

macCompanion

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Volume 5, Issue 9

## *Masthead*

### **Publisher**

Editor-in-Chief  
Assistant Editors

MPN, LLC  
Robert L. Pritchett  
Harry Babad  
Michele Patterson  
Harry {doc} Babad  
Ted Bade  
Robert L. Pritchett  
Robert L. Pritchett  
Robert L. Pritchett

### Consultants

Advertising and Marketing Director

Web Master

Public Relations

Contacts

Webmaster at macCompanion dot com  
Feedback at macCompanion dot com  
1952 Thayer, Drive, Richland, WA 99352  
USA

Correspondence

1-509-210-0217

1-888-684-2161

rpritchett at macCompanion dot com

**Skype:** maccompanion

### **macCompanion Staff**

---

Harry {doc} Babad	Ted Bade
Matt Brewer (MacFanatic)	Dr. Eric Flescher
Kale Feelhaver (AppleMacPunk)	Steven Fyffe
Jonathan Hoyle III	Eddie Hargreaves
Daphne Kalfon (I Love My Mac)	Wayne Lefevre
Daniel MacKenzie (Tech Fanatic)	Michele Patterson (Dixie Graphics)
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Dennis Sellers (Macsimum News)	Gene Steinberg (TechNightOwl)
Rick Sutcliffe (The Northern Spy)	Mike Swope (Swope Design)
Tim Verpoorten (Surfbits)	Julie M. Willingham

---

### **Guest Authors**

Linda Cameron, (The Finder)

Chris Eschweiler

Application Service Provider for the *macCompanion*  
website: <http://www.stephousehosting.com>

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In addition, thanks to you, our readers, who make this effort all possible.

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# Table of Contents

## Columns

.....	7
<i>Letter from the CEO</i> .....	7
<b>The Theme</b> .....	7
<i>According to Hoyle</i> .....	8
<b>Looking Forward to Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard, Part II: Xcode 3.0 IDE</b> .....	8
<i>Views from the Ivory Tower -September 2007</i> .....	15
<b>VMWare, Macmini, iPhone bills and AppleWorks</b> .....	15
<i>The Northern Spy</i> .....	17
<b>The Financial Chicks</b> .....	17
<i>Under the Magnifying Glass</i> .....	21
<i>Video Projection, or How I Learned to Love RGBHV</i> .....	24

## Books

.....	27
<i>No Business Like E-Business: The Spectacularly Simple Secrets Behind How You Can Create A Web Site And Make Money With It</i> .....	27

## Greenware

.....	31
<i>The Solar Sterling Engine from Infinia Corporation</i> .....	31
<i>Straw Bale Building How-To Guides</i> .....	37

## Hardware

.....	41
<i>MicroMemo iPod Recorder</i> .....	41
<i>MyVu Made for iPod, solo edition</i> .....	44
<i>Sling Media, SlingPlayer, Slingbox, Oh My!</i> .....	47
<i>SportsWrap iPod Armband</i> .....	51
<i>XRocker Sound Chair</i> .....	54

# Shareware

.....	58
<i>Scribus / aqua 1.3.4</i> .....	58

# Software

.....	65
<i>Finale 2008: Professional Music Management and Notation Software</i> .....	66
<i>GoldenSeal OSX Business Management Software Version 3.9 – For Construction and Small Business</i> .....	73
<i>Keynote ‘08 – Much Better than PowerPoint for Presentations</i> .....	76
<i>Morpheus Photo Animation Suite Mac v. 3.00</i> .....	80
<i>ConceptDraw Project 3 version 3.4: Professional Proactive Project Management</i> .....	85
<i>Sibelius 5</i> .....	89
<i>WebAssist Professional – SuperSuite Adobe Dreamweaver Extensions</i> .....	94
<i>Web Security and IPasswd</i> .....	97

<i>Advertisers Index</i> .....	103
<i>Amazon.com</i> .....	103
<i>Apple Store for Individuals</i> .....	103
<i>Apple Store for Businesses in the USA</i> .....	103
<i>Evo Networks</i> .....	103
<i>TeachMac</i> .....	103

<i>Advertising Information</i> .....	104
Statistical Analysis .....	104
Advertising with macCompanion .....	105
Site Ad Rate .....	105
Affiliations .....	105
Sponsorships .....	105



## *Letter from the CEO*

### *The Theme*

By Robert Pritchett

While everyone in the US is getting back to school and trading airborne diseases in September, we look at music apps as well as Mac-based business apps. Cover your mouth when you sneeze, please.

MPN, LLC has also become an authorized reseller of the **Data Center Express** from *Evo Networks* as a network center designed for businesses that cannot or do not want to afford their own full-time IT department. This roll-around sound-reduced box contains Apple's own Xserve system, and RAID, a *Cisco* Internet box and *Netgear* equipment. Everything ties together and has one powercord to the wall. [http://www.evonetworks.com/website\\_g4/solutions/dce/dce.htm](http://www.evonetworks.com/website_g4/solutions/dce/dce.htm)

*Netgear* just posted a notice that all their equipment sold through *Evo Networks* has a lifetime guarantee.

We were looking for a system that we could use with the *Ever-Green Renewable Energy Resource Center* and discovered this Mac-based system that handles other non-Mac boxes without a problem. The unit begins at just under \$22,000 and businesses can get financing for around \$670 or so per month for 36 months, if they do not want to pay for the complete system up front. How much do you pay for IT services now?

The **Data Center Express** systems are supported remotely. Hopefully we can discuss it at length later. We liked the concept so much, we became a distributor.

Now, so we can stay solvent, we also need you to visit our advertisers, affiliates and Bazaar and purchase products.

As part of *AABA* (Apple Authorized Business Agents), we saw the iPhone available for a short time for sale and then saw it disappear to be replaced with refurb links. We learned that *iLife '08* and *iWork '08* family packs are not intended for small business, but can be purchased through the **Apple Business Agent Store** on our website. Volume licensing is available for 10 or more workstations.

Please continue the whisper campaign and let your family and friends know we exist. We have been publishing *macCompanion* magazine for over 5 years now and it is because of you.

# *According to Hoyle...*

## *Looking Forward to Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard, Part II: Xcode 3.0 IDE*

by Jonathan Hoyle

[jhoyle@maccompanion.com](mailto:jhoyle@maccompanion.com)

*macCompanion*

September 2007

<http://www.jonhoyle.com>

Last month, we reviewed Apple's latest operating system, *Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard*, from an end user's perspective. We now continue looking at *Leopard* but from a developer's point of view; in particular, we will review Apple's latest update to their developer tools: *Xcode 3.0*.

### **Legalese-y Does It**

As a reminder, *Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard* is pre-release software and is covered under a non-disclosure agreement. This means that, prior to its release (due sometime next month), I am not allowed to discuss all of the features that I would like to. I am allowed, however, to discuss any features which Apple has already disclosed to the public, or are otherwise already in the public domain. Fortunately, Apple has documented a great deal about Xcode 3 since the latest *Worldwide Developer Conference*, and I am sure you will be as excited as I am to see these great new features. For more detailed documentation from Apple, visit:

<http://www.apple.com/macosx/leopard/developer/xcode.html> and

<http://developer.apple.com/leopard/overview/tools.html>

The Apple website also makes the following note about these features: *These Leopard overview articles show features and interface elements that are pre-release and may change*. This is important, since Apple has been receiving continual feedback with each beta release of *Leopard*. With only about one month to go, however, I would assume that any changes will be small ones, at this point.

### **Great Leadership**

Much has been written about Chris Espinosa's early days at Apple (he was Employee #8) and the valiant work he did as part of the original Macintosh team. However, I think his best contribution is coming now as Manager of the Xcode IDE Core team. Under his leadership, Xcode is finally becoming a top-flight development tool, worthy of Apple's reputation.



As many of you are already aware, Xcode 1.0 was introduced in 2003 and was little more than an update to the creaky *ProjectBuilder* developer tool used back in the *NeXTStep* days. Most Macintosh developers were still using *Metrowerks CodeWarrior* at the time, and Xcode was an interest only to the student and small smattering of NeXT-turned-Cocoa developers. All that changed in 2005 with Apple's decision to migrate the Macintosh platform onto the Intel processor. Just weeks earlier, Metrowerks CEO David Perkins made the self-destructive decision to sell off its Intel-based tools, despite cries from the developer community of what that could mean. In short order, Perkins killed his own customer base, and Mac developers went scrambling to learn Xcode.

By this point in time, Xcode was at version 2 (the first truly usable version of the product). Cocoa developers had been using Xcode all along and saw only improvements as Xcode evolved. Carbon C++ developers, however, had a much more difficult transition moving from *CodeWarrior* to Xcode. Xcode's slower performance and numerous quirks was a difficult adjustment for many. To this day, many Carbon developers still long for *CodeWarrior*'s combination of ease of use and development power. I am pleased to say, however, that *Xcode 3.0* is in fact a superior product to any release of *CodeWarrior*. And much of this is due to Espinosa's clear-headed direction and understanding of the developer's needs.

### **Civility at last**

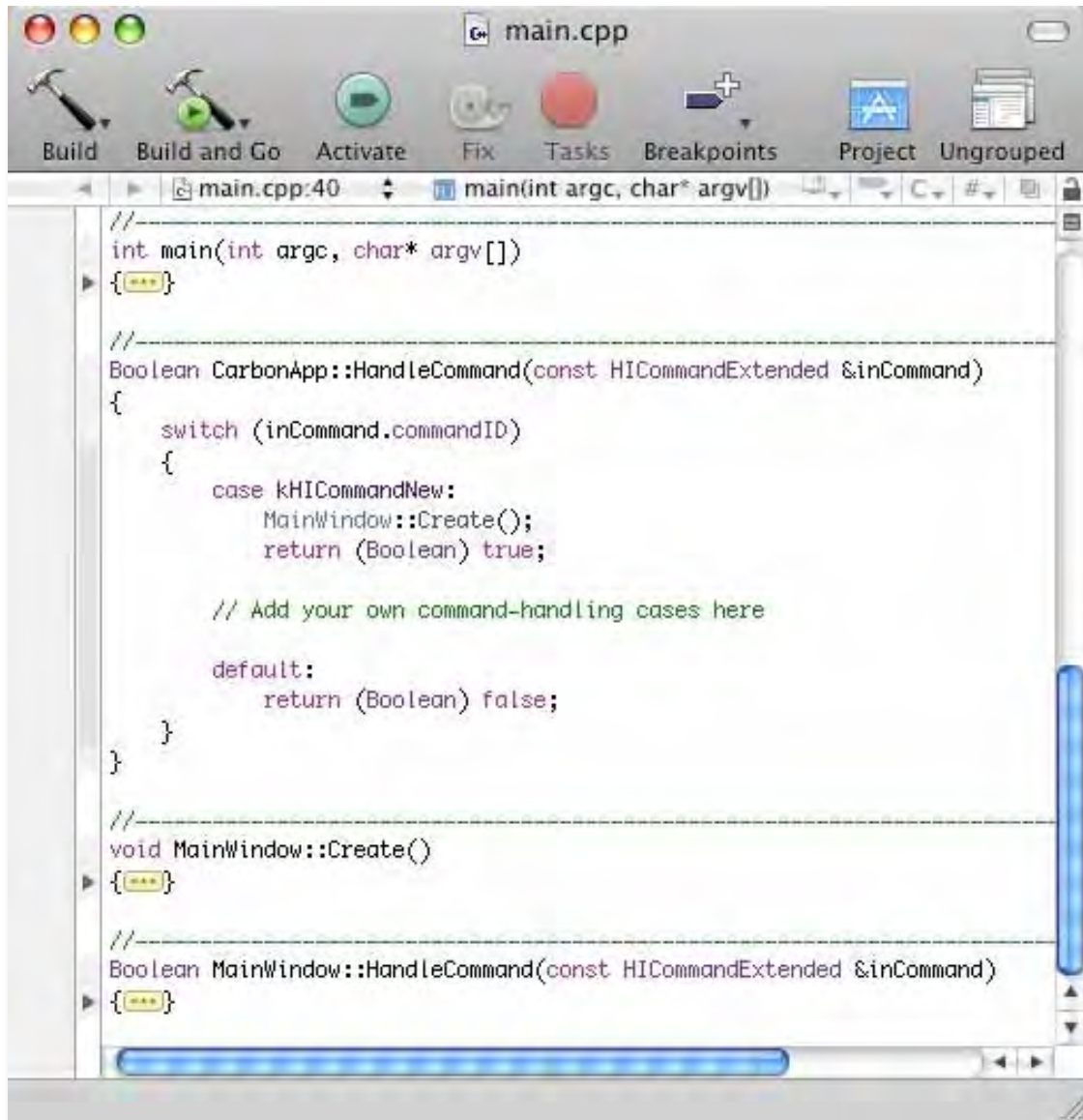
Unlike most other Mac OS X applications, Xcode hasn't always been a very good citizen. Xcode was required to reside in the Developer folder on your boot volume and could not be moved without risking disaster. Worse still, the version of the product was tied to the operating system: Version 1.x would run only on Panther whilst 2.x would run only on Tiger, each with their own project file types. If you had a bug in a different operating system than the one you were developing in, you had to convert your project to the other type just to debug into it. Yechh.

With Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard, all that changes. The Xcode 3 folder is self-contained and can be moved wherever you wish, including a removable hard drive. Furthermore, Xcode 3 plays better with others, allowing you to have multiple versions of Xcode on your hard drive. Thus you can have an Xcode 2.5 (which runs on both Tiger & Leopard) folder, Xcode 3.0 folder and some later Xcode 3.1 folder all on your hard drive. To facilitate cross-development, Xcode 3 is interoperable with Xcode 2.4+, meaning that the file types are compatible. Only when you add Xcode 3.0-specific behavior to your project does the file type get modified, and you are warned with an Upgrade or Cancel dialog.

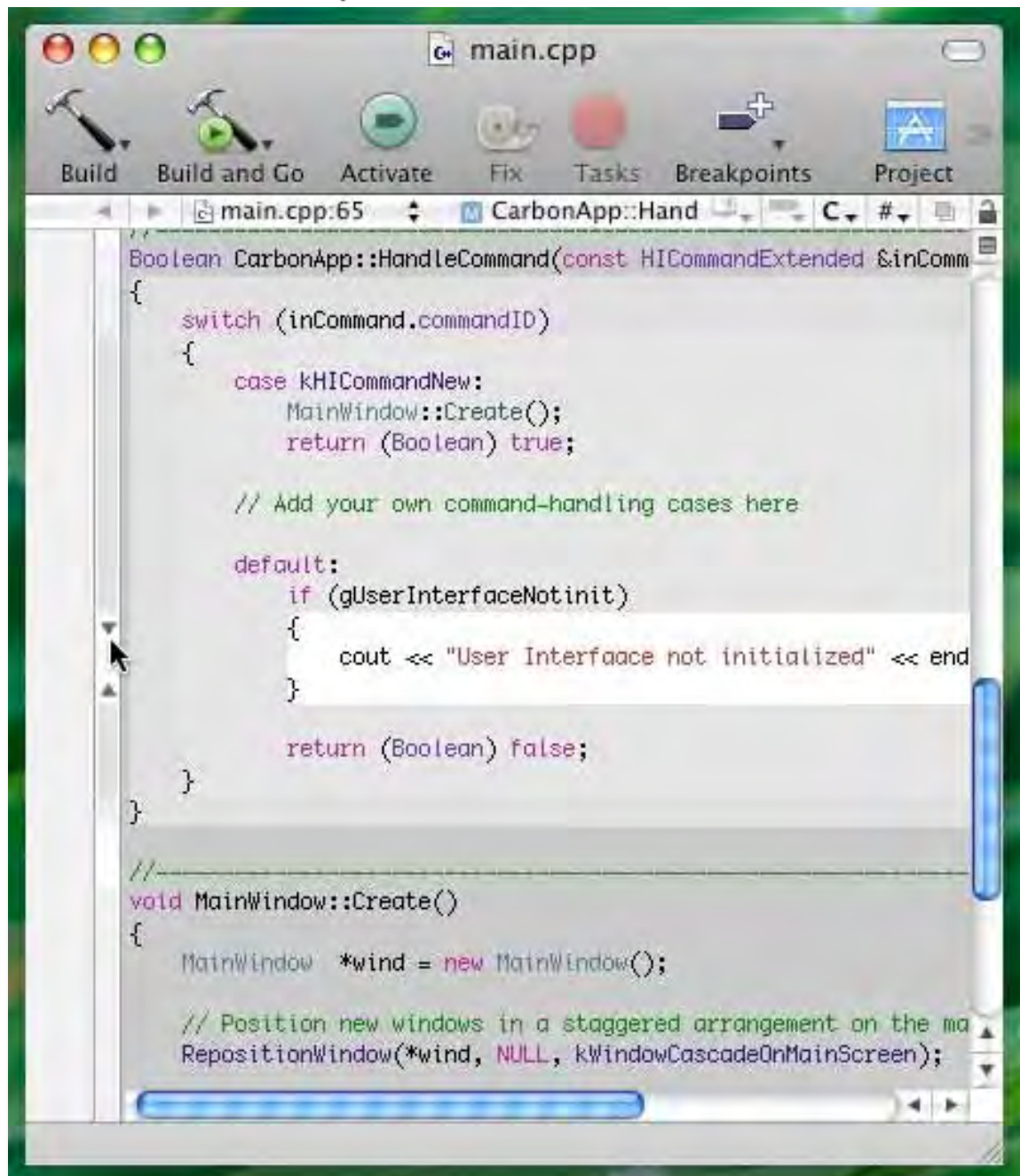
A command line version of the Xcode Editor, called *xed*, is also now available with Leopard, along with the powerful *Xcode Organizer*.

## Editor Improvements

The Xcode editor has been sufficiently enhanced to finally be up to 21st century standards. Those familiar with *Microsoft Visual Studio* will be glad to see the inclusion of *Code Folding*: the ability to collapse logical blocks of code so as to be able to concentrate on the code that is important to you:



Another really nice feature by Apple is *Code Focus*. When turned on, this feature gives visual feedback to the nesting level of your edit selection. Alternatively, you can leave it on all the time to get a handle of the structure of your code:

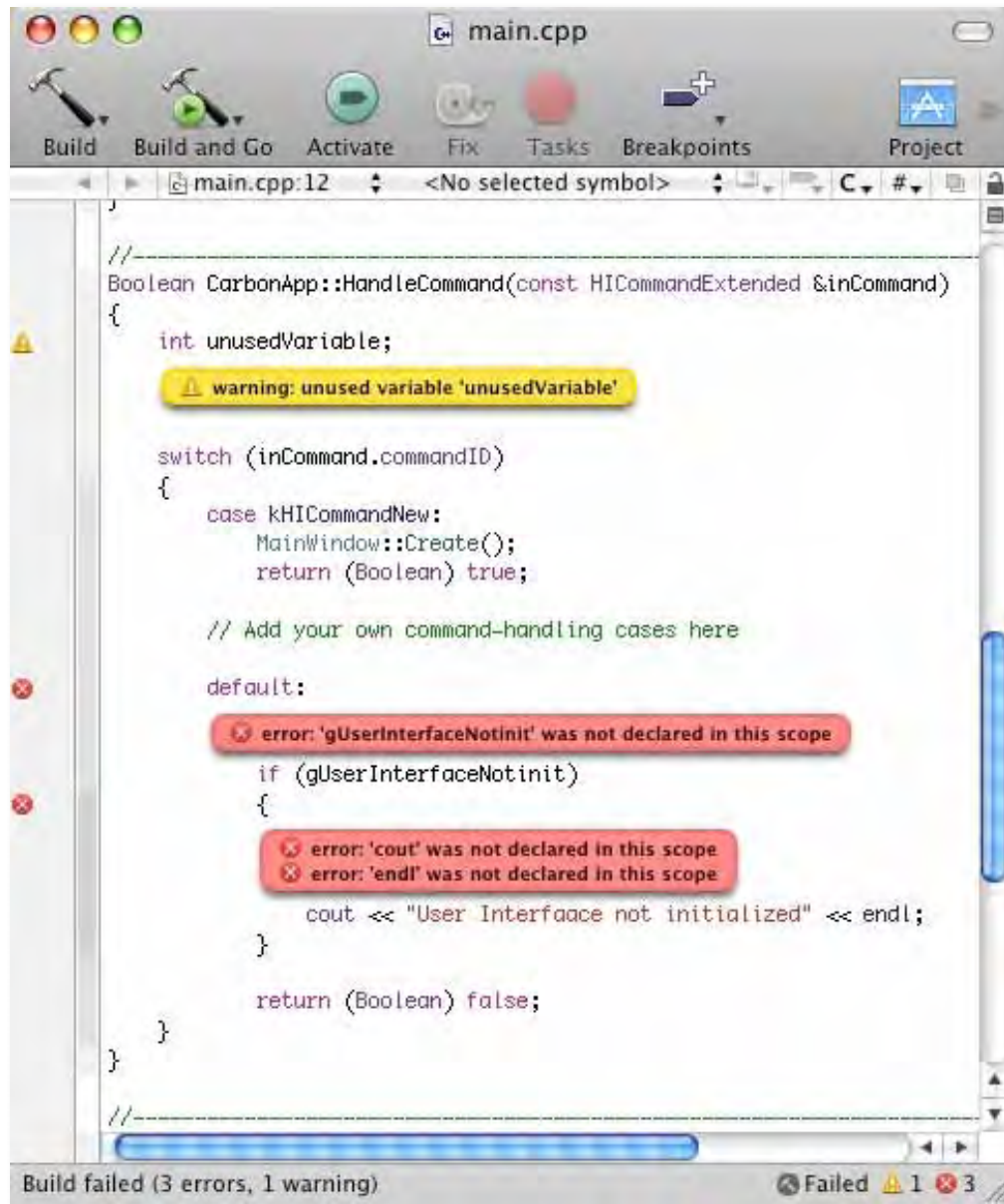


*Code Completion* has been enhanced by allowing an *immediate* option: rather than hit the Escape key to see your choices, you can it run live an auto-fill as you go, as per *REALbasic* or *Visual Studio*. Other changes include performance improvements, additional syntax coloring, an *Xcode News* pane, *Project Find* being integrated with *Spotlight* and documentation nicely integrated into the IDE.

