easily go through the wall, so as you back up, suddenly you are outside the room,looking at the other side of the room's wall. Being able to get a perspective from beyond a wall would be nice, if the wall would become invisible. The controls take a little getting used too.

After you complete your project, you can place one or more cameras in the room and use these for making images and to start your view whenever you open it. This is also a good tool for creating a still of your planned project. It would have been nice to add the ability to change the camera (you can move it about) so that you could get a slightly smaller perspective. In the real world this would be like using a fish eye lens to view the room.

Although playing with the canned rooms can be a real treat, the real value of a program like this is to be able to create a room in your house that you want to work with. Live Interior 3D was good at helping me do this. I won't say it made it an easy task, but the program is designed in such a way that the difficulties of doing such as task can be dealt with.

To give this program a whirl I decided to reproduce my living room. We wanted to replace the drapes and would love to see a variety of colors in the room before we bought anything. So I set out to build the living room of my house as a test project.
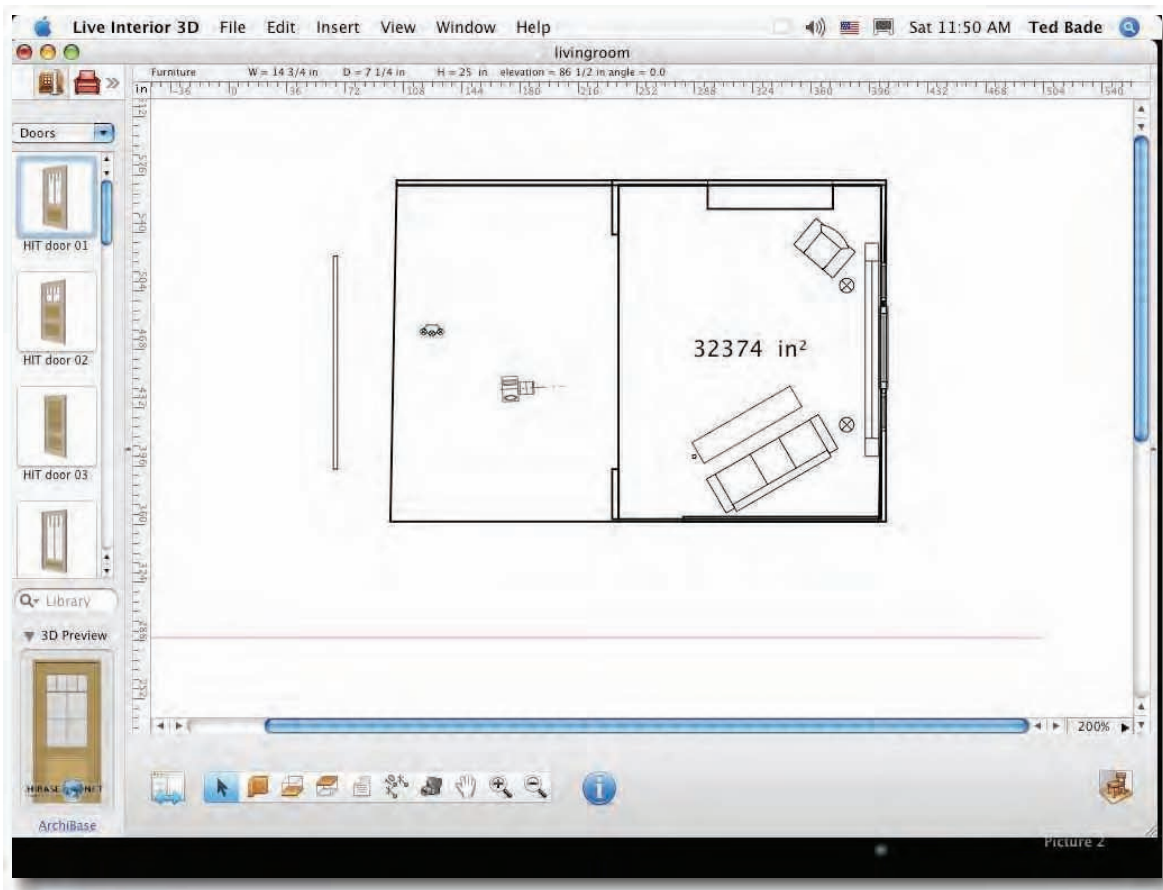
(A 2D view of my project)

One would think that a room is four walls, a door, some windows, and perhaps a few other features. To reproduce one's actual space can be a challenge. Getting the correct dimensions is the first challenge. There is a lot of "homework" associated with getting the actual dimensions of your living space. This includes items one might consider minutia, such as the thickness of walls. While it won't matter for the interior look, if you are putting together an entire house, wrong wall thicknesses can cause some issues.

