macCompanion
YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH

April Fooled!

Friberg, Title of Liberty

$1.00
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Cover by Michele Patterson

Masthead

http://www.tropic4.com/

Columns

Books

Greenware

Columns

Letter from the CEO

April's Fools!

By Robert Pritchett

Since this is a Mac magazine, think of it this way; If Apple collapses or becomes controlled by the government or their bank account is "nationalized", where will we be?

Why fall for the absolutism of "If you are not with us, you are against us" mentality?

Figured it out? Good, because I'm still trying to sort it all out in my mind. Over time, we've been taught a lot of untruths. Here is what I know now:

*"In a time of universal deceit, telling the **truth** is a revolutionary act."*

No Longer a Republic?

You may not like what I write here, but please pay attention. It is time to "warn my neighbor" so I don't stand before the Lord in condemnation for not having told you what I know. You've been warned. Now go warn your neighbor.

Complete. Utter. Control. Dominion over all. One. World. Government. One. World. Religion. Have we become April's Fool? We have done some things as a society, that are completely **unconstitutional**.

"Socialism" used to be a "bad" word. Does anybody remember the Pledge of Allegiance? We never, ever, were a democracy. We *were* a God-fearing Republic.

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the *Republic* for which it stands, one nation *under God*, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."
http://www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm

The American Form of Government

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DioQooFIcgE

We used to recite George Washington's Farewell Address: http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/farewell/text.html It is good reading.

The US Constitution is a sacred document. It has been trashed by the current government. We need to get it back. We need to get away from Fabian Socialism - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fabian_Society

Our country (USSA) is being "led" by Fabian Socialists. http://www.nolanchart.com/article4425.html

Defend Our Freedoms Foundation http://www.defendourfreedoms.us/ - An organization of volunteers that are working to preserve our unalienable rights and our freedom guaranteed to us in our constitution.

The "Gadiantons"

For "Mormons", the "bad guys" are called "Gadiantons". Here, you can learn more about these folks who destroyed earlier civilizations on the American continent and are doing a repeat performance today on a global level this time.

Dr. Jack Monnett: History of Secret Combinations - BYU Freedom Society

Watch this 1.22 hour long video;

http://video.google.com/googleplayer.swf?docid=-7650763335074610214

"Jack Monnett goes through Ether Chapter 8, of the Book of Mormon, to lay out the foundation of the Secret Combinations, also described in his book: Awakening to Our Awful Situation. Jack reminds us that the Book of Mormon tells us of the Secret Combination and how it infiltrated government at the highest levels, just as today. Ether 8: 24-26 Wherefore, the Lord commandeth you, when ye shall see these things come among you that ye shall awake to a sense of your awful situation, because of this secret combination which shall be among you; or wo be unto it, because of the blood of them who have been slain; for they cry from the dust for vengeance upon it, and also upon those who built it up.

THE BASIC ILLUMINATI STRUCTURE and its relation to cooperating satanic bodies.
TAVOLA N° 4
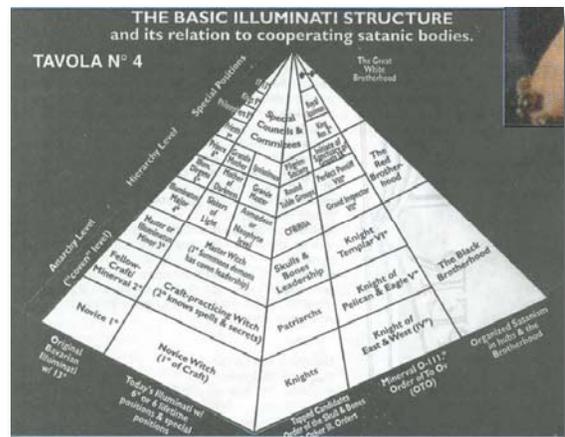
Jack Monnett spoke of Christopher Bolyn, non-LDS, who read about the Secret Combinations in the Book of Mormon. He wrote to Professor Steve Jones: "The LDS

Church has an advantage over other Christian Churches... it has the warnings of the Secret Combinations and the Gadianton Robbers taking over the government... in my mind **that makes the LDS Church the most relevant Christian church on the planet. It requires its followers to do something about our awful situation** brought on by the Gadianton Robbers. Most non-Mormons don't have a clue about these terms in the Book of Mormon, such as in Ether 8:16..."

