macCompanion
YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH

I ♥

MyMac

Volume 6 Issue 2

Cover by Michele Patterson

Masthead

Our special thanks to all those who have allowed us to review their products!
In addition, thanks to you, our readers, who make this effort all possible.

EN EVO NETWORKS

Data Center Express

Because your data is worth it.
The Data Center Express is the first ever secure, fully integrated, completely flexible and remotely managed data center designed specifically for smaller organizations.

Data Center Express Overview

Evo Network's Data Center Express (DCE) is the only fully integrated, completely flexible and remotely managed data center designed specifically for small organizations with 5 to 100 users. The DCE features integrated security, collaboration services, disaster recovery, and remote access. All of which, scale to meet future business demands. This is a true enterprise class data center solution for a fraction of the price. Best of all, no in-house IT staff is required.

The Data Center Express is at home in any office.

DCE At A Glance

- Single solution for storing and managing data in your organization with up to 1.5 terabytes of storage (1500 GB)
- Shipped to you preconfigured and ready to go
- Integrated Firewall protects entire network from external threats
- Handles 800+ secure remote connections (VPN)
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- Disaster recovery solution protects servers, desktops, and notebooks
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- Protective, whisper quiet desk-height enclosure with casters
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- Optional 24x7 Support + Maintenance
- Mac and Windows Versions Available
- Designed and Assembled in the USA

The IT Challenges Your Small Business Faces

As small businesses grow, they begin to accumulate a hodgepodge of computing technology. While this may seem like the nature of the beast, trying to use and control the growth of an IT infrastructure that was never designed to work together becomes a nightmare to manage, expensive to repair (what was your last IT support bill), and in the end isn't even very reliable or secure.

With the IT industry as fast paced and complex as it is, SB owners and managers find it hard to create and maintain an IT solution that provides a reliable, secure and scalable infrastructure that eases the communication of information and ideas with the organization, its partners and its clients.

The Data Center Express Solution

The DCE was designed specifically to address these challenges. It combines industry standard technology to create an all-in-one solution designed to work together, but more importantly designed to work for your business.

Integrated security, collaboration services, disaster recovery and remote access make this a true enterprise class data center solution for a fraction of the price of typical data centers.

This scalable solution also means your business can continue to grow and evolve without having to "rip-and replace" the DCE or its components.

EN offers truly affordable and comprehensive 24x7 service and support for those companies that have few or no IT staff.

Express Financing

Commerce Bank We have financing available through Commerce Bank.

Secure Your Information	Simplify Collaboration	Insure Against Disaster	Eliminate IT Headaches	Evolves With Your Business

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Where are your Priorities?

By Robert Pritchett

Free Speech is limited to those who own a free press.

Do we love Apple? Not so much perhaps, is my lament. The Apple PR folks don't call back or submit any hardware or software to *macCompanion* magazine. I honestly feel ignored or worse. Apple Corporation treats pro-Apple publications less than stellar, so we should not feel like the lone stranger, but I still have to wonder…

After nearly 6 years of monthly publications for the Macintosh computer and watching the increase of users go from a few million to many millions, I'm ready to move on to other ventures and so you may see other folks taking over as publisher and editor-in-chief of the magazine soon. They can turn it into gold. Me, apparently not so much. So I need to delegate accordingly.

If you go to http://www.macsurfer.com, you will see a host of publications both off and online with us intermixed with them. All of them are struggling. Few are really prospering. How do we differentiate ourselves from the Apple Pack™? We provide reviews that may not be exactly what the manufacturers and software developers want to see in print. We have not been bought yet (snarky remark), though we are looking for buyers willing to carry the torch of truth and honesty in publishing. And our reviews need to be more "timely" – as in immediately instead of only once a month. We could follow the lead established by many on our staff who have their own websites and Mac-based businesses.

Public Relations

A good story can take care of itself and is worth retelling over and over. I don't think original story-telling is really my forté. I'm good at finding information and disseminating it. I don't spin tales (dishonest lying about products) and I don't expect our staff to do so either. Sometimes the truth we find rubs the wrong way to manufacturers and software developers, but we feel compelled to tell it anyway, because we still believe in the golden rule in how we treat each other.

Ray Barber has done a great job gathering Pubic Relations material over on his website at http://www.prmac.com. Public Relations for computer systems sometimes has to work extra hard on stories that need to be compelling to be worth listening to or reading. Sometimes products speak for themselves. Anyway, Ray Barber has created a fee-based venue for them that is over a year old now and it is doing nicely. We established a prMac page on our website to keep up with the news –

http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/prmac/prmac.php

In A Funk

Maybe it is just me, but I'm not seeing as many "good" stories with the latest MacWorld Expo and since the economy is taking a nosedive – along with the political scene, I perhaps need to move on myself. I feel that the MacBook Pro Air is just so much hot air after all. To me, it is designed for a limited audience and is full of compromises and requires expensive add-ons to get it up to speed. I expected better. I should be excited about MacWorld, but I have been feeling an anxiety attack lately! –

http://www.macworld.com/article/131864/2008/01/macbookair.html
http://www.amazon.com/gp/blog/post/PLNK1K03AZRFGK9R5

I'd rather have one of these – MacBook AirCraft – wouldn't you?
http://cultofmac.com/?p=1706

So Retro – missing a Parallel port, RS232 connection, MIDI Interface and an ADB connector though…and again, perhaps they are over on the left side of the machine ;^)

Feedback Loop

Meanwhile, we recently established a long overdue feedback loop so each of you may comment on articles published in *macCompanion* magazine over on CollectiveX –

http://macComp.collectivex.com/discussion/forum/show/43246.rss

It is always good to read how well we do and if we mess up, ways on how we can improve. Perhaps that will get me feeling loved again and get my groove back.

Yes, our website needs to be improved and updated. It is on our To-Do list.

Software Definitions

Over on the Mac Business Software Forum (macsb) the discussion regarding software categories cropped up again –

Martin Pilkerton of http://www.mcubedsw.com wrote;

Freeware - Closed source free software
Donationware - Software where you pay if you want
Shareware - Software where a user gets the entire application with a time/feature/data limit but where entering a code removes those
limits (the important thing is they don't have to download anything new)
Demoware - Software where the user gets a limited version of the application, built exclusively to show off the features. When users buy the application they then have to download/install a different version
In other words, if your application is also the demo, it is shareware. If the demo and application are different executables then it's a Demo of commercial software.

Andrew Satori of http://www.druware.com wrote;

In the chef analogy, it works fairly well in most cases, but the comment raised by Martin is accurate, it also has a reasonable answer though:

A chef works for 10-15 minutes per plate served, and has to pay the prep cook, dishwasher and support staff out of the price per plate. Each plate has an associated cost of the raw materials plus the labor of about 10-15 minutes per plate.

Software can take years to develop, and rather than have each person that licenses the software absorb the entire cost of the development, that cost is split among the potential buyers, what you are being asked to pay is the equivalent of your share of the appetizer plate that everyone at the table splits.

The problem is that most people understand this, but they don't want to hear it because ultimately, very few people are generous with their money and the explanation will fall on deaf ears, hence the reason that 'Shareware' in its traditional form is gone. People don't pay unless they have to, and as such, 'Demoware' has supplanted shareware.

In *macCompanion*, we have recently consolidated references to freeware, shareware, donationware into the Software section, based on monitoring what has been going on in the software development community. "Demoware" has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

New Energy Congress

I met with Sterling Allan in Salt Lake City on my way back from a business trip to Florida and he and his team agreed to allow me be a part of the New Energy Congress. So I will be devoting time and energy to this new venture, since it explores new worlds relating to alternative energy systems –

http://peswiki.com/index.php/New_Energy_Congress

LinkedIn

I felt it necessary to establish a Solar Energy Consultant Group over on the Professional Social network known as *LinkedIn*. So far, it has worked nicely and has allowed me to make contact with a wide array of very knowledgeable people who are involved in the Solar Energy industry –

http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/47674/6B718533E884

Will Apple manufacture a Liahona device?

I firmly believe that we are given inspiration from above for blessing mankind. In the Book of Mormon, an instrument for guiding folks to come from the Middle East to the Americas was used that had directional pointers and occasional text messages associated with them as instructions from a loving, kind and caring Supreme Being – only if the people who had this device were living righteously back around 600 BC. It was named the "Liahona" –

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liahona_%28Book_of_Mormon%29

Today we have inspired Global Positioning System (GPS) devices that work loosely in a similar fashion, albeit from different sources and for different purposes –

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

The GPS field is rather crowded, so I suspect that Apple will not provide such a dedicated device. But imagine if they did! What if they provided such technology in their iPhone units? We may see something this direction in the Spring of 2008 from Apple. I wasn't the first to think of it – (but really, do you want to be tracked by government interests?) –

http://www.navigadget.com/index.php/2007/05/23/rumor-iphone-to-get-gps-in-2008/

Meanwhile, make our day by reading what our staff has to say about Apple-based products and software that have helped improve lives, reduced frustration and in a few instances made certain folks very, very rich.

We have to console ourselves with the belief that we at *macCompanion* magazine are making a positive difference in the lives around us throughout the world. Richness for us comes from personal relations and contacts – and we established quite a few good ones over the years. Thank you!

If only Apple loved us as much as we love (some) Apple products…

Now stay healthy, go get your bills paid, your tax papers submitted before April and avoid getting sucked into the next Recession/Depression/bad juju and enjoy being with your immediate and extended families. They give you lasting love and will be around much longer than any Apple computer. Isn't that where priorities should be, after all?

According to Hoyle...

Running Classic on Leopard, Part III
February 2008
by Jonathan Hoyle

jhoyle@maccompanion.com
macCompanion
http://www.jonhoyle.com

For the past two months, we have been investigating solutions for the Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard user who wishes to continue running Classic applications.

In Part I
http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/December2007/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm,
we examined three open source applications: *SheepShaver*, *Basilisk* & *Mini vMac*, detailing performance and installation procedures.

In Part II
http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/January2008/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm,
we explored optimization settings for these, as well as discuss the viability of additional emulators, such as *Mac-on-Mac*, *PearPC*, *Executor* and *SoftMac*. I have received the most email on these articles, so this month, we conclude by summarizing our findings and handling some Q & A.

1. Can you give me a summary of the emulators you reviewed?

SheepShaver is the only PowerPC emulator which can run Classic, making it the most important one to consider. *Basilisk* behaves very much like *SheepShaver* with the exception that it is a 68K emulator. Both run on PowerPC-based Macs, Intel-based Macs and Windows. Each of the remaining emulators we reviewed have serious defects, making them unworthy of further consideration: The current versions of *SoftMac* and *PearPC* do not work properly on the Mac, *Executor* and *Mini vMac* emulate very ancient Macintosh computers, and *Mac-on-Mac* and *PearPC* do not run Classic at all. For these reasons, we will focus exclusively on *SheepShaver* and *Basilisk* from this point onward. However, it is worth noting that all these solutions are free to try, so you are not out any money if you wish to try these for yourself.

2. So, what's the bottom line then?

In the end, if you need serious interaction with a Classic application, your best bet is to stay with Mac OS X 10.4.11 running on a fast G5. None of the solutions offer anywhere near the simple, clean experience offered by Apple's *Classic Environment*. Even getting past the initial effort of installation, accessing common files and drives is a major pain, and bugs riddle these emulators. Moreover, you are stuck using archaic versions of the Classic operating system, as nothing I tried worked with versions 9.1 or later. If your needs are modest, however, and you need only access a few self-contained apps, then one of these solutions may be marginally acceptable.

3. That's disappointing. I'd be willing to pay $200 or so for a Classic emulator that worked well. Any chance of this happening?

Probably not. Unfortunately, the plethora of free partial solutions has undermined the business case for a commercial project. As time goes forward, the number of potential customers will only decline, further making the proposition unattractive. The bottom line is this: if Apple does not think it is worth continuing to supporting its own *Classic Environment*, how much less of a value is it to a vendor who must reinvent it from scratch?

4. Okay, let's say for sake of argument I am interested in trying it out. Which one is the better for me: SheepShaver or Basilisk?

For most people, *SheepShaver* is the best choice, as it is the only PowerPC emulator that can run Classic. However, if all the Classic apps you wish to run support 68K, Intel-based Mac users will do better with *Basilisk*.

5. What do I need to do to run SheepShaver?

Essentially, you need to obtain these three items: the *SheepShaver* software itself (a free download), a Power Macintosh ROM file, and a version of the classic Mac OS which is compatible with the ROM file you are using.

The hardest of these to obtain is typically the ROM file. Probably the quickest way is to do so is to download the *Mac OS ROM Update* - 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.

Once the disk image is mounted, you will find a file named *Mac OS Update Tome*. This is the ROM file you want, although it is compressed as a Tome file. You can decompress it using the Classic application *TomeViewer* - http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macos/4561.

6. How do I obtain Macintosh System Software?

It depends on which version of the System Software you wish to use. *SheepShaver* emulates a Power Macintosh 9500 series computer which requires System 7.5.3 or higher. Apple provides System 7.5.x as a free download - http://download.info.apple.com/Apple_Support_Area/Apple_Software_Updates/English-North_American/Macintosh/System/Older_System/.

For System 7.6 onward, you will need to acquire these on your own, such as on EBay. It is important to remember to ensure that the System Software you are loading is supported by the Mac ROMs you are using. The maximum version of the System Software supported by *SheepShaver* is Mac OS 9.0.4.

7. How do I obtain a Mac ROM file?

There are two types of Macintosh ROMs: *Old World ROMs* and *New World ROMs*. *New World ROMs* are those distributed as part of the operating system (Mac OS 8.5 and higher), as a file named *Mac OS ROM* inside the System Folder. Unfortunately, not all *New World ROMs* are compatible with *SheepShaver*, so it is important to be careful which you select.

For those wishing to run a pre-Mac OS 8.5 operating system with *SheepShaver*, you will need to acquire *Old World ROMs*. Since this type of ROM is built into the Macintosh hardware, a ROM reader - http://mes.emuunlim.com/tips/capturing_a_mac_rom_image.htm is typically needed to acquire these. Also, this web site - http://www.tsfsc.com/vintage.html may be able to offer help in this regard.

8. Could you email me a compatible ROM file?

Sigh. Unfortunately not. Legally, the ROMs are owned by Apple and you license their use. There are two ways to get a legitimate license to these ROMs: 1) through a download from Apple's web site (and the license agreement is part of the installation package), or 2) by acquiring a Macintosh computer and reading its ROMs. Many of you are aware that ROM files for a number of computers (Apples and otherwise) are circulated all over the Internet. Some of these are legal (those which are simply copies of the free ones from Apple); others however are not. Which are which is not always apparent at first glance. In any case, I have yet to hear of anyone serving time for a "non-licensed ROM file" rap. Perhaps Apple treats it as a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" situation?

9. I downloaded Mac System Software and ROMs directly from Apple, but SheepShaver refuses to boot. What happened?

The versions of your System Software and ROMs are not compatible with one another. Apple provided free System Software for versions up through 7.5.x. Beginning with System 7.6, Apple charged for these, and thus does not supply them as a free download. The versions of the Mac ROMs that can be downloaded from Apple require Mac OS 8.5 or higher. In other words, the freely downloadable ROMs do not work with the free System Software. If you use one, you cannot use the other.

10. So...what do I do now?

You either need to get ROMs compatible for your System Software, or System Software compatible with your ROMs. Since obtaining *SheepShaver*-compatible ROMs is usually more difficult than obtaining newer versions of Mac OS, you may find it easier to simply look around for later operating systems.

11. Okay, I obtained a Mac OS 9 Installation CD. However, it does not boot in SheepShaver.

There are a few possible reasons that this can happen. First and most obvious, your installation CD may not be bootable. You can tell if your CD is bootable by the existence of a System Folder at the root level of the CD. There are ways around some of these issues. One way is to begin with a pre-configured bootable hard drive file that *SheepShaver* understands. Emaculation.com provides a starter disk - http://www.emaculation.com/articles/starterdisk.zip which comes with System 7.5.3 pre-installed. (Note that you must use older ROMs to use this.) Once you have booted with System 7.5.3, than you can use your non-bootable installer.

Even if your Mac OS 9 installer is bootable, it may not work if you are using an installation CD designed for a specific computer, such as an iMac or PowerBook installation CD. The best way around this is to use the ROMs associated with that particular Macintosh.

If you have an installation CD, you may have access to the Mac it came with. If so, you simply need to boot into that Mac and run a ROM reader application to capture these ROMs (visit this link - http://mes.emuunlim.com/tips/capturing_a_mac_rom_image.htm for more information).

Finally, even a generic bootable Mac OS 9 install CD can fail if the CD is formatted as Mac OS Extended (HFS+). Due to a bug in *SheepShaver*, only Mac OS Standard (HFS) CD's appear to boot in *SheepShaver*. This is the situation I was in. I tried to burn a Mac OS Standard CD containing these files, but the Mac OS X disc burning doesn't make that easy. I ended up having to use a combination of steps: I obtained an older ROM file from the internet, used the System 7.5.3 starter disk mentioned above, then updated to Mac OS 8 (since System 7.5 does not understand *Mac OS Extended* format), and finally updated to Mac OS 9.0.4. Pheew!

12. The application I wish to use is 68K-based. Am I better off using SheepShaver or Basilisk?

PowerPC-based Mac users are better off running all their apps (68K or PPC) in *SheepShaver*. The reason for this is that Apple's built-in 68K emulator (which runs in *SheepShaver*) is faster than *Basilisk's* 68K emulator. For Intel-based Mac users, the opposite is true: *Basilisk* is by far much faster than *SheepShaver*, with CPU and Math performance being 9 times and 5 times better, respectively. This performance differential is due entirely to the fact that 68K apps have **two** layers of emulation in *SheepShaver* (68K translated into PPC, and PPC translated into Intel), whereas there is only one layer of emulation in *Basilisk* (68K directly translated into Intel).

13. If I wish to try Basilisk, what are my ROM and System Software options?

To run *Basilisk*, you must use ROMs from a 68K Macintosh, and these are all *Old World ROMs* (and thus, not downloadable from Apple). Therefore, you should use a ROM reading program - http://mes.emuunlim.com/tips/capturing_a_mac_rom_image.htm and get more information about acquiring ROMs - http://www.tsfsc.com/vintage.html. I recommend using the ROMs from a 68030- or 68040-based Mac II style computer. Once you have these ROMs, simply download the starter disk available from Emaculation - http://www.emaculation.com/articles/starterdisk.zip , which is a hard drive file with System 7.5.5 preinstalled. You can then upgrade this drive (if you wish) to a later version of the operating system, with a maximum of Mac OS 8.1.

14. Can I run other operating systems on these emulators, such as Linux?

Mostly not. These emulators do not emulate the target processor's MMU (Memory Management Unit) capabilities, something which is required by most Linux operating systems. There are Unix-like OS's which do not require the presence of an MMU, such as some versions of *MachTen* - http://www.tenon.com/products/machten/ and *Minix* - http://www.pliner.com/macminix/ and so these may work (but I have not tried them). If the client operating system lives within the application space of a Classic program, then chances are pretty reasonable that it will run in *SheepShaver* or *Basilisk*.

15. My emulator is running slow on my Intel-based Mac. How can I improve performance?

On an Intel-based Macintosh, the performance of *SheepShaver* and *Basilisk* can be tremendously improved by checking the *Enable JIT Compiler* checkbox found in the GUI application:

Even better performance is available for those running *Parallels* or *VMWare*, as the Windows versions of *SheepShaver* and *Basilisk* outperform their Mac counterparts. However, there are more crashes and compatibility problems using these Windows versions, so I would not recommend this approach unless performance is critical and more important than robustness.

16. What value (if any) is there of the other emulators?

For emulating a Mac Plus, *Mini vMac* - http://minivmac.sourceforge.net/download.html is certainly the best. *Executor* - http://www.ardi.com is one the fastest emulators for a pre-System 7 environment, but has some compatibility problems. Furthermore, it is a Windows app, so you will need to be running *Parallels* or *VMWare* to use it. *Mac-on-Mac* - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mac-on-Mac does not support Classic, but does a fairly decent job of running earlier versions of Mac OS X. Unfortunately, *Mac-on-Mac* does not run on Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger or later, and development appears to have all but stopped.

Neither *PearPC* - http://pearpc.sourceforge.net nor *SoftMac* - http://www.emulators.com
appear to run properly on the Mac, but perhaps future versions will address this problem.

Coming Up Next Month: Now that we have considered the Classic Mac OS, we now look toward other operating systems that you can run on your Mac, including the many flavors of Linux. See you in 30!

To see a list of all the According to Hoyle columns, visit:
http://www.jonhoyle.com/maccompanion

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

February 2008 Edition

By Harry {doc} Babad   © 2008

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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.

This month I continue sharing my occasional tip related finds with you. As the occasion warrants, some 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. Yes, I do write some of the tips I've discovered while Macin' around.

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:
- Your Home Folder is Special
- Will PandoCalendar be compatible When I Switch to Leopard?
- A Strangeness in PandoCalendar
- Don't Despair, Deal with Corrupted Documents
- Experiment With Smart Folders
- A MS Word Extra Paragraph Breaks Removal Tip
- Changing the Master Password for your Computer
- Leopard Users Don't Give Up on Eudora 6.2.4
- Use New Screen Region Capture Options in 10.5 and One Capture Hint for the Tiger
- Change icon view options in open and save dialogs in Leopard
- What is Identity Theft? How to Prevent it.

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Your Home Folder is Special

Your home folder (or home directory) is indicated by the little house icon, and it's a very special folder indeed. It must be located within the Users folder, which is at the root level of your hard disk. ("At the root level" means that you can see it as soon as you open the hard disk.)

If you succeed in moving your home folder out of this location or renaming it, the Mac will be confused to the extent that next time you start it up, it will create a brand new (essentially empty) home folder for you, and ignore the original one entirely. You will have the impression that all your personal documents, music, photos, settings, and whatever have gone west. They haven't, but it's surely a shock to the system (yours, not the Mac's).

But does the Mac OS even allow you to move your home folder to another place or to rename it? Insanely yes, as long as you're an Administrator user, which most of us are. Correcting the situation after a restart is not so easy!

Unless you want to pay someone to sort out the consequences, *do not move or rename your home folder*.

AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
From Paul Taylor's Hints and Tips Newsletter – October 2007

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Will PandoCalendar be compatible When I Switch to Leopard?
I wrote reviewed *PandoCalendar X 7.0.3 — A minimalist* KISS *Calendar for keeping dates] and notes [4.5 macCs] in the October 2007 macCompanion*. It simplicity, compared to Apples *iCal* is so welcoming that I've never abandoned it. Therefore, I checked its developer on whether it would be Leopard ready.

As long as you're running PandoCalendar 7.0.5, you should be fine on Mac OS X 10.5. Among the bugs it contained fixes for, was the only Leopard specific bug I've found.

Panda Systems <http://www.PandaCorner.com/>

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Strangeness in PandoCalendar
I noted, several weeks after I'd published my review, a strangeness PandoCalendar that I'd love fixed in a future version. Yes I know this PandoCalendar a labor of love for you... but feedback is my calling

Discomfort — I often need to enter repetitively scheduled meetings, such as those related to the organizations I volunteer for. Therefore I use the PandoCalendar advanced rule feature of the new appointment support function.

Okay here's the glitch. Although I my have a meeting for the men's club of my church every third Wednesday evening, the subjects (focus) for that meeting differs each month. I've tried to use the details window to show the differences, but as you know that doesn't work. A similar problem occurs when listing events for our community

concert series, every 1st and 3rd Saturday evening through the school year. But of course the focus of the concerts changes each month.

Developer Reply — Not being able to change the edit the title/details for individual occurrences of a recurring event isn't a bug. It's more of a catch 22. I've been aware of the limitation since I started working on the implementation of the recurrence system. When you set an event to recur, your causing THAT event to occur again on days in the future. All the occurrences are just aliases of the same event. Right now, I'm not sure when I'll be able to address this.

