

macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH



*Wishing for Leopard
for the Holy-days?*

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

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Simplify Collaboration

Insure Against Disaster

Eliminate IT Headaches

Evolves With Your Business

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Columns

Letter from the CEO – Unfinished Business

By Robert Pritchett

2007 has been a rough and tumble year, but we are still living and breathing and looking forward to 2008.

Of Best-Laid plans?

With fear and trembling, I installed the Family Pack version of Leopard and sat back as the program did its magic of archiving and installing. Amazon had sent it a full two weeks earlier than it had reported it would do.

My Leopard installation experiences were captured by Michael Potter in his *For Mac Eyes Only* Episode #49 - “The Best Laid Plans” - <http://formaceyesonly.blogspot.com/>

Apparently I had an internal hard drive that had issues that needed to be fixed, so the drive was not recognized, until I ran disc utilities and fixed the problems not seen in Tiger but apparently by Leopard’s own DVD. Then there was the indexing thing that took a while and finally the drive became visible so I could let the program install itself.

I became immediately aware of the fact that Leopard does go back and uses hooks into the “Previous Operating System” folder to get things like driver kernels that make the VerticalMouse 2 from Evoluent work using the Universal USB Driver X to continue to function properly. I discovered that sad fact after I had removed the “Previous Operating System Programs” folder and trashed it. Well, everything *was* working before I removed that folder!

I had to remove Preferences for all the browsers I use in order to view the websites that have video links to work at all. FireFox came up with a blank screen. I mean really a blank screen! And I had to remove it and all preferences to reinstall it from their website. I discovered that some of the browsers had been updated. I also found that there are some misleading steps to QuickTime posted online as to what can be removed from the Internet plug-ins folder and what can be left alone. In my case, removing the QuickTime Preferences from my User Folder did the trick. (Removing the plug-in for the web for QuickTime was not a good move.)

Mail.app quirks – at least on my machine, I noticed that certain Email messages end up in *Drafts* and yet I’ve successfully sent them (or at least I think they were sent). Perhaps that will be resolved with the next general release of the OS or a security update?

Since I could not wait for Adobe to get off the dime and fix the Print-to-PDF issue, I did some exploring by going to the Adobe forum and reading how their “fix” was to do my work in *InDesign CS3* and print to PostScript and from there to PDF. Not! (Yes, I do have a legal copy.)

So I discovered the Apple Discussions thread entitled “Can’t get back to PDF Printer” - <http://discussions.apple.com/thread.jspa?messageID=5741108> and scrolled down to find Charles Dyer’s entry about CUPS-PDF and this link - <http://www.codepoetry.net/projects/cups-pdf-for-mosx> - It worked – sort of. The simple MS Word documents with graphics bloated to humongous size, so I had to get into *Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional* and reduce their size considerably. And it took a while, but I didn’t have to wait until January 2008 to “Print to PDF”! See, I couldn’t get Distiller to “work” and it hung and paused the simplest of files in Mac OS X until I switched printers from Adobe Acrobat to CUPS-PDF.

By the way, the “Print-to-PDF” issue did not go away even after updating to 10.5.1, so this puts the issue of the Adobe PDF Printer squarely in the lap of Adobe. Doesn’t it seem just a little strange that an independent can figure out how to make the “Print-to-PDF” work and Adobe has to wait to make it the last thing they fix in CS3 (*Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional* will be updated to version 8.1.2 in late January 2008)?

Meanwhile, Tom Yager over at InfoWorld gives Leopard a “Perfect 10” – http://www.infoworld.com/article/07/11/26/48TC-osx-leopard-client_1.html And here is Dennis Seller’s comeback - http://www.macsimumnews.com/index.php/archive/leopard_a_perfect_10/

No more AABA

As of January 1, 2008, I will no longer be part of the Apple Authorized Business Agent team. The program is being terminated by Apple, so in reality everyone who was a part of it are being disbanded and encouraged to participate in the <http://www.apple.com/channel/> and join the Consultants, Resellers and Store Affiliates <http://www.apple.com/storeaffiliates/> instead. They killed off the LinkShare Internet sales venue and signed up with the Commission Junction Network instead. My beef with CJ is that if you have no sales in 3 months, they terminate you and you have to struggle mightily to get back on with them. I have not attempted to do so again. It takes too much time and effort to keep trying to sell through CJs. The 2% gain by selling Apple products on the *macCompanion* website could be worth the effort – maybe – except I and others were burned as AABAs, so what makes CJ referrals any different an experience, now that Apple is using them for Internet sales outside their own extremely successful online store site?

The contract those of us signed as members of the AABA was so restrictive as to who we could sell to, that it was extremely difficult to even consider this process as a way to generate a means of steady, reliable income – especially since Apple was cannibalizing sales through the AABA contacts and buyers (bypassing the agents and going directly to the prospective buyers without giving credit for the face-to-face process instigated by the Authorized Apple Business Agents). And yes, that *is* documented!

I did manage to get an NFR copy of Leopard for my troubles – which I promptly gave to a well-deserving staff member, since I had already purchased the family pack that so far has only been installed on one machine.

Dennis Sellers quoted me in his AABA article in Macsimum News - http://www.macsimumnews.com/index.php/archive/apple_ending_aaba_program/#post-comments

You may still purchase Macs through our affiliation with Amazon.com on our website now and after January 1, 2007 – <http://www.macompanion.com>

By the Numbers

Wayne Lefevre did a great job using *Numbers* to organize a list of all the reviews we've done this year. That can be found in this issue of *macCompanion*.

Movin' On

For the last little while, I have been spending most of my time being a baker of glutenless (no wheat, barley or rye) baked goods for folks who have a special gene that keeps them from enjoying those grains – in fact those grains make them very, very ill and so by eating a tasty diet of non-gluten foods, folks can have a healthy sustainable life again. I'm happy that they can be happy. My time is being absorbed as Store Manager and "Partner". We just set up the *Glutenless Maximus* website - <http://www.glutenlessmaximus.com/> and updated the Giggles Gluten-free Custom Bakery and Deli site - <http://www.glutenfreebakery.biz/home.html>

However, my heart is more into the *3-Rivers Synergy Centre* and we had our first Alternative Energy User Group meeting in Richland, WA. Heck, I was even on the evening news that night and as a result, we had around 30 people show up for it.

http://www.kvewtv.com/news/?sect_rank=2§ion_id=3&story_id=3840

<http://macompanion.com/RenewableEnergy/newsandevents.htm>

So you may see fewer of my contributions to *macCompanion* magazine in the Mac side of things but more in the Greenware side of things, as we press forward in preparation for whatever is going to happen in 2012 - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012>

Just how prepared are you?

May 2008 be peaceful and prosperous for you and your families.

May we all be blessed! Everyone!!

According to Hoyle...

Shaving Sheep and Running Classic on Leopard

by Jonathan Hoyle

macCompanion

December 2007

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With each new release of Mac OS X, Apple sets a new bar for excellence, power and ease of use. Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard is no exception, as this recently released operating system draws raves of praise by even long time PC proponents. However, Leopard also is a milestone in another way: it puts the final nail into the coffin on Classic.

Longtime Mac users have been familiar with Classic, as Mac OS 9 and earlier helped paved the way to where we are today. The Classic environment allowed Mac users to continue to use older applications even within Mac OS X. Surprisingly, even some original applications from 1984 continue to run just fine on Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger, over two decades later. However, with Apple's transition to Intel-based Macintosh computers, Classic appeared to be on borrowed time. With Leopard, it's official: no Macintosh computer running Mac OS X 10.5, either PowerPC or Intel, will run Classic applications.

Pulling the Wool Over Our Eyes

Well...not exactly.

Just because Apple ceased to support its Classic Environment implementation does not mean you have to delete your old apps just yet. As it happens, there are still a number of options available to the Leopard user who wishes to run these older applications. We will examine three of these: *SheepShaver*, *Basilisk* and *Mini vMac*. The good news is that all three are open source products, so they are absolutely free for you to download and try. Even if you do not find them suitable for your needs, at least you cannot complain about the price. Moreover, each of these products is cross-platform, allowing you to run them on a Macintosh, Windows, Linux and many other systems. Suddenly, your old Classic apps have renewed vigor, by being able to run on virtually any platform!

Of the three, *SheepShaver* is the only one which can run PowerPC applications and the only one which can run Mac OS 9 (the other two are 68K emulators). For this reason, *SheepShaver* is likely to be the one of greatest interest as a Classic replacement. It simulates a Power Macintosh 9500 series computer with a G4 processor board, but its speed is highly dependent upon the hardware it runs on. Depending upon the configuration and platform you deploy it upon, *SheepShaver* can be slow as molasses or it can be faster than the Classic Environment itself (see **PowerPC Tests: SheepShaver vs. Classic** below).

Although *Basilisk* emulates only a 68K Macintosh, do not dismiss this option so quickly without reading its benefits. In particular, its performance on Intel-based Macintoshes is more than double than that of *SheepShaver* (see **68K Tests: SheepShaver vs. Classic** below). If the application you desire to run is fat (that is, contains both 68K and PowerPC binaries), you will have far better performance running it in *Basilisk* than in *SheepShaver*. *Basilisk* and *SheepShaver* share many source files and both operate and look similar to each other. *Basilisk* can simulate a Quadra 900 for those wishing to run Mac OS 8, or a Mac IIfx for System 7.x compatibility.

Mini vMac is a different pedigree of emulator, essentially emulating only the earliest of Macintoshes. Whereas *Basilisk* can emulate any 68K processor from the 68020 on upward, only *Mini vMac* emulates a 68000-based computer. Admittedly, *Mini vMac* is of extremely limited use, interesting only to the hobbyist wishing to resurrect the spirit of his old Mac Plus. It is included here only because it completes the entire range of Macintosh computer emulation, from the 128K Mac all the way up to the Power Mac G4. *Mini vMac* is a successor product to the Classic application *vMac*, which is no longer being developed.

This month's article will describe some of the pro's and con's to each of these three emulators, including running comparative performance tests and step-by-step installation instructions. This last part will be saved for the end, as it is rather technical and only of interest to those who, after reading the review, choose to try it out.

As these are open source projects, you are free to download the source code and build it yourself. In this article, we will focus only the end user perspective of these emulators.

Baaaaaah Humbug

Before proceeding, it is worth preparing you now for a disappointment. None of these emulators is anywhere in the same league as Apple's Classic Environment. Most notably, these emulators do not allow you to run Classic apps on the Mac OS X desktop as Apple's Classic Environment did. Rather, the experience is more akin to the older Virtual PC, where your entire Classic environment lives inside of a window. It is a rather ironic turn of fortunes: just a few years ago, Windows apps were bound inside a window whilst Classic lived on the Mac OS X desktop; now with Parallels Coherence, the reverse is true on Leopard.

Another unfortunate aspect of moving to any of these emulators is its backward step in OS versioning. Most users of Classic were running Mac OS 9.2.2, the final release of the pre-OS X operating systems. The latest version supported by *SheepShaver* is Mac OS 9.0.4, meaning that apps requiring 9.1 or later will not run. Nor is this limitation a temporary one. Mac OS 9.1 requires a Memory Management Unit (MMU), which is not supported by *SheepShaver*'s G4 emulator. The MMU is used for virtual memory, and any Classic apps requiring VM (such as Office 2001) will likewise fail to run on *SheepShaver*. Gwenole Beauchesne, who maintains the emulator, says that there is no plan to include an MMU since it would likely degrade performance.

Finally, all these emulators are riddled with annoying bugs and limitations. I find myself constantly rebooting SheepShaver, either due to crashes in the application, or because the slightest configuration change involves closing the application down and restarting. This is very much still a work in progress. Unfortunately, the work is not very fast, as the most recent version of SheepShaver was built about a year and a half ago. I have no idea when (or if) the next version will be released addressing these problems.

Mary Had a Little Classic Emulator

So what does running Classic have to do with being a lamb's barber. No, the name SheepShaver is not some obscure reference to an Austin Powers movie, but rather a play on the name *ShapeShifter*, an old Macintosh emulator for the Amiga. The current version is 2.3, but this is not informative as the last few releases use this same version number. It is best to look at the modification date, and the latest (official) build is from May 2006. I have found later build by other sites, but this article focuses on the official release.

So...does it work?

Absolutely! As this screenshot shows, I was able to get Mac OS 9 running on a Mac Pro running Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard:

Aside from its lack of virtual memory, I could detect no behavioral difference between the SheepShaver environment and a genuine Mac OS 9-based Macintosh. Performance, however, was certainly a factor, as described below.

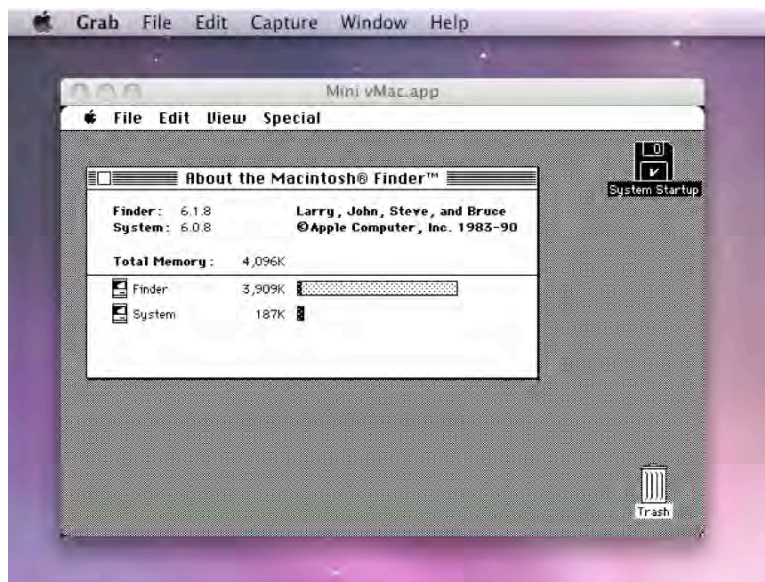


The SheepShaver product itself lacks polish, and easily crashes. It is also very difficult to get files into the SheepShaver environment. Although the my boot hard drive appears on the emulated desktop as a volume named "Unix", it does not see any of the resources on my volume, making it nearly useless. Other frustrating bugs include an error when drag copying a file from the Unix drive onto the SheepShaver desktop. Another alarming bug is on the PowerPC, in which SheepShaver starts up with a false application crash error. All in all, a great deal of promise is seen, but a great deal of work left to be done.



Likewise, Basilisk had many of the same user experience problems that SheepShaver had, although Basilisk did appear a bit more robust. The current release is *Basilisk II*, with no informative version number associated with it. The release date was May 2006, simultaneous with the SheepShaver release. Running in Mac OS 8.1 on an emulated 68K machine severely limited the number of applications I was able to try. However, all fat (both 68K & PowerPC) applications I did try ran better on Basilisk than on SheepShaver. Interestingly, both environments are nicely self-contained, and these can be run in parallel with each other without problem.

Mini vMac was updated very recently on November 17th to version 3.0.4. Although it lacks most of the problems plaguing SheepShaver and Basilisk, it also lacks most of its features. The only configuration option made available is in the selection of disks to be added to the running environment. The original vMac allowed frame rate and RAM settings changes, but these were dropped for Mini vMac. Although a fine Mac Plus emulator, its interoperability with the rest of the system needs work.



However, Mini vMac comes with a number of extra utilities.

Performance

How do SheepShaver and Basilisk compare with the Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger's Classic Environment? To answer this question, I downloaded the shareware Classic application Speedometer 4.0. This application nicely allows tests to be formed in either PowerPC or 68K mode.

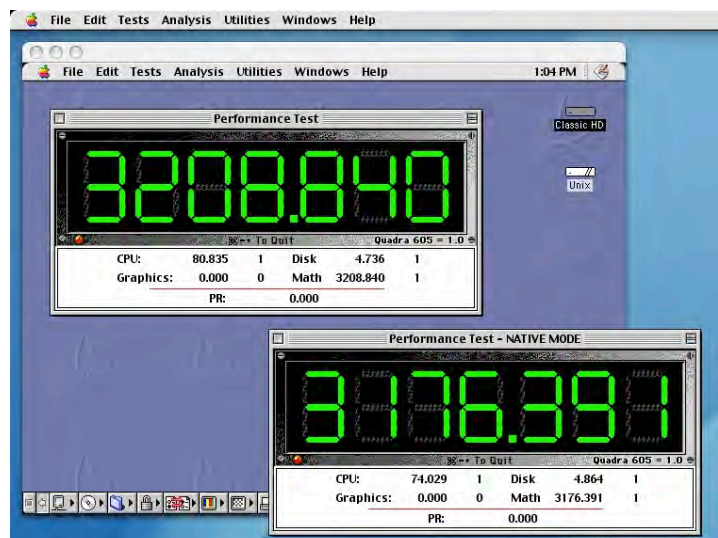
So, I divided the tests into two groups: PowerPC tests comparing SheepShaver with the Classic environment, and 68K tests, comparing Basilisk, SheepShaver and Classic. I ran both tests on various hardware, including G4's, G5's and Intel boxes. The results did not change when switching between Tiger and Leopard.

Speedometer 4.0 normalizes all of its tests to the speed of a Quadra 605. Thus, if a test result value is 2.50, this means that this test ran two and a half times faster than would be expected from a Quadra 605. Although Speedometer offers a myriad of test options, I limited to the basic "Performance Test" suite of 4 scores: CPU, Disk, Graphics, and Math. Of these, the CPU score is the most important and indeed the most informative of the tests, following closely behind by the Math score. The Disk score was much less informative, as it tended to be the same across all emulators and Classic. The Graphics test could not even be run at all on Tiger's Classic environment, as it requires the monochrome capabilities long since dropped from modern Macs (although the SheepShaver and Basilisk were able to emulate this). For this reason, I will concentrate exclusively on CPU and Math scores, denoting them as a pair, so that "123.45 / 67.89" means that the CPU score was 123.45 and the Math score was 67.89. It is also worth noting that the same test performed many times will yield different scores, typically with 5% of each other.

Speedometer 4 requires a 68030 processor or higher to operate, so no speed tests could be run on Mini vMac. I do not view this to be terribly inconvenient, since those interested in Mini vMac are not likely to be worried about performance. However, casual use of Mini vMac shows it to be no slower than Basilisk in most cases, and in some instances faster.

PowerPC Tests: SheepShaver vs. Classic

For these tests, I configured SheepShaver to its defaults, setting the RAM to 256MB and a hard drive file of 512MB. The ROMs used are from Apple's freely available Mac OS ROM Update 1.0, and Mac OS 9.0.4 (the latest supported by SheepShaver) installed on the Classic hard drive. The Classic environment is the one used on Mac OS X 10.4.11 with the usual



defaults (itself running Mac OS 9.2.2).

To my great surprise, SheepShaver's PowerPC performance (relative to Classic) depended greatly on the hardware it was running. On a Powerbook G4 1.5 GHz system with 1GB of RAM, SheepShaver ran approximately at half the CPU speed of Classic, scoring around 32 / 1300 to Classic's 78 / 1700. Moving to a two processor system, much more interesting results are found.

On a Power Mac G4 with Dual 1.25GHz processors and 1 GB of RAM, SheepShaver narrowly (but consistently) outperformed Classic by nearly 10%. At first, I thought the result was a fluke, but repeated tests bore this out. The screenshot below shows a typical example of SheepShaver beating Classic with a score of 80.835 / 3208.840 to 74.029 / 3176.391.

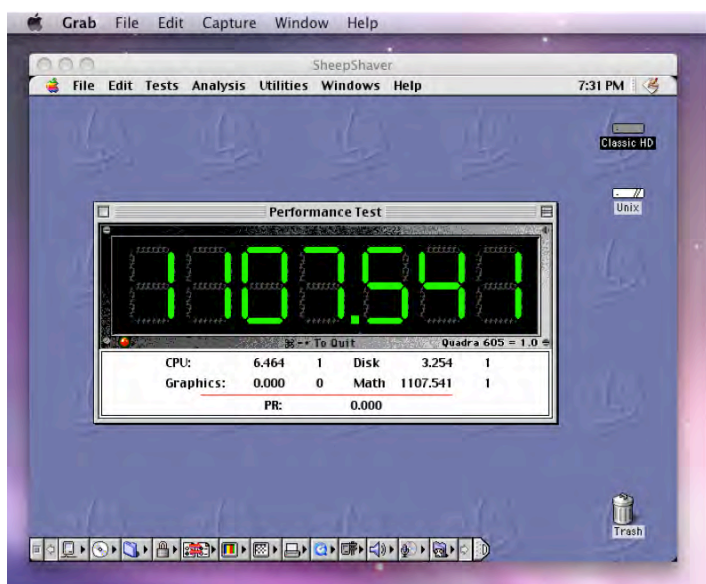
Possibly, SheepShaver's G4 emulator is a simple "pass-through" on this machine, possibly taking advantage of the second processor.

However, running the same test on a Power Mac G5 Dual 2.0GHz with 2.5 GB of RAM yielded less impressive results. Despite the G5 system nearly double the speed of the aforementioned Dual G4, Classic's performance CPU scores remained about the same, whilst SheepShaver fell to half speed once again. In this screenshot example, Classic scored 71.649 / 3289.094 and SheepShaver dropped to 36.426 / 1717.396.



Apparently, SheepShaver's G4 emulator is optimized for the G4 but not so optimized for the G5. Also, the advantage of a second G5 processor did not seem to help SheepShaver as it did in the G4 case.

The numbers go from disappointing to downright miserable when we move to the Intel platform. Although there is no Classic environment on Intel-based Macs, one might expect that SheepShaver's performance might improve due to its faster Xeon processor.



Unfortunately, the opposite is the case: without a native G4 processor to pass through, all PowerPC assembly calls must be emulated on an Intel machine. On a Mac Pro 2 x 2.66 GHz Dual-Core Xeon with 1GB of RAM, a machine which should be about 2.5 times the speed of the aforementioned Power Mac G5, a typical SheepShaver score is shown here as a mere 6.464 / 1107.541.

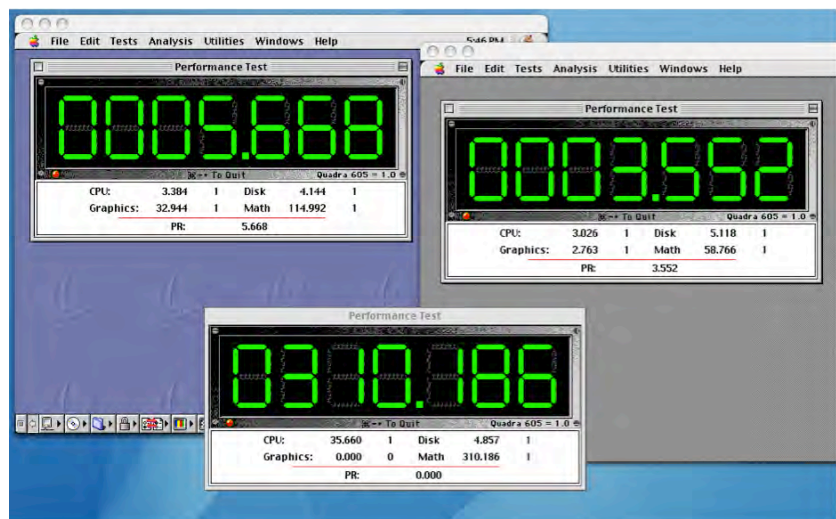
In other words, a Mac Pro which would otherwise be double the speed of a G5 ends up running SheepShaver at less than one-tenth the CPU speed. The only bright spot found here is in the Math score, which remains the same between the G5 and the Mac Pro.

The conclusion to this is rather mixed: SheepShaver's best performance is on a Power Mac Dual G4, running at about half speed on other PowerPC's. But how likely are G4's going to be upgraded to Leopard anyway? Apple's minimum requirement for Leopard is an 867MHz G4, but recommends a G5. Early tests suggest that PowerPC performance drops by about 10% when switching from Tiger to Leopard (while Intel systems see virtual no change)[see: <http://www.primatelabs.ca/blog/2007/10/leopard-performance-october-2007/>]. For this reason, G4 users who still need Classic are probably less likely to upgrade to Leopard, and thus do not need SheepShaver. G5 users who do make the jump will find their Classic apps falling to half speed. Intel users (who never had Classic to begin with) are not likely to be attracted by SheepShaver's abysmal Intel performance.

68K Tests: Basilisk & SheepShaver vs. Classic

For these tests, SheepShaver and Classic remain configured as they were for the PowerPC tests. Basilisk was configured to a reasonably generous level for a 68K machine: 68040 processor setting, 32MB of RAM and a 250MB hard drive running Mac OS 8.1 (the last operating system to support 68K machines). To be as normalized with Speedometer as possible, I used the Quadra 605 ROMs for this configuration. Speedometer was set to run 68K tests.

On the Power Mac G5 configured as above, Classic's 68K emulator weighed in with a score of 35.660 / 310.186, which is about half its CPU score on PowerPC and 1/10th the Math score. Since SheepShaver was using the same 68K emulator found in Mac OS 9, I was expecting a similar ratio to its PowerPC score, something in the 18 / 170 range. Instead, the results were much lower: 3.384 /



114.992 as shown in this example.

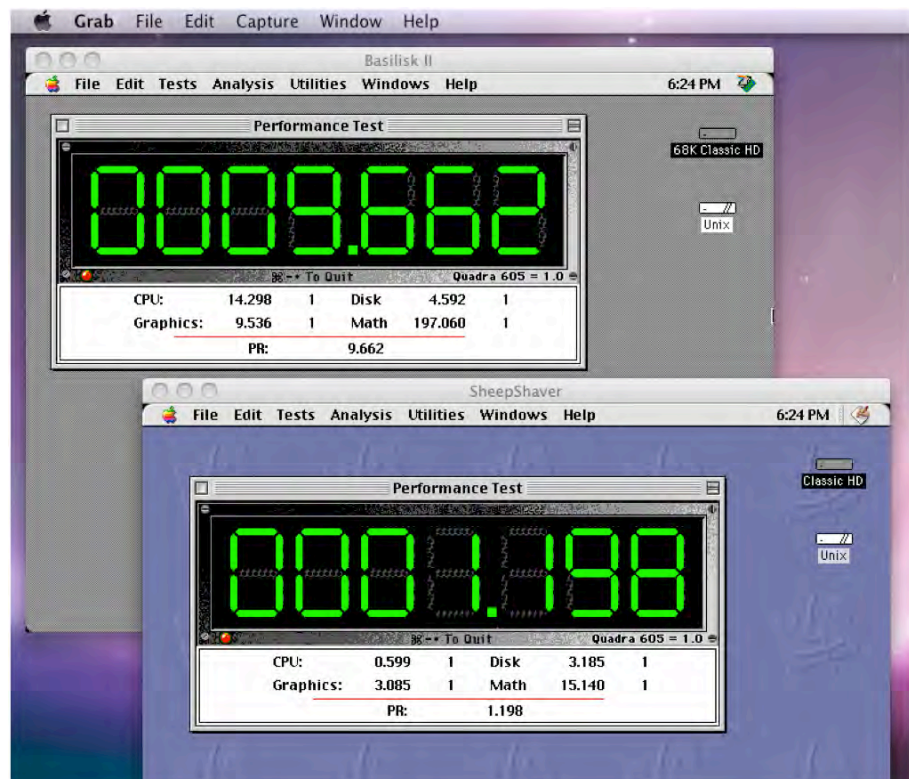
Basilisk fared worse, with a mere 3.026 / 58.766 score. Why these numbers are out of proportion is hard to explain. The only thing I can guess is that the G4 instructions most used by the 68K emulator must be ones which SheepShaver and run more slowly.

I then moved to the Power Mac Dual G4 system, the system which SheepShaver outperformed Classic in the PowerPC tests. On this platform, Classic's 68K scores remained relatively unchanged with 34.004 / 309.321, SheepShaver showed more than 2X improvements with 8.992 / 257.930, and Basilisk declined to 2.243 / 45.722. From these results it is clear that Basilisk offers no benefit to the PowerPC user, as SheepShaver running in 68K mode outperforms it. Note also that SheepShaver's Graphics test ran an order of magnitude faster than Basilisk's. With Basilisk's limitation to Mac OS 8.1 and lower, and lack of free access to 68K ROMs, it is hard to imagine why a Power Mac user would be interested in Basilisk.

Again, surprises await us as we change platforms. Running these tests on a Mac Pro, Basilisk begins to shine, weighing in at 14.298 / 197.060 over SheepShaver's 0.599 / 15.140.

The reasons for this become clear when you realize that SheepShaver is performing double translation: It is running a 68K emulator on a G4 emulator on an Intel machine, whilst Basilisk can go directly from 68K to Intel. This makes Basilisk's CPU more than 20 times faster than SheepShaver's, and its Math 13 times faster.

But this is not the surprising piece. The real news is that Basilisk's 68K emulator is faster than SheepShaver's G4 emulator, with a CPU score more than double. In other words, Intel Mac users interested in performance are better off finding 68K versions of their software to run on Basilisk than to use PowerPC versions on SheepShaver. For example, Microsoft Office 4.2.1 (containing Word 6, Excel 5 and PowerPoint 4) will run better in Basilisk than in SheepShaver, whereas the PowerPC-only Office 98 cannot run in either emulator (due to virtual memory incompatibilities).



Installation: SheepShaver

SheepShaver emulates a PowerPC-based Macintosh; particularly, a Power Macintosh 9500 series computer. Although PowerPC-based Classic operating systems contain 68K emulators themselves, SheepShaver does not. It emulates a G4 processor (minus the MMU). If you wish to emulate a 68K-based Macintosh, you should use Basilisk or Mini vMac.

Unlike what you might have heard, all of the items needed to run SheepShaver are freely (and legally) downloadable. You are not required to buy an old Macintosh and run some obscure ROM-reading application to use it. There are, however, three separate pieces to the puzzle that you will need to assemble to get SheepShaver operating. The first piece is the SheepShaver software itself, which can be downloaded from its web site:

<http://sheepshaver.cebix.net/>

The second piece needed is a compatible Macintosh ROM file. This is commonly found inside the System Folder as a file named *Mac OS ROM*. Unfortunately, not all such files are compatible with SheepShaver. If you have access to System Folders for Mac OS 8.5, 8.5.1 or 8.6, look for this file and you have a decent chance of it being compatible. The ROM files from Mac OS 9 do not appear to be supported. However, one simple way to acquire a compatible ROM file is to obtain it directly from Apple. There are three free Macintosh updaters, each containing a SheepShaver-compatible ROM file, which may be downloaded from these locations:

<http://download.info.apple.com/Apple_Support_Area/Apple_Software_Updates/MultiCountry/Macintosh/System/Mac_OS_ROM/Mac_OS_ROM_Update_1.0.smi.bin>

<http://download.info.apple.com/Apple_Support_Area/Apple_Software_Updates/English-North_American/Macintosh/iMac/>

<http://download.info.apple.com/Apple_Support_Area/Apple_Software_Updates/English-North_American/Macintosh/System/Mac_OS_8.6_Update/>

These links download installers containing packages called *tome* files. Inside these *tome* packages are the *Mac OS ROM* files you will need to extract. The Classic application *TomeViewer* can easily extract it, and you can download this program from:

<http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macos/4561>

The ROM files described above are called *New World ROMs*, as they were a new direction Apple began to take with regard to ROM distribution beginning with Mac OS 8.5. SheepShaver also supports some *Old World ROMs* as well, although these must be read from a ROM reader. For a detailed discussion on supported ROMs, visit:

<http://gwenole.beauchesne.info/en/projects/sheepshaver/help/faq#which_rom_to_use_for_my_system>

The third and final piece needed to run SheepShaver is the system software itself. Depending on the ROMs used, you can go as far back as System 7.5.3, or as high as Mac OS 9.0.4, or anything in between. The choice of System 7.5.3 as the minimum was not an accidental one, as this was the last bootable version of the Macintosh operating system distributed freely by Apple. (Beginning with System 7.6, Apple charged for OS updates.)