## Goodbye, Debug-Mode!

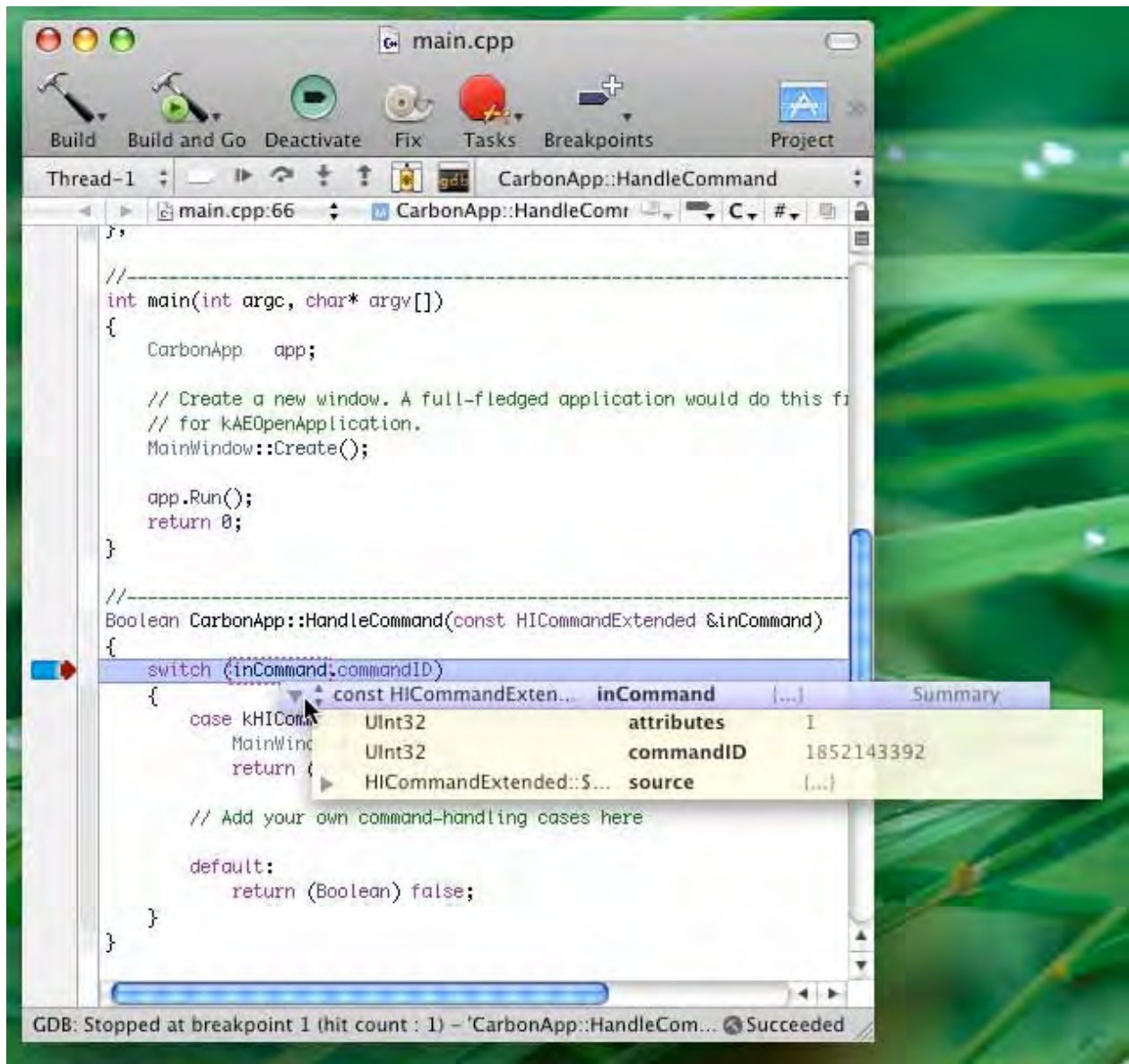
One of Xcode's best features is *Seamless Debugging*. Even back in the *CodeWarrior* days, Mac users have had to deal with mode-based development: Edit-Mode, Run-Mode and Debug-Mode. Your code gets duplicated in three places: the Edit window, the Debugger window and the Error window. With *Seamless Debugging*, all this is in the past. You edit, put breakpoints, and see error messages all in the same edit window. Very nice.

As for your errors and warnings, *Message Bubbles* appear in the editor so that you can see what the problem is:



In addition to the usual errors and warnings, Apple can now display a Message Bubble for deprecated function calls, making it vastly easier to see where your code's greatest weakness and potential problems lay.

Expression evaluation is facilitated with Xcode 3.0's *Data Tips*, allowing you to hover over a variable to view its value:



Xcode 3 has also added support some ANSI C++ types, such as `std::string` and `std::vector<>`, but not general STL containers. I am hoping that future updates to Xcode will generalize this useful feature.

Another extremely nice feature is Xcode 3's *Mini-Debugger*: a debugger living in a floating window, so as not to upset the event stream. This is extremely useful for those debugging full screen applications, or debugging into mouse/key events.

### **Habla usted Ruby?**

The primary users of Xcode are *C++* and *Objective C* developers. However, Apple is truly embracing some of the newer 4GL languages and adding support for them in Xcode. Two languages which are particularly hot right now at Apple are *Ruby* and *Python*. As these languages mature, I expect to see them receive first class citizen support in the not too distant future.

Although Xcode 3 continues support for Java, there does not appear to be a great deal of interest in this arena. Java developers are probably best served moving to a different environment, such as the excellent *IntelliJIDEA* by JetBrains <http://www.jetbrains.com/idea/> , or for those on a budget, the freeware *Eclipse* <http://www.eclipse.org/>

**Coming Up:** We continue our look at development with Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard. See you in 30!

# *Views from the Ivory Tower -September 2007*

## *VMWare, Macmini, iPhone bills and AppleWorks*

By Ted Bade

Wow this has been a very busy period for Apple fans. First the release of the iPhone, then another seemingly very robust application for running Windows (or any Intel-based OS) on your Mac, and finally updates to Apple's consumer desktop computers. We will look at all these items and some other interesting things.

A company called [VMWare](http://www.vmware.com/) - <http://www.vmware.com/>, released a new product that gives an Intel Mac the ability to run many different operating systems. The product is called VMWare Fusion for Mac OS X and it looks like it will become a very serious competitor in the Virtualization market.

Here is a [blog](http://blogs.vmware.com/vmtn/2007/08/top-10-things-y.html) about the product created by the producers, which gives your some idea of what it can do. I had the opportunity see some information about this product and I was impressed –

<http://blogs.vmware.com/vmtn/2007/08/top-10-things-y.html>

I was really impressed with one particular feature that lets the Windows based App run on your Mac OS X desktop, Really what they are doing here is very similar to what Apple did with Classic applications when we moved from OS 9 to OS X. The OS is running, but those parts of it that display the desktop environment just don't show. So it appears that you are running a Windows-only application inside of Mac OS X. Very slick.

I expect that *macCompanion* will provide a full review of this product in the near future. Stay tuned.

Apple had their own little announcement event in early August, which was good news for Macintosh users. They showed us that “computer” hasn't really left Apple! You probably heard that they updated the iMac, iLife, and iWork. We'll leave the full details of these improvements for a real review. One very noteworthy aspect of the iMac update was Apple's move to more recyclable materials. It's display is now glass faced (rather than the less recyclable plastics previous) and the body is now aluminum, again a very easy to recycle material. Great job Apple! Now keep it up. Let's show the world that we can have lots of electronics and a clean environment too!

Apple also quietly released updates to their MacMini line at this time. I think the Mini is a great solution for a variety of situations. We had been hearing rumors of its demise for the past several months. I just couldn't believe that Apple would consider dumping this excellent machine. The newer versions are the same as the last version with slightly faster processors. If you are the type who like to look at performance, take a look at this [benchmark page](http://www.primatelabs.ca/blog/2007/08/mac-mini-performance-august-2007/) concerning the MacMini -

<http://www.primatelabs.ca/blog/2007/08/mac-mini-performance-august-2007/>

We have been hearing all types of information about the iPhone. It didn't take very long for people to figure out how to dump the “phone” part and begin turning this device into a very elegant PDA.

A very humorous aspect of the iPhone are the bills. Apparently AT&T includes excessive amounts of information about what you did with your iPhone in their bill. Take a look at this article concerning the bill, apparently every time the user got data from the web, it was listed in 101 pages of billing information. (<http://arstechnica.com/news.ars/post/20070811>). Apparently AT&T not only itemizes Internet usage, but does the same thing for text messaging. If you haven't seen this [uTube video](#) about a woman and her 300-page bill, you've got to see it! Yes, it's real!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdULhkh6yeA>

In the mean time, environmental groups are up in arms about this blatant waste of paper. And they should be. There is no excuse for this. People don't need and apparently don't really want all this detail. If AT&T needs to provide this information, perhaps they can send virtual billing information, via the... iPhone! It's really funny. Years ago, the Feds broke up Ma Bell. (In case you are young enough not to remember that there used to be only one really, really big phone company in the USA). Perhaps now that Ma Bell is back (as AT&T, who is slowly but surely becoming a really really big telephone monopoly), it's the same old Ma Bell. With those 1950 attitudes towards pollution and environmental concerns, as it, they didn't really exist back then!

☺

Well, whatever the case, it has been fun reading these articles on huge bills. The iPhone is an elegant device that is helping to bring some humor back into the world!

Fare thee well Appleworks - Apple has always offered some program that offered basic features such as a word processor, spreadsheet, and even a database program. Back in the old Apple ][ days, this program was called AppleWorks. It died a quiet death along with the Apple ][ series of computers back in the early 80's. It was replaced by a program called ClarisWorks for the MacOS. ClarisWorks was with us for a long while. Apple spun off a company called Claris Software that offered ClarisWorks, and a soon to be very, very popular program called

[FileMaker](http://www.filemaker.com/) - <http://www.filemaker.com/>

FileMaker was so popular that Claris dumped the ClarisWorks suite of programs to become FileMaker Corporation. Apple took the ClarisWorks suite of software back into the fold and changed its name to AppleWorks.

Well in mid August Apple quietly killed this product. Announcing to vendors that it would no longer be supported. It was to be expected. Apple released an update to iWork, adding a spreadsheet application and changing Pages so that the user could easily change from page layout program controls to more traditional word processing controls.

We will miss you, AppleWorks, you have served our community for a good long time!

Until Next Month, keep on enjoying your Mac!





## *The Northern Spy*

### *The Financial Chicks*

By Rick Sutcliffe

Technology News and Views Since 1983

September 2007

#### **Some old ones have come to roost, particularly**

as the stock market lurches from insane optimism to guarded pessimism, the Ameribuck adjusts to levels more consistent with the massive U.S. trade deficit, and a slew of once respectable companies "adjust" past earnings, replacing past terminological inexactitudes (to use an old Diefenbakerism that once slipped by Parliament's speaker for a day) with newer and figures that may have a one-to-one correspondence with reality.

Latest to get caught creatively cooking books is once-industry-darling Dell, which must now downwards restate four years of earnings by as much as \$150 million. Seems executives wanting to fly above the clouds demanded accounting adjustments to make it appear they had reached quarterly performance targets. The investigation continues, though the rug has probably now been lifted from above most of the swept-under dirt.

Dell's troubles have been nowhere more evident than in stock trading, as the company's market cap is now approximately half that of Apple's.

#### **Meanwhile Apple is flying high**

Indeed, Apple's valuation has now surpassed HP for the first time and is now about half that of Microsoft. Perhaps it's time to start a contest for who can predict the date it will push past that of Billg's former company. It might also be interesting to predict the first quarter Apple's that sales will pass \$10B. Given that the last "big quarter" peak was \$7B, the Spy suggests the next back-to-school/Christmas season.

In the short term Apple continues to spin out new iMac models following the aluminum motif, and with screens to 60cm. A new iPod iteration seems imminent, and the Spy expects another desktop rev next, though towers are clearly no longer a high priority.

Operating systems appear back on track now that iPhone has been released. Builds of 10.4.11 (Tiger) have accelerated, suggesting a release candidate is at hand. New builds of 10.5 (Leopard) have also been sighted. It's too soon to say if the latter can reach us by the end of October, so figure on at least a possible 10.4.12 as the last in the Tiger series. By the way, iSteve, how much would it really cost to include Classic support in 10.5, at least for PowerPCs? Given the still-missing critical features of system X word processors, the Spy needs Classic.

On the software side, the most notable addition is to iWork '08, where one of the Spy's long-term wishes has been partly satisfied with the addition of a spreadsheet. Christened "Numbers", the new offering will surely redefine the seminal application that created the whole personal computer market in the 1970s. (The Spy owned one of the first copies of VisiCalc sold in this country, and some of his models are descendants of ones he wrote back in the day, BTW.)

The newcomer's strength is visual layout. Harkening back to the OpenDoc experiments, a document page may contain a number of independent spreadsheets, set side-by-side with their graphical interpretations. Like so many other things Apple does, beginners and naive users will find this package fascinating, even compelling. However, Numbers is unlikely to replace Excel for corporate and professional heavy number lifting any time soon, as it's weak in formulas and lacks macros of any kind. This will come. Watch out when it does. Thus far, who rules the spreadsheet rules the entire marketplace.

Moreover, Numbers hasn't yet been integrated with other Apple apps in any meaningful way, Pages is not really a word processor, and iWork does not include mail or database, but the Spy is confident that eventually, iWork will surpass all current standard office packages.

So, why market a fresh-look spreadsheet, when its users aren't likely to be old crocs like the Spy--at least not for the first few iterations? Because it's new people, especially the younger ones, that Apple wants to hook. Indeed, iSteve and his boys and girls may well be the best marketers to teenagers ever. Remember the Spy's Fourth Law? In a few years those teenagers will be the young Turks of the industry, buying software and hardware for at least their own use. A few more years beyond, and they will specify purchases for whole departments. What brand will they be predisposed to buy? Just so. Is it any wonder other pundits are now lining up with the Spy's predictions of 15%+ marketshare in the medium term, more in the longer? Indeed a market cusp as all these teenagers begin spending their own disposable income is now a real possibility. In such a scenario, Market share could double or triple in a span of two years.

OTOH, in view of this, Apple's almost complete lack of interest in higher education seems puzzling. Why does the company that markets the future more effectively than anyone else remain missing in action from the hotbeds of the future--the continent's colleges and universities? Apple should be aggressively pursuing higher education partnerships with leading schools to cement the good will those students already have when they arrive in their calculus and programming courses carrying their iPods and iBooks.

### **A notable buzzard disintegrated in a cloud of feathers**

as, on August 10, U.S. District Judge Dale Kimball ruled that perennial litigant SCO doesn't even own the copyrights it was using to threaten or even extort money from Linux users. Rather, Novell owns them.

At this ignominious conclusion, those who gave in to SCO's pseudo-legal blackmail must be scratching their heads over their own motivation for succumbing. However, the companies that actually funded SCO's piratical designs ought to be hanging their collective heads in shame. Indeed, perhaps they too should be subject to audits for possible misappropriation of funds. Perhaps this long-expected decision will give pause to others who today are bringing similar pressure against the Linux community. Ahem.

### **Meanwhile, flying through the not-so-rarefied air,**

at least according to a study by a group of Australian scientists, are far too many ultra-fine toner particles emitted by nearby laser printers. Apparently, if pollution doesn't get you driving to the office in your gas guzzler it'll get you instead on the way past the printer to the water cooler. Will office workers end up sharing silicosis with coal miners.

### **Quote of the month has to be**

from Jim Louderback, departing editor of PC Mag while flying the coop and handing over a few choice comments on Vista to the incoming editor. I've been a big proponent of the new OS over the past few months, even going so far as loading it onto most of my computers and spending hours tweaking and optimizing it. So why, nine months after launch, am I so frustrated? The litany of what doesn't work and what still frustrates me stretches on endlessly. Hey Jim. Shoulda bought a Mac.-

### **New releases this month**

include LemkeSoft's flagship product Graphic Converter version 6, available as usual from the Northern Spy's download site. This full version upgrade does however require users to pay for a new license code.

### **Book of the month**

is *Inventing English* by Saul Lerner-an engaging and fascinating romp through the history of English by a master scholar of the language. Highly recommended.-

--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>

PCMag: <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2171472,00.asp>



## *Under the Magnifying Glass*

**By Steven H. Fyffe**

[sfyffe@maccompanion.com](mailto:sfyffe@maccompanion.com)

Who's Steve Fyffe? My first thought: I am called Papa by Jared, my five year old grandson. This fact alone drew me down the cobblestone path of digital photography and Apple gadgets, but I'll explain that in a few minutes.

I recall it was back in the late '50s that the television program Superman caught my eye, like many other ten year olds at the time. At the crack of dawn, I would ride my bike to a nursery near a small rural village in Ohio to hoe weeds from around bushes and mow grass for fifty cents an hour. My goal was a tape recorder to record that famous intro, "Look, up in the sky. It's a bird. It's a plane. It's Superman!" With this and the camera my grandma had given me, my fascination with gadgets flourished.

I got the awesome responsibility of running the reel to reel projector for my science teacher in junior high. This motivated my interest in science and I went off to college to study medical technology.

Soon after I graduated from the university, I had my very own Super 8 movie camera, just in time to take movies of my sister's first baby. A few months later, along the ice covered shores of Cape Hatteras, I was taking movies of my beloved Pam with whom I eloped to North Carolina for our midwinter marriage. Nine months later my first child, Becky was immortalized in Super 8 silent movies and by the time my second girl, Amy, came along I got a sound movie camera and projector.

Working in a small hospital, I had the responsibility to give a presentation on infection control. I photographed various objects around the hospital and the health care workers performing their duties, and then recorded an audio tape so the folks could listen to the presentation on the various shifts. However, the slide projector operator needed to know when to advance the slides. I had a brilliant idea ... a laboratory beaker half filled with water ... OK, maybe not so brilliant ... you should have heard the laughter when the gonging sound announced each slide!!

I was an early adopter of Pong at home, but my first introduction to computers and programming came in the '70s when we got a programmable laboratory calculator with a card punch device. Later, a company came to the hospital to sell control sera for laboratory tests. To sweeten the deal they gave the hospital lab one of those fancy new personal computers. I can still remember the day it arrived. It was a mystery to my boss and he said I could figure out what to do with it. Great!!! The Apple II was moved into my tiny Microbiology lab and I couldn't wait to crack open the VisiCalc manual. I developed an antimicrobial sensitivity report for the physicians. The Apple II cranked out those reports for several years until I moved on to greener pastures.

I became enamored with this computing tool, uh toy. My wife reminds me, still with a glare in her eye when she tells it, of one Saturday when I was at the hospital and got so involved in programming on the Apple II that I was oblivious to the weather outside. A tornado had hit our little town, and my family was crouched down watching our neighbor's roof fly off ... well I did know it was raining kinda hard and of course didn't want to get wet.

This gave me an excuse to get my own computer at home, but when I checked the prices of Apple IIs and discovered that they cost as much as my car, I kept looking. Believe it or not, I found a so-called Apple-clone at Toys-R-U's made by Texas Instruments, but it coughed up a fur ball when I tried to load VisiCalc, so back to the store it went. After waiting awhile, I got a Commodore 64. It was great fun and I used it for Basic programming with an application called S.A.M. which talked to my girls when they did their lessons for our home school.

When I started taking Theology classes in the 80's, the Commodore 64 was programmed by a friend to handle Greek and Hebrew fonts, but eventually I needed a Biblical Greek grammar program only available on a PC running DOS. So in the midst of the illumination from God's Word, I was drawn to the dark side of the computing world, as I dragged my family off to a quiet Indiana town to go to seminary.

Although I had heard of an all-in-one computer called a Macintosh, I had lost track of what Apple was doing in the '80s and '90s. I primarily used a PC for writing papers for school and learned a little programming in DOS for work, but never had any formal training in the cyber arts. When Windows came on the scene, it became a necessary burden to deal with at work. Also, I used it to publish a news magazine for our church fellowship and in teaching Biblical Greek in our Theological Practorium, but I had limited uses for the PC at home, except to play games, like Frogger.

Then, along came the Internet, and not far behind, spam, viruses, and a three-year MSN contract I got trapped into. The PC got relegated to an almost unused piece of furniture in the corner and I used Web TV for Internet surfing.

That brings us to 2002. Jared, my grandson, was born. "Honey, I got to get one of those digital cameras." Soon afterwards, I brushed the dust off the PC & started experiencing constant crashes from what had become "that darn computer." I started searching for a more stable operating system. When I was reading about UNIX and Linux, I discovered that Macintosh was running an operating system which was the graphic user interface for UNIX. After several visits to Microcenter, I took the plunge. Soon after Jaguar was released, I bought an iBook.

I was fascinated how easy it was to make slide shows of Jared, which included music and transitions in iMovie. Of course, one thing leads to another, and I latter purchased a digital video camera, which of course meant I had to have the more powerful and upgradeable PowerMac G5 dual 2 with multiple displays and several external hard drives.

Now, Jared is getting older and he needs his own Mac when he comes to Papa's house. Therefore, an eMac was set up in the family room attached to the television, so Jared can play the Cars game and watch slide shows of Papa and him playing on the swings.

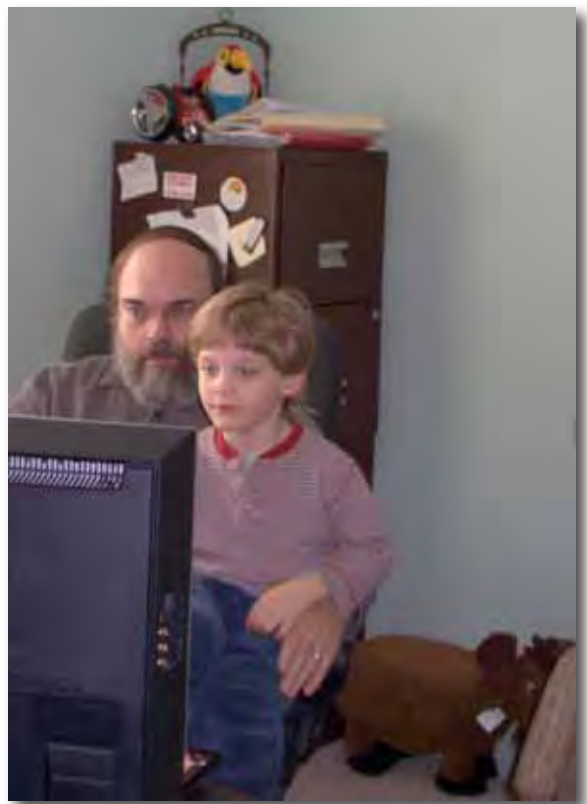
Knowing that my iBook was getting long in the tooth, I just had to get the newest MacBook Pro, just in time for the logic board to die on the old iBook. Since we had all these great tools to edit digital media, we needed a way to carry it back to my home town to show my folks. The video iPod serves nicely, thank you. And let us not forget about Jared's grandma watching slide shows and movies of her grandson in the living room while listening to her favorite music, so along came the HDTV and Apple TV.

Technology has come a long way over the past fifty years and that little tape recorder wore out long ago from playing the Superman intro, but my fascination with gadgets, both as tools and toys, has never faded. In my current occupation as an Infection Control Specialist in a large metropolitan hospital, Keynote helps me to avoid the laughter from the gonging beaker.

In my column for *macCompanion*, I hope to share my experiences as an every day user of the Macintosh computer and other Apple gadgets. When I was teaching my children in our home school and later teaching Biblical Greek, I found that my students mastered the topic best when I encouraged them to dive right into details of a topic, discover how they fit together to accomplish a task, and then to teach what they learned to others. I hope you will feel like you stopped by for an informal chat with a friend, as you read "Under the Magnifying Glass" and then go out to share with others what we discussed together.

Now, lest you think I have become completely Mac-centric at this point, my beloved wife Pam is center of my life. I spent the last year and half as her care giver, while she was fighting cancer. The Lord has answered our prayers and she is now in remission. Pam and I have many deacon duties in our small congregation. Of course, I did convince my Pastor to get a Mac.

I like bike riding and managed to ride 30 miles in a fund raiser for MS recently. And most important, I must jump into the inflated pool with Jared or take him on a bicycle ride to the ice cream store. Who is Steve Fyffe? Jared's Papa of course!!!



# *Video Projection, or How I Learned to Love RGBHV*

By Chris Eschweiler

After listening to Robert Pritchett's recent appearance on the Mac ReviewCast (Episode #121 - <http://www.surfbits.com/?p=1270>) with Tim Verpoorten, I thought I'd put my two cents worth in on the topic of S-Video vs. VGA connections to feed signal video projectors.

Between portable computers with blazingly fast processors and video cards capable of tremendous feats of visual acrobatics, presenting before a group of people has officially become technically trivial. You can walk into a conference room, connect a cable between your Mac and a projector and within seconds you can be showing a presentation filled with pictures, videos, charts, text and even (gasp) clip art.