Doc sez, I'll be awaiting any solution you can implement; the program's value to me is with the wait.

Panda Systems <http://www.PandaCorner.com/>

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Don't Despair, Deal with Corrupted Documents
Not infrequently, Steve Cooper is asked to fix an apparent problem in an application, which turns out instead to be a problem with an individual document.

If you have a persistent problem in working on a document (such as odd formatting that you can't change, or strange characters that you can't delete), one thing you should try early in the process of troubleshooting is to see if the same problem appears in other similar documents. Open a new document; enter text, graphics or whatever of exactly the same kind as caused the problem originally. If the problem does not appear in the new document, you can be pretty sure the original document is corrupted. If the document represents a lot of work, the question will be how to rescue it.

As a first step, try cutting and pasting the content to a new, empty document; that is, select the content of the problem document, copy it (Edit > Copy), switch to the new empty document, and paste (Edit > Paste). If the document contains both text and graphics you will probably have to copy and paste these separately.

If the problem persists in the new document, it is very likely that the problem is related to the invisible formatting commands embedded in the document. What you now have to do is to save the document's visible content in a way that involves simpler formatting commands, or none at all, in the hope that the cause of the problem will be left behind.

Do this via the File > Save As.. Menu command. In the "Save As" dialog you will very likely see a pop-up menu enabling you to select file formats other than the normal one.
First, try saving in the format of an earlier version of your application. For instance, if you're working in a recent version of Microsoft Word, try saving in Word 6/95 format.

If this doesn't produce the desired result, save in a simpler generic format. For word processing documents this would be RTF or, as a last resort, Plain Text (also called ASCII Text or just Text). RTF has the advantage that it will often retain embedded graphics, while plain text is just that — all graphics and almost all formatting are lost.

In each case you will probably lose some of your formatting, but trying the alternatives in the above order will minimize such loss. Having finally found a format that eliminates the problem, resave your new document in the original format to continue work on it.

Sometimes, the problem will be so severe that you can't open the document at all, or that your application crashes soon after opening it. In this case, look for a feature of your application that enables you to open any document at all — not just those created by that application. There may be a pop-up menu in the Open dialog that allows you to choose "Any File", or there may be a menu command "Open Any". In some applications, holding down the Option key while choosing the "Open" menu command will enable you to open any document.
If you succeed in opening a "foreign" or badly damaged file in this way, you're likely to see the text you recognize interspersed with nonsense text, which is actually the formatting command. A single section of text may appear several times, depending on how many alterations you made to it during editing. It may therefore be something of a chore to eliminate the rubbish and reconstruct the original document, but sometimes there is sadly no alternative.

<div align="right">Steve Cooper — AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
From Paul Taylor's Hints and Tips Newsletter – October 2007</div>

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Experiment With Smart Folders
I've just begun using Smart Folders, and already I can't live without them. Smart Folders are a great way to find files, and keep them organized. Apple says "With Smart Folders, you can organize files by what they have in common, instead of by their location on your disk. Because they use Spotlight, Smart Folders can organize files by their contents, as well by attributes that describe those contents and how they were created. For example, you can create one Smart Folder with all your spreadsheets, another with the documents you modified today, and another with the presentations that mention a specific project."

Pretty cool! To begin experimenting with Smart Folders:
- In the Finder, choose File > New Smart Folder. Choose your search criteria. To search your files' names, contents, and attributes for text, type in the search field. To limit where the Smart Folder searches, click one of the listed locations, or click others to choose another location. To search on a specific metadata attribute, use the pop-up menus.

- Click Save, and choose the name and location for your Smart Folder. You can place a smart folder anywhere you can place a folder. If you do not want your Smart Folder to be in the sidebar, deselect Add To Sidebar.

- From Apple: "To view the items that match your Smart Folder's criteria, click it in the sidebar or double-click it in the Finder. The folder is updated automatically as you change, add, and remove files.

- To edit a Smart Folder, locate it in the Finder or in the sidebar and open it. When you are done changing the search criteria, clicks save.

- To change the name of a Smart Folder, Control-click it in the sidebar and choose Rename, or select the folder in the Finder and type a new name."

If you're like me, Ed, and you have lots and lots of files, or lots and lots of versions of files, Smart Folders are for you.
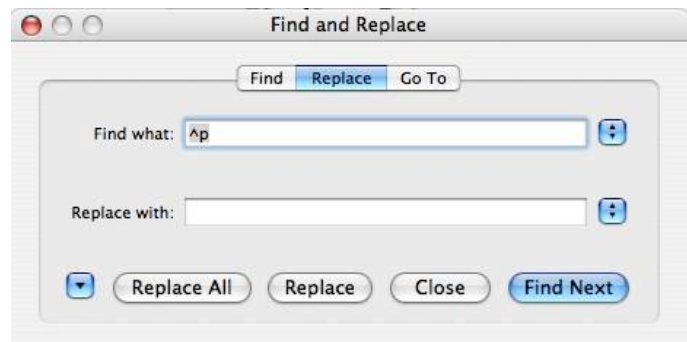
Ed Shepard — LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY
From Paul Taylor's Hints and Tips Newsletter – October 2007

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A MS Word Extra Paragraph Breaks Removal Tip
For some reason, some features of my MS Word 2004, installation don't behave as they used to. I'm too lazy to figure out why, and since I keep MS Office updated and have extensively customized MS Word to meet my needs, I don'/t want to reinstall and update the product.

Here's the problem. If often copy test, either from a website or a PDF for either reference materials or to use as quoted materials in my writing. Of course that results, when pasted into a word document in a line break (paragraph mark) at the end of each line of text. MS Word has a *Find and Replace* feature in its *edit menu* that when, in the past, I selected the text section that needed to be consolidated into a single paragraph, would do so. That no longer works. Initially I used the replace/next function manually, skipping over <u>legitimate</u> paragraph breaks. But that quickly got OLD.

Now many of you would either go to the Microsoft Mactopia site <http://www.microsoft.com/mac/comingsoon.htm > or Google or even MSW Help. But I've never been comfortable cashing my tail on the Microsoft site and most of the <u>Help</u> info doesn't solve my problems. Therefore, I decided to brew my own solution. Its simplicity amazed me. Here are the instructions.

Copy your selected text into a new MS Word document. (Why not just paste it into the document you need it in; later…? Make sure that show paragraph [¶] is on or you'll not see the formatting.

Enter a Section Break [Menu > Insert > Section Break] where you need the real paragraph break.

Paste paragraph symbol into the "Find What" text field. It will look like this [ˆp]. Tab to the next, replace with field, and add a space; it's not obvious but the cursor has moved in the text field. If you don't add the space the ext will run together… what a mess.

Press <u>replace all</u>. Each paragraph is now separated by a section break. Add a paragraph break or tow, depending on the formatting you want, before each continuous section break. Disappear the section break by selecting its line (the ¶ symbol that precedes it and backspace. Alternatively, select the continuous section break with you cursor and hit the *enter* key once or twice, Voila, a new paragraph. That all there is to it.

Note — You likely find that the pasted text has other spelling or extra spacing artifacts, an easy fix which I do each error at a time.

Oh, lest I forget. With the replace in selected text glitch in my MSW copy broken, I'd have more work to do to make such extra paragraph corrections in my working document

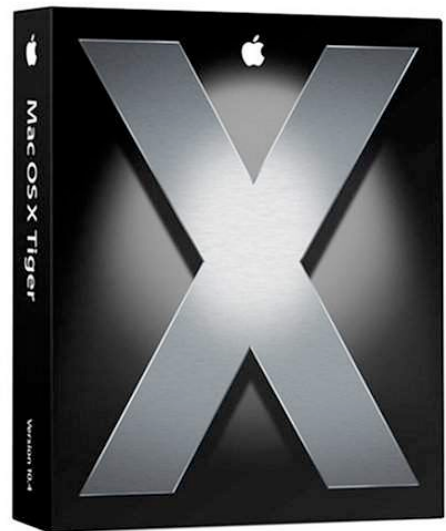<div align="right">Harry doc_Babad, macCompanion.com</div>

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Changing the Master Password for your Computer
If you have an install disc for the operating system that your computer is running you can change the master password. (Any Macintosh OS X version works for this tip.) You may want to do this either for security reasons or because you forgot that password and are cut off from administrator privileges.

Here is how.

- Put your Mac OS X Install CD or DVD in your optical drive and restart with the C key held down (to boot from the optical disc).
- Click through the language selection screen. Then choose Utilities > Reset Password.
- Select your usual startup disk. Then, from the pop-up menu below the volume list, choose the user whose password you want to reset. (Do not choose "System Administrator (root)", which represents an entirely different account!)
- Enter (and repeat) a new password, and optionally enter a hint. Click Save, and then click OK.
- Choose Reset Password > Quit, and then Installer > Quit Installer. Click the Reset button to restart from the hard disk.

Once you've done this, you'll still be prompted to enter a password for your login keychain. If that password was the same as your login password - meaning it too is forgotten - you'll have to delete that keychain, make a new one, and set that keychain as the default.

<div align="right">Paul Didzerekis
Mid-Columbia Macintosh Users Group
Also "CreativeTechs.com" from Paul Taylor's Hints and Tips Newsletter – October 2007</div>

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Leopard Users Don't Give Up on Eudora 6.2.4

Since I was not ready to give up on Eudora I've kept checking the web for a way to keep my favorite email client. There was nothing new about Odysseus on the http://www.infinitydatasystems.com/products/odysseus/index.html or http://www.ugnn.com/2007/10/new_eudora.html/ sites

See my previous feedback on Eudora and Leopard at:
http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/December2007/Columns/MacTips.htm

But I found a notice from Qualcomm about Eudora 6.2.4 OS X for 10.5 'Leopard' users — "In order for Macintosh Eudora to work well under OS X 10.5.x 'Leopard', you need to turn off the use of specific sounds in Eudora. These are the sounds Eudora plays when you get new mail or Eudora needs your attention, or are played by Filters. The sounds that are problematic are the ones that contain 'Eudora' in their name as they were created using a sound synthesizer that Leopard does not support. To disable or change the sounds used in Eudora, do the following:

Turn off or change the 'New Mail' and "Attention" sounds:
Open Eudora->Preferences and select the 'Getting Attention' panel
In the 'Sounds' section, for both 'New mail sound' and 'Attention sound', select a sound OTHER than one that has 'Eudora' in its name (i.e. NOT 'Eudora Attention', 'Eudora New Mail' nor 'Eudora Short Warning')
Click OK to the close the Preferences

- **Turn off sounds triggered by filters:**
- Open Window->Filters
- Look through all your filters for filters that have a 'Play Sound' action.
- Select a sound that does NOT have 'Eudora' in its name, or disable sounds all together by selecting 'None' from the action popup menu."

Qualcomm Information Source — http://www.eudora.com/download/

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Use New Screen Region Capture Options In 10.5 and One Capture Hint for the Tiger
In 10.5, the region capture screenshot tool -- that's Shift-Command-4, which turns your cursor into a draggable crosshair -- has learned quite a few new tricks. Since the days of 10.2, if you added the Control key into the mix, the capture would go to your clipboard, instead of to a file. (This is a great way to grab a quick screenshot for an iChat session, by the way. Just Shift-Control-Command-4, drag around the area to capture, release the drag, then switch back to iChat and hit Command-V to paste.)

But with 10.5, Apple has found uses for the Shift, Space, and Option keys as well. This gets a bit complicated, but I'll try to explain it clearly, and then demonstrate with a short movie. If you start a region capture, either with or without the Control key, you can then change how the region selection area changes by using the following keys -- note that you can release the original

keys once the crosshairs appears, as long as you've started dragging your mouse, and you keep the mouse button down.

- Space Bar: Press and hold the Space Bar, and the size of the current region is then locked and can be dragged around the screen. As long as you hold the Space Bar down, the region's size is locked and it can be dragged about.

- Shift: Press and hold the Shift key, and one side of the region will be locked, based on which way you then move the mouse. For instance, if you press and hold Shift, and then move your mouse down, you'll only be able to resize the region vertically; the horizontal size will be fixed. Move the mouse left or right, and you can resize the region horizontally while holding the vertical size fixed.

Option: Press and hold Option while dragging your region, and you'll change the way the region grows as you drag. By default, your region is anchored at the upper left corner; when you press Option, the anchor point is moved to the center of the current region, and it expands in all directions from that point.

To make things even a bit more confusing, you can combine some of these keystrokes. Shift and the Space Bar together will allow a fixed-size region to be dragged in either a vertical or horizontal direction, depending on which direction you first move the mouse after pressing the keys. If you combine Shift and Option, then you can grow your region from the center, restricting either the vertical or horizontal size. As I said, it's a bit confusing, so there's a movie of the options in action on the Mac Hints website.

Check Rob's the movie at:
http://www.macworld.com/article/131404/2008/01/screencapopts.html?lsrc=mwhints

For Tiger Too…
Doc Sez, if you are using Tiger, you can change the default output for screen captures by using one of several shareware/freeware applications. I do prefer that all my captures be in jpeg format at high resolution so I can better customize the images.

Capture Me 1.4.1
http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/11623/capture-me#descContainer_link

ScreenShot Plus 1.4.1 (Nice tool!)
http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/11820/screenshot-plus

You can also use the elegant but more complex Cocktail 4.0.1 (Leopard) and 4.0 (Tiger) for this task; but the product does to enhance working with your OS, so much more it's worth looking at. http://www.maintain.se/cocktail/index.php/

Of course you also get more options with Apples Grab tool

By Rob Griffith MacWorld OS X Hints   Jan 4, 2008

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Change icon view options in open and save dialogs in Leopard

Doc Sez, I'm not much of an icon view fan. Relying mostly on list view for my Finder meanderings. However this sweet tip by Rob Griffiths caught my eye and I couldn't resist passing it on.

"Here's a new feature for those who prefer working in icon view. When you see an open or save dialog in OS X, you can now change the displayed icon size—as well as the position of the text labels—through a convenient though oh-so-hidden menu. As seen in the image at right, you'll find this hidden menu hiding behind the icon-view icon in the save or open dialog's toolbar. To make the menu appear, you must click-and-hold on this button; control-clicking will not work. In addition to the icon sizes, you can move the icon labels from the bottom to the right using the Label Position menu item.

Keep in mind that changes made in this dialog apply to *all applications*, not just the one you're changing them from within. The settings are also permanent, and will stay as you set them across logouts and restarts."

By Rob Griffiths MacWorld OS X Hints   Nov 28, 2007

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What is Identity Theft? How to Prevent it.

Doc Babad sez that this article I reviewed as a AmEx cardholder contains much of the information found in Consumer Reports, the AARP magazine and other sources I've read. But it was shorter and more to the point, so I am reprinting here, w/o permission since the information appears in other public sources including Federal sites such as that of the Federal Trade Commission [http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/].

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal information without your permission to take over your existing accounts or to open new accounts. Identity theft can result in damage to your credit rating and denials of credit.

Identity theft commonly begins with the loss or theft of a wallet or purse. But there are many other ways that criminals can obtain and use your personal information, including "dumpster-diving" (stealing records from your trash) and phishing (sending fraudulent e-mails requesting your personal information).

Since identity theft is of concern, it's important to remember that there are steps you can take to minimize the risk and help protect your privacy and identity. Doc sez, I've added an item to this list based on safe practices I've read.

- Shred documents containing your personal information before discarding them.
- Secure your personal information at home and at work.

- Before disclosing any personal information, make sure you know why it is required and how it will be used.

- Obtain your credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus once every 6-12 months and review them for accuracy. (You can get a free copy of your credit report each year at http://email.americanexpress.com/a/hBGfAA6AQB6AABNVsQSAGG2jabP/axp5 or http://www.annualcreditreport.com.

- Use caution when responding to e-mails requesting personal information. When in doubt, contact the sender of the request through a known, secure channel (phone number on back of credit card or a known website address).

- Make copies with you Social Security number blackened out on any ID you carry in your wallet.

- If it's too good to be true, it's not true. As Robert Heinlein noted in several of his novels, there is no free lunch.

A Bakers Half Dozen Sites with more information:
http://www.privacyrights.org/fs/fs17-it.htm
http://militaryfinance.umuc.edu/id_theft/id_prevent.html
http://sbinfocanada.about.com/od/insurancelegalissues/a/identitytheft.htm
http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/credit/idtheftmini.shtm
http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/misused/index.html
http://www.ehow.com/how_6856_prevent-identity-theft.html
http://www.schoolcio.com/showArticle.php?articleID=192501201

That's all for February folks…

Harry {doc} Babad

The Northern Spy

In The Picture - Part I
By Rick Sutcliffe
Technology News and Views Since 1983
February 2008

The product of the month,
and perhaps of the year, is the Canon EOS 40D digital camera. To be sure, this fine piece of the digital geek's lifestyle has been around for several months now, but a confluence of events finally seduced the Spy into the purchase he's intended making for some time now.

One was the increasing age and consequent loss of youthful functionality of his venerable film camera. When he bought the Miranda Sensorex EE back in the early 1970s, it was a state of the art camera, and cost a corresponding two weeks' salary. The company subsequently made an all-too-familiar mistake however, by announcing a replacement product before it was ready to market. By the time the inevitable delays were negotiated, marketshare had collapsed on unfulfilled expectations, and the company that invented the SLR was yet another piece of roadkill on the Information Highway.

How good was this camera? With occasional refurbishing of the lens (which had an oil-on-the-leaves problem) and cleaning of the electrical contacts (subject to corrosion), it performed well for over thirty years, the automatic through-the-lens metering system only then failing, leaving the Spy to hold a finger to the wind before setting speed and f-stop manually.

Unlike other early attempts at automation that were aperture-priority, the Sensorex gave precedence to the speed, which was set first by choice of ISO in film and then by the top speed dial. The camera could then close the aperture to an appropriate stop automatically. The Spy used it to take thousands of pictures, nearly all slides. His shows of candid shots at church dinners became legendary (well, a legend of limited circulation), and his collection of family pictures a priceless record of birth, death, marriage, personal development, and achievement.

But time and technology stand still for no one. Kodak no longer makes slide projectors, trays or film cameras (try eBay), and a once bewildering choice from store walls of film canisters has shrunk to a mere handful hiding shamefacedly on an out-of-the way little rack. Once cameras crossed the 8-megapixel barrier, picture quality became equal to that of 35mm film, and the last technical excuses for switching vanished.

The Spy was ready to buy Canon's EOS 20D a couple of years ago, or the improved 30D last year, but a lack of ready funds and a reluctance to be extorted by inflated Canadian prices proved an effective barrier to his wallet.

But an upcoming trip to Ireland offering one inducement, and further improvements for the 40D another, the coup de grace to his resistance was finally delivered by a narrowing of the price gap. When one camera store, albeit somewhat distant in the nether reaches of Vancouver (where he rarely ventures), erased the RO factor by advertising a boxing week sale equivalent to the U.S. street price ($1499 with 17-85mm lens), a copy of the ad presented to the local London Drugs camera counter yielded a matching price, so the Spy fully joined the digital image revolution (he already had a high-end Epson scanner).

Comparable advanced-amateur/semi-pro cameras are offered by Nikon, Pentax, Olympus, Sony, and others. However, reviews, discussions with pros and other amateurs, and his own sense of the technical aspects have consistently pointed to Canon as the picture maker of choice. Two years of waiting and watching have merely confirmed the brand selection.

The Canon EOS 40D is situated in a line of cameras all accepting EOS-mount lenses, and occupying a variety of market niches and price points. Below it, and offering comparable image quality in a smaller and simpler package is the Digital Rebel. Above is the new 3D, the 5D, and the pro flagship 1D (mucho loonies). For the Spy's meaty hands, the Rebel feels clumsy and uncomfortable. Too bad, because it also seems like excellent value for the money, and would be the right SLR choice for most people. On the other side, he didn't need to spend an extra $1K or more for a full-format machine (i.e. sensor the same size as a 35mm film frame) and the slightly more robust (but not necessarily better) images offered by, say, the 5D. Hey, the 40D cost relatively less than his old Miranda, and wouldn't disgrace even a pro's kit.

First impressions remain positive. Out of the box, one charges the battery, installs a CF card (separate purchase!), attaches the lens, sets the mode dial to fully automatic, and blazes away. Half press the shutter button for automatic setup and fully press it to shoot. The camera figures out all the settings accordingly, and does so reasonably well. Each image is displayed on the large screen at the rear of the camera for a user-definable number of seconds after being taken, and of course all images on the installed card can be called up for review.

Speaking of lenses, the Spy eschewed Canon's cheapest offering, the 18-55mm plastic lens, in favour of a kit that included the 17-85mm IS (image stabilized) f4.0-5.6 (depending on zoom) lens This isn't a prime or even an "L" lens, but offers a mid-level, fairly decent quality set of glass. The corresponding 75-300mm IS telephoto also appears interesting (maybe later), as do Canon's more professional lenses, but the cheaper ones deserve little interest. If you're going to blow as much bread as this on a camera, don't buy cheap lenses. Sigma and Tamron also make lenses of various qualities for this and other EOS cameras.

But, if he'd wanted a point-and-shoot camera, he could have had one for far fewer loonies than this. So, the top dial's basic zone has several other automatic setting collections for portrait, landscape, closeup, action, shade, and no-flash, situations. Select one of these, and the camera can make better informed decisions about speed, aperture, and ISO.

The creative zone on the same dial permits more manual and correspondingly fewer automatic settings collections. There's a "program" mode, where the automatically selected speed/aperture combination can be altered manually (as a pair). Or, one can specifically choose and manually set one of speed, aperture, or depth-of-field priority, and have the other settings computed automatically. Needless to say, in the more automatic modes, and where appropriate, the built-in flash pops up and does its bit. One can also do multiple shots, bursting up to sixty images in rapid succession. Or, one can go fully manual and set everything, with only assistance from the electronics. Focus can of course be automatic or manual. Did we mention time delayed shots, variable multiple shot firing, red eye adjustment, manual aperture stop down for testing, exposure compensation bracketing, magnification (and histograms) in playback mode, and the ability to select which of the nine focus points to use?

However, that's just the beginning of the 40D's configurability. A collection of settings can be assembled and attached to one of three custom positions on the top dial for repeated use. Standard, portrait, and landscape settings can be applied in the manual mode, and the parameters behind these can be tweaked in a special menu. For this purpose, single buttons allow immediate access to ISO, drive, white point, focus mode, drive mode, picture quality, exposure compensation, and auto focus. Progress in performing some or all of these operations can be viewed variously on the rear, top, or through-the lens info screens (some on all three). The built-in fill flash can be operated manually, automatically, in conjunction with or instead of an auxiliary flash, or turned off altogether. Indeed, nearly every setting the camera has van be changed by the user, if desired.

The camera has a live video mode, and this can be output to a TV screen if desired, though the camera does not record video itself. There are also outputs for direct transfer of images to a computer or printer, though it is just as easy to do this by inserting the card into a suitable reader. Moreover, the bundled software makes this a breeze. Once installed (and after a reboot) it will detect either card or camera mounting and offer to transfer and process images.

It's worth noting that there are often several ways to do the same thing -- though one or more direct buttons, or via menus. Moreover, there are three separate finger controls for navigation through menu choices-a top wheel, a dial, and a joy-stick-like universal controller. Figuring out which does what and when can be a challenge, but adds to the appeal of the camera. It can be adapted to a variety of modes for working, and each possible adaptation sells a few more units. Indeed, Canon recently passed the 30 million camera mark in the EOS line, a remarkable achievement. Caution: complexity does come at a price not all Mac enthusiasts will want to pay--you do need to read the manual, several times.

All in all, this appears to be a well-designed, well-put-together, and well-sold product of the first quality. The interface is pretty good for a small screen, easy to read, and logically laid out. The Spy's only caveat--the picture display button is too close to the lower left corner and too easily pressed accidentally. This isn't a hazard, just a slight inconvenience. Other manufacturers could learn from Canon on several score. More on accessories and picture taking next month, but meanwhile the Canon EOS 40D inspires the Spy to proclaim:

The Spy's Ninth Law--On selling wicked-successful products

KISS but LUCE--Keep it simple for starters but let us change everything.