Users lacking access to any version of a Macintosh OS can at least be able to download this version. System 7.5.3 comes as 19 disk images, downloadable from this location:

http://download.info.apple.com/Apple_Support_Area/Apple_Software_Updates/English-North_American/Macintosh/System/Older_System/System_7.5_Version_7.5.3/

A System 7.5.5 updater is free for System 7.5.3 users, and can be downloaded from this location:

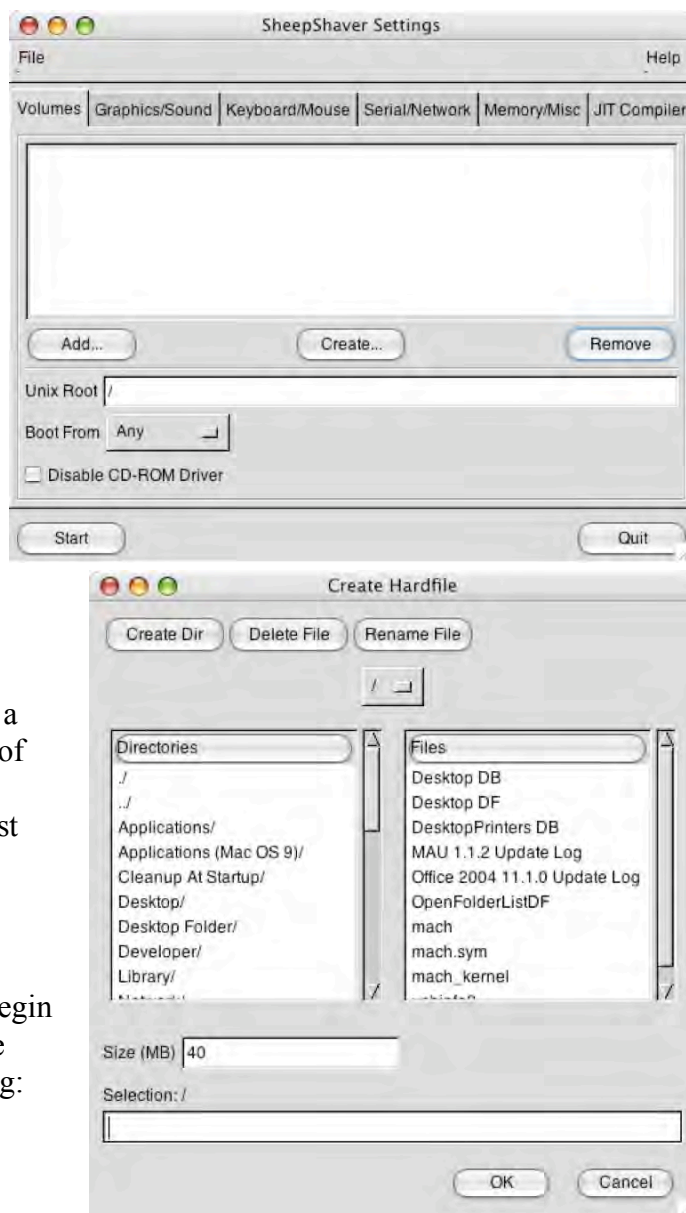
http://download.info.apple.com/Apple_Support_Area/Apple_Software_Updates/English-North_American/Macintosh/System/System_7.5.5_Update/

Users of *New World ROMs*, however, must boot with Mac OS 8.5 or later. This is not likely to be a major inconvenience, as most people interested in using SheepShaver are long-time Classic users who probably have access to a later version of the system software anyway. In our example, we will be using the ROMs extracted from Mac OS ROM Update 1.0 and a Mac OS 9.0.4 boot CD.

Regardless of which ROMs and System Software is used, SheepShaver emulates a Power Macintosh 9500 series computer. The 9500 was presumably chosen as it was one of the last Macintosh computers produced by Apple which could boot in System 7.5.3, as well as Mac OS 9.

Once you have all three parts, we are ready to begin. Opening up the SheepShaver folder, you will find two confusingly named applications: *SheepShaver* and *SheepShaverGUI*. Why these are two separate applications instead of one is beyond me. Essentially, *SheepShaverGUI* is nothing more than a preference file generator for the main *SheepShaver* application. This is certainly a poor Macintosh User Experience (the first of many), as typical Macintosh applications simply provide a Preferences menu to adjust these settings. In any case, we first launch *SheepShaverGUI* and get this window.

This ugly window is where you add your volumes that the emulated Mac sees. We begin by creating a blank hard drive. Click on the **Create...** button and you will see this dialog:



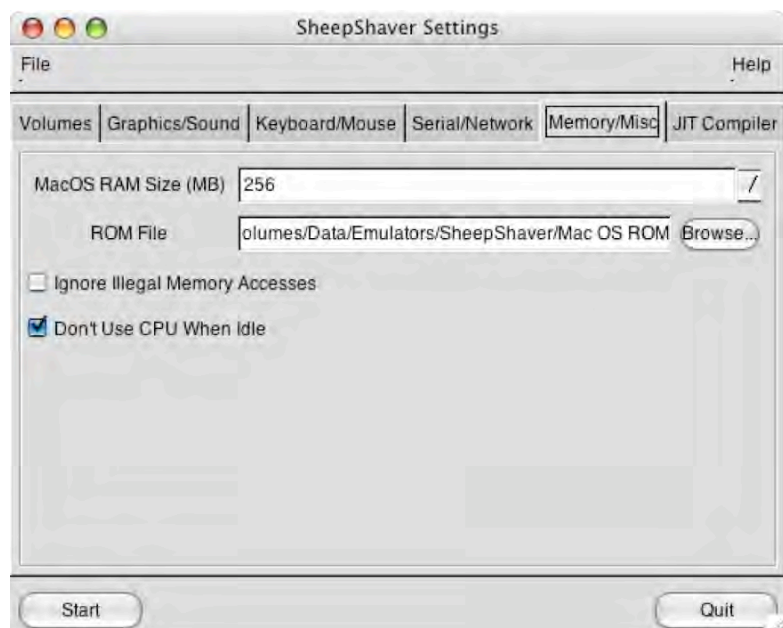
Just when you thought that the windows couldn't look any uglier, this God-awful dialog appears. The decoupling of folders on the left and files on the right is rather bizarre, something only a Unix geek could love. Navigate to the location where you want to create this hard drive. Unfortunately, the default is root, not something more reasonable like the SheepShaver folder.

You might suspect that to get to a folder on your desktop, you merely need to double-click the **Desktop/** item, or even possibly the **Desktop Folder/** item. Sadly no, you must instead navigate through **Users/**, then whatever username you have, and then **Desktop/**. Similarly, you will not find your mounted volumes inside **Desktop/** but instead in **Volumes/**. In case you are wondering, **./** does nothing (as it simply refers to itself), whilst **../** refers to the parent folder (unless you are at root, in which case **../** acts just like **./**). Don't ask, it's Unix.

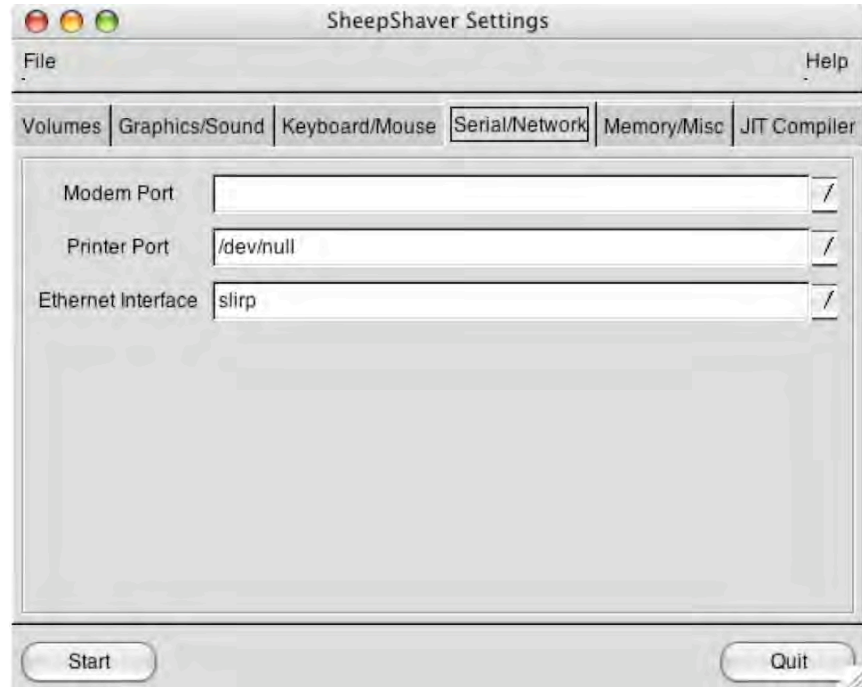
The default size is set to 40MB, but for a Mac OS 9 installation, you will need to make it much larger. I recommend making it about 500MB. Put the name of your hard drive file in the *Selection: /* text field and press OK. If you have a Mac OS 9 image file, perform the same file-picking contortions to point to it (no, this file picker does not remember where you were previously, so you always start at root). If you have a Mac OS 9 boot CD, you can place it into the CD ROM drive now.

Note: It is important to verify that your Mac OS 9 CD can indeed be used with SheepShaver. Some CD's will boot but fail to install because they were intended for installing on specific Macs and not accept as valid the Power Mac 9500 (the hardware SheepShaver is emulating). Other CD's may be general Mac OS 9 installers but fail to boot, as SheepShaver seems to have problems booting with Mac OS Extended (HFS+) CD's, whereas Mac OS Standard (HFS) CD's boot fine. Finally, you may have a valid installer on a Mac OS Standard CD, but the CD itself is not bootable. These are all frustrating problems that you may encounter, and it may require some tinkering. I for example, had to boot with my Power Mac G4 system CD, but use a separate disk image to install. If you run into difficulties, email me and I may be able to help.

Now switch to the **Memory/Misc** pane. Set your *MacOS RAM Size (MB)* to at least 256, and click on the *ROM File's* **Browse...** button to navigate to your *Mac OS ROM* file. Your dialog should now look something like this:

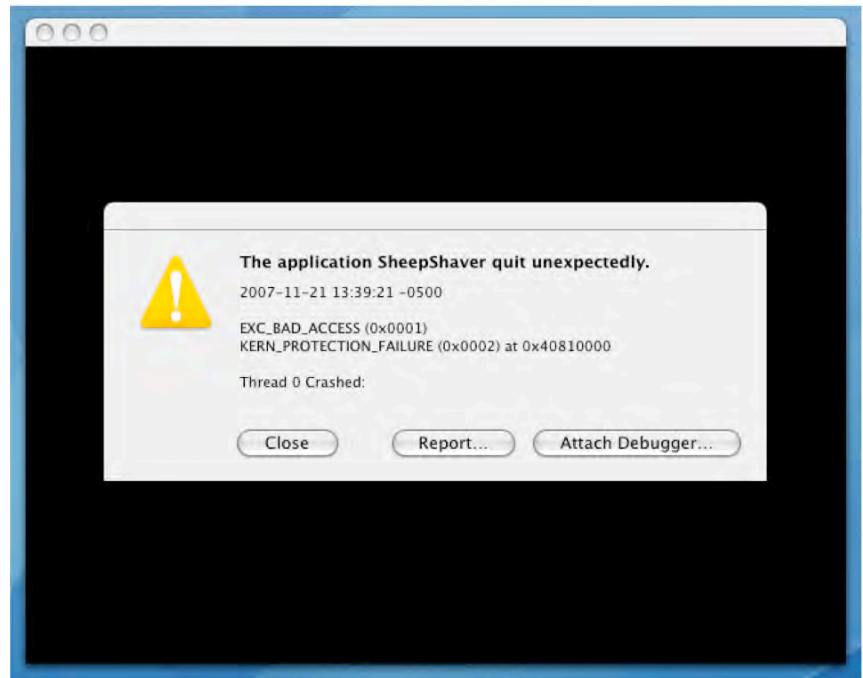


Finally, click on the **Serial/Network** tab, and set your *Ethernet Interface* to "slirp" (this will pass along your Mac's internet access to SheepShaver). This dialog should look like this:



There are other settings available to adjust as well. I prefer my emulated screen resolution to be 640 x 480, but you may adjust this and other settings to your liking. Once you have finished, press the **Start** button. If you are running on a PowerPC-based Macintosh, you may see the following scary message:

Just press the **Close** button and ignore it. This false crash message is just one more of the ending bugs found in SheepShaver. Intel-based Macs do not seem to have this bug.



Installation: Basilisk II

Basilisk emulates a 680x0-based Macintosh; either a Mac IIci or a Quadra 900, depending on whether you wish to use System 7.x or Mac OS 8.x. Its processor choices range from 68020 to 68040. If you wish to emulate a 68000-based Macintosh, you should use Mini vMac (see below), or a PowerPC-based Mac use SheepShaver (see above).

As with SheepShaver, Basilisk requires three pieces to be assembled: the Basilisk software itself, the ROMs from a 68K machine, and System Software compatible with the chosen ROMs. The part is easy, as the Basilisk software can be downloaded from its web site:

<http://basilisk.cebix.net/>

The ROMs, however, are a bit trickier. Unlike the case of *New World ROMs* available on Power Macintosh computers, the ROMs for 68K Macs were never officially distributed as software by Apple. Legally, one is expected to somehow acquire a 68K Mac and run one of the ROM reader programs to obtain this ROM file. An excellent tutorial on this procedure is available here:

<http://mes.emuunlim.com/tips/capturing_a_mac_rom_image.htm>

However, a number of people have already done this and put these ROM files on the internet. Shrewd Google searches for such text as "*Iix Iicx SE30 rom*" and the like can yield links to more than a dozen such ROM images. Although I do not endorse or condone the distributing of copyrighted ROM files, it is likely that Apple has greater concerns than these 20-year-old ROM files being posted.

The System Software version needed to run Basilisk depends upon the ROMs used. A Mac Plus, for example, could use System 3.0 up through System 7.5.5, so this is the range of availability using Mac Plus ROMs. Despite what the documentation claims, I have not had much success emulating a Mac Plus, or anything below a 68030-based Mac. For this reason, I recommend using basilisk for the Mac IIx and later class ROMs for Basilisk, and consider Mini vMac for earlier Macintoshes.

As noted in the SheepShaver installation section, System 7.5.3 was the last freely available operating system for the Mac, and the aforementioned link can be used to access this. The Emaculation web site, a site devoted to Macintosh emulation issues, has a pre-configured System 7.5.5 starter disk that can be used with Basilisk, downloadable here:

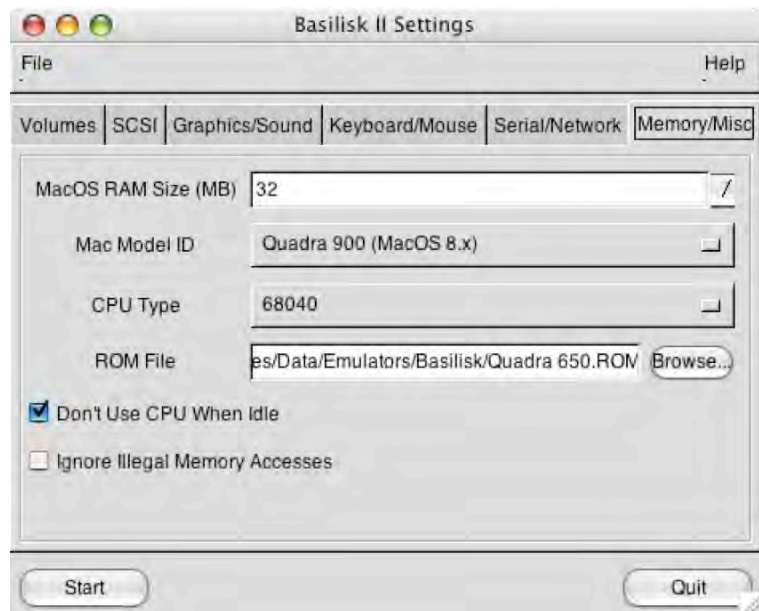
<http://www.emaculation.com/articles/starterdisk.zip>

With later Mac II style ROMs, Basilisk can run Mac OS 8.1, the last 68K supported operating system. My recommendation is to begin with this starter disk to install the operating system onto your hard drive file.

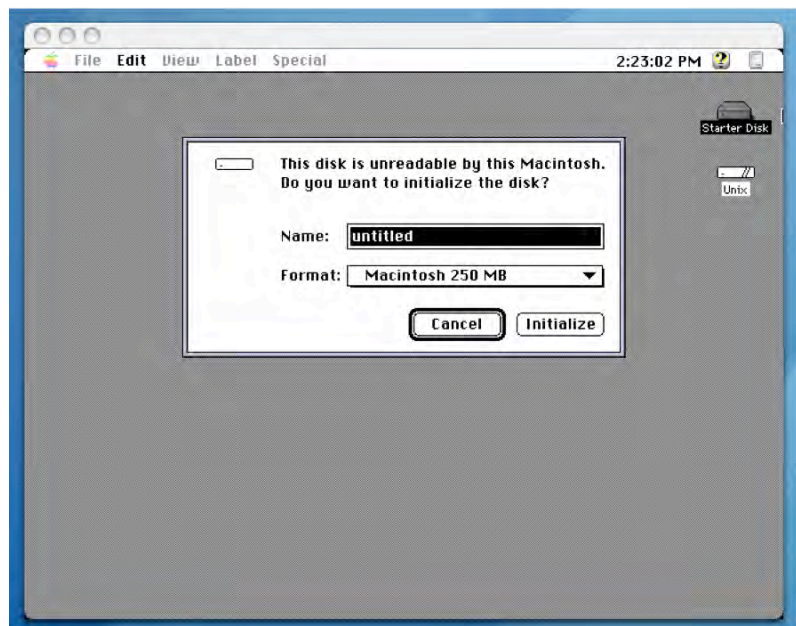
Once that is completed, than you can insert a Mac OS 8.1 installer and upgrade your emulated Mac.

If you have been following along with the SheepShaver installation procedure, you will see that Basilisk behaves nearly identically. You begin by launching the *BasiliskIIGUI* application to configure the preferences used by the *BasiliskII* application. We create a hard drive file large enough for Mac OS 8.1, say 250MB. If your Mac OS 8.1 installer lives on a disk image, add that as well; otherwise place your Mac OS 8.1 CD into the CD drive. We will also save time by including the System 7.5.3 starter disk available from Emaculation.com. Just as with SheepShaver, I will adjust the **Serial/Network** settings to use the oddly named "slirp" Ethernet Interface, and change my video resolution to 640 x 480 in the **Graphics/Sound** pane.

Finally, we move to the Memory/Misc pane, where we make our final modifications. For RAM, 32MB seems reasonable for the class of machine we are emulating. For Mac Model ID, we select the Quadra 900 model, since we are using the Quadra 605 ROMs and wish to run Mac OS 8.1. Likewise, we set the CPU type to 68040, and point to the ROM file we have:



We can now click on the **Start** button to boot up our emulated Mac. You will no doubt notice how much faster Basilisk is in booting up than SheepShaver. Much of this has to do with the fact that System 7.5.3 is a much smaller operating system than Mac OS 9 is. You should now see this:

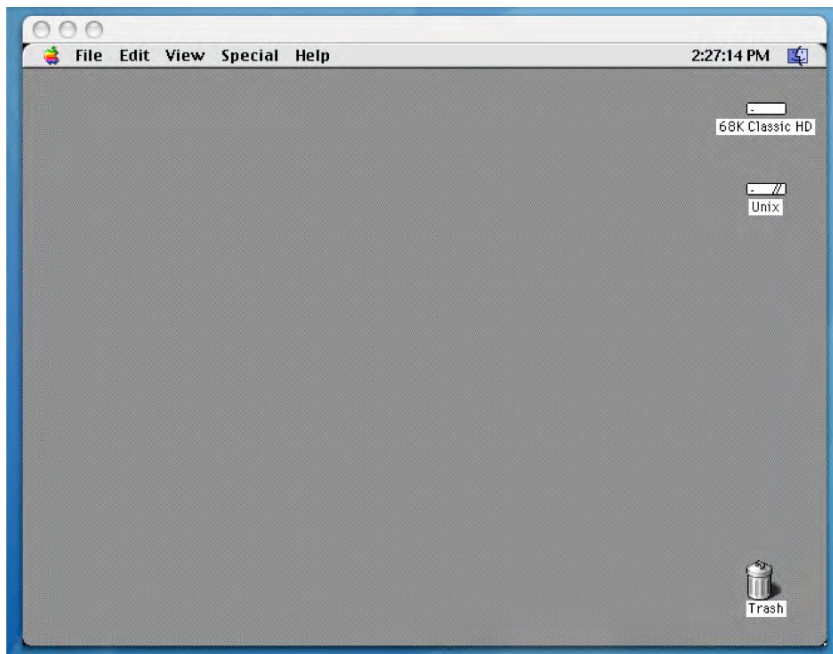


Initialize and install Mac OS 8.1 on your hard drive. When you are finished, your window will look something like the following:

At this point you are ready to use Basilisk.

Installation: Mini vMac

Mini vMac emulates a 68000-based Macintosh, such as the Mac Plus, SE and 128K. To emulate a later 68K-based or Power PC Mac, use Basilisk or SheepShaver (see above). In this example, we will be emulating a Mac Plus with 4MB of RAM.

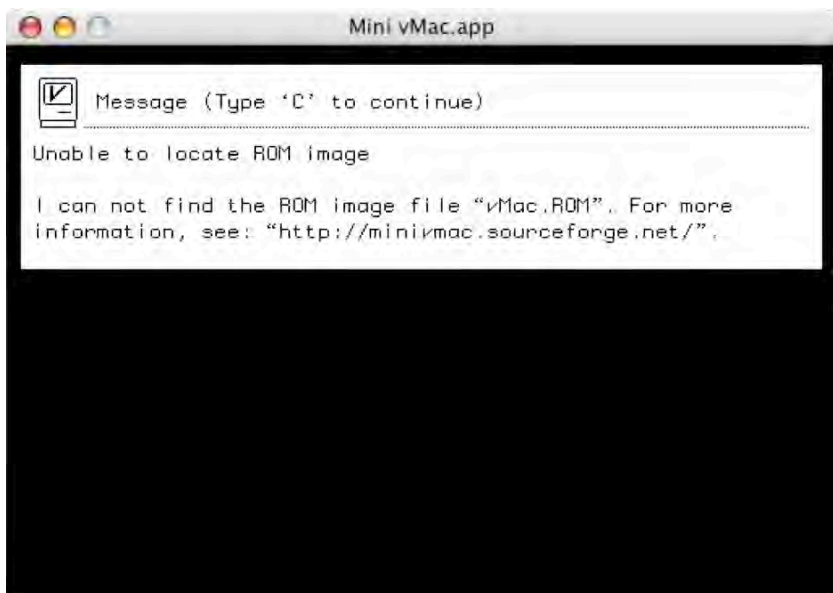


Compared with SheepShaver and Basilisk, Mini vMac is a much simpler application to get started. First, you go to the web site to download the application:

<http://minivmac.sourceforge.net/download.html>

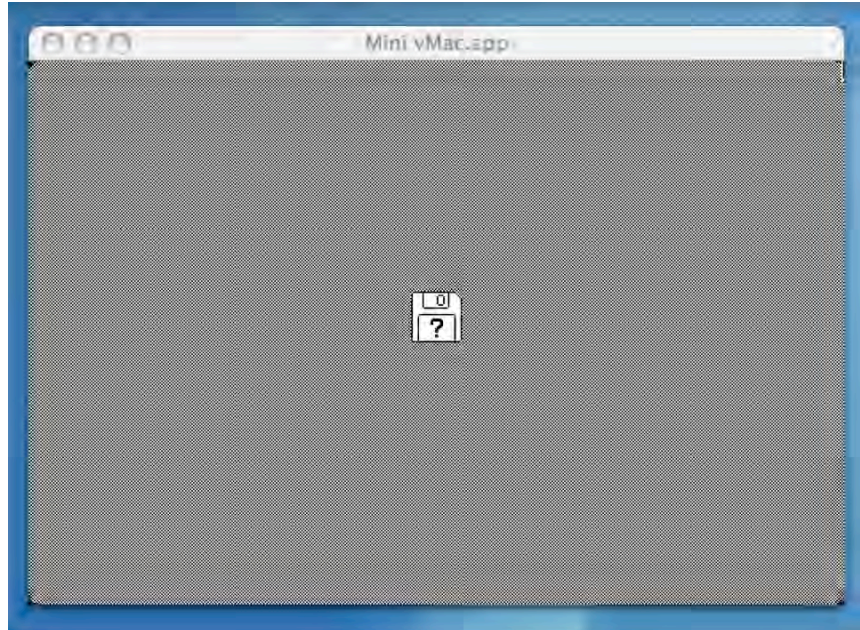
Without doing anything else, you can launch the application and get reasonable information of what needs to be done next:

What you must do next is obtain the Mac Plus ROM file, rename it vMac.ROM, and place into the same folder as the *Mini vMac* application. (Please read the **Installation: Basilisk** section for hints on how to obtain Mac Plus ROMs.



Once you have done this, you can relaunch *Mini vMac* and you will see the following:

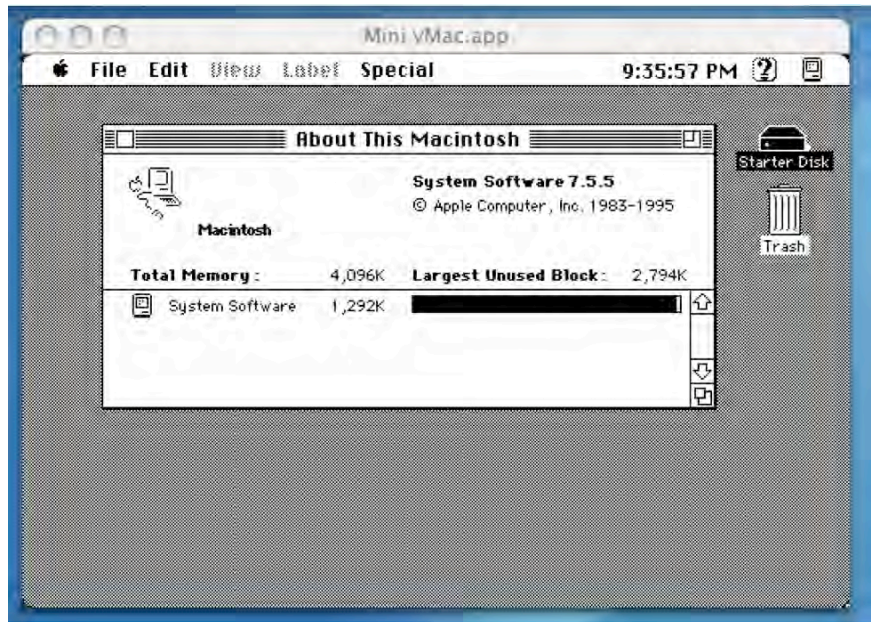
This is essentially how a Mac Plus appears upon startup with no System software. Fortunately, *Mini vMac* offers a much better user experience than do *SheepShaver* and *Basilisk*, and so the next step is easier. Under the **File** menu, the **Open Disk Image...** allows us to select a boot image to run in our Mac Plus.



Hard drive files created within *Basilisk* can be used with *Mini vMac*, provided the boot system is no greater than System 7.5.5 (the latest which can be run on a real Mac Plus). If we use Emaculation's starter disk image downloaded from:

<http://www.emaculation.com/articles/starterdisk.zip>

we can get to a reasonable working position:



You will also want to download some of the utilities available for Mini vMac, which nicely enhance your experience:

<http://minivmac.sourceforge.net/extras/index.html>

In addition, it is worth downloading the original vMac, as its bundle contains items useful for Mini vMac, such as a System 6 startup disk: <http://www.vmac.org>

Conclusion

None of the options we have discussed is a truly suitable replacement for the Classic environment. If you use Classic applications continually and interactively, then your best bet is to stay with Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger on the fastest G5 system you can obtain. If your needs are much more modest and are willing to keep your expectations low, then perhaps one of these emulators may be acceptable to you.

Unfortunately, the performance of these emulators are inversely proportional to their usefulness. On Intel-based Macintoshes, the 68K emulators outperform the PowerPC emulator, although 68K emulation is far less useful. And PowerPC emulation performs best on exactly those machines least likely to be upgraded to Leopard: G4 systems.

The obvious question is thus: Why do you still need to use Classic? Most Classic applications have native OS X equivalents available today, so if it is a matter of paying the upgrade fees, you will find this to be a preferable alternative to emulation. If it is simply to run some older games or utilities which you have grown accustomed to, SheepShaver and Basilisk are your only solution.

Coming Up: More Classic solutions for Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard. See you in 30!



MacNightOwl

The Leopard Report: Your Problem Isn't My Problem

By Gene Steinberg

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As I near a month using Leopard, I continue to delight in its great performance, stability and reasonably good compatibility. It's not that nothing has gone wrong, but none of the issues seem terribly serious. However, I'm still troubled by all the reports I read online about serious issues that cannot be ignored.

Even after the 10.5.1 update fixed that horrific file movement bug that could, theoretically at least, cause loss of data if something interrupts the process of moving a file across partitions, drives or file shares, some people still aren't satisfied.

Recently, for example, I read about complaints that Leopard's stringent graphic needs are hurting the battery life of Mac notebooks. Maybe so, but I haven't seen that on my first-generation 17-inch MacBook Pro. I got roughly three hours under normal circumstances with Tiger, and I've observed little change since then. Well, maybe I'm not running software that could substantially exercise the graphics hardware, although I do run a cross-section of applications, including Parallels Desktop and Windows Vista. All right, that does cause battery life to decline more rapidly, but the very same thing is true for Windows users. At least I can quit Vista and get back to my work; they can't, unless they choose to downgrade to XP.

AirPort reception remains a hot complaint. Again, I'm not seeing it. In fact, since the 10.5.1 update, which did address some AirPort-related troubles, I see an additional bar on the AirPort menu's signal strength display, and appropriate increases in Internet download speeds. Now it's not perfect; never was. I am immersed in a sea of Wi-Fi and portable phone soup in this neighborhood, and I've gotten improved reception by playing with the channel selection options in my 802.11n edition of Apple's AirPort Extreme. I settled on Channel 11, after a brief test, but your mileage may vary. Yes, sometimes reception dips almost to the point of disconnecting me from the network, but it used to be worse in pre-Leopard days. Maybe when I have the time, I'll go back and try some other channels and see if they fare any better.

Again, that's not a specific Leopard issue.

Just as I was writing this, I read a report about a stuttering mouse anomaly, where the cursor would travel across the screen of its own accord from time to time. Now that particular complaint involved a user with a fair amount of third-party software and peripherals, so maybe that's where the fault lies.

This isn't to say I haven't had difficulties with any input devices. I have one of Logitech's Cordless Desktop Wave wireless keyboard/mouse combos. Although the ambidextrous mouse, the LX8, is good, it's not quite the match of Logitech's superb MX Revolution. Only the most recent software generated fits when I hooked up the MX Revolution's transceiver to the USB port and tried to use that mouse under Leopard. For example, scrolling down would produce the opposite effect.

Well, Logitech just released version 2.4.0 of their software, and that has cured this apparent conflict, and now I can use the mouse that I prefer. The release notes also state that Logitech is no longer depending on Unsanity's controversial Application Enhancer to provide access to certain system functions. That's something that concerned me quite a bit, because the previous version, 2.3.1, did not provide the standard Application Enhancer preference panel, so I wasn't even aware of its presence.

Indeed, after restarting with the new software, I found some window display inconsistencies in Leopard's Spaces feature were also history, and managing multiple desktops is now noticeably more fluid and dependable. Even better, the semi-ergonomic keyboard portion of the Desktop Wave combo no longer lags slightly when I'm engaged in a fit of burst typing. I thought that was just a symptom of the keyboard's response, but, no, it was the software all along. But that particular artifact existed even with Tiger.

The remaining persistent bug exists in Microsoft Word 2004, where I cannot print documents without getting a message, erroneous, that the page is out of range. For now, I simply use the Pages application from iWork '08 for that purpose. Maybe Microsoft, which is aware of the bug, will fix it before I move to Office 2008. Or maybe not.