In MacReviewCast #121, Robert asked this question: with so many connection options dotting the back of modern video projectors, what's the best path to use? Specifically, what's the best input option: S-Video or VGA? Let's compare the two.

## **First Comparison: The Numbers**

I know, I know: many folks hate math. But this is nowhere near as confusing as a tax return, I promise. As a (very) general rule, most smaller video projectors have a native resolution of 1024x768. Newer projectors are going even higher and displaying 16x9 format images as well. These resolutions are found as output options on Macs and PCs. Output can be set as low as 800 x 600 or all the way up to 1920 x 1080 depending on the video card in your computer.

On the other hand, the visible resolution of S-Video is 640 x 480 or about 30% smaller than our common-law standard. That means that if you were to switch from VGA signal to an S-Video signal, you'd have 30% less information to make the same eight foot wide picture on the wall in the conference room.

When it comes to displaying pixels, there is no such thing as good conservation. It really comes down to how much you are willing to lose. If your presentation is important enough for you to endure sweaty palms and butterflies in your stomach, why should you toss out thirty percent of your presentation before you even introduce yourself?

## **Second Comparison: Conversion**

Since computers display a high resolution natively, a VGA connection will simply pass that signal along to a projector which is designed to handle that information directly. Using S-Video, you first have to downconvert the signal to S-Video as it comes out of your laptop, transmitting your signal through the s-video cable to the projector. Then the projector has to upconvert the signal so that its circuitry can paint the image on the previously-mentioned 1024x768 LCD image panel. There's no benefit to converting the signal twice, and every time you do you lose detail.



### Third Comparison: Compatibility

As you make presentations to more and more people, and to larger and larger groups, you may need to interface with larger projectors. Most mid-sized projectors take VGA input, but some larger projectors only take an input with five BNC connectors (one wire each for Red, Green, Blue, Horizontal Sync and Vertical Sync).



For the highest fidelity, you want to use the high res output from your laptop without downconverting. All you would need is a [VGA to BNC breakout cable](#). For \$11 or so, you can interface over high quality RGBHV BNC cable to any high-end projector or even a video switcher.

Some projectors can be configured to use those five BNCs to ingest several different flavors of video input. Got a composite signal to project? Just plug your composite signal into the Green input BNC (which may also be labeled "Y") on the projector and find the menu item that tells the projector that's the flavor of video you'll be supplying. Viola! It's like your old VCR. Easy...but not nearly enough video information to paint a really large screen.

Say you have S-Video. If the projector supports it, you can send it an S-video signal to two of the BNCs. You would need another adaptor, though. [Here's one example.](#)

<http://www.stsi.net/storefrontprofiles/DeluxeSFItemDetail.aspx?sid=1&sfid=104074&c=91561&i=151185826>

Typically you plug it into the channels marked Y and C on the projector.

So to wrap up, you want to use the highest resolution signal path possible. There's no benefit to downconverting your content just so you can use an old RCA cable from your Atari 2600. Sure, composite video is what everyone is familiar with in a home setting, but in the world of live events, nobody uses less than a hi-res signal at 1024 x 768.

Say you have S-Video. If the projector supports it, you can send it S-video to the BNCs...you would need another adaptor, though. ([Here's one example.](#))



[VGA-DVI adapters](#) [Editor: search on Amazon.com for “QVS CF15D-FMA VGA to DVI Flat Panel Display Video Adapter”],

six RCA FEMALE TO BNC MALE ADAPTERs



and half dozen of  
BNC FEMALE TO RCA MALE ADAPTERs.



Yes, it's an expense, but they are cheap insurance to ensure you're never just \$2.99 away from having a successful presentation.

# Books

## *No Business Like E-Business: The Spectacularly Simple Secrets Behind How You Can Create A Web Site And Make Money With It*

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

**Author:** Ravi Jayagopal

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

[Ravi@WebmasterInABox.net](mailto:Ravi@WebmasterInABox.net)

347-992-4212

**Publisher:** <http://www.nichwordspublishing.com>

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

**Pages:** 277

\$25 USD

Password-protected E-Book.

But wait – there's more!

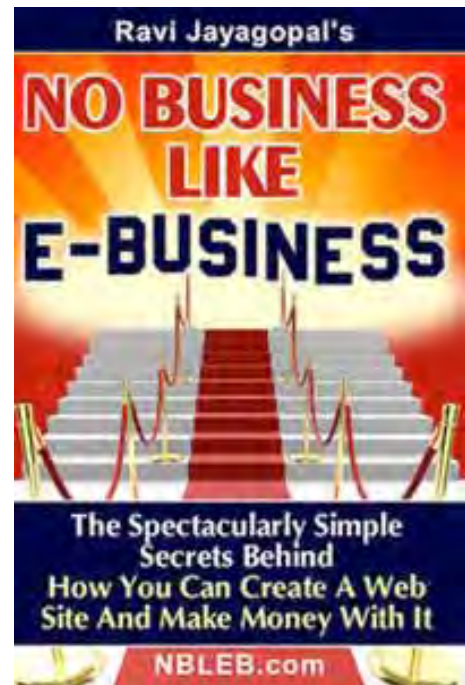
<http://www.nbleb.com/bonuses.php>

**Requirements:** A desire to make money online. A PDF reader.

**ISBN:** 978-0-9794376-0-1

**Strengths:** This is a "How-To" book.

**Weaknesses:** A few typos, bad links and perhaps some overpromotion of his own net of websites...



From: "**Annie, Get your Long Term Capital Gain!**" (*with enormous apologies to Irving Berlin*) <http://www.javaskyline.com/nobus.html>

There's no business like e-business like no business  
I know Everybody's website is appealing  
Everything the traffic thinks is hip  
But you get that satisfying feeling when you are stealing their JavaScript!

There's none colder than stock holders they sell when you go low  
One day's SJ Merc declares that you're a bomb  
Then Palm burns you in their E-Prom  
Next day's Wall Street Journal links to YOU DOT COM!  
"This company is a Go! This company is a Go."

The biddings, the askings, the mergers, the flops  
The guru who falls right into your lap  
The log files, recoveries, the abends, the stops,  
The ERP that won't stop messaging your App!

The Launch when you're prepared for DSL!  
Release date when the product doesn't sell.

There's no Commerce like e-Commerce like no Commerce I know  
One day your accountant says "it's over."  
Phones ring off the hook at your VC  
Then a merger leverages you some clover  
And you take over their B2B!

There's no people like e-people - they loved your IPO  
One day products moving and your site is packed.  
Sales are booming! .  
Your server's maxed!  
Next day Congress hits you with a Web sales tax!

But go on with the Show!  
This company is a Go!  
■ Rich Katz ED

## **Introduction**

### **If**

“You have always wondered about creating a web site.  
You wonder how come everyone else is making money online, but you aren't.  
When you read about people making a killing online and having a great life, you secretly wish you could do that too (or you simply convince yourself that they must be bull\$#!%ting).  
You are intrigued about the thought of having a web site, but don't know where to start.  
You have just launched your web site, but don't know how to take it to the next level.  
You are not making any money from your site.  
You are not getting any traffic.  
You are getting traffic, but no one is buying your stuff.  
You think just because your business is local, you don't need a web site.  
Your web site is nowhere to be found on Google or Yahoo.  
You spend a lot of time pursuing worthless Link Exchanges.

You didn't know that you can get a Free Paycheck from Google - month after month - all while still working at your day job.”

## **Then**

You don't know how – but want to know how.

## **Else**

“What to sell (products, services, advertisements or a brand)?  
How to sell (web design, copy writing, technology, getting paid online)?  
How to get visitors to your web site (generating traffic: free and paid)?  
How to get them to buy your stuff (conversion through pre-selling, brand building, information give-away)?  
How to keep them and their friends coming back for more (up-selling, cross-selling, affiliate program, joint ventures, self-sustaining lead generation)?

Master these 5 areas, one item at a time, and you are golden.”

## **In this book...**

My copy of this book was PDF-double-password-protected and read like a pre-released review copy instead of a final polished version of the book.

Hopefully, by the time you get this book the typos and broken links and links to unfunctional sites (Ping list for example) will be overcome and updated. After all, the book is an E-Book and there is no excuse for not keeping it updated.

After all, Ravi Jayagopal is self-published through the website [nichwordspublishing.com](http://nichwordspublishing.com)

So what is revealed between these 277 pages that you might otherwise be able to go online and garner from dozens if not thousands of websites? -

Solving problems instead of selling products, deciding what to sell, selling advertising space and other peoples products, earning from Google, learning about search engine optimization, indexing your website, pagerank pranks, keyword searching, link exchanging (Not!), one-way and multi-way linking, linkbaiting, submitting to “authority” sites, online discussion participation and blog commenting and trackbacking, a case study of his own [HowToThrowYourVoice.com](http://HowToThrowYourVoice.com), website planning and fast-tracking, accepting credit card transactions and other options, list-building, opting-in and out, E-mail publishing, newsletter promoting, tracking and marketing, finding sponsors, linking affiliates and joint-venturing, converting visitors into customers, referral and affiliate marketing, google hacks, FireFox plugins, marketing with RSS feeds, Domain registration, Web hosting, site design, E-mail management, website program tools (he has a few of his own to sell), biggest challenges and to-do lists, and ideas not worth publishing and a challenge to go all the way.

## Conclusion

Yes, you really could get the lion's share of knowledge online search for all these tidbits, but Ravi has been around a while and has become successful in his own right. He migrated to America I'm sure partly because of his online efforts for him and his family. And he is realizing his great American dream. He is just showing how he did it, so we can too.

## Recommendation

If you are new to E-Commerce, then this is a good place to start. After all, for the price of the book he throws in a few of his own software tool she developed along the way. We paid quit a price at the beginning for those tools a few years ago, and he is giving them away along with the book.

“What You Get With Your Purchase Of "No Business Like E-Business"

ClickBank Download Protector PHP Script from WebmasterInABox.net.

- a \$34.95 Value

Paypal Download Protector PHP (TLG) Script from WebmasterInABox.net

- a \$34.95 Value

TypingAssistant Productivity Software from VirtualTypingAssistant.com

- a \$47.00 Value

\$50 Discount Coupon for my WebmasterInABox.net Suite - or may be used with any of my current or future products.

- a \$50.00 Value

-

Access to Ravi's Global Affiliate Program where you can make money by recommending this book to others (and you can promote his other products too!)”

How's that for viral marketing?

# Greenware

## *The Solar Stirling Engine from Infinia Corporation*

Jim Clyde was interviewed by Robert Pritchett for this article



Infinia Corporation  
6811 West Okanogan Place  
Kennewick, WA 99336, USA  
1-509-735-4700  
FAX: 509-736-3660  
[info@infiniacorp.com](mailto:info@infiniacorp.com)  
<http://www.infiniacorp.com>  
Patents: <http://infiniacorp.com/technology/patents.htm>

Welded, Sealed body.  
Payload through side to run other equipment or the electric power version has the alternator/inverter system inside and runs 3.3kW.

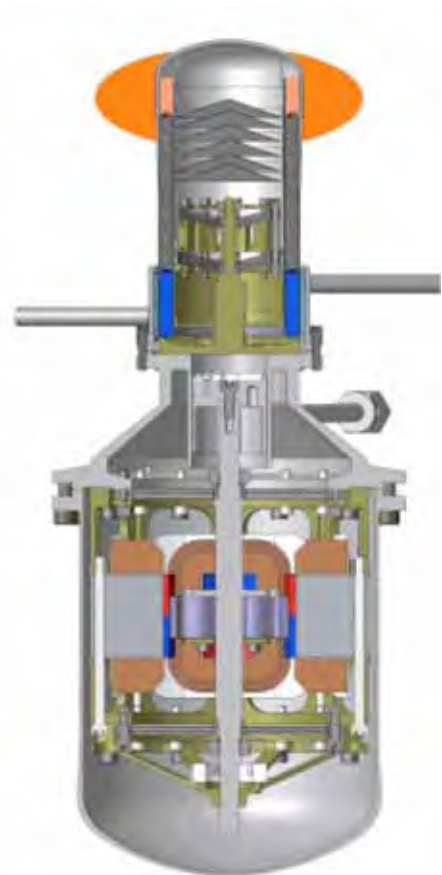
The only moving parts in this unit are the flex-springs located in both the chambers.

How the Infinia Stirling Engine Works -  
[http://infiniacorp.com/technology/how\\_stirling\\_works.htm](http://infiniacorp.com/technology/how_stirling_works.htm)

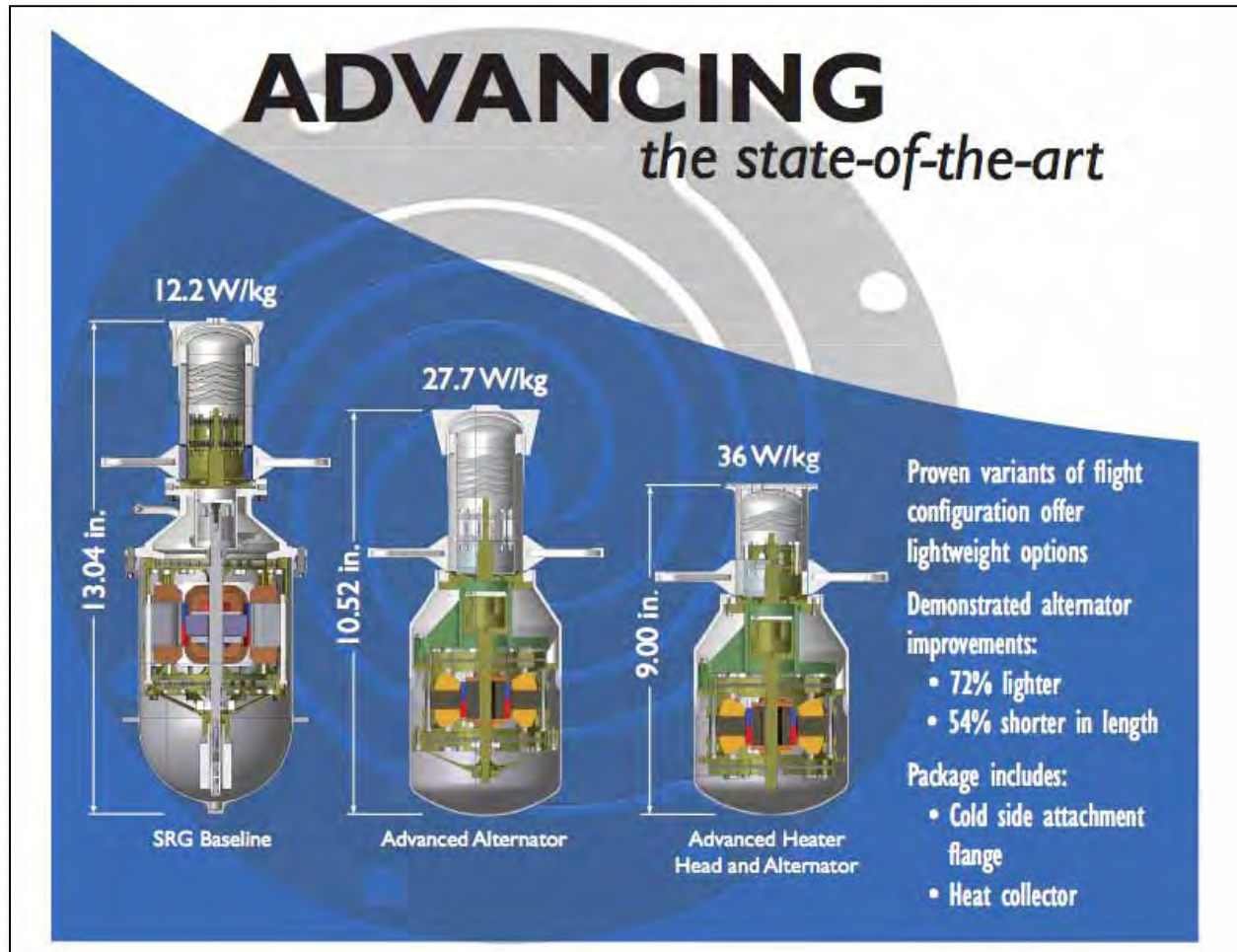
Press: [http://news.zdnet.com/2100-9596\\_22-6129168-2.html](http://news.zdnet.com/2100-9596_22-6129168-2.html)

### **Introduction**

“Originally developed by Robert Stirling in 1816, the Stirling cycle uses a working fluid (typically Helium, Nitrogen or Hydrogen gas) in a closed cylinder containing a piston. Heated on one end and cooled on the other, the expansion and cooling of the gas drives the piston back and forth in the cylinder. The work performed by this piston-motion is used to drive a generator (in Infinia’s case, a patented linear alternator) or to create pressure waves to drive a compression process.



The cycle can be operated in reverse by using the generator as a motor to drive the piston. In this case, the continuous expansion and cooling of the working fluid caused by the piston motion creates a cooling effect. These types of systems are called Stirling coolers (also referred to as cryocoolers) and can maintain temperatures as low as 10 Kelvin (-263°C, and -442 °F).”



I remember this company back in the 1980's (three company name changes ago) when it was working on the sterling engine vehicle. When I asked about it, I was told it was before Jim Clyde's time at Infinia and so that was buried deep in the past.

Infinia Corporation worked with NASA back then ([http://infiniacorp.com/applications/space\\_exploration.htm](http://infiniacorp.com/applications/space_exploration.htm)) to get a nuclear-based power plant on to a space probe to Mars that could withstand being bottle-rocketed into space from earth, survive the landing on Mars and do its job for 17 years without failing.

Based on those successes in space, they moved on to using this maintenance-free, free-piston generator system for ground-based mission-critical applications for the military and other government organizations.



Remember the program on TV with *Tactical to Practical*? <http://www.tv.com/tactical-to-practical/show/21710/summary.html> and <http://www.history.com/shows.do?action=detail&episodeId=242363>

Perhaps Infinia was the inspiration for those episodes by showing how tax-based projects can be converted into real public good - <http://infiniacorp.com/applications/tactical.htm>

Today the little engine that could can be found in rare-to-be-found-publicly portable generators, vehicle auxiliary units and mini combined heat and power (CHP) systems. But that is about to all change soon.

Infinia received some well-deserved venture capital to take it up a notch from Paul Allen's Vulcan Group. They are being extremely conservative about what is possible and what has been accomplished so far and that is probably why you never heard of them before. But you will. I'll see to it.

Why? Because they are also using this inspired device to generate electrical power from sunlight!

Will you be able to have this on your roof? No. At least not in the near future.

Will you be able to have this on the ground using a 2-axis stand (2 axis poles provide 50% increase in efficiency)? Yes – if you are a commercial site.

Will there be direct sales or dealerships? Yes, to fill government contracts. Yes, to solar distributors for commercial installations.

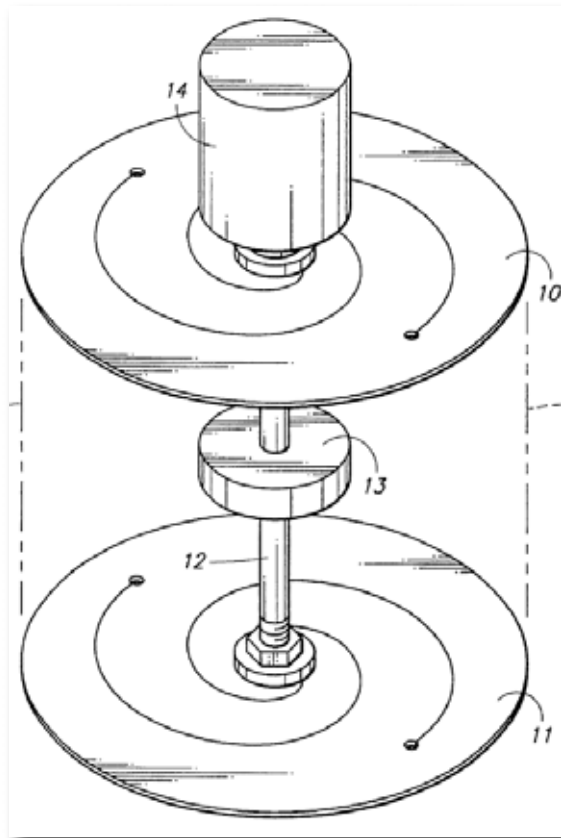
How soon? The Solar collector and sterling engine units will be visible at the company location in October with prototypes being tested around the USA in January, so expect (if nothing goes wrong) these units to be available in the Fall of 2008. They just removed the "1<sup>st</sup> gen" that was located just west of their building that had been there for nearly 2 years. I thought it was a closed-circuit broadcast dish that the local TV stations use. Boy, was I wrong!



The \$2-billion + alternative energy industry is heating up and you will have to wait in line after the government and commercial entities have gorged at the feeding trough first. Perhaps by then the whole unit will have been reduced in size even further. Can you hold out for the roof-top version in 2 or more years (if ever)?

This is tantalizing tech!

The key to all this effort are the patents that have been carefully and patiently preserved for close to 2 decades - [http://infiniacorp.com/technology/patents\\_know\\_how.htm](http://infiniacorp.com/technology/patents_know_how.htm)



**Conceptual Design**



**Closer to Reality**

And what I feel is the real key to the free-piston engine is the patented flex-spring technology shown above. You wouldn't know it by just looking at it, but if you pushed down on the handle in the first picture, the two "wheels" would flex downward (assuming the outer edges were anchored to something) and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> picture, the holes in the outer rim are for anchoring. The center would be where the free-piston would be located and there are 6 or eight of these rings that can flex a few millimeters in either direction as the gas heats and cools inside the hermetically sealed engine.

The recent job postings at Infinia indicate that this technology is going to leap Photovoltaics in the next year or so, because it can do nearly twice the power in the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> the space and for less cost than for a Photovoltaic array based on the same power requirements. Fewer parts, cleaner design, smaller components equals quick assembly (relatively speaking) in comparison to the turn-around time for photovoltaic cells to finally get to sunlight and produce power.

[http://www.infiniacorp.com/applications/clean\\_energy.htm](http://www.infiniacorp.com/applications/clean_energy.htm)

Internally these electric-generation jewels contain not only the generator, but the alternator and the inverter, none of which have mechanically moving parts. No brushes, no bearings to wear out, etc. What was simple has been made even simpler still.

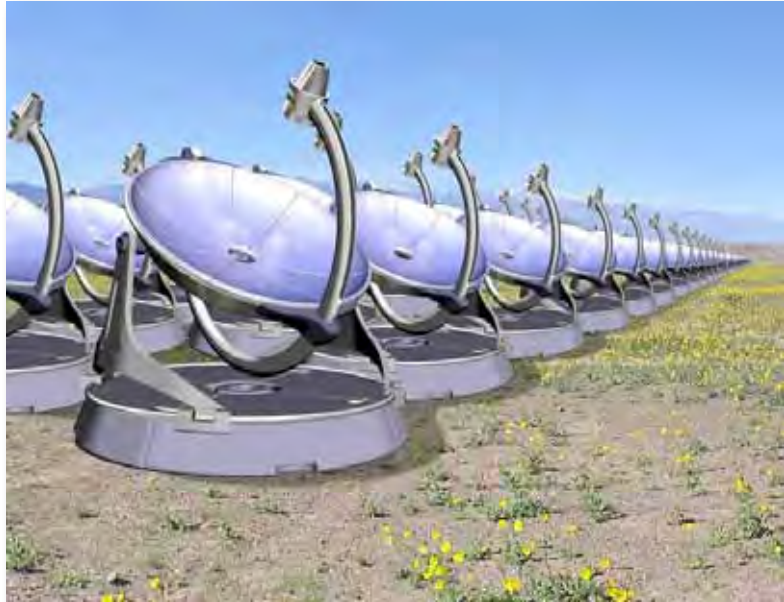
The materials are essentially off-the-shelf metal parts that do not have the legacy issues of pollution and brown-fielding activities associated with the long process of creating silicon-based solar cells. (By the way, one of the largest manufacturing facilities for solar silicon is also here in Washington State – except all product is being shipped to Norway for further processing and used in Europe. So far, none of it has “reached home”.