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch Department,

As somewhat forecast in this space in recent months, iSteve's Cupertino outfit announced an entry into the shrunken iBook market -- this in the form of the MacBook Air, a small portable targeted at the 100% wireless crowd. Naturally, to get the ultra-thin format, some things had to be sacrificed, in this case, space for an optical drive, which becomes an optional external accessory.

The product fits iSteve's long history of giving customers what he personally wants in a fairly closed box--witness the original Mac 128, and the first iBooks. More configurable and accessorizable Macs have been more successful, however, and this appears to validate the ninth law above. The Spy therefore sees this as iSteve's own niche product -- not one that will break any sales records, though useful for some. Meanwhile, stay tuned. Supplies of flash memory are going into something else (grandson of Newton?), though iSteve's recent disparaging remarks about book reading and readers might suggest that something else won't be an eBook device, except perhaps as a third-party afterthought.

'Course, he wouldn't misdirect us, would he? Would he?
--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 subsidary 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
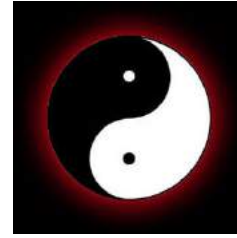Booksurge: http://www.booksurge.com
Fictionwise: http://www.fictionwise.com

Rants, Raves and Revelations –
February
How To Create a Basic PDF Form
By Harry {doc} Babad

Introduction
As I was reading Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips column http://www.mac-hints-tips.com, one of his tips was sufficiently useful that I thought I'd created stand-along tip by illustrating the input provided by Max Rechtman, LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY. http://www.limac.org/ This tip is used with both Max and Paul's permission. Indeed, I was delighted that the tip was a more concise set of directions that I was able to extract from Doug Sahlin's *How to Do Everything with Adobe Acrobat 7.0* McGraw-Hill Osborne Media, 2005 or from the help files in Acrobat 8. Reviews for both these products have appeared in macC. Where I've updated the original material my inputs are either italicized or clearly identified.

In reality, this 3Rs columns has been sitting for about 6-months because I was too tied up with other stuff. But as I re-read the column it still makes sense to I'll share it with you.
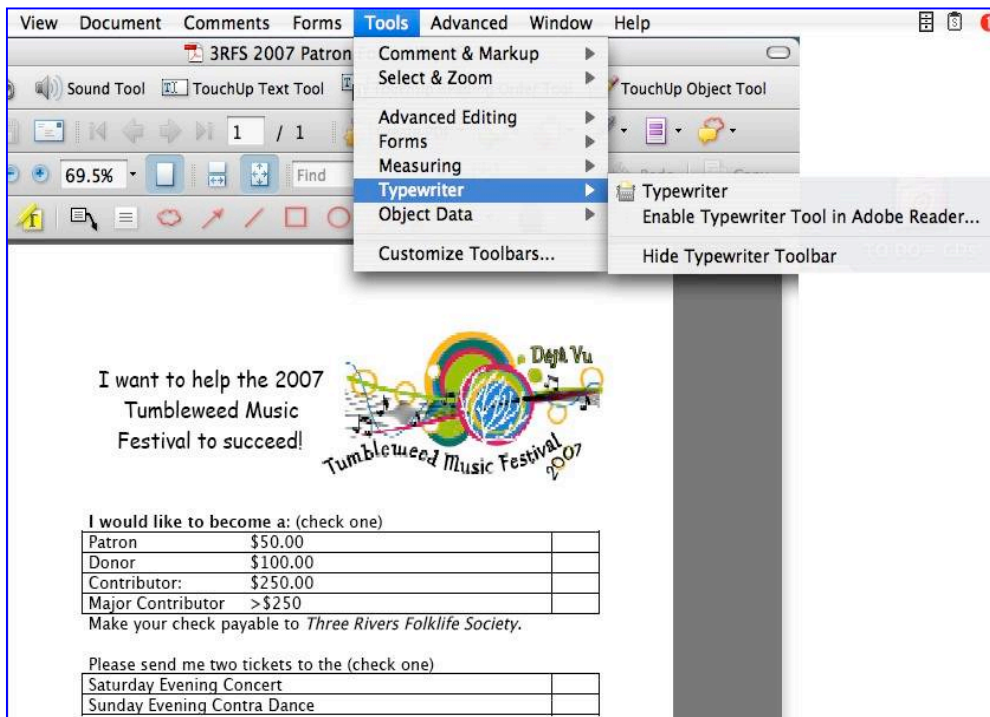
Getting Started
To create a basic form, all you need to do is convert your form to PDF and overlay form fields. So you're the master of your bureaucracy, with paperwork going out into the world and coming home full of new and interesting information that needs to be processed.

For an example, I am using, as an example, a form I modified for fund raising for the 2007 Tumbleweed Music Festival, here in the Tri-Cities.

Because I'm, doc_Babad, using a form, which asks for contributions, there are four ways the initiating organization and the donor can deal with the transaction. That assumes of course some wants to make a donation. In the image below, I only show part of the form. Obviously donor contact information and ticket pickup also needs to be a part of it. Your simple choices…

1. Fill out a printed paper form by hand and mail it with a check [Uck, hard to read] If the organization takes credit cards filling in your card number also works on in "letter".

2. Fill out a scanned PDF copy of the form on your computer using Acrobat's typewriter feature, print the form, and mail it with a check (more legible)

3. Fill out a form on the computer, print the form, and email it via a PayPal account using a credit card number (no check or letter to mail) Note that emailing a completed form, as a promissory note, is another alternative. That is comparable to a pledge form at your favorite charity of church.

For this tip, as does Max Rechtman, lets focus on creating the form and not worry of about the mechanics of sending your donation.

As Max Rechtman noted, the traditional paper-based workflow can be time-consuming and expensive. Digitizing the whole process speeds up not only the sending and receiving of forms, but the processing of the information your *organization* receives. PDF forms can be emailed as an attachment, saving you from printing a document, feeding the paper into a fax machine and waiting for a return receipt.

Putting Forms on Your Website — You can also post a PDF form to your Web site and make it available for download. Users can download forms and save them to the desktop, giving them time to fill in lengthy documents rather than having to do it all in a single sitting through your site. And, since the form is a PDF, you don't have to worry about users casually destroying your form's presentation or format.

<u>For Advanced Users</u> — Once you feel comfortable with the basics of manipulating PDF forms, you can automate the extraction of data into spreadsheets and databases. This comes in handy particularly when dealing with large numbers of forms that need to be processed.

The Form Itself

The most basic type of PDF form is the "print and fill". Like traditional paper forms, these are designed to be filled out by hand, but can be found online and printed to be returned via snail mail. [Choice 1 above.]

Flipping that paradigm, you have "fill and print" forms. Acrobat 7 or 8 users can save these forms after filling them out, but Adobe Reader users can only print and send the forms *if they were created with Acrobat 7*. The PDF can also be printed and the forms filled out the old-fashioned way, or a user can type the text into the forms, and then print the completed document for submission. [Choice 2.]

> *Now, Acrobat 8, which you need to create forms, now allows users of Acrobat Reader (Reader as its now called) to also fill out forms. So in this hint I am assuming that the reader feature is enabled, a discussion which is out of scope for this article. Now both Acrobat and Reader users can email the filled out form but in my example, the check must be sent by snail mail. (doc) Shucks!*

The general procedure for creating a form in Acrobat 7.0 or 8.0 and Professional is to start by creating a form document in any application, such as Microsoft Word, or converting a paper form into PDF. If you're starting from scratch, you may want to download some of the free Microsoft Word templates. Be sure that you are happy with the way your document looks before converting into a PDF, as *you won't be able to change the form layout* in Acrobat. Make a copy of your Word document to preserve the original formatting.

MS Word to PDF — There are dozens of third-party programs available for converting Word documents to PDF, but you'll always want to keep an original copy of your file on hand no matter which you use.

If you have Acrobat, the simplest method for creating PDF files is to use the Adobe PDF printer, which is added to MS Word when Acrobat is installed:

1. In Word, choose File > Print.

2. Choose "Adobe PDF" from the Printer Name pop-up menu.

3. Click "OK", and specify a file name and location for the PDF file, then click Save.

Form-izing Your PDF in Acrobat — Open your new PDF in Acrobat. If you are adding multiple forms to a document you should open the Forms Toolbar on your desktop. From the toolbar, choose Tools > Forms > Show Forms Toolbar.

To insert a text field, click the Text Field tool on your Forms Toolbar, and then use the mouse to draw a marquee around the area in which you want to create a form field (such as the fill-in line for name, address, ZIP code, and so forth).

Hold the left button while drawing the box, and when you release a Text Field Properties window will appear letting you set options. The default options are "Scroll long text" and "Check spelling". If you intend to print the document as is, you should turn off the Scroll feature, because not doing so means that you won't see any of the scrolled text when printing.

Other options include "Multi-line" for long form entries (such as comments) and "Allow Rich Text Formatting," which lets users apply text styles such as bold and italics to their entries.

Tip — You can also password-protect the field for extra security. You must designate each form field with a unique name. [Read the Acrobat Help File.]

From the Properties box, choose "General" and fill in the field name. These names will not be visible to the user, but they will be used for database connectivity (should you choose to implement that option at a later time).

Then choose the type of form field from the Type pull-down, and add a description of the field in the Short Description box. This is used by the screen reader for vision-impaired users.

Click "OK" to accept the default settings, and you have created your first form.

Hint — In addition to inserting a *Text Field*, which would be used for areas like Name or Address on a paper form, you can insert a *Signature Field* for digitally signing the document. *Radio Buttons* can be added for letting your user choose only one option from a list such as Yes/No boxes, or you can use Combo Boxes for pull-down menus with editable text boxes.

CREDITS:
Many thanks to Max Rechtman for his lucid tip, it was clearer than the longer draft article I had written.

<div align="right">

Max Rechtman, LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY
February 2007 — Hints & Tips www.mac-hints-tips.com

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Under the Magnifying Glass
The Lonely Dynamic Duo
By Steven H. Fyffe
sfyffe@maccompanion.com

Automator is a very powerful application in the OS X arsenal and has been greatly enhanced in Leopard (1). Indeed, Automator has such a commanding presence that many Tiger and Leopard users have never explored its power. Perhaps, that old Jim Croce lyric, "You don't tug on Superman's cape" (2) scared them off. As a result, far too many Mac users are afraid to mess around with Jim, uh I mean Automator. Don't be like Sylvester in the classic cartoon *Scaredy Cat* (3) …

In spite of it's awesome potential, Automator is gentle as a lamb. There is a great Mac 101 tutorial which will help to squelch all your fears (4).

On the other hand, TextEdit is viewed by most Mac users as the Caspar Milquetoast (5) application of OS X. Perhaps used only as a quick note pad. I recently picked up one of the Leopard "How-to" guides which used the term "barebones" to describe TextEdit. However, it is so much more than that. Check out Apple's Mac 101 TextEdit tutorial (6).

Automator and TextEdit both have one thing in common. Both are underused by most Mac users, but for opposite reasons. They fear Automator's strength and underestimate TextEdit's abilities. However, together they constitute a true Dynamic Duo, albeit a lonely pair due to neglect. Why not consider exploring how together they can wow you and impress your friends?

Motivational Story

Let me tell you a story of the prowess of these implausible team mates. Once upon a time, on a bone-chilling January morning, our Digital Photo SIG was gathering around steaming cups of café latte. A hush settled over the room when two of my photographs suddenly appeared from the warm glow of the liquid crystal display … caught your attention didn't I? I told you that everyone is enraptured by good story (7).

Any way a discussion arose about my two photos of the holiday lights in our town commons. I had taken a photo of the same scene with and without a flash.
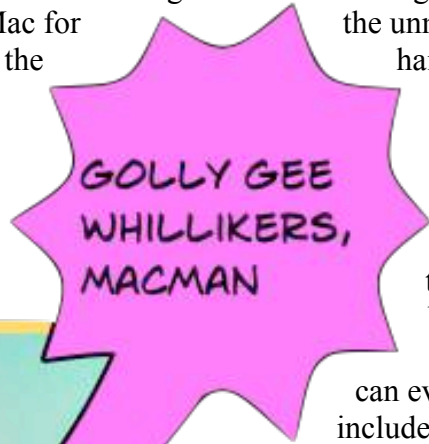
Our discussion sparked my interest in digital night photography. I wanted to share two interesting web pages (8) & (9) with other members of the SIG. However, rather than just sending them the URLs in an e-mail … so 90s dial-up, don't you agree ... I wanted to send them a TextEdit document. However, not just a run-of-the-mill, Milquetoast document, mind you. I wanted my friends to open a magical, mystical document … going a bit too far am I? … how about a digital document in which the text of each article was read to them (10), sorta like one of those audio greeting cards.

TextEdit Capabilities Discovered

OK. How was this possible? I mean it is called "Text" Edit, is it not. Well, as Sherlock Holmes said in **The Boscombe Valley Mystery** (11), " There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact" (12). Therefore, it was time to experiment. After all, I do call my **macCompanion** column, **Under the Magnifying Glass**, or as dear old Sherlock would say, "Here is my lens. You know my methods" (12).

I discovered that TextEdit has a hidden talent which you might not expect or may not discover without experimenting. Remember my admonition a few months ago to investigate the trifles (13). Again, I encourage you to explore your Mac for the unmitigated joy of discovery. This is precisely what I did and, oh, the hairs on the back of my neck stood on end, dancing the jig.

TextEdit, similar to an e-mail document, allows you to embed audio files in documents, the same way you include photos and graphics. Just drag and drop the file into the document where you wish to hear the text read back to you. You can even include video clips in the document, if you wish.

GOLLY GEE WHILLIKERS, MACMAN

When you drag the audio file into the TextEdit document, you will have the opportunity to either copy the file itself, or add an alias.

Now, you know. The secret is out. The mild mannered TextEdit can transform into a superhero … OK, maybe I am taking the metaphor a bit too far, but how can I help but be amazed. After all, TextEdit can handle audio files!

Automator's Super Powers Tamed

The next trick is to convert the text of your document into an audio file.

If you have not "tugged on Superman's cape", you are past due to give it a try. Automator is sitting in the applications folder waiting for you and if you are still afraid, I'll loan you my kryptonite ring. You can create a Text-to-Speech Automator workflow in about 10 minutes.
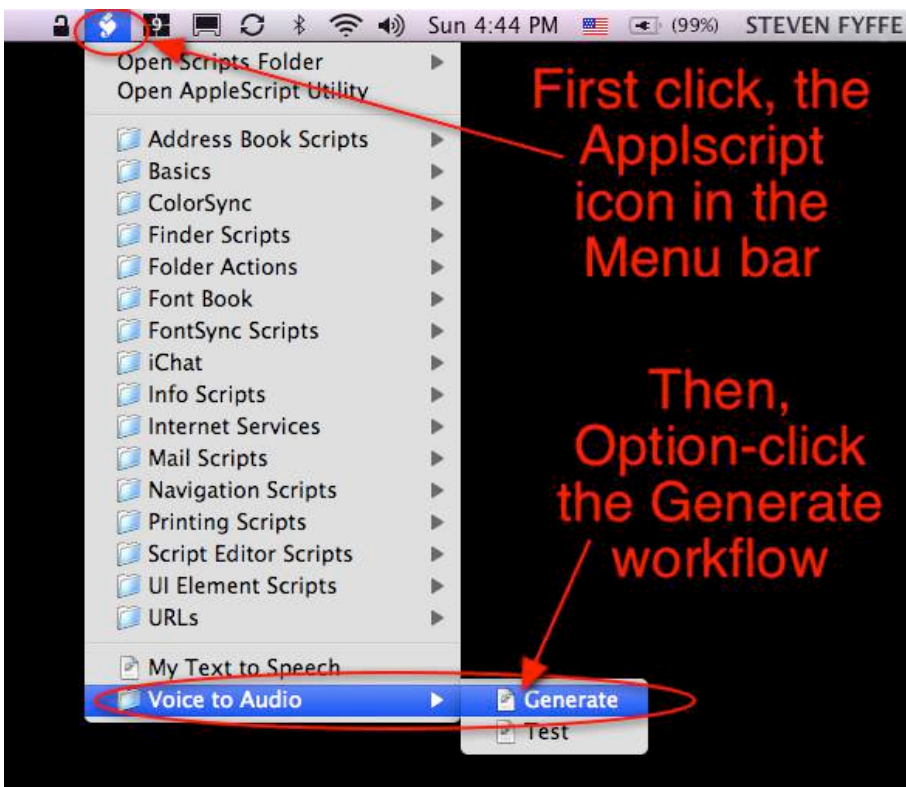
The details for building the workflow is clearly described in **"Creating Podcast Narration Tracks"** at Automator.US (14), Sal Soghoian's (15) personal web page. Sal is AppleScript Project leader at Apple and often appears in Automator video tutorials (16) and podcasts (17).

I won't repeat the information you can read for yourself, but I'll share how I customized the workflow.

In the paragraph "Testing the Text", you are first instructed to download (18) and "run the installer containing the workflows used to generate the audio clip". Go ahead and do that, while I wait … Back already? Great!

After doing this, I modified the "Generate" workflow. To do that, I made one change in Sal's instructions, "While holding down the Option key, select the **GENERATE** workflow from the Voice to Audio sub-menu in the system Script Menu located at the right of the menu bar." This allowed me to open and edit the "Generate" workflow.

I just saved it with a name of my own "My Text-to-Speech" … how clever.

Instead of typing the text or cut & paste the text into the Automator action "Get Specified Text", I wanted to be able to simply copy the text in to the clipboard. Therefore, I needed to change the first action and replace it with a different one.

I replaced the TextEdit action "Get Specified Text" with the Utilities action "Get Contents of Clipboard".

Second, drag the Utilities action "Get Contents of Clipboard" to the first step in the workflow

First, delete this TextEdit action

Then, I changed the System Voice to "Alex" the new voice in Leopard.

In order to customize the name of the audio file, I needed to have the name changed automatically. This was easy to do. I just dragged the Files & Folders "Rename the Finder Items" action to the workflow. I placed it after the Quick Time action "Export to MPEG Audio" and above the "Open Finder Items" action.

The last step was to save the workflow. Under File, click Save As and change the File Format to Application.

Drag the Files & Folders action "Rename Finder Items" to the workflow. Place it AFTER the Quick Time action "Export to MPEG Audio" action & ABOVE "Open Finder Items"

All you now need to do is select the text you wish to listen to, copy it to the clipboard (Command-C), and click your new application "My Text to Speech". Your text is now saved on the desktop as an audio file. Just drag it into your TextEdit document to give it the power of speech.
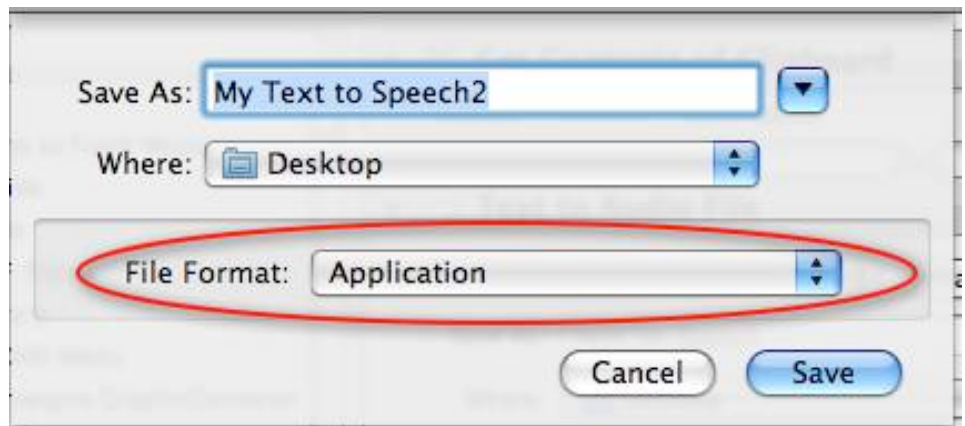
If you are interested in listening to my Night Photography TextEdit document read to you or wish to have my modified Automator workflow, I have placed them in my .Mac Public Folder (10).

By the way, notice that Alex's voice sounds deeper. I used Amadeus Pro (19) to lower the pitch and increase the reading speed.

I hope you enjoyed your "guided discovery" (20) of this dynamic duo. They should not be lonely applications on your Mac any more. Try them out for yourself! Investigate the power of Automator and familiarize yourself with the full range of TextEdit's capabilities. I would like to encourage you to continue on our journey together, putting OS X and other Macintosh software *Under the Magnifying Glass*. Now, with Leopard our journey down the yellow brick road has more the 300 new discoveries (21) to add to our golden collection.

Laughter Productivity - Photo Booth

Before you jump up and leave, I want to remind you of another cool application. Photo Booth, now available with Leopard, which can give you and your family many productive hours … productivity measured in smiles and laughter. Jared and his Papa guarantee loads of fun.

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Views from the Ivory Tower –

February 2008
On the RIAA and MacWorld
By Ted Bade

Let me begin this article by getting back on my soapbox concerning the RIAA and their seemingly endless battle to destroy their own business. Yes, once again, they have done something so stupid that if this doesn't convince you to permanently stop buying their CDs, nothing will.

Let me be blunt. They are working on a case that would make it illegal for a person who purchases an audio CD to rip it into MP3 for their own use…

Since the dawn of recorded music, the current popular method of enjoying music was one step behind how consumers wanted to use them. So people have been converting their music to the desired format. For personal use, this has never been a problem. Why should it be? If you bought it, you should be able to use it in any way you like. I agree, you cannot sell it or give it to a friend, but you should be able to convert and use it. In the olde days, we could make tapes, then CDs of our vinyl and today we make MP3s of our CDs. But if the RIAA has their way, doing this *with a CD you purchased legally*, will be against the law.

We know why they are doing this. As their business begins to fall apart, they are making every move they can to eek out that last bit of profit. Rather than embrace the digital age, these aging businessmen choose to hide behind the coattails of technophobic legislators, poking their greedy little hands out for whatever they can grab, caring little for who they hurt in the process (and making sure little goes to the actual artist).

Think about it. The RIAA is finding ways to fine and sue the very people who have provided them with all the money they have. How long will it be before absolutely no one will purchase any product they make? With the Internet, the members of the RIAA are no longer the only source of recorded music available in the US. We have many choices of digital downloads in the US. We can also buy CDs almost as easily from a non-US music company as we can from a US one. Why purchase a CD of a UK group from the RIAA, when one can easily buy it from some source in the UK, and get a CD formatted the way the artist actually wanted to? For years the RIAA has dictated how a non-US group's CD was set up, which made "import CDs" sought after and so valuable. With the "import CD" you got the music that the musician wanted to offer, not what the RIAA dictated.

So what is happening is this, a man in Arizona is being sued because there is music on his computer that he converted from the CD's he owns. Take a look at this article as presented by the Washington Post –

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/28/AR2007122800693.htm

Here is a quote from that article that I find most interesting: "…the industry maintains that it is illegal for someone who has legally purchased a CD to transfer that music into his computer." Wow, this is scary. I doubt that anyone reading this article has not done this. So we are all criminals! Terrible, just terrible.

This article goes on to say: "The RIAA's legal crusade against its customers is a classic example of an old media company clinging to a business model that has collapsed. Four years of a failed strategy has only "created a whole market of people who specifically look to buy independent goods so as not to deal with the big record companies," Beckerman says. "Every problem they're trying to solve is worse now than when they started."

I couldn't agree more. Don't these business men read children stories? I think they missed the one about, "Don't bite the hand that feeds you"! Be sure to read the entire article, it has a lot of good information.