The upshot of all this is the unfortunate fact that no PC operating system can be compatible with everything. It's just not in the cards. Even though Apple has a limited number — relatively speaking — of models available, there is no possible way they can predict all the theoretical interactions as the result of thousands of potential system configurations.

Sure, maybe they did ship Leopard somewhat prematurely, no doubt because of marketing pressure and not to miss another deadline. But that's how the software business works. If the bug is serious, it's clear from the recent 10.5.1 update that Apple will do their level best to set things right.

And that, my friends, is the best you can hope for in this highly imperfect world.

See comments at –

<http://macnighthowl.com/2007/11/22/the-leopard-report-your-problem-isnt-my-problem/>



Surfbits Presents
The Mac ReviewCast
Looking at Hardware, Software
and Websites that make
Using the Mac Special

The Mac ReviewCast

Software and Podcasting: A Look Back and A Look Forward

By Tim Verpoorten Copyright © 2007

December

Looking back at software in 2007 we saw a tale of a two-headed monster. The first 9 months of 2007 was near stagnant in Mac software development and the final quarter of 2007 was just the opposite. Of course, the reason for this was Leopard. Leopard brought so much to the table with its October release that software developers could let their imaginations run wild with ideas and features that they were not capable of achieving until Leopard arrived. Now that Leopard is here, we're all winners. But with every major update to an operating system, we're greeted with some new problems to solve. With Leopard the problem was updating all the shareware, freeware and major commercial applications to not only take advantage of Leopard's new capabilities, but just to allow the applications to run correctly on Leopard.

Freeware applications such as Onyx and Applejack which I think should be on everyone's Mac are still not Leopard-ready. Shareware apps that we all know and many of us depend on such as SuperDuper are still not Leopard capable. Then we have major commercial apps like Adobe products which may or may not run correctly on Leopard. Patience may be a virtue, but it's a dangerous virtue when it comes to system backups and basic computer etiquette.

Now that the Leopard floodgates have been opened, I expect to see more and more unique, attractive and functional Mac applications coming down the road. We'll be looking at as many as we can on the MacReviewCast podcast, so stay listening.

Talking about Podcasting, this year has seen continued growth in podcasting and more importantly, videocasting. With the new line of iPods being released in 2007, video podcasts are as easy to take with you and watch while away from your computers as never before. There is still one obvious advantage for podcasts over videocasts, and that's the ability to listen to the podcast while driving to and from work. Podcasting may seem a bit old-fashioned at time with the new access to video media we have, but there will always be a place for them in our everyday lives.

So let's look at where we're going in 2008. Mac software will continue to amaze and delight us. Leopard has created a solid footing for years of future development. The visual aspect of Mac development can only get better with core graphics and as more people migrate to the Mac, the opportunities for Mac developers to make a good living just increases. I expect to see more and more software products rolled out in 2008. As for podcasting, I feel that audio-only podcasts will continue to exist, but they may not grow at the numbers we've seen over the last two years. I look for more screencasts and videocasts to make their way into our iPods and our homes. The time is near when we find podcasts about what someone did last week or whom they chatted with online fall off of iTunes altogether. I think we'll see more and more interest-specific podcasts find a niche in your directory.

As Mac users, we must be ready for the steady growth in the user-base. The influx will bring both positive and negative online experiences to you and I. But, I can say with confidence that the Mac Software we now know and love will only be getting better in 2008.

Comments on this article may be made at –
<http://www.MacReviewCast.com>

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

December 2007 Edition

By Harry {doc} Babad © 2007



This month I continue sharing my occasional tip related finds with you. A few of the Tips I share come from — Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips column <http://www.mac-hints-tips.com> and are used with his permission. Where I use any one else's tips for this column, I acknowledge both their source and their contributors. Since we've, at macCompanion been involved or avoiding Leopard, the new Macintosh OS X 10.5, I've passed on some of my software compatibility findings that fell outside of the scope of my book reviews and article in this issue.

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

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

- Don't Panic Just Restart It!
- Steve Jobs Says be a Dull Filer
- How to Print to PDF — Your Not Really Scavenged by Leopard
- Spell Catcher and Leopard – Now a Functioning Dynamic Duo
- Eudora 6.2.4 and Leopard — Eine Meanie Minie Moe
- Pasting Safari Graphics to Word
- How Big Can You Print Your Photos?
- Avoid Needing *DriveSavers* Data Hard Disk Recovery Services

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The software related tips were tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM; running under Macintosh OS X OS X 10.4.11.

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Don't Panic Just Restart It!

When perusing technical forums such as MacFixIt and Macintouch, it's amazing how often you can find lengthy and breathless descriptions of some problem that appeared after a new OS update was installed, only to find right at the end the statement: Finally I restarted and the problem disappeared.

Such "well informed" people have somehow missed the basic principle that if a problem appears and you can't figure out what's causing it in a pretty short time, the first "shot-gun fix" you should apply is to try restarting the Mac. The command is right there in the Apple menu, for goodness' sake!

Restarting the Mac will resolve a problem that has occurred as the result of some unique combination of circumstances that will never (or rarely) be seen again. This happens more often than you might suspect. If restarting fails to fix the problem you haven't lost anything but a couple of minutes of your time, and you can go on to investigate more complex possibilities.

If the Mac has frozen and you can't use the Restart menu item, most modern Macs can be forcibly shut down by holding down the power button for about six seconds. After than you can restart the Mac normally.

Steve Cooper

AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
Hints & Tips September 2007 Used With Permission

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Steve Jobs Said Just be a Dull Filer

Being dull and unimaginative is a real bonus in filing!
Steve Jobs has a very sharp mind and is very, very wealthy, so it doesn't do any harm to follow the system he has laid down for us in OS X:

- File documents in Documents
- File music in Music
- File pictures in Pictures
- File movies in Movies

This was the system presented to Mac users when the first version of OS X came out and I've found it excellent. As the revolution of the digital hub has played out, the utility of this simple system has been confirmed to me a thousand times.



Doc Sez, this is not to say that all your documents should be storied in a seemingly endless monolayer. As I've previously noted, creating a hierarchy of nested folders that meet you organizational need is critical to keeping your projects and their document accessible — semi-organized if you prefer.

The point Steve Jobs makes focused on where you put most of the different *general* types of files you collect or your files. Actually, rather than have the 37 GBG of photos and clipart or music clutter up my hard drive, I store them in a separate volume.

In addition, if you have project associated graphics or audio files, by all means keep them within your project folders in the documents folder. But that collection of clip art, mostly recipe photos or those songs you ripped from your CDs.... those belong in their respective(Picture and Music.) folders

Dick Johnson

AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
Hints & Tips September 2007 Used With Permission

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How to Print to PDF — You're Not Really Scavenged by Leopard

As by now many of you know, Adobe will not be updating Acrobat Pro 8 until January. Since this was the means that allowed the Macintosh OS, as well as MS Office application to save/print to PDF, those needing the feature will either be out of luck or need to wait before installing Leopard.

Some Possible Solutions — [CUPS-PDF](http://www.codepoetry.net/projects/cups-pdf-for-mosx/) is an open-source software backend module for CUPS (Mac OS X's printing system) by Volker C. Behr. Rather than printing to a device, it allows printing straight to PDF files.
<http://www.codepoetry.net/projects/cups-pdf-for-mosx/>.

According the information posted on the Internet this software, updated **09 Nov 2007**, may bypass the need for the Acrobat Plugin, which for the time being is unavailable to Leopard users. In addition the products developer notes: "Why use this rather than a simple "Save as PDF" in the print dialog?"

- Pressing return is faster.
- Batch-print through the writer to convert documents to PDF.
- Common save location for all generated PDFs.

Although the information provided by the developer does not specify its Leopard ready, without Leopard installed on my system, I can't verify this.

Leads to this information proved by Robert Pritchett, November 2007.

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Spell Catcher and Leopard – Now a Functioning Dynamic Duo

There are, as you can read in my 3Rs column in this issue, a number of reasons not to upgrade to Leopard. I type and therefore I spell horribly. Therefore, having a robust and universally available spelling check is a necessity, not just a whim. Although I'm heavily invested in the spelling and grammar checking system associated with MS Word, these are of no use when I'm filling in feedback notes on the Internet, or misspell words in document titles.



The tool I prefer, above everything else I tried, is Rainmaker's *Spell Catcher X 10.2.3*, last updated by its developer on 23 November 2006. Therefore I was justifiably concerned what would happen to the product when installed on a Leopard operating system. I appreciate the prompt reply I received from Evan Gross. Based on what I learned I would not use lack of *Spell Catcher* compatibility as an excuse to avoid upgrading to Leopard. All the features I presently use will indeed work, some with a bit of tweaking.

"Everything you need to know (and that we currently know) is found here: <http://www.rainmakerinc.com/kb/index.php?article=87/> Meanwhile, we have a major upgrade coming in the next 4-8 weeks that will take advantage of new-in-Leopard technologies (it will run on Tiger as well).

"*Spell Catcher X 10.2.3* is compatible with Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard). There are some issues that you should be aware of (listed on the FAQ). If you follow the advice given for each item, you should be able to use *Spell Catcher* as always, without sacrificing any of the features you are accustomed to or require."

Harry Babad, macCompanion.com

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Eudora 6.2.4 and Leopard – Eine Meanie Minie Moe

The more I read, the more confused I become. But first some background.

Earlier in the Year all registered Eudora users received the following message.

"Qualcomm is no longer selling or providing technical support for Eudora.

The paid mode commercial versions of Eudora are no longer available. The

sponsored mode (advertising popups) versions of Eudora continue to be available for download. An open source version of Eudora® is being developed by Mozilla and will be free of charge."



Open Source Eudora Version 8 — A quick search on the MacUpdate site and I was able to download the Thunderbird (a Mozilla variant) version of Eudora, as *Eudora 8.0b1* dated 02 September 2007.

[<http://www.eudora.com/download/eudora/mac/8.0/%5D/>.] The release notes did not provide me with information I needed to decide whether to switch to the open source version. [http://wiki.mozilla.org/Penelope_Releases/.] The information I could find was strangely silent about Leopard and Eudora 8. Okay,

Okay, I'd play anyway. As a precaution, I after burned my complete Eudora 6 files/folder/preferences and application to a backup CD.

I was very disappointed in the new version. It took me three tries to figure out how to do the installation since the installer screen asked for information I did not immediately understand. Then, victory I hoped. No chance. Not only did it transfer a gazillion emails to my new email in folder, but it completely lost all of my Mail Folders – a feature that keeps me addicted to Eudora. These are a multiple level, in depth hierarchical file system that I used to store important emails by subject (e.g., projects and subprojects.) In effect creating a less detailed mail oriented organization of my email files that matched that on my hard drive. Needless to say, zap, actually *CleanApp*, and that beast was gone.

Will Eudora 6 Work? — Okay, how about a bit of googling? Search for variants of Eudora-Leopard compatibility gave me lot of seemingly replicated and redundant hits whose authors said well maybe, without providing any in depth analysis of what worked and what didn't. Perhaps there's more information out there this week than three weeks ago, but for now I don't want to play.

Eudora MacFixIt reader Sam writes about his Eudora 6.x experiences with Leopard:

"Eudora starts up, let's me get and send mail, look at mailboxes, but there are problems. Sometimes a very simple operation, like clicking on a message in a mailbox, will produce an extended session of staring at the spinning beach ball. Fairly frequent crashes occur." Stuff like this doesn't reassure me. Alas, I'm still one of the unrepentant — I don't like either Apple's Mail or Microsoft's Entourage, the later of which I was stuck with for years on a consulting clients email system.

A New Developer Joins the Game and a Bit of Hope — As I literally stumbled around the Internet I came across some new information, actually a new developer who write/blogged about a New Eudora. They noted that:

"Many people think that Eudora was the best e-mail program for the Mac or for Windows. The most recent version of Eudora still offers features not found in other newer e-mail programs. *Odysseus* is the code name for the Eudora replacement.

"I was unhappy that Qualcomm decided to abandon Eudora and it really doesn't seem like Thunderbird will be able to pull off the modification needed to make it mimic Eudora.] *doc_Babad agrees!*

"Odysseus is the code name for the Eudora successor that Infinity Data Systems is working. We have always felt that Eudora was a best-of-breed email application for both platforms, Mac OS X and Windows. Easily one of the oldest email applications, it still offers features either not found in competing applications or, if found, not implemented as elegantly.

"There will be an initial beta of Odysseus released by the end of the year, with the final release due toward the end of Q1 2008. The plan is for the final application to offer full backward compatibility with Eudora, utilize existing Eudora mail boxes and settings, and offer the features and functionality that Eudora users are accustomed to, while at the same time improving on those areas where Eudora lagged behind, such as HTML rendering and OS integration. Individuals who would like to keep up with the development of Odysseus can check back at the web site below, as these pages will be updated frequently.

[<http://www.infinitydatasystems.com/products/odysseus/index.html>] or
[http://www.ugnn.com/2007/10/new_eudora.html/]

Additionally, individuals can sign up to receive email updates by sending an email to: odysseus_list@infinitydatasystems.com.

"Needless to say, we were saddened by Qualcomm's abandonment of Eudora. And while we have the utmost respect for the Thunderbird/Eudora team, like many Eudora users, we don't believe that modifying Thunderbird to mimic Eudora offers Eudora users the features, functionality, or experience they've come to love and depend on. It's our belief that only an application written from the ground up can adequately succeed a program as great as Eudora."

Harry Babad, macCompanion.com

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Pasting Safari Graphics to Word

Mac 911 Tip of the Week - 10 Sep 2007

Reader Keith Boone is puzzled by the relationship between Safari and Microsoft Word. He writes: "I have run into a cut-and-paste issue in Safari when using Microsoft Word. I look up an image in Google and when my image is located, I Control-click (or right click) and choose Copy Image from the contextual menu. I then go to my opened Word document and choose Paste. Instead of seeing the picture, I only get the URL to it.

"I can copy and paste from Safari to any other program (Pages, TextEdit, and so on) and all works fine. I can also use Firefox except the Copy Image works no matter which application I am pasting to. Sure, I could just save the image to the Desktop, and just drag it into the Word document, however that creates an extra step. Is there a setting or something I could do to make the programs play better together?"

Chris Responded: "Here's the way around the problem: Instead of choosing Paste, choose Edit -> Paste Special. In the resulting Paste Special window choose Picture and click OK. The image will be pasted into the document rather than the URL.

"This is a slight pain in the neck. In such situations I select the image I want to copy in Safari and click and drag it into an open Word document. The image appears in the Word doc as it should."

By Christopher Breen <mailto:mac911@macworld.com>

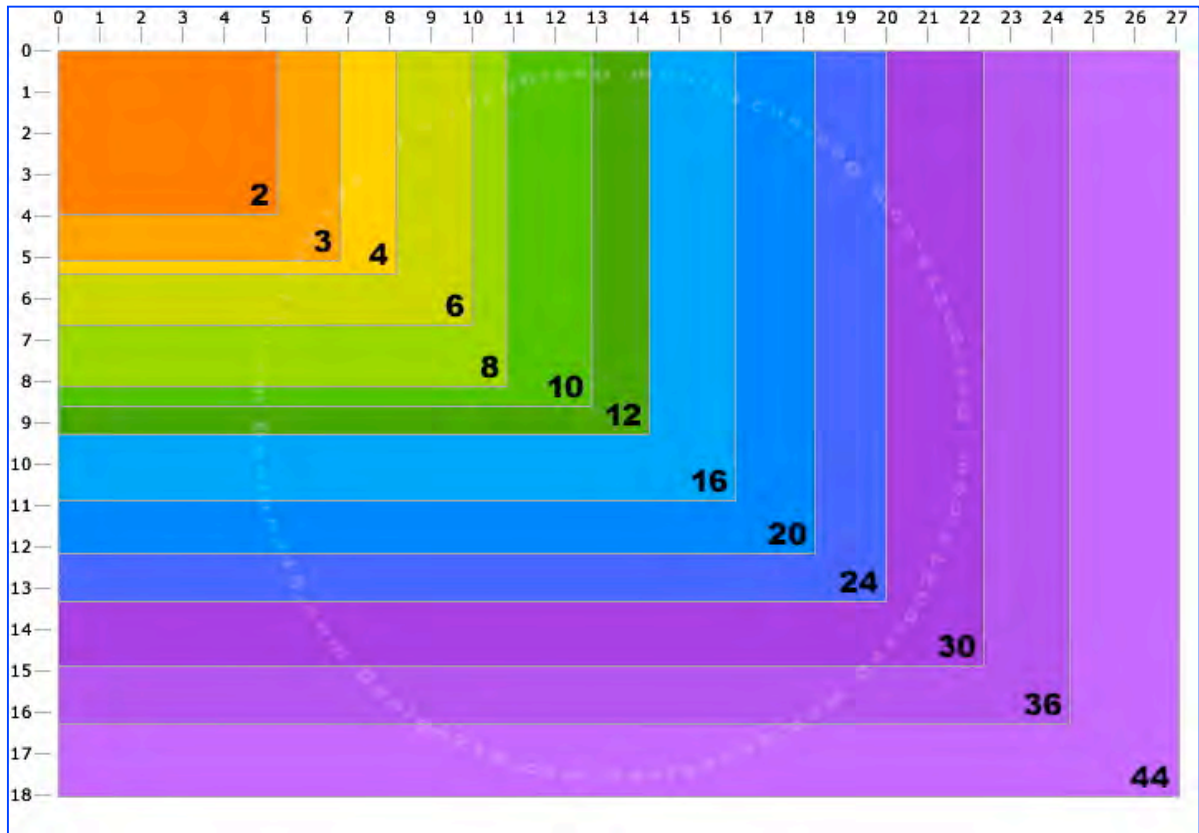
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How Big Can You Print Your Photos?

The Kim Komando Site noted if there is one combination that trips up many people, it is resolution and Megapixels. Many people equate the number of Megapixels with a camera's resolution.

Response — Of course, manufacturers contribute to the confusion. They lead you to believe that Megapixels are the single most important aspect when it comes to judging cameras.

That said, there is a correlation between Megapixels and resolution. The more Megapixels a camera has, the larger you can make prints - and still get a decent resolution.



Of course, you probably wouldn't know offhand how big you could go with an 8-megapixel camera. That's where today's Cool Site comes in.

It's contains a chart that shows you how big you should make your prints. This is handy for anyone buying a camera. If you already own a camera, it is still handy.

So bookmark it for future reference! Check out <http://photojojo.com/content/websites/how-big-can-i-print-this-photo/> and to dig deeper also check <http://www.design215.com/toolbox/megapixels.php>

Tip Provided by Andrew Stevens
 Mid-Columbia Macintosh Users Group
 Shared Feb. 16, 2007

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Avoid Needing *DriveSavers* Data Hard Disk Recovery Services

When they visited the Diablo Valley MUG in January, DriveSavers reps Anne Chase and John Christopher handed out brochures with some great tips to help us avoid needing their company's services (and paying out the big bucks to rescue our data). Here are the tips:



1. Always back up and test your backup! Keep current copies of important data offsite.
2. To avoid data loss and program corruption, always exit your programs before shutting down your computer.
3. All computer equipment should be used with high-quality surge protectors or line conditioners.
4. Never turn off peripheral devices while the computer is on or when the disk is active—this may cause directory damage.
5. Never reformat your drive without testing your backup first. If you use tapes, be sure you are familiar with the backup software before archiving important data.
6. Do not move or jar a drive while it is operating. When transporting a drive, prevent jostling by using a padded container.
7. Allow adequate space around an external drive's cooling vents. Remove books, papers, etc. that might block airflow. Do not put the drive on carpeting.
8. As a general rule, if you are comfortable, the climate is appropriate for the drive. Avoid rapid temperature changes. If the drive was previously in a very cold environment, allow it to warm up to room temperature before operating.
9. Use extreme caution when using software utilities. In cases of severe corruption or physical damage this may make the problem worse.
10. If you hear unusual noises from your drive, turn off the unit immediately and call DriveSavers (1-800-440-1904*).

These sounds may indicate a mechanical problem that could ultimately result in total data loss. [Dec Sez, this harkens back to the Iomega Zip drive "click of death" problem I suffered. — not fun at all.]

* DriveSaver's John Christopher told us that the DriveSavers phone number was chosen because that was the Mac default date when its battery died. He said that the company was founded by and for Mac users over two decades ago. There's more help, specific to the Mac, at:

<http://www.drivesavers.com/recovery_tips/mac_users.html>.

Brenda says take a look at the DriveSavers link BEFORE you have a problem!

Brenda Boswell

ApplePRESS, Diablo Valley MUG, Concord, CA

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Harry {doc} Babad

That's all folks...



Musings From Mars

In Praise of Third-Party Mac OS X System Enhancements: Hats Off to Mighty APEs, Incredible InputManagers, and Satisfying SIMBLs!

By Leland Scott

On the [Unsanity](#) website this week, a heated discussion broke out regarding some problems Leopard users were having with an older version of the company's Application Enhancer (APE) module. What ensued both there and across the web—wherever those “blue screens of death” were discussed—was a revival of the ongoing argument about how “safe” APEs are. Most of the writers also bundled InputManagers and SIMBL (Simplified InputManager Bundle) plugins into the mix, which just pissed off the developers who know how different APEs are from **those beasties**. Meanwhile, developers of APE haxies and InputManagers have had to continuously address legitimate concerns about the security of their products and their impact on system stability, and so they've tended to become a bit defensive even in constructive arguments. I was so distressed by it all that I was moved to write the following lengthy entry on Unsanity's forum.

It turned out to be an article I've been meaning to write for a long time now, and for this Mars report I've spent some time cleaning it up and adding information to it. I hope it adds something mostly positive to the debate about the value of these kinds of system enhancements. At the very least—if you have the patience to wade through my overlong prose—you'll be rewarded with a list of 30 “system enhancements” that I use (or have used), which try to explain why I find them so useful and necessary to my Mac Life.

Honestly, as both a developer and user, I find this kind of internecine backbiting very disheartening. The APE guys have been attacked for so long, and lumped into the same camp as the SIMBL/InputManagers guys that Slava and Rosyna do a “gasp!” “don't mention InputManagers to us!” thing in a kind of knee-jerk dance every time the topic comes up. I can understand the chip on their shoulders – they're outlaws, after all, unsupported (thwarted?) by Apple and frowned upon by “official” Mac bloggers, who seem to feel they are the only legitimate Mac OS X evangelists out there. Those guys have never blessed APE, so APE is bad.

Bull****. Their ire is equally great at InputManagers and SIMBL. Those who are actually coders will also rant about the dangers of code-posing and method swizzling, both of which are legitimate features of Cocoa. Can APEs, InputManagers, and other “outlaw” enhancements to Mac OS X be used for malware? Certainly, but so can a text editor!

APE is probably the most secure of the bunch, since all third-party APEs must adhere to Unsanity's carefully developed API, and they plug in to the APE framework. One of the best things about that framework from a user perspective is the ease with which you can turn the whole bunch off when trying to identify a system problem. Equally great is how easy it is to disable an APE in a given application. And this functionality comes with the framework... it's not something an APE developer need worry about.

InputManagers are definitely rogue fellows. They adhere to a loose, old Apple API that was intended more for uses like TextExtras than Inquisitor. However, what they provide—and the reason why I as a user love them—is some serious, across-the-board enhancements to my Cocoa applications that I’m not getting from Apple.

By the way, SIMBL is an API that attempts to bring some order to InputManagers by providing a common framework and unifying some commonly used methods. However, to both users and “gasp! SIMBL!” writers it can appear mostly confusing. (Is it an InputManager, or not?) The guy who developed SIMBL had a great idea, and initially there was some good adoption of SIMBL. But it probably needed continued development and more support to become the “APE” of InputManager-dom.

In that sense, they arise from the same impulse that drives Unsanity’s haxies... and it’s why the two types of “system add-ons” are lumped together. The guys who develop InputManagers (or SIMBL plugins) are trying to provide system-level functionality that will work in all applications. There is no other way to do this than through APE or InputManager that I know of. Well... you could go below APE and use “mach inject”, which is what APE does below the surface. That is, it injects code at the mach level, whereas InputManagers inject code at the Cocoa level. One of the biggest differences, functionally, between the two methods is that InputManagers have no effect on Carbon-based apps like Finder, iTunes, or Photoshop, because only Cocoa apps are able to load them.

One thing I find amusing about the whole anti-InputManager crowd (including Unsanity) is that there’s a lot of similarity between InputManagers and two other system-level add-ons that you don’t hear folks worrying about from a security perspective: Contextual Menu Items, and PreferencePanels.

Actually, what I said earlier about there being no way other than InputManagers or APE to add system-level functionality to applications on OS X was incorrect. Both Contextual Menu Items and PreferencePanels share with InputManagers the fundamental Cocoa building block known as NSBundle. These are all bits of code that get loaded into the Cocoa framework in order to do things. The main differences are that

1. CMs must use a context menu interface. But they aren’t limited to that functionality.
2. Preference Panels have a defined API and user visibility that the other two types of NSBundles do not. Typically, preference pane apps can be turned on and off, just like regular apps. But they aren’t regular apps beneath the hood.
3. Unlike the other two types, InputManagers can show up pretty much wherever the developer chooses in the interface. Typically, they appear in the main menubar or a submenu, but some, like Inquisitor, are restricted to run only in a given application. I suspect that the relative “invisibility” of InputManagers makes them more likely targets for the “anti-system-add-on” evangelists.

With respect to security, Apple has indeed made InputManagers more secure this time around, but I think they can and should go further... without destroying the positive virtues of InputManagers and other system enhancements. In Leopard, InputManagers must be installed at the system level folder, with strict permissions that only allow write access by the root user. This alone helps ensure that none gets installed without the user’s permission.

One thing that never gets said in these discussions, however, is that if a malware writer wanted to wreak havoc among helpless Mac users, it would be a simple matter to write a badly formed Cocoa application, put up a pretty website, and invite users to try it out. The app could do all sorts of nasty things before the bad code consumed all your memory and crashed the system. On rebooting, you don't necessarily restart the app, but it's installed a daemon process that runs automatically, again leading to a system meltdown in 10-15 minutes.

This is purely hypothetical, but very feasible. Ultimately, your system security depends on the user applying some common sense and on the developer community having rational, realistic discussions with Apple about some of the risk factors.

No one wants to destroy the creativity that drives people to the Apple platform—developers as well as users. Make the platform too locked up, and it won't be any fun to develop on. But make it too thin, and it's dangerous for everyone.

Both APEs and InputManagers/ContextualMenuItems/PreferencePanels have their place at this table, and I for one hope the backbiting stops. No, APEs aren't InputManagers. We get that. But their purposes have a lot in common, and the purposes of both are good.

If I were to propose an improvement for InputManagers to Apple, I'd suggest they add features to the System Preferences API. I think it would be a big improvement if InputManagers could be turned on and off in a System Preference pane, which gets installed with much user visibility. I'd support taking away the InputManagers folder if as a developer I could provide the same functionality through a System preference pane. The key difference, as I understand it, is that as an InputManager, I get to load into every application that passes by, actually becoming part of them. It's understandable that some developers would find that notion a bit quease-producing... if you're prone to anthropomorphizing your apps anyway.

So why bother defending the "evil" InputManager? Because here's a list of 'em I couldn't live without... nearly all of which are free, by the way:

Inquisitor. A terrific enhancement for Safari's web search field. (Here's [a short review](#) from my *Software Addicts* section of Mars.)

SafariBlock. An ad blocker for Safari.

TextExtras. Adds a slew of useful text-input options in all your apps. (*Note for developers: Source code available as well.*)

StepMenus. Enables tear-off menus for your application's main menu, and is a model of how I'd like all InputManagers to work: It provides a System Preference pane for use in turning it on and off and configuring it. (*Note for developers: Source code available as well.*)

HotService. Puts the Services Menu in your main menubar, which makes it much easier to use. Only when you do this do you begin to realize the power of application services.

OCSmartHacks. Provides *many* functions, but I use it mainly for popping up main menus in apps that don't have them, and for easily resizing and dragging windows. It's one of the few here that I actually had to pay for, and I also devoted [quite a few keystrokes and brain cells to it](#) when I finally decided it was worth the dough.

MenuExtraEnabler. An InputManager from Unsanity that overcomes limitations in Statusbar menu extras that Apple introduced in Jaguar (Mac OS X 10.2). Lets me use menu extras like MenuMeters. From what I can tell, it does the same thing that the open source **MenuCracker** bundle does, though MenuCracker can work outside of the InputManagers folder. MenuCracker comes built in to some great Menu extras like **MenuMeters**.

Edit in WriteRoom. If you use WriteRoom, you know how useful this is... it adds a menu item so you can switch to WriteRoom's full-screen editing interface from any app where you're entering text. It seamlessly puts the edited text back where it came from when you're done. How cool is that? (WriteRoom itself is a text editor, but it includes the InputManager as an optional module. **Here's my review of the software** if you'd like more info.

SafariStand. The best Swiss-Armyknife for Safari that exists. (Saft? bah!) and Stand is free, too. It runs as a SIMBL plugin. This software is so great I devoted **a whole article** to it last fall.

SetAlphaValue. Lets you customize window transparency uniquely for any app... I'm currently morphing that code, which I'd earlier customized for my own ShapeShifter theme, Crystal Clear, into a new plugin called CrystalClear Interface. It will do the transparency thing and a lot more besides.

Visor. From Blacktree (the Quicksilver guys), it's just a way-cool interface to your Terminal window. Runs as a SIMBL plugin. (**Here's my review from last year.**)

MegaZoomer. A freebie SIMBL plugin that lets you zoom the entire window if you want. (*Note for developers: Source code available as well.*)

SafariScript. Adds an AppleScript menu to Safari, utilizing Jay Tuley's open source **CocoaScriptMenu** framework. The developer website also hosts a great repository of Safari-related scripts you can use.

SIMBL. Of course, you need the SIMBL InputManager if you want to run any SIMBL plugins! (*Note for developers: Source code available as well.*)

Those are the ones I currently have active. Others (including ones in the SIMBL family) that I've used in the past and enjoy are:

CocoaSuite Includes many useful enhancements—including gestures, mnemonics, and menu shortcuts. It isn't free, but it does have a new Leopard-compatible version available as well as an "**InputManagersManager**" application that you can use to disable CocoaSuite in specific apps.

*(Update 11/1/07: As I'd hoped, InputManagersManager provides an API so that other developers of InputManagers—including SIMBL plugins—can utilize it. Why do this? Quite simply, it provides two excellent benefits to users: First, with it developers can make their InputManagers **self-installable**, and Second, both developers and users can utilize it to restrict InputManagers to specific applications or to disable them in specific apps. Developers interested in learning more can **read about this remarkable new tool here**. If you're an InputManager user, just download the software, follow the simple instructions, and begin taking advantage of it to organize your InputManagers collection!)*

GreaseKit (formerly Creammonkey). This little InputManager plugin lets you run some Greasemonkey scripts in Safari. A new version was just released, but I'm getting two GreaseKit menu items in Leopard. 😞

MaxiMice. A nice add-on that enhances your mouse, but it's not free. (Note: I reviewed MaxiMice along with a dozen other such apps in the May 2007 article, "**Window Tricks: Extending Your Power Over Mac Applications**").

TabExpose. An inexpensive add-on to Safari that lets you see all tabs, Expose style, as Shiira does.

SafariTidy. A terrific add-on that runs Tidy on any web page source code and displays the results in Safari. It was recently updated for Leopard. If it's working again, I'll be moving it to the "active" list for sure.

AcidSearch. A SIMBL plugin that I was in love with until it stopped working in WebKit and Safari 3.0... And then Inquisitor came along...

Graffiti. A SIMBL plugin simply too cool for words... and a great parlor trick. It lets you flip over any window in your Cocoa apps and write on them. Like, notes and stuff. You can even save what you write before quitting the app! If you want more words from me on Graffiti, **here's a short review**. (*Note for developers: Source code available as well.*)

OK, so that's a quick rundown on some really useful and/or fun InputManager/SIMBL apps that I've enjoyed, and I'm sure there are others out there as well. (Not to mention the ones I've tried and simply didn't enjoy or find useful.) But not to leave APE's out of the party... and again to demonstrate the similarity in the intent behind them, here are the APE's I currently have running in Tiger.