Jack Monnett illustrates how the Secret Combination (Secret Societies / Conspiracy) have accomplished most of what they set out to do. He talks about the Illuminati, their history, and other histories of the conspiracy led by Lucifer himself.

Jack Monnett counsels that we should educate ourselves and awaken to our awful situation and commanded by the Lord in Ether 8, written by Moroni. Once we are educated and awake we can help to educate and wake up others. Dr. Monnett answers questions from the audience. Talks about the Rothschild family. One person asks, "Now that we know all of this, what do we do?"

Dr. Monnett suggests that would should each take that question to the Lord and pray to find out what He would have us do. It was also suggested that each of us have our own talents, knowledge, abilities, etc. and we can each be effective in different ways, there is no one correct answer. The answer may be different for each of us as the Lord so inspires." http://www.latterdayconservative.com

Awaken.

Ether 8

Once you watch that video and the others found on "Latter-day Conservative", you will understand this video;

The Book of Mormon and Freedom
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOOonUiGOjs

"Including messages relating to Freedom and the Book of Mormon by Latter-day Saint apostles and prophets: Gordon B. Hinckley, Ezra Taft Benson and L. Tom Perry."

ETHER 8 / A Warning from The Book of Mormon
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obDRpx2H5h8

April is when we celebrate the resurrection of the Messiah during Easter. I am one who delights in believing in a living, breathing, resurrected Christ. I believe He is directing His Kingdom here on earth through living prophets, as He has always done from the beginning. I am a part of that 14-million strong team. I also believe we are bumping up against the end times. It has been prophesied. The prophecies are coming to pass.
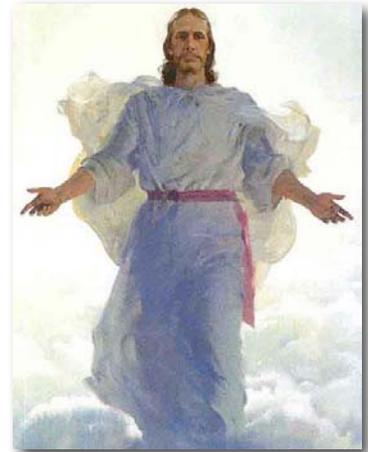
I know the truth. I studied it. I pondered it. I prayed about it. I gained a testimony of it. I invite you to read for yourself the Book of Mormon and then act on what you read, whatever your faith is today. It is a 2nd Witness of Christ, along with the Holy Bible (I prefer the King James version). The Book of Mormon also reveals to us what is to transpire in our day. It was written for our time. Christopher Bolyn is absolutely spot on with his comment that we ought to do something about our "awful situation". I know the Book of Mormon is inspired writing.

Dare to study the truth – and then act on it. God does not want us to be sheeple to be sheared by those who want total control over us. He wants us to live free, to be responsible for our actions, to be self-sufficient and *not* be slaves of the state.

"Stop sucking at the hind tit of a dead cow." I wholeheartedly say, "Amen to these following two videos!

We the People Stimulus Package by Thomas Paine II
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeYscnFpEyA

The Second American Revolution and Common Sense by Thomas Paine II
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKFKGrmsBDk

Take Back America Now!
"**Tolerance** is the last virtue of a dying society." Aristotle.

"In the beginning a patriot is a scarce man; hated, feared and scorned, but in time, when his cause succeeds, the timid join, because then it costs them nothing to be a patriot." Mark Twain

USA COMMUNIST States? What we have become.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLDNfjd-PV