Do you know what I am considering doing? Cataloging all my RIAA CDs, and sending a certified letter to the RIAA business office and asking for a refund for these CDs. Since they apparently want to dictate how I use them, I no longer want them on my property. I also want to be refunded, in today's dollars, for every one of them! I would also send a copy of this letter to every artist that has a CD is in my library. I want them to know that I will no longer enjoy their music and to warn them that the RIAA will be probably asking them to pay back their royalty fees for those CDs I am being refunded on!

I am truly and fully sick of the RIAA and their tactics. I have said this before and will continue to say, I will never again buy any CD from any RIAA associated company. If I buy a CD it will be an import or from an independent label. I truly hope that all of my readers will make this same commitment. If you don't, the next headline you hear will be something like:

"RIAA sues man in New Jersey for listening to a CD at 9AM when they have labeled it specifically as a CD to be listened to at 5PM. " Please, don't make this a reality. ☺

Security and the Mac - It appears all this talk about the Mac being more secure then Windows is actually being listened to by important and large organizations. Apparently the US Army is considering moving a lot of their sensitive stuff to Macs to take advantage of this security.

In the mean time, those people with a vested interest in viable environments for malicious software are working hard to come up with ways to get a truly harmful piece of software easily on many Macs.

We heard of the release of a Trojan for Mac OS X. Apparently, if you choose to install a codec that was "necessary" to view a special video file, the Trojan would be installed. So far, this Trojan installer has only been found on certain pornographic sites.

As with every other Mac-related malicious piece of code so far, the user has to give his or her permission to install the piece of software that contains the Trojan. Whether one visits these sites or not, any intelligent user has to remember to not let software install itself unless you know exactly where it comes from. No matter the reputation of a web site, I would never allow a piece of code to be installed unless I knew exactly what it was.

I should also mention that, if QuickTime needs a codec that it doesn't have, it will open a web page on the Apple site that provides all the codecs that Apple has tested to work with QuickTime. I personally wouldn't install any codec if it wasn't available on this site.

I expect we will see more action in the future. Be safe, know where the software you are agreeing to install comes from. If you don't, then don't install it.

Along this line of thought, I recently saw a message while running Safari that PubSub Agent wanted to access to keychain. Whoaa! I did what any intelligent Mac user should do and denied the request. I then went out and did a little research, and discovered it was a routine used by Apple. Apple should have told me they were going to use this routine, LOL! –

http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=306870

MacWorld Expo 08 - What would Apple be without exciting announcements, especially at the Expo? This year's expo was no different. We'll take a brief look at some of the things Apple released this year.

MacPro - This wasn't technically released at MacWorld, but the week before the Expo. This new desktop Mac includes Intel's latest four-core chip. The standard edition includes two of these chips running at 2.8GHz. That's eight cores,. Wow! Apparently these new chips run faster then the previous versions, so although there isn't much of an increase in processor frequency, the computer operates faster then the previous ones. Visit the Apple store for more information –

http://store.apple.com/

MacBook Air - As many people predicted, Apple release a small notebook computer they call the MacBook Air - http://www.apple.com/macbookair/ This new ultra thin portable is about as thick as a finger (about .76"). Yet it includes a full sized backlit keyboard and a 13.3 inch screen. The computer sports a 1.6 or 1.8 GHz core duo chip (the newer smaller sized one), is LED backlit which uses a lot less power), external USB port, and even an iSight camera! Wirelessly it includes both 802.11N and Bluetooth. The touch pad has a number of "gestures", that add a lot of functionality it. Apple expects about five hours of operation on a fully charged battery. Of course, a computer this thin doesn't have room for an optical drive. Hmm you say, so what good is it?

I am not sure how popular a portable that cannot play DVDs, or easily access CDs will be. Apple believes that people will make use of movie rental/ purchases. We will have to see how the market likes that. I am sure few people will buy a digital version if they already have a nice DVD collection.

For $99 you can buy a USB optical drive to use with the Air. For installations you can use a feature called Remote Disc. This application works on both Mac and PCs. Using the computer's wireless connection to d the installation. You put the DVD/CD in that drive and it wirelessly acts as the drive for the Air.

Another really cool innovation is the option of a 64GByte solid state drive! The computer comes standard with an 80 GByte Parallel ATA drive. Also this machine is a very green product, arsenic and mercury free and an all recyclable aluminum case.

While a portable this thin would be cool, I am a little put off by the lack of an optical drive. But if the Remote Disc feature works well, it might be a non-issue. Of course, to use this feature you will have to own a computer with wireless built in. Apple is pricing the basic machine at $1799.

Movie Rentals - The iTunes Store will now offer rentals. The cost will be $4 for new releases and $3 for older movies ($1 more for HD versions). Movies will come from many studios including: Fox, WB, Disney, Paramount, Universal and Sony, along with Touchstone, Miramax, MGM, New Line, and Lions Gate. It launched the day of the Keynote. There should be over 1000 titles available for rental. Once you download a movie you will have up to 30 days to watch it. Once you watch it you will have 24 hours to finish it. (This is very similar to the method used with Amazon/Tivo rentals).

Time Capsule - "A backup appliance". Apple has released a wireless hard drive for use as a backup device for Leopard's Time Machine backup utility. Essentially, Time Capsule is a network drive that offers a connection to the Internet, to a wire-based LAN and a wireless LAN.

In addition to its function as a backup drive, Time Capsule is a full airport extreme base station. You can use it to share your broadband internet connection. It also can connect a printer wirelessly to the network. Even more interesting is the fact that you can use it with both non-Leopard Macs and PCs. For these devices, it shows up as a wireless hard drive.

Time Capsule will ship in February and will cost $300 for a 500GByte version and $500 for a 1TByte version. For more information visit Apple's Time Capsule related web site –

http://www.apple.com/timecapsule/

Apple TV - There are some nice additions to the Apple TV. First of all they reduced the base price to $229. They also provided an option of a 160 GByte hard drive.

The big news is that they untethered it from the Mac. As Steve said: "Now- no computer is required to use it"! This means that right from your TV you can use the AppleTV remote to buy and rent movies and TV shows, download YouTube videos, podcasts and more. It still has the connection to your Mac so you can use it to listen to and watch content that is on your Mac or PC. The great news is that all the new features are free to all previous owners as a free download. For more information visit Apples Apple TV section –

 http://www.apple.com/appletv/

iPod Touch - Apple has released five new applications for the iPod Touch. The new applications include a Mail program, a map program (using Wi-Fi location feature as in the iPhone), web clips, stocks, notes, and more. Previous owners will be able to upgrade for $20.

I think that Apple is slowly moving the Touch toward being a PDA. For some reason, Mr. Jobs is against making an Apple PDA, but I think the market is drawing these devices in that direction. To get all the information, visit Apple section on the Touch –

http://www.apple.com/ipodtouch

iPhone - The day of the Keynote was the 200th day since the iPhone has shipped. In that time, Apple has sold 4 million of them. It got over 19% of market share in first quarter.

Apple added some new features to the iPhone. They enhanced their Maps features. Including the ability to locate where you are. The Dropped Pin feature lets you set a location to use later. For instance pin where your car is parked, then take your phone with you. Later you can find your car and use Maps to set up a trip to another location, from where your car is, not where you are. Maps uses wireless networking to tell where you are. It is probably not very useful outside of a major city, but pretty interesting technology.

You can now customize the icons on your iPhone home screen, and even have up to nine home screen pages. There are some other features as well. If you would like to learn more about this new update visit Apple's section on the iPhone. There is a nice movie there that lets you see a demo of these new features –

http://www.apple.com/iphone

All in all, these are some interesting releases, but nothing all that earth-shattering. The stock market reaction to this information wasn't very good. Apple's stock fell over $11 by the end of the day of the Keynote. I imagine they expected something really terrific. Too bad. However, since the rest of the NASDAQ was falling at the same time, perhaps this was not related.

Apple Financial News - January 22nd was the official release of Apple's First Quarter financial results. The results were good, but dampened by the ongoing fall of NASDAC values in general. As always, check out Apple's financial press release for exact details –

http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2008/01/22results.html

Apple posted a revenue of $9.6 billion and net quarterly profit of $1.58 billion. Compare this to the year ago quarter of revenue of $7.1 billion and net quarterly profit of $1 billion. A nice increase for Apple. Non-US sales accounted for 45% of this profit.

Apple shipped over 2.3 million Macs, over 22 million iPods, and over 2.3 million iPhones. Sales of Macs was up 44%, while iPods increased only 5%. (Looks like the market is saturating! What do you mean you don't own six or more iPods???)

Think back to the last days of Mac OS 9; Apple was on the brink of disaster, their OS was old and weary, and their Computers were tepid at best. What a change a little infusion of charm (in the form of Steve Jobs) makes!

But Apple needs something new and exciting as well as to make a stunning change to Mac OS X. Sure Mac OS X is nice, but let's face it, computer users have been dealing with the same type of OS for decades. We are still tied to a keyboard for input and the mouse for control. Most of all, when things go wrong, the average user still gets confusing assistance at best. While I don't know what is really needed, I can see that a change is needed.

I recently added a new MacPro tower to my Mac collection, replacing an older G5 PowerMac. The disappointing thing was that, after moving my files over, there was little about working on this new machine that was new and different.

That might be a very good thing for the business environment, but for the computer hobbyist, it is boring! Sure the thing is faster (I mean a **lot** faster), but where is that new computer smell?

Apple also needs another really successful consumer electronic "thingy". The iPod is slowly saturating the market. I doubt it will ever go away and will always be in demand, but now it is replacement sales rather then new sales. The iPhone was a good try, but it wasn't that different from all those other phones. We will have to see if Mr. Jobs can put on his thinking cap and come up with a really truly new exciting thing.

Now I must get back to playing with my new Macintosh. ☺
As always, keep on using your Mac...

Books

Designing Interactions
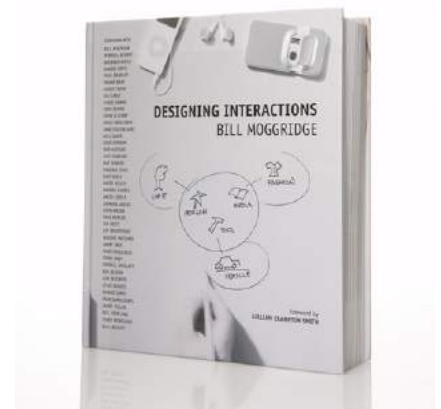Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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MIT Press
http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=2&tid=10934
Released: October 2006
Pages: 800
$40 USD, £26 GBP
ISBN-10: 0-262-13474-8
ISBN-13: 978-0-262-13474-3

Strengths: Brings out information not published elsewhere, based on direct interviews with those who did the work. Great DVD and website interactivities.

Weaknesses: Appears to be a "Rah-Rah" book for IDEO. Contains repeated paragraphs into each andevery section.

Introduction

> "In *Designing Interactions*, award-winning designer Bill Moggridge introduces us to forty influential designers who have shaped our interaction with technology. Moggridge, designer of the first laptop computer (the GRiD Compass, 1981) and a founder of the design firm IDEO, tells us these stories from an industry insider's viewpoint, tracing the evolution of ideas from inspiration to outcome."

What I Learned

Bill Moggridge has done a marvelous job gathering information on the thought-processes behind the design of new or improved technologies by folks who really got into the trenches and did the footwork in "High Tech".

I'm amazed at how many of the people he interviewed were in one way or another associated with Apple Corporation or touched one way or another through their interaction with IDEO – http://www.ideo.com/, so I see the book as a promo-piece for his company. Getting past that obvious marketing ploy, the content is really excellent. However, I hate re-reading stuff and I found that each section opens with a picture of the interviewee and an executive summary (no heading) of their work – later repeated in whole or part within the chapter.

One other thing I liked about this book is that each interview pretty much segues into the next, so the flow follows function nicely.

Conclusion

If you want to know who did what with whom somewhere in many sections of the electronic age, then enjoy reading this book. I see *Designing Interactions* as a book that could begin a series on background and snapshots in time on the history of innovation and design.

Digital Astrophotography : A Guide to capturing the Cosmos

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

O'REILLY®

Author: Stefan Seip
http://www.photomeeting.de/astromeeting/_index.htm
Rocky Nook
http://www.rockynook.com/index.php
O'Reilly
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9781933952161/index.html
Released: December 2007
Pages: 162
$30 USD, $33 CND
ISBN 10: 1-933952-16-4 |
ISBN 13: 9781933952161
Novice/ Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Provides solid information about using equipment, cameras and resources for astrodigital photography. Good examples of his masterful astrophotos. Descriptive information and guide oriented information for Registax and Astroart image processing software. Colorful photo and screenshots.

Weaknesses: No index. Glossary of resources should have been indexed and have additional information about each item. Some of the screenshots are too small to read. Screenshots do not have additional circles, arrows and other visuals " to zone in on" which parts of the screen instructions go with the text. Guide information is "jumbled" together in paragraph form instead of being spread out, numbered and being easier to read. The author uses Astroart, a commercially available program. If you use another program (for example, one listed in the Resources section) for stacking and image processing, you will have to either find your own manual or use the information to try to piece together the information about using image processing. Novice astrophotographers may need to consult other camera, astronomy and image editing resources and information.

Introduction

The stary skies and observing the stars have captured our imagination since ancient times. Observing and records came first and then sketching was available. Photographing on film the heavens was a great step forward. Presently the use of digital cameras and equipment are the rage. Amateur astronomers are increasingly using digital devices to "capture" the heavenly objects and events. One noted astronomer and photography has provided a guide book to help you with your digital photography: *Digital Astrophotography: A Guide to capturing the Cosmos*.

The author is a celebrated astrophotographer for many years. His knowledge and his astronomical photographs are displayed on his website which is well stocked with many brilliant photos. I was interested to see how much of his knowledge could be "communicated" in this book, so that myself and others could learn about the technigues and information that has brought these brilliant photos to fruition.

The author provide information about hardware, software, methods and techniques. Chapter 1 "Before you start" offers a welcome introduction to starting out with this hobby. It starts from " the ground up" so novice astrophotographers will find the information well suited for them as well. There is a good solid information and ideas about browsing, choosing and working with simple compact digital camera, tripods and telescopes

Chapter 2, digital compact camera are introduced.

Chapter 3 has webcam information and explains the advantages and disadvantages of the overall use for astrophotography. The more popular webcams available market (ex. Phillips Toucam and four others are listed with photographs) but there is no information what are the "pros and cons " of each. The author elaborates on using the free (PC) programs called Registax which is a fine program. However this software could also be used with digital cameras and equipment but this was not mentioned.

This part of the book also has a good instruction on the use of avi files for processing your video to images (don't know what that is then you will have to consult other information). Websites where these webcams can be found are listed in the resources section but you will have to hunt for them as these are no segregated. There is a section on fine tuning with photoshop (pages 58- 59) but the information does not include additional processing (using photoshop) such as unsharp mask (which I did actually find is in another section (page 86) with DSLR. This is where a good index would have helped.

In Chapter 4, digital cameras is the main focus of information. Using a DSLR camera to shoot the Sun, Moon, stars, star clusters, and nebulae while attached to your telescope are discussed. The digital lens reflex camera demonstrated in this chapter is the Canon Rebel XT (which is what I use as well). However this chapter does not include additional information concerning the differences between using the XT model and the newer XTi model. Other cameras are listed in the resources section however non- canon users will have to consult their manual, manufacturer's website (see resource guide) or another book to learn all about their DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera. Maybe it does have to be told but it is important before using this book and this chapter, that you know and be comfortable using your camera first so that you will be ready for the assistance laid out in the astronomically oriented chapter in Chapter 5. It is tough to cover everything but as I looked through this chapter I found that important information was missing.

 I found the lack of credible and informative techniques and information concerning the using of the cameras bulb extended time exposure, a little mystifying. In addition some of the equipment is a little dated. For example, it is a good idea to use a device to automatically snapping your shutter without having to touch the camera yourself. There are remote cords that can do this (for canon and other cameras). However nothing was expressed about the use of remotes that use infrared (which I have and use) and are even better for remote work.

Chapter 5, the astronomical CCD camera, using charge-coupled device (CCD) and camera assists with learning about these nice instrument. This chapter has a nice section regarding the use of dark frames (page 118). Helpful fine explanations as well as the importance for using these with your photos and FITS formats are well explained. Flat field and bias frames also are helpful to know.

There is a nice glossary of important terms used throughout the book. The Appendix, has a nice listing of application areas for digital astrophotography as applied to equipment and the celestial sights we can see and image. However this nice chart does not integrate itself well into the chapters. In addition, I have enjoyed photographing many comets but such celestial wonders are missing from this listing and any part of the book.

A Resources section has a number of image processing software program listed (non alphabetically listed in the titles). These are all "mixed-up" together in the listing and not categorized (according to image processing, software, image manipulation, video capture etc).I was a little perplexed to find that Starry Night Pro software (which I use), is listed as "image processing software", which it is not.

 The main tool for image editing is called Astroart http://www.msb-astroart.com/ which is a PC (only no Macintosh) based commercial program (pages 122 -132). A fine program in its own right, the author helps you learn the program. There are screenshots to help in the process (the sizing is better then in other parts of the book) but once again the author does not use highlighting symbols (arrows, red circles, numbering system etc) to go along with the instruction. Astroart is the only other program to use (along with registax)   if you are looking for a free based program . You can use (the free) Registax (have to look up what kind of PC needed but not here) with your PC.

Throughout the book and the chapters there is too much "verbosity" with the instructions. There are guided steps and instructions but these are all "mashed" together in long paragraphs without ample space. This makes the reading a little tedious.

 The step by step processes would have been easier to understand and easier to read if a numbering systems was used or separations. More space in between the instructions would help in the integration with the visual screenshots as well. Screenshots do not have additional circles, arrows and other visuals to zone in on which parts of the screen instructions go with the text.

I was disappointed in the resource section, which is not concise enough. The are jumbled together with software, applications and other resources all together. Each does not have much information. There is nothing that is said whether some of the software is for macintosh or windows or both. In addition, the cover has a beautiful photograph of a total solar eclipse (that he took no doubt additional information is nowhere to be found). I had to go into his website to figure out where it was. I would have liked more information about filters, what kind of exposures for lunar and solar eclipses etc or at least an explanation where additional information could be found.

Most astrophotography and image processing books and tutorial type books offer an index of specific categories and titles found in the book. What I found to be an unforgivable omission is the lack of an index. While the chapters are fine, it would have been nice to have specific topics listed in an index.

Conclusion

When it comes to digital astrophotography for me, I am always looking for more insights and information that will "put it all together". I am always searching, like others, to make my photos, the best they can be. While I have had astronomical photos published in Astronomy magazine and my web blogs and websites, I still have a lot of room for improvement.

Many amateur astronomers who are becoming acquainted with various photographic devices are taking advantage and using them for their astronomical photographic work. There are bits and pieces from this book that I can use but I wanted "more". I did not expect this book to be the all-in-one resource guide on everything digital astrophotography for me. While the author is a fine astrophotographer and has compiled a good a wealth of techniques, ideas and information involved image processing, I still need to search for more.

This book is great for those looking for equipment to use and sorting out there choices for how and what ways their astrophotography endeavors can start and develop. It is a fine resource. But the book, might not be what you want. Possibly you already have all the equipment you have or need.

If you don't plan to use the Astroart program, a cornerstone in this author's tutorial explanations for image processing, you will need to find another program (for example one listed in the Resources section), for stacking and image processing. But if you buy this book , then you have the option to either find your own manual or use the information that comes with the software, to "piece together" the image processing techniques. In addition, most of the book can be used to help MacIntosh astronomy hobbyists but several of the better image processing program for MacIntosh are not listed in the resource section. Macintosh users can use the PC software with their Intel newer MacIntosh computers but this is not mentioned.

I like most of the book and what it "has to say." However the index omission, the haphazard resource listing and the focusing upon Astroart as the sole basis for image processing instruction just disappointed me. I wonder why Registax is only application used for webcams? Couldn't Registax could be used withCCD imaging (chapter). I can work these pieces of software on my older Compaq and in that way I will learn more. But still I am working towards using my Macintosh for image processing that will elevate my astrophotography skills while using this book.

This book is still a good resource in many regards. Perhaps the next version of this book will be improved on some of the concerns I mentioned. Some astronomy enthusiasts looking for answers to their astrophotography questions will like this book as is. However I suggest before you buy this book, check it out and see that it has what you want and if the book can help you. That is better then being disappointed when the shipment arrives. That way you can choose another astronomy digital processing books that can meet your your image processing better.

Dreamweaver CS3 - Dynamic Learning Series

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Fred Gerantabee & Aquent Graphics Institute
Creative Team
http://www.agitraining.com/
O'Reilly
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596510572
Released: September 2007
Pages: 416
$45 USD, $54 CND
ISBN 10: 0-596-51057-8
ISBN 13: 9780596510572
Requirements: Dreamweaver CS3, 1 GB hard drive
space, DVD-ROM drive, Mac OS X 10.4.8 or later or
Windows XP or later.

Strengths: Excellent visual and interactive approach to
learning Dreamweaver CS3.

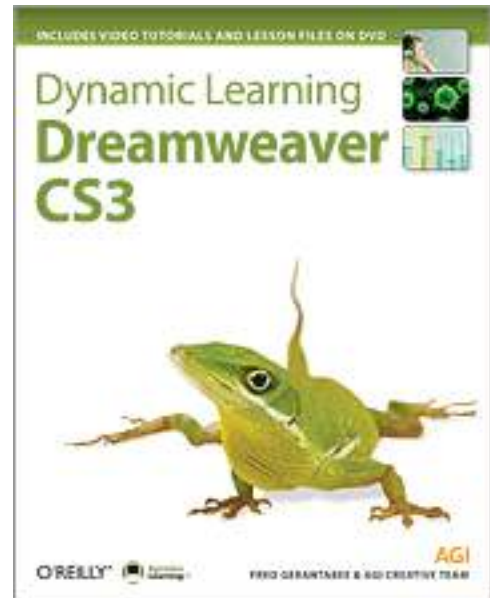**Weaknesses:** Minor printing errors found – and fixed in the errata page online.

Introduction

"*Learning Dreamweaver CS3* is like having access to a top-notch team of your very own
instructors. Written by product experts and trainers who have produced many of Adobe's
training titles, the book takes you step-by-step through the process of learning to use
Dreamweaver X like a pro.

This full-color book is organized into lessons, with easy-to-follow instructions, tips,
examples, and review questions at the end of every lesson. Each lesson is self-contained,
so you can go through the entire book sequentially or just focus on individual lessons.

Topics covered include:

- What's new in Dreamweaver CS3
- Dreamweaver CS3 Jumpstart
- Creating web sites
- Styling pages with CSS
- Working with Snippets and library items
- Using tables and frames
- Adding Flash, video, and audio content

In addition, the book comes with a companion DVD with video tutorials and all of the files needed for the lessons, including final, completed Dreamweaver files. A free Instructor's Guide is available online."

What I Learned

There is a free online version available from *Safari Books* online. I took this book on a business trip with me. The book really needs to be used while sitting at the computer and running the included DVD.

I was most interested in the Building Web Forms section in an attempt to provide an interactive feedback section on our *macCompanion* website, but I ended up dog-earing a number of sections, especially regarding CSS.

Interestingly enough, the book has colorized graphics that sometimes have the Windows-based frames intermixed with Mac OS X frames and frankly, the Mac-based pics look cleaner.

Conclusion

This book follows the perfected format that makes O'Reilly–based publications so good and easy on the eyes. Being able to "see" how things are done in the "Digital Classroom DVD" just puts the icing on the cake and is greatly appreciated.

Easy Mac OS X Leopard — A great guide for beginners

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2008

Author: Kate Binder
 QUE Publishing
http://www.informit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=078973771X
http://safari.adobepress.com/9780789737717/pref06
Released: November 2007
Pages: 304 pages in English
List $25 USD, Street $17.00 USD; $27 List, $17.50 CND;
£13.00 List, £6.49 Street, GBP.