(Though not, of course, in Leopard — envision smoldering anger here, since the same thing happened in May 2005 when Tiger came out. I'm sympathetic to Unsanity and hugely appreciative — in dollars as well as pleasure — of the work Unsanity's engineers have done with their fine products. However, they always seem to be the last developers to get their products ready for a new OS release. Since I actually was in the developer program this year and got all the seeds, it's not clear to me why that had to be the case. My suspicion is that they suffered a bad surprise in some earlier OS update and now have a policy of ignoring everything but the final release. Silly, when you think about it, since 10.5.0 will soon be followed by 10.5.1... Anyhoo... Here are the APEs I can't use right now but would like to. Not all are from Unsanity, of course.)

FruitMenu. A marvelously rich tool for customizing your Apple menu as well as your contextual menus. Plus it puts an icon in the menubar instead of the application name, and that's the most-asked question I get when I publish screenshots of my desktop. How did you do that?

MenuMaster. Despite Apple's improvement in the Keyboard Shortcuts preference pane, and despite many competing solutions that exist, I still find MenuMaster to be the easiest and most reliable way to add keyboard shortcuts to menu items in my applications.

WindowShade. Yep, it's cool. Why hasn't Apple taken Unsanity's lead and brought this one back? WindowShade adds a number of other great ideas to the concept as well, including one of my favorites: Customizing your window shadows.

ShapeShifter. Nobody's ever made money from building themes for Mac OS X, but ShapeShifter and its sidekick, ThemePark (now free), have certainly provided a rich playground for us design-control freaks out there. (And we know who we are!) Not to mention all the time wasted and visual pleasure derived from this activity by Mac users who download and install our themes. We don't hate Aqua, you know. We just think we can do better. 😊

WindowDragon. I **wrote a review of this one recently**, and I'm happy to see the developer has put out an update since then. WindowDragon is a great, free add-on that gives you more power over moving and resizing your windows. (*Note for developers: Source code available as well.*)

DesktopSweeper. This free APE is how I (used to) keep my desktop free of icons, except when I wanted to see them.

Slider. This freebie just does a cool visual trick with your windows: It basically animates them in and animates them out, giving you some control over how much effect you want.

ICeCoffEE. This great APE does many useful tricks, but my favorite is letting you launch a URL by Cmd-clicking it, even if the URL is not formed as a hyperlink. It's also useful for managing your application services. It's one of the first things I'll install once Unsanity releases a Leopard-compatible Application Enhancer.

Smart Scroll X. Here's another fine shareware APE **I reviewed and recommended last year.** Once you get used to whizzing through documents and web pages with this tool's "Super Wheel" feature, you'll not want to install Mac OS X without it. Unfortunately, if you're on Leopard, you'll have to wait a little while yet. The developer promises a Leopard-compatible version on November 3.

Of course, there are many more "haxies" that are available for Unsanity's APE framework, including quite a few from Unsanity itself. Taken together, the universe of useful "system enhancements" is quite large, and it would be even larger if there wasn't so much fear-mongering about them.

It's a complicated issue, because if I'm a software developer trying to help a customer troubleshoot a problem that appears to arise from my application, it's tempting to blame the system enhancers she has installed instead of looking at my own code. On the other hand, it might very well **be** the system enhancer that's causing the problem.

Certainly, a lot of finger-pointing does no one any good. What's needed are better logs and crash reports. Unsanity's tried to help out there with its – you guessed it! – InputManager bundle, **Smart Crash Reports.** Unsanity has done the whole developer company a huge service with this effort, but adoption requires that we get our minds around the idea that InputManagers can be **good** for you! Despite that resistance, Unsanity now has 300 developers signed up for using the reports, which come with an amazing web interface. If Apple and more mainstream developers would adopt something like Smart Crash Reports, it would be easier for developers to pinpoint software problems. No more finger pointing! One of the Unsanity developers published a long (a *very* long) **article on this whole subject** on the company's blog last year... well worth the read.

So that's it... I've been sick of the bad press InputManagers, SIMBL plugins, and APEs have gotten for a long time now, and that discussion on the Unsanity website the other day kind of set me off. Good to get it all written down, and I hope somebody else finds it useful, or at least interesting!

And by all means, if you know of a great system enhancement that's not listed here, add a note in the comments below. When I have time, I'd like to document all the System Preferences and Contextual Menu Items that I use as well, but that would double the length of this article, and I'm frankly now out of time! Back to coding **Crystal Clear Interface**...

Comments on this article can be posted at –
<http://www.musingsfrommars.org/>



The Northern Spy

The Spy's Case Files

By Rick Sutcliffe

Technology News and Views Since 1983

The Spy's Case Files

December 2007

The case of the missing economy

heats up by the month (or cools off, depending on your choice of metaphor). Canada's southern neighbour faces (and it shares some of these to an extent) uncontrolled fiscal deficits, paying for expensive foreign adventures with no prospect of return on investment, a failed housing market, massive illiquidity of the resulting bad paper, increasingly scarce, hard to get, and expensive oil, huge infrastructure and social deficits, pollution problems requiring staggering investments and lifestyle changes, interest rates that can neither go up nor down without making something worse, gargantuan trade deficits, a failing drug war, loss of international confidence in the once mighty yankeebuck, religious-based hostility from a sizeable fraction of the world's population, and the total lack of political will among politicians of any stripe to do anything about the problems. One must therefore timidly enquire how the high-tech economy might be affected in the face of deepening recession.

On the one hand, government and business will become reluctant to make capital (equipment) purchases, and this will surely hit the traditional PC market numbers very hard. On the other, tough times force sharper cost-benefit analysis, and this could push both sectors toward cheaper, more reliable, and more easily-maintained Macintosh systems and away from resource-costly PCs. Score a Pyrrhic double win for Apple--modest improvements in sales to big-number buyers even while the overall market shrinks, perhaps dramatically.

What about on the household front? An economy that cannot afford its once-darling (and frequently deceptive) junk mortgages is hardly fruitful ground for marketing high-tech toys. In the short term, the negative press and faltering economy should to lower retailers' expectations for the usual year-end buying season. (It's not really "Christmas"--that's something else.)

And yet, as in any recession, the poor will get poorer and the rich will at least hold their own in relative terms over the longer haul. Thus, goods with the reputation (real or only perceived) as high-quality, even if priced accordingly, will not suffer as much as lower priced and lower quality items. This too could shift relative market share to Apple, though even they ought to prepare for absolute numbers to decline. After all, this economic setback will last more than just a few months.

Given that Apple's computer sales are only beginning to cash in on the mindshare gained from the iPhone and iPod and you have a three-pronged reason to believe the net result will be much sharper increases in overall market share (of a possibly diminishing total) than previously forecast.

A similar pushme-pullyou is already taking place in the equity markets. Perceptions of a coming slowdown have punished high tech stocks, including Apple's. The Spy isn't planning on buying any equities just now, but thinks it reasonable to expect their shares will do better relative to the rest of the market over the medium term, for it is one of the few companies that retain a technological glow in the face of a bleak overall market. (Colour them steady to up in a sea of declining prices.)

Expect currency markets to become ever more important in the short to medium term, as world trade forces force the greenback to a more realistic level, and other countries shift their reserves to more stable (better managed) currencies. This makes U.S.-manufactured items cheaper elsewhere (boosting exports), and goods from Asia, South America, and Europe more expensive in the United States, gradually improving the trade balance, but at the expense of American standards of living. Given that most technology items are already manufactured in Third World countries, the effect on them may be more neutral than on others.

Every manufacturing sector sports well-managed and nimble companies able to adapt to the new economic realities, to do more than merely survive. However, there will be many casualties, and a goodly number will be in high-tech, where only insatiable consumerism has kept some enterprises afloat in the face of bad management and worse decisions. At least we should be spared the spectacle of quite so many outfits preying on the rest by suing over phoney patents. They will be too busy crafting survival plans.

The case of the emerging eBook reader

Amazon has apparently decided to try a little vertical integration of its own in the eBook market, with its much-leaked "Kindle" reader now being officially released.

There's apparently a lot to like here. ("Apparently", because the Spy is not an early adopter of many products.) The device uses eInk technology, so the screen should be very readable. It also uses their "whispernet" via Sprint's EVDO cellphone network to access content, (including blogs, newspapers, and magazines) which is a big plus, and makes the device not so much a reader as content terminal, in both the viewing and vending sense. It appears to offer respectable storage (200 books claimed), an ergonomic size, and light weight--all in the hopes of duplicating or bettering the reading experience offered by dead tree books.

On the other hand, there is also much to indicate that though the device may kindle (sic) a revolution, it does not itself constitute one. First, even by Apple's control freak standards, this is a closed platform. You access (and pay for) only what Amazon says you can, and at the moment, that means the traditional publishers who've never before been friends of the eBook. There's no indication anyone else will be invited to the party. Surely the number of titles will grow, but there is no indication the smaller publishers who built and are the mainstay the eBook industry will be allowed to benefit. The very fact that Amazon partnered first with the big boys to the exclusion of the little girls bodes ill for both their platform and the industry.

Second, from pictures alone, the design does not appear either inspired or practical. The page turning bars are on the sides, yet the bottom sports a substantial keyboard, presumably for entering credit card information and book titles. Without trying one, this appears awkward.

Third, there's nothing in the pricing model for either the existing eBook industry or its consumers to get very excited about. A price range from \$6.50 to \$9.99 per book might excite the large publishing houses who can get incremental sales on their paper products at next to no cost, but it's too high to compete directly with the existing market--high enough that the Spy suspects the model serves primarily to boost its own profits by spreading out the connectivity costs over expected purchases.

Fourth, and back to the closed platform issue, Kindle uses a variant of the Mobipocket format, but one that is unique to Kindle, so not even existing Mobipocket formatted eBooks work. Amazon has ironclad control over files. The Spy suspects that hackers will find a way for Kindles to use other sites and content than that blessed by Amazon, but heartily wishes this whole proprietary approach to content would go away. That's what killed the Rocket reader, and it will kill this too, if either someone finds a better way or the hackers get theirs.

The Spy has believed all along that the electronic book reader will eventually replace industrial age books. However reluctant Apple may be to get into the business, its designers and marketers could readily trump this attempt. He could himself, and he makes no pretensions of being either.

Locate the keyboard in a drawer or on a touch screen, and put page turning buttons on the bottom sides or underneath. Use a better case design. Dedicate the entire top surface to reading when not actually ordering or creating bookmarks. Price out-of-copyright books at ninety-nine cents, and sell current releases for \$4.99, with others in between. Use no DRM whatsoever. Let the user put her own content on the device. Let anyone sell any content they want for it. Allow access to all sites (full browser). Include at least a PDA and possibly a phone. Make pocket and tablet versions. Run it on Mac OS. Sell the physical product starting at \$200. 'Nuff said?

Whether iSteve cares enough about this market to bother is quite another question, but the Spy would be greatly disappointed if this is the best anyone can do, as Kindle is little much more than the old Rocket book with more readability and titles, but still hampered by the same closed-system mentality. Still, it looks like a partial step in the right direction.

The case of the missing Googlephone

proved the Spy part right and part wrong in his prescient prognostications last month--right in that there is no Googlephone, but only a specified platform which manufacturers can build to run Google specified software, and wrong in that the iPhone isn't part of the picture. Perhaps Apple and Google have yet other fish to fry.

The case of the unlocked StevePhone

T-Mobile, Deutsche Telecom's wireless division, has given up contesting court orders requiring it to make iPhones available unlocked so they can be used on rival German networks. True, such phones will be two-and-a-half times as costly, but who can doubt this is the precedent for North American law, whenever the first such case reaches the courts here?

The case of the incremented versions

ConfigServer Firewall has reached version 2.92 with some minor fixes and improvements. If you run a server, this is a must have product from WayToTheWeb to help lock down your machine. As in times past, the Spy highly recommends their products and services to harden your server (and mail system). The black hats knock on his door thousands of times a day, and it's good to have confidence that it won't swing open very easily.

Nisus Writer Pro has been bumped to 1.0.2 for Leopard compatibility. The express version has also been incrementally updated to 3.0.1. No new features to speak of, though. The Spy resignedly awaits a file merger/inserter, and useable invisible text for web markup.

A useful tip has come his way on the former front, however. Apple's Pages (if one has it) can merge multiple rtf files. Just open the first in the sequence, place the cursor where the insert is to take place (at the end for merging in multiple chapters) and use Insert-Choose, then multiply select the files to be added at that point. They will be incorporated in the desired sequence. This feature alone is almost enough to tempt him to switch to the innovative, albeit underpowered Apple product.

The case of the purloined literary idea

iHow quickly science fiction turns into science fact. The Spy used the idea of inducing meiosis in skin cells as an incidental plot element in one of his novels just a few years ago. Today, he notes a news item that stem cells have been produced from skin. His fictional feat (which he simply assumed would be possible) comes a step closer--at least, cloning from skin cells should be very nearly possible, making the whole questionable practice of using human embryos for stem cell research moot, to the great relief of many. Just a matter of time, folks.

Hey. Perhaps Amazon, Apple, Fictionwise, Google, and other players will get together to realize another of his fictional elements--the Personal Intelligence Enhancement Appliance (PIEA). Combine an eInk reader with PDA and phone, a few very personal interface enhancements like ear speakers, eye cameras and throat mikes, and you'd be pretty close to what his Hibernians use on a daily basis as portable MTs (Metalibrary Terminals).

--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>

ConfigServerFirewall: <http://www.configserver.com/>

NisusWriter: <http://www.nisus.com/>

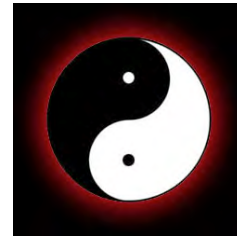
Skin cells to Stem Cells: <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory?id=3891061>

Amazon's Kindle: <http://www.amazon.com/Amazon-com-kindle/dp/B000FI73MA>

Rants, Raves and Revelations

Doc's Leopard-Ready Shareware Fav's and Other Systems Upgrade Issues

By Harry {doc} Babad © 2007



Over the last year or so, I've shared my non-mainstream products, freeware or shareware with you. Well, it's almost Leopard time in doc's home and I decided to check on what works and what I'll either have to replace or perhaps wait on. There are in my mind three kinds of items I need to at least checkout, for compatibility, if not worry about.

- My mainstream productivity software – the stuff I use to get my work done and to communicate with the outside world.
- Other less well know applications that I've harnessed to support my writing and volunteer efforts, products that sore much information that I'd rather not loose.
- Finally there are all the gems that I share with you in my reviews, at those that are keepers, that make my computing efforts easier by avoiding extra keyboarding or provide shortcuts to navigate my hard drive or save a mouse click or three when writing.

As was noted in, Joe Kissell's eBook, *Take Control of Upgrading to Leopard* that I review later in this issue, as part of the upgrade process you need to cleanup your Mac by either deleting unused software or updating all third party software. Hey, no one said if you're a software junkie as I am, that it would be easy. But being careful and thorough beats the @#\$\$&*# out of crashing your newly installed operating system.



Joe notes "Every major upgrade to Mac OS X results in software compatibility problems, where some applications work poorly or don't launch at all. Even in the best cases, most of us will have to update a few applications to get them to work correctly under Leopard.

If history is any indication, some incompatible applications won't be updated right away, and a few might never be. But many developers work hard to ensure that their software is ready for each new version of Mac OS X, and "Leopard-compatible" software updates have already been appearing for months." Remember you checking must include "preference panes, menu extras, plug-ins, Dashboard widgets, and other system enhancements." Also to be safe, and leave no clutter, deinstall unneeded items with a uninstaller utility such as *AppZapper* or *CleanApp*, both of which we've reviewed.

Details – Details – Details

When dealing with a utility designed to save me computing effort, or my universal spelling checker and auto text expander, my menu based easy web access tool, or even the wonderful haxies from Unsanity, I have ways to work around the absence of a Leopard compatible product. Although I use these tools every day, I can, with clenched teeth, work around them.

However, were my 21 MB and growing snippets database broken, I'd be destitute or Leopard-less. I use DEVONthink Pro to collect info for my articles and other obscure but important information. Other software in this category include the drivers for my Dymo Label Writer drivers and label databases, PandoCalendar, HP ScanJet scanner software, ReadIris OCR Software, and my graphics software. The I'd be desperate category also includes my mainstream powerhouse applications (e.g., MS Word, FileMaker Pro, Acrobat Pro, Eudora (my email client) and Roxio's Toast.)



Checking for Leopard Compatibility —

- For main steam applications the folks at MacInTouch have provided readers with a good first start. Checkout <http://www.macintouch.com/leopard/compat.html>
- There are also the items at TidBits <http://db.tidbits.com/article/9281>.
- The Mac:Rumors:Guide site also contains a listing of applications not compatible with Leopard. http://guides.macrumors.com/List:Applications_Not-Compatible_with_Leopard
- MacInTouch also provides some detailed reader reports and fixes of Apple's software problems at <http://www.macintouch.com/readerreports/leopard/index.html/>.

If it's not on any easy to access list, Joe Kissell suggests, for each product you have installed, you check for updates. This can be done from within many software items or by checking the download sites such as Version Tracker or MacUpdate. If all else fails you can check the developer's website, some thin g alas that was mostly singularly unproductive. But that still leaves you with unanswered questions. For what's left, the ball is in your court. Write the developer who may or may not respond. Temporarily delete the software you are uncertain about, or take you chances. These guidelines are true no mater which method you use to install Leopard on your existing hard drive, since an installation of Leopard on you system that contains only Apple software is pretty sterile and limiting.

What Have I Checked and Learned

The table that follows only contains information about the products I love, use and have perhaps convinces some of you to use. If you adopted other products I've reviewed, or others found on the shareware-software update sites, you're on your own... use the methods described above for checking or play Russian roulette.

If a software tool you prefer is not on either those item listed on the links previously provided or my table, do your homework. Alternatively after you migrate to Leopard, and everything else is stable, backup your drive, making sure it is a bootable volume. Then install and test that product you lust for.

Unless otherwise stated, I am using the latest version of a product, downloaded from a vendor site or from MacUpdate.

| Product Name | Function | Status | Link |
|---|---------------------------|--|--|
| Acrobat Pro | PDF Tool | January, Alas | www.adobe.com/support/products/pdfs/leopardsupport.pdf |
| Adobe Photoshop Elements 4 | Image | No Support Announced | www.adobe.com/support/products/pdfs/leopardsupport.pdf |
| AppleWorks | Office Suite | Abandoned for iWork & Bento | www.apple.com/support/appleworks/ |
| Beholder 3 | Graphics Browser | Unknown Status | www.mesadynamics.com/ |
| CleanApp Or AppZapper | Application Deletion | Unknown Status Mostly Compatible | www.synium.de/products/index.html www.appzapper.com |
| DEVON Products •DEVONthink •DEVONnote •EasyFind •DEVONagent •XMenu | Productivity tools | Posted Versions Leopard Ready | www.devon-technologies.com/ |
| Disclabel | Media Labels | Leopard Ready | www.smileonmymac.com/Disclabel/ |
| DiskTracker | Catalog your media | Unknown Status | www.portents.com/disktracker/ |
| FileMaker Pro 9 | Database | Patch Posted, More to Come | www.filemaker.com/ |
| GraphicConverter 6 | Graphics Tool | Leopard Ready | www.lemkesoft.com/ |
| I.R.I.S. for OCR •Read Iris Pro 11 •Iris Card 3 | OCR and Card OCR software | Leopard Ready | www.irislink.com |
| iCan | Menu-based trash tool | Likely broken, no updates since August 2004 | www.kanzu.com/index.html |
| HoudahSpot | Spotlight Front End | Leopard Only (2.0.1) | http://www.houdah.com/houdahSpot/ |

| Product Name | Function | Status | Link |
|--|--|----------------------------------|--|
| ICeCoffEE | Linking Tool | Leopard Ready | http://web.sabi.net/nriley/software/ |
| MS Word 2004 | Word Processing | Leopard Ready | /www.microsoft.com/mac/ |
| Opal Outliner 1 | Outliner | Unknown Status | http://a-sharp.com/opal/opal |
| PandoCalendar | Calendar | Leopard Ready | www.PandaCorner.com/ |
| PopChar | Font Tool | Leopard Ready | www.macility.com/ |
| Print Shop | Greeting card & CD covers | Leopard Ready | www.mackiev.com/print_shop.html/ |
| <u>Printfolio Suite</u> • Disc Cover • Mail Factory • Business Card Composer • Swift Publisher | Graphics tools and Other Productivity | Posted Versions Leopard Ready | www.belightsoft.com/main.php |
| shadowClipboard | Clipboard Tool | Leopard Ready | www.stupidfish23.com/. |
| shadowGoogle Or iSeek | Best menu-based Internet access tools I've found | Posted Versions Leopard Ready | www.stupidfish23.com/shadowgoogle/ www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/iseek/ |
| Spell Catcher 10 | Universal Spell Checker | Mostly, Read the FAQ | www.rainmakerinc.com/products/spel/catcherx/ |
| ToDo X | ToDo List | Believed Compatible | www.nomicro.com/ |
| Unsanity Products | System Haxies | Being Updated | www.unsanity.com |

SpinTips

Distribution and Retail for the Mac Developer

By Ed Prasek

Most every developer with products in retail has a love-hate relationship with the retail industry. On one hand, their products are in front of millions of potential customers on a daily basis, and the opportunity to make a ton of money is massive. On the other, retail is no place for the risk-averse or faint-of-heart. For as rewarding as retail can be, it can also be cruel, selfish, and disloyal.

Still, it's the dream of most Mac developers: Create some fantastic products that will turn the Mac world on its head, and then have leading retailers falling over themselves to carry those products in stores around the world. But before all this goodness comes to fruition, what's involved with getting your products ready for retail? How do you get them into distribution? What are the costs? How do you avoid the downfalls and mistakes of the retail marketplace? And more than anything, how do you make the retail channel work for you and your products? These are a few of the issues you'll need to know about and prepare for *before* setting your sights on retail. Below, in no particular order of importance, are ten helpful hints and tips to get you pointed in the right direction.



If your company and products are new to retail, don't plan on major distributors picking you up right out of the gate. Very rarely will major tier one distributors pick up a company or product that doesn't have a proven retail sales history. There's too much risk involved. Rather, you're better off seeking out the services of a good tier two distributor or a distribution aggregator. Tier two distributors and distribution aggregators are sort of akin to professional baseball's minor leagues. It's where companies and products reside while they mature, season, and build a successful track record. The difference between tier two distributors and distribution aggregators is that tier two distributors handle all the distribution themselves ... retailers actually order product from them. Distribution aggregators, on the other hand, don't directly distribute any products to retailers, but rather service the distributors (including major tier one distributors). The distribution aggregator assumes the risk by carrying unproven products. Once a product proves itself in the retail environment, then tier one distributors will consider it for inclusion in their product mix, but not before. It's like a player being

called from the minor leagues up to the majors.

2

Getting into distribution requires far more than just a great product. It also requires a strong, well-orchestrated marketing plan. Believe me, every distributor, regardless of where they are in the retail ecosystem, will want to see your marketing plan to ensure you intend to effectively and consistently market your products. After all, customers don't buy products they don't know about or think they need ... and distributors don't want to deal with products that collect dust. Getting your products into retail doesn't mean your work is over; it actually means it's just begun.

3

Realize that in the Mac marketplace, Apple's retail stores are a breed apart. No other Mac retailer performs like Apple's retail stores. That's because Apple's retail stores attract an almost 100% active and qualified audience. There's no doubt about it, customers that come to Apple's retail stores are, to a large degree, already predisposed to buying something. They're either already Mac users and are coming to the store to pick something up for their beloved machine; or they've decided to switch platforms, and they've come to the store to buy their first Mac (and some goodies along with it); or they've come to the store to be convinced to switch to the Mac. Whatever the case may be, Apple retail store customers are far more active and qualified than customers at pretty much any other retailer that sells Macs and Mac products. Why is this important? Because the way products perform in Apple retail stores is not a good indication of the way those very same products will perform at any other retailer in the Mac marketplace. If you ever have your products carried in Apple's retail stores, keep this in mind when planning production runs, inventory management, product end-of-life strategies, etc.

4

Plan to give up a healthy chunk of your product's retail price to the channel ("the channel" is defined as distributors, aggregators, retailers, and any other entity involved in the process of getting a product from the developer and into the hands of customers). How big of a chunk, you ask? Well, here's a hypothetical situation. Let's say you have a product that retails for \$50. The retailer is going to buy it from the distributor for, say, \$30 (that's 40 points, and gives the retailer a \$20 profit margin). The distributor, who also has to make money, buys the product directly from you for, we'll say, \$21 (so he or she is making \$9 profit). And what's left is your gross take ... in this case \$21. Now here's where things get really interesting: If you have a product that catches on and becomes a huge market success, the channel will want an even bigger slice of the action. Where you were once giving up, say, 30 or 40 points to a major retailer, that very same retailer may all of the sudden require 40 or 50 points if you want them to continue carrying your product. Such is life in retail. This isn't so much a hint or a tip, but rather something

you need to be cognizant of right out of the gate.

5

Realize that entering retail immediately means the scope and size of your business changes, so plan accordingly. For example, the very first order you get from your distributor can easily eclipse, many times over, the total number of units you were selling directly from your website during an entire year. And when that order comes in, you only have a small window of time to fulfill it and get the product to the distributor. That means you must plan *BEFOREHAND* for some of the hidden elements of distribution and retail, including packaging, product production, shipping, product assembly, inventory management, production scheduling, etc. And, of course, you also have to plan for all the associated costs that come along for the ride. Oh, and keep in mind it'll be a few months before you see any revenue from the first order, so make sure you have enough capital to keep chugging along until revenues starts coming in.

6

Pay careful attention when setting your product's retail price. There are a few reasons at play here, all of which are important. For starters, customer psychology is forever at work; a product that's priced too inexpensively is often considered cheap and a potential waste of money, and therefore passed over. On the other hand, price your product too high, especially if it's a horizontal consumer product, and customers will set unrealistic expectations of the value and performance they should receive for their money. Also, read and re-read item #4 above ... you have to make sure that whatever retail price you establish leaves you with a satisfactory revenue stream after the distributor(s) and retailers take their cuts, and you've paid all your production costs. Visit your local Mac retailers and analyze the prices of the products they carry, especially your competitor's prices. In the end, you want to settle on a price that generates maximum revenue for you, while at the same time leaving customers with the feeling that the price is right for the level of value and performance they expect your product to deliver. That's a pricing strategy that's often referred to as "sweet spot" pricing ... and it's often more an art than a science, I assure you.

7

Upon getting a product into distribution and retail, there's no guarantee it'll stay there. Remember, retailers have a very limited amount of shelf space with which to work. As such, products that occupy that shelf space must perform by consistently generating revenue. From a retailer's point of view, a product that sits on a shelf collecting dust is just like a tenant that doesn't pay his rent. As a result, if your product doesn't perform, retailers will cease to carry it. And if retailers don't want it, distributors don't want it either, which means they'll drop it. The best way to combat such an unsavory situation is to provide the marketplace with a really good product that people

will want, and then market the living daylight out of it so people both know about it and feel it's a product they must have.

8

Once you get your products into retail, be mindful of the way you engage in direct sales. You don't want to cannibalize your own retail efforts ... which will make for some very unhappy distributors and retailers. Of course, you can sell directly from your website, but don't compete with retailers by undercutting their pricing. Rather, if you're going to engage in direct sales, sell your product at its full retail price, or even a little higher. That way, you don't upset the channel and the retailers upon which you depend to reach very large audiences.

9

Rarely can you succeed in the retail market based solely on a single product. You need a variety of products, at least two or three, that provide you diversification and minimize your retail exposure risks. It's akin to investment diversification: You wouldn't put all your investment monies into a single stock, right? Rather, you'd spread the money around to maximize your investment growth potential, while at the same time minimizing your investment risk. And so it goes with a retail product mix. In fact, few distributors will consider picking up a developer with only a single product. There is simply too much risk involved, for both the developer and distributor, with "putting all your eggs in one basket."

10

Maybe you've decided retail isn't for you. Or maybe you don't have the capital needed to take a serious run at retail. Or perhaps you haven't been successful with distribution or retail in the past. Whatever the case may be, don't throw in the towel. There are many alternatives that can still have your products on retail shelves. For example, you can consider shopping your product around to another developer who already has established distribution and a strong retail presence. Such a developer may be interested in acting as publisher for your product, especially if it enhances his or her product line. Or, you might decide to sell the rights to your product to another developer who will then bring it to market under his or her name. Or, even though it's getting more and more difficult to do these days, you can establish a handful of direct relationships with smaller retailers who believe in your products and their potential, completely bypassing distribution in the process. Remember the old adage: Where there's a will, there's a way.

Spin Studio Can Take Care Of It At Spin Studio, we're Mac industry experts and highly experienced at helping developers navigate these issues and much, much more -- bring us in to assist with your strategic business and marketing needs. Spin Studio applies its highly creative and innovative experience in marketing, business management, design, product development, and more, to successfully deliver unparalleled results to both developers and companies within the Mac industry, as well as assist clients with the creation, launch, and management of exciting new products. Contact us today to discuss how we can assist with your strategic marketing and business needs.



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View from the Ivory Tower

Leopard Experiences and a desire for “An OS That Just Works”™

By Ted Bade

As the year comes to a close and I reflect back on what has happened in the world of technology and specifically with Apple, I am amazed by all that has happened. It has been a great year for Apple and a fun year technology-wise, the iPhone, the iPod Touch, and greener Apples to mention some highlights.

This is a very unusual time for Apple and Apple fans. We are seeing Apple providing the world with many electronic devices, such as the iPhone and the unbelievably popular iPod. And while a lot of Apple's resources have been placed on these devices and I feared that the computer aspect of Apple would fade, it really hasn't. They continue to release updated Macs, making them more environmentally friendly, and did manage to release Mac OS X 10.5 in the month promised.

But not everything is well in the world of Apple. Bringing these electronic devices to the world has spread Apple engineers thin. There are bigger holes in their products than before. The majority of this commentary this month is concerning my many issues with Leopard and we all have heard about various issues centered on the new iPhones and late generation iPods.

I hope Apple and specifically Steve Jobs stands back and takes a look at this. Apple needs to get back to its core business, that of producing almost flawless products that amaze the consumer, products that consistently work well.

That being said, let me say that as a Mac user, I am still very happy with Apple. I love my machines and enjoy using them. While I am still “iffy” about Leopard, I am very pleased with Tiger and have been extremely satisfied with how it operates. As for my iPods, I wouldn't be happy without them. The performance is a manner consistent with Apple, flawless.

Now, let me complain about Leopard...

I was quite excited about many of the new features that were to be released with Mac OS 10.5, Leopard. While some of these features are still cool, Leopard is probably the buggiest of Mac OS X released, ever. Coming from me, a devout Mac fan, this is saying a lot ☺.

With past releases, including the first public beta of Mac OS X, I only ran into one or two issues which I felt needed to be reported (Using Apple's Feedback website). Truly, the original beta release had a number of issues, but they were expected and could be lived with, since we anticipated the release of future versions which would (and did) fix them.

The along comes 10.5. The drums roll and the fanfare plays. Steve Jobs jumps on the stage not once, but twice before and has this OS released. After the smoke settles, I feel that Apple has created more problems with this version than it fixed. IMHO, the glitz and glamor has finally taken its toll. Too much "wow factor" and eye candy, and not enough inherent stability. Apple, lets get back to our core, an OS that just works.

As I write this, I wonder if any of my issues are due to the fact that I installed this new OS on my aging G5 tower. However, I doubt all of the issues are due to that. Monitoring the Internet, as I always do, I hear about other people having the problems I have had. So I don't think it is just me. Truly, there are always big stories about how the installation went wrong. This has been the same for every OS released, but I usually avoid these pitfalls, perhaps I am lucky or perhaps I just follow the directions ☺

While most of the issues I discovered are minor things, they are the type of issues one expects Apple testers would have resolved long before final release. Let us not forget to mention that many little things eventually add up. Mac OS X is a powerful and very mature system, let us hope that these issues aren't signs of senility.