[http://195.26.0.70/default.asp?V\\_ITEM\\_ID=442](http://195.26.0.70/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=442) )

The latest 3.3kW stirling engine unit is going the solar mirror dish route and those units take up a little bit of space. In this picture below, think of the frame as a gun turret for side-to-side and swivel up-and-down motion.

Remember the first set of dishes that came out for satellite reception? These are smaller. A real live one will be planted next to the Infinia Corporation building in Kennewick, WA soon, so concept will become reality.

Why did I interview Jim Clyde (VP of Marketing and Business Development) now instead of waiting a year? Because it would be really sweet if I could have a day job with a company that has taken “old” technology, spiffed it up and made it leapfrog what we would consider the latest in Solar Tech today. And because I wanted to see for myself if this technology was consumer-ready for prime-time. Just hold your breath for a little while longer...



Meanwhile, the sterling engine by Infinia Corp is seeing the light of day in systems being OEMed to Rinnai in Japan for combined heat and power units that probably will be sold here in the US within a year and also by Enatec in the Netherlands.

[http://www.infiniacorp.com/applications/combined\\_heat\\_power.htm](http://www.infiniacorp.com/applications/combined_heat_power.htm)



**Rinnai**



**Enatec**

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What was old has been made new again and we can see that the “not invented here” syndrome does not exist at this company. They have taken the best of the best and made it literally shine around the world!

# Straw Bale Building How-To Guides

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



**Presenter:** Andrew Morrison  
<http://www.strawbaleconstruction.net/>  
Straw Bale Innovations, LLC  
7803 Sterling Creek Road  
Jacksonville, OR 97530  
[info@strawbale.com](mailto:info@strawbale.com)  
<http://www.strawbale.com>  
<http://www.learnstrawbale.com/>

Released:

\$40 USD for each DVD.

**Requirements:** DVD player. Desire to build with straw.

**Strengths:** Excellent Step-by-Step How-To's with a little bit of humor.

**Weaknesses:** No costs discussed.

You probably heard of “Green Building” construction. With straw bales, this is more yellow than green, but you get the idea.

Why Straw? <http://www.strawbale.com/why.html>





“As the founder and owner of A. C. Morrison Construction, LLC, Andrew has a passion for straw bale construction that is matched only by his desire to teach his knowledge to others. Andrew is the creator and builder of the Straw Bale Village, a community of 15 straw bale homes in the National Historic Landmark City of Jacksonville, Oregon. He is a skilled, licensed General Contractor (CCB License #161204) with experience in designing and building both conventional and straw bale homes.”

He also has a pretty good team working with him to pull off these training seminars. I would not be surprised if these ended up on the DIY Channel.

### **The How-To Guide to Building a Monolithic Concrete-Slab Foundation**

Before you can put on a roof, you need to put in a foundation. The other DVDs show how to create a deck-like above-ground foundation, but this one looks at how we can create a solid concrete foundation that will pass inspection. There is around 1 hour and 46 minutes of solid instruction and some out-takes beyond the published “running time”.

I discovered which concrete types work and what to ask for once the forms are built. I also found out how to do form squaring, proper radiant floor heat tubing and besides polishing, also coloring and texturizing concrete.

We are also shown how to properly install anchor bolts in the concrete for holding the 4x4 beams to the floor.

If you want to do a basement, this does not cover that aspect of construction.

In the series, I would think this would be the first to look at before going on to the other DVDs.

<http://www.StrawBale.com/cmd.php?=-aftrack&af=637775&u=www.learnstrawbale.com/concrete.html>

### **The How-To Guide to Building with Straw Bales (Load Bearing)**

Do a starter building first before going full-bore on a major facility. Think “outbuilding”.

This DVD goes for 2 hours and 3 minutes (with time not included covering a “Special Considerations” section on electrical, plumbing, interior partition walls, handling wet environments, installing hanging cabinets and running baseboard trim).

Andrew shows us how to create an above-ground stilt foundation and plywood floor, adding straps to hold the bales in place, using needles to resize bales, and using welded wire (2-inch stuff) instead of chickenwire to give plaster “teeth”.

I also learned how to use a nail-bed instead of all-thread or rebar to hold bales in place and (surprise!) adding washed gravel between the outer beam and inner beam to act as a drain in case moisture enters the straw after construction.

I thought it was rather innovative using strapping material to hold the straw bale walls in place and then to cinch down all around to level the bales before adding the 4x4 frame above the walls to support the roof – thus the “Load-bearing” title.

This DVD also shows detail work on how to build a 3x12-pitch roof.

<http://www.StrawBale.com/cmd.php?af=637775&u=www.learnstrawbale.com/dvds/load-bearing.html>

### **The How-To Guide to Building with Straw Bales (Post and Beam Infill)**

If you want to do something that is more “conventional” and works as a frame-built home on a concrete foundation, then this is a “real” house DVD with the straw acting more as insulation rather than as the main building material.

If you watched the Load-bearing DVD, there is repetition here, but we learn a lot more about framing doors, windows and protection the beams with tarpaper and the stuffing walls with more straw and filling voids behind the 2x2 welded-wire so less plaster is used.

There are plenty of tips and tricks from lessons learned included in this DVD.

The “Special Considerations” section is also repeated from the “Load-bearing” DVD.

<http://www.StrawBale.com/cmd.php?af=637775&u=www.learnstrawbale.com/dvds/straw-bale-howto.html>

### **The How-To Guide to Plastering with Natural Hydraulic Lime (NHL)**

Now that the building is “built”, there is the finishing process. Because this is a Lime process, I learned that this could take as much as 6 months to complete, because lime plaster has to be prepared one day and used a day or so later to mature and can be used up to many months afterwards. I had no idea!

I learned about scratch coats, “Hawks”, using either shovelfuls of lime and sand blends and the various sand types and premixes if “doing the plaster mix by hand” is less desirable than getting bagged mix.

This is an involved process with 3 coats and close to 2 inches of plaster on each side of the walls, but the final results sure look like they were worth the effort.

But using lime apparently is better than using other plastering methods with straw bale buildings. Why NHL? Because it is easier to work with.

So this is the “final coat” for the DVD series.

<<http://www.StrawBale.com/cmd.php?=-aftrack&af=637775&u=www.learnstrawbale.com/straw-bale-plaster.html>>

## **Conclusion**

The videos were beautifully organized, filmed and edited by Gabriella Morrison. The websites were created by Dicken Weatherby. The experience was provided by Andrew Morrison, who obviously likes what he is doing.

Learn even more by going here - <http://www.learnstrawbale.com/straw-bale-articles/>

Read the Blog - <http://www.thestrawbalehouse.blogspot.com/> Follow the Straw Bale Minute - <http://www.thestrawbaleminute.com/> or listen to the Strawbale podcasts - <http://www.strawbale.com/#podcast>

## **Recommendation**

If you have been going through our list of Renewable Energy Resources on our website and have been interested in alternative building materials and want something besides styrofoam-covered concrete and want to avoid chemical outgassing issues with new construction, think straw.

And if you think you need help to design a green home, go check out Chris Keefe’s website - <http://www.organicformsdesign.com/>

## **More Here**

<<http://www.StrawBale.com/cmd.php?=-aftrack&af=637775&u=www.strawbale.com/minicourse.html>>



# Hardware

## *MicroMemo iPod Recorder*

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie



XtremeMac

3265 Meridian Parkway, Suite 114

Weston, FL 33331 USA

(866) 392-9800—USA Toll Free

(954) 385-9877—All other areas

(954) 385-9320—Fax Line

[sales@xtrememac.com](mailto:sales@xtrememac.com)

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

**Released:** December, 2006

\$60 USD \$63.34 CND €43.76 Euro £29.58GPB

**Requirements:** iPod nano or iPod video

**Strengths:** Built-in speaker, good quality audio, detachable microphone, plug-and-play.

**Weaknesses:** Can't be used when iPod is in a case, some "hissing" in the background.

### Specs:

**Bit Rate**

**Sample Rate**

**1-Minute Recording**

**1-Hour Recording**

**Recording Capacity** (30GB iPod)

**Recording Capacity** (60GB iPod)

**Low**

352 kb/s

22.05 kHz

2.6 MB

156 MB

192 Hours

384 Hours

**High**

1411 kb/s

44.10 kHz

10.3 MB

618 MB

48 Hours

98 Hours





## Introduction

For a while there was a need for a way to record audio onto your iPod and even on Apple's website, they said it could be possible. The only problem was that there was no device which let you record the audio. Now we have one. The MicroMemo is a microphone with a built-in speaker that attaches to the bottom of your iPod. It is very cool!

## Getting Started

A great thing about this product is that it's plug-and-play. Just plug it into the bottom of the iPod and it automatically switches to "Voice Memo" mode. You don't need to install anything because it's part of the iPod Software. When you plug it in, you will hear a small noise to tell you it's connected. Then the screen changes and shows the voice memo screen. After that, all you have to do is hit record.



## **Using the Hardware**

My experience with this product has been good. I haven't encountered any problems. You have a choice of two settings for the recordings - Low quality and high quality recordings (Specs at the top of the review). If you have it plugged in, but not in record mode, you can hit the little silver button in the middle of the speaker. This will take you back to the recording screen and now it's ready to record. There is a little bit of a difference in quality between the two settings, but it's not a lot. The higher quality is a bit clearer, but I prefer the low quality because of the file size difference. I have tested how long the recorder can go on a full battery. On low setting, it can last for over 3 hours straight. There have been some rumors that these recorders don't last for very long because they run off of the iPod batteries. This isn't true. Three hours should be enough for a podcast, seminar recording and a class recording.

Unfortunately, I have experienced some hissing in the background of my recordings. The hiss clears up a bit with the higher quality but not too much. Speech is still audible and it's not too bad if the volume isn't turned up too high. Another downside is that if I want to use it, I have to take my iPod out of the case. The way the edges curve up at the bottom makes it impossible to use both at the same time.

Now, onto the built-in speaker. When something is being played, say a recording or even some music, you can hold down the button in the middle of the speaker for two seconds and the speaker should turn on. Every time you unplug the recorder, it resets the speaker so you have to turn it back on. For the sound quality of the speaker it's not the greatest, but if you need a speaker, it will do.

Another feature is the detachable microphone. They give you one, but if you have another microphone that uses a 1/8 inch jack, then you can use it. When plugging into something like a MIDI, you have to switch it to "Line" mode with a switch on the side of the recorder.

## **Conclusion**

The model that is in the pictures is for the video iPod, but you can also get the same product for the second-generation iPod Nano. Excellent job, XtremeMac!

## **Recommendation**

Overall, I have enjoyed this product. It sufficiently solves the problem of a recorder for your iPod and I would recommend this to anyone with the need for a recorder. Anyone who wants to record radio songs, seminars or even class discussions for further reference.

# *MyVu Made for iPod, solo edition*

Reviewed by Wayne Lefevre



Myvu Corporation  
31 Dartmouth Street Westwood, MA 02090  
781-326-8111  
Fax: 781-326-4110  
[http://www.myvu.com/Products/ipod\\_solo/](http://www.myvu.com/Products/ipod_solo/)

**Released:** January 2006  
\$200 USD, \$214 CND, £100 GBP, €148 Euro

**Requirements:** Video iPod.

**Strengths:** Portable, personal viewing anywhere. Built in headsets rest comfortably in ears, giving noise-canceling in-ear effect.

**Weaknesses:** Sucks battery life from iPod quickly if you don't have an optional charger.

**Other Reviews:** <http://www.mobilitysite.com/articles/link.php?id=344>  
<http://www.trustedreviews.com/mp3/review/2007/07/14/MicroOptical-Myvu-Personal-Video-Viewer/p1>



## **Introduction**

The myvu is like a portable TV set that you can watch anywhere. OK, you might be asking yourself, why do I need one of these if I already have a video iPod? You might not want to advertise the fact that you have an iPod, though walking around looking like Jordy from Star Trek pretty much puts you into the geek category anyway. But it is a great way to watch a show, in a largish size screen, anywhere without distraction or causing distractions.

You can watch your favorite TV shows, music videos, podcasts and movies anytime, anywhere while enjoying a large TV viewing experience! The myvu Made for iPod® edition is ideal for viewing movies purchased from the new iTunes 7 and is compatible with 30GB, 60GB and the new 80GB Apple® iPods.

Viewable in all lighting conditions, it provides a unique large TV viewing experience when watching downloaded entertainment. Unlike immersive headset systems that restrict natural vision, myvu eyewear allows you to also view your surroundings...perfect for on-the-go lifestyles.

Equipped with noise-reducing in-ear earbuds for stereo sound, the viewer has patented SolidOptex™ optical technology incorporated inside a unique eyewear frame to form a comfortable, compact design.

## Getting Started

One would assume that you are going to be able to use the headset straight out of the box. Simply plug into your video iPod, put the headset on, place the earpieces in, and go to town. Of course, it wasn't so easy for me! Unfortunately, when I got my headset, there was no instructional material in the box, and the website currently did not have any manuals to be had. I called customer support because the screen was very dark and the controls did not seem to be working.

You see, the myvu comes with a control pad that has screen brightness, contrast, and volume controls. Handy if you don't want to take your iPod out of your pocket. I got to service instantly, they apologized for not having the instruction manual out yet, and asked me to press down both volume up and down keys at the same time. This resets the screen, and everything worked fantastic from there.

The only other problem I had was my fault really. I couldn't figure out why video wasn't playing in my headset. Turns out I did not have the iPod set to TV out. A simple mistake, really, but not what I was planning on since I've never watched the iPod on a regular screen.



## Using the Hardware

From then on, my wife thought I was a dork. Because it has these windows in the front that sit on either side of the screen, you can actually see what's going on around you. A little hard to explain, I'm not sure if they use mirrors or what, but you can see what your doing. I wouldn't ride a bike or drive with them on, of course, but I can walk around the house with them on, much to my wife's chagrin.

What is odd, though, is when you move quickly, you can see the scan lines. Actually, let me back up a bit. Looking at the screen is like looking at a 27" 4:3 screen at around 5 feet away. You can't really tell it's interlaced unless you look quickly a certain way. Say you turn your head quick, you can see the interlace lines, then it becomes solid again. Not something I would stop using them for, however.

The screen is nice to look at in most lighting conditions, but I have to disagree with the company on this point. They say all lighting conditions, but I find I can't see much in bright daylight. If I wear a hat or put up my hand to shade the myvu, then I can see enough to see what's going on. When the light is at full noon and the sun is shining straight down, I'm sorry, but it's like every other screen out there.

## Conclusion

Overall I'm impressed with the myvu, though I would definitely want to spend the extra \$80 on the optional myvu power pack. It's a rechargeable battery offering up to 4 extra hours of viewing time, which is good, because without it watching one one-hour and forty-five minute movie will pretty much put your iPod in the red (at least our 30 Gig.)

The best part is being able to watch a video on your iPod without having to hold it up to your face to see it for a couple of hours. Just being able to do other things with your hands, like eat on an aircraft, watching what you want, drowning out the noise without cramping up your arms is just what this thing is made for. And for that, it's a winner.



# *Sling Media, SlingPlayer, Slingbox, Oh My!*

Reviewed by Tim Verpoorten – reprinted with permission from <http://www.surfbits.com>



Sling Media, Inc. 1051 E. Hillsdale Blvd,  
Suite 500

Foster City, CA 94404

1-650-293-8000

**Fax:** 1-650-293-8800

<http://us.slingmedia.com/page/home>

<http://us.slingmedia.com/page/slingboxpro.html>

**Released:** April 2007



**Tour:** <http://us.slingmedia.com/page/slingboxinaction.html>

Slingbox Tuner - \$130 USD

Slingbox AV - \$150 USD

Slingbox PRO - \$250 USD

**Strengths:** No monthly fees. Connectivity to everything Audio-Visual.

**Weaknesses:** Cables everywhere! A challenge to configure and set up.

**Sling Community:** <http://www.slingcommunity.com/>



## **Introduction**

For about the past two years I've been hearing more and more about this new product that will revolutionize how you watch TV, it's called **Slingbox**. Since I didn't have a PC, only Macs, it went on the back burner of my "things to check out" list. But when Sling Media released a Mac version of their software in April of this year, I decided I better pay attention. Last month I received some review hardware from Sling Media and I started reading and researching to understand what this hardware did and exactly how it did it. It took me several weeks, but I have everything working and all I can say is, "Wow"!

## Getting Started

Let's start from the beginning. What is a Slingbox and what does it do? Imagine the ability to watch your television from any online computer in the world. (Plus the ability to watch your TV from many portable devices.) Imagine the idea of not only watching your TV, but watching your recorded events from your Tivo, or DVR. Now imagine the possibility of tuning your TV or setting your DVR to record an event from any online computer in the world. This and even more is what you can accomplish with the Slingbox and their software and accessories. It does this with the help of what they call SlingStream Technology.

According to Sling Media, "SlingStream is the groundbreaking technology within your Slingbox that dynamically adjusts your video quality to provide the best possible viewing experience. It functions by taking into account a variety of factors, including network bandwidth, SlingPlayer device characteristics, video content, and the type of video input. Using patent pending algorithms, SlingStream automatically adjusts compression level, video bit rate, frame rate, and other settings to create a continuous quality video experience. And SlingStream works regardless of the connection type, whether its LAN, Internet, or even wireless from your mobile phone."

The Slingbox communicates with the SlingPlayer to determine the device you're using (be it a PC, Mac, or mobile device), and provides the information to SlingStream, which enables it to configure the appropriate video quality and bandwidth parameters for the particular device. But I am getting ahead of myself. What's a Slingbox and the Slingplayer?

The Slingbox is the key to this whole process. Sling Media has three versions. The entry level is called the Slingbox Tuner. The Slingbox Tuner connects directly to the cable outlet in your wall, making it so that you don't even need a home television to watch TV on your computer or phone. Plus, you don't have to worry about any complex set-up, expensive rewiring, or monthly fees. The minimum tech requirements and the difference in the three Slingbox's are listed on their website, <http://us.slingmedia.com/page/yourcomputer.html>. The next Slingbox type, and the one I have is the Slingbox AV. "The Slingbox AV not only allows you to watch your home television virtually anywhere, but it also allows you to watch any cable subscriptions, special programming, or sports packages you may have – with no monthly fees. If it's on your home TV, it's on your computer and phone. With the Slingbox AV you have just as much control over your special programming and component devices (such as TiVo and On Demand) as you do at home. You have the ability to fast-forward, rewind, pause, and everything else under the sun."

The final Slingbox design, and the top of the line is their Slingbox PRO. With the Slingbox PRO you have just as much control over your special programming and component devices (such as TiVo and On Demand) as you do at home. "You have the ability to fast-forward, rewind, pause, and everything else under the sun. Connect and control up to four A/V sources. This means you can access your entire home theater, including digital cable, DVD players, TiVo, or any other new-fangled contraption you may have. The Slingbox PRO is HD Component video compatible (up to 1080i) when used with the optional Slingbox HD Connect Cable. The Slingbox and SlingStream technology adapts the compressed video stream to match the available network and Internet bandwidth. This provides the best possible video quality between the Slingbox and the SlingPlayer application, whether running on a computer or mobile phone."



The next component is the SlingPlayer. “The SlingPlayer is the software that works hand-in-hand with the hardware inside the Slingbox to bring your entire living room TV viewing experience to your laptop, desktop or mobile device. It features an array of innovative features and controls, including a favorites bar, customizable remote controls, multiple viewing modes, and streaming video. SlingBar™ - docks SlingPlayer on either the right or left of the desktop, allowing you to watch your television and work with other applications simultaneously. Resizable Window - move it around the desktop just like any other application adjusting the size to fit your needs including going to full screen mode. Full Screen - for a real break watch your shows as big as your screen can get. Extensive customizable settings including a Favorites Bar and Manual Audio and Video controls allow you to fine-tune your viewing experience and view streaming statistics.”

Sling Media thinks of everything. To get your signal from the Slingbox to the SlingPlayer software on your network computer you may need a SlingLink if you do not have your network near your TV. The SlingLink TURBO is a plug and play device. Just plug one SlingLink TURBO into the wall near your router, plug in the other SlingLink TURBO wherever you have your Slingbox installed or to any other device that needs to be connected to the Internet and you're done.

I have the Slingbox AV with the Slinglink, so it took me a bit to figure out how to install the hardware so I not only could receive my TV signal across the net, but also watch and control my Tivo remotely from any online Mac or PC. The back of my TV and Tivo already looked like a rats nest, therefore, the added wiring for the Slingbox and SlingLink did not make it any less cluttered. But after the installation, I installed my software and allowed a remote connection from my router to my networked Slingbox and I was in business. It's absolutely amazing to see, not only my TV screen, but the recorded shows from my Tivo and to see the virtual remote control from my Tivo sitting there on my computer screen allowing me to change channels, schedule recordings, and change any my Tivo settings.

## **Conclusion**

The technology that Sling Media brings to the table is top shelf and the cost is very reasonable in my opinion. MSRP from Sling Media's store is \$129.99 on the Slingbox Tuner, \$149.99 on the Slingbox AV, and \$249.99 on the Pro model. I could go on for paragraphs about the products they produce and how to use them, but I found Sling Media's website to be an excellent source of information and support when I had questions about hooking up and getting my system online. Check it out for yourself, you'll fall in love with Sling Media and their products.

[Sling Media Slingbox AV \( SB240-100 \)](#)

[Sling Media SlingLink Turbo Powerline Kit \( SL200-100 \)](#)

[Sling Media Slingbox Tuner \( SB220-100 \)](#)

## **Recommendation**

I will let you know how I was using my Slingbox set-up and what the results were;

I tried it on the two other computers in my house. They are on the same gig network as my Slingbox and, as you would expect, the picture quality was top notch. It's similar to what I receive on my Miglia Hybrid TV tuner. The real test was using my office PC, which is on a slow DSL connection in an office with 11 other computers sharing the Internet. I get a smooth running picture in a window that's about 320×240 pixels. I consider that pretty impressive, considering I cannot get most YouTube movies to play decently on my work PC.

# SportsWrap iPod Armband

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie



XtremeMac  
3265 Meridian Parkway, Suite 114  
Weston, FL 33331 USA  
(866) 392-9800—USA Toll Free  
(954) 385-9877—All other areas  
(954) 385-9320—Fax Line  
[sales@xtrememac.com](mailto:sales@xtrememac.com)  
<http://www.xtrememac.com/>

**Released:** 2005

\$30 USD \$31.54 CND €21.87 Euro £14.81 GBP

**Requirements:** An iPod (pre-nano and non-shuffle) and a desire to perspire.

**Strengths:** Comfortable, lightweight, iPod fits snugly, “in armband” use.

**Weaknesses:** Can’t be adjusted tight enough for people with smaller arms, not a lot of protection if you were to fall.



## Introduction

There are many solutions for active people or athletic people who want to listen to their iPod but don't want to put it in their pockets. Belt clips, pant loop clips and other things are available, but I prefer armbands. They provide an effective way to carry your iPod as well as show it off. The SportWrap is no exception. It is a comfortable, stylish armband that provides a place to put your iPod while you work, play or run.