In Live Interior, it's easy to build a room. To create the wall, you select the wall tool, drag for the length of the wall, then click to stop. Since the tool was designed to draw a room, it wants to continue around the corner to make four walls. My living room opens to the dining room and really has only two walls, the third wall is a railing which is open to the stairs down to the front door. Once I got past the fact that I had to convert my carefully measured lengths from feet/inches [Editor: the Preferences can be changed to feet/inches] to all inches, it was easy to adjust the wall to its exact dimensions. However, I still don't know why one cannot just simply type in the dimensions one wants and let the program draw it. I was never very good using a mouse to draw a measured distance, so I struggled a bit trying to get things exactly right.

Now I had the two walls of my living room, with an opening from the adjacent dining room and an opening to where the railing is. Next we paint the walls. The standard wall in Live Interior 3D has two sides, and molding near the ceiling and the floor. Each of these parts can be colored separately. Live Interior 3D offers a fair selection of paint colors. Again, they are generic rather then those offered by a particular paint manufacturer. However, you can use the materials tool to create a custom material. In my case, I went to the manufacturer of the paint I used in my living room and found the color, made a copy of the paint chip they provided and pulled that into Live Interior 3D. A little work, but not that hard. Besides paints, Live Interior 3D offers a wide variety of other materials to use and you can create just about anything else. What is cool is that you can enter the 3D view, select the object you want to color and see the effects of the color as you change it! Just be sure to turn on lighting, otherwise you will get a dull image.

(Light are off, a dull image results)

Next we added the windows. Live Interior 3D is very nice about how windows are added. You select the window, make sure the dimensions are what you want, including the height of the window above the floor, then place the window where it needs to be on the wall. The program takes care of removing the necessary piece of wall. The window then becomes an see-through object. That was very cool. My problem was finding a window that looked remotely like the ones I own.

This is a little item of contention that I have with programs like this and the building industry in general. Companies are so caught up in licensing and "protecting" their rights that a designer or a consumer finds it very difficult to get a digital rendering of the items he or she actually wants to use. Live Interior 3D includes a number of basic items, which one can use in a pinch, but ones which your probably won't find in your house.

Live Interiors also includes an interface to Google's "Sketch-Up" item database. You can use Google's search engine to locate an object that closely resembles what you have. Even in that database I couldn't find many of the actual items in my basic living room. While this is not a problem specific to Live Interiors, I am frustrated about it. The advantage of accessing Google's database is that they provide the tools to create items, so a lot of people have created and then share what they create. [Editor: They also "forgot" to add bathroom features to the basic room set.]

Live Interior 3D will let you manipulate the dimensions of an object. In my case, I chose a standard window from their database which looked a little like those I own and manipulated the size to match mine. An issue I had with the program comes in here. Objects used in this program obviously have a lot of properties, all of which can be manipulated to suit your design. For some reason, the designers created two separate means of accessing these properties, which the user accesses in different ways. In the case of my windows, I wanted to change the standard dimensions to match those in my project. There were boxes to put the dimensions in, but I couldn't get it to work, until I discovered that the other means of accessing this object had a lock on the dimensions and the dimension ratio. The "keep ratio" lets you change one dimension and the other dimensions change in a similar fashion, basically changing the size of the object. If you need to change the shape of the object, you need to turn off the ratio feature as well. Besides the dimensions of the window there is an important dimension of height above floor! I forgot to write this one down and had to run back upstairs to get it!

Adding the other objects in the living room was also a task. Few items I could find were close to what I actually own. I wasn't impressed with the objects in either the Live Interior 3D or the Google database. At best, I was able to locate things that were close. What I would like to do is recreate my actual environment, and use this basic model to try design features. Is it too much to ask that I actually be able to see representations of my actual furnishings? [Editor: images can be imported as PDF, JPG or PNG files.]