Here is my list:

1. The Keychain lost the file containing all my passwords. The first time I went to a web site that needed a keychain item, I was told that my keychain file couldn't be found. Since I did an archive and install, I hoped it was in the "old system folder". But alas, it wasn't. Luckily I had made thorough backups and had a library folder backed up hours before the upgrade, so I moved the missing file over. A simple fix, but what went wrong with the previous system folder routine? Since thing worked fine in the last major upgrade one would expect them to work this time. Does this mean none of the beta testers used the keychain utility?
2. The Dashboard keyboard shortcut was gone when I first tried it, and wouldn't stay after I changed it with the preference controls. After about the third or fourth time, I returned the preference to the normal F12 default where it finally took. I might have to take the heat on this one. Perhaps the preference file for this pane was corrupt when the upgrade brought it over. I have no idea on this one.
3. The secure empty trash can feature has an issue. If you use it, it will grind through most of the files in the can, but when it gets to the last 4 to 6 items, it freezes and nothing more happens, although the deleting window stays on the screen. (Clicking the "cancel button has no effect) The only way I have found to get it to stop is to relaunch the Finder. Now this isn't a big issue, since I don't often have any documents I need to destroy in this fashion. But it is really annoying when one accidentally makes the wrong selection then learns the only way out is to relaunch the Finder. I tried this several time to be sure it wasn't just a fluke. This is a big one. Apple of the best security fame has managed to break something I am sure is a real benefit to anyone who works with sensitive information. Could you imagine how frustrating it would be if one needed to do a secure empty trash several times a day only to discovered that you have to relaunch the Finder every time? And what happens to those last few files? Are they destroyed? Are they simply trashed like regular emptying? Are they lost somewhere on the computer where prying eyes might discover them if they care to search?

4. Sometimes, when I am playing on the Internet, I find something that intrigues me, like a link to another site. What I have done in the past is to copy the link, open a new tab in Safari, paste the URL into it, then go back to what I was doing. Sometimes I then might go back to the first page to copy the name of a particular item I was interested in or some other piece of information. With the new version of Safari, when you copy the next piece of information into the clipboard, the URL placed in the new Safari tab disappears. I guess if I just went to the URL I pasted rather than waiting, this wouldn't be an issue. But, why is it an issue at all?

5. I keep folders I use regularly on the Dock for easy access. In the past the folder would show a generic icon or the icon one gave to the folder in the Finder. With 10.5 the folder now displays the icon of the alphabetically first object within it. This is weird, since using interesting folder icons is a great visual clue for finding the right folder fast. Now my Application folder, which has that great application icon Apple created, shows the icon of AOL or whatever other application alphabetically before it that is in the Application folder. I found a really nice Star Trek related folder icon that I use for the folder I keep my games in. On my 10.5 dock it now displays the icon for the game Big Kahuna Reef instead. But this feature did help me with something. The folder I keep Internet related applications in somehow had a vacation image of a steam train dropped in it. So this folder shows up as an image of a steam train! I guess we can say this might be a feature for locating missing files that don't belong, providing their names are alphabetically before any other. But I choose to think of it as a bug.

6. Speaking of the new Dock features, the feature that lets you click to either fan out or show a grid of items within the folder is more problems than the eye candy is worth. First of all the fan display works only for a few items, when you have a folder full of stuff, you always get the grid. However, if there are more items than the grid can show, you get a final icon that says something like "and 20 more items". You can't see them without opening the entire folder onto the Finder.

Previously, you would see a list of items in the folder and could move up and down the ENTIRE list. If there were more than would fit on your display, the list could be scrolled down and then back up again as needed. If you knew the item you wanted to access had a name that began with "U", you could type a "u" and the cursor would jump to the first item with that letter. This was a great way to jump to the "Utilities" folder inside the "Application" folder. Typing a letter and jumping to an item trick seems to work on occasion in 10.5, but not always. But it won't jump to the first item that is represented by "and 20 more items". Talk about taking steps backwards. Here is a glorious example of how eye candy gets in the way of functionality. I hope somebody writes a utility called "Tiger dock folders" or "eye candy killer"!

7. I should also mention that in the previous version, if the item you selected from the docked folder list was a folder, and you moused over it, a submenu would open, showing its contents. Not so with Leopard. When you want something inside the folder, you select the folder which opens in the Finder, then you have to select the item you want to access, then go back to the Finder to close the window you really didn't want opened anyway. Hmmm, let's take a process that requires one step and see how many steps we can add to it. Here is one "feature" that gets me screaming, **Apple, dump the crappy eye candy and get back to the ease of use you are known for! Let's get back to the core business, an OS that just works!**

8. Mr. Jobs touted how easy it was to access other Macs on a local network with the new Finder. I found the process added some confusion. I have all the Macs in my house networked together. Normally when I am moving a file to another machine, I put the item on the desktop so they have half a chance of being found. I don't think anyone in my home wants to dig down to a "public" folder to see if I put something new there. But with Leopard, the default view shows the public folders only. Getting access as the account holder is a bit tricky.

With Tiger, one clicked on the machine of interest and selected to log on as either a "Guest" or with an account name. To makes things really easy, I could use the Keychain application to automatically insert my login information. Then in an instant, I had access to the desktop.

Leopard really, *really* wants me to use the public folders. When I look at the machines on the network, I see all the public folders. It isn't immediately obvious how to access the machine and log onto the master account. It can be done, but I stumbled the first couple of times looking for a way to do it. Again, here is a case of taking something that works and complicating it. Sure it is easier to access the public folders on another's machine this way. Sure, they all automatically show up in the network window. However, in my small world, this isn't something that is ever done.

I also discovered that Leopard isn't quick to notice when new machines come onto the network. When I need to transfer a file I am working on from or to my PowerBook, I plug in to my network and do the transfer. Well, that's how it went with Tiger. With Leopard, I see the computers that are on the network when I started the machine, but I don't see the PowerBook popup when I plug it in. Rather than wait, it was easier to use Tiger on the PowerBook to look for computers on the network and transfer the file that way. Ok, the Leopard interface looks nicer, but looks aren't everything. I want functionality! Need I say again, Apple, let's get back to the core product, an OS that just works!

9. I personally don't like how the new Dock shows that an application is running. The Dock is trying to be a table, a three dimensional object. Instead of having an easy-to-see and recognizable black triangle (which is soooo last OS), we now get a very difficult to see light blue dot(?) under the application icon. Luckily for me, I recently added a 22" monitor to my Macintosh. With the old 17" monitor, I doubt I would be able to see this little faint little blue symbol. I find it difficult to see the difference between the blue running dot and the reflection of the icon. It's frustrating. This was such a simple piece of functionality, destroyed with eye candy!

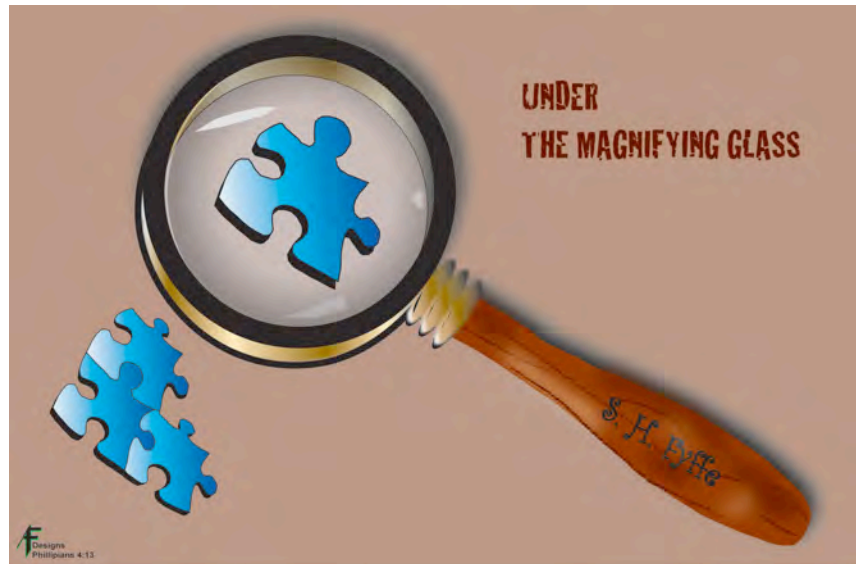
Well, there you have the things I sent Apple feedback about. I do hope they read my comments and make some changes. Each of them is a minor thing, not really a big deal. But this is the first version of Mac OS X that I actually sent this many pieces of feedback. I am really concerned about this. Has Apple become so enamored with its electronic toys that it is beginning to loose it's interface edge on the computer? Was Leopard released before it was ready because Mr. Jobs was concerned that people would be disappointed otherwise? I am not asking for perfection. I want the new version of Mac OS to be fun to learn about and try all the new features and not have to lament the loss of functionality.

My nine comments don't include other items that I have heard about over the Internet. Problems with iCal, Time Machine, and more related to parts of the OS I don't typically use. Come on Apple, let's get with the program! You won't continue pulling people to the Mac if they come and find that the Mac doesn't play as well as those electronic toys! Let's get back to the core business, an Operating System that just works!

Do I recommend that you buy and use Leopard? For the most part, yes. While I am unhappy with a number of small issues with it, overall it is movement forward. It is now completely 64 bit code, which means it should operate faster and take advantage of today's faster chips. It is still significantly better than any version of Windows, and performs consistently better as well. The main reason for my ranting here is to make a point. I don't want Apple to lose track of the most important reason why I use Macs, because they consistently perform well and are very intuitive to use.

Next month is MacWorld Expo. Who can imagine what fantastic things will be released at that event? New machines, new software, it's all very exciting. I hope you have a terrific winter holiday season, no matter what path you follow. Peace be with you all.

As always, keep on using your Mac!



Under the Magnifying Glass

Time to Realign our Paradigm Parasol

By Steven H. Fyffe

sfyffe@maccompanion.com

“There’s a naked tree, Grandma,” Jared said, while watching the fading leaves swirling around the park. Later, he saw a skeleton at the library left over from Halloween. “Look, Papa, a ‘keleton” ... take my body off and that’s what I look like”.

In “The Adventure of the Cardboard Box” Sherlock Holmes said, “We approached the case, you remember, with an absolutely blank mind, which is always an advantage. We had formed no theories. We were simply there to observe and to draw inferences from our observations.” (1)

Jared’s view of his world, much as Sherlock Holmes advocates, is from a unique perspective. Having not formed deep-seated theories, opinions, or prejudices, he often “calls it as he sees it” or as Art Linkletter said, “kids say the darnedest things.” Last Christmas, we gave Jared his first camera. When the photographer is only 41 inches tall, his pictures of his 4 foot 11 inch grandma take on an interesting perspective.

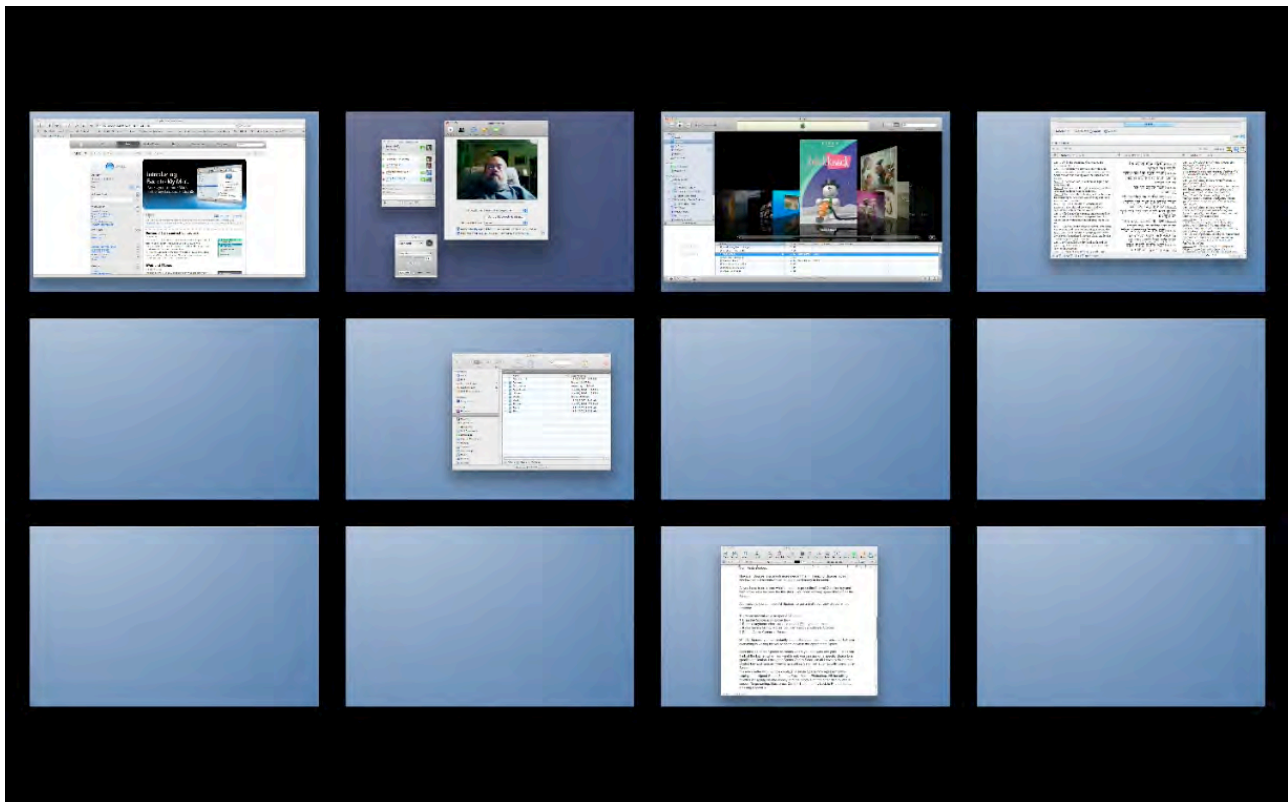
We may not be 41 inches tall, but it is important to remember that we all view our world from a certain perspective, even through tinted glasses. As we take each step forward down the cobble stone path of today’s journey, we formulate our own paradigm or way of thinking. Some call it their comfort zone. Having an “absolutely blank mind,” as the fictional detective advocated, may not be possible or even prudent for that matter. However, it is very important to understand that our personal paradigm may cloud or even blind us from the truth, if not taken into account. Thus, our way of thinking may slow or stop our progress.

A beach parasol is designed to give protection from the direct rays of the sun. However, if the parasol is not aligned correctly, we will burn. Therefore, the parasol must be realigned occasionally. Likewise, our Paradigm Parasol must be examined from time to time to make sure it is aligned correctly and to see where we stand in relationship to it.

It is time to step out of your comfort zone, to explore for the pure joy of exploration, and to discard the “if it is not broken, why fix it” attitude. Hop on board, because the train is moving on.

On Leopard

Apple has long been in the “Think Different” business. They are always challenging consumers to undergo a paradigm shift. On October 26th, they threw down the gauntlet. Leopard has arrived on the scene and it is time for a paradigm shift again. Time to realign our parasol. Join me as we discover the new cat. I’ll start with my favorite ...



SPACES

It is so simple and intuitive to use. One of my dear friends in our MUG pointed out that Spaces is similar to minimizing a window to the Dock. She is right. Minimizing hides our active windows, but we know right where to retrieve them when needed.

However, Spaces is so much more elegant than minimizing. Spaces hides windows on full screen virtual desktops, until ready to be used.

All you have to do to see what is hidden is press the Control Qualifier key and then the arrow keys become your thrusters. You zoom at warp speed through all the Spaces.

Alternatively, you can open All Spaces, to get a bird's eye view of your whole virtual universe.

There are several ways to have access to All Spaces:

1. Drag the Spaces icon from Applications folder to the dock.
2. Press a keyboard short cut (use default F8 or you can reset it).
3. If you have a Mighty Mouse, you can assign a button to Spaces.
4. Set an Active Corner to Spaces.

With All Spaces, you can instantly see all the quadrants of your universe & where everything is waiting for you to beam down to the appropriate Space.

Start thinking of Spaces as rooms where you can work and play. Just as you think of the kitchen when you want to eat, you can assign a specific Space to a specific application. I assigned Space #1 to Safari which will automatically open there. When I beam down to another quadrant of my universe, to perform another task, all I need to do is press Control key followed by number 1 key to instantly beam back to Space #1 to go surfing again.

Spaces really shine if you have multiple displays. A single Space now represents two displays. For example, I connect my MacBook Pro to my 32-inch HDTV and assign Space 8 to Photoshop. All the editing palettes will reside on the internal display and the photo is on the HDTV at full screen. While in the middle of my photo editing, all I need to do is press Control-1 to go to Safari for Internet surfing and then beam back to Photoshop by pressing Control-8.

TALK ABOUT A PARADIGM SHIFT I NEVER HAVE TO RESIZE or MINIMIZE or MOVE WINDOWS AROUND AGAIN

One caveat, you do need to do some preplanning of your Leopard trek.

Using System Preferences, I appointed applications which I may want to open in the same Space, like Address Book and Mail.

For applications which I want to use full screen, but don't expect to open at the same time, I can also assign to the same Space. For example, I assigned my video applications, iMovie HD, iMovie '08, and Final Cut Express, to Space #12.

For applications that I want to tag along, no matter where I beam to, I assigned to Every Space, such as iChat.

One of my friends, also assigned Finder to open in Every Space so his Finder windows stick with him throughout his virtual universe. For me, I wanted Finder windows to remain in the Space where I open them. I can always show All Spaces to see what "planet" they reside on and can easily drag to a different "sector," as I please. Spaces can be customized according to each individual's choice and needs.

In the same way I assigned Safari to Space #1 in the example above, you can treat Spaces like Rapid Dial on your cell phone. You can beam directly there by pressing Control and a number key. For example, you can assign Space 8 exclusively to iTunes.

You can also reserve a Space for an open Desktop, by not assigning any applications to it. I have reserved Space 9 for this purpose, available to play or work as needed.

Try out these discoveries for yourself and come back next month, as we experience more shifts in our personal Paradigms. Happy Leoparding.

Don't jump up and leave just yet. Did you try the guided discovery exercises from last month's column? (2) Here are the answers and comments ...

1. Pressing the Shift key, in the Finder drop down menu changes "Add to Sidebar" to "Add to Favorites".
2. By pressing a Qualifier key when setting up Exposé hot corners, you prevent accidental activation, but still have fast access without using keyboard shortcuts.
3. Shift-Command-C key opens a Finder window to show all attached volumes; Shift-Command-A opens the Application folder; and Shift-Command-U opens the Utility folder.
4. Of course the oldest Qualifier key still performs it's same function The Shift key while typing text, gives the old faithful Capital letters.



Take care. Happy exploring.

1. <http://www.bcpl.net/~lmoskowi/HolmesQuotes/q.detection.html>
2. <http://www.macompanion.com/macc/archives/November2007/Columns/UMG.htm>

Books

The Artist's Guide to GIMP Effects: Creative Techniques for Photographers, Artists, and Designers

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre



Author: Michael J. Hammel

Publisher: No Starch Press

<http://nostarch.com/frameset.php?startat=gimp>

Released: August 2007

Pages: 360

\$44.95 USD, \$44 CDN, £21 UK (Based on exchange rates)

ISBN-10: 1-59327-121-2

ISBN-13: 978-1-59327-153-4

Audience: Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Excellent, *Useful* effects. All skill levels covered. Easy step-by-step tutorials that will have you working like a pro.

Weaknesses: None (If you use GIMP.)

Introduction

The Artist's Guide to GIMP Effects shows you how to harness the GIMP's powerful features to produce professional-looking advertisements, impressive photographic effects, as well as logos and text effects. Author Michael J. Hammel, who has used the GIMP since its first public release, won't mince words or waste your time. His extensively illustrated, step-by-step tutorials are perfect for hands-on learning and experimentation.

In this book...

Although not an inexpensive manual at \$44.95 USD, I was immediately impressed with how much information is offered. As you may, or may not know, GIMP is short for GNU Image Manipulation Program. Basically, it is a free Adobe Photoshop type pixel pusher, and well worth trying before spending a lot of money on the branded product.



It is now on version 2.4.1 and multi-platform, however it's not the easiest application to install. Running GIMP on Mac OS X requires Apple's X11 environment. It is included on the "Optional Installs" package on the OS X install disk. (Under the new Leopard install, X11 is automatically installed, unless you uncheck it on the initial installation.)

In all practicality, it is as fine of an image editor as Adobe Photoshop. The tutorials in this book are exactly the kind you see on DIGG in individual articles as a way to do neat effects. I'm sure you've seen a few of them, anything from putting smoke and flames into your photos to changing the weather and creating your own type effects. This book has them all. After a crash course in using the GIMP's interface and core tools (such as brushes, patterns, selections, layers, modes, and masks), you'll learn:

1. Photographic techniques to simulate ripped edges, create sepia-toned antique images, swap colors, produce motion blurs, alter depth of field, and even fix rips in an old photo.
2. Web design techniques to create tiled patterns, navigation tabs, rollovers, and fancy buttons and borders.
3. Type effects to create depth, perspective shadows, metallic and distressed text, and neon and graffiti lettering.
4. Advertising effects to produce movie posters and package designs; simulate clouds, cracks, cloth, and underwater effects; and create specialized lighting.
5. Interface design tips for creating textures, navigation bars, and buttons.

I cannot even begin to list all the tutorials, but some of the neater ones are putting in reflections from glass to lakes, creating a waving flag, making things look like they are underwater, and making text look like anything from metal to neon. Each tutorial has plenty of pictures, and offers a true step-by-step approach making it almost impossible to mess it up.

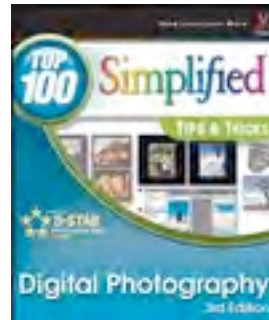
The author, Michael J. Hammel is an embedded software engineer living in Colorado Springs. He's been involved with the GIMP since version 0.54 and was a contributor to the early development of the program. Hammel wrote a column on the GIMP for Linux Format magazine for three years and is the author of *The Artist's Guide to GIMP* (Frank Kasper & Associates, 1998) and *Essential GIMP for Web Professionals* (Prentice Hall PTR, 2001).

Conclusion and Recommendation

If you use GIMP, you really should take a look at this book.

Digital Photography: Top 100 Simplified Tips & Tricks (3rd edition)

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Rob Sheppard

Publisher: Wiley

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470147660.html>

Released: September 2007

Pages: 221

\$20 USD, \$24 CND, £14 GBP

ISBN 13: 978-0-470-14766-5



Strengths: Nicely laid out, easy to understand and colorful. The helpful screenshots are well coordinated and integrated with the instruction. Great range of topics and ideas. Great for intermediate and novice users as it starts off from the beginning in many areas dealing with digital photography and integrated the ideas so that you can take better photos.

Weaknesses: Some users who want more information about RAW information should seek another book after reading this one. If you need additional information, specifically how to use the intricacies of your particular digital camera, using your user manual or a special book on the topic may help even further to supplement this book.

Introduction

Learning digital photography is very much a visual medium. But learning smarter and more efficiently in many situations is a difficult to accomplish so that you can become more productive. Sometimes a greater insight is gained with a more visual system versus some of the other how to guides which work more like a text book, detailing how to use the applications while using too much text.

Some don't always make for easy reading. But the better ones simplify the instruction by dividing the tutorials and focusing upon step-by-step approaches, using a visual oriented system that makes the learning easy and fun. Such a book is *Digital Photography: Top 100 Simplified Tips & Tricks* (3rd edition).

The Top 100 simplified tips and tricks series is known for its highly visual style and instruction tutorial. The tips and tricks are more akin to a series of short stylized instructional guides that help you visually learn along the way. In this book, *Digital Photography* is covered from starting out to more advanced techniques, so that novice to even intermediate and possible advanced users are covered. This 220-page book is divided into ten chapters which span the 100 instructional tips and tricks. The author has divided the book into these six sections: (1) getting ready to take photos; (2) consider light more than imagination; (3) Control Exposure; (4) Control sharpness' and depth of field; (5) Take better photos; (6) Try creative photo techniques; (7) basic image workflow with adobe photoshop elements; (8) beyond the basics with Photoshop Elements; (9) Making photographic prints; (10) share your photos

The colorful screenshots are integrated with the instruction. Numbered red dots point out and highlight the easy to read step-by-step instructions for the tasks. Application laden screenshots demonstrate how the tools can be utilized to complete carefully designed tasks. Each task spans two pages. Under the prominent task number on the top right page is a colored bar. Easy to read, the color bar, on the top of the exercise pages, indicate the difficulty level of each task. The difficulty rating can help differentiate which of the tasks to try first or can target the particular level of your expertise. The lowest level demonstrates a new spin on a common task. The second level, introduced a new skill or task. The third, combines multiple skills requiring in-depth knowledge while the fourth requires extensive skill and may involve other technologies. I was glad to see also that these same rating levels are also listed in the beginning of each chapters tasks so at a glance, the difficulty levels easy to see and target what the user wishes to try first. I thought this to be very helpful in gauging the level of expertise as compared to using the novice, intermediate and advance rating.

Looking over the tasks gave a better understanding of the complexity of the tasks needs using the tools and the final outcome that needed to be performed. In addition, extra tip sections inserted in the tasks were highlighted. These included Did you know? Customize it, Put it together, Caution. The visuals not only save time but illustrate learning how to make your graphic endeavors more productive. The step-by-step instructions do not read like a text book which makes for easier understanding of learning about digital cameras and photography which is the main intend of the book. But does format of book and tasks hold up to scrutiny in terms of learning all you can know about digital photography?

The book and the exercises are well thought out. Exercises like gif animation, text patterns, plug ins, use of scratch disks, use of the brushes and many of the 100 tutorials are not only interesting but using the applications. Making a calendar, postcards and much more can help spark your inner creativity while using the software in different ways you might not have thought.

Then I searched for selected topics that are important to photographers, digital photography, intermediate to more advanced users. RAW file format was highlighted on several pages but not really within its own section of tasks. Tonal range and adjustment, important for RAW and other formats, were found on only four pages. But these were well done.

The White balance pages were brief and to the point and had some very nice comparison charts to contrast file formats and difference of JPEG to RAW. I was very impressed the layout of the two pages concerning depth of field and sharpness information. Outstanding illustrations for a great visualization of the need for depth of field happened to be some of the best I have ever seen, instruction wise. Very helpful as well are the tutorials using Photoshop Elements.

Conclusion

If you need a comprehensive guide about RAW format or your particular camera, this book may not be for you. But it is an easy to use and great starter that will carry you a long way. Easy to understand, well laid out with 100 interesting tasks, there is something for everyone to learn or take to the next level of expertise. What more could you want from a book that helps you in many ways, visually lays out the instructions and gives you a better understanding while using Photoshop Elements 4. This book is not a textbook but an instructional visually based manual for learning how to make your photos better and using the images in different ways. For the price and what can be learned about many issues relating to Digital Photography and improving your photos, this book is a great buy.

iPhone for Dummies

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Authors: Edward C. Baig and Bob LeVitus

Publisher: Wiley

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470174692.html>

Released: September 2007

Pages: 240

\$22 USD, \$26 CND, £15 GBP

ISBN: 978-0-470-17469-2

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Good price. Intuitively written with color screenshots, illustrations and more. Covers the breadth and depth of the iPhone. Helpful hint, resources and much more. Very well done.

Weaknesses: None found.

Introduction

Many could not wait for the iPhone to arrive. Now that the iPhone is available, many are learning how to use the device. This is evident in the commercials on TV that display and communicate different ways the iPhone is being utilized using innovative ways. But if you are one who has the iPhone and wants to get “up to speed” quickly, look at iPhone for Dummies. There are several reasons why an extra few buck might help now.

This book is written by two computer authors. Baig is the Personal Tech columnist for USA today and Bob Levitus is Dr. Mac for the Houston Chronicle. Both have combined their knowledge to craft a book that not only looks great but covers a wide array of information about the iPhone. You know instantly as you open the first page that this book can help you.

This inside page starts you off with five keys to mastering multimedia with the iPhone. A model of the iPhone points where to find multimedia based areas on the device. Information concerning the iPhone’s keypad buttons and additional parts is displayed in words and visuals. “Five ways to make a Phone call, “ “working with contacts” and “five things to try when your iPhone acts up,” pave the way for learning and more that will come throughout the chapters.



This 240-page color guide is bright and attractive looking, as easy to look at as the iPhone itself. The authors have written an intuitively written guide. The information is easy to read with wide white area/ spaces which are complemented by many helpful photos and large screenshots. One does not have to guess where information is. Pointer arrow help while the always venerable and informative Dummies icons (Tip, Warning! , Technical Stuff , Remember!) convey more gems of wisdom.

The content, good for novice to advanced, cover the MP3, computer and PDA/ telephone action for the iPhone. Users who need help in all of one of these areas will enjoy reading seventeen chapters that highlight the breadth and depth of the Ipod hardware, software and more.

Chapters 1, 2 , 3 highlight the iPhone in particular connecting, synching and more. The next three chapters have information that many may take for granted but there are insightful hints that are good and sound. Chapter 4, “Phonedementals”, (making, receiving calls and more), Texting messages (Chapter 5). In chapter 6 , “Calendars and Calculators and Clocks, Oh my”, include solid and clear hints with clear tutorials.

Lots of audio pleasure to learn about with Music in Chapter 7. This chapter assists with “Get in Tune(s): Audio on your iPhone”. Going with the video visuals and more are in Chapter 8, “iPhone Video: seeing is believing”, Chapter 9, “You oughta be in pictures”, includes photos and the like.

Chapter 10, “ Going on Mobile safari” is about webpaging, browsing, and more while, while Chapter 11, “ The email must get through”, talks about the emails needs and uses of the iPhone. A multiple pronged tour of maps, stocks and weather is in Chapter 12 while Chapter 13, “Setting you straight on settings”, helps the understanding about preferences, general needs, and iPhone settings. Chapter 14, “ when good iPhones go bad”, helps with trouble shooting and possibly assists without having to travel to your local Apple Store.

Chapter 15, “Ten things for the wish list”, includes what I need before I buy one, a freedom of telephone company use which needs a hole in the AT&T contract or something) , include wishing for a GPS in the device and more. Chapter 16 has ten terrific web resources (a real good wi-fi hint, a great iPhone website to use and learn from, shopping hints and more). Finally Chapter 17 has ten great helpful hints, tips and shortcuts. The index is also straight forward.

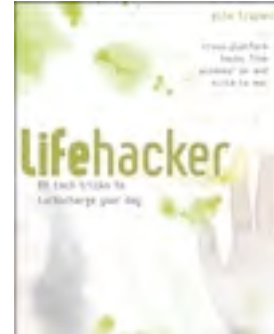
Conclusion

I will be looking through this book in the near future. Like many others, I will be interested when different carriers may be possible or if somehow I sign up with the AT&T high speed I am now using. An iPhone may be in my future but if the future is now for you and you have an iPhone, look at this book and notice that it can help you make the most of using iPhone now.

You’ve plucked down hundreds of dollars for an iPhone and telephone monthly connection fees. Now get the most out of using all parts of it. The price is right. Easy to learn, smartly designed, this concise book will help you “connect” with your iPhone in many ways so that you can do more with it now for home, business and pleasure.

Lifehacker: 88 Tech Tricks to Turbocharge Your Day

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Gina Trapani

Publisher: Wiley

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470050659.html>

Released: December 2006

Pages: 336

\$25 USD, \$30 CND, £16 GBP

ISBN: 978-0-470-05065-1

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced



There is an 2008 version –

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470238364.html>

Strengths: Each hack has a difficulty level , which platform(s) it works with and the cost (many free). Interesting set of 88 tech tricks and tips. Covers all platforms and free and commercial software. Great to find what you need to use right now and to use a resource in the near future as you continue to look through the pages in this book.

Weaknesses: Black and white. You have to go through all of the chapters and hacks and see ones you like for example that can be used for Macintosh. Would have been nice if the content outlines the level, platform and cost there instead of having to "hack" through each of the 80 tasks to get an idea of the ones wanted. This way you have to thumb through all of them and the titles which is not all that bad as many are an interesting read even if you may not want to use some of them now but possibly ideas for later. Some of the hacks like the ones that deal with Firefox might be a little dated, as there are new extensions and new development coming out all the time but as at least these hacks will start you in the right directions or give you optional paths you never thought of.