## Getting Started

The first thing I thought when I looked at the box was that any iPod could use it because it said “For all iPods”. The only thing I didn’t think of was that it was for full iPods not the iPod Nano or Shuffle. So, please don’t get this product if you don’t have the right iPod. They do sell the SportWarp for the iPod Nano and the iPhone as well. Anyway, the way you get the iPod in is through a Velcro pocket in the back. Just open it up, stick it in and close it.



## Using the Hardware

Putting the armband on is very easy. Thread the strap through the plastic spot on the band then put it on your arm. Pull the strap until it’s the right tightness then attach it to the Velcro. That’s it. Now, for people with thinner, smaller arms, there may be a problem. - you can only tighten it to a certain degree and it might not be enough. This happened with my arm, but for adults it shouldn’t be a major problem. The armband feels comfortable when you wear it and it doesn’t weigh a lot. Basically, it feels like you are just carrying an iPod on your arm.

A good thing is that it is easy to use the iPod inside the armband. You have easy access to the buttons and you can actually use the scroll wheel through the plastic. Also, there are two holes on the top and bottom of the iPod holder so you can put the iPod in any position you want. The holes are for the headphones. The two holes are in different positions, because the previous iPods have the headphone jack in the middle of the iPod while the iPod video has it on the right side. Both can be used.

On the downside, there isn’t a lot of protection for the iPod. If you fall or something hits it, it will take damage. This could be a bad thing, but it is protected from dirt and small debris. It also gives your iPod some protection from water and the rain, but please don’t go running in the rain with this. It won’t protect it completely from water, but if you get caught, it will help.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, this is a good product. It provides a light comfortable way to transport your iPod. Anyone who runs, walks or has a need for this, I encourage them to check out the SportWrap.

## **Recommendation**

Anyone who needs an armband and has a regular iPod will enjoy this product. To make sure you have the right iPod, go check out their website at:

<http://www.xtrememac.com/cases/video/sportwrap/index.php>

# XRocker Sound Chair

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie



Ace Bayou Corp.  
1040 Higgs Rd.  
Lewisburg, TN 37019  
504 712-0833

**Fax:** 504 712-0833

<http://thexrocker.com/>

**Released:** 2005

Prices ranges for each model. XRocker II is about \$100 USD  
\$107.70 CND €74.49 Euro £50.42 GBP



**Please note that this review is on the XRocker II with speakers, handles and a subwoofer. I have not experienced other models.**

**Strengths:** Comfortable, great audio quality, wide range of compatibility for devices, really nice piece of leather furniture.

**Weaknesses:** Lots of cables (solved by the wireless models), doesn't work with PSP (they said it would), gets a bit uncomfortable after a while, can be broken easily.



## Introduction

There are many audio chairs or gaming chairs on the market but I think this one should be close to the top. It is a functional, stylish and affordable chair that can add to anyone's sound system. Gamers, movie lovers and audio gurus will love this chair because of the great speakers and amazing sound system. It is excellent.

## Getting Started

The model I received is very easy to set up. Just unfold it. It folds in two parts that are joined by hinges. When unfolded, a piece of Velcro keeps it in position. When it was shipped, there were no handles attached. You must attach them yourself. It is very easy to assemble and they give instructions that I could easily follow. There are many ways you can connect to devices and it is all explained in a diagram that they give you. Next thing is plugging it in. On the bottom of the chair, there is a zippered compartment that holds the power supply. You can use it for anything you want without it being crushed by the chair. Anyway, just plug the power supply into the wall, plug it into the chair and you are good to go.



## Using the Hardware

I have had a lot of fun using this chair. You have easy access to the controls, which are located on the bottom right side of the chair. This control panel has all of the inputs you need. The panel has a neon blue XRocker logo at the top which lets you see if you are in a dark room. You have the power input, an audio in 1/8 mm jack, an audio out 1/8 mm jack which is used for connecting multiple XRockers together, and a headphone jack (just in case the family is still sleeping). Also on the panel are two dials. One dial for volume and another dial for bass. Both control the speakers and the subwoofer. There are two speakers located at the top of the chair - one on either side. These speakers can get really loud, but the sound quality is stunning. Even though the speaker isn't pointed at you while you sit in the chair, you can still hear it well. Both speakers have neon blue XRocker logos as well.

Now onto the subwoofer. At high volumes, this thing can pack a decent punch. With the bass turned up and the volume at a reasonable level, you start to feel the music on become more immersed in the game. The way the sound effects sound as if they are coming from a distance of from one side. It is the same effect you would get from a surround sound system but with a lower cost.

Unfortunately, there are downsides to this wonderful product. With the model they gave me, there were a lot of cables. Those got in the way, got tangled and are a hassle to clean up. Now they do produce wireless models of the same product, but it will cost a bit more. Also, they have a model with wireless and a battery pack so you don't even need the power cable. Another thing with the cables is that they can damage the chair or they can get damaged themselves. My friend has the exact same model as me and he is experiencing background noise and shortouts because he accidentally stepped and pulled on the cables. Sometimes, I had to rotate the jack in the port to get both speakers to work. So, to sum it up, they can get damaged easily if you aren't careful.

Another downside is that the chair doesn't work with some of the devices they say it does. I tried to plug my PSP into the chair and it wouldn't work. The jack would not go in far enough, because the adapter they included is too big. I followed the instructions in their diagram and it still wouldn't work. Just be careful about what devices you assume will work. Most 1/8mm output jacks designed for MP3 players or iPods should work with the chair. For the most part, the chair is very comfortable, but after an hour or two your back can start to hurt. As a recommendation, I would suggest they add a bit more padding in the chair to help with that. This isn't a major concern, because the position it puts you in is comfortable.

## **Conclusion**

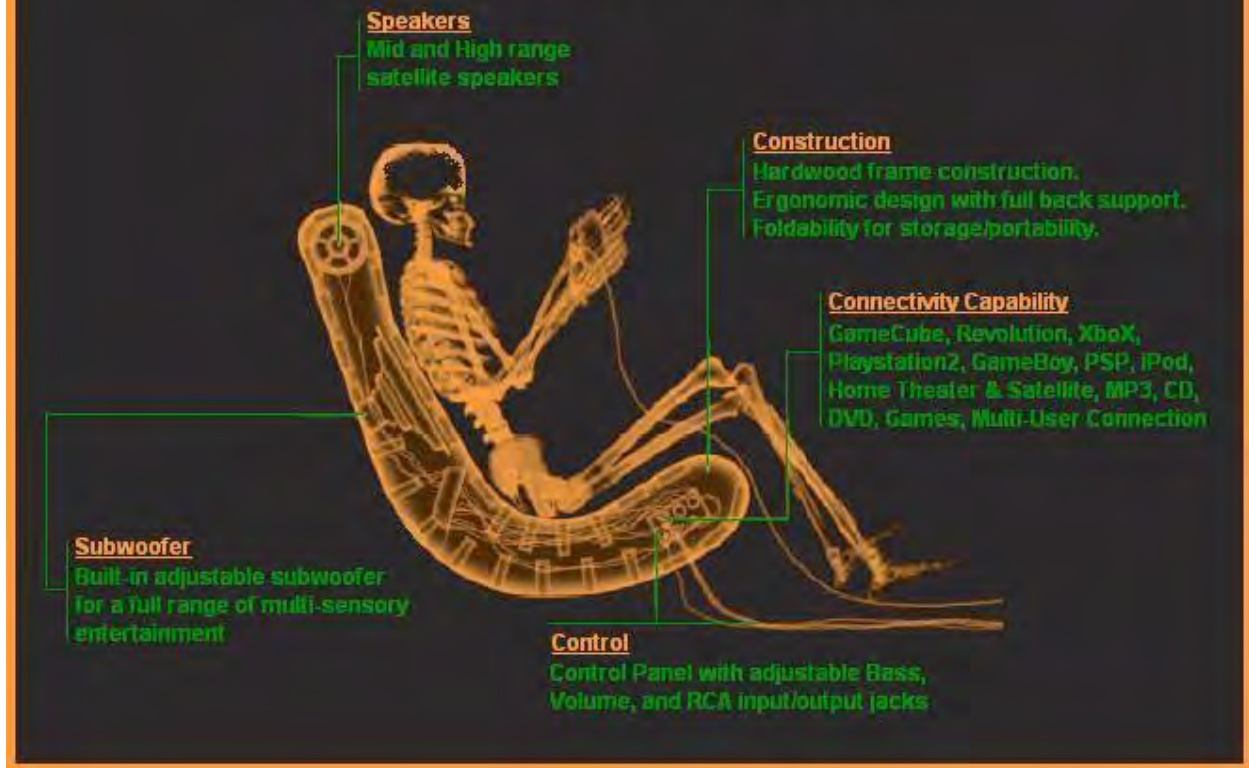
Overall, this is a great chair. Great sound with stylish leather and a comfortable rocking chair to boot, make this an awesome chair. People with home theater systems or people who are looking for a cheap audio system should have a look at this chair. So go ahead, start rocking!

## **Recommendation**

Anyone with a need for an audio/gaming chair will get a lot of use out of this chair. I know I will!



# A LOOK INSIDE THE FUTURE OF SOUND FURNITURE...



# Shareware

## *Scribus / aqua 1.3.4*

Reviewed by Michael Potter



Scribus / aqua 1.3.4

<http://www.scribus.net/>

FREE

**System Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; PPC Only (will use Rosetta); Python 2.4 and Ghostscript 8.54+ frameworks required; 512+ MB RAM; 350 MB Hard Drive Space

**Strengths:** Open Source, native aqua port, excellent community support.

**Weaknesses:** Tricky installation, weak file format support, buggy and slow.

### **Download:**

[http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group\\_id=125235&package\\_id=192212](http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=125235&package_id=192212)

### **Introduction**

Open Source software has been making a big splash on our Mac desktops in recent years. With the popularity of programs such as Mozilla's Firefox, NeoOffice, Adium, Transmission and others, it makes sense that we should see a serious push to replace the bread and butter apps of many professional Mac users: Adobe Photoshop and InDesign.

And the challengers stepping up to the plate are GIMP and Scribus. No doubt you've heard of GIMP. Touted as the open source equivalent of David to Adobe's Goliath, GIMP is a very good alternative to Photoshop, but Scribus you may not have heard of outside of the squeaks of praise heaped upon it from a vocal minority who pop up in the occasional InDesign vs. Quark debate.



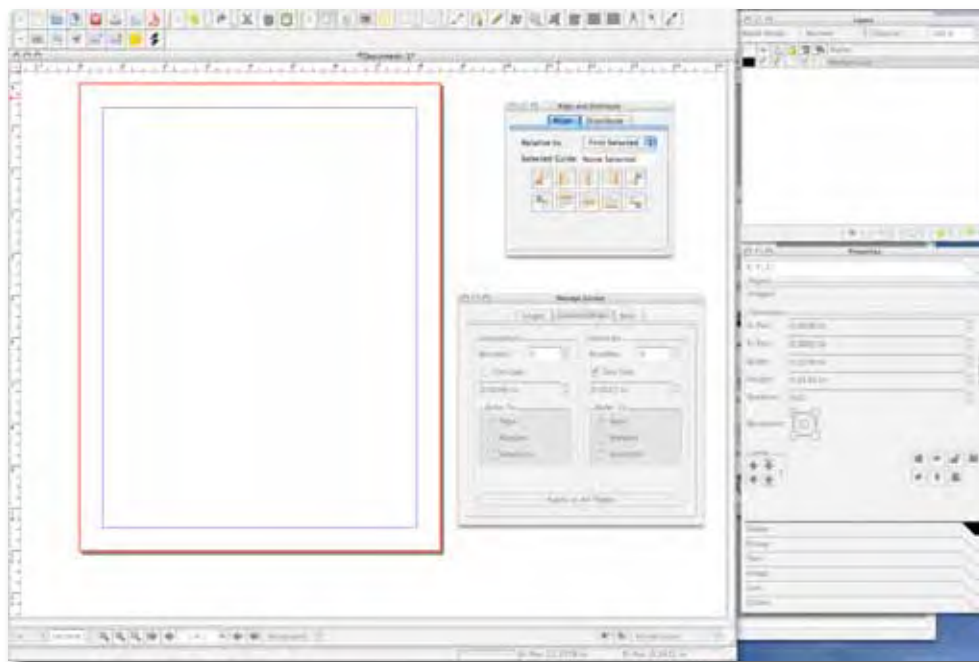
On the surface, Scribus has a lot going for it. Unlike GIMP, Scribus is a native aqua port to OS X and doesn't require the extra complication of installing Apple's X11 Window server first. It's well past the 1.0 stage of development and, on paper at least, contains most of the tools needed for producing professional caliber publications. To get a real feel for how it performs in the "real world" I set out to use it in place of InDesign for a simple one page project.

## Getting Started

Installation of Scribus is straight forward, but be sure to follow the instructions on their home page. In addition to the application itself, you must also install the Ghostscript and Python frameworks into your system's *Library > Frameworks* folder if you want full functionality. All of the necessary packages are provided in tar.bz2 format on the Sourceforge download page for Scribus.

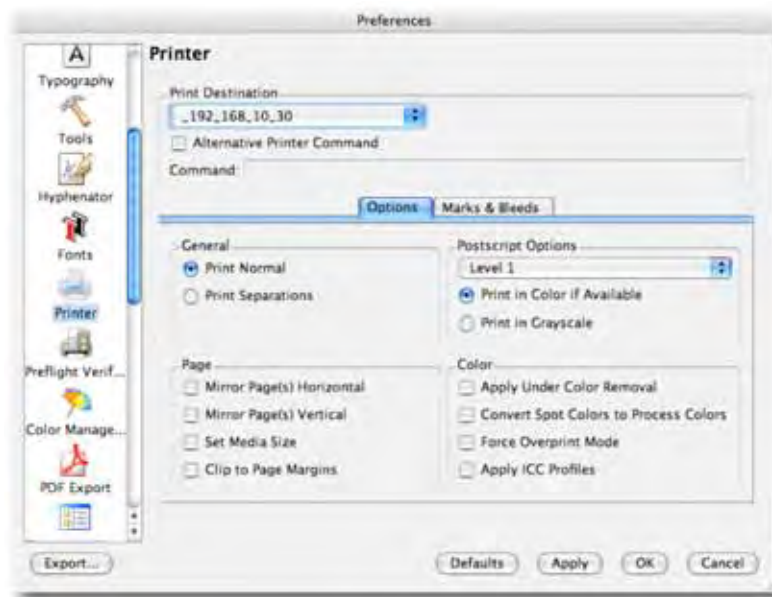
When you run Scribus for the first time, it will scan your system for available fonts. Depending on the size of your font library, this may take a while. With a couple hundred fonts on my system it was fairly quick. Unfortunately, before I could use the application, it crashed on me as it was loading up. A couple restarts later and it eventually came up, although it insisted I didn't have the Ghostscript framework installed – even though it was exactly where I was instructed to place it. A quick check in the Preferences menu told me I could specify the location of Ghostscript. Setting this was a small exercise in frustration itself, however, as it highlighted one of the first oddities of the program I encountered: setting preferences doesn't always stick. Many times it does, but I found myself resetting certain preferences each time I started the program. Fortunately, the Ghostscript location finally took after a couple tries.

The Scribus window is an odd mix of Aqua with a healthy helping of Linux/Windows thrown in. This is because Scribus uses the QT cross platform environment to draw its windows. The results are a decidedly unMac-like experience.



The main window is on the left and, though it can be resized, is fixed to the upper left corner of the screen. While okay, this is somewhat annoying on a larger display – maybe more so for a right hander – because I find it uncomfortable shifting my gaze to the left all the time. Like some of the preferences, the size you set the main workspace window isn't always remembered – though much of the time it is. Just another one of those oddities. Other windows such as layers, properties and alignment can be opened from the Windows menu, though they seem to suffer the same fate of disappearing from time to time when the application is started anew.

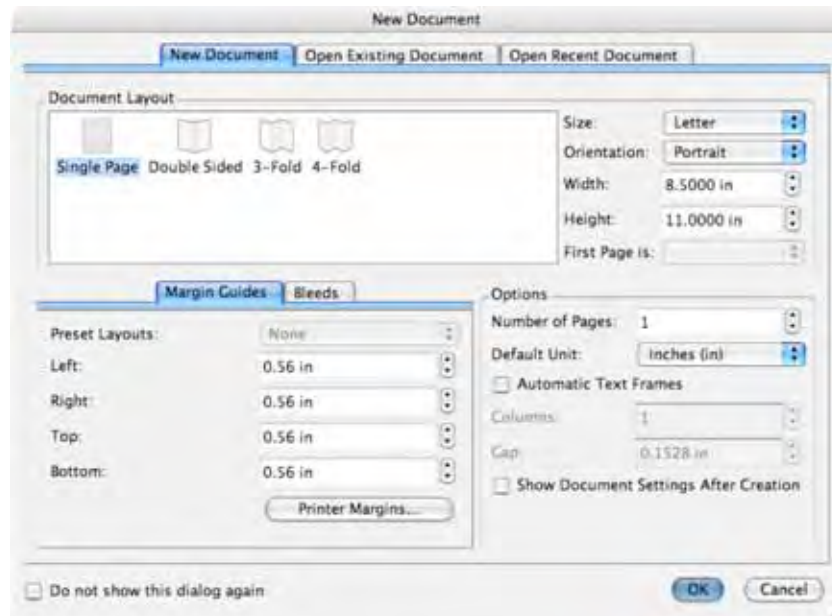
Scribus' Preferences window is simple to navigate and clearly provided to allow you to set up Scribus to work the way you want to work. Working through the preferences, however, you'll come across a couple other things that give away the QT / Linux origins of the software. A simple example is the Print Destination. Rather than display the printer by the name given to it in your Print & Fax system preference pane, the software identifies it by the queue name instead. Not a problem where only one printer is involved, but could be an issue in a professional environment with multiple IP printers.



Be sure to check out the link to the user-provided ReadMe found on the Scribus site for OS X which provides a number of helpful hints, limitations and workarounds to Mac users of Scribus.

## Using the Software

Upon start up you're prompted with the following dialog box:

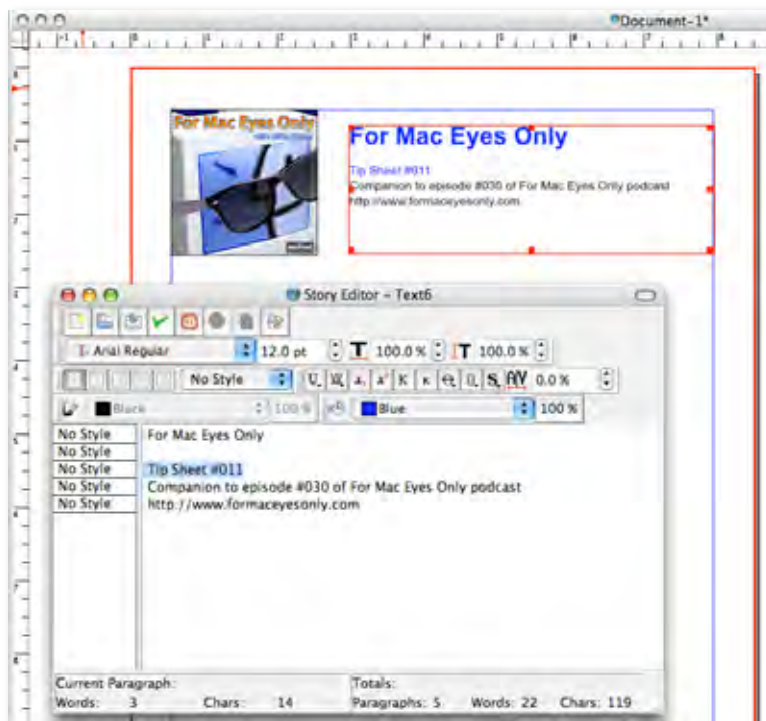


From here you set your document type, margins and other technical details of your document. Once open, you're presented with your new, blank document and can begin work.

Scribus is a frames-based desktop publishing program which means you must set up containers for your images and text before you can lay it out on page. This is not a foreign concept to anyone who uses Quark or InDesign, but in Scribus it's not as elegant as it could be. Unlike most other DTP programs, you can't import text or images without having set up a frame and selecting it first – the menus are just grayed out. As an example of working with Scribus' frames, I placed an image frame and then imported a Photoshop image to that frame. I could then resize the frame manually or I could right click and adjust frame to the contents, but after trying various combinations of modifier keys with the mouse, I couldn't find a way to easily use the mouse to resize the image itself. The answer lies in the, initially turned off, Properties window. It's through here that you can specify if the image should “Scale to Frame Size” or not. In addition, you can manually input percentages to scale the image or specify a size directly. After searching the Scribus Help screens and the website itself, this seems to be the only way to scale / resize images in Scribus.

Text frames have their own unique ways of working. Those familiar with InDesign know that if your text overflows your frame, you can grab the overflow indicator and drop it in another frame. Scribus has an overflow indicator, but I couldn't grab it. The program insisted that I wanted to resize the frame instead. Again, modifier keys didn't seem to help here. What I discovered is an interesting feature called "Link Text Frames". By drawing another frame and then linking them, the text would automatically flow over to that frame. Again, not bad ... just different.

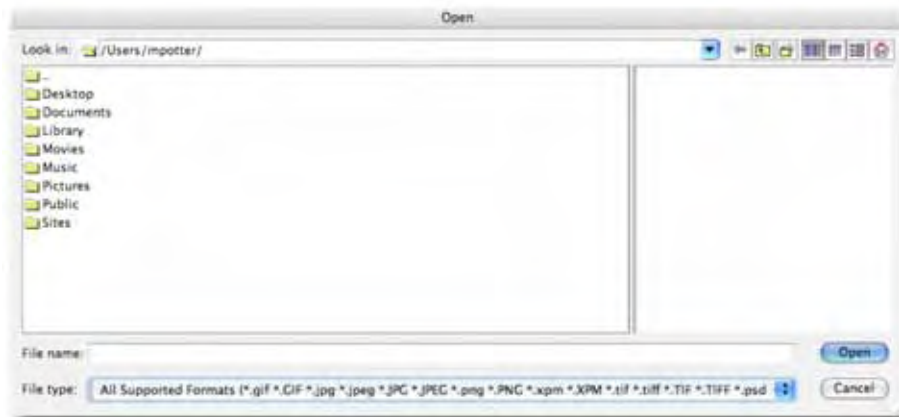
One aspect of Scribus that I found terribly unintuitive and cumbersome, was working with an empty text frame I wanted to manually type content into. I could double click the frame to get an insertion point and cursor, but no manner of typing would produce results! I found the only way to enter text, was to right click and choose Edit Text. This would give me a non-WYSIWYG Story Editor window that I would have to position such that I could see my document and continually refresh if I wanted to see the results in my layout.



Once the text was entered, you then return to the Properties window to tweak it. Leading, as an example, does not appear to be automatic in Scribus and defaults to whatever is appropriate for just that one line. To get my text to align properly, I could highlight the text in the text frame I wanted to adjust and make changes to properties such as leading or font changes, but if I wanted to edit the text? I had to return to the Story Editor. I'm not sure what the developers are thinking here.

Though Scribus will import native Photoshop files, it refuses to recognize Word documents. I actually came across this first when laying some text down on the page and said to myself, “Okay, sure, I get the whole 'we're not going to show any love to Microsoft's proprietary file format' attitude”, but then I noted Scribus will import Photoshop files! I know Adobe opened their PDF format, but I believe that even though PSD is in wide use and recognized by many different programs, it is still a closed file type. So why the contradiction? If they hope to make it on professional desktops, Word is a necessary evil. You can't expect everyone to open the docs in OpenOffice.org, convert to the OpenDocument format and then import into Scribus. It's an irksome series of steps to impose on the end user.