Then there was the wall of my room that is a railing and a stairway. Don't get me started about that. Live Interiors offers a variety of objects including vases and painting to put on the wall, but no railings. They do offer columns, but that would require finding one I like, shrinking it down and finding an object to set on top. It is doable, but not something I was going to try for this review. I finally settled on just putting a wall there, leaving the opening for the central corridor.

I had to do a little creative searching and work to locate other objects in the living room as well. Live Interior 3D didn't provide a fireplace that was close to what I have, but I did find a sofa and lamps that were acceptable. Here again the Google database was a real help.

(A window to Google's database of objects)

Then came the time to install the curtains, the main purpose of this exercise. You can use a work search when accessing the Google database, but not so inside of Live Interior 3D. The Live Interior 3D side bar shows four "tabs"; three for accessing objects and the fourth shows a project tree of the items in your current project. The three item tabs are "Building Elements", "Furnishings", and "Google 3D Warehouse". I had almost given up on finding even basic curtains, the noticed one of the canned rooms had them, so I searched through all the furnishing sections and found them at the bottom of Miscellaneous. The thumbnails of the objects and their names are cramped into the limited sidebar area, any name more then a few characters is impossible to read. It might have been nicer to open a separate window with these objects, so one could spread out a bit more. Luckily, mousing over the object shows the full name. With the curtain object in hand, I changed their size to fit my dimensions and put them where they belonged.
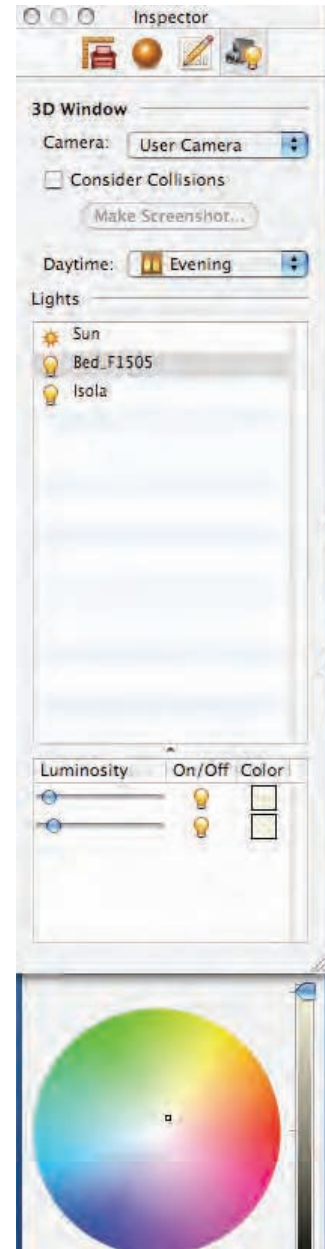
(controls)

Using Live Interiors to search the Google database is easy. Finding what you want is like any search, you need to use the same word for the object that the person creating it used. However, Google lets the creator add other words that might help another locate the object. First you select the Google search icon, which looks like a truck. This opens a browser window inside of Live Interior 3D. There is a text box for the search word. Once you enter the search words and hit return, Google returns a group of matches. For my drapery search, I first used: "drapery" which found four entries, two were drapes, a canopy bed and an office space. I selected the curtain item that was close to a drape shape and clicked on download. Live Interior 3D then downloaded this into the program and placed it on my diagram. I then had to change it dimensions, colors, and position to suit the image.

Lighting is an important aspect of seeing your finished design. You need to make sure you account for light sources including ambient light. I placed two stand lamps in the living room I was building, corresponding to where they sit in reality. The program allows you to change the luminosity of the lamps, but I could find no way to manipulate the color temperature of the light sources. The program can show the effects of sunlight or moonlight on the room. You can tell Live Interior 3D which direction the room is facing, then choose a time of day, it will locate the sun (or moon) as a source of light [Editor: It allows for morning, day, evening and night]. One needs to play around a lot with the lights to get a view that resembles what happens in reality. In my case, I needed to place a lamp in the space that would be my dining room if I had continued in that direction, to get a lighting effect similar to what I really have. Luckily Live Interior 3D didn't have a problem with me placing a light without first defining the room. [Editor: I found the "Luminosity" controls and added them to the other tow control pictures above.]