Introduction

A brief review of some page in this book at first did not thrill me. The author is an independent web programmer and a writer (for Wired, Time, New York Times). She is also the editor of Lifehacker.com, a software and productivity weblog. She describes a “Lifehacker “ as one who “uses technology to discover and design new ways to get thing done.”

So in other words, will this book help me and you with your creative problem solving and get more done with less effort.

As I looked more closely at some of the tech tips, I became more interested. Browsing in earnest, I was interested to know whether some of the hacks would be worthwhile for me and are those that I could use now and possibly a later. I took a closer look at these 88 tech tricks to see if they could “turbocharge” some ideas for me and my Macintosh but also whether there were interesting ideas that could be used across some of the cross platform Hacks. Okay Lifehacker - make my day. What can you show me? And I dove into the tenth chapter of the book.

Each hack has a difficulty rating level (difficulty level, use of platform(s) and displays the cost of each (most free or commercial). I then did a quick look at the different chapters. These included from one to ten. Chapter 1, “free up mental ram”, had information about making a hack for an “instant wiki”. This one was very helpful as I have heard of “wikis” but this hack gave me more food for thought and possibly creating ideas for the future.

Sometimes the hacks had additional tasks to try with various website software, in this case, Flickr but this one included information on tagging your photos. Some of the hacks like those in Chapter 2, “firewall your attention,” mentioned “splitting desktops” which was intriguing.

There are hacks for MP3 players, computers, tasking and more. Chapter 3, “automate repetitive tasks” downloading movies while hack 19 “defrag PC” which was one of the hacks for just PC. Chapter 4 “streamline common tasks,” has a hack for disabling desktop via remote control home computer (hack 36). In Chapter 5 XP, Vista and OS X “get your data to go,” optimizing your desktop, running a home server and even backing up your iPod had some ideas for eventual if not immediate usage.

In Chapter 6m “control your email”, the best hack for me is the Hack 46 “decreasing your email response time”, but otherwise I did not find this chapter that helpful. Chapter 7, “organize your stuff”, has 13 Firefox-recommended extensions you might want to use, while Chapter 8, “kick start your productivity” was not much to liking but people who need more help might find these ideas helpful mapping your time using a spreadsheet.

Chapter 9, “master the web”, had some good ideas. Like many, I found out about Firefox and pretty much ditched Internet Explorer a few years ago. Hack 71 (for Firefox extensions) has some worthwhile ones to look for and utilize. However, if you have Firefox you also need to know that more extensions are coming out all the time, some that surpass these extensions. Meanwhile, Hack 68 “subscribe to website with RSS”, was helpful. Hack 74 (using) “multiple sites tab browsers” is well done. If you have not used multi-tab homepage for your browser this is certainly a definite looksee. Chapter 10, “tune your computer”, has many that are PC and windows-based.

Conclusion

The hacks are a interesting and easy read. I was hoping that the index would list all Mac or OS X so I could narrow my search more quickly. No such luck however. I am not really sure why such an index is missing. I will definitely try several of these hacks right away or have a good in-depth look. I'll also keep thumbing through for those hacks that I think may be useful. For \$25, this book might be useful no matter whether you have PC (Windows, Vista) and / or Mac (no Linux). Your purchase might also depend upon your main intent and use your computer. But chances there are some new ideas that will be gained, others you will tweak and tinker with and other mini-ideas that also will be helpful.

Mac OS X 10.5, Leopard – Peachpit Learning Series - Part One of a Two Part Review

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre

Author: Robin Williams

Publisher: Peachpit Press

<http://www.peachpit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0321502639>

Released: November, 2007

Pages: 480

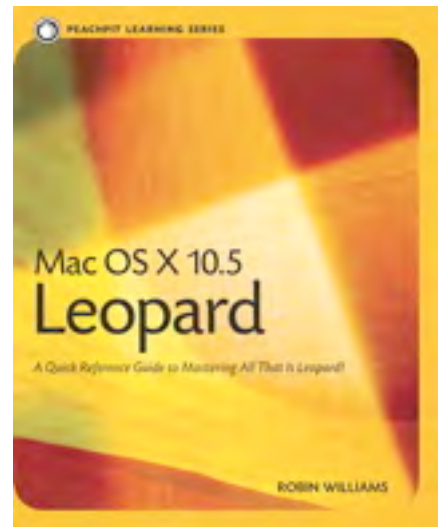
\$29.99 USD, \$28 CND, £14 UK (UK Based on exchange rates)

ISBN-10: 0321502639

ISBN-13: 978-0321502636

Audience: Beginner

Note: *Part Two of macC's review of Robin Williams book by Harry {doc} Babad follows.*



Strengths: Step by step introduction and tutorial to Leopard with lots of examples and photos.



Weaknesses: Specific information can be hard to find at times, definitely not a “manual” type of book, (Which can be helpful when first learning about the system.)

Introduction

If you are new to Mac OS X, you'll learn to use your Mac with help from a world-renowned teacher, Robin Williams. She has created many, many books on the Mac. From there, you can move on to customize it to suit the way you work. And if you've been using Mac OS X already, you'll learn to use the new features in Leopard, like Spaces, Quick Look, and Time Machine, and explore all the enhancements to favorites like Mail and iChat.

In this book...

In true Robin Williams fashion, she guides you step by step into using Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard operating system. From upgrading and installing, to using the applications that are installed with the OS. Note of forewarning, however, is she does not cover any of the iLife apps, since they are not part of the operating system.

The book is rationally organized into four main sections (Mac OS X Basics (Lessons 1 and 2), Mac OS X Applications Basics (Lessons 3 to 14), Make It Your Own Mac (Lessons 15-20 and Tech Stuff (Lessons 21-24) as well as ”End Matters” such as a glossary and index. However, there is no need to read your way through the material page-by-page or even lesson-by-lesson.

As Robin makes clear, read only what is useful to you right now; the rest will be there whenever you need it.

The exact topics covered are:

1. Introduction to the Mac OS X Desktop
2. A Bit Beyond the Basics – including Finder, Exposé, etc.
3. TextEdit
4. Mail
5. Address Book
6. Safari
7. iCal
8. iChat
9. iTunes
10. Preview
11. Miscellaneous and other common tools in applications
12. Personalize your Mac
13. Dashboard
14. Printing and Faxing
15. Sharing
16. Spotlight
17. Time Machine
18. Upgrading
19. Basic Troubleshooting
20. Secure you Mac and Files.

As you can see, there is a small sampling of most of the items that beginners will need to figure out the basics of the entire OS.

On the other hand, if you are a seasoned veteran you will probably want to pass. If you have seen Robin Williams OS X 10.4 Tiger book, well, it's very similar to this one. For that matter, there is a lot of the Leopard book that is taken word for word from the Tiger book. All of the pictures and examples are updated for Leopard, and any Leopard specific items are definitely changed in this book, however.

It would have been nice, if she was going to repeat most of the information from her previous book, to have a "Leopard Only" feature. Maybe an entire chapter devoted to those sometimes elusive "300+ New Features." Of course with more than 400 pages, that might be asking a bit too much.

Conclusion

This is probably the premier book for a beginner, or even an intermediate user needing to familiarize themselves with Leopard. It is a very easy book to follow, and can be read from beginning to end easily. It is less a manual or reference book, and should probably not be used in that capacity. If you need to learn Leopard quickly and, for the most part, thoroughly, than it's a fine book to get.

Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Peachpit Learning Series — Part Two, an idiosyncratic in-depth look

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2007

Author: Robin Williams

Publisher: Peachpit Press

<http://www.peachpit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0321502639>

Released: November, 2007

Pages: 480, Paperback. There is also an eBook version of this title available for \$23 [USD]

\$30.00 (USD), Street Price \$22; \$23.30 CDNS\$;

ISBN-10: 0321502639

ISBN-13: 978-0321502636

Audience: Intermediate or Beginner users with basic Macintosh skills.

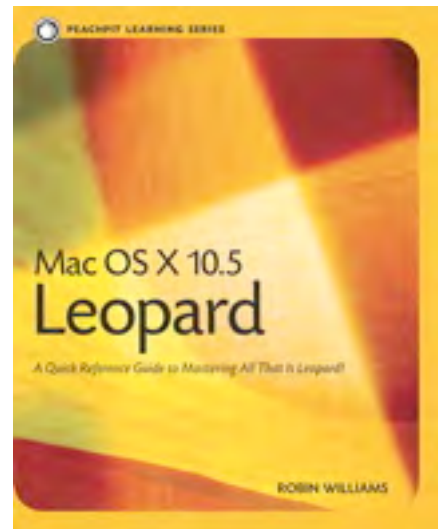
Strengths: Elegant layout and organization, meaty but readable feature descriptions suitable for novice and intermediate Macintosh Users. Most of the 300 OS changes identified by Apple are identified and discussed. An exemplary combination of index and TOC details make it almost hyper-link easy to find information.

Weaknesses: No clear distinction of Leopard features, somewhat arbitrary level of details for various Apple applications. (You can tell which of Apple's tools and OS functions Robin likes and uses.)

Introduction

Although it has little to do with the practical parts of this book, you can always tell a Robin Williams by the visual elegance of its contents and layout. We're talking primo graphics design here. It's all about readability, and her sheer visual clarity of her printed word; tools that get you to read on when you'd rather be gaming or focusing on your other hobbies. If you want to read more about Robin's graphics expertise check out D. Greenbaum "DoctorDave" review of this book at http://www.amazon.com/gp/cdp/member-reviews/A1T2ZO4ARVSUGE/ref=cm_cr_dp_auth_rev?ie=UTF8&sort_by=MostRecentReview/.

I share this book review of Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Peachpit Learning Series [Leopard PLS] as Part Two with Wayne LeFevre, and had we desired to do so could have subtitled our efforts "Two Reviewers – Almost One Mind". Wayne is his Part One review takes you though the *meat* of Robins book. Its contents, focus and those aspects of her writing that make buying her book, as a beginner, worth your while.

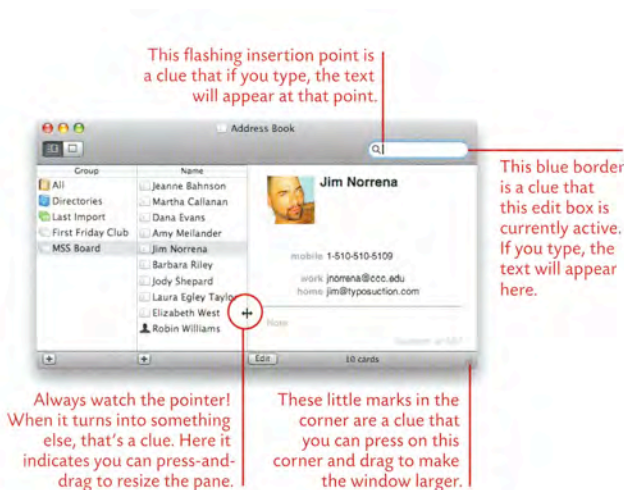


Me, doc, in Part Two, provided you with a more subjective insights into the books strengths (mostly) and occasional weakness, based subjectively on how I use my Macintosh and my present (Tiger) based biases about the various features, and accompanying applications for the new OS.

Doc's Review Focus — I'll be focusing by way of snippets and tidbits and just plain ramblin' short essays on the new features that make Leopard different, especially the user experience, from its earlier OS 10.x predecessors. Note I said different, not in my eyes always better.

To Leopard or Not to Leopard — As mentioned previously in this December issue of *macCompanion*, I have the Leopard DVD but have no intention of installing it on my 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh. I have on black Friday, ordered my new 24" iMac, and may start using it with Leopard in January. That will depend on the state of the critical software I need to feed my computing habits, in part discussed in my 3Rs column. So why review the book, after being saturated by articles about Leopard, both kind and not, I read on the Internet, I thought a little bit of detailed and explicit foreknowledge would be appreciate. ... And I am a Robin William's fan, having read and reviewed, and mostly understood, the contents of almost all of her Macintosh and design books.

Getting a head start in understanding a new OS, especial one that makes leaps as great as when Apple killed Classic, a lingering Shakespearean tragedy style death, in favor of the cats in Macintosh OS X is a means of controlling stress. Why, you ask? Who wants to deal with the idiosyncrasies or is it idiotsyncrasies of a new OS while trying to get work done, or letting off stream in play. When I'm in front of my Macintosh, as my readers well know my life is chained to research and writing articles and reviews, responding to mail and the demands put on a community services volunteer, supporting my consulting clients or playing an occasional game of Shanghai. In other words who want to deal with that %^\$#@*\$# operating system that refuses to do what you want it to or trusted software its broken. So I read and view the information Robin provided and become more convinced that there will be a Leopard in my life.



Publisher's Description

The *Peachpit Learning Series* brings you the best-selling authors you know and love, on the topics that are near and dear to you, in a format that allows you to learn just what you need to know, and at your own pace. With this book, you can learn in your own way—whether it's working through the lessons from start to finish, jumping straight to step-by-step exercises about new features, or looking up just what you need to know at that moment. *You not only read it, you get to see it too.* There are hundreds of exciting tools and hidden gems in your Macintosh. And with the gentle yet expert hand of Robin Williams guiding you along the way, you will learn to take full advantage of all that Leopard has to offer.

If you are new to Mac OS X, you'll learn to use your Mac with help from a world-renowned teacher. From there, you can move on to customize it to suit the way you work. And if you've been using Mac OS X already, you'll learn to use the new features in Leopard, like Spaces, Quick Look, and Time Machine, and explore all the enhancements to favorites like Mail and iChat. Dave Greenbaum noted, "This book is not intended for intermediate or advanced users. You won't find out which port to open for screen sharing or it's inner workings--just how to initiate it. I contrast her books to more "manual" like books that cover every feature in depth. This book is designed to hold the readers hand, through the steps or learning."

Although the book is rationally organized into four main well-illustrated sections, parceled out over 24 lessons, I never felt distracted by an overdose of intrusive underlying technical detail. If a subject needed more detail, it was expanded on either later in the book or in the *tech stuff* materials.

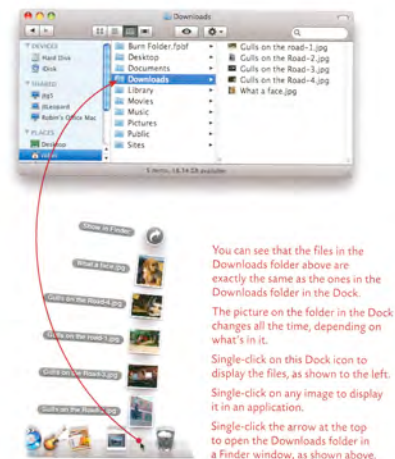
Random Thoughts About The Book Itself and on that New Darned Cat

As I skimmed, read or even studied the parts of Robin's book, I became comfortable with the thought that, my software tools being willing, adapting to Leopard book would not further raise my blood pressure.

Tiger Feature that Might be Worth Reconsidering in Leopard — Indeed many of the things in Tiger, that I loathed or ignored (e.g., Spotlight, Expose, Column View, TextEdit, Preview) had been either made truly functional or at least potentially fit the way I wanted to use my computer. Robin thanks for almost convincing me. However, based on what I've read, Apple has introduced now targets for loathing including Cover Flow, Spaces, the dock's rainbow arch of nested folders and lots of flash and glitter *pixie dust* that Apple added to make things more 3D. I do take an iconoclastic view, however of widgets. I convert the almost a dozen widgets I use to a WidgiApps using Amnesty Singles

[<http://www.amnestywidgets.com/Singles.html/>]

application. I store these, along with a few other reference tools in a folder on the right side of my dock where they are a click away. This makes the as available as I need, without having to resort to Apples Dashboard with its unpleasant looking interface.



Apple Applications That Don't Yet Seem Good Enough — A list, follows, but it would take more space than I have to tell you why. For the curious reader, check out my past macC reviews. On the other hand Apples tools are free and when a newbie, you won't know there's better tools out there. Free is not always cost effective.

Ms. Williams has not discussed some of Apple's iWork and iLife applications, rightfully noting they are external to the tools installed with the OS. However, Robins doesn't emphasize there's more powerful and flexible tools out there, even from Apple, but then doc's a nit-picker by temperament — Robin forgive me.

- The Apple spelling checker vs. Spell Catcher
- Apple's Mail Client vs. Eudora
- Safari vs. Fire Fox (I use both since Safari ruins recipe lists copied from some websites. I wish I could pick two default browsers and toggle between them.)
- Roxio's Toast vs. Apples media burning tools
- Text Edit vs. Apples Pages or better yet MS Word. Bit with modest word processing needs, Text edit might do for you.
- Preview vs. a combination of GraphicConverter and Adobe Acrobat Standard or Pro.

I would have liked, at least for Apple products, an appendix listing to tools folks can graduate to.

Mail Talk — After an extensive, 16-page soliloquy to TextEdit, despite favoring Mariner Write for her personal use, Ms. Williams give considerable attention to Apple email client Mail, working with notes and creating todo lists. Unlike the tools I use, Mail is integrated with Apple's Address Book, iCal and Safari sparing you need to change applications to transfer information found in an email message to your schedule or add new contact information to your address book. Need to add either a link or a part of a webpage to a message; it's just, according to Ms. Williams, a click away. Now don't get me wrong, I have not yet succumbed to Mail, despite an occasional use of Mail's import features to keep transfer the contents, well much of them, from Eudora to Mail. In any case Leopard PLS, makes a strong case for me to explore further, if Eudora remains not ready for Leopard (see my December Tips Column).

Contact Lists and Appointments — If you're not already a user of Apples Address Book and its calenderer application (iCal) there's much to learn in Lessons 6 & 7. I do wonder how iCal deals with repeat appointments such as your Thursday night Bridge Club, the last Sunday sing-along or the TBD artist performing at the first and third Saturday concert series. The book did not mention such a feature.

Now I don't use either program, having too much invented in other programs (FileMaker) that long precede Macintosh OS X. These contain both my contact information and a partial schedule of my day-to-day activities. They go back to day one on my second at home Macintosh, a Performa 600-CD. No all my appointments and todos are not all in the calendar database, but the archives open sweet as can be, when I want them to, for a bit of pre-retirement reminiscing.

Be that as it may, if you've a need to keep in touch, and keep interacting with folks the tools Robin describes, couple with Mail, iChat and Safari, will keep track of your contacts and you in touch. A little reading and a bit of practices, Leopard PLS tells you how.

Here's a few other things I learned from the book and will likely use:

Safari — Using Safari to identify, aggregate and serve up RSS feeds could simply my keeping track of new events in the energy (renewable and nuclear), Global warming, innovation and inventiveness and the marketplace, and nuclear and other waste management and disposal issues. No, nothing about my beloved Macintosh, my macC and McMUG colleagues and magazine subscriptions keep me well supplied on *Mac-inations*.

Preview — No, no — a thousand times no. Despite the clear information provided in Robin's book, I'm not convinced. Adobe speed up providing a Leopard ready Acrobat Pro... There really are more users than for your CS series of applications, even if we don't generate as much profit and glitz. I did have a preview question.

What happens with you annotated or marked up a PDF in preview? Will the person you share the PDF file with see these changes? I must assume so, or why bother, but that fact was not explicitly mentioned.

The iLife and iWork Applications — Should I adopt these applications, the older brothers to some of the applications provided by Apple with the Leopard operating system, I'd need to learn more. I would certainly seek out the John Tollett and Robin Williams' book *Robin Williams Cool Mac Apps: A guide to iLife 08, .Mac, and more* (Peachpit Press, January 2008 - <http://www.peachpit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0321508963/>).

And the Rest of the Book — I read, skimmed, studied and am likely to forget the remaining material in Leopard PLS. However, I do own the book, and am aware of its contents should the need arise. As noted earlier, its easy to find information in the book I neither share my Macintosh, except to allow my grandson wireless access to my printer.

What more can say, in general about this book? Despite its title, pay attention to lesson 23, *Basic Troubleshooting*, its not very intimidating and can save you some grief when Murphy visits. Robins includes troubleshooting advice for times when things go wrong. As D. Greenbaum noted, "The advice she gives is as good or better than what you'll get on the phone calling tech support or stopping by the "bar" in an Apple Store. If her troubleshooting section doesn't cover it, you'll *really* need a technician..."

Finally, don't be shy about reaching for it again as your computing needs change. There's a lot buried in Leopard, as Robin notes, which can enrich your computing experiences.

What follows is a longer than needed list of kudos and a short list of discomforts The former provides an alternate view of my thoughts about both the strengths of this book *Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Peachpit Learning Series*. Although the discomforts are real, they don't devalue the usefulness of this fine book.

Kudos

Crisp, Eye Catching Well Highlighted and Annotated Figures — There's not need to decode an image trying to figure out what it means and how it related to the text, What more can I say!

Basics for New Mac Users — An excellent compromise between an extensive introductory tutorial on the Mac OS and a primer on the Macintosh computer for newbies. Yes, I'll read and perhaps review her Leopard focused Little Mac Book. Robin convinced me years ago, that the *Mac was not a Typewriter*. I'm forever trying to convince my PC user friends that its time for a change and Robin's beginner book as well as the now classic *The Naked Truth* by Scott Kelby are all tools for my tirade.

Apple Applications Common Features and Shared Tools — The Leopard PLS book is replete with excellent and focused discussion of the various applications and other tools that are shared by the suite of Leopard installed applications.

As Ms Williams points out in Lesson 3 and 13, and elsewhere, Leopard is a well-integrated Apple product. Mail programs, address books, calendars and assorted note taking tools are supposed to be integrated with each other to, doc sez, form a virtual PIM (personal information manager) — Robin shows us where such interfaces occur, and then shares how the user can take advantage of the inter-operability of Apple's software tools.

Whether it's the use of services menus, a consist design of menubars and menu contents, or common shortcuts Robin painlessly share such information with her readers. In addition, to assist users to seamlessly access and use the individual tools they need, Ms. Williams tells us of their built in commonality of function and interconnected nature. Check out page 71 (Text Edit) "standard Mac OS X Application Features. Skip ahead to the details on Page 105 for a look at how "Mail is Integrated With."

Discomforts

Leopard vs. Tiger Notations — I know this is not a Kelby Side-by-Side book; it would have been helpful to provide the reader (me-me-me) that items were new and significantly changed in Leopard. As it was, I kept several Macworld articles handy to see if a described feature was new to Leopard, or that I'd simply found it a distraction or useless in Tiger. Differentiating truly new from enhanced old features become important because I may want to stop boycotting some OS X applications and functions if they've become civilized enough to be useful. A rose by any other name may not smell as sweet.

Lack of a Formal Introduction — In know the title says it all, but just as you provides in Lessons 1& 2, an introduction to the Macintosh, an intro would have helped new Macintosh users get oriented, but they could also read the back cover of the book.

Desktop Background Color (Pg 4, Desktop figure) — Robin, this is a yuck background, designed to distract you and me; perhaps give me a headache. It the only thumb in your nose figure in the book.

Lack of Figure Numbers — There are all sort of places in e book that would have benefited by a cross reference to an earlier figure. A strange omission, but you haven't numbered figures in your other design or Macintosh books, so its just Robin's way.

Conclusion/Recommendation

As noted in this review, Robin's books are typically aimed at beginner or intermediate users. She does not overwhelm her Mac novice readers with a lot of technical details that they don't want or need to know. That being said, a significant part of this book's contents make handy references even for a more advanced Mac users.

Robin has brought her trademark clear, approachable style to this Peachpit Learning Series guide on the new Mac operating system, code-named Leopard. As noted in Wayne and my reviews, the book focuses on what you want to know: All about Leopard's features, but alas not on what new in Leopard.

It shares how can you get the most out the new OS and provides Leopard PLS, offers focused lessons that take users step-by-step through practical, real-world projects, and provides users a basis for adopting Leopard's tools and interface to their daily computing. The full-color guide 480 pages, easy to read and understand primer serves as a first-rate introduction for anyone who needs to know and use Mac OS X 10.5, Leopard.

Ideal book for new Leopard Users! Easy to understand and read — buy it and read it, if possible before you start working with Leopard.

PS

I have not read Robins book on Tiger, therefore can't comment on any undifferentiated (Tiger vs. Leopard) issues related to Robin's earlier book. For a change though, I'm a bit more positive about the book than my fellow reviewer.

Macro Photography Photo Workshop

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Haje Jan Kamps

Publisher: Wiley

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470118768.html>

Released: July 2007

Pages: 253

\$30 USD, \$36 CND, £20 GBP

ISBN: 978-0-470-11870-4

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced



Strengths: Magnificent layout makes the book easy to read. Superb general examples of photography, close-ups, large screen shots and (Photoshop) screen well done. The author has included many insightful ways of looking and dealing with Macro Photography as well as photography in general. Breadth and depth covered in excellent fashion. This book is Intuitively written and easy to understand.

Weaknesses: This is not a tutorials guide, per se. You have to “digest” the readings slowly step by step like a textbook. The tutorials are learned through these worthwhile readings. If you want a quick guide, this is not for you (but you will miss a great book!).

Introduction

Most of my photography has been with nature, sky and other worldly objects, using telephoto, regular or other lenses. Lately however I have seen objects such as spiders, plants and other objects that show objects close up. Having dabbled in taking close-up pictures of spiders, flowers, moths and more, I thought it lucky that a book called Macro Photography appeared at the right time when I was searching for further information about creating better close-up photographs. And this is why I was happy about finding it.

The author, a freelance writer, has a popular photography blog and is known for his creativity and work with hardware. He also has a good way of using words and I found that his ideas and ways he communicated them within the tutorials and more, a great read. In many ways, I found the “wording” and “his ideas different then I had ever thought about. I found myself being drawn into the book by this and several other ways.

The author, using expressive words, says that macro photography “has changed over time and that macro photography has changed it even to further”. The 10th chapter spans a wide range of his important insights, reflections and ideas. What is remarkable about this book is the extremely intuitive nature and the clear ideas that are laid out about macro photography.

Instead of regular text laden tutorials, the author integrates detailed examples (photos) with profound statements that are instantly understood. These insights gave me a “new look” on several ideas and included new insights that I could use about photography in general but also macro photography. Instead of stating the obvious or including information that one should just do a task, the author eases the user into understanding and the “why’s and how’s”. This is a refreshing change. His statements are communicated brilliantly and concisely. He also addresses how and what ways macro photography “has changed over time and how digital photography has changed it even more” (page 5).

He then continues to introduce you to “the regular topics” used in macro photography and going beyond.

Photos in the book (collected from other photographers) are magnificent and illustrate his “points of view and idea,” too an even greater extent. He also says that while macro photography can be used in many ways, many of the rules that apply to other branches of photography are “meaningless when you start to getting close enough for the results you want” (page 7). I found statements like this and others helped me pay attention even further to the remarkable detail the author has crafted into this book.

Orange box-markers (ref for reference) within the chapters, detail additional ideas regarding instruction, hardware or software. Additional ideas called “notes”, assist with knowing about equipment, learning new ideas, and even include websites for finding additional information. Boxes with “tip” inside yield information about equipment. “Idea” boxes include other websites and resources to search for find additional information.

Chapter 1 eases you into the world of macro photography. This includes basic challenges, working with macros and information about camera bodies for the topic of this book. Chapter 2 focuses more in-depth about equipment, while Chapter 3 includes lighting under many situations (well done chapter and important). Chapter 4 lays the ground work for “macro opportunities everywhere.” This is followed by subsequent chapters which include techniques and ideas for photographing flowers, textures, insects. Then skills can be practiced with abstracts pictures and art and people. Finally Chapter 10 includes digital darkrooms skills and understanding more “how’s and what’s” which includes Raw information.

In the Appendix A, there are internet resources while Appendix B includes the 10 names of contributing photographers who has some of the books photos utilized in this text. A nice glossary allows for the searching of vocabulary, while the index helps find additional information at your finger tips.

Conclusion

I really found this book insightful, resourceful and a refreshing way to learn about photography. I instantly found more information concerning utilizing my camera for “macro – fun.” The photos elevated my ideas even further because I literally could look at the photos and tutorial/readings and instantly get “a-hah (insight)” in my mind how and when to try to use my camera for other close-ups now and in the future.

Recommendation

I think you will be delighted you found this book for several reasons. The price is right and is a great buy. Everywhere you turn in this book, you will learn something new. It looks good and will no doubt inspire you to look at the “the world “ and using your camera in different way.

Anyone who wants to use their digital camera for close-ups / macro activities should take a look at this book. Not only does it expand your thoughts about exploring with your camera but also the best ways to experiment and how. You will also discover some twenty-plus ways to be challenged, how to troubleshoot and use your digital-editing skills to create effects desired. Find and read this book to get as many “a-hahs” as I did.

Take Control of Upgrading to Leopard, an eBook

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

© 2007



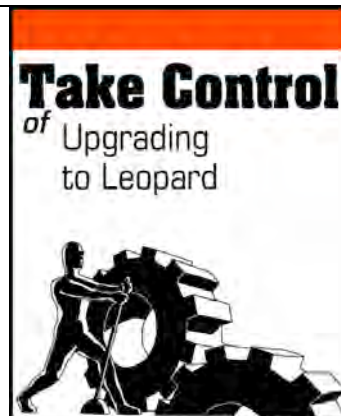
Author: Joe Kissell

Publisher: Take Control eBook Series
TidBITS Publishing Inc.

<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/leopard-upgrading.html>

Released: October 26, 2007

Pages: 125



\$10 USD; eSellerate service handles non-US purchases.

ISBN-10: Print Copy not yet Available

ISBN-13: Print Copy not yet Available

Audience: Beginner/Intermediate Macintosh Users.

Strengths: The crisply written eliminates the uncertainty and the confusion of upgrading, guiding you through every step of the process. Added notes and tips provide a wealth of additional information for those who like to problem more deeply.

Weaknesses: Nothing worth mentioning except I still prefer holding paper in my hand or stuffing a book into my backpack to read in the car or while having some espresso.

Introduction

I don't know where I've been hiding all these years, but this is the first e-paper book I've ever reviewed. Although I use a 21" inch LCD Apple monitor, there is something very comfortable in holding a handful of paper. So I printed it out, only afterwards having checked the take control FAQ that suggest printing 2 pages to a printed sheet. But that's okay, I've old eyes and the single page per page worked just fine for me; the paper can and will be recycled. Besides it's just a bit easier to annotate paper than a PDF page.

I'm in the processes of giving serious thought to updating my OS to Leopard. Why serious thought, FileMaker pro is only now Leopard ready, Acrobat Pro will not be available until January 2008 although there's a work around in my tips column thanks to Robert Pritchett. After doing some detailed checking, most lots of my favorite tools will likely work, if not in December, by January at the latest. Read more on that subject in my 3Rs column in this issue.

I've read that Office 2004 works mostly, and Office 2008 will be Leopard compatible but I've been burned by Microsoft before. Be that as it may, I've read many articles and a book to three by Joe Kissell whom I trust, and agree with him that if your gonna upgrade, you must be prepared.

About New Operating Systems

Tanya Angst one of the series publisher says "Little is more exciting and unnerving than a major operating system upgrade for your Mac, but thousands of people have upgraded to Panther and Tiger calmly and successfully with the advice in Joe Kissell's previous hit *Take Control of Upgrading...* titles. Joe's expert guidance, developed over innumerable test installations, walks you through the six steps necessary before upgrading, which of Leopard's three installation options is right for you, how to perform the actual upgrade, and post-installation checking and cleanup."



So I'm off on learning about Leopard marathon, having compulsively read and reviewed four Leopard book for this and the next macC issue.

Joe, in the book introduction notes, "...I've installed Mac OS X upgrades hundreds of times on dozens of computers over the years, and listened to many other people describe their own experiences. Even on a Mac, a major upgrade such as this one is a complex operation with many potential pitfalls. Some users will find that they can't complete the installation process but won't know why. Some will be unsure which options to choose, or what effect they'll have. Some will be unable to reboot their Macs after the installer finishes. Some will be unable to print or access the Internet. Some will lose important data, encounter software incompatibilities, or find that their peripherals no longer work." Joe Kissell's *Take Control of Upgrading to Leopard* helps you avoid these problems.