ISBN-10: 078973771X
ISBN-13: 978-0789737717

Paperback, Product Dimensions: 9.8 x 7.9 x 0.6 inches
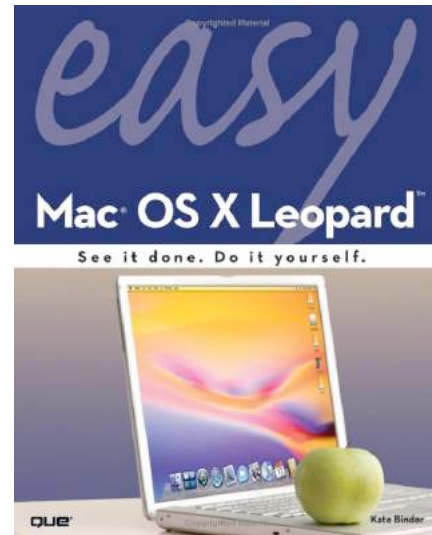[25.2 x 20.2 x 2 cm]

Requirement: Mac OS X Leopard

Audience: Beginners to the Macintosh Platform and Leopard

Strengths Simple straightforward easy to follow instructions and descriptions. Full Color, color-coded section-by-section, step-by-step.

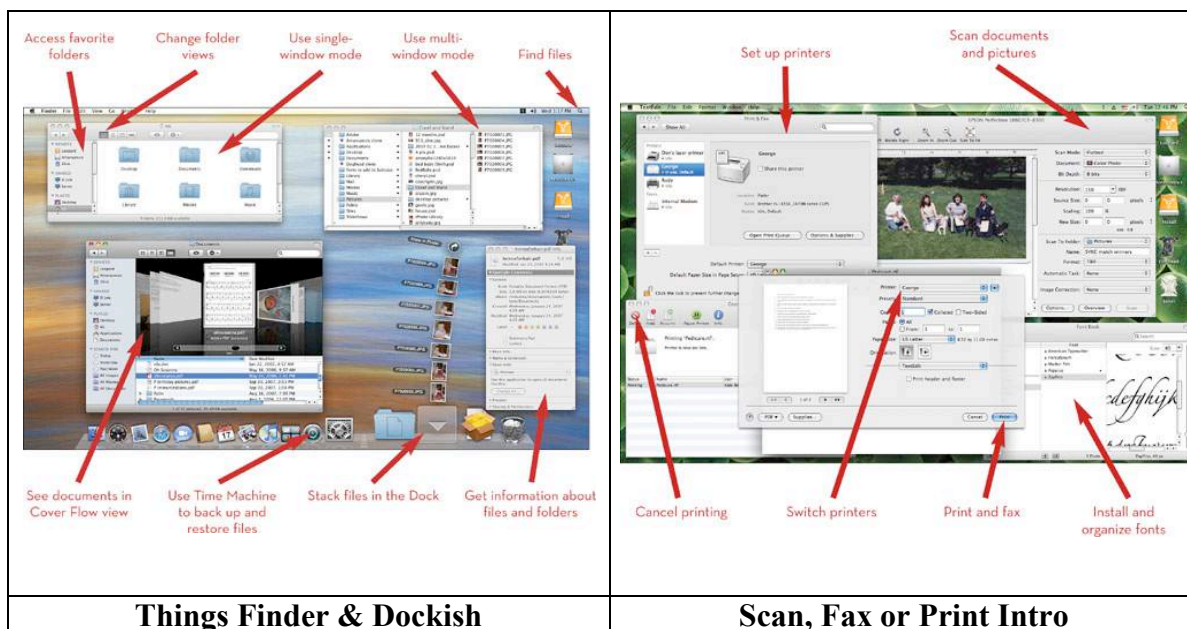**Weaknesses** No serious weaknesses found.

Introduction

I've in past months have review several beginner/intermediate user oriented books about Leopard, Apples new OS, as have other macC staff members. However, this is the first book I've read or read about that seem ideally oriented toward new users be they new to OS X or switchers from the Wintel platform. This oversized, well color-illustrated book is the first of a series about Leopard published by QUE. Robert Pritchett reviewed the comparably well-illustrated beginner-intermediate user book in the January *macCompanion*. Check out *Mac OS X Leopard On Demand* by Steve Johnson, QUE if you're beyond the beginner phase with Macintosh's OS X operating system.

Publisher's Introduction

Mac OS X is like no operating system, Macintosh or otherwise, that came before it. It's incredibly stable and powerful, and it looks amazingly sleek. But underneath the glitz and sparkle, it has the same old friendly nature that Mac users have enjoyed since 1984.
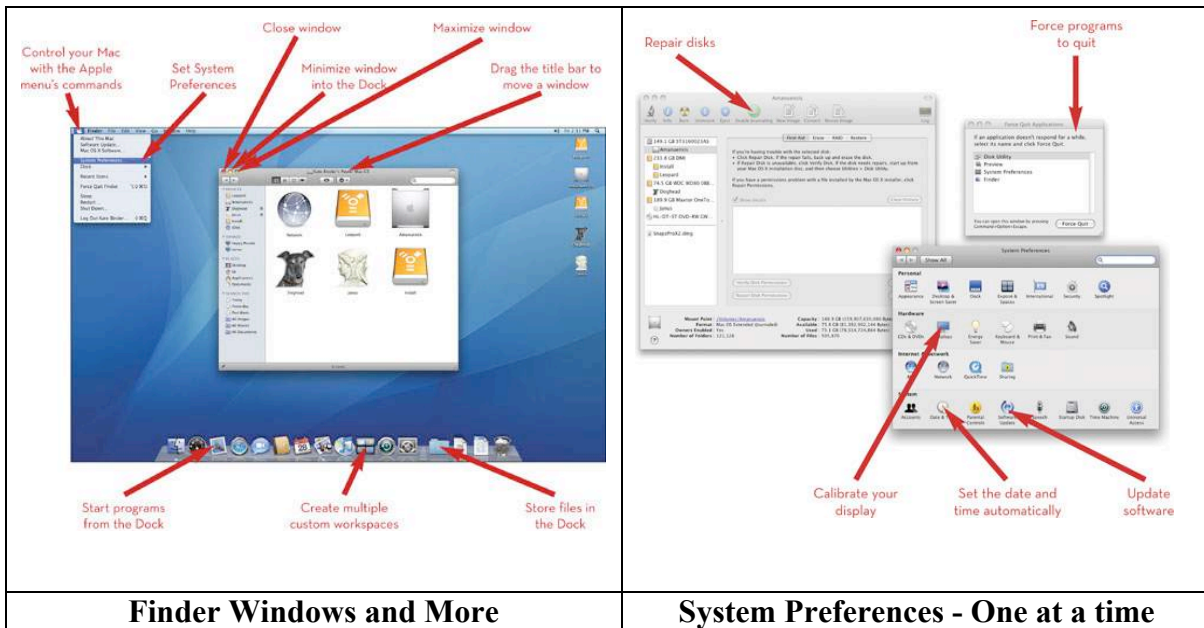
With *Easy Mac OS X Leopard*, you'll learn how to take advantage of powerful and useful Mac OS X features such as the built-in instant messaging program iChat, controlling other Macs over a network, and the ability run Windows right on your Mac (if you really feel you must). Along the way, you'll get used to being able to run a dozen programs at one time on a stable system that doesn't crash. This book's step-by-step approach tells you just what you need to know to accomplish the task at hand, quickly and efficiently. All the skills you need to get the most out of Mac OS X, both online and on the desktop are covered here.

Things Finder & Dockish	Scan, Fax or Print Intro

If you want, you can work through the tasks in *Easy Mac OS X Leopard* in order, building your skills steadily. Or, if you prefer, use this book as a reference to look up just what you need to know *right now*. Either way, *Easy Mac OS X Leopard* let's you see it done, and then do it yourself.

Background on book topic…

See it done. Do it yourself. It's that Easy! Easy Mac OS X Leopard teaches you the fundamentals of working with the Mac operating system. Fully illustrated steps with simple instructions guide you through each task, building the skills you need to master Mac OS X Leopard with ease. No need to feel intimidated, we'll hold your hand every step of the way. Each step is fully illustrated and a dream to follow. The ground covered by Ms. Binder is as complete as her beginner audience needs to learn to use the main features of Leopard, with a minimum of pain or confusion.

Finder Windows and More	System Preferences - One at a time

In this book…

Learn how to: - Save, open, and print your documents - Use Spotlight to instantly locate any file - Network multiple Macs and share your Internet connection - Back up your important data automatically - Buy music online - Use iPhoto to take control of your photo collection - Share calendars with coworkers, family, and friends - Keep your Mac running smoothly

Easy steps guide you through each task. Items you would select or click to complete an action are shown in bold. Each step is fully illustrated.

Book Contents Getting Upfront with Leopard — The Introduction, Chapter 1: Getting Started, 2 Chapter 2: Working with Disks, Folders, and Files; Chapter 3: Installing and Using Applications, Chapter 4: Setting System Preferences, Chapter 5: Customizing Your Mac, Chapter 6: Organizing Your {computing} Life, Chapter 7: Printing, Faxing, and Scanning; Chapter 8: Getting Online, and Chapter 9: Living Online.

Diving Deeper into Leopard — Chapter 10: Getting an iLife, Chapter 11: Sharing Your Mac with Multiple Users, Chapter 12: Creating a Home Network, and an often ignored essential Chapter 13: Maintaining Your Mac.

And in Closing — An excellent Glossary and an easy to use Index.

Some Unique Features That Caught My Eye

Tutorial Approach — Kate is one of the few authors of a beginner or beginner-intermediate book who has stepped back far enough to ask what does a newbie need. For example, she shares both a quickie definition of the *Finder's* purpose and function and then illustrates a variety of *Finder Windows*, something most tutorials skip.

Sharing Third Party Solutions — This is the first book specific product oriented I've run across when reviewing for macC, that provides third party solutions to expand the capability of the subject software. Wow, you can read about alterative to Time Line (apples new Backup system, and NeoOffice http://www.neooffice.org/ as an alternative to MS Office. More 3rd party goodies shared are the great sites in which you can find screen savers, wallpaper and icons to customize your computer.

Well Focused Tips and Hints — Each page of the book has a strip of hints and tips across the bottom of the page adding information a user might find helpful, or delving deeper into a point made in the body of the text.

Safari Online Edition — A Safari version of the book is available online for 45 days, making it easier to expand various images (not usually necessary) for more detail You can work with your new OS with the tutorial onscreen, easier then juggling the book.

Hurrah for Kate's Support of Shareware Fees — See Page 56.

Disappointments and Discomforts

Snap to Grid — When explaining icon views, Ms. Binder seems to have lost my favorite feature "snap to grid" although she dies mention changing grid spacing — new in Leopard.

Expose — Kate, for those of us who hate Expose, you've not told us how to turn it off.

Cashes and Ever Increasing Cashes — Although its not rightfully a beginner subject, I would have like the author to mention these potential, and mostly user invisible, disk space hogs. Chapter 13 would be an ideal place for such a mention.

Administrator Role — In a few instances (e.g., see page 31) Ms. Binder mentions the term "authorized" with having previously defined the computer administrator's rile.

Conclusions

"Easy Mac OS X Tiger" offers a streamlined, easy-to-follow visual approach with clear, concise explanatory text, and a carefully constructed organizational plan. The book covers not only system level functions but also the basic use of the many accessories and free applications that come with Mac OS X. Although not so noted in her BIO, Ms. Binder turns out to be an excellent teacher, an invaluable asset to beginner–level books.

When you've worked with this book for a few days, you'll be able to hit the ground running, whether using Apples productivity oriented application tools and OS functions or third party software you installed to support your work and play. No you will not be an expert, but will be a confident beginner ready to dig more deeply both into more advanced OS features and third party software.

Recommendation

Instead of making the obvious recommendation for this book, I'll quote *kclam* (Hong Kong), a customer reviewer on Amazon.com. I'll let him speak for me. "It is fun to read this colorful book. In addition to the fully illustrated steps with simple instructions, I find the 'tips' and 'notes' for working with the Mac OS Leopard very useful. I like to recommend this book particularly to first time users of Mac OS like me. I managed to get on working with my {new} MacBook very quickly."

About the Author

Kate Binder is a longtime Mac lover and graphics expert who works from her home in New Hampshire. She has written articles on graphics, publishing, and photography for magazines including *Publish*, *PEI*, and *Desktop Publishers Journal*. Kate is also the author of several books, including *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Mac OS X*, and coauthor of books including *Sams Teach Yourself Adobe Photoshop CS3 in 24 Hours, Microsoft Office: Mac v. X Inside Out*, *SVG for Designers*, and *Get Creative: The Digital Photo Idea Book*. To those interested in a successful career as a computer book writer, Kate recommends acquiring several retired racing greyhounds (find out more at www.adopt-a-greyhound.org)–she finds her four greyhounds extraordinarily inspirational.

PowerPoint 2007: The Missing Manual

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Author: E.A. Vander Veer
Oreilly
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596527389/index.html
Released: December 2006
Pages: 488
$30 USD, $39 CND
ISBN-10: 0-596-52738-1
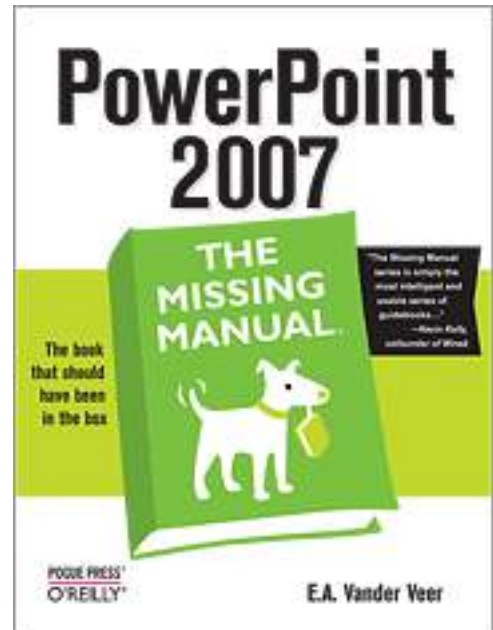**ISBN-13:** 978-0-596-527838-9
Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Depth in providing information about creating and improving PowerPoint slideshows and presentations. Nice tables, screenshots (very good size and readable). Valuable technigues and information that goes above and beyond just developing the PowerPoint. There is no CD with the book but at the website you can find additional information about the book in addition to shareware that can be found and utilized.

Weaknesses: Black and white.

Introduction

PowerPoint is often thought of as maligned piece of software and necessary at the same time. While this presentation/slide show is at many times useful, many users don't apply the features in the best way. PowerPoint 2007: The Missing Manual is here to the rescue.

The author has background in programming and has written for several of the Missing Manual series. Her articles appear online as well. This book series is written by David Pogue, the New York Times Technology columnist, and continues to the helm of the series of books called "The Missing Manual". Four other major contributors helped create this book besides the author. The words on the front cover of the book say it is "the book that should have been in the box". For the most part, you can call this the main theme of this series of books. The series books are self-help guidebooks for learning how to use software and hardware that come with more then the meager original documentation or manuals. I like some of the series of these themed books. This one caught my eye, as I was interested in what it says about PowerPoint being a better slide show and presentation tool.

This 488-page book is divided into 4 parts and 15 chapters. Part 5 is the Appendix (getting help). The nice index helps find needed information. The white-on-black screenshots are integrated within the instruction and while color would have been nice, the non-coloration does not detract from the content. Text and screenshots are large enough to read and decipher what you need to know. Easy to read step-by-step instructions are found throughout the chapters. Application-laden screenshots demonstrate how the tools can be utilized to complete carefully designed tasks. The visuals not only save time, but illustrate how to make your graphic endeavors more productive.

 Throughout the book there are helpful tips, help boxes, notes along with some very nice tables (conversions for different formats, Programs and PowerPoint add-ins and more.   Throughout the book, there are helpful ideas in the way of tips, (called from the field, Nostalgia corner, workaround workshop frequently asked questions Design time, up   to speed) help boxes and notes. Also there is a short hand system of arrows that replaces the use of "much more text information" that guide you through the learning process and information.

This book included information about the different style compared to the 2003 PowerPoint version. Missing from this missing manual are the software's redesigned look which does not have the once popular menu wizards, menus, toolbars and panes. In its place is the "ribbon". However you can still develop your same trusty presentations that included those characteristics within your presentations. The main new interest in PowerPoint 2007 is how you accomplish your presentation and what the book and the author do to help you with your presentations. Since PowerPoint software is a sometimes misunderstood, I was interested to garner information how this new version and the Missing Manual book helps for creating better presentations.

While most computer users have tried PowerPoint in one way, shape or form, this book starts from the beginning, so novice users can create their first presentations. It is nice to know that (pages 2-4) the differences between slide shows and presentations are compared, what you can do with the PowerPoint 2007 are concisely explained. Since many PowerPoint sessions are not handled properly it was interesting to note that the information "When not to use PowerPoint".

Information about the completely redesign interface are explained. There is a very nice tour of the new interface, explaining eight characteristics and additional information for making presentations. It is good to know   that tighter and more efficient integration among the other Office programs are also included.

Part 1, included the slide show basics. While this seems simple enough, it is refreshing that the author decided to include this nice section entitled "The evils (or not) of Text". Approaches, ideas about design are peppered throughout the book to give perspectives, ideas for maintenance of solid techniques. using handouts, speaknotes and the pros and cons of using them are highlighted. The 15 file types (p.48) and their uses, is an eye opener. Editing slides, adding special characters, aligning text, laying out slides and editing slideshows are covered in-depth. Adding well displayed charts, diagrams and tables

Part 2, editing, customizing and packaging your presentation for emails, for CDs, on the web are all here.

I really liked what the author had to say in the notes of "Design Time" in Chapter 7, concerning "Tailoring your presentation for self-running distribution". Packaging for a CD (page 244) was insightful as well as " When to use the web" (page 247). A great series of screenshots about converting to other formats are nicely done as well as a nice two tables concerning file formats. This section also had including optimizing presentations, compressing your images, the best way to deal with fonts and a variety of very useful and informative ideas about how to make your presentation the best it can be.

Part 3, " Beyond bullet points" has more information about multimedia access, use of interactive shows, animations and more. I have always found it fairly easy to add pictures and images with PowerPoint. However Chapter 9 had more information about modifying drawings and working with multiple drawings (which is not something I usually work with but others may find more useful).

Adding sound, video animations, slide transitions and animated effects as well as making the slide click able are all ideas I have managed on my own previously. I liked what the author said about " when to use multimedia", multimedia copyrights, old and new sound options, "doing video right" and even had a nice little blurb about "where to get good video clips".

Part 4, "Working faster and more effectively", is very well done. Customizing PowerPoint, using macros (autopilot and little mini programs) and collaborating with others is shorter section compared to the other section (in the book) but well done. I wanted to see more information about new and inspired techniques to use and promote efficiency and versatility and that is what I found here.

Conclusion

This is a fine and detailed book with helpful detailed information about learning about PowerPoint 2007. But more importantly I wanted to know how this book could show how PowerPoint could be more versatile and work with it efficiently through techniques. The helpful notes, ideas and more included by the author, go beyond the software, to include solid "how to include techniques" that you really and probably might not come up with on your own. That is really what I was looking for in this Missing Manual book. And most likely those who have already used PowerPoint and looking for extra ideas and information as well as novice PowerPoint creators will find this a useful guide. If you are planning to use this PowerPoint version efficiently, this is a good buy. A resource, a visual guide, a learning tool, that is a great resource. I recommend it highly.

Switching to a Mac for Dummies

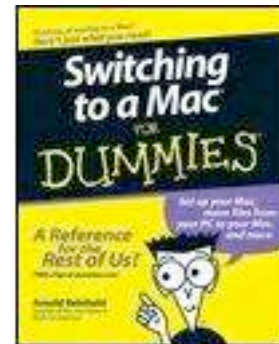Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Author: Arnold Reinhold

http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/DummiesTitle/productCd-0470140763.html

Publisher: wiley

Released: 2007

Pages: 384

$22 USD, $26 CND, £15 GBP

ISBN: 978-0-470-14076-5

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Good solid helpful information on all things Macintosh. Screenshots and illustrations are large enough to view easily. Solid information concerning switching over from a PC to Macintosh and covers all the bases.

Weaknesses: Black and white makes the book appear bland.

Introduction

Arnold Reinhold has over three decades experience in the software industry. He has coauthored numerous books, including The Internet For Dummies Quick Reference, 8th Edition.

I have been a staunch Apple/ Macintosh user from the days of Apple 2E. Many of my family have Macs, but my son just switched over after having another laptop brand. I was interested to know what my son would ask and want to know like other PC/windows users, as they make the transition to the Apple/Macintosh world. This book, *Switching to a Mac for Dummies* covers what my son and other switchers will need.

I particularly was curious about the line in the introduction which talked about Macintosh and Windows/PC similarities but then said "still there are differences big and little, that cause problems for the unaware (PC users?)".

There is a nice page on the inner front page dealing with top 10 Mac hints for Windows users and boot option keys which immediately will settle down and have Windows users more at ease.

Tearout cheat sheets

Six Foolish assumptions on page 2 were interesting.

It is written in black and white. While the size of the illustrations and screenshots is ample, the non-coloration gives the book a little "bland " feel to it. But as with most of the Dummies books, the non-color books are still user-friendly and include additional helpful information to find and learn about, in this case, Macintosh computers and switching from PCs.

Of course, the review would not be the same without pointing out the other helpful informational icons "peppered" throughout the book. Five icons that are placed throughout the pages. These (Tip; Technical stuff; Warning!; Remember;) serve to include precise additional information that assists along the way regarding the instructions. Through the chapter in the 6 parts, there are helpful numbered steps to guide you along the way.

Informed switching starts here, Part 1, is a great start for the book. It is too bad that most PC users are not able to read most of this section of the book. For most people who are thinking about or have just purchased a new Mac, they are acquainted with why Apple computers have an advantage right away. There is a nice two-page historical outline of the history Apple from beginning to now which some might like to know about and read (pages 18-19).

Part 2, Making the switch, why switch, understanding the Mac family and selecting which Mac to buy covers the full line of computers and equipment. Assuming you are still searching for your Mac computer instead of already having one, you gain a great understanding of not only what to buy but how to decide which is best for you in terms of computer types (hardware etc).

Chapter 4, setting up you machines helping learning about Mac OS X, techniques for windows users moving files from PC to Mac and switching applications.

In Chapter 6, there is a enlightening set of paragraphs concerning "digital right management - curse and blessing? "

Part 3, Connecting hither and yon, covers Mac online stuff, networking the Mac way and being secure (chapter 8). There is a nice section on Ethernet configuration for your Mac understanding, configuring, connecting routers networking wirelessly and setting up Wi-Fi security. This is some of the nicest written material about networking and more that I have seen. Well written, to the point and includes illustrations and more. Since I have been dealing with some networking problems recently, I found this information very interesting. Very helpful section on working with Wi-Fi and fixing interference problems (p. 185). There is also Bluetooth information and sharing files from your PC.

More software , more choices (Part 4), the iLife suite stuff, enjoying other Mac OS X goodies running windows on Mac is well done. It is a good place to start working with iLife's components. Of course you might need more information and books to cover iLife, but at least you have an insight how to get started with iLife, which doesn't have much documentation.

Part 5, Specialty switching scenarios covers interesting information.

Part 6, The part of Tens (additional helpful information found in many of the Dummies books) is always interesting. In this section the prevalent points concern troubleshooting, cool Mac tips and 10 creative uses for all your old PCs (there may be some more innovative ideas in here then you think!).

Chapter 10, staying secure, is very important, even in the Mac world. I found it interesting that all the information about passwords.

Removing data from an old Mac will certainly come in handy for those switching from another Mac not only a pc. Social and parents control switching, your business to Mac-converting files and operating system files and even converting from Linux (page 299) are well done.

There are a host of diagrams and helpful illustrations that deal with running PC windows with your Mac. I found the little section "why can't I run OSX on a Dell?" (I thought that Apple should have tried that a long time ago) very interesting.