Floors and ceilings are automatically created when you create a room (four walls). In the case of my two-wall living room, I needed to define and add the floor so I could attach a carpet, which is obviously a source of reflected light. You can capture a color and a texture for a rug (or any other material). All you need is a digital image of it. I didn't try grabbing colors from an actual image, but I did extract the color and texture from a carpet manufacturer site. The result looks pretty good.

(The finished product!)

If you want to see the effects of changing the carpet or flooring, just create new materials with the correct names, select the floor and go into the 3D view. With the materials inspector window open, you can change between the various items you want to see. Again, the only problem with this is that the color of the lamps in the room might not match those in your home. In my living room I have two floor lamps that have full spectrum fluorescent bulbs in them. The color of these lamps is a lot more blue and a lot less yellow then the standard incandescent lamps that would typically be used in these lamps. The color of your light source has a big effect on the look of the materials in the room.

Overall, I found Live Interiors 3D easy to use, once I got past the learning curve. The learning curve isn't very steep, but you do need to put a little work into it. There are a lot of aspects of this program I didn't even try. As with any design program, expect to do a lot of work preparing your space.

If you are a real stickler for perfection, you will probably need to create most or all of the items in you spaces. People who are willing to accept a general idea can easily put a generic space together. BeLight have proved to be a great company, so I expect to see a number of the issues I have with the program resolved as they improve it. I intend to have a little chat with them about light sources!

Live Interiors 3D will help you design a room or floor. It will give you a good idea of how things will look. It might be hard to get an exact image, but it will be easy to use this program to get a very good idea of what it will be like. I think it is well worth the money. It has a definite Macintosh feel to it and is easier to use then any of the Window's versions I have tried in the past. If you are working on a design project, I highly recommend this program.

MarsEdit

Reviewed by Michael Potter

Developer: Daniel Jalkut
Red Sweater Software
support@red-sweater.com
http://www.red-sweater.com/
Acquired: 22 February, 2007
http://www.red-sweater.com/press/MarsEditAcquisition.html
$25 USD
Forum: http://www.red-sweater.com/forums/viewforum.php?id=6
System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; Universal binary; 6MB Hard Drive Space.

Strengths: Easy to set up, small footprint, decent multi-blog organizational tool.

Weaknesses: Creation and editing of blog entries is weak.

For a 30-day demo of this product: http://www.red-sweater.com/marsedit/

Introduction

Stretching back into the early 80's the concept of posting summarized information, whether it be of a personal nature or the aggregation of news from multiple sources, is not new. Blogs themselves, as we might recognize them today, began as refinements of the online diary. With the advent of online posting tools such as LiveJournal, Blogger and others, blogging became less labor intensive and evolved into a place on the Internet designed to make the dissemination of ideas easier for the masses. Sure, many decry the existence of blogs as proof the "million monkeys" theory is false, however, I'm a fan of blogging even if not a big blogger myself. Blogs have progressed from being a sub-page of a much larger site to becoming the site itself; the exclusive home page for many who otherwise would have no interest or skill to create an entire site from scratch. Without blogging, many of my friends and family members would be unable to share their thoughts, pictures, spoken word and even video, as easily as they can now. Though blogs continue to provide a way for writers and poets to test new ideas and techniques, most recently, they've evolved yet again to become well respected and reliable sources of information from major news organizations and smaller independent journalists alike.

However, despite the many advances over the years, for some, maintaining a blog can still be a chore. The web based interfaces are often slow (or worse, down for "maintenance") and, more critically, the inability to work "offline" is a hindrance to many -- there's nothing worse than when the Muse knocks on your door and you're not able to answer! Certainly the option exists to compose your entry in your favorite text processor, but when you go back online and the final words are pasted into the compose window, many times the formatting is lost and now your efforts have doubled.

Enter MarsEdit. MarsEdit seeks to resolve these difficulties and improve upon them at the same time by adding organizational tools to your arsenal that make creating and maintaining multiple blogs easier and less time intensive.

Getting Started

Installation of MarsEdit is straight forward. A simple drag and drop of the small 6 MB program to the Applications Folder shortcut provided in the Disk Image is all that's needed.