A final note on importing and saving your documents. Scribus, because of its lineage, has an overly complicated open/save dialog box:



You can see that it uses the underlying UNIX directory structure when working with the OS X file system and not the common dialog boxes we are used to. On the whole this is fine, but if I want to save to a USB thumb drive or to another hard drive on my system, why should I have to navigate to /VOLUMES/ThumbDrive/ in a butt ugly Windows-like dialog box? I shouldn't.

I seemed to run into too many walls with Scribus as I used it. Things like font selection would work in one spot, but not another or I could delete frames from the document by right clicking, but not by selecting the frame and pressing delete on the keyboard... The inability to directly edit text was the final straw for me.

There are a couple of really cool features I'd like to call out however. The first is the ability to turn on an Outline Mode for any given layer. If you have a very complex layout, turning on the wireframes will dramatically speed up the display.

The second cool feature is a Barcode Generator. This is sorely needed in Scribus' commercial brethren, but as yet can't be found. Scribus has support for 18 formats including the elusive ISBN. The downside? I couldn't get it to work. I tried the Barcode Generator on text frames and image frames, but could not produce any results. Accessing the Help system yielded nothing on this feature.

So goes the story of Scribus. If I can't get it to do basic layout work in a friendly and efficient manner, then the rest of the bells and whistles simply don't matter.

## Conclusion

I really, really want to love Scribus. This is not my first look at it. Each time it passes another milestone, I give it another try, and each time I end up removing it from my system.

I'm a huge proponent of Open Source and am, in fact, using it right now (in the guise of NeoOffice) to compose this document. Firefox, Thunderbird and Adium are all running in the background and I'll likely use Cyberduck at least once or twice today.

I give Scribus three stars because the *promise* is there. It will get to the point that it offers some serious competition to the likes of InDesign...someday. It's just not there quite yet.

I'd love to see the NeoOffice guys get their hands on Scribus. They fixed in OpenOffice.org many of the same shortcomings I found in Scribus and then some. If you're a programmer who thinks you can lend a hand to the Scribus Team's efforts, you should consider doing so because they're accomplishing some great things and, as with all of the Open Source projects I'm aware of, can no doubt use the help.

## Recommendation

If you're looking for a refined desktop publishing program, you won't find it here. Scribus is still very much behind PageMaker 7 in most ways and on par with or ahead InDesign and Quark in few others, but with that said, the price can't be beat and if you're willing to give it a go, you won't be out anything for trying.

In the mean time, for professional layout environments, you should definitely stick to either InDesign or Quark. I don't know why you would consider anything else. For the rest of us, keep a sharp eye on Scribus because I've no doubt it will surprise us. In the mean time, give Apple's Pages a try for your medium to light duty publishing needs and I think you'll be much happier.



# Software

Enjoy the fruit. Spread the seeds.



### Learn What You Need

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

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



### Teach What You Know

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

[www.teachmac.com](http://www.teachmac.com)

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



# *Finale 2008: Professional Music Management and Notation Software*

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

**makemusic®**

MakeMusic  
7615 Golden Triangle Drive, Suite M  
Eden Prairie, MN 55434-3848  
1-952-937-9611  
1-800-843-2066  
FAX: 1-952-937-9760

<http://www.makemusic.com>

<http://www.finalemusic.com/finale/>

**Released:** July 2007

\$600 USD New, \$150 Upgrade, Crosstrade from Sibelius - \$200.

<https://www.finalemusic.com/store/products.aspx>



**Requirements:** Mac OS 10.4 or higher (Mac-Intel or Power PC) or Windows XP/Vista 32-bit; CD or DVD-ROM drive; 800x600 minimum monitor resolution; Minimum 512MB RAM (1GB or more recommended for optional use of Garritan sounds/Kontakt Player: more RAM = more available sounds); 400MB hard drive space required for software and user manual. An additional 1.6GB hard drive space is required for all Garritan sounds.

**Optional Requirements:** MIDI interface; MIDI input and/or playback device; Printer; Scanner; Microphone required for use of MicNotator®.

A soundcard (including a DirectSound driver) is required for playing the Garritan sounds in Windows.

**Comes With:** 3 CDs, Quick Reference Guide, Installation and Tutorials Manual for Windows and Macintosh.

**Strengths:** Excellent tutorials and training.

**Weaknesses:** “Please note that the Rhythm Section Generator is not available for Macintosh.”

**Previous Reviews:** June 2004 and Finale Allegro April 2007 –

**Events:** <http://www.makemusic.com/events.aspx>

**Demo:** <http://www.finalemusic.com/finale/demo.aspx>

**Resource Center:** <http://www.finalemusic.com/finale/resources/default.aspx>

**Showcase:** <http://www.finalemusic.com/showcase/>

## Introduction

“The latest upgrade to the world’s best-selling music software offers unprecedented playback options, major productivity enhancements and even more control for the perfect page. A few of the top-level additions found in Finale 2008 include:

- Finale can record/import a mono or stereo audio file to enhance playback. No other notation software offers this capability.
- Now more than 250 world-class Garritan instrument sounds are included free.
- Finale’s interface has been streamlined to be more efficient, intuitive and consistent, particularly in the area of cut/copy/paste/insert.
- Document Styles can instantly personalize the appearance of new documents, controlling text and music fonts, all libraries, text, graphics and page layout.
- Enhanced Setup Wizard offers more options and control and provides intelligent page layout to reduce white space on the page.
- Colored noteheads can be automatically configured to appear on specific pitches and to play back integrated Boomwhackers tuned percussion tube sounds.
- 

Finale 2008 is the first notation software to offer the ability to add an audio track,” stated John Paulson, chief executive officer of MakeMusic, Inc. “This unique feature allows you to hear your songs come to life with a real vocalist, or hear your concerto performed by a real instrumentalist.

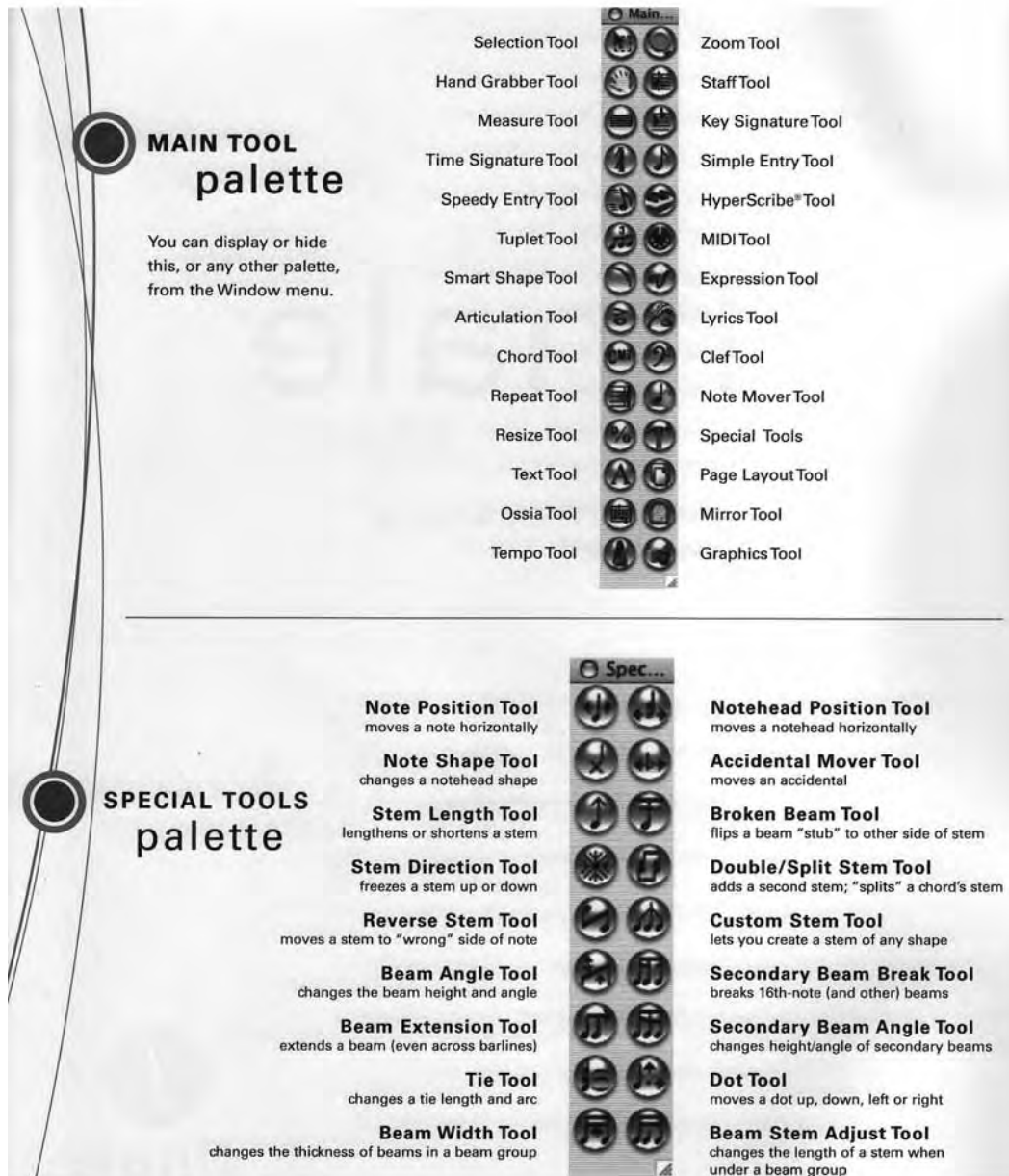
“Finale is a crucial part of our workflow,” stated Glen W. Nardin, commanding officer of the First Cavalry Division Band. “We rely on Finale to constantly create and edit our charts in an effort to always remain fresh. Finale is easy to use and reliable. We’ve come to depend on Finale.”

## Getting Started



Loading the software from the CDs requires the included serial number. After installation, the system also requires an authorization code only made available after online registration processing has been completed.

Musical instrument and voice configuration is painless. The tool buttons are beautiful works of art. And scoring consists of mouse-clicking away on the staves!



# WINDOWS and MAC

## THE VISUAL INDEX

COMPOSER (inserts) — **Steven M. Alper**

**Vocal**

**Piano**

**pa.**

**voc.**

**inst.**

**pa.**

**MEASURE NUMBERS**

**voc.**

**inst.**

**pa.**

**WIN / MAC - 1**

© 1992, '99 by Steven M. Alper  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED — COPYRIGHT NOTICES (inserts)

TITLES (mixed fonts)

METRONOME MARKINGS

STAFF NAMES

INDENTING SYSTEMS

HARMONICS

SLURS

COMPOSER (inserts) — **Steven M. Alper**

GROUP NAMES

D.S. AL CODA

ROLLED CHORDS

DOITS: FALLOFFS

PICKUP MEASURES

accel.

rall.

FIGURED BASS

PEDAL MARKINGS

CUT TIME, COMMON TIME

Also: MIXED/FLOATING TIME SIGNATURES

ABBREVIATED GROUP NAMES

CROSS-STAFF NOTATION

GRACE NOTES

PARENTHESES

SLURS

BAR LINES

CRESCENDO/DECRESCENDO

To Coda

COMPOSITE TIME SIGNATURE

TIME SIGNATURE (Size)

CHORD SYMBOLS: Standard, Nashville A&B, Solfeggio, European, German, Roman, Scandinavian

RESTRIKE KEY SIGNATURE/RESTRIKE TIME SIGNATURE

FRETBOARD DIAGRAMS

SLASHES

HIDE FRETBOARDS

FINGERING NUMBERS

SECONDS IN INNER VOICES

ABBREVIATED STAFF NAMES

CESURA

To Coda

DASHED LINES

5-Str. Bass

TABLATURE

MEASURE REPEAT SIGN

MEASURE NUMBERS

**A** — REHEARSAL LETTERS

TUPLETS

WORD EXTENSIONS

BREATH MARKS

*p* — DYNAMICS

MULTIPLE VOICES

PIANO BRACES

# WINDOWS and MAC

10. — FIRST ENDINGS

DIFFERENT FONTS: Maestro™, Jazz™, Tamburo™, Engraver™

MID-MEASURE CLEFS

PERCUSSION NOTATION

4 TOMS

CRASH

BRACKETS, REPEAT BARLINES

inst.

1.

B.D.

HH foot

pa.

REPEATS (Brackets & Text Indications)

BRACKETS

VOCAL MUSIC

14. — SECOND ENDING

RIGHT CLOSING BRACKET

day-break in his homeland, Muf-fins from the o-ven, Sun-light through the lat-tice,

CADAENZA

TEXT EXPRESSIONS: ENCLOSURE

pa.

DOUBLE WHOLE NOTES

GUITAR SYMBOLS

15.

Ossia

DASHED LINES

COURTESY TIME SIGNATURES

ENHARMONICS

QUARTER TONES

TRILLS

MELISMA

STEMLESS NOTE

ARROWS

D.S. al Coda

DOUBLE BARLINE

CUTAWAY SCORES

inst.

MULTIPLE KEY SIGNATURES (Transposition)

PERCUSSION PARTS; NOTE SHAPES

HEADLESS NOTES

HIDING NOTES & REST

DASHED LEFT BARLINE

BEAMING ACROSS BARLINE

D.S., D.S. al coda - D.S. al Coda

CODA

COURTESY KEY SIGNATURES

pa.

TIES

BRACKETS

MULTIMEASURE RESTS

G.P.

REVERSE STEMS

FERMATA

NONSTANDARD KEY SIGNATURE

FINAL BARLINE

GRAPHICS

**makemusic®**

WIN / MAC - 2

The Installation and Tutorials manual consists of 212 pages with instructions for Windows first and Macintosh 2<sup>nd</sup> in each section. Nothing is assumed, so MIDI is discussed, along with a lot of music theory on chords, accidentals, tuplets, notes and rests working with measures, using HyperScribe for notation, transcribing and setting time signatures and beaming patterns.

Detail work includes changing keys and time signatures, entering lyrics, adding 2<sup>nd</sup> verses, using the repeat tool, working with chord symbols and inner voices.

There is even a section on articulation, expressions, slurring and using libraries. After that there is print dedicated to measure layout, pickup measures, spacing, beat charts, paging, texting and graphing and even printing.

Then there is a section on setting Clefs and Staves, hiding Staves, transposing instruments, styling and optimizing systems and linking parts.

There is even a section covering MIDI Channels and Instruments such as the Kontakt Player and Garritan Personal Orchestra. For more electronic fun, there is discussion on the Mixer, Human playback, the MIDI Tool, creating a Decrescendo and Intelligent Tempo Marking and Swing playback as well as syncing Finale to Video.

Those who intend to write music for guitar will like the section on guitar tablature, tab staff, string and fret numbers, entering slides, bends and tremolos, hammer-ons, pull-offs and other markings, and MIDI guitar.

The last section discusses fancy beam and stemming, measure numbers, the Shape Designer, scanning music and percussion maps.

The last part of the book covers document style and templates order of entry, minimizing screen redraws, keyboard shortcuts, macros and linking to the rest of the world and learning more about MusicXML and plug-ins.

As of course, anything having to do with music notation and theory has a lot of pictures, but the video tutorials along with the manual don't really make me flashback to music camp when I was a kid. The review we did for *macCompanion* magazine still was a reflection of the excellent job that MakeMusic did back then and they most certainly have come much closer to perfection this time around with Finale 2008.

My father, who is still a professional musician and loves playing with his orchestras, fiddling groups and quartets, is still intimidated by using this app on his Mac. However, he does have others who come by and they love using his machine to print out or save their music after transposing or adapting to their instruments.

Dad is still "old school" and still feels comfortable handwriting scores and tuning pianos. I think the video tutorials are the kind of thing he'd really enjoy and he'd "get it" once he sees them.

## **Conclusion**

There is a reason why Finale 2008 is really a “Cadillac” in the music industry for music composition and notation, whether doing pieces for one instrument or for a full orchestra. They made it incredibly simple to use!

## **Recommendation**

MakeMusic listened to our concerns and even has plans for a future Finale, only if we submit our requests – and they are freely soliciting comments and ideas for improving an already excellent product that truly enhances musical productivity and creativity. And of course, if you use Sibilius, they want you to switch ;^)



# *GoldenSeal OSX Business Management Software Version 3.9 – For Construction and Small Business*

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Turtle Creek Software  
625 W Buffalo Street #1  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
888-272-1008  
607-272-1008

[info@turtlesoft.com](mailto:info@turtlesoft.com)

<http://www.turtlesoft.com>

**Released:** May 2, 2007

Basic - \$395 USD, Complete Version - \$695 USD. There are licenses for up to 20 users.

**Forum:** <http://bb.turtlesoft.com/>



**Demos and Downloads:** <http://www.turtlesoft.com/downloads.html>

**Comes With:** A CD and 2 spiral-bound manuals on Estimating and Accounting.

**Requirements:** QuickTime. Mac OS X 10 or Windows. 85 MB of hard drive space. Versions for earlier OSs (8 though 9) for the Mac are also available.

**Strengths:** Cross-platform QuickBooks Replacement as an Estimating and Accounting application.

**Weaknesses:** Does not integrate directly with Computer-Aided Design apps yet.

**Other Reviews:** <http://www.turtlesoft.com/testimonials.html> <http://construction-estimating-software-review.toptenreviews.com/goldenseal-review.html>

**Comparisons:**

<http://construction-estimating-software-review.toptenreviews.com/>

## **Introduction**

“Goldenseal is **business management software** for anyone who needs to control expenses, give estimates, keep inventory, manage projects or properties, or keep track of customers. It's a simple software package for accounting and many other business functions.

Goldenseal is used by many remodelers, construction contractors, architects, property owners, retailers, service businesses, professionals and small manufacturers. It's ideal for small businesses who have outgrown QuickBooks, and who want a program that handles more than just basic accounting."

This is a cross-platform C++ app written in CodeWarrior Pro.

## Getting Started



Goldenseal is one of the few, if not the only, construction estimating software designed to work with Mac OS X. It has plenty of competition on non-Mac systems, however and we linked to those reviews above.

Some things Goldenseal doesn't do directly right now is integrating directly with Computer-Aided Design applications. That may change as they are actively doing fee-based updates. "Three-pack" updates (next three) cost \$90. Turtle Creek Software offsets that with free phone and Email support for as long as you use their product.

In construction, time is money and Goldenseal provides templates for general construction, framing, painting and drywall in the Basic version. The app also offers cost estimating, scheduling, contract writing, project and business management modules.

The full version as shown above, also covers job costing, general accounting, payroll, project billing, customer billing and inventory tracking.

Goldenseal's power is in being able to provide on-site estimates – something I was looking for as we deeper into the Ever-Green Renewable Energy Resource Center project.

The 177-page Estimating and Project Management manual Covers the basics for doing dimensions, allowances and bids, contracts, bill of materials and takeoffs, customer and project setup, project management itself, cost categories, locations and items, assemblies, updates and backups, company info, printing layouts and reports, templates, exporting and importing text files, and setting things up. The occasional hints at humor are refreshing.

The 208-page Accounting manual is basically a book on how to successfully run your own company and starts with page 201 as a continuation of the Estimating manual. The Index is in the estimating manual and interestingly enough, I receive the manual for Windows instead of for the Mac. The PDF versions make no such distinctions.

The Accounting portion of the program and page examples appear to be FileMaker or Hyperlink-based.

Both manuals also comes as PDFs and are dated from 2004 with 2 columns, so take up half as much page space as the spiral-bound manuals. That said, there are additional files in Excel format that cover Canadian province payroll structures as well as US state-by-state payroll structures for 2007. By the way, they opened just fine in iWork '08 Numbers.

If you do not want to start from scratch and desire to import QuickBook files, you may do so. However, there are starter files generated in 2006 for Basic, Architect, Construction, Developer, Drywall, Framing, Metric, Paint, Property Management, Retail and Service Biz.

## **Conclusion**

If you are into using your Mac for the construction trades, Turtle Creek Software has provided the tools for doing the job for the Mac.

## **Recommendation**

You can download a demo version and see if this will meet your needs. I have not located other estimating software that runs under Mac OS X yet. Turtle Creek Software has been in business for many years and they stand behind their product.

# Keynote '08 – Much Better than PowerPoint for Presentations

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Apple

<http://www.apple.com>

1-800-MY-APPLE

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

**Released:** August 2007

\$80 USD, \$99 for Family pack (5 licenses)

**Requirements:** Mac OS X and perhaps a Mac-friendly LCD Projector and a desire to present professional presentations.

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



**Strengths:** Built for Steve Jobs Stevenotes and we can now emulate his presentations.

**Weaknesses:** Timing is everything and it is an art to coordinating voice, and video for QuickTime and YouTube properly.

Discussed with Tim Verpoorten in the Mac ReviewCast - Episode #121

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

**30-day trial:** <http://www.apple.com/iwork/trial/>

**Other Reviews:** [http://ptech.allthingsd.com/?p=137&ak\\_action=printable](http://ptech.allthingsd.com/?p=137&ak_action=printable)

<http://chris.pirillo.com/media/2007/08/16/iwork-and-ilife-08/>

<http://macsparky.wordpress.com/2007/08/18/review-keynote-08/>

<http://www.macvoices.com/wordpress/macvoices-788-in-depth-on-keynote-4-with-brian-peat-of-keynoteusercom/>

<http://www.macworld.com/2007/08/reviews/keynote08/index.php/?lsrc=mwrevrss>

## Introduction

“Amaze your audience with cinema-quality presentations that are easier than ever to create. Use the new features in Keynote '08 — the latest version of Apple's powerful presentation software — to tell your story effectively and dramatically.”

## Getting Started

I bought the family pack of iWork '08 for \$107 USD, including tax and shipping.

I've played with Keynote off and on for a few years and never really got into it much except on occasion. Now with the *Ever-Green Renewable Energy Resource Center* project ramping up, I get to go evangelize it and Keynote does a wonderful job letting me do that with its new transitions and movements that just put PowerPoint to shame in comparison.

I almost feel like I'm directing an orchestra as pieces come together.

I don't know if it is because I didn't buy iLife '08 yet to use Garageband for background music, but there does seem to be a bit of a time lag between music, voice and slides. It appears mostly when exporting to QuickTime and something I hadn't noticed before was the record button, so I'm guessing that is new. Okay, no guessing - it *is* new - <http://www.apple.com/iwork/keynote/>

## Using the Software

What I did in my quick learning curve, was run a piece of music in the background and let the slides go by as I played with various transitions and themes. The trick was in getting the timing right so the music ended the same time as the slides did. I almost had it once or twice. Then I discovered that the record not only was adding the music from iTunes I had selected, but it was also picking up my voice as I sneezed a few times in somewhat appropriate places. It was funny!

That is how I found out that it defaulted to the iMac's mic and was picking up the keyclicks and keyboard sounds as well. I soon discovered that I could get it to switch to the external headset so the background noises like lawnmowers, planes and street noise were not included and the music was then also muffled.

The neatest part is that we can now export from Keynote to YouTube directly, after we set up a YouTube account. If I thought there was a lag in QuickTime between syncing audio with slides, doing so with Keynote to YouTube tended to be even trickier. The timing is more art than science as far as I can tell.

I was invited to speak to the Sunrise Rotary Club in Pasco, WA and I had to do some quick prep such as finding a mini-VGA adapter that would work with my iMac that interfaced properly with their Dell LCD projector.

I ordered the mini-VGA video adapter M9109G/A, figuring it would arrive in time. I expected that it would be the correct adapter to interface with any projector. I was wrong. However, I was able to ask our local Mid-Columbia Macintosh User Group <http://www.macusergroup.com/> for an adapter and a former *macCompanion* staff member who runs his own ISP now <http://www.3-rivers.com/> had an extra mini-VGA to VGA 15-pin adapter for me to borrow – which is exactly what I needed. It is the Apple VGA Display Adapter M8639G/A and costs the same as the other adapter.