Living Within A Budget

What does $1 trillion look like? http://www.pagetutor.com/trillion/index.html
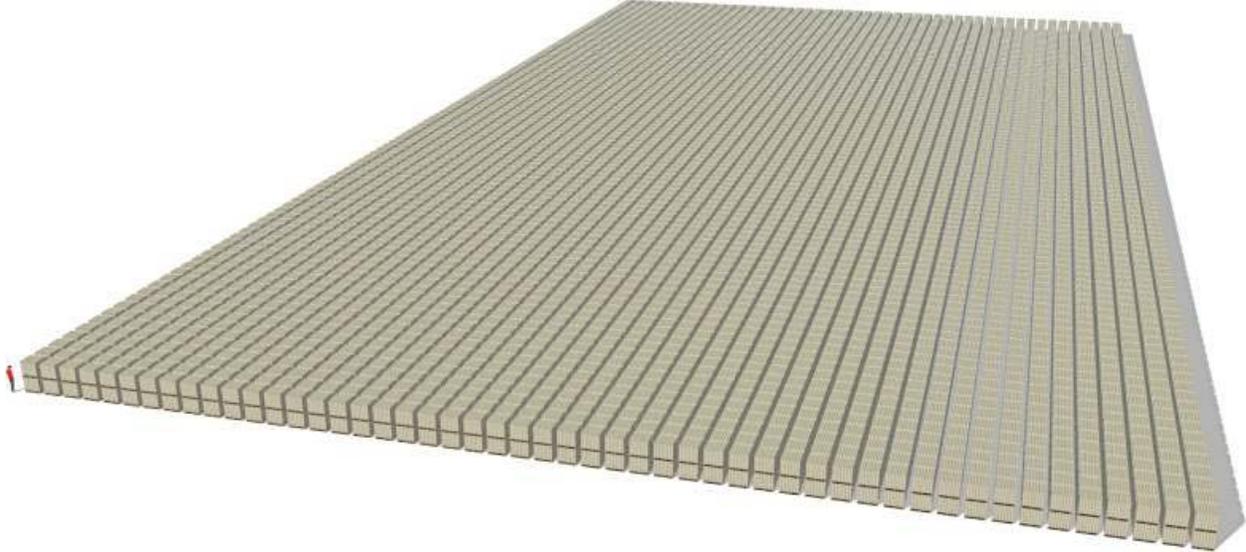
That is a man standing on the left next to a double pallet of $2 million (look close). 5 pallets equals $1 billion. The whole picture above is $1 trillion.

As of March 2009, the US outstanding National Debt (both personal and governmental) is over $11 trillion. Seven is business and personal, and four is governmental. Imagine that stack above being 11 times higher. http://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/BPDLogin?application=np

If government can print money whenever it needs it, why do we pay taxes? Answer: Control. But today, the 3rd largest expense is interest on borrowed money. Again, if the government can print as much money as it needs, why does it pay interest on borrowed money? Think about it. http://www.federalbudget.com/

The current administration has obligated us to well over $60 trillion, is sending out its minions to convince us this is the right thing to do and CONgress is voting itself another $90,000 each.

What We Really Owe
http://www.brasschecktv.com/page/584.html

90% Taxes and Power Grabs
http://cnintruth.blogspot.com/2009/03/stalinist-tactics-and-power-grab-of-us.html

The End Of A Crooked Road
http://www.newswithviews.com/Schwiesow/jim152.htm

Economic Collapse 2009: Anonymous American Patriot: God Bless America!
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DioQooFIcgE

A Nation of Snitches

Now we have become a nation of snitches. How many of you remember Nazi Germany, circa 1930's? Déjà vu.

Fusion Centers and Intelligence Sharing

http://www.it.ojp.gov/default.aspx?area=nationalInitiatives&page=1181

"A **Fusion Center** is a terrorism prevention and response center, that were started as a joint project between the Department of Homeland Security and the US Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs between 2003 and 2007.

The fusion centers gather information not only from government sources, but also from their partners in the private sector.

They are designed to promote information sharing at the federal level between agencies such as the CIA, FBI and Department of Justice) and at the state and local level. There are more than forty fusion centers with up to fifteen more are planned. Fusion centers may also be affiliated with an Emergency Operations Center that responds in the event of a disaster."
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fusion_center

We are being told to "fear" the right, when we should be fearing those in control o four government who are trying to take away our ability to defend our selves and are now trying to limit access to ammunition.

Why I Carry a Gun

"I don't carry a gun to kill people, I carry a gun to keep from being killed.
I don't carry a gun to scare people, I carry a gun because sometimes this world can be a scary place.
I don't carry a gun because I'm paranoid, I carry a gun because there are real threats in the world.
I don't carry a gun because I'm evil. I carry a gun because I have lived long enough to see the evil in the world.
I don't carry a gun because I hate the government, I carry a gun because I understand the limitations of government.
I don't carry a gun because I'm angry, I carry a gun so that I don't have to spend the rest of my life being angry ay myself for failing to be prepared.
I don't carry a gun because I want to shoot someone, I carry a gun because I want to die at a ripe old age in my bed, and not on a sidewalk somewhere tomorrow afternoon.
I don't carry a gun because I'm a cowboy, I carry a gun because, when I die and go to heaven, I want to be a Cowboy.