The first time you run the program, you'll be greeted with a user-friendly Getting Started dialog box:

Though many other weblog editors offer this same feature, I've not had one work as well or as seamlessly as MarsEdit's does. After typing in the Weblog name and URL, MarsEdit prompts you for the username and password and then immediately downloads all recent posts from your blog as well as your settings such as tags you've set up in the system.
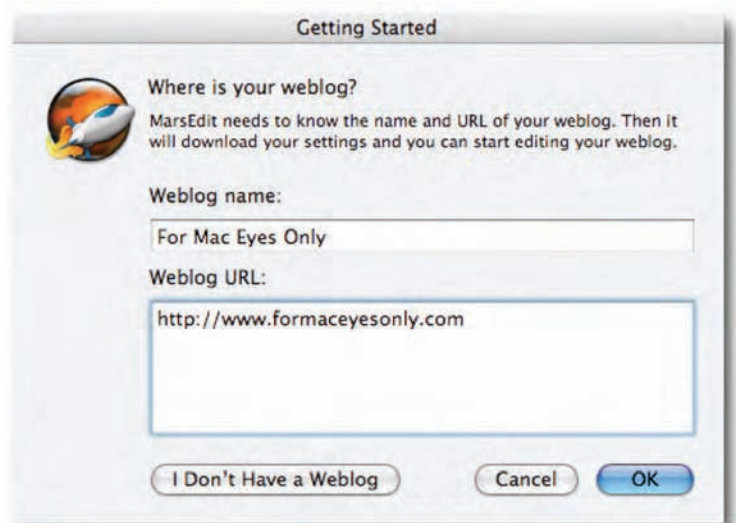
The main interface is sparse – but in a good way – containing only a handful of buttons needed to get started with your blog. The lower half of the window contains a Preview area to give you a rough idea of what your post will look like when published.

Clicking the Weblogs button opens a drawer with a list of the blogs currently set up in MarsEdit as well as access to the Drafts folder.

Using the Software

Since the main function of keeping a blog is writing and editing your words, I'm going to focus on that for this review.

The first thing you'll notice when you compose a new blog entry is that Rich Text editing is conspicuously absent. Instead, you are typing in what amounts to be "plain text". In truth, you're coding HTML. If you want to, say, bold a word, you highlight it, drop down on the HTML menu and choose Bold. MarsEdit will automatically add the appropriate   tags to your text. There are HTML tags for just about anything you'd want to do, but it's definitely an old-school approach.

In what is probably the most annoying (in a gnat buzzing about your head sort of way) aspect of the program, it will not automatically interpret your line breaks as you type, forcing you to utilize its Scripts menu to "Add Paragraph Tabs." After two or three entries, your brain will slowly become hardwired to run this script before saving, but why should I have to? Fortunately, if you forget to use the script to add the tags, save the draft and then realize your mistake, MarsEdit is kind enough to remember that you used breaks so you don't have to go through manually entering them all again. So, if it's smart enough to do that, why can't it add the tags on its own?