Appendix A, a transition glossary used for speaking and using the right vocabulary helps to focus on needed information In addition, another way to quickly find out what you want to know is there is a helpful index. The top section includes the part and title while on the right top page you know which chapter you are in and the title.
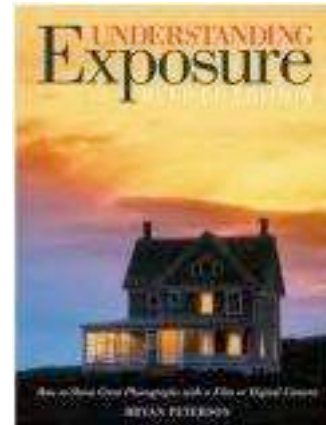
Conclusion

This book is a solid and in-depth guide to learning and knowing all that you need to switch from a PC to your Macintosh. Despite the drab look of the book, the helpful illustrations and ample sized screenshots will give you a better visual understanding of using your Mac. This book might even be used by those who casually use PCs, but have Macintosh already. The author covers the material in depth and breadth. Even though I am not converting over from a PC, I still found the information informative. This is great book for converts and those using Macs. While it appears visually bland, the text and information are solid. If you are switching, this book is a great one to try.

Understand Exposure: How to Shoot Great Photographs with a Film or Digital Camera (Revised Edition)

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Strengths: Beautiful color photos. Not a tutorial type book. This book is not a "pocket guide" but a "full meal deal." It takes time to read and " digest." But it is a very worthwhile to help you improve your photographic skills.

Weaknesses: Only 160 pages, but is packed with information.

Introduction

I had read information about the author (of this book) and his focus on photography and the difficulties of using exposure. The essence of it struck a cord with me. I wanted to get this book and discover further about the author's insights.

I have taken photographs for many years, under many different situation with the main objective being to advance my skills and capture better photos. Since the author had beautiful award winning photos, I wanted to know further about his methods concerning explaining relationships of aperture, shutter speed and film/ digital speed (ISO/ASA) which he considered the cornerstone of making (his) magnificent photos. Called the "photographer's triangle," the main idea is to perfect this "trifecta (three fold)" of methods (aperture, shutter speeds, and ISO/ASA). I was hoping that I would find fresh beneficial ideas that might benefit myself as well as other photographers, and I was glad I did.

This book is only 160 pages, but is loaded with information within the six chapters and the index. Don't expect a series of tutorials for relaying the information.

What this book offers is a set of insightful and easy to grasp notions that expand your knowledge of photography, photographic methods and the ideas which involve creating photograph in general.

The way the author writes is a like an "unfolding story." The ideas and methods actually intertwine and integrate along the way. Each idea has at least one of the author's superb photos that immediately "pops out at you." He weaves his ideas and explains how the final product created this award winning photo. Basic information is included along with the final exposure and additional information. Several times the focus also includes how the photo were initially created and then gradually transformed into a "better photo" and why. One or more photos show the "before and after" effects.

This book is not only enlightening but extremely instructive. Along the way to reading this beautiful books, there is information concerning polarizing filters, double and multiple exposures. Instead of reading this book as a speed reading course, you "digest it slowly " and "think about what is being said." In this day in age, where speed is everything, this is a welcome read.

Conclusion

This book is not a "pocket guide" but a "full meal deal." This definitely is a book that you "slowly digest." If you desire to learn about photography and take your time learning, this is a great book from an award winning photographer. While it might take a little time to finish the book , most will learn from the author's methods and his ideas.

The best way to learn from this book is to read the information, think about the photos and then how it might relate to your photos that you have taken in the past or want to take in the future. Whether you are just starting your photographic endeavors or advanced photographer, the author will give you something to think about, learn and construct your photos to a better level.

Using Mac OS X Leopard - Special Edition Series

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Brad Miser
QUE Publishing
http://www.informit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=078973653
5
http://safari.adobepress.com/9780768680980
Released: December 27, 2007
Pages: 1,056
$50 USA, $55 CND, £36 GBP
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard
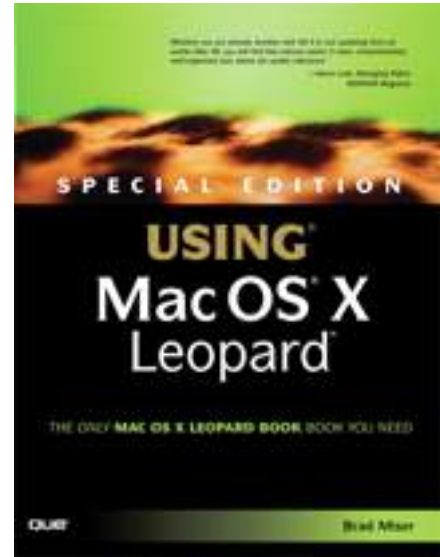**Audience:** Beginner- Intermediate

Strengths: This is a usable Reference Book for Mac OS X Leopard. Tabbed sections. Lots of Tips and Notes.

Weaknesses: Are lack of colored graphics an issue?

Introduction

> "We crafted this book to grow with you, providing the reference material you need as you move toward software proficiency and use of more advanced features. If you buy only one book on Mac OS X Leopard, Special Edition Using Mac OS X Leopard is the only book you need.

- Explore the depths of Mac OS X's core including the desktop, Finder, Finder windows, the Dock, user accounts, the Dashboard and widgets, Spaces, and much more.
- Master OS X by installing and using Mac OS X applications, customizing the system, making your Mac accessible to everyone, automating your Mac with the Automator, using Unix commands, and working with mobile Macs.
- Run Windows applications on your Mac for those rare occasions when a Mac application isn't available.
- Exploit Mac OS X's Internet tools to connect to the Net with or without wires, use email, surf the Web, and take advantage of the many features of .Mac.

- Explore some of the great applications included with Mac OS X, such as iTunes, QuickTime, DVD Player, iCal, Address Book, iChat, and on it goes.
- Expand your system with input devices (such as keyboards and trackballs), output devices (printers, displays, and such), hard drives, and hubs (Ethernet, USB, and FireWire).
- Connect to other computers and devices safely and easily using Mac OS X's advanced networking tools. Learn to configure your own network including Macs and Windows computers and how to share an Internet connection among them.
- Use great Mac OS X tools and techniques to keep your system in top condition and to solve problems."

What I Learned

"Special Edition Using Mac OS X Leopard is the only book you need." Okay, maybe. This book also has a 45-day free online edition at Safari Books Online after purchase.

All graphics are black and white and not color. Each section is full of Tips and Notes.

This is a reference book. I guess I'm spoiled by O'Reilly, where there are online updates that keep hardcopy current and where print errors can be tagged and corrected. I'd like to see QUE Publishing do the same with their books. They have stiff competition form the O'Reilly Missing Manual Series.

Conclusion

I find this book to be a snapshot in time and it is clear to see that Brad Miser loves to write about the stuff he knows like the back of his hand.

Will the book become quickly obsolete as Apple updates the OS? Probably. Is the book worth getting? It definitely goes much more deeply into Leopard than anything else I've seen for beginners who have not discovered the "Help" button at the top of the screen.

Greenware

Roll-n-Glow Fireless Flame Fireplace

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

HeatSurge, LLC
3939 Everhard Rd.
Canton, OH 44720
1 800-627-3718
$587 USD
http://www.heatsurge.com/
http://www.amishfireplaces.com/entry.cfm

Strengths: 110 Power plug. Roll-around heater.

Weaknesses: Poor glue and staple construction. No thermostat adjustment for auto-heater on/off. Casters are plastic and not "heavy-duty steel". Overpriced. False advertising.

Other Reviews:
   http://www.alternativeconsumer.com/2007/12/09/heat-surge-fireplace-whats-up-with-that/

Introduction

While in Florida on a business trip, I read the *USA Today* newspaper and found a "24 hour free offer" for 2 of these units. http://www.fatwallet.com/t/24/786579/ So I called. I got a bait-n-switch and ended up getting one, not two of these units delivered via UPS.

I asked for the Cherry wood mantle. The unit I received wasn't "free" by any means. Perhaps they meant the heater was free, but the wood mantle cost extra?

Cherry or Oak

   Handmade Amish mantels made from solid wood. (No composites or press broad)
   Fully assembled and delivered to your door.
   Integrated caster design for easy maneuverability.
   No venting and no chimney required.
   UL listed.
   Two speed heat settings - 1500 watts and 750 watts.
   2559 BTU's / 5119 BTU's.
   Dimensions 31.875"w, 25.5"h, 11.875"d   Weight 57lbs.

6ft electrical cord.

http://www.heatsurge.com/craftsmanship.cfm

The unit I received had plastic wheels and not steel casters. Is there such a thing as "heat-resistant catalyzed varnish"? The marketers think so…

The "solid" wood apparently is remanufactured wood scrap on veneer and some pieces are solid, but perhaps not Cherry. The front pieces are glued and stapled instead of being "quality" mitered pieces. Mine came with the right side front piece twisted so I could see the unfinished ends. Pressed wood, not "solid". Not happy.

By the way, it is not a "free heater" per the ad. What you get is the overpriced heater with a "free" mantle made by the Amish so you "save" over $200. The wood may be solid, but the craftsmanship is not. The wood is glued on (rubber cement?) and stapled in place (short staples). Cheap, cheap construction and will not last "100 years".

The heating unit is above the "fireplace" section, instead of below it. The fan blower unit is loud and not whisper quiet. The heater unit has wire elements, but I never saw them glow, so I assume they are not truly functional and the ceramic heater is hiding behind the "coils". Heat really does blow into the room from the unit, so the heater works.

That said, the "fireplace" lights can be dimmed using the control panel under the upper grating. The heater will not shut off because apparently the heater unit does not sense the room temperature and stays on. There is an extra remote unit which I did not purchase and an extended 2-year warranty beyond the one-year limited warranty for another $28 fee. I didn't get that either.

There are two heating levels depending on how much juice you want to run through your 110 outlet – either 750 Watts or 1500 Watts.

When you buy this unit, you are buying ambiance and not practicality. A ceramic $20 heater would do the job just as nicely as this under-$600 unit would and would take up a whole lot less space.

Buzz Alexander wrote;

"…every electric heater in the world converts a kilo-watt hour of electricity into 3413 BTUs. period. can't do better or worse. a 1500 watt heater is a 1500 watt heater. you can buy them for $12 or wrap a mantel around them, call them a miracle, install cool looking fake flames and charge $400. 1500 watts= 1.5 kilo-watts. 1.5 x 3413= 5119 BTU produced by a 1500 watt heater. all 1500 watt heaters. the cost depends on your local rate of electricity, not a national average. If you pay 10 cents per kwh, then a 1500 wat heater will cost you 15 cents per hour."

Conclusion

Don't buy this unit. The wood may or may not be all "solid" (photofinish wood strips mixed with perhaps solid top piece all stapled and poorly glued together).

I really can't tell if I bought the mantle or the heater unit for whatever my credit card was charged, but the advertising is poorly worded. Either way, it is over-priced and under-performing. You can get a "throw-away" ceramic heater that performs better. I do not like false advertising and this is one of those things. I attempted to get it returned and have the charges reversed on my card. See "Post Mortem".
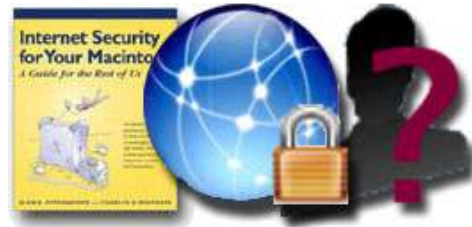
Post Mortem

Calls to Customer Service were not initially successful. "Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Customer Service Department is closed". I finally got through a week later and the Customer Service person was kind, tried to get me to keep the unit at a discount, but was willing to have UPS pick it up for a full refund. She admitted there was no thermostat, but there is a kill circuit if the unit overheated.

So, no steel casters, no thermostat, no great wood construction, no sell.

DoorStop X 2.2 Security Suite for Leopard

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Developer: Alan Oppenheimer
Open Door Networks, Inc.
110 S. Laurel St.
Ashland, OR 97520 USA
541- 488-4127
info@opendoor.com
http://www.opendoor.com/security.html
Released: November 5, 2007 for Leopard
$79 individual or $259 for 5 licenses.
Free 30-day evaluation.
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later.

Strengths: Picks up where the Leopard Firewall leaves off.

Weaknesses: I wish all the components landed in the Utilities folder in the Applications folder instead of being elsewhere in the Applications folder. (Yes, they can be co-located in the Utilities folder…)

Security Blog: http://www.isfym.com

Previous *macCompanion* Review – January 2006.

Introduction

"Open Door Networks' security products include:

- **The DoorStop X Security Suite** A comprehensive approach to full Internet security. Fully updated for Leopard.

- **The DoorStop X Firewall** Allow and deny access on a service-by-service basis. Fully updated for Leopard.
- **The Who's There? Firewall Advisor** Understand and react to access attempts detected by your firewall. Fully updated for Leopard.
- **"Internet Security for Your Macintosh: A Guide for the Rest of Us"** Essential easy-to-understand Net security guide for any Mac user. Fully updated for Leopard.
- **"ISFYM.COM: A Blog for the Rest of Us"** Keep up with the latest Macintosh Internet security issues
- **Learn.** The eBook edition of **"Internet Security for Your Macintosh"** is accessible from all products in the Suite. Whether you read it section-by-section or look up information on specific services or access attempts as you encounter them, the book helps you to achieve an invaluable knowledge of Internet security concepts and issues. The book's associated blog, **ISFYM.COM**, keeps you up to date with new issues as they develop and its **Top 10 list** provides a set of simple things you can do to better protect yourself on the Internet.
- **Protect.** Open Door's flagship **DoorStop X Firewall** builds on our decade's worth of experience with Macintosh security products to provide you with an easy-to-use, reliable application that protects your Mac from outside attack. At the same time, through its integration with other Suite products, the DoorStop X Firewall also helps you to learn about and understand both the details and the broader context involved.
- **Understand.** The **Who's There? Firewall Advisor** goes beyond protecting your Mac to helping you understand and react to security "events" as they occur. By working with both the book and the firewall, Who's There? ties together the Suite products into an integrated whole, worth even more than the sum of its parts."

My Take

Do you feel naked when it comes to firewalling your Mac under Leopard? Does the firewall that comes with Leopard feel just a little lacking? Well, try the DoorstopX Security Suite and feel fully dressed again. You won't feel like your computer-based pants are down around your ankles any longer and you won't feel like you need to have a hardwired firewall device external to your Mac. In other words, if you are a road warrior you can relax just a tiny bit. If you are tied to a desk, then this extra precaution is really all the insurance you really need to feel safe and secure while using your Mac.

I personally think the included 413-page PDF book "Internet Security for your Mac" is still the best in the business. And I "found" the Index in the left column this time. There are 16 chapters covering literally everything you need to know, including how to secure iLife, 3rd-party Internet services, how to properly respond to security threats, how to do FTPing without using FTP and how to handle home networks and wireless networking. I personally think the book is the main product and the Firewall app was thrown in for good measure, but I'm sure Alan Oppenheimer and Charles Whitaker would disagree.

No, the real meat is in the Firewall app itself – Doorstop X and of course the other tool in the kit – Who's There? Firewall Advisor.

This latest version of Doorstop X was released to tackle Leopard-specific issues such as iChat Screen Sharing and Remote Management and combating port access attempts through use of the Firewall Advisor.

Conclusion

Not only is this the oldest firewall app for Apple computers, but it is still the best. $79 for this 3-in-1 security suite is cheap insurance compared to the eventual attempts by hackers and malware distributors to attack the Mac.

Perhaps some day this will be married to the ClamXav app and an Email spam filter system such as SpamSieve for a full-meal-deal in Mac-based security. You can start now to practice safe computing by getting a copy of DoorstopX Security Suite.

NisusWriter Pro version 1.0.2

Reviewed by Ted Bade

Nisus Software
http://www.nisus.com
Released: November 20, 2007
$79 (digital) or $89 for CD. Upgrade from NisusWriter
Express available). There is an option to purchase a printed
manual.

Nisus Writer Pro

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; Universal binary;
120 MB Hard Drive Space.

Strengths: Easy to use, uncluttered workspace, saves into other word processing formats.
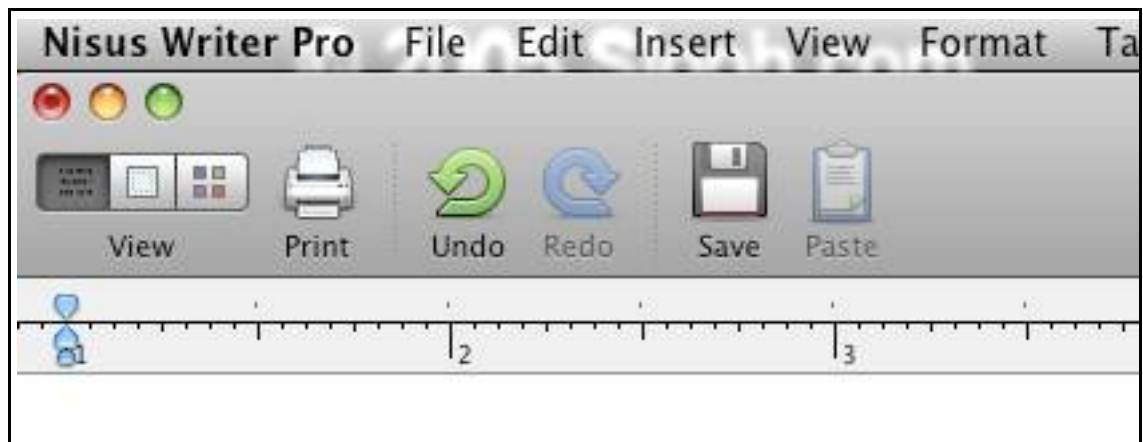
Weaknesses: Some issues remain with Leopard.

For a demo of this product: http://www.nisus.com/free/pro.php
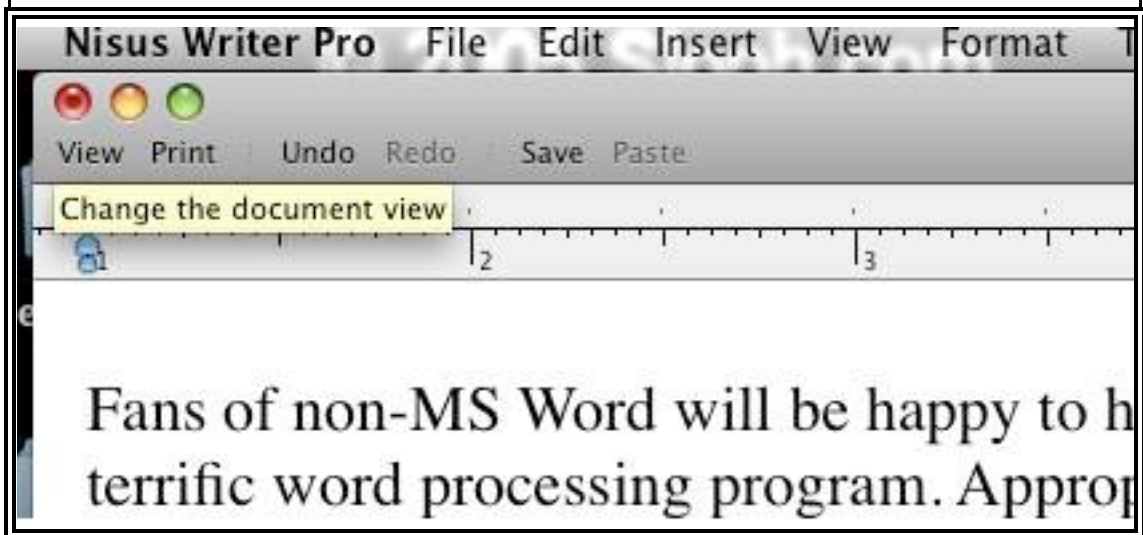
Introduction

Fans of non-MS word processing applications will be happy to hear that the people at Nisus have released the Pro version of their terrific word processing program. Appropriately it is called, NisusWriter Pro (NWP). NWP is a full features word processing program that is easy to use, provides a clean uncluttered workspace, with a true Macintosh-like interface.

NisusWriter Pro has all the typical features you would expect from a word processor and they all work great. It can do tables, work with styles, include URLs, add graphics, footnotes, headers, and everything else you would expect. Nisus was the first word processor to actually include noncontiguous selection of words (although everyone has that now), and supports a variety of languages, even those that are read from right to left. The earlier version, NisusWriter Express, is a terrific word processor. The Pro version adds a lot of features and some nice polish.

One of the things I liked most about NisusWriter is the uncluttered workspace it provides. Most of the space is your text, there is a small control area in the top brushed aluminum area of the window and you can choose to open and close a tool panel, along the right side of the document. Users of NisusWriter Express will notice that the icons in this top area are now in color.
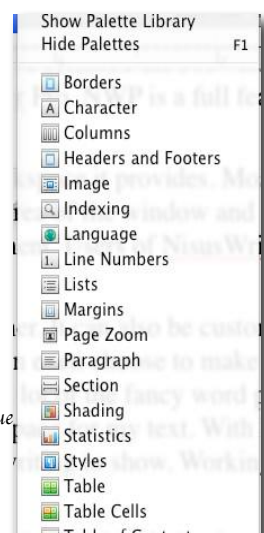
For even less stuff, you can do this

This area can be customized to show either Icons or Text or both together. It can also be customized, letting the user add or subtract whatever they don't think they will use. You can choose to make the icons smaller if you feel they are taking up too much real estate. I don't use a lot of the fancy word processing features in my day-to-day writing. To me it is more important to have space for my text. With MS Word, I always feel crowded, having just enough room for a paragraph of my writing to show. Working in NWP's uncluttered and spacious environment is a real treat.

An additional tool area opens or closes on the side of the document window and includes four default palettes. It can be customized to show those tools that you find most useful. For myself, I like to see font information, the document stats and the Thesaurus window (called Language for some reason). There are a lot of items you can view in the various palettes.

This area also provides easy access to manipulating fonts, paragraphs, tables, borders, margins and much more. Since the user can customize this
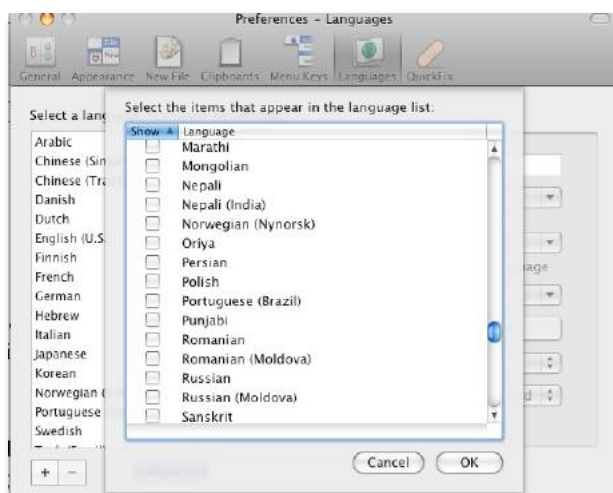
area, it is relatively easy to add any item you find useful or extract those you never use. If you don't want to see the tools side panel, it can be closed with a click on the Tools icon.

In addition to this, NWP includes floating palettes that you can pull up if you need them. These are the same palettes you see in the side tool are, but they float on the screen. As with the tool bar, you can bring them up or dismiss them as needed.

Of course, as with any Mac OS application, NisusWriter Pro includes a plethora of keyboard shortcuts. You can modify the keyboard shortcuts as well as add shortcuts to several other commands that do not have one. For myself, I generally stick with the basic keyboard shortcuts. I did create one when I used earlier versions of Nisus for Mac OS X, this shortcut would "paste text only", a function I use often in my writing. With NisusWriter Pro, this already comes setup with a default keyboard shortcut. I also noticed you can set up a keyboard shortcut for to "Print as a PDF", which is another function I find myself using a lot these days.