I don't carry a gun to make me feel like a man, I carry a gun because men know how to take care of themselves and the ones they love.

I don't carry a gun because I feel inadequate, I carry a gun because unarmed and facing three armed thugs, I am inadequate.

I don't carry a gun because I love it, I carry a gun because I love life and the people who make it meaningful to me.

Police Protection is an oxymoron. Free citizens must protect themselves. Police do not protect you from crime, they usually just investigate the crime after it happens and then call someone in to clean up the mess.

Personally, I carry a gun because I'm too young to die and too old to take an ass whoopin'." (Independent American http://www.independentamerican.org/)

2nd Amendment Part 1
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2ZF_mjEGP4
Part 2
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7txSkmO2S0
Part 3
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8nbdVJK_pg

The Modern Militia Movement-Missouri MAIC Strategic Report 20Feb09
http://www.scribd.com/doc/13290698/The-Modern-Militia-MovementMissouri-MAIC-Strategic-Report-20Feb09

The Radical Polarization of Law Enforcement
http://www.augustreview.com/news_commentary/general/the_radical_polarization_of_law_enforcement_20090318113/

Active US hate Groups Interactive Map
http://www.splcenter.org/intel/map/hate.jsp

Freedom Ain't Free

"Freedom Ain't Free" - American Tea Party Song by Lloyd Marcus
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2H8xHFXC8U

Song by Lloyd Marcus http://www.LloydMarcus.net ,
copyright Zephyrus Music:

Mr. President!
Your stimulus is sure to bust
Its just a socialistic scheme
The only thing it will do
Is kill the American Dream

You wanna take from achievers
Somehow you think that's fair.
And redistribute to those folks
Who won't get out of their easy chair.

We're havin' a tea party across this land
If you love this country
Come on and join our band
We're standin' up for freedom and liberty
Cause patriots have shown us freedom ain't free

So when they call you a racist cause you disagree
It just another of their dirty tricks to silence you and me.
I believe in the Constitution and all it stands for.
Anyone who tramples it should be booted out the door.

We're havin' a tea party across this land
If you love this country
Come on and join our band
We're standin' up for freedom and liberty
Cause patriots have shown us freedom ain't free

Now we're not advocating violence
That's what the so-called peace crowd do
We're talkin' peaceful protest to defend the red, white and blue

We gotta vote out these clowns who don't love the USA
Who stay up late losing sleep fearing what the French might say

We're havin' a tea party across this land
If you love this country
Come on and join our band
We're standin' up for freedom and liberty
Cause patriots have shown us freedom ain't free

We're havin' a tea party across this land
If you love this country
Come on and join our band
We're standin' up for freedom and liberty
Cause patriots have shown us freedom ain't free

Freedom ain't free
(Stand up for America)
Freedom ain't free
(Gotta take a stand)
Freedom ain't free
(Mr. Obama)
Freedom ain't free
(we work hard for our money)
Freedom ain't free
(Don't give it away)
Freedom ain't free
(Save the day)
Freedom ain't free
(Don't go givin' it away)
Freedom ain't free
(It ain't gonna work)
Freedom ain't free
(Give back our freedom)
Freedom ain't free
(Give back our liberty)
Freedom ain't free
(I love my country)

They can't take our weapons so we cam protect ourselves, but they can keep us from arming
ourselves – if we let them. Don't let them! -
http://ammunitionaccountability.org/Legislation.htm

The Title of Liberty

Join *The Title of Liberty* -
http://www.thetitleofliberty.org/

"Liberty is not something bestowed by government in legal process, but a God-given right, or title, flowing from the responsible actions of a people."

The Sheriff: More Power Than The President
http://www.etherzone.com/2009/stang032009.shtml

We should not be April's Fool.

I care about you. Do you?