In a glaring example of how difficult to work with MarsEdit's edit mode can be, here is an example of an existing blog entry I opened to modify:
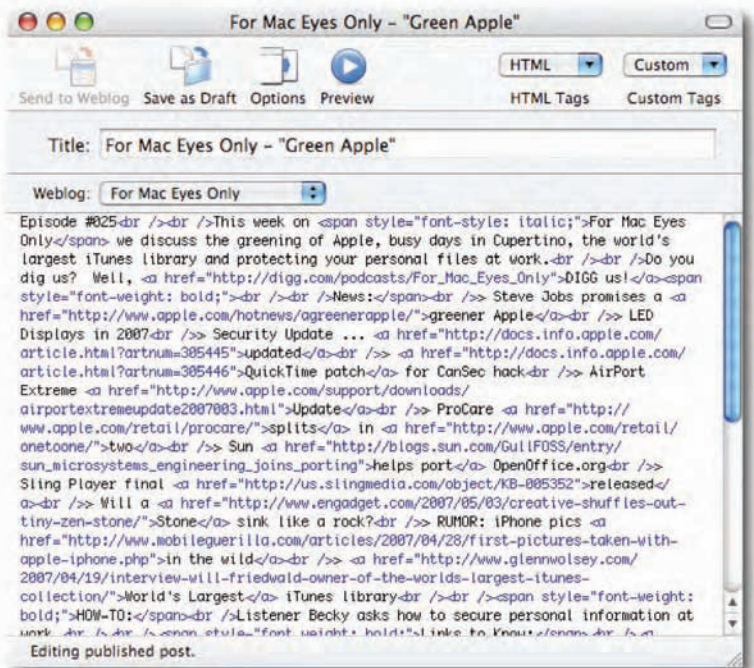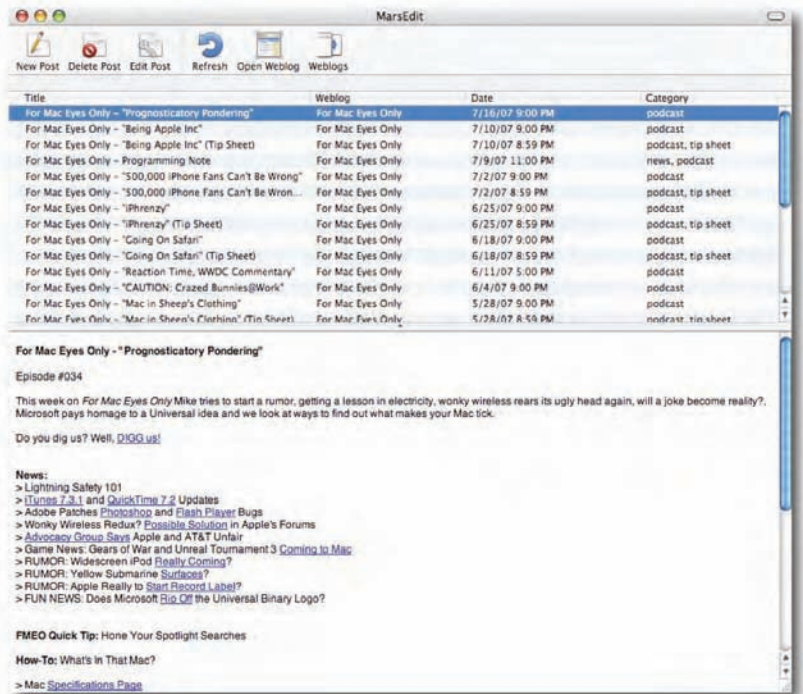
There is a Preview button which works well to see your work in progress, but you can't edit text in the Preview window. You do have the option to turn on "Live Preview" but that requires a constant shift in vision from one window to the other to ensure what you're creating is coming out how you want it to.

I couldn't even click in the Preview window to move my insertion point in the editing window nor could I double click text in Preview to have MarsEdit highlight the corresponding code in the editing window – which would be very handy in the jumbled mess above.

There is an option to insert images, but it doesn't integrate with your iPhoto library so you're stuck rummaging around your hard drive looking for the image you want to use.

A couple useful options found in the Post menu include "Add Technorati Tags", "Edit Date" and "Edit Enclosure". All of these work as expected, though any one of them could have been handled better directly in the editing window (such as the date) or perhaps as drawers off the editing window.

That's one of the things I slowly discovered about MarsEdit: With the exception of Rich Text editing, just because you don't see it, doesn't mean it's not there. Dig around in the menus and you stand a decent chance of finding what you're looking for.

Conclusion

While it certainly makes organizing your blog much easier, it falls apart when it comes to making the creation of posts accessible for those I envision using the program. What should be an easy task, like embedding an image in your post, is several times more difficult than it should be, plus I shouldn't have to use an external editing application to format my text. There's a lot missing from MarsEdit in the usability department. A blogging tool – any tool designed to make life easier – should strive to be better than the tools it's replacing. MarsEdit does not fit that bill.

Recommendation

While the organizational features of the program are nice, they hardly make up for the deficiencies in editing the posts themselves. On one hand it's perfect for those who love to code in HTML – and ONLY HTML – but on the other, that's not the sort of user who needs this program the most. My rating shows how conflicted I am with MarsEdit. While my gut told me to rate it lower, I can see how there might be some who really appreciate what it has to offer, even if what it offers pales in comparison to similar programs. Despite its "Universal Binary-ness", MarsEdit feels like a hold over that hearkens back 10 years to when blogs were kept by hand. With more advanced web and blog editing tools at our disposal, my opinion is that MarsEdit will need to work that much harder to continue to be a viable option for the folks who "just want to keep a blog."

I'll take a look at it again when it hits the next major revision, but in the mean time, there are a number of other packages that do this same job and do it much better.

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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* 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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The *macCompanion* Staff