One of the major advantages of the NisusWriter family is their ability to work with non-English languages, including those that read from right to left. Changing to another Language is easy, just pull down the menu and select the language. There are 16 languages listed in the menu, and two "Tech" formats (URL and Email). However, there are many, many more that can be selected by using the "edit language" menu.
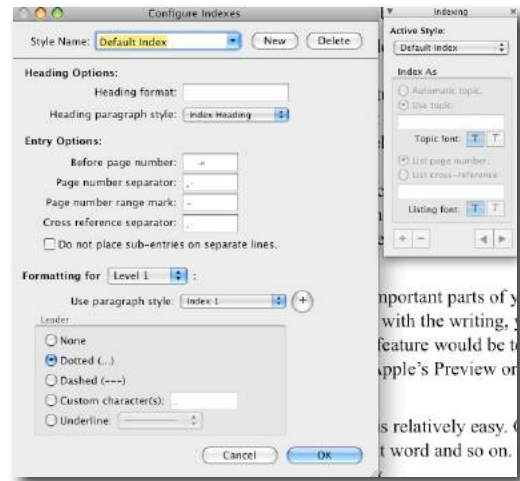
NisusWriter Pro offers a number of features that were not available in earlier version of NisusWriter Express. Lets take a quick look at some of them and see how they might help the typical user. We will start with the ability to easily make a Table of contents. To use this feature, you move through your document selecting headings and subheadings then telling NisusWriter to put them on level one, two, three or onward. For instance, you might have a chapter title, this would be on level one, then perhaps some areas in the chapter that feature sub-topics, these could be set to level two and so forth. When you are done selecting which text or headings are to be included at what level in your document, you then locate a place to insert the Table of Contents.

The resulting table shows those items you chose and on what page they are. Sub-headings are indented. This makes for a very nice presentation. You can change how the Table of Contents looks to suit your preferences, although I found the defaults to work very well.

Bookmarks can be inserted as a way to help a reader navigate to important parts of your document. I could see this as useful for any technical document. When you are done with the writing, you can go through the document and set bookmarks to the important subjects in it. This feature would be terrific if it would work with the "Save as PDF" function. However, I couldn't get either Apple's Preview or Adobe's reader to show the bookmarks I made as I experimented. Maybe we will see this in a future release. Nevertheless, if you work with NisusWriter, bookmarks can make working through a large document easier.

Another new feature is the ability to easily create an index. Doing this is relatively easy. Open the Index palette, select a word from your text that you want to index, click to add it, then go to the next word and so on. Once all the terms you want are indexed, using the insert menu, you can insert your index. The default index format is nice, but you can easily modify the look of your index.

NisusWriter Pro also has some other nice features like preventing window orphans, lots of control for line numbers, and extensive macro language. Footnotes can span multiple pages, and more.

I really enjoy working with NisusWriter Pro. The only issue I ran into was due to upgrading my Mac to Leopard. As of my writing this, Nisus hasn't yet completed a version that is fully compatible with Leopard. They do offer a public beta which is pretty good with Leopard and I imagine they will release the final version in the near future.

As far as I can see, it can save files that are compatible with MS Word. I even opened a review submission template made for Word, filled in all the important information, then saved the document in MS Word format. I asked my editor if there were any problems with working with my document and there were none. This template wasn't just a basic one, it includes blocked areas, URLs, graphics lines, and a variety of text formatting. I am really happy I won't have to run MS Word any more to complete my final submissions.

Conclusion

Lots of new features, easy to work with, a clean and uncluttered workspace all work together to make what is my opinion to be the best word processor option for the Macintosh platform. You can't go wrong with this program. I use it for all my word processing needs and I highly recommend it.

The Odessa Tools Collection — An Overview

A Software Comparison/Review – February 2008   By Harry {doc} Babad © 2008

Introduction
When asked by Alexander Tyagulsky of Computer Systems [CS] Odessa whether I wanted to review, not the individual software produced by his firm, but the set (not billed as a suite) in its entirely, I hesitated a bit before accepting. The products, which are variants of project management, mind mapping and visual outlining tools includes three applications, which I briefly describe below. My initial concern was that the staff of macCompanion had already very favorably reviewed two of the three individual products.

So after a bit of email dialog, I accepted the review task thinking that it would sever to check several aspects of this three-product collection.

- What target audience is the best suited to each of these products. They are ConceptDraw, ConceptDraw MINDMAP and ConceptDraw Project. This was important because the "user of focus" is not specifically covered on the CS Odessa website, not or side-by-side comparisons between their features provided.

- Since the three software packages were approximately the same price, and some were available as both Pro and Standard versions. In both working with them and reading about their features, they seemed to overlap in function. Therefore I wondered whether there were advantages to owning more than one product.

In my summaries of these products, initially one at a time, I've done two things. First, I've paraphrased (abstracted or modified) the publisher's product descriptions to be a bit less *press release* oriented.

Second, I in a summary fashion evaluated these individual products based on an overall assessment of the capabilities of the Odessa tool themselves, rather than redoing three detailed in depth reviews. My remarks are based on both my own experiences and the macC reviews of two of these three products. The specifications for these individual products are tabulated at the end of this article.

Finally at the end of this review, I assess:

- What target audience is the best suited to each of these products?
- Were there were advantages to owning more than one product despite the only modest reduction in price for purchasing a second product?
- Last but not least, I share a potential use of the three tool sets provide by Alexander Tyagulsky of Odessa; an analysis which I fully agree.
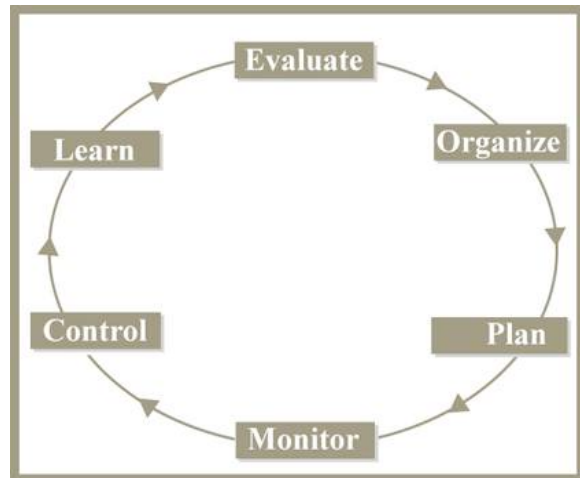
My thoughts about these questions are detailed in the summary section of this review. Be that as it may be — all three of these products are excellent choices for both a beginning or advanced user of mindmapping, project management and a more general concept diagramming software. In some ways these products are comparable to Omni Group's OmniGraffle and OmniPlan < http://www.omnigroup.com> or Mindjet's MindManager http://www.mindjet.com/us/products/mindmanager_7_mac/?s=6 Which I've previously reviewed for macC. Perhaps the Omni Group's tools will be topics of future individual reviews. For the present, the capability to integrate the outputs of the three Odessa tools with each other and with other visualization and project applications makes these tools well worth trying.

The Tools Themselves

ConceptDraw Project 4.1

According to Wikipedia, "Project management is the discipline of organizing and managing resources (e.g. people) in a way that the project is completed within defined scope, quality, time and cost constraints. A project is a temporary and one-time endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service, which brings about beneficial change or added value.

"This property of being a temporary and one-time undertaking contrasts with processes, or operations, which are permanent or semi-permanent ongoing functional work to create the same product or service over and over again. The management of these two systems is often very different and requires varying technical skills and philosophy, hence requiring the development of project managements.

"The first challenge of project management is to make sure that a project is delivered within defined constraints. The second, more ambitious challenge is the optimized allocation and integration of inputs needed to meet pre-defined objectives. A project is a carefully defined set of activities that use resources (money, people, materials, energy, space, provisions (logistics), communication, etc.) to meet the pre-defined objectives." Link: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Management

Back to ConceptDraw Project — ConceptDraw Project 4 project management software is designed to efficiently plan and track a number of projects simultaneously and to accurately allocate and manage any identified resource used in any and all of the projects being managed. Project 4 represents project data in a clear visual manner, displaying a color-coded representation of resource usage; as well as highlighting any possible areas of resource misalignment for easy identification. An easily accessible and convenient tabular project interface provides quick navigation between projects.

Across your projects, a variety of different status views, make it easier to manage each individual project. For senior management purposes, these views can serve the same functions across all the projects in the manager's portfolio. ConceptDraw Project 4 appears to be effective tool for both beginner and experienced users.

Doc notes that although he has been part of many projects in large corporate environment, he has only personally organized and dealt with small projects at church, community group or professional society associations.

Odessa has designed ConceptDraw Project [CDP] as a visual means to organize and manage projects with clear, easy to read and follow industry standard Gantt, WBS (work breakdown structure) charts and Mindmaps. It allows you to share your projects across Mac and Windows platforms. ConceptDraw Project lets you monitor tasks and resources in a project, using an easy to create and understand visual interface, quickly and easily. It is, based on my assessments, a comprehensive and powerful tool for project planning and resource management.

A Generic Gantt Chart and WBS	ConceptDraw Mindmapping Principal

The developer notes that, as described above, project management is a complicated process of planning, organizing and controlling tasks and resources aimed at achieving a definite goal. Usually in real life, such projects are also by their nature usually limited in available time, resources or funding; there are never enough of these. Where ever a pinch point in a real project occurs, milestones a missed, costs go up and proverbial hell breaks loose for both a projects' management and the clients oversight team.

"Any technical problem can be overcome given enough time and money" - states Lerman's Law of Technology. The corollary adds, "You are never given enough time or money".
Lerman's Law is not Listed in Wikipedia

The CDP software lets you determine all essential elements involved into project, control resources and funds, and monitor projects progress in an easy to learn and use way. CDP documents and methodology allows you to track execution phases, take stock of resources and financial status, and create reports reflecting the state of affairs in a project.

CDP's functionality helps you to:
- *Define project goals*
- *Subdivide the project as a set of manageable tasks*
- *Assign appropriate and necessary resources*
- *Identify and build a appropriate team or teams to perform the project work*
- *Plan the work and allocate the resources to the tasks and team members*
- *Monitor and control the execution of you diagrammed projects*
- *Follow the progress of project performance with comprehensive reports*
- *Input corrective actions to update you project analyses*

Previously Reviewed: ConceptDraw Project 3 version 3.4: A Professional Proactive Project Management Tool**. Reviewed by Robert Pritchett. MacC September 2007 [4.5 macC rating.] http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/September2007/Software/Project3.htm

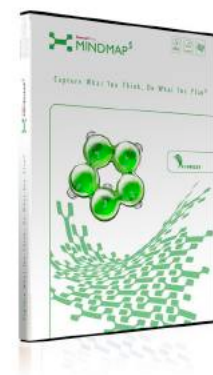## ConceptDraw MINDMAP 5.2.2 [CDM]
According to Wikipedia "A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks or other items linked to and arranged radially around a central key word idea or *goal*. It is used to generate, visualize, structure and classify ideas, and as an aid in the study, organization, problem solving, decision making, and *in* writing."

"It is an image-centered diagram that represents semantic or other connections between portions of information. By presenting these connections in a radial, non-linear graphical manner, it encourages a brainstorming approach to any given organizational task, eliminating the hurdle of initially establishing an intrinsically appropriate or relevant conceptual framework to work within.
A mind map is similar to a semantic network or cognitive map but there are no formal (*methodology imposed*) restrictions on the kinds of links used.'

The elements are arranged intuitively according to the importance of the concepts and they are organized into groupings, branches, or areas. The uniform graphic formulation of the semantic structure of information on the method of gathering knowledge, may aid recall of existing memories."

In my analyses and testing I found ConceptDraw MINDMAP [CDMP] is a tool for personal and small group brainstorming, mind mapping and visual thinking. [Now I've checked Google and as far as I can tell these are all synonyms for an overlapping concept. Using images and relationship arrows to connect concepts or tasks. But a "Rose by any other name…" Although not so defined, the developers web site implies that this product is aimed more at individuals and smaller groups

than for larger project management tasks.

Mindmapping tools serve as your personal *logic board or recorder* when discussing ideas and their relationship to each other. Such products support making decisions by cleanly illustrating their supporting concepts. They also enhance the projects planning process by graphically documenting your ideas.

CDMP enables you to present information in a simple, visual way by building trees of ideas or Mind Maps. The software to organize brainstorming sessions, take notes, plan your work and then make presentations to your colleagues presenting your ideas. In particular, the brainstorm mode helps you generate ideas and then discuss them in a group by combining the software visual out put and your own persuasive narrations. You were hit on the head when a wee person with a bit of the blarney stone, weren't you?

When session is complete use Map view to discuss, edit, develop, remove or organize your ideas, again merging images and textual content.

Areas where this tool can support capturing and visualizing you thoughts include: Front-end project planning for your church and non-profit group or in a small business environment. It is especially powerful for capturing and distinguishing between concept alternatives. Use it for supporting business presentations and illustrating your ideas in the documentation you produce be it a report, pamphlet, a book or an article for external publication.

> *Doc Sez, having previously reviewed other mind mapping programs, and being comfortable with the genre and its uses. This product, except for tracking menus and reading tool window details posed no problems for me. Despite have not done a detailed formal review of the product; I would certainly feel comfortable with a VIRTUAL macC rating of 4.0-4.5.*

ConceptDraw 7.5

ConceptDraw is designed, according to its publisher, for professional flowcharting, diagramming and illustrating. Its flexible, handy tools help business and technical users quickly document complex structures, systems and processes. ConceptDraw 7 charts can be shared as a variety of graphics files and CAD documents, printed pages, presentations and web pages. Owing to the advanced libraries of pre-drawn shapes, ConceptDraw 7 is valuable tool for most of the charting tasks including business, IT, project, UML (Unified Modeling Diagrams), and network diagrams.

A built-in scripting language allows using ConceptDraw 7 to build enterprise-level visualization solutions so all users can be working to the same information (e.g., *scrip or perhaps template*). Especially useful is the products ability to visualize/display resource usage (people and critical tools), as well as the relationship between elements of your "concept map or maps".

The product contains powerful vector drawing tools, graphics libraries with hundreds of pre-drawn shapes, built-in scripting language support, support the import and export of many file formats to assure exchange of information beyond Odessa software users.

Previously Reviewed: ConceptDraw 7.0.3 Professional, Reviewed by Robert Pritchett July 2007.
http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/July2007/Software/ConceptDraw%207%20Professiona
l.htm

Comparisons and Target User Audiences
You do remember my questions?
- What target audience is the best suited to each of these products?
- Were there were advantages to owning more than one product despite the only modest reduction in price for purchasing a second product?

Product [1]	Beginner User	Advanced Users
CD Project	Perhaps [2]	Pro
CD MindMap [3]	Standard	Partially Contained in ConceptDraw
ConceptDraw [CD]	Perhaps [4]	Pro
[1] Odessa bundles it software as a business suite [2]There are enough tools in ConceptDraw that for casual project management efforts, this product might suffice a casual user. However CD Project is definite preferred for use by users who have recurrent, even is simple, project management needs. [3] If the difference in cost is not a barrier, I recommend ConceptDraw over CD MindMap, because of its richer feature set. However Mindmapping capabilities are more limited and les intuitive in CD. [4] According to the developer, ConceptDraw 7 could not entirely substitute ConceptDraw MINDMAP. One can certainly draw a mind map in CD 7 but it takes much more time than accomplishing the same task with CDM 5. Particularly, when it comes to business tasks time is essential.		

Summary Product Specifications

Tool	Requirements
CS Odessa LLC http://www.conceptdraw.com [See Notes: 1-4]	
Tool	**Requirements**
ConceptDraw Project 4.1 [Serious visually oriented project management tools]	Mac OS X version 10.4.0 or higher; Processor G3 (minimum) G4 for Leopard; 512 Mb of RAM; 20 Mb of hard drive space available. Cost — MRP $200 USD. *PC Version Available.*
ConceptDraw MINDMAP Standard & Pro 5.2.2 [Mindmapping and Support for Brainstorming]	OS: Mac OS X 10.4 (Tiger CPU: G4 or higher), Core Duo 1,6 GHz or higher. RAM: 512 Mb, HDD: 150 Mb. Cost — Available in either a personal [MRP $119 USD] or a richer feature Pro edition [MRP $200 USD]. *PC Versions Available.*
ConceptDraw Pro 7.5 - [Business Graphics, Diagramming and Mindmapping]	OS: Mac OS X (Leopard/Tiger) CPU: G3 or higher, G4 for Tiger; RAM: 256 Mb; HDD: 500 MB. Cost — MRP $249 USD]. *PC Versions Available.*
GENERAL NOTES: [1] A comparison of ConceptDraw MindMap Standard and Pro product features can be found at http://conceptdraw.com/en/products/mindmap/provsstd.php [2] All the Odessa products can export to MS Office including the Windows version of Project. [3] All the Odessa products have good to excellent built-in drawing tools and provide rich libraries of symbols. [4] Street prices for these products varied so greatly, as did the version being sold, that I could not in good faith define a street price I trusted. However the academic prices from Odessa are 50% of the MRP.]	

A Corporate Use Example

Consider a manager in large project oriented organization. He's got new project to develop and wants to complete it in time and within budget. First he will need to prepare a brief task outline with approximate durations for each task. This document serves as a framework for further planning. The best tool to use for that task is ConceptDraw MINDMAP. It can also serve to capture possible alternative tasks/routes and has a memories function to capture non-mindmap items for future consideration.

The project engineer, using brainstorming techniques, gathers all major tasks required to define the project. Then in a mind map mode divide these *broad* tasks into smaller manageable subtasks. In the process, the engineer adds visual information about the importance, priority and duration of each subtask. As a result of this mapping activity he has developed a top-level draft project-planning document.

During the second sage of the panning work, the design engineer opens that document in ConceptDraw Project and transforms the individual mapped items into a detailed project-planning format including a work breakdown structure. This includes defining task dependencies, milestones and resource requirements and assignments. Later during he project's implementation, this more detailed information is used on every day basis to manage project progress.

In parallel to the detailed planning activity, the project manager creates visual project documentation presentation to company executives or stakeholders in form of various simple charts. Such audiences don't usually want to see large and detailed Gantt Charts, schematic or interface diagrams. Such visual project overview reports can be produced with ConceptDraw 7.5.

Through all stages of project development and implementation, the Odessa tools can be used to capture and visualize the detailed project activities and tracking tools:

- ConceptDraw Project is primary used for managing tasks and people assignments,
- ConceptDraw MINDMAP at problem solving brainstorming session, complex topics analysis, decision making process, information management.
- ConceptDraw 7 is used mainly used for preparing flow charts, org charts, WBS, UML and other visual documentation depending on project type.

Try these tools out, the demos are fully functional. You'll like them; I did.

Starry Night Pro 6.2
Reviewed Dr. Eric Flescher

Starry Night
284 Richmond St. E.
Suite 300
Toronto, UN M5A 1PA, Canada
http://www.starrynightstore.com/stniso.html
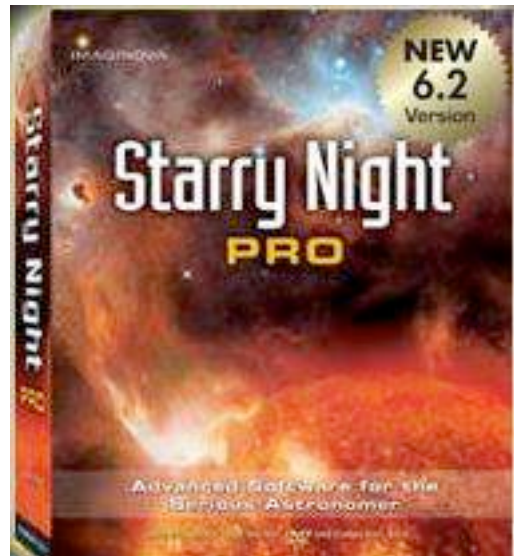**Released:** November 29, 2007
$150 USD
Macintosh/Windows/
Update:
http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/11008
Strengths: Very versatile. Starry Night Pro (SNPro)
is a feast for your eyes and astronomical mind. Starry
Night works with Macintosh and PC Windows
version (different version OS are available). Different
pricing for different versions of Starry Night to meet
your needs. Upgrades are possible to add to lower
priced versions and previous versions can be updated
to newer versions.

Starry Night can update celestial coordinates for objects which are "on the go" like comets and
satellites. Customizable interface allows for a variety of types of sky and celestial viewing. Other
DVDs (DVD Skytheater DVD etc.) include simulations, videos and slide shows. Three different
ways to locate celestial objects on the sky maps. The sky observing window can be customized
with legends, coloration, titles and much more, to showcase your views of the sky. A variety of
keyboard shortcuts (Mac and Windows versions) allow quick access of features used frequently.
Left hand pane has 12 different options.

Weaknesses: Labeling can be a pain as there are different ways to configure the icons and it is a
little confusing. Starry Night Pro 6 requires OSX 10.2.8 or later. (If you use an earlier OS try a
different version of SN. The Pro version might have more tools then you might need. See
website for differences versions of Starry Night, to see which one might be best for you and price
range. Companion Astronomical Guide Books are found for lesser versions then Pro or Pro Plus.
Factual information is easily accessed on the User Guide in the Toolbar under HELP.

Introduction

Astronomy is a fascinating to children and adults. To elevate their understanding and observing
the planets, celestial objects and phenomenon, many users think about a telescope as their first
astronomical instrument of choice. Today, planetarium programs for locating celestial objects
and assisting with their assorted endeavors, is a growing first choice before buying a telescope.

One software program packed with numerous possibilities for various budgets and astronomical lifestyles is Starry Night.

Currently the Comet Observer Award coordinator for the Astronomical League, I began hunting comets in earnest in 2001 using a version of this program. There were many fine astronomical planetarium programs on the market. Starry Night is very Macintosh friendly but is cross platform, so that I could "talk" to amateurs who using the Windows version. Initially having purchased Starry Night before 2001, I needed for the software to be able to update coordinates of objects "that did not sit still" like comets, asteroids and satellites. These objects "that moved in the sky" had to be updated manually to appear in the right place and it was quite a chore. Typing in the new objects into the database was tedious and time consuming. A new version solved my problem. It was a pleasure to have the information updated automatically. Finding and knowing the new accurate coordinates of the objects on a daily basis became a painless process. This was "worth its weight in gold" and made my astronomical work more efficient. I could then concentrate on other tasks.

Since then, I have been able to locate and photograph over 36 comets, 10 asteroids, many galaxies, nebulae and more. I become so enraptured with this program and the finding comets that eventually I created the Comet Observers Award. It is now being achieved by many amateur astronomers in the US and abroad. And I have not looked back with this program not only for these reasons but for its versatility, power, Macintosh oriented abilities and ease of use and much more. Since then, I decided to look at the Starry Night 6 version with when I started using OSX 10.4.11, as the previous version 4.5 was slowing down and sometimes crashing. I wanted to see if version 6 could help. I am glad to say, it did.

Starry Night Pro works with Macintosh and Windows versions and both versions come on the DVD. Starry Night Pro 6 for Macintosh is native to OSX so your computer needs to have version OSX 10.2.8 or later. (Earlier OSX and Windows version are still available). The program has ten main features. These are (1) Getting Started and using the basic controls; (2) Changing viewing and directions; (3) Sky Data: Using Object databases; (4) Date and time viewing; (5) Labeling objects and configuring your view; (6) Finding working with and viewing your objects; (7) Learning more about objects; (8) Using options; (9) Advanced options etc.; (10) Printing, miscellaneous features and other options.

Getting Started and using the basic controls

Three ways help to control the program: (a) using the tool bar at the top; (b) using the side panes (small panel like vertically placed labels); (c) and/or the button bars (only in Windows version). Operating the controls can be performed in either of the three ways or in combination which gives you on the go flexibility. The disadvantage is that you have to learn three ways of learning the different controls if you want to use the three types of controls depending upon your preferences. It is really a personal, visual and creative preference which way the features are managed. But it is not that difficult and there is much help along the way.