Robert L. Pritchett, Constitutionalist

Note: Many of the links above can be attributed to those participating on the LDS Freedom Forum - http://ldsfreedomforum.com

Other Reading

Economic Scuttlebutt: Tea Party Revolution
http://yophat.blogspot.com/2009/03/tea-party-revolution.html
Our Awful Situation - Secret Combinations Above Us (PDF)
http://www.latterdayconservative.com/other/our-awful-situation-secret-combinations-above-us-pdf.html
The History of Secret Combinations by W. Cleon Skousen
http://www.latterdayconservative.com/downloads/view.download.html (MP3)
Awake and Arise
http://www.awakeandarise.org/Benson.htm
The Biggest Secret Forum
http://thebiggestsecretpict.online.fr/nwo.htm
The Empire Of "The City" Part 1
http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=4675077383139148549
The Empire Of "The City" Part 2
http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4430543376785758889
The Illuminati and the House of Rothschild
http://www.redicecreations.com/specialreports/2005/08aug/redshield.html
The Obama Deception
http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7535755025025800195
 Freemen Institute
http://www.freemeninstitute.com

National Center for Constitutional Studies
http://www.nccs.net/
Don't Torture in My Name
http://www.themormonworker.org/articles/issue3/dont_torture_in_my_name.php (Communist front source)
Jim Marrs - You Don't Win an Occupation and "Global Hawk" system
http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3295514150832328011
Jim Marrs – Follow the Money and 9/11 Omission Report
http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4603934165835322116
The History of the Betrayal of the Republic and the Dismantling of America
http://www.greaterthings.com/Conspiracy/Betrayal_History/index.html
Preppers Network
http://floridapreppersnetwork.blogspot.com/

Just for Fun

Hackers
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hackers_(film) - The bad guy refers to the New World Order in this delightful movie.
How the Markets Really Work
http://www.brasschecktv.com/page/187.html
"Enlightened" Sheep-le
http://www.break.com/index/light-up-sheep-art.html

According to Hoyle...

Software Development Jobs in a Down Economy, Part II

April 2009
by Jonathan Hoyle

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macCompanion
http://www.jonhoyle.com

We continue this month exploring this month exploring the software development job market in the present economy, from a Macintosh perspective. Last month http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/March2009/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm I began by making the comparison of the current economy with the '92/93 recession. In particular, I noticed that the Bureau of Labor Statistics [http://www.bls.gov/] (which is a wonderful resource by the way) listed the January 2009 unemployment rate at 7.6%, which neared the high of the recession 15 years earlier (which itself peaked at 7.8% in June 1992). A month later, we now have the February 2009 unemployment rate, which has jumped to 8.1%. This figure edges out the worst of the '92/93 recession, and one must go back to '82/83 to beat that number. For those keeping score at home, this latter recession peaked at a whopping 10.8% in November and December of 1982. Hopefully we will not see the jobless rate spike to quite those levels, but it's certainly too early to rule out anything yet.

But of course, this 8.1% figure is the overall jobless rate. What would this figure be if we were to limit our arena of interest to that of software development? As pointed out last month, this is the first recession to affect software engineers in any measurable way. The Bureau does not break down the unemployment figures in narrow occupational fields like "Macintosh engineers". The most specific these numbers get is in very broad categories, and in the *Professional and Related Occupations* group, the unemployment rate is 4.5%, or nearly half the overall jobless rate. At first glance, this may appear to suggest that the current recession is not hitting professionals nearly as hard as other categories. As it turns out, such optimism is not warranted, as professionals typically have a lower unemployment rate even during good times. For example, the February 2008 overall jobless rate stood at 4.8%, but for professionals was 2.3%. If anything professionals are being hit harder, as their unemployment rate has nearly doubled in a

year's time, whereas the overall market has seen its joblessness jump only 68% for the same time period.

Posting Your Resume

Obviously the first thing you want to have ready is your resume. Keeping it up-to-date and ready for the viewing is certainly essential. Some of the job-hunting books do not put a high premium on keeping a static resume, but rather recommends that a professional tailor a resume specifically for a position for which he or she is applying. Despite the logistical hassle of rewriting dozens of resumes, this recommendation may have made a bit of sense in the pre-internet days. However, today most resumes are searched and found digitally, and keeping your resume accessible online precludes you from knowing who is actually reading it. And although it is true that a significant number of resumes are still printed and mailed, those searching for software engineers rely less on old school approaches and more on the internet.

Most people have heard of monster.com [http://www.monster.com/] and other resume resources, and I encourage everyone - whether you are looking for job or not - to keep your updated resume posted at all times. Moreover, keeping your resume copied on your own web site is useful (as mine is at http:www.jonhoyle.com/resume). True, this may generate some unwanted phone calls from time to time, but it's an excellent gauge