**Apple VGA Display Adapter M8639G/A**



**Apple Video Adapter M9109G/A**

---

Thankfully being a member of our local Macintosh User Group paid off for me and I was able to make a miracle happen. (About an hour after I got home from the presentation, FedEx arrived with the Apple Video Adapter.)

Guess what? The mini-VGA video adapter from Apple has ports for an RCA jack (composite video) and S-video out. I would have needed an S-video cable to work with the Dell project to use this adapter if it had arrived in time.

The iMac performed perfectly. The Dell LCD projector presented a very dull and dark picture and the lettering was all pixilated.

**Note:** Apple Chancery fonts do not look great unless they are HUGE on-screen.

The version of the Keynote part of the presentation I had at that time did not have my voice, but just the music, so I did the narration before presenting the 4-minute Keynote and it went rather well actually, especially for those who were able to watch the computer screen on my iMac G5 instead of the projection screen.

Here is the updated version that has my voice narration more or less timed to the slides and the muted music in the background on YouTube –

<http://www.youtube.com/v/OfH0YIPs954>

One thing I learned about the mini-VGA to S-video is that it does not work with the early-version eMacs (the 700 MHz systems do not support TV display, nor do the original “lampshade” iMacs) – and a separate S-video cable will need to be purchased because apparently most projectors do not have one handy. Most have the VGA 15-pin port and cables instead.

Anyway, the cost of iWork '08 and the VGA adapter will have paid for itself if any in that audience were to come forward and be an investor in this \$5 million activity. (Believe it or not, we have a couple of certified investors in Great Britain who have already expressed interest in helping us with this Renewable Energy project – and they saw the first Keynote YouTube presentation where I was sneezing!)

Areas for further exploration would be the A-to-B animations for moving objects along a path or scaling an image, popping in and out of backgrounds (Alpha) and “smart” building of photo inserts for creating sophisticated animation and exploring timing between what the audience sees and the presentation platform.

## **Conclusion**

Pages and Numbers are just nice-to-haves as far as I'm concerned. Keynote is the reason to get iWork '08. It makes you look and feel professional when giving presentations.

## **Recommendation**

Keynote has always been a better product than its competition. Now with Keynote '08, I have no problem recommending it to anyone who would rather spend more time on presenting, rather than on preparing. And by the way, now with the Record option, the presentation can speak for itself!

# Morpheus Photo Animation Suite Mac v. 3.00

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



SmithMicro Software  
185 Westridge Drive  
Watsonville, CA 95076  
1-831-761-6200

<http://www.allume.com>

<http://www.morpheussoftware.net/>

<http://www.morpheussoftware.net/morpheusmac/>

**Released:** August 2007

Free Download.

\$60 USD, Pro version \$120 USD.

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later.

**FAQ:**

<http://www.morpheussoftware.net/morpheus/faq/faq.php>

**Forum:** <http://forums.morpheussoftware.net/>



**Strengths:** Universal binary. Quick morphing, warping and photo mixing.

**Weaknesses:** Ported from Windows environment. Memory-sensitive.

## Introduction

Morpheus Photo Animation Suite is an award-winning graphics program that lets you create animations of photos or movies morphing from one to another, being warped and distorted, or create mixes of characteristics from two photos. Morpheus Photo Animation Suite lets you create morphs in Flash SWF, Animated GIF, AVI, JPEG, PNG, TIFF, and other popular formats.

The **all-in-one animation suite** includes Morpheus Photo Morpher Mac v3.00, Morpheus Photo Warper Mac v3.00, Morpheus Photo Mixer Mac v3.00, as well as all 15 sample morphs, warps, and mixes.

The Professional edition lets you create **higher quality animations** and supports **additional output formats**. All Standard features are included with the Professional edition plus additional features such as:

- Line tools, **transparency support**, key frame options, and fade options used to create more **advanced animations**
- **QuickTime output** for use with **3rd party movie software**



## Getting Started

It is easy, fast, and fun to use for both beginning and advanced users. There is a beginner mode and tutorial to help you get started quickly. Sample morphs come included as well, which can be used as another way to quickly learn the program.

There are three tutorial sections in the Help Menu for morphing, warping and photo mixing and the steps are basically the same; Load pictures, “Add Dots”, “Adjust Dots”, preview and render and either use Key Frames or use “Fading Dots”.

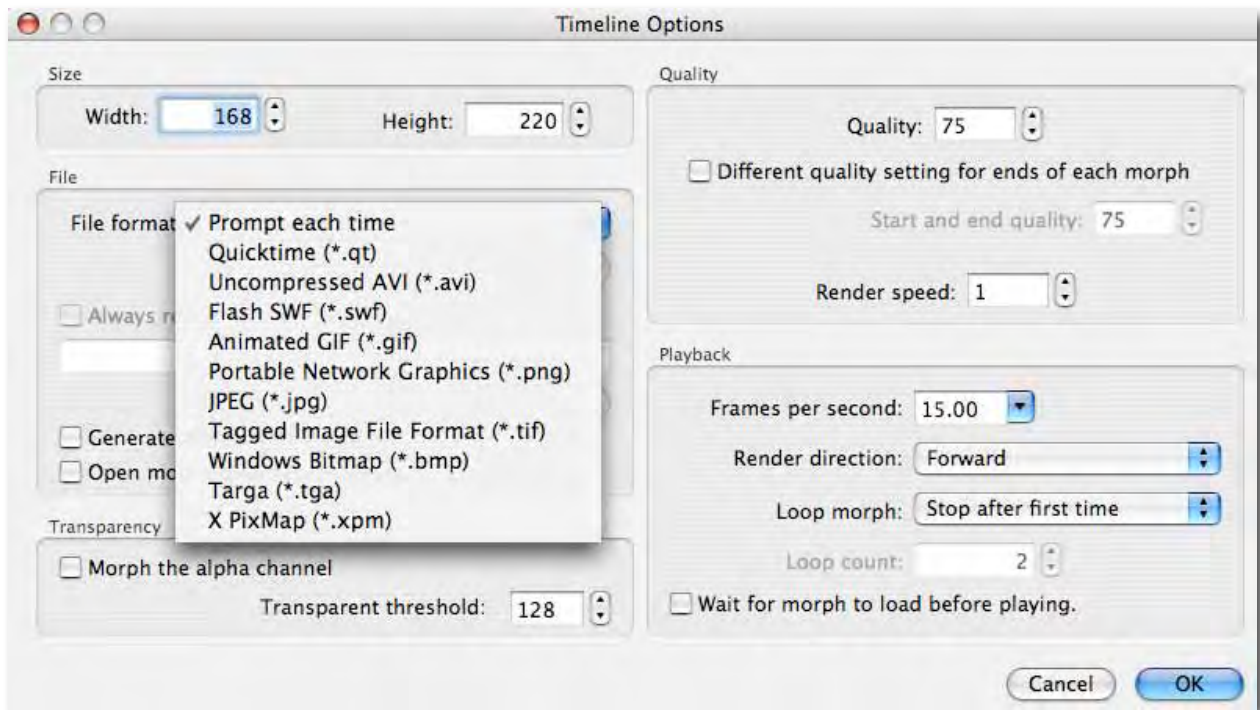
The square dots are basically anchor points to lead the bits from one picture to another. The more dots, the smoother the transformations.

The first time I ran it I did so many dots, the system began reusing the same colors for the dots and when I began removing them the program poofed on me and I had to start over.

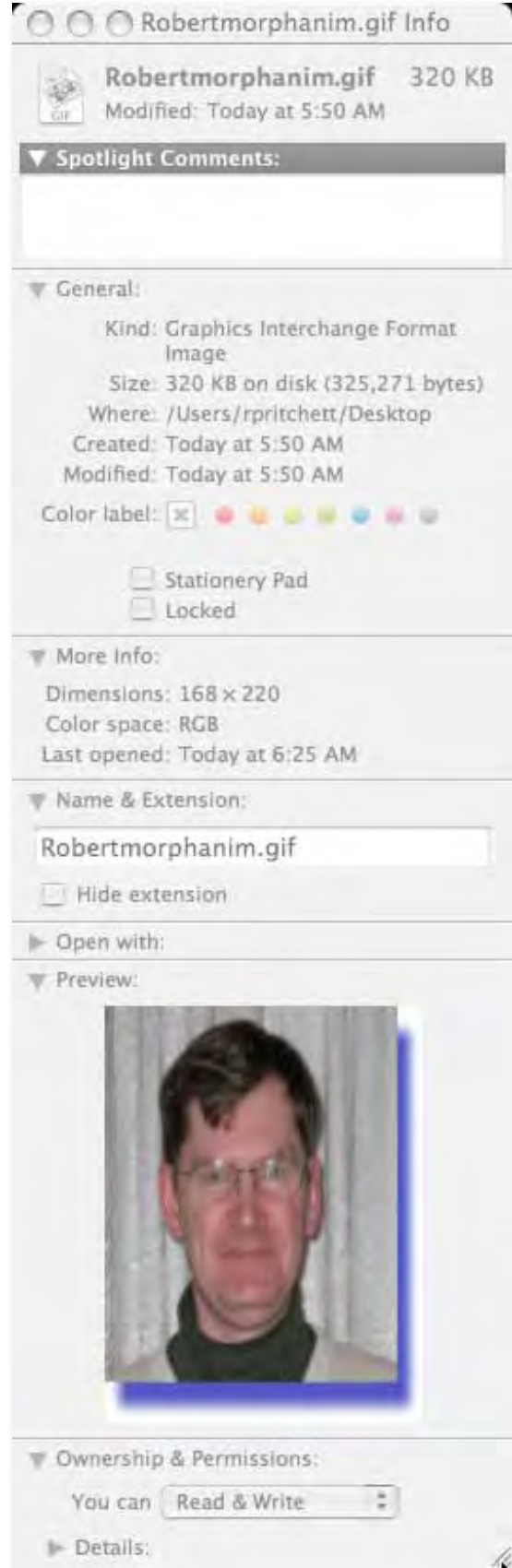
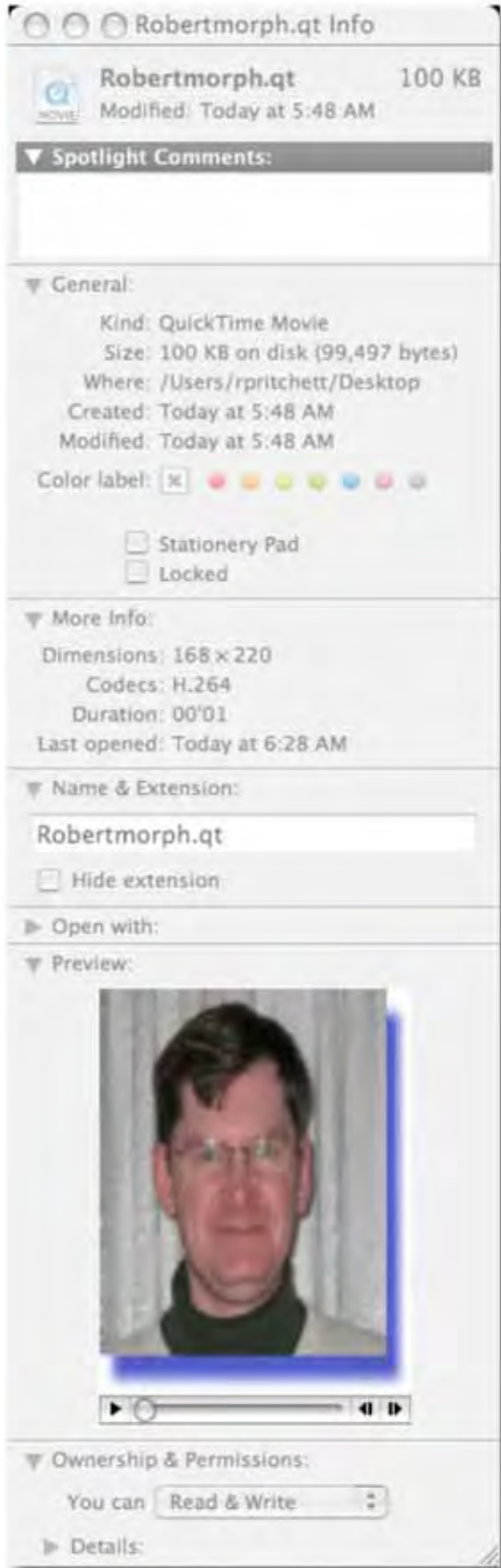




The file is saved as a .aml file. To view the file, either click the Play button, send it to Email, or “Render Timeline” to export to video formats for Internet or Email.



I saved it as a QuickTime movie and as an animated .gif.



Would I pay extra for the Professional version? Only if I wanted to get crazy with control.

Look at these:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dc8wkorJ9Fs>

<http://www.namepuzzles4kids.com/morphing.html>

And this is way cool –

<http://i77.photobucket.com/albums/j64/Beenzon-Toste/Animations/Bairnsinabox.gif>

See how “Dr Robert” morphed his CAD drawing into a real object –

<http://www.ultimatecharger.com/satellite%20system%20conversion2.gif>

## **Conclusion**

This is quick&dirty morphing form the Windows environment ported to the Mac. It only took 4 years to go from the question to actualization of bringing this app to the Mac.

## **Recommendation**

You can download the Morpheus Photo Animation Suite for free and try before you buy. I would like to see more of the “Dr Robert”-like renderings myself for professional applications of going from idea to manufactured object.

Can you tell the difference between the QuickTime and the animated Gif below?



# ConceptDraw Project 3 version 3.4: Professional Proactive Project Management

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



CS Odessa, LLC  
1798 Technology Drive, Suite 244  
San Jose, CA 95110-1399 USA  
1 (877) 441-1150  
1 (408) 441-1150  
**Fax:** 1 (408) 441-1138  
Or  
CS Odessa, Ltd.  
29 Frantsuzskiy Blvd.  
Odessa, 65044 Ukraine  
Fax: +38 (048) 728-6661  
[info@conceptdraw.com](mailto:info@conceptdraw.com)  
<http://www.conceptdraw.com/>



**Product Site:** <http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/products/project/main.php>

**Released:** January 2007. Version 3.4 released August 2007.

\$200 USD, or with ConceptDraw MINDMAP and ConceptDraw Concept 7 Pro (\$500 USD).

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/products/cdsuite/>

**Languages:** English, French, German, Spanish.

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Windows systems – Win 98 or later.

**Strengths:** Cross-platform and integrated into the other ConceptDraw apps. Imports and Exports MS Project XML files.

**Weaknesses:** Perhaps a little more work on the Contact entry.

**30-day Demo:** - <http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/resources/project/trial.php> or pa

**FAQs:** <http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/support/project.php>

**Forum:** <http://community.conceptdraw.com/>

**Screenshots:** <http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/products/project/screenshots.php>

**More Resources:** <http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/resources/supflowres.shtml#project>

## Introduction

“ConceptDraw Project 3 is a unique program, designed to help successfully plan and keep track of any number of projects simultaneously. Working in business means there's often a need to work on several projects at the same time, each with a different focus and limited resources. With the help of ConceptDraw Project 3 it's easy to manage the resources being shared by different projects, as well as create linkages between them.

Various projects are managed from a single workspace, giving the freedom to plan effectively, no matter how complex or large scale a project's needs are."



The usual project management tools are available here, with an interactive Gantt chart, individual calendars, functions to work with HTML, RTF, MS Excel and MS Project and the ConceptDraw family of products. And of course, it works with both Macs and Windows-based systems.

What's New? [http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/products/project/whats\\_new.php](http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/products/project/whats_new.php)

It has been prettified with a floating dialog system, the ability to do multitasking, dragging and dropping between tasks, colorization schemes for better identification, sorting of tasks, projects and resources, a filtering wizard, an improved network diagramming viewer, and they added a Critical Path Management highlighter function as well.

It also transfers directly into ConceptDraw MINDMAP and provides for import and export to MS Project XML files.

## Getting Started

The app may either be downloaded or it comes as a CD. There is a 28-page QuickStart Guide that covers how to work with the application including turning phase into task, specifying task parameters and information, setting links, milestones and deadlines, adjusting the timescale, working with resources, and calendars, and document transfers.

After installation and registration, the ConceptDraw Project 3 Online Manual may be accessed. There are 4 lessons on charting, editing, printing and working with multiple projects.

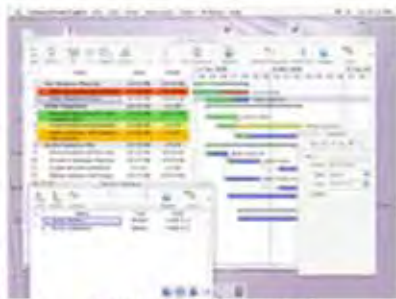
Drag your favorite item into the toolbar...

...or drag the default set.

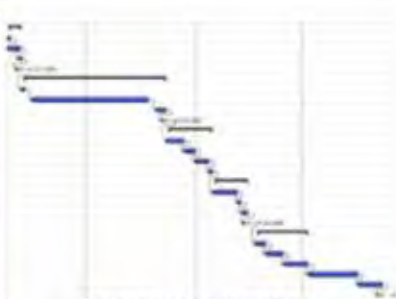
Show  Icon & Text  Use Small Size Done



Creating project schedule



Adding a resource



Typical Gantt chart



Network diagram view



Project overview report



Resource Usage Report



Creating a filter



Cash flow report



Managing reports

## **Conclusion**

If you are familiar with project management activities, CS Odessa has made the process of documenting, planning and organizing with this Project 3 tool, considerably easier than it has been in the past.

## **Recommendation**

I have no hesitation in the least recommending this product. CS Odessa has been actively updating it along with the other applications they make for business. They listened to our concerns, and have met them with improved products. And after starting in Odessa, Ukraine, they now have an office in San Jose, CA, in support of their ever-growing client base.



# Sibelius 5

Reviewed by Daphne Kalfon



Sibelius Software

The Old Toy Factory  
20-23 City North,  
Fonthill Road  
London N4 3HF

**0800 458 3111**

[infoUK@sibelius.com](mailto:infoUK@sibelius.com)

**Sibelius Australia**

2/52 Weaver St., Edwardstown SA  
5039 **08 8277 1722**

[infoAU@sibelius.com](mailto:infoAU@sibelius.com)

<http://www.sibelius.com>

\$498.95 USD, \$530.135 CAD, £ 240.780 GBP, €369.00 Euro



**Requirements:** Sibelius 5 is a Universal Binary application. Mac OS X 10.4 or later, 512 MB+ RAM, 350MB hard disk space, DVD-ROM drive. Recommended for optimum performance: G5 or Intel processor, 1GB+ total RAM, 3.5GB total hard disk space.

Sibelius can be purchased for multiple licenses and various bundles, depending on individual needs, so consult the website for more details.

To read about what's new:

<http://www.sibelius.com/products/sibelius/5/index.html>

At this link above, there are options to download a free demo, watch a movie about Sibelius 5, and purchase the software.

**Strengths:** Highly versatile, adaptable to virtually any notation project and creates beautiful, professional looking scores.

**Weaknesses:** A few too many options for those only interested in creating traditional scores; Kontakt Player interface has an unnecessarily busy look and clunky feel; not compatible with the very high quality orchestral sound pack that comes with GarageBand.

## Introduction

Sibelius 5 is the newest upgrade to Sibelius 4 Professional. New features have been added, and improvements made to some of the features found in Sibelius 4. This along with new built-in sounds, VST and AU compatibility and the new mixer, allow you to create any kind of score, instantly play it back, manipulate anything on the score, print to a myriad of layouts, publish/share your music, and sell your music on the web.



## Getting Started

Installing Sibelius 5 went without a hitch and was a quick, easy process following the steps in the new manual.

Sibelius 5 comes with a small booklet which consists of the chapters “Installation”, which explains the upgrading process, “What’s New”, which goes through all the new features that have been added to Sibelius 5 - from playback to overall look and feel - and the last section is “Appendices” which contains a section on all improvements made up to present, menu changes from Sibelius 4, and lastly, new and changed keyboard shortcuts.

The program comes with a new collection of sounds called Sibelius Sounds Essentials. This sound library consists of a complete set of General MIDI sounds along with chosen sounds from Sibelius Sounds Rock and Pop Collection, Garritan Personal Orchestra, Garritan Marching Band, Garritan Jazz and Big Band, and TapSpace’s Virtual Drumline. This kind of collection has been designed to be usable for many different genres of music.

If one wishes to have all the sounds from within any of the sound libraries contained in the Sibelius Sounds Essentials collection, one can purchase the full versions.

In addition, the program comes with many example scores, from band and choir to jazz, orchestral, guitar tab, playback example scores to show the difference between a “Meccanico” and “Espressivo” playback, assorted QuickTime movies provided for film scoring practice, and “ideas” type scores which I will explain in more detail later on. I opened and listened to several of these various scores and thought that in general the sound quality was okay, but not great.

Sibelius 5 comes with 17 tutorial videos covering everything from getting started to publishing on the Internet. I watched several of them and although many were helpful, I hoped that some of them would get into more detail, especially in regards to the new Kontakt Player and the new mixer as they contain many new features. Or perhaps there could be two sets of tutorial videos as there are manuals – one for quick reference of basic concepts, and another for getting into the details. There is also the in-depth reference PDF and online help centre.

## **Using the Software**

I started by loading up one of the ready-made scores that come with the program, so that I could use it as a base for trying out the various features of Sibelius 5. One thing I noticed right away in doing this, is that when the sounds for the score are loading upon playback, there is a very flashy thing going on – the window showing the sounds being loaded in - which is rather unnerving to have to see each time. I wonder if perhaps this loading could be accomplished in a more “behind the scenes” manner, rather than front and center?

Sibelius comes with the new Native Instruments Kontakt Player 2 which is an enhanced version of the sample player from previous versions, and it now is able to play sounds from many various sample libraries. And depending on your computer CPU, you can have more than one player at once and up to 16 sounds per player. Sibelius is also compatible with many virtual instruments, and you can set up your own playback configuration of any combination of virtual instruments that are available to Sibelius and switch between the different configurations.

I think it's unfortunate that with all the new additions of VST and AU virtual instruments and sound banks, that Sibelius could not have integrated the orchestral sound pack of GarageBand into this new version of Sibelius, because in my opinion, they are among the best I've heard and used.

For those who own Kontakt Gold, GPO Sibelius Edition or Sibelius Rock and Pop, the updates to allow these to work with Sibelius 5 are free.

I find the Kontakt Player a bit clunky to use and it was also a little glitchy, as I had to reload or reallocate instrument sounds for no apparent reason from time to time. I generally found the interface of the player to be hard on the eyes and a bit too busy.

The mixer is quite a nice feature, with volume, pan, mute, solo and other options for each instrument. The effects buses allow for the use of whatever compatible effects you have available in your arsenal.

I applied a reverb effect and then a delay, both to the same bus, so that the whole score was affected equally, and then applied them to separate buses for experimentation, and they seemed to work well, as the knobs allow you to adjust how much of each effect you would like to apply. Then I applied a very non-orchestral type sound effect, and I can see how one could have a lot of fun with this if you are looking for a non-traditional or very specialized type of sound for your music. There are 4 effects buses with 2 slots each, and 4 master effects slots.

One thing that is annoying when you are picking and choosing what effects you would like to apply, is that you have to close the “playback devices” window before you can preview what effect your chosen device has on the music.

I was able to choose the horn sounds of a compatible virtual instrument, however playback seemed to be a bit glitchy - some tied notes didn't tie or play at all and hairpins weren't played as accurately as when using the horns that come with Sibelius Sounds Essential.