To be fair, however, I've never personally installed a new operating system, having been blessed with a relative, my grandson's father, who is both Apple Certified and helpful. So what the heck, I'll report on Joe Kissell's book anyway for those of you must go it alone. If you can hire Joe or his equivalent, this is the book to buy before you attempt to upgrade to Macintosh OS X 10.5, Leopard.

In this book review

Rather than do a chapter-by-chapter analysis of Joes excellent dissertation-tutorial-help guide... a rose by any other name will smell as sweet, I'll splash you the table of contents at the end of this review. Rather than a blow-by-blow, I'll focus this review on a number of key points, items that Joe emphasizes must be done to assure a relatively glitch free installation or upgrade to an existing system. I've extracted the points I share herein from the whole of Joe Kissell's book but the themes and details are easily accessed from the table of contents or using the find feature in Acrobat Reader.

I've a Brand New Macintosh, Now What? — Now if you just bought a Macintosh, with Leopard pre installed, and your hard drive is free of 3rd party software, this is **not** the book for you. All you need to succeed in your efforts to add new software tools or system modifications to allow you to do your work is to check, before you install it, all 3rd party software for Leopard compatibility. You've a virgin stem that Apple has taken great pains to assure that all of its products will work {most likely} with Leopard (e.g., iLife, iWork and the more sophisticated professional version of Apple's media tools.) As you will read elsewhere in the issue of macC, some major and most minor developers of productivity, graphics, multimedia software, system haxies have joined the Leopard bandwagon, If not already in the next month or so. So the only rules you need to follow are:

- If it's not Leopard Ready or Leopard Compatible — DON'T install it.
- If in doubt, and the software tool or device driver is critical, create a bootable backup of your drive before adding uncertain applications. Why, so you can easily recover from a major glitch. Software that doesn't work can be removed, but a product that renders your OS unstable, the system must be reinstalled... more time than you want to afford.
- Add new software a piece at a time working with your computer for a day or two, to determine if a product causes a problem. If you install a baker's half dozen new items and you glitch the operating system, there's no way to trouble shoot.

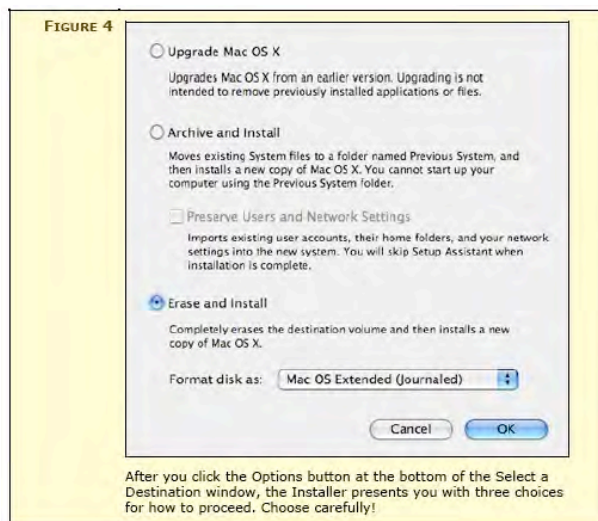
I've an Older Leopard Compatible Macintosh, Now What? —

Buy and read the book paying especial attention to items Joe emphasizes, some of which I list below. These turn out to be chapter headings, but for the most part, I flitted through them studying only the items that were relevant to my situation.

Note: I've been a Macintosh user since my first SE-30, and have a good understanding of how I approach using my computer. If in doubt, don't skim or flit, take the time to do it in more depth. It's not Oxymoron, it really is easier to do it right the first time than to go back and fix it; that is if you're not a government contractor on an actual expenses reimbursed contract.

Keys to success are:

- Check Your Hardware For Compatibility. Although there are workarounds for a few Macintosh models that Apple's Leopard does not official support, it might be time to start budgeting for a new computer if you want to switch to Leopard. Joe provided a link to XPOSTFACTO a utility that adds a few additional Macintosh models to the potentially compatible list.
- Back Up Your Disk as a bootable volume. Kissell notes "having a complete duplicate of your disk enables you to use the Erase and Install method of upgrading, which wipes out all sorts of potential disk gremlins and incompatibilities while transferring your existing files, applications, preferences, and other data to the new system easily." Joe also provides advice on what to do if you don't have an external hard drive (Page 20) Remember that there is no such thing as a free lunch and the work arounds have limited solutions to minimizing fuss when upgrading to Leopard. Hard drives have become dirt cheap and can be used for routine backups — you do back up you key data, don't you?
- Clean Up Your Mac -Then clean up your Mac again. Every non-Leopard compatible driver or piece of software is a glitch waiting to happen.
- Carry Out Final Preparations for Installation. (E.g., "Before installing Leopard, you should check your disk for errors and repair them if necessary. Even if you did this days or weeks ago, one more check never hurts—errors may have crept in since last time.")
- Choose an Upgrade Method — This is critical for users who have hard drives filled not only with the documents you created but also with a variety of third party software and hardware drivers. The tree alternative you face are (1) Upgrade Mac OS X, (2) Archive and Install, and (3) Erase and Install and (3). You can also perform a customized upgrade, but your reviewer is uncomfortable with that option. If I understand what Joe has shared, the method you chose can and will affect both the ultimate stability of your whole computing platform and the ease of getting back to using most, if not all, of the third Party tools essential to your computing life.



Kudo's — Stuff I liked, a lot

Where to find 3rd Party Software including Drivers and More — Appendix A: Software Sources contains an extensive list. "If you want to be sure you have the latest and most compatible firmware, drivers, and utilities for Leopard, use these (links) download links to save yourself some time. Joe also Notes "If you didn't find what you're looking for here, check VersionTracker (<http://versiontracker.com/macosx/>) or MacUpdate (<http://www.macupdate.com/>), each of which keeps track of thousands of Mac applications and their latest update."

A Belt and Suspenders Approach to Upgrading — Troubleshoot Upgrade Problems and if all else fails, How to Downgrade are chapters one hopes you'll never need. You will of course follow the instructions provided by Joe to minimize upgrade problems. Never the less, in a world of gremlins enforcing to Murphy's Law, the material in this section of the book are well worth noting. Most of you should not need them, but..

Web Extras — Although many authors of traditional computing books, especially those published by Peachpit and O'Reilly Press, maintain websites that post corrections and book updates. This feature, with an Internet connection, is available right from the eBook; make checking just a bit faster.

Disappointments and Discomforts

No Index — I'm used to reading paper and found the lack of an index in this eBook, uncomfortable. I had no trouble using the find feature (Acrobat 8 Pro) but would have preferred using a hyperlinked index to find specific information I wanted to recheck. For speed and focus, that would beat the heck out of my using the index and *PostIt* tabs on the pages of a paper copy, or using the software's search functions, over and over and over again.

eBooks and an Old Fashioned Reader — I'd rather be snuggled in a comfortable reading chair, with the book, a notepad, *PostIt* tabs, a pen and my highlighters than sit in front of my 21" screen. My grandson disagrees. However, the one thing I could never get from a book is the convenience of hyperlinked access to all the reference materials and extra information resources Kissell has identified. [E.g., *Are Your Fonts Ready for Leopard?* by Sharon Zardetto.]

My Only Point of Confusion — On Page 70, Joe discusses transferring your old data via *Startup (Migration) Assistant*. I don't understand whether your backup drive containing your old data must be running before you upgrade, using the installer, your new Leopard disk or partition?

Conclusion and Recommendation

I whole-heartedly recommend this book to all those who are planning to update an existing Macintosh operating system to Leopard. Although less useful to folks who've bought a new Macintosh with Leopard preinstalled, it would be a useful reference, that takes up no bookshelf space, for trouble shooting your systems one you've loaded it up with all the great 3rd party tools you use every day. It, at a *double fin*, is a bargain. Use it to get you out of trouble, for several hours, and at minimum wage you've totally recovered its cost.

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Take Control

of Upgrading to Leopard

by Joe Kissell

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\$10

Hardware

Miglia DIVA 2.1 - Compact Speaker System

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Miglia Technology, LTD
United Kingdom

<http://www.miglia.com>

Product site: <http://www.miglia.com/diva21/>

Released: September 2006

\$63 USD, £69 GBP, €76 Euro, (all prices are ex VAT)

Requirements: Phone jack, wall port. 3.5mm audio port.

Comes with; universal power adapters with external auto-switching 110-240V power supply, 3.5mm audio cable, 2 speakers and subwoofer, Quick Start User Guide.

Specs:

http://miglia.com/pdfcenter/eng/Diva21_ENG.pdf

Strengths: Compact size, great sound. Good bass.

Weaknesses: Plastic parts fall off speakers, no power indicator, intermittent volume controls.

Introduction

“The beauty of Diva 2.1 speakers is that they are entirely portable, and at the same time produce excellent quality of sound. The unique aluminium tube subwoofer ensures that music has a powerful bass and spoken word is delivered in rich, deep tones.

Diva 2.1 allows you to blast out your favourite music wherever you are. It provides the listener with a warm, clear sound whilst looking great.

Diva 2.1 reproduces high sound quality from any source through a standard speaker jack and is perfect for maximising the potential of your iPod. Attention to detail and a high build quality make the Diva 2.1 the first choice for music lovers everywhere.”



Technical Specifications

Power Output - RMS: 2x3w + 6w.

Signal-To-Noise - 70dB

Frequency Response - 38Hz - 20KHz

Driver Unit - Subwoofer: 2" Satellite : 1.5"

Dimensions (W x H x L) - **Subwoofer:** W:59mm x H:82mm x L:270mm

Satellite: W:59mm x H:74.5mm x L:55.5mm

Warranty: 2 years

My Experiences

My experiences have been echoed by others elsewhere on the Internet that the plastic covers that are apparently intended to protect the speaker cones from damage fell off and needed to be glued back on.

The audio was iffy, meaning that connected to my iMac G5 audio port, sometimes it worked and sometimes it was not initially recognized as Audio Out. Once Mac OS X Leopard settled down, the sound was great, but I did have issues with buzz, fuzz and feedback noise for a while. That went away after I moved the speakers away from the Subwoofer.

There is no power indicator light to show the speakers are "on". The On/Off "switch" is a combo of pushing both the "-" and "+" buttons.

The intention by Miglia is that this is supposed to be a portable speaker system for MP3 players. By definition of portable, an MP3 player runs with batteries. These speakers require 12-volt DC power or the speakers do not work. There is not a battery pack option.

The Voltaic Converter bag has the 7.5 V lithium-ion battery, but it only provides power up to 7.5 volts DC and did not work with the speakers, but I would not want to carry the Diva 2.1 unit around with me. It is really a desktop unit.

Conclusion

If you need external speakers that look and sound great, try the Diva 2.1 for desktop environments with your iPod, Mac or PC. Just have some glue handy if the speaker protectors fall off. And don't plan on taking this unit around with you unless you have a long power extension cord.

SimpleDrive Deluxe

Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves



SimpleTech
1830 East Warner Avenue Santa Ana, California 92705
(877) 486-155
International Sales: (949) 477-7700
<http://www.simpletech.com/commercial/products/signaturedrive.php>

Released: April 9, 2007
\$130 - \$400 USD + (depending on capacity) – Click the link above for a sizing table.

Requirements: Mac OS X, Available USB or FireWire port.

Strengths: Compact & stylish design, quiet operation, good documentation, included cables.

Weaknesses: Included backup software.

The unit reviewed was the 250GB SimpleDrive Deluxe, which includes both USB and FireWire.



Introduction

With the introduction of Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard and its spiffy new automated backup feature, Time Machine, external hard drives are even more important than ever. And SimpleTech has an attractive line in the SimpleDrive, ranging in capacity from 250GB to 1000GB (1 terabyte!).

First, I recommend using the SimpleDrive Deluxe, because in addition to the SimpleDrive's normal USB port, the Deluxe model has two FireWire 400 ports. One can be used to connect to your Mac (and boot from) while the other can be used to daisy-chain other FireWire devices.

The other notable hardware features of the drive are the capacity meter and one-click backup button. The capacity meter is an illuminated ring that illuminates to indicate the amount of available storage space on the drive (in 25 percent increments), flashes to indicate reading and writing activity, and flashes red for 10 seconds if available space falls below 10 percent. I didn't find the meter very useful because it will only illuminate when power is first applied to the drive. It's also not particularly accurate because it only uses 25 percent increments. For instance, if the drive is 72 percent full, two of the four lights illuminate, giving the impression that the drive is 50 percent full.

The one-click backup button works with the included Total Media Backup software. I have never found backup software included with external hard drives to be particularly pleasant and Total Media Backup is no exception. It has a very Windows-like interface and the installer leaves an alias on the desktop. It also installs a menu icon that I found consumed an unhealthy amount of processing power even when the backup was not taking place or the drive was even connected.

But you are not required to use the Total Media Backup software. The drive is compatible with other software packages and if you have Leopard you will no doubt use Time Machine.

When set on its bottom the drive is only 1.5” tall (or wide, if you set it on its side), giving it a very low profile. Yet with a design by the renowned Ferrari design house Pininfarino, it’s still very stylish. Taking a cue from the auto world, you can choose between the colors Sapphire (blue) Charcoal (gray), Fire (red), Onyx (black) or Pearl (white). It also runs pretty quietly, especially when the drive goes to sleep.

Both a USB 2.0 and FireWire 400 cable are included, as well as a nice quick start guide with special information for Mac users. If that’s not enough, you also get a free 2GB account on myfabrik.com to store, manage and share your personal media online.

Conclusion

If you’ve upgraded to Leopard and are looking for a capacious, yet attractive external hard drive, check out SimpleTech’s SimpleDrive Deluxe. With capacities up to 1TB, you could manage to go way back in time.

Street Party Size Zero Portable Speakers

Reviewed by Michele Patterson



Disruptive Technology Channels

Disruptive Limited

4 Blenheim Rd

High Wycombe

HP12 3RS

UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: 01494 436221

Fax: 01494 453856

info@gear4.com

http://www.gear4.com/product_detail.php?products_id=368

Released: July 2007

\$102 USD, £49.99 GBP, €67,89 Euro

Requirements: iPod nano or iPod video.



Comes With: Speaker system, AC Adapter, User manual, Remote control and carrying case.

Strengths: Lightweight, nice carry case, battery or AC power, compact & good sound quality.

Weaknesses: Volume control buttons very small, blue light is very bright (difficult to sleep by unless you still want a night light, didn't charge my iPod 60G video in fact drained it whether on AC or batteries & the hook up for iPod player is a little flimsy and feels like it could come off.

Other Reviews:

<http://www.pocket-lint.co.uk/news/news.phtml/8249/9273/Gear4-StreetParty-Size-Zero-speaker.phtml>

<http://www.macnn.com/reviews/gear4-streetparty-size-zero.html>

http://reviews.cnet.com/speakers-speaker-systems/gear4-streetparty-size-0/4505-6467_7-32638975.html

Introduction

The overall package is impressive; Weight is just under 300grams, Dimensions: 8.7 inches long, 4.9 inches high and 0.7 inches deep (22cm x 12.5cm x 16mm). The ability to run on either batteries or power adapter (not included) and is toted to charge your iPod while on the adapter. Gear4 also made sure to include a decent carry case made of neoprene (the same material as a wet suit). The case doesn't close; it just fits over the speakers like a sleeve and doesn't provide much padding.

The unit fits all versions of iPod and nano, and does include a remote control (that I never got to work). The fronts of the speakers are sleek and stylish with a full black metal mesh and bright blue/red indicator light.

US Gotchas

I was ready to hook these up the moment I received the package and I was feeling pretty confident about the product. Right off the bat I was disappointed. There wasn't an AC adapter for US plugs, only European ones. Immediately I contacted my rep and was told that I should have gotten one and would be sent right out. I still haven't seen one. In fact I haven't read one review that hasn't mentioned the lack of the US AC adapter. It's a little disheartening to know how easy it is to get one and still not be provided one. But I pushed on and found a few toys, robbed the batteries and fired them on up.



Sounding Off

At first the sound was flat, no base no real, “ahhhh” so I tried different music, something with more base and fuller mids. I like to *feel my music*, not because I want it loud, but because I want it precise and clear. I have been using my Atrio™ headphones for so long now that I know how my music is supposed to sound and if the output has no real depth then it's not the music, it is either the EQ or the speakers.

So my first logical step is change options in the settings on my iPod. Naturally I go to the EQ first and turn on the base boost then make sure Sound Check is off and try again. Now I have base, **but** I also have that annoying vibration that comes from speakers that aren't made for deeper base and higher treble.

It was a sad moment when I realized that I couldn't fix the depth of the music with any of my settings. I had to just accept that the StreetParty Size 0 isn't created for superior sound, but rather compact, lightweight, easy to travel with, portable speakers that sound just, “OK”.

All the features, all the cords included or not included, all the compatibility, all the sleek and smooth design, cannot make up for lack of sound quality.

Conclusion

For the constant traveler staying in hotel rooms night after night, The StreetParty Size Zero is a welcome respite from well-worn headphones and bulky speakers. But for me, I am left wanting more and wondering why they didn't go the extra mile.

It's a good-looking product that could become a great product with *little more attention* to what people want most out of speakers - Great Sound!

Techshell Protective Laptop Covers

Reviewed by Steve Fyffe



TechShell

5100 N. 9th Ave
Pensacola, FL 32504

1- 850-476-6563

FAX: 1- 305-359-3261

info@techshell.com

<http://www.techshell.biz/index.html>

<http://www.techshell.biz/blru15mapro1.html>

Released: January 2007

Item# 2379104 \$79.95 USD



Compatible with 15" MacBook Pro Intel Core 2 Duo.

Strengths: Snap on with NO Adhesives, Do not need to remove MacBook Pro from case to use, Full Access to all ports, No restriction in screen movement, High-quality plastic protects against scratches and dents, Rubberized Exterior gives firmer grip. Adds aesthetic beauty.

Cons: Lighted Apple logo not visible, difficult to unsnap the top.

Q&A: <http://www.techshell.biz/qa.html>

Other Reviews: <http://www.techshell.biz/reviews.html>

Introduction

Right Side (15-inch and 17-inch)



<http://www.techshell.biz/15mapro12nde.html>

Why would you want a Techshell Protective Case?

When one spends a few thousand bucks on a shiny new MacBook Pro, his heart drops just a bit, when that first scratch or dent mars the aluminum surface. Some may want to mod their new MacBook Pro to make the announcement, “Hey, man, I march to a different drummer.” If you hold tightly to your precious Mac, as I do, you want to make sure that grip is firm. These are a few of the reasons you may want to consider Techshell’s line of protective laptop covers.



Getting Started

I need not give a wordy explanation how to start using the Techshell case. I just snapped on the top and then the bottom. The cases are form-fitted, engineered precisely to the dimensions of the Mac laptop. Small tabs on each corner securely hold it in place, with no adhesives to mar the surface you want to protect. Although I didn’t think about it at the time, I would recommend making sure the surface is very clean before snapping on the Techshell case, to prevent causing a scratch from trapped dirt. Of course I didn’t think about it because I looked at the instructions AFTER putting it on ... like what man worth his salt does? I did find their on-line Q&A page (1) very informative, including the PDF & video, once I perused it.

My Experience

The first thing I noticed on the Black Rubberized Techshell case was that the bottom was a little loose on the rear, left side near the Magsafe power port. I was not able to secure the tab on this corner. I’m not sure whether this was intentional or a quality issue. This did not cause any real problem. In fact, I appreciated this “feature” when I needed to remove the bottom later. All ports were fully accessible.

One “opportunity” arose during my evaluation, which the Techshell case caused me a minor dilemma. My logic board went out twice ... go figure. I needed to drop off my MacBook Pro to my local certified Apple care technician. I wanted to remove the protective cover, just in case they needed to send it on to Apple. I found that the form-fitted top was a little too form-fitting for my taste. I had great difficulty removing the top. Finally, with a very thin metal knife with a rounded end without a sharp edge (looked like a putty knife which my wife found in the kitchen), I was able to pry up the tabs to get it off. This caused a slight, unnoticeable scratch ... exactly what I wanted to prevent. Later, I was directed by the Techshell representative to watch a video available on YouTube –

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yd3eW4BKqv8&eurl=http://www.techshell.biz/qa.html>

The fellow made removing the lid look very simple. He used his fingernail to first pry up the tabs in back, and then it came right off. He must have had finger nails made of transparent aluminum

and very thin ... do you remember Scotty using a MacPlus in the movie *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*? ... but I digress.

Durability

Although not constructed of transparent aluminum, the Black Rubberized Techshell is made of high-quality, durable PolyCarb plastic with the added feature of having a rubberized coating for a firm grip. Mind you, I said rubberized, not Flubberized ... don't test it by bouncing your MacBook Pro & expect to see it gently float back to you ... duh. Just as they advertise, the rubberized surface did give a much better grip than the aluminum surface of the MacBook Pro.

Also, the Black Rubberized Techshell does look very sharp, but the first thing my wife said was, "You can't see the Apple." For a fleeting moment, I thought about one of many white Apple decals in my den ... uh, a little cheesy, don't you think?

Techshell's rubberized cases come in a few other colors. There are also several clear cases made of the same durable plastic in a variety of colors. Therefore, you can still show off the glowing Apple (2). If you want make an even louder statement, Techshell has some opaque (loose Apple again), metallic models in hot pink and orange.

Now, if you recall the Tangerine Clamshell iBook featured in the first *Legally Blonde*, there is a customized Techshell which would make Reese Witherspoon giggle. This hot pink case, called the Bling Bling (3), is "CRYSTALLIZED WITH 100% GENUINE SWAROVSKI CRYSTALS" ... whatever that is; looked like gaudy beads to me ... "custom made and each crystal is placed one by one by hand." Sorry, you will need to contact Reese, if you want a review on that case, thank you.

Conclusion: Aside from my little mishap described above, I give the Black Rubberized Techshell protective case a high score. It does exactly what it was constructed to do ... protect, add aesthetic beauty, and give a firm grip.

References:

1. <http://www.techshell.biz/qa.html>
2. <http://www.techshell.biz/15mapro12nde.html>
3. <http://www.techshell.biz/blingtechshell.html>

Software

Popcorn® 3

Reviewed by Ted Bade



Popcorn® 3

<http://www.roxio.com/enu/products/popcorn/standard/overview.html>

\$50 USD.

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.10 or later; 300 MB Hard Drive Space to install, up to 15 GB during usage; QuickTime 7.1.6 or later. Optional - CD-ROM/DVD-ROM, Apple TV™, Video iPod®, or iPhone™, BlackBerry® device with MPEG-4 video support, Palm® Treo™ 680, 700p, or 755p with video support, Xbox 360™, PlayStation® 3, or PSP™, EyeTV video recorder or Turbo.264 video encoder hardware.

Strengths: Can convert a wide variety of formats, Nice interface, Tivo conversion option.

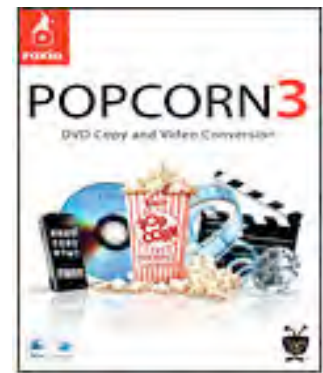
Weaknesses: Limited video controls, a bit of a learning curve to use.

Previous Reviews: <http://www.macompanion.com/archives/May2006/Software/Popcorn2.htm>

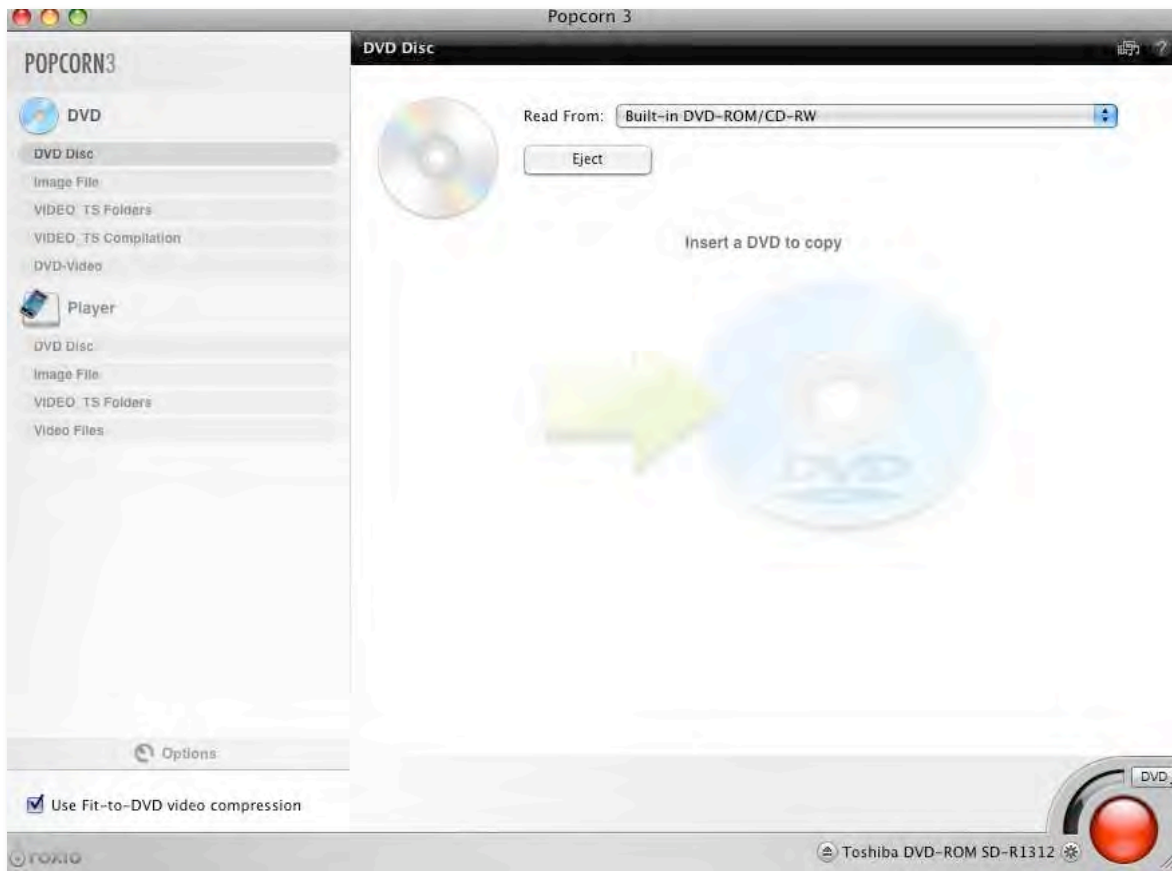
Introduction

Popcorn® 3 is a program used to convert video formats. With it you can convert almost any video into a format that works on your favorite video player, into a variety of different file types for use on your computer, or build a DVD to watch on you TV. Popcorn also offers a means of downloading from and converting Tivo formatted video files. It is a good program and while there are several shareware options that perform conversions, I don't believe any one product has all these features in one application.

Popcorn's interface is very similar to Toast 8. I felt, while working with it, that Popcorn is really a less expensive version of Toast that leaves out the CD burning features. Making it a good choice if your needs are only in the realm of converting video files and saving them to devices or DVD.



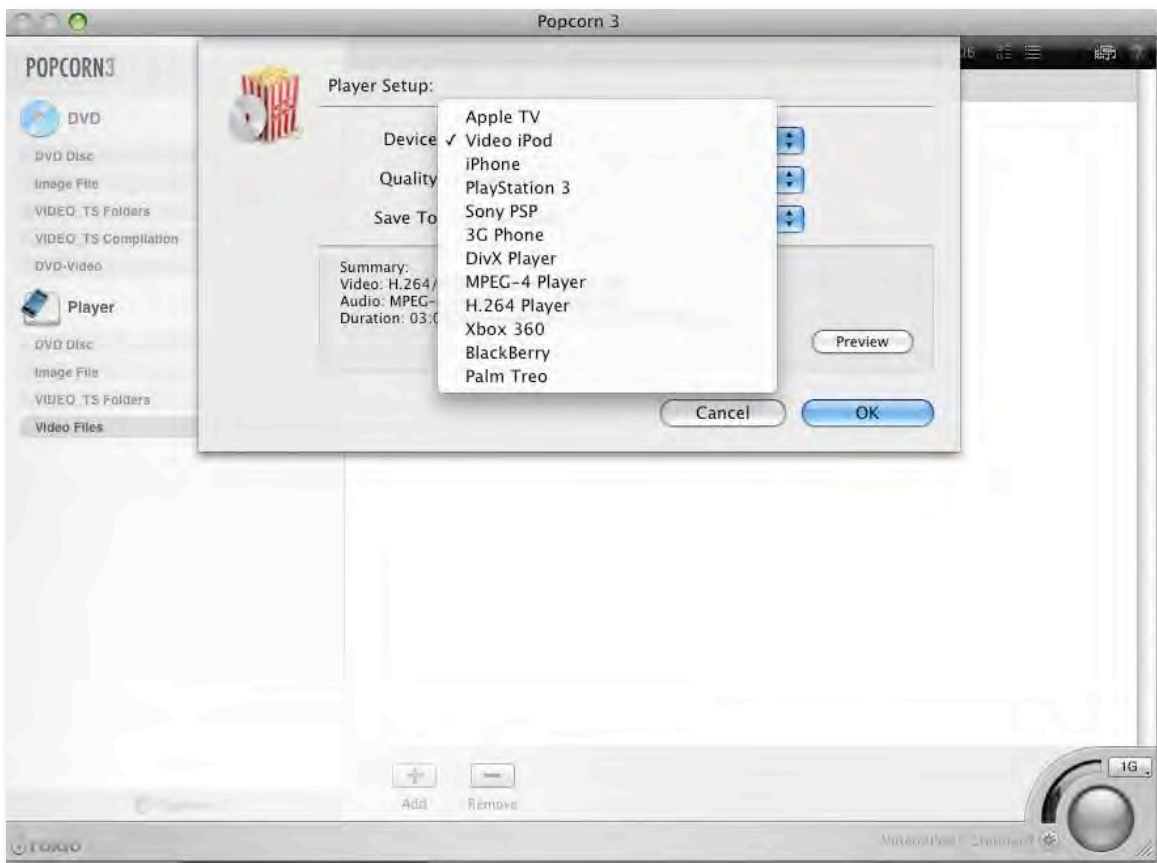
The main Popcorn window is divided into two areas. On the left side is the source where the user chooses where the file(s) to work with come from. The right side is the content area where you see a list of the files that are currently being worked with and lets you interact with them. On the bottom of the right side are two buttons, one clicks open to show a menu of formats the file can be converted to and the other tells Popcorn to begin its work. Like Toast, Popcorn 3 offers a media browser that knows the basic media locations on a Mac and provides it's own browser interface for selecting media to work with. It also includes a media viewer so you can watch the videos to make sure you are working with the right one.



Popcorn can convert a video file to work with a variety of different video players. The list includes, Video iPod, Apple TV, iPhone, Xbox360, Playstation 3, Sony PSP, Blackberry, and PalmTreo, as well as a basic video formats such as DIVx and H264. The list includes all the really popular methods of viewing videos.