The Starry Night Quickstart is a six-sided booklet for helping you get started with the program. Basically the working of the program breaks down to these nine parts. Getting started with the software was the first task.

Your desktop opens and to a starry background view. Modifying your viewing direction helps orient a proper accurate view. Clicking on either N, E ,S , W(in the top toolbar) and your "sky" will quickly "slew" (quickly move) to the area which can be viewed on your desktop. A trick I learned, pressing the spacebar, while this was happening, made the action go much more quickly.

The software is highly customizable which adds to the appeal for using the software. Depending upon preferences, the "look and feel" of the desktop could be modified for "seeing, identifying and observing" in more enjoyable ways. By using the nine Preferences (Starry Night Pro menu with Macintosh and File menu for Windows), general options from the drop down box, users work with additional options. The default cursor is a "hand" icon (is troublesome sometimes) can be changed.

 (2) Changing viewing and directions;

The top toolbar can display and change time mode, location and field of view. Options include hiding the toolbar in the View toolbar. The time area shows the date and time for selecting your viewing. The time mode, a series of icons similar like those for movie controls, allows the user to stop or to put into action, the movement of the "heavens" over time during the day or night. Clicking on any of these reveal pulldown menus and ways for even more options. Hiding the toolbar in the View toolbar is an option if you desire. The time area shows the date and time to select your viewing. In the top tool bar is the " time mode", which is a series of icons, similar like those for movie controls, allowing the user to stop or to put into action, the movement of the "heavens" over time during the day or night. For example you can let the time progress, stop the "sky" at a different time or switch to a different time frame.

Viewing direction (orientation) by default, shows your view facing south, looking slightly over the horizon. By using the Preferences (Starry Night Pro menu with Macintosh and File menu for Windows) and then the General setting from the drop down box, the user can decide other options. The default cursor is a "hand" icon. Holding the mouse button down and dragging on the window drags the sky view in whichever direction desired. Looking high above the horizon, a red marker called the "zenith" can be seen or if looking straight down, the "nadir" (the point below your feet) can also be observed. These can be changed in the Preferences as well.''

(3) Sky Data: Using Object databases;

Sky Data is the heart of using these programs. The Object database helps locate deep space objects like double stars, nebula, supernova and other objects. The Solar System Stars and Deep sky objects allow the identification and finding literally millions of objects. The number of objects can also be increased or decreased (hidden from view). Identifying and finding objects in the sky and using the information to simulate the sky, objects, events, phenomenon etc is part of the fun for using such a program.

The Sky data part of the software can add to the multimedia possibilities. Some of the sky date that is required for certain type of celestial objects requires connecting to the Internet (called LiveSky events). It is your option to turn this feature on or off. Upcoming Events in LiveSky can show events immediately (eclipses, planetary conjunctions, moon events for example). The Hertzprung-Russell diagram can also show a multitude of options that emphasizes the stars age versus the stars mass. Starry Night can show 19 million celestial objects but a host of images can be also used from a database know as the Digitized Sky Survey (DSS). Online telescope imaging in the LiveSky control can image a part of the sky by using controlled remote telescope over the Internet.

The Sky Data section shows the astronomical events that can occur or the general sky information settings. Some of the date requires connectivity to the Internet (called LiveSky events and information). Movies, Astronomy Events, LiveSky Pane images, can be played on the SNPro DVD (other levels of SNpro these can be purchased separately). Upcoming Events in LiveSky can show events immediately (eclipses for example). The Status info pane shows general information, field of view, limited magnitude, time (universal time etc), location (longitude, latitude of location etc). The Hertzprung-Russell diagram can show a multitude of options in a different way that emphasizes the stars age versus the stars mass. Starry Night can show 19 million celestial objects but a host of images can be also used from a database know as the Digitized Sky Survey (DSS).
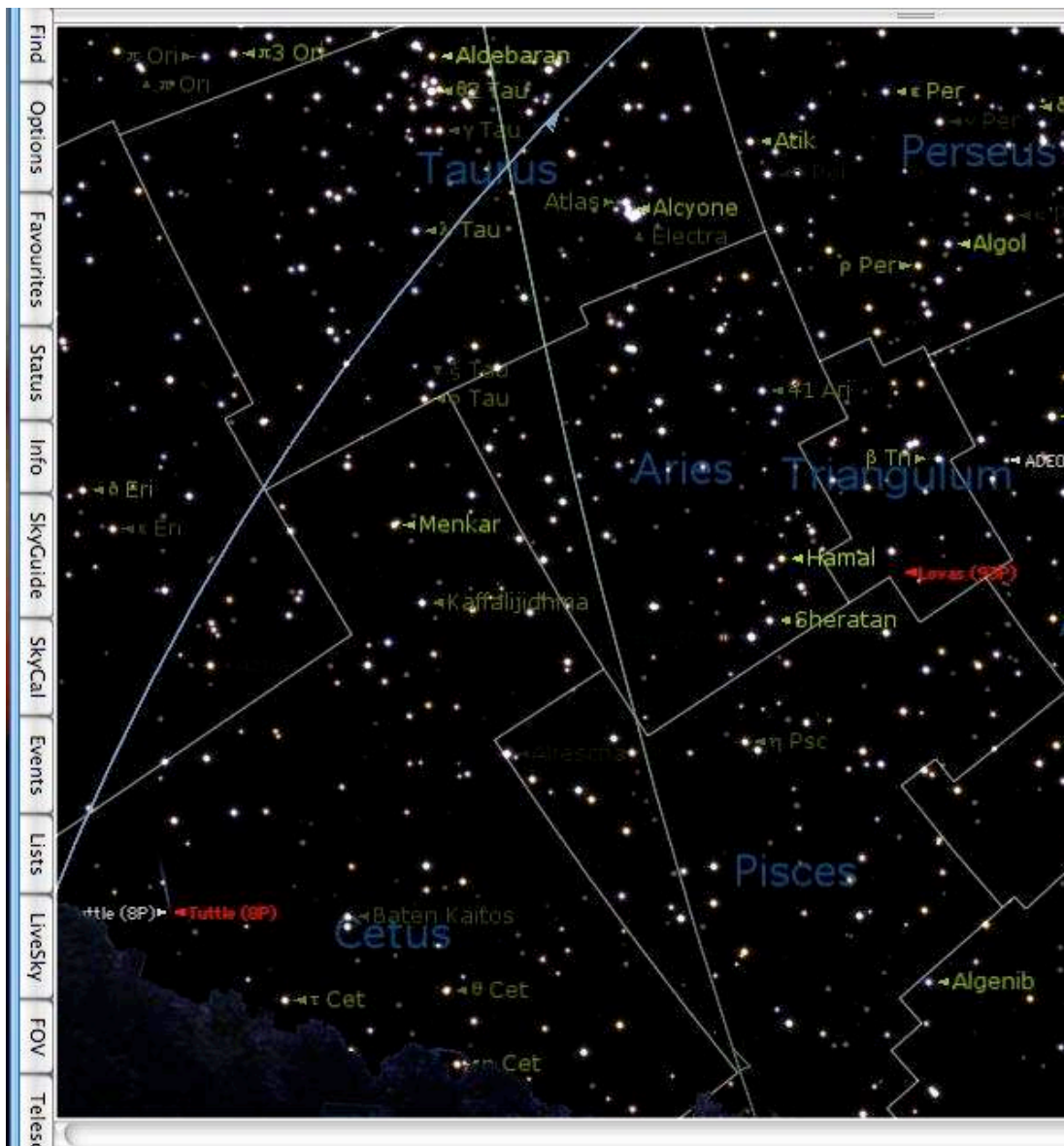
(4) Date and time viewing

Planetarium programs like this one have a myriad of information in the form of databases that can be called upon, replaced, updated, reviewed or viewed at any time. What is amazing is that you can work with the data in many ways and at your whim. One reason I like this particular program is its versatility for customization.

The main parts of the interface show the constellation/sky viewing area, the toolbar and the side bar labels. The top toolbar has 9 different options. The main planetarium interface is easy to view and the constellation/sky scene, the toolbar and the side bar labels were easy to use and helpful. However labeling took awhile to configure and use the way I wanted.

(5) Labeling objects and configuring your view;

Flexibility in terms of labeling can help with identifying objects but so much so it can be a pain. SNPro has multiple options but this makes possibilities confusing sometimes. Some of the options are not where they should be or are located in different parts of the toolbar for further flexibility (or is it confusion?). There are different ways for configuring the icons and it is a little confusing. For example, instead of all information about labeling being in one section, this function is actually in different parts of the Toolbar. By clicking on the objects (Toolbar> Labels), data icons such as objects, planets etc, are turned off/on. Clicking "Options > Solar System > Comets" really brought up what I wanted- how to configure the colors of the comets so that these objects could be displayed in the sky. However nothing happened when I clicked on the color which I thought would made it so in the sky. I had to drag the yellow color (swatch) and place into the top color window. Once that was done, the window turned yellow which meant the comets in the sky would appear as yellow icons and it immediately changed. Working with the Toolbar>Options even more is possible but I found it was "overkill" for me and started to get confusing. Once again Starry Night shows it flexibility, some time more so then you want.
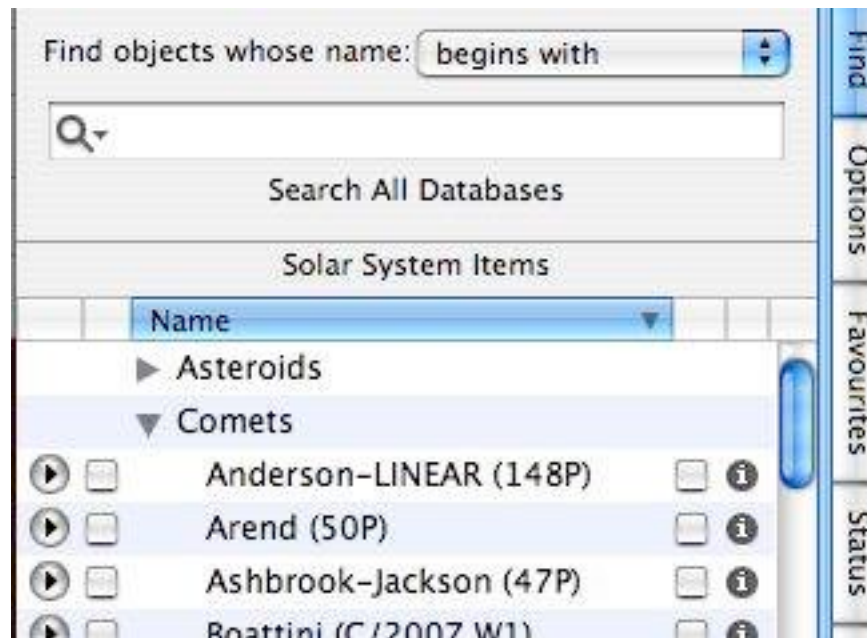
Better more flexibility than too little I thought. It was best for me to find and use an option path and stick with that to avoid confusing. Sometimes SNPro multitasking is not a good thing.
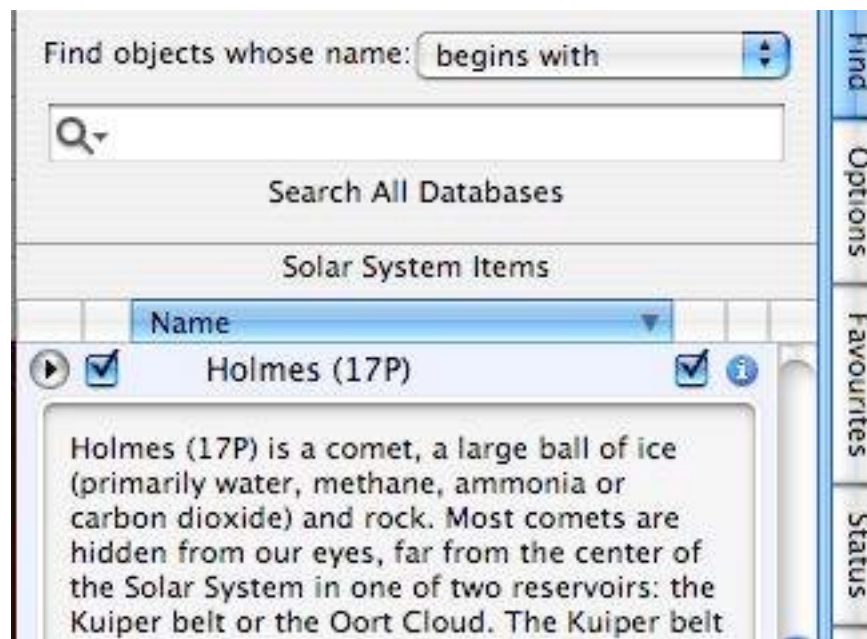

(6) Finding working with and viewing your objects

The left pane listing of celestial objects has titles (planets, comets etc). The Name, Kind, Semi-Major and Database columns can be widened by dragging the little vertical line to the right of each column in the header row. Furthermore, you can resize the entire side panel by dragging the blue line that runs vertically down the right hand side of the panel. But when you have your object in view, you can identify more about the object. Typing a name like M42 (the Orion Nebula), identified the nebula, set the sky into motion and zoomed in on this pretty nebula. A interesting graphic of the nebula also showed more information. By clicking upon the magnifier

icon, brought up a listing of different objects like quasars, constellations etc that could be used to narrow the search of the objects you are looking for.

Pressing the FIND button brings up the objects listing that can be used to find celestial objects on your planetarium screen.

Clicking on the "i" in the right hand part of the FIND dropdown menu calls up additional information. However the information is not very specific for each object . For the most part the "facts" are a generic introduction. If you need more specific information then Google a search engines or websites are the better places for finding more specific and detailed information (for example comets) showed more.

Clicking the little triangle (next to the object category title) allows more of that family of objects to appear. For example, names of many more comets will appear under the main Comets heading when clicking on the little "side-triangle". Hundreds of Comet names cascade downward (working with the Preferences is a way to customize how many you want). But what if I wanted to alphabetize this listing of comets? Clicking on the Name bar under Solar System did not do the trick at first clicking on the title "Comets" (after the rest of them descended), then clicking on NAME helped alphabetize the listing. This made working with the interface easier for me to locate the comet(s) I wanted to find and view.

First I clicked the latest bright comet called Holmes. Clicking on the comet (left side square) then clicking on the name, started the "slewing (moving from one position to the next)". I found that by holding down the space bar while this happened, made the "slewing" to the object go much faster. The position of Comet Holmes popped into the center of the desktop (my preference but this is customizable), surrounded by all the other stars and objects in that quadrant. Objects that are "checked off" appeared on the desktop as red (my preference but this can also be changed).

(7) Learning more about objects

Sometimes more information is good. There is an amazing array of celestial objects in the sky at any time and date. By clicking on this centered object (or any object nearby), the HUD (Heads Up Display) appeared. This HUD display is customizable by changing the types of information (in toolbar) that will appear (magnitude, altitude etc). I tailor- made my information with the pop-up window so that by clicking on a comet, for example (or another object), a pop-up window displayed the coordinates, magnitude and much more information, using the colored text of my choice. Clicking on other objects helped locate any objects nearby to identify what was nearby in my photographs that I made.

(8) Using options;

Using menu (Macintosh) or the preference (Windows) helped the finding of more options. Normally the sky will appear dark with light stars but white side mode can adjust this in inverse (which is preferable for types of printing). Night vision mode, dims the screen and adds a red tone which is good for viewing a nearby telescope or monitor. The brightness can also be adjusted and the night vision can also be turned off when needed. Full screen mode shows all the celestial objects and hides the screen controls.

Multimedia computerized simulations are possible. One of my major obsessions is computer simulations. After all they were a main part of my doctoral dissertation. What is really cool is that with this "time machine" software, you can literally go view objects in the present as well in the past as well as the future. Certain circumstances and events can simulate sky viewing not normally possible. Options include changing locations, elevations, orbits as well viewing locations from a difference vantage point (on the Moon, another planet etc) is possible. For example, on the desktop, I watched as an eclipse of the sun from the moon progressed, as the dark (umbra) shadow was crossing over Libya in 2006. At the same time, I simulated what the sky would look like in 2001 and used it in my eclipse video by captured the simulation on screen and saving to hard drive.

I also went back in time to check out some research for the phenomenon known as the Star of Bethlehem. I devised a simulation that would allow me to see what the sky looked like while trying to view the "Star of Bethlehem" conjunctions (close meeting in the sky) with Venus and Jupiter 2 BC in Jerusalem. It was most interesting to see these objects so close 2000 years ago as historical data had found.

Different formats can be used on the menu (Macintosh) or with the preference (Windows version). Normally the sky appears on a dark background with light stars but the white mode can adjust this (inverted), which is preferable for printing. Night vision mode, dims the screen and adds a red light hue on your computer which is good for viewing with a nearby telescope or monitor which makes it easier to view both the instrument, your telescope and starry night without a blinding glare. The brightness of the color can also be adjusted and the night vision can also be turned off when needed. Full screen mode shows all the celestial objects and hides the screen controls.

(9) Advanced options etc.

Special tools can synchronize with Starry Night and telescopes. My old telescope can't work with SNPro. Starry Night offers the possibility of operating a telescope, if you have the equipment, to control one. If this is something you want to do with your Starry Night, it is best to see if your telescope is supported by Starry Night or want to use your current one. before you purchase a new telescope. Macintosh computers use a telescope plug-in that has drivers that are packaged with the main Starry Night installer. (The PC version uses an open source code called ASCOM. The drivers for this are on the CD but need to be installed after inserting the Starry Night Pro disc and choosing "Install telescope support" from the pop-up menu).

The telescope controls are in the Telescope side pane. There are instructions and information to configure your telescope, connecting to your telescope, disconnecting, setting up the telescope, telescope controls and then using a very nice feature called the Observation Planner.

This allows adding special features to your favorites and operating your telescope with Starry Night when you want. This planner allows for the operation of your telescopes and Starry Night for current date or from a different date (use of the Planner side panel pane). Clicking one of the listed objects, these can be added by clicking upon the Add Items window. The full name is displayed or if part of the name is listed, several possibilities will show in the listing and there is the possibility to choose the one desired. Checking in the add window (left hand box) allows the adding of this object to the Observation Planner. Several windows called "filters" (Name, Database, Type, Constellation) can be used if one of these areas are entered. Finding one of these and clicking on the Add button adds to your listing. Clicking on the Name, shows whether than object is visible (if it is not visible, then the object can be deleted from the list immediately as well as any other time). A planned listing is immediately saved and can be recalled by opening the pulldown menu at the top of the Planner and then choosing the required date. The Graph option is very interesting as this offers a visual way of examining object's quality as compared with: time: angular separation; altitude; magnitude; distance; elongation (plotting of the visual separation in the sky between an object in our solar system and its parent body); angular size; and/or time range.

A previous SETI Home plug-in let the software use a popular option that is also available through separate Internet connections. The main goal is to continuously monitor signals that may be signals from extraterrestrial alien life. If selected, this screen saver appears on your screen and launches a continuous stream of data send from a radio telescope from Puerto Rico. Someday you might discover signals from a far away planet. However at this time, SETI does not work with this version but it might do so in the future.

 (10) Printing, miscellaneous features and other options

Sky charts can be customized, printed out or even saved or run as later QuickTime movie. There are also different ways to work with files. Savings the initial settings can restore the setting to correct it. A great feature is the use of multiple settings that can be saved as "sets" after various options are configured. Clicking on the Presets menu (under Options) can turn on any of the presets later.

Working with Starry Night files, image files, movie files, and exporting text files give the user even further flexibility. You can also make movies of your favorite celestial events. For example, I simulated the eclipse of 2001, a viewed traversing the Earth from the Moon. Starry Night allows the capture of movies and then turning these into QuickTime movies. I used such a video simulation which I Integrated into my 2001 solar eclipse movie with other video effects, view and travel information. Exporting images, printing color images. Making movies and then saving them under QuickTime mode is very helpful. Using Starry Night to play back your movies is not needed as these movies can be played on a PC or Mac computers through the use of most versions of QuickTime software players (which is free).

Savings the initial settings is an option. These can be restored if needed or multiple settings can be saved as "sets" by using the Option and then presets option. Clicking on the Presets menu under Options can turn on any of the presets later. Print settings and global preferences can be customized.

The astronomical CDs that came with this new version were well done and informative. DVD Skytheater DVD. Those who want to know more about astronomy can use the DVDs that come with it or even purchase other ones. Novice and intermediate users may be useful to give a wider understanding of Astronomy, Advanced users may want to use this version for the extreme flexibility, to control their telescopes and to do advanced sky observing. However for me, I just want to use the sky tools.

Past, present and future are also tools at hand with Starry Night. There is a special events section that shows and presents in simulation format, several lunar and solar eclipses. Also while doing research on the Star of Bethlehem, I "went back in time" and could observe the planetary very close conjunction of Venus and Jupiter in 2 B.C.

Conclusions

Working with OSX 10.4.10, on my iMac, I found Pro version to be a very flexible, faster and did not crash compared to SNPro 4.5. The fact that Starry Night Pro can grow with you, depending upon your needs, desires and astronomical pursuits is one of the strong suits of the Starry Night software. Many years ago, I used Starry Night Pro as a OS 9 version and it accomplished what I wanted to do - find comets and asteroids and show me what was happening in the past, present and future. I will be able to use all the tools in the future when I can get an automated telescope. However the later versions allowed me to update the coordinates upon launch and that has been most helpful.

The DVDs/CDs are "eye candy" and while other users might like using them , these adventures about the solar system, looking at simulated comets and asteroids in space and more are not my main purpose for using this great program. Advanced users may be interested in these other CDs and might want to try the less costly Pro version instead. The other CDs can be purchased later if desired and also work with the other versions of Starry Night, not only the Pro versions. This makes for even more flexibility beyond just being a "planetarium maker" and yields superior product for all astronomical pursuits for all levels of users.

This Starry Night Pro version, like versions before, is fairly easy to use. Once I learned the many control options and discovered which set I preferred to use, my planetarium looked friendlier. moved into position at a good pace and then centered (can be altered in the preferences), on the comets and other objects that I wanted to view. I liked the flexibility for controlling the colors of the various labels so different objects would stand out and be recognized more easily. In particularly I liked the way all the information concerning each object displayed. Once clicked, like on a comet, a listing of all the necessary information (magnitude, declination, right ascension, etc) lined up in a column above the stars. This was an invaluable tool for trying to plan when objects could be observed or photographed.

In the preferences, I increased the number of comets and asteroids that would be updated each time I launched Starry Night. This allowed me to view more of these objects in the Find pane. I made the updater launch when the software was installed. I made sure to have my Internet connection launched before the starry night was launched and for it to operate properly. Once the up-to-date coordinates finished and I closed the window down and started the program up again. This was to insure that the current coordinates would allow the planetarium to place itself into the proper coordinates. If the updater indeed needed to be updated- on some of the days, the updater window would open and the display that "no other corrections were needed". I made the listing of the Find pane alphabetizes the column area so I could better view the comets and other objects. I also placed check marks next to the comets that I wanted to view when I launched the software at another date.

I configured the "look and feel" of my planetarium interface so that when it launched each time, I could view the sky the way I wanted. I added a mountain scene that had the starry night in the background (there are many other options including feet etc). I reconfigured the colors for the constellation borders, comets, satellites, planets and other objects so that the colors matched what I wanted and so that each object was a different color. I changed the constellation colors to show as light green, the constellation boundaries as darker green, the names of the comets showed in red when targeted (but normally yellow), the stars showed as different shades so on. I also configured the limitations how I could see the brightness of stars and more. Versatility can be fun I found. You can change how you want the sky to appear and much more. And this version was more stable for my OS so what is not to like?

No matter which Starry Night version you choose, the software will allow you to grow with your astronomical endeavors now and the future. There are many fine Astronomical Planetarium programs on the market. However for my astronomical needs then, now and in the future, Starry Night is my choice. The "sky's the limit" (literally), for your celestial pursuits with Starry Night Pro.

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