It seems that any compatible virtual instrument you wish to use with Sibelius must have MIDI channel options, because if you can't allocate a specific channel to a sound, Sibelius, won't be able to play that virtual instrument.

In general however I feel that both mixer and Kontakt Player could use some simplifying à la GarageBand otherwise it seems a bit too technical for orchestration projects. In that same vein, I would suggest having both as an outside additional option to use rather than THE new interface for choosing sounds etc.

I very much like the new “Ideas” feature. Sibelius comes with a library of over 2,000 ready-made ideas of all kinds, from synth lines to drum beats to orchestral snippets. To find an idea, you can do a specific search for what you're looking for by typing in key words. Once you find something, you can click and hold the mouse over it to listen to it, and if you want to use it, you can easily paste it into your score.

These ideas can be exported or shared between users and or teachers and their students, and “ideas” also allows you to copy and save your own musical ideas, whatever they happen to be, into a library of your own ideas for future reference.

There is a convenient new way of viewing your score called “Panorama” which allows you to view your score in a single, wide strip or scroll style, rather than in pages. This makes it much easier to see your score as a whole and to navigate around it. Together with the “Focus on Staves” option, you can much more easily work on one or more particular staves of your score instead of trying to edit just those staves out of the whole score on the page.

There is now a cue feature for adding cues to parts and a feature for implementing instrument changes within a staff for example when one player is assigned to two or more instruments. I tried the latter feature and was impressed with how smoothly instrument changes take place. There are improvements to and more options for bar numbering, page numbers and rehearsal marks, a new family of fonts called Reprise which are especially suitable for jazz, lead sheets, big band and show music, the new Opus Note Names font which writes the name of the note inside the notehead (very handy for students learning to read music), a couple of new fonts for chord symbols, 200 extra music symbols for early music and avant garde music, and more than 20 new plug-ins as well as updates to many existing plug-ins.

In overall look and feel, Sibelius 5 is pretty similar to Sibelius 4, so a new user of Sibelius 5 can get started pretty much right away. Some of the menu items have been renamed or moved to other menus and these changes can be found in Appendix B of the handbook that comes with Sibelius 5. Appendix C lists new keyboard shortcuts.

All other improvements are listed near the end of the handbook for quick reference.

## **Conclusion**

I don't feel that Sibelius 5 is an absolutely necessary upgrade for everyone. It depends on what your individual needs are and what you look to Sibelius for the most. If you are strictly writing orchestrations for traditional orchestra and other ensembles such as chamber music or choral music, then the previous versions should do just fine. However, if additional options outside of the traditional realm are needed or appeal to the composer in you, then Sibelius 5 might well be a worthwhile upgrade.

## **Recommendations**

In all I would say Sibelius 5 is a very impressive and comprehensive software program, with virtually something for everyone, from neophyte to professional, from student to teacher, no matter what notation project is on the agenda. As always however, I recommend anyone to take the guided tour available on the website as well as to try out the free downloadable demo, before you decide whether or not to purchase.

# *WebAssist Professional – SuperSuite Adobe Dreamweaver Extensions*

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



WebAssist.com Corporation  
227 North El Camino Real  
Encinitas, CA 92024 USA

US and Canada: 800.886.0130 (Toll Free)  
Outside US and Canada: +1.760.633.4013  
Fax: +1.760.633.4014  
US & Canada Hours: Monday-Friday 9AM-5PM PST

Europe: +44 (0) 170.453.3838  
European Hours: Monday-Friday 9AM-5PM GMT  
[sales@webassist.com](mailto:sales@webassist.com)  
<http://www.webassist.com>

**Pricing – see chart below.**

**Requirements:** Dreamweaver 8

**Forums:** <http://www.webassist.com:8119/>

**Resources:** <http://www.webassist.com/professional/community/webproresource/default.asp>

**Other Reviews:** [http://weblog.infoworld.com/tcdaily/archives/2006/09/preview\\_webassi.html](http://weblog.infoworld.com/tcdaily/archives/2006/09/preview_webassi.html)  
[http://www.it-enquirer.com/main/ite/more/wa\\_site\\_import/](http://www.it-enquirer.com/main/ite/more/wa_site_import/)

**Adobe Search:** [http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/search/index.cfm?loc=en\\_us&term=WebAssist](http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/search/index.cfm?loc=en_us&term=WebAssist)



## **Introduction**

“Crafting an online store is a big task: bring it down to size with eCommerce solutions from WebAssist. If you're just starting out and looking for the ultimate all-in-one solution, Super Suite is the best value going. Just want to integrate shopping cart functionality into your custom site? Take a look at eCart. Hoping to break into the world's biggest marketplace? Don't miss eBay StoreBuilder. Make money the new-fashioned way – with WebAssist's eCommerce solutions.

Site builder, file upload/download, site importer, shopping cart: get it all – and more - in one super package, Super Suite from WebAssist. Build any kind of site you need in Dreamweaver and add sophisticated Web functionality, without coding. Super Suite gives you both the power tools and the knowledge needed to put them to work.”



### Suite Comparison Chart

	<u>Web Designer Suite</u> The creative professional's design-time toolbox	<u>Web Developer Suite</u> Power tools for enhanced Web applications	<u>Super Suite</u> The ultimate value in extensions	<u>eCommerce Suite</u> The best extensions for building online stores	<u>Admin Suite</u> Your secure administrative site builder
eCart			✓	✓	
SiteAssist	✓		✓		✓
Site Import	✓		✓		
PhotoAssist	✓		✓		
Database Starter Kit ASP	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Database Starter Kit PHP	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cookies Toolkit	✓	✓	✓	✓	
DataAssist		✓	✓	✓	✓
Universal Email		✓	✓	✓	
SecurityAssist		✓	✓		✓
Digital File Pro		✓	✓	✓	✓
Validation Toolkit		✓	✓	✓	
Database Search		✓	✓		
Dynamic Dropdowns		✓	✓		
Technical Support Incidents	3	6	9	6	5
Items Priced Individually	\$559.91	\$1,049.85	\$1,939.76	\$999.86	\$749.91
Retail Price	\$299.99	\$499.99	\$899.99	\$499.99	\$399.99
<b>Savings</b>	<b>\$259.92</b>	<b>\$549.86</b>	<b>\$1,039.77</b>	<b>\$499.87</b>	<b>\$349.92</b>

If you do website development or maintenance, wouldn't you like a set of tools that made the job easier?

### Getting Started

Since I started reviewing this suite of applications a year ago, Adobe updated their program and WebAssist has tried very hard to keep up with their Dreamweaver extensions. I liked what they are doing so much that we became an affiliate on our site (see Bazaar - <http://www.macompanion.com/bazaar/computersoftware.html>).

Inside Dreamweaver, I have all the tools in the menus listed in the chart along with the free extensions such as those created for Google support.

To get a flavor of what is going on with WebAssist apps, jumping into the Forum makes a lot of sense - <http://www.webassist.com:8119>. Understandably, there seems to be a lot of traffic in the Website Development and ECommerce sections and fewer in the Web Design section – and there is a job board for folks looking for work and those who are experts in their fields willing to offer their services for a fee.

Joseph Lowery wrote the book, “Dreamweaver CS3 Bible” and he is a VP at WebAssist and monitors the Forum. <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470122145.html>

Can you build a website business using WebAssist extensions? Yes, but it is a cutthroat environment and it is a good idea to outsource to experts that do a great job, because businesses do not want to pay for “on the job “ training.

These extensions help turn around website development quickly and there are a great bunch of folks that are willing and able to help get over those coding hurdles that inevitably show up in any project.

## **Conclusion**

If you do website development for a living and use Dreamweaver as the tool of choice, WebAssist’s SuperSuite really is the way to go for getting in, getting it done and getting out.

## **Recommendation**

If you have Dreamweaver CS3, go through the tours and feature sets and try out the test drives for each of the apps at <http://www.webassist.com>

If they work for you, pay the price and get the tools that help get the job done.



# Web Security and 1Passwd

Reviewed by Linda Cameron, editor of *The Finder*. Reprinted with permission.



Agile Web Solutions  
16715-12 Yonge St, Suite 192  
Newmarket, Ontario, L3X 1X4

<http://1passwd.com/>

**Demo Video:** [http://1passwd.com/home/show\\_movie](http://1passwd.com/home/show_movie)

\$30 USD

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4 or later.

**Strengths:** One-click password entry.

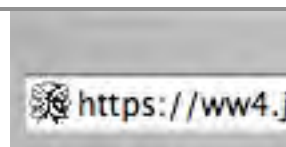
**Weaknesses:** None found.

**Switchers Blog:** <http://switchersblog.com/>

Do you worry about how secure you are using the Internet? I know people who still don't shop or do banking online because they are afraid their information could be hijacked and possibly used to steal their identity or get access to their bank account. Mac users are somewhat more secure, but we shouldn't take it for granted that those things can never happen to us, because they can. The best defense is to know as much as you can about what can happen and then stay vigilante and take precautions.

## Recognize a secure web page

Safari and most Mac web browsers are compatible with secure websites, such as those that use 128-bit encryption. Learn how to recognize a secure connection, and how to avoid a fake.



[A secure web page shows a locked Padlock icon on the upper right.](#)

Websites that deal in personal or financial information typically offer secure connections. With a secure connection, your data is encrypted so that it cannot be easily read by anyone who might intercept it between your computer and the website (similar to using an ATM machine).

You should not enter any sensitive information on a form if you are not sure it is secure. If a legitimate organization requests sensitive information on an insecure form, you should consider contacting them via telephone instead.



To see this Verisign certificate, click the Padlock icon on your web page.

When you are entering sensitive information on a web page, the URL should start out with “https:” rather than “http:” —the “s” is for “secure”.

You should also see a Padlock icon on a secure web page up in the right corner. Click the padlock to open a small window that shows the Secure Server Certificate. If that site happened to be a phony site made to look like one of the legitimate ones you do business with (such as your bank), you would be warned. If a web page has the “https:” and the padlock icon and you trust the organization that created the website, then go ahead and use it. If you are not comfortable, then maybe you should do your business over the phone.

### **Phishing scams**

One way a scammer gets your information is by “phishing”. It sounds like fishing and is similar. The usual way phishing works is -you get an Email from what appears to be your bank, or some other institution. I would say most of us have received a lot of phishing Emails already from financial organizations that we have nothing to do with, so we delete it as spam.

Occasionally, some of those phishing Emails will appear to be from a bank we actually do business with or an organization—such as a PayPal or eBay. That is when you could get in trouble, if you assume they are legitimate. Often the phishing Email will have links for you to click on where you are supposed to login to your account. If it is indeed a phishing scam, and you go and type in your account info and password, they “gotcha”. Depending on the type of business you do, they could steal money from you or mess up your good ratings on eBay by using your identity to rip others off. You definitely want to be careful with PayPal because you could give someone access to your checking account.

One rule is to NEVER click on a link in an Email unless you are sure who sent it to you. However, if you do click on a phishing link, the only way it can work is for you to type in the information. If you save your passwords in Keychain and let Safari autofill the blank fields then it won't work because Safari knows it isn't the real web page that you saved that information originally.

## **Keylogging**

Keylogging is another sneaky way your passwords and sensitive data can be stolen. There are applications that can be installed on PCs and Macs which will log all keystrokes no matter what applications you are using. I have such applications on my Mac. One of them is called Ghostwriter and is a component of Spell Catcher. My purpose for using that application is in case I am working on something and the program crashes, I could retrieve most of the text I had typed. Sometimes, businesses will install Keylogging applications on their computers to monitor what their employees are doing. Parents may want to keep an eye on what their children are up to on the computer, for their protection. I have even heard of keylogging being used to find out if a spouse is being faithful.

What you don't want is someone who has access to your computer secretly installing such an application and later on, retrieving the information to collect passwords and personal data.

If you use Safari as your web browser and let Keychain store your login and passwords, you are somewhat protected from keylogging attempts. When you go to a web page where you have to register with a login and password, you get a window asking if you want Keychain to remember that information. Clicking "yes" lets Safari automatically enter the text rather than you having to type it out each time. Keylogging only works on things you actually type out, not auto-filled forms. Keychain is a really nice application included with our Mac OSX software. We only need to put one password in to open it and then we have access to all our passwords. Unfortunately, Keychain only works with Safari. Many of us use other web browsers also.

A trojan horse over the internet is another way to get a Keylogging application installed. Some websites have flashy ads that entice you or your children to click on them. Clicking on the wrong link on a web page could download and install software while the person who is at the computer may think it is something else—like a free game. On a Mac, using Safari, we have to click to allow any downloaded application to continue before it is installed. That gives us some protection, but if we think we are downloading a game and it is really something nefarious, we could be in trouble.

## **Low tech danger**

It is tempting to keep a notebook near your computer where you can write down all the logins and passwords you use, but then if someone broke into your house and stole your computer and could easily find the notebook containing all your passwords, that would be really nice for them and bad for you. Having a notebook like that might not be a bad idea, but the important thing is to keep it in a safe place.

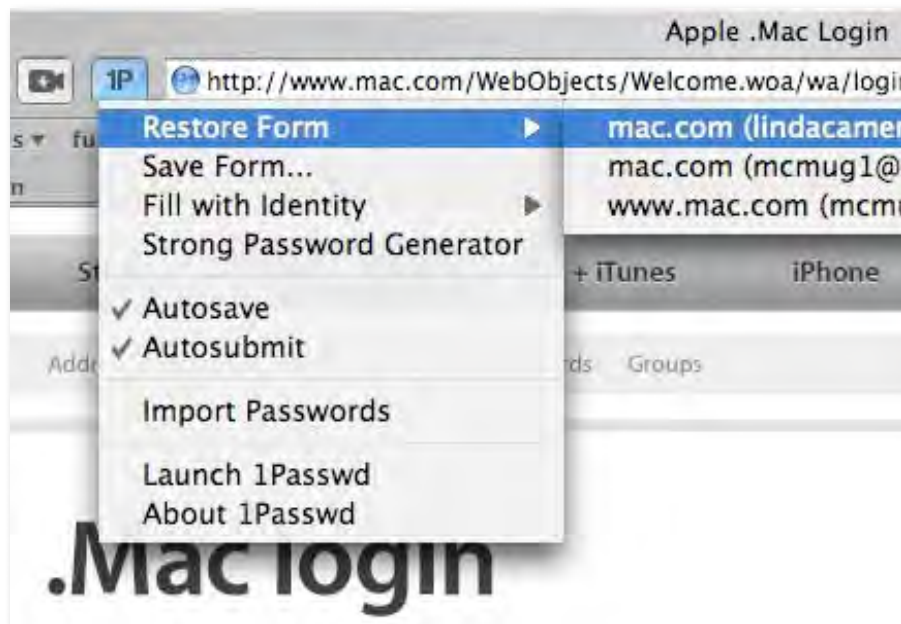
## 1Passwd offers extra protection

I recently found out about a web browser plugin called 1Passwd. It works with all the most popular web browsers for the Mac. It is a password manager which lets you easily login to all your web accounts with one click of the mouse.

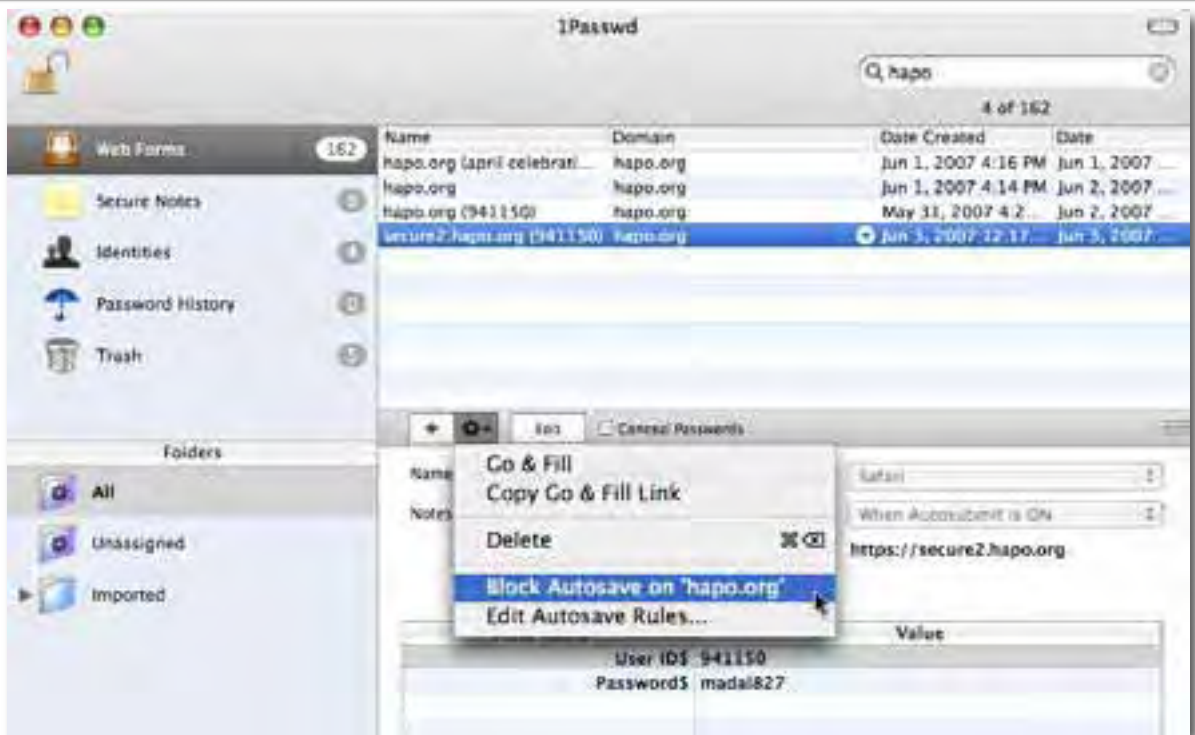
When first installed, 1Passwd (pronounced onepassword, I believe) asks you to choose one password which will be used to unlock all your passwords which 1Passwd stores. Do not forget this password because all the passwords and login names you use at different websites will be stored in 1Passwd from now on. It is similar to Keychain, but 1Passwd automatically works in all your web browsers, not just Safari.

Once installed, 1Passwd puts a small icon in the toolbar of all your web browsers. I was able to import my passwords from Keychain, saving me the hassle of having to manually enter all the logins and passwords. Now with 1Passwd, when I go to a web page requiring a login, the login information is empty on the page, but I can click on the 1Passwd icon and it will autofill the info into the fields and log me in. Using 1Passwd to fill in all my logins and passwords, I can never be tricked by a “phish” because 1Passwd will only work with the legitimate web site that you first registered at and saved.

Keychain’s AutoFill only works in Safari and can only be used for one identity and can only put in information you have stored in Keychain and Address Book. 1Passwd can store information for multiple identities, it can store credit card numbers, and other sensitive information that you might use online but don’t want anyone else having access to. You could even store safe combinations and information that you don’t need online, but want to have stored in a safe place.



One click of the mouse and your login and password are entered.



1Passwd is an application but it is also a Keychain.

1Passwd can also generate really strong passwords for you to use on web pages. You don't have to remember those passwords—you only need to know the one password you set up. That is beneficial to prevent someone from guessing your password. 1Passwd is an application and a browser plugin. If for some reason a future update disabled the browser plugin, the application can still be opened up and you can view all the information inside. So far in the month or two I have been using 1Passwd, there have been several updates to 1Passwd.

Some of my financial institutions online will lock me out if I put in the wrong password more than three times. That happened to me on two or three websites. When you first enter a login and password on a web page that 1Passwd doesn't know, a window pops up asking if you want to store it in 1Passwd (just like Safari and Keychain does). If you click YES, and you have entered wrong information, then it can get confusing. I had to go into 1Passwd and delete some of the saved logins or edit them to contain the correct information. A couple of my financial institutions' websites that I got locked out of—I had to call the website's customer support numbers to refresh the information so I could get it working again. Once my login is working properly with 1Passwd, it is very smooth and easy.



1Passwd requires only one password to unlock all your passwords.

If you use FireFox rather than Safari as your main browser, you may already have many login/passwords stored in FireFox. 1Passwd can import those also. In my case, I use Safari as my main browser and having 1Passwd installed makes it easier to use other browsers because my login/password information is in 1Passwd and available within all those browsers. In fact, that is what I like best about 1Passwd. (If it could turn off annoying ads in the web pages, it would be fantastic!)

All the data you have in 1Passwd is in Apple's Keychain. If you are backing up your Keychain regularly, it should also backup your 1Passwd information too. I use Dot Mac to backup my Keychain and other things regularly to my iDisk. That way, if I am away from my computer (like out of town) but I want to access any of my browser bookmarks or Address Book, I can, using another computer. I notice also that in 1Passwd, you can export all your data as a text document. If you do, then it could be opened in any word processor and everything is right there to see, so I am not sure that is a good idea unless you just want to print it out and keep it in a safe place.

At first, I noticed that 1Passwd was always allowing me to automatically fill in the login and passwords even when I rebooted and started using the web. That concerned me because I figured if someone else had access to my computer, they would have really easy access to all my accounts too. I posted a question on the 1Passwd forum asking "Shouldn't 1Passwd require you to enter your password before you can have access?" A few people responded offering suggestions like turning on the Account login requirement on the Mac in System Preferences. Then a week or so later, a new 1Passwd updater came out and the next thing I knew, it was asking me for my "one password" to start using it. 1Passwd now locks automatically after about 10 minutes of inactivity although you could change that setting. This seems much more secure to me and I am glad they changed the default settings.

Using 1Passwd doesn't require much of a learning curve. It is mostly automatic. I shop online all the time. I do online banking and bill payments and even investment transactions. So far, I have never had a problem with security, but all along, I have kept myself aware of possible threats. I have received plenty of phishing attempts which I now just delete. I used to forward them to the legitimate sites, but there are so many scams, I don't think it does any good. If you are still confused about 1passwd and how it works, I would suggest you browse on over to [http://1passwd.com/home/show\\_movie](http://1passwd.com/home/show_movie) and watch the QuickTime video.

One thing I would like to see in 1Passwd is a keystroke shortcut I could use to automatically fill in the passwords and login names. I am used to using keyboard shortcuts rather than having to mouse up to the menu to do things. It is just quicker.

1Passwd costs about \$30 and is well worth it.

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Contact Robert Pritchett, our Ad and Marketing Director, for working through the process of advertising with us.

[rpritchett@maccompanion.com](mailto:rpritchett@maccompanion.com)

We are the Macintosh® Professional Network (MPN), Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). MPN, LLC continues to evolve, ever since its creation in 1996 as a way to reach out to those who use computers for a living in an effort to make their lives easier and their work both enjoyable and profitable.

We also provide monthly book, hardware and software reviews at [macCompanion](#). We offer ways and means for folks to get comfortable using the Macintosh™ created by the Apple® Corporation in the multibillion-dollar computer industry. We know that bad software doesn't live long in the Mac™ environment. On the other hand, good computer equipment and software becomes great as the word spreads, and we are very good at helping to spread it. Our suggestions over the years have also helped improve many successful products in use today. Through kind and gentle efforts, we have been able to help many people move to better tools-of-the-trade so they can be more productive in their work.

Besides our website 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”.



## **Advertising with macCompanion**

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### **Site Ad Rate**

We offer website ads for a fixed-budget price of only \$100 per month on our site. Following the KISS principle, we accept banner ads in only one size at this time - 468x60 pixels (per the [Interactive Advertising Bureau](#) standards for a Full Banner Ad Interactive Marketing Unit.) The ad will be rotated through with other ads, and there is no limit to how many you want to include.

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

The *macCompanion* Staff