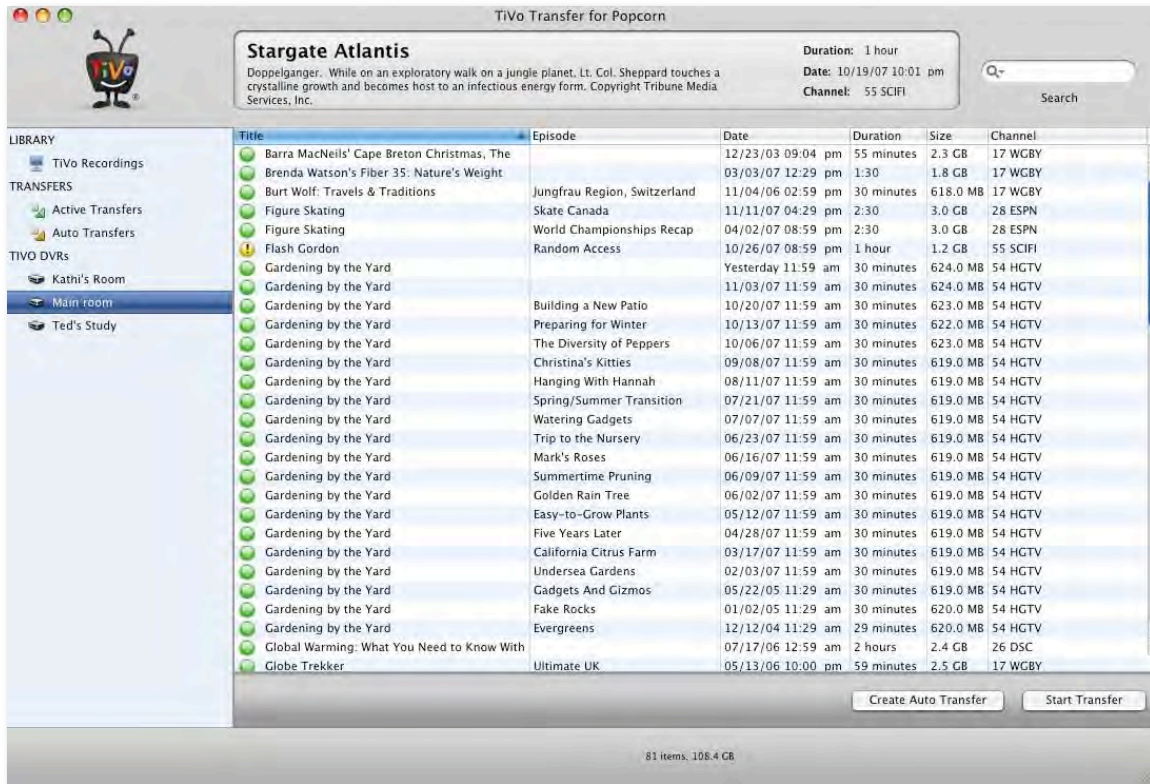
Obviously, since this is a commercial product, Popcorn will extract video files only from non-commercial DVDs. Which means if you or someone you know has made their own DVD for any purpose, you can extract and convert this material. It won't open or convert commercial DVD movies.

Working with Popcorn is relatively easy. Drop a video file onto the content area (or select it using the other various means provided), then select a format to convert it to, and finally press the start button to begin the conversion. Popcorn gives users limited control on what happens during the conversion. When converting to one of the various players, you essentially control the quality (the quality choices are based on the device you are converting to) and the location the file is stored. For video formats used by Apple devices, the default location is iTunes, which makes a lot of sense.



While the left side of the menu is mostly for choosing a source for your video, some of the choices define an output method. One can select DVD disk as a source to create a copy of a DVD, drag one or more Video TS folders to create a single DVD containing them all or create a DVD containing a single Video-TS folder, or create a DVD from any video or group of videos dragged onto the content side. Depending upon what you are doing with the video file, there are a variety of preferences that can be manipulated (or if you don't really know what to choose, go with the defaults, which are always a good choice.)

If you own a Tivo and have it connected to a network, Popcorn 3, as with Toast 8, allows you to transfer videos from the Tivo and then convert them for another player. This is really nice, since Tivo owners now have a lower cost commercial choice for working with their Tivo videos on the Mac. I found the interface for transferring files from our family of Tivos very nice and easy to deal with. The Tivo Transfer utility automatically locates Tivos on your network and lists them by the name you have given them (if you did this using the Tivo.com features. Otherwise you get a boring code name). Click on a Tivo, and you see a list of the items currently on that Tivo. If you select an item on that list, it will tell you about that show. This is generally a brief description of the show, the duration and the station that it came from.

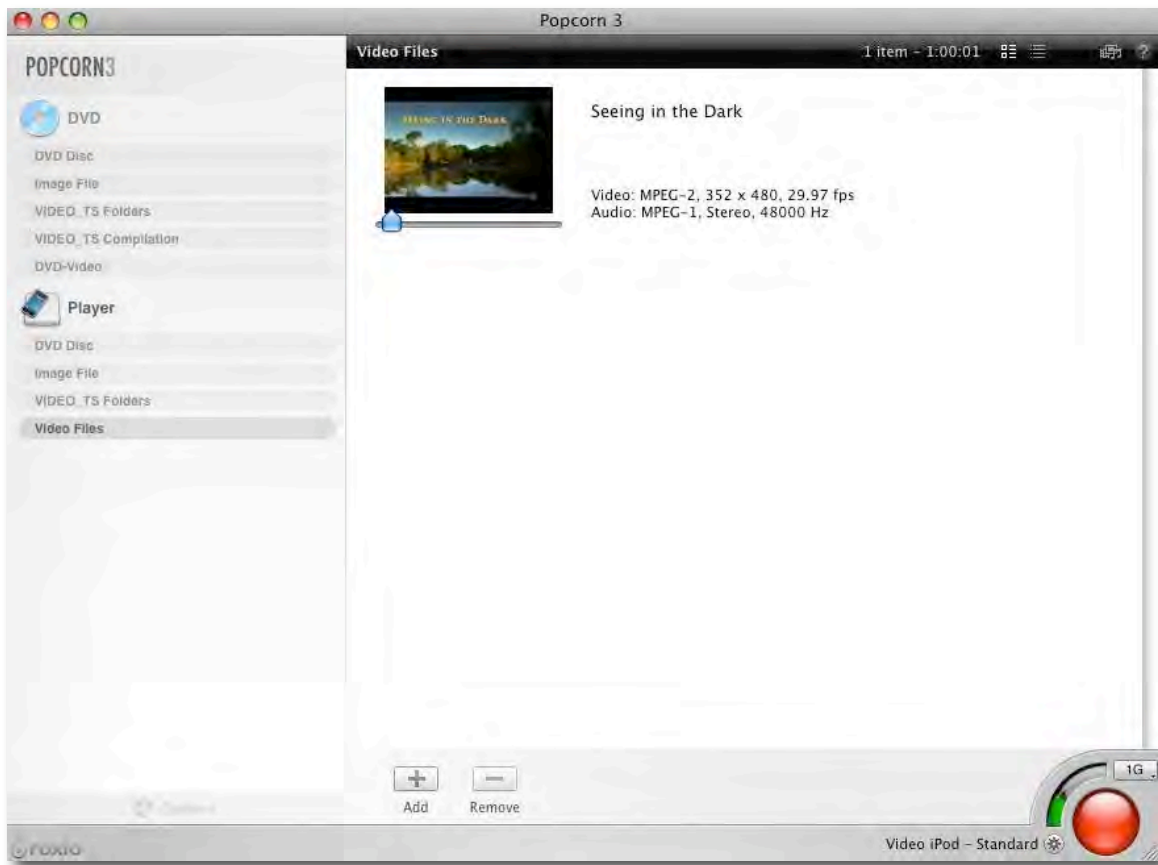


With the Tivo transfer interface, you can select to transfer one or more programs to your Mac and even set up an auto transfer that transfers new programs as they are recorded on your Tivo. It is a great interface for moving files from the Tivo to the Mac. My only problem is that the quality of the files transferred is limited. Although iTunes can handle larger video formats, Popcorn (in agreement with Tivo Corporation) limits the video size down to a smaller version. I wish that we could have full quality and sized videos. I realize that this is being done to make TV producers happy, but I don't intend to do anything but watch the shows on my Laptop or video iPod. Oh well.

Observations

While working with Popcorn 3 was pretty easy, I did have a few problems. It wasn't obvious to me, until I read the manual, that the little starred button on the content window was the means of selecting a player to format the video form. There are also relatively limited controls for manipulating the video. Granted, most people don't have a clue what most of them would do! I guess Roxio's feeling is that if you need more control, you will probably buy a higher end conversion package.

As with Toast 8, I found it very hard to get the video opening image just right. When you save the video to a DVD or another format, you can move through the video to choose a frame that acts as the splash screen for that video. To select the frame you move a pointer on the bottom of a thumbnail sized video window until the frame you would like to use appears. But this interface method is really clunky. You can spend a lot of time and frustration trying to get the right frame to show.



Conclusion

Overall, Popcorn 3 is a really nice program. If you have a need to convert videos from some source to another format and want an application that will just do the job nicely and easily, Popcorn 3 is a great choice. You will need to learn the interface, but once you get past that, it is easy to work with. Probably, most users will find themselves using the program to convert for their player of choice only. In my case, it is a terrific utility to move videos from my Tivo, format them for iTunes, and set them up to play on my PowerBook or my video iPod. If you have a need for a video conversion software package with a lot of power, be sure to check out Popcorn 3.

Posterino 1.3.1

Reviewed by Michael Potter

Zykloid Software

Zykloid Software
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Germany
+49 731 159792-00
Fax: +49 731 159792-05
<http://zykloid.com/>



\$24.95 / \$34.95 Household (up to 5 Macs)

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4+; Universal binary;
20 MB Hard Drive Space; Lots of RAM to render large
posters

Strengths: Super easy-to-use and customize, excellent integration with your Mac, strong export
feature, fun to use.

Weaknesses: Limited selection of templates included, lacks printing capability.

For a demo of this product: <http://zykloid.com/posterino>

Discussed in Episode #50 of *For Mac Eyes Only* – <http://formaceyesonly.blogspot.com/>

Introduction

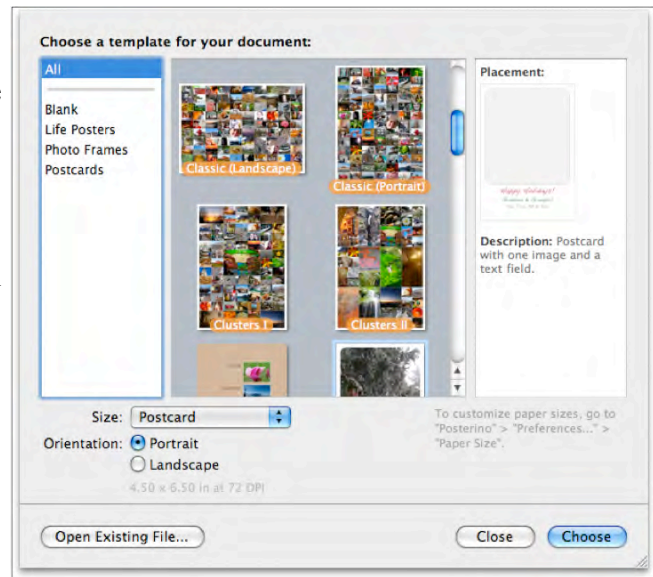
There are certain niche programs that fulfill small, but important, roles in our Mac using lives. One of those specialty programs, Comic Life, ships with every new Mac sold. And, though I've used Comic Life for a project or two, I know I've yet to use it to its full potential – and possibly never will. Even still, I've produced some pretty cool results that I'd be hard pressed to reproduce as easily using any other program.

Posterino from Zykloid Software is just such an application. I don't have cause to use it every day, but for creating custom posters to hang at family gatherings or putting an extra special touch on a photo you're e-mailing to your Aunt in Cucamonga, Posterino fills a gap that, perhaps, you never knew needed filling.

Using the Software

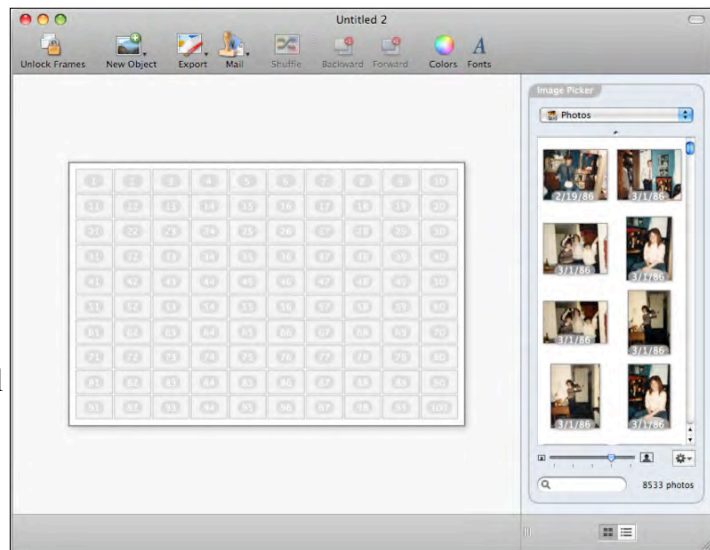
Posterino's installation is drag and drop simple. Taking up a meager 20 MB of your hard drive space, it instantly picks up and allows you to take advantage of photos stored in iPhoto, Aperture, the Pictures folder, iChat icons and Desktop pictures. Any of these can be easily turned on or off in the preferences. In addition, you can drag and drop images from a Finder window.

When first fired up, you're presented with a template picker. From here you can decide if you're going to work on a poster, photo frame or a postcard from a pre-defined template or start with a new, blank slate. The default poster size is 20x30 inches and 6.5x4.5 for a postcard. These are arguably the most common sizes, but if you'd like to work on an 8x10 or an A4 sized mini-poster you can do that too. And you shouldn't feel limited by what's built in to Posterino. Like so many features of this program, your selection of paper sizes can be quite extensively customized in the preferences.



Once a selection is made, a poster for example, you're presented with a blank template and a list of your images in a panel to the right.

When creating a poster like this, the prospect of dragging and dropping pictures into each and every frame in the template is a daunting one. Certainly it can be done and you may very well want to do this if you prefer to maintain control over every aspect of the design, but for those of use who say, "There's no way in heck I'm gonna drag all those images in there!?", Posterino has an answer for you as well.



First, you can use Posterino's Fill command. With your iPhoto library, a Smart Album or Finder folder of pictures selected, you can instruct Posterino to begin filling the poster with the available images. It will fill in the order they're found in iPhoto unless you instruct the program otherwise in preferences. For me, prepping a selection of photos in iPhoto or Aperture and then using Fill is much easier when creating a poster than the drag and drop method. You can also opt to randomly fill the poster from your selections if you'd like a more varied look to the poster. This second

option is the one I use most often. No matter which route of filling the poster you choose, you can always use the Shuffle command to randomize the images a bit more after they're placed.

Creating a postcard is equally easy. With a much smaller canvas on which to work, deciding on 365 images to fill up a postcard is never an issue. Instead you're typically limited to 5 or 6 at most.

The templates provided are very tastefully composed and, should they prove to not be sufficient, it's very easy to modify an existing template or create a new one that can be saved and recalled for future projects.

It's this customizability of Posterino that impresses me the most. Every aspect of the program, it seems, can be modified. Rearranging the image frames, text elements or what part of a photo is exposed in a frame is all as easy as dragging a handle. Frames are identified with blue handles, images with orange. A double click in the image area exposes the orange handles. One thing to watch out for is that it's possible to drag the handles outside of the working area. Once you've done so, you'll have to move the object around to expose that handle again. Zooming in or out of the project does not re-expose the handles.

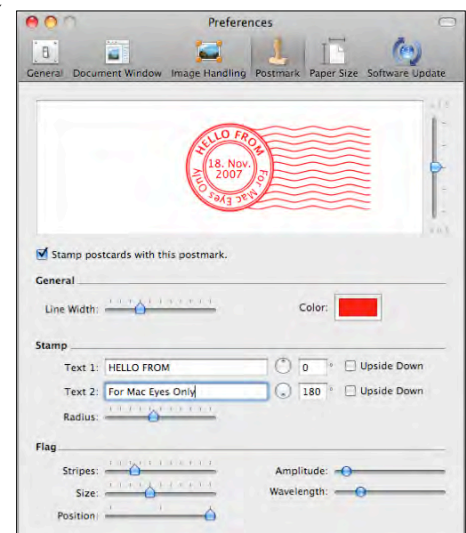
Speaking of zooming, in a minor quibble, Posterino does not automatically fit a project to the window if you resize the application window. You can use the View menu to Zoom In or Out and Fit to Window, but I'd like to see this happen automatically.

One of my favorite features of Posterino is the postmark you can add to your postcards. As long as your postcard has a "stamp" on it, it will be canceled with this postmark when output. Though it seems a rather trivial thing to focus on, adding this to a postcard you send gives it that extra special sense of authenticity.

Where this really gets cool is in Posterino's preferences where you can adjust everything about the postmark including the text. Things like the number of stripes, their position, amplitude and wavelength can all be set to your liking. And if you prefer to stamp your cards with a blue postmark, you can do that too. The date is set automatically to your system clock. To make it even more authentic, you have the option in preferences to set the number of random variations Posterino adds to your stamps and postmarks. It's great fun to play around with. One thing I'd like to see added to the postmark preferences is a button to revert things back to factory defaults.

The stamp we're canceling with our individualized postmark can be customized too. I'm sure I would have discovered this eventually, but I stumbled upon the fact that you can change the image on the stamps. Simply drag a photo onto the stamp, adjust its position and size and you've got your own personalized stamp! Very cool.

So we've created our posters, postcards and picture frames in Posterino, but the question is what do we do with them?



Basically you have two choices for most of the projects you create. You can either export your project or mail it. Exporting your project to a file or iPhoto allows you to either bring it to a local print shop or use iPhoto's print service for output. Unless you're lucky enough to have a printer capable of pushing through a 20x30 sheet of paper, using either of these methods is necessary for most poster-sized prints.

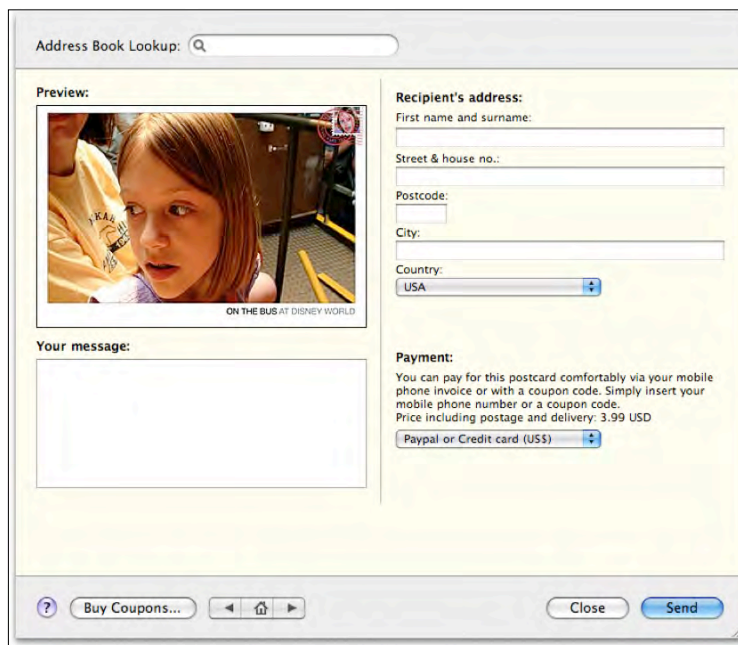
Choosing to export to iPhoto is a no questions asked proposition. It saves the image in JPG format and imports it to your library. Choosing Save to Disk, however, gives you a bit more control over such things as the amount of compression to apply and the file format (JPG or TIF). Once saved to disk, you can always manually add it to iPhoto. I'd like to see an export to PDF option, but perhaps that will be in a future version. Unfortunately, you can't use OS X's built in print to PDF option because Posterino has no Print functionality. Projects must be exported and printed elsewhere.

The final export option is the ability to upload to Flickr. When choosing this option you can set a Title, Description and put tags on the image. You can also adjust the size and whether it will have a border and shadow.

All in all, Posterino's export capabilities are fairly rich.

The other output method Posterino supports is Mailing your creation. When you choose this, you can opt to either e-mail it or, in a highly original feature I've not seen in a program like this before, have it sent as a real, live, postcard! Surprisingly all the project types work well for e-mailing including the large posters. If you're e-mailing a poster, Posterino simply generates the image and asks how big you'd like the file attachment to be. It, like the other features of the program, is very well thought out to make it easy for the user.

Sending a real postcard is a curious feature. After creating your poster, picture frame or postcard, you can click. Send as Postcard and the file gets uploaded to Zykloid software's servers where you then type in (or choose from your address book) the recipient's name, address and country. You can also type in a personal message that will be printed on the postcard. Payment can be made using a wide variety of options including PayPal, via coupon codes pre-purchased from Zykloid's site or even your mobile phone if you live in Germany, Austria or Switzerland. Now that's cool. The cost of mailing a postcard via Swiss post can be pricey at \$3.99, but when you consider they're printing the card and applying the appropriate postage as well, it's not so bad. The price falls quickly, however, if you purchase more than one postcard in the coupon shop.



As I said at the beginning of this review, Posterino is one of those applications you might not seek out if you otherwise didn't know it existed. Once you've added it to your arsenal of programs, however, there are all sorts of projects you could dream up.

A listener of my podcast, Philip Brown, recently received a copy of Posterino and we traded some e-mails about its features. We both agreed that it may take some effort to fully come to grips with all it can do, but once you have, the possibilities are endless.

One suggestion Phil had that I'd not thought of is wrapping paper! Philip wrote: *"Posterino could be used to produce personalised gift-wrap including a combination of photos and seasonal symbols. Small-sized gifts - needing just a piece of A4 (8.25" X 11.75") in the domestic printer would be best suited and I imagine that children could have fun working on a project like this."*

I agree. Any teachers out there reading this may want to look into Zykloid's generous educational site licenses for Posterino as well.

Posterino is not without its issues and I've touched on most of the minor annoyances above. One small additional thing I noted while using it is in the Details panel for the project. When working on a project measured in inches – such as a 6.5in x 4.5in postcard - the details window depicts it as 6.5mm x 4.5mm, rather than inches. Clearly that's not correct or it would be one of the world's smallest postcards ever created. Fortunately this is merely an aesthetic issue because, aside from the nomenclature, the dimensions are accurate and come out correctly when exported. *(note: this has since been fixed in the "cutting edge" builds of Posterino!)* The only other issue I've had with the program is a random crash that's occurred twice in all the time I've used it. This could be Leopard, it could be Posterino or it could be something else, but after losing two postcards I'd started but not yet saved, I've gotten in the habit of saving my projects regularly – as you should anyway.

If I had a wish list for future versions of Posterino it would be this:

I'd like to see the ability to design both sides of a "real" postcard. I can understand why there might be limitations on this, but it would be a nice, advanced feature to have. As it is, your design is printed on one side and your message, addressee information and postage is placed on the other.

So far, I've yet to find a common image format Posterino can't handle. Not only have I been able to include JPGs, TIFs and GIFs in my projects, but also Photoshop PSD images and PDFs without so much as a squawk from the program. The only format it didn't like was an Illustrator file I tried to throw at it just for kicks. I'm impressed at it's ability to take advantage of all these different formats. However, I would like to see two things added to Posterino's photo handling capabilities: First, I'd like to be able to browse Events (Rolls) in my iPhoto library. Second, I'd like to be able to import Illustrator files and add them to the New Object menu where I could use them as custom objects on a page. A logo, for example, or maybe custom borders for your pictures.

The poster options in the program are great, but it would be awesome if they added a photo mosaic feature similar to the shareware application, MozoDojo. Even after all these years of them being around, people still love to look at photo mosaic posters. Especially kids. Witness the new mosaic option added to Leopard's screen savers as proof. Photo mosaic posters seem a perfect fit for Posterino.

And finally, I really think printing and exporting to PDF should be part of the package.

With the rapid pace of development Zykloid software has had on their site in the past few months, I wouldn't be surprised if any of these features were already in the works.

Conclusion

At \$24.95, Posterino is a pretty good deal for anyone who likes to get creative with their photos and, unlike many applications of this sort, it isn't limited to working with iPhoto exclusively. I can think of a few events where a poster of the year gone by would be very cool to display. Zykloid suggests a "best of" poster to create and hang each month. It really is left up to your creativity.

Of all the features in Posterino, I believe the postcard is the one I'll make the most use of. It's a unique way to share pictures with family members and is certainly much nicer to look at than the standard message body filled with seemingly unrelated image attachments.

Posterino is best summed up with a quote from Phil Brown's son who was on the receiving end of an e-mailed Posterino postcard. He said: *"It lets you get some use out of digital photos that's not otherwise obvious."*

I couldn't have said it better myself.

pzizz 2.3 tackles sleep deprivation and energy dips

Reviewed by Daphne Kalfon

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+971 4 3918702(fax)
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P.O. Box 73000
Building 3
Office 117
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
customercare@pzizz.com
<http://www.pzizz.com/>

Released: August 28, 2007

Price:

pzizz Bundle (includes licenses for both energizer and sleep modules): \$49.95 (download only)

pzizz Energizer \$29.95 (download only)

pzizz Sleep: \$29.95 (download only)

pzizz box set (contains both Mac and Windows versions of pzizz energizer and sleep) \$49.95

pzizz handheld unit (only supports the energizer module but comes with the box set): \$147.00

System Requirements: minimum recommended hardware for pzizz is a G4 1GHz computer with 1GB RAM and Mac OS X 10.4.

Download: <http://www.pzizz.com/download>



The website mentions that pzizz works just fine with Leopard so go ahead and upgrade to the new OS :)

Strengths: customizable; easy to use; lots of new help features; the health benefits gained from this software far outweigh the already reasonable price.

Weaknesses: none found.

Screencasts: <http://www.pzizz.com/screencasts/downloading>

Forum: <http://www.pzizz.com/forum/>

FAQs: <http://www.pzizz.com/support/faq>

Revolutionary power napping and sleeping software that's already helping thousands of people to cope with today's hectic world.

At the website, you can download a free 15 minute "taste of pzizz". This trial version allows you to see how pzizz works, and it's available in Mac, Universal Binary and Windows (XP or Vista) versions.

Pzizz offers free upgrades on their software - forever (very generous indeed) and they also offer a 100% full money back guarantee. So, you definitely have nothing to lose.

Each key can be used on up to 3 computers (PC or Mac) and you can use the same keys you have from previous versions.

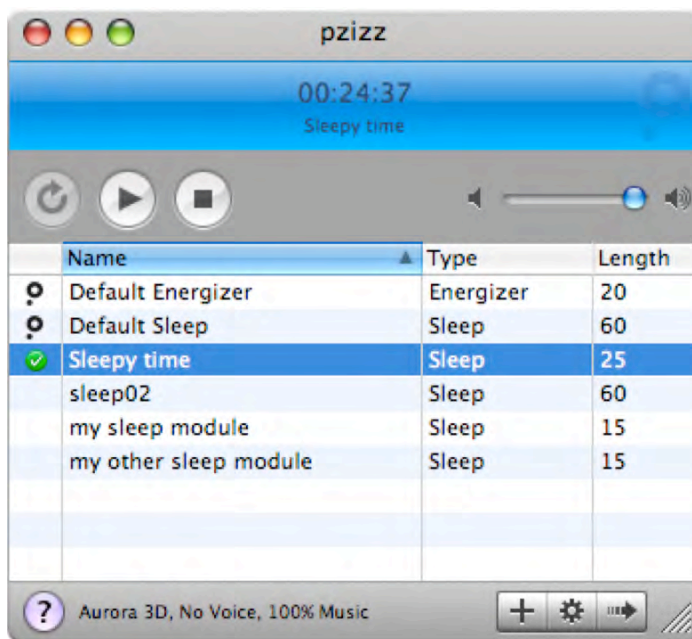
Introduction

Pzizz 2.3 is the newest upgrade to this revolutionary power-napping and sleep software developed by Brainwave Enterprises, a developer of specialized software. It's a life-enhancing tool that can be used anytime, anywhere, and is customizable to the individual users' needs. The regular use of pzizz software has been proven to reduce stress levels, improve decision-making abilities and enhance overall day to day functioning.

Getting Started

After you install pzizz, you can watch the short tutorial video/screencast "Welcome to pzizz". It takes you through "License Key Installation", "Preset Creation" and "Exporting Soundtracks".

For the first of these three, the screencast shows you step by step, how to install a license key for the energizer module. It explains how the module can be installed but not licensed, the latter of which has to be done in order to be able to start using it. The default energizer module is 20 minutes in length and the default sleep module is 60 minutes in length.



For "Preset Creation", the presentation shows you how to quickly create a sample soundtrack preset. The options allow you to name your preset, choose between stereo and aurora 3D voice effects, and choose when you want to hear the spoken suggestions ("Regular", "Intro and Wakeup Only" and "No Voice"). Using horizontal sliders, you can also adjust the soundtrack length which can range from 0 - 60 minutes and you can set a delay for the alarm which plays at the end of the soundtrack, which can range from 2 - 10 seconds. Using vertical sliders, you can adjust voice and music volumes. There is a button "test levels" which allows you to check the volume settings you've chosen. Click the "okay" button and you're done.

Using these options, you can create an infinite variety of your own customized modules. For example, you can create anything from a quick 15-minute energizer module to a 90-minute super energizer module.

For "Exporting Soundtracks", you are shown how to export a few soundtracks to iTunes. With a few easy steps, you can choose which soundtracks you want to export to either your iTunes library or to a folder. From there you can load it onto your mobile device.

To get the most out of pzizz, check out the handy hints provided at this link:

<http://www.pzizz.com/hints>

The program also comes with “pzizz Help”. There are 4 sections: a guide to help you learn about pzizz’s features, info about the pzizz creation team, an F.A.Q. which addresses common problems, and info on purchasing a license key.

Using the Software

I first tried the Energizer module called “Default Energizer”. It is 20 minutes in length, with music, soundscapes, sound effects and a relaxing male voiceover. I really enjoyed the variety and combination of music, sound and voice and felt refreshed and energized at the end. The alarm beeps at the very end weren’t jarring or too loud - they were just right and all that is necessary if you want to make sure that you wake up in case you happen to have fallen asleep during the module. I highly recommend the Energizer module (or your own customized one) for those times in the middle of the day when you need a “time-out” and are able to get away and do it.

I then listened to a large portion of the “Default Sleep” module. This one also has a relaxing male voiceover but the music and sounds are different than those used in the Energizer module. I found that this module was really effective in helping me to relax and go to sleep in the right frame of mind...quiet and calm. The voiceover is very well done – it’s interesting to listen to and it isn’t continuous but rather intermittent as with the changes in music and sounds.

I also created a few of my own modules with and without voiceover and of varying lengths and they worked well too. Using the features I mentioned earlier, I created a couple of shorter sleep modules for example, with and without voiceover, and they are just fine to use as well. I really like how you can customize the modules to suit individual needs - it’s a very valuable and useful feature.

At this point I should mention that prior to this review, I had already been using pzizz. I created a pzizz sleep module without voiceover, and I’ve been using it in conjunction with some of my favourite visualizations. I must say that pzizz works very well when used in this way as well. Not only is it easy to go through the visualizations when accompanied by the soundscapes, music and sound effects used in the pzizz sleep module, but when done before bed, it really does help me to sleep better. So, you can really go one of three ways: sleep module with voiceover, sleep module without voiceover, or sleep module with no voiceover accompanied by your own visualizations.

Conclusion

Pzizz is a great tool for anyone looking to reduce some of the daily stress in their lives or for those who would like to sleep more deeply, soundly and consistently at night. You can sync any number of customized soundtracks to your mobile device and are good to go anywhere, with pzizz available to you at the touch of a button. From new parents to professionals to athletes, this is an invaluable tool for relaxation and better sleep.

Recommendation

I've been using pzizz myself for a number of months, and I highly recommend it to anyone. With the free trial and money back guarantee, you can't go wrong and have nothing to lose anyway. Besides regular physical exercise, pzizz is probably one of the best things you can do to improve your overall health. Pzizz would make a great gift for anyone on your list :)

2007 macCompanion Magazine Index

Prepared by Wayne Lefevre

Each review is accessible at - <http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives.htm>

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| Adobe Acrobat 8 How-Tos: 125 Essential Techniques | Adobe Press | October |
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| Web Graphics Creator 3.0 | Laughingbird Software LLC | July |
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| What ToDo 1.2.1 | Objective Satisfaction | October |
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We are the Macintosh® Professional Network (MPN), Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). MPN, LLC continues to evolve, ever since its creation in 1996 as a way to reach out to those who use computers for a living in an effort to make their lives easier and their work both enjoyable and profitable.

We also provide monthly book, hardware and software reviews at [macCompanion](#). 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”.

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

The *macCompanion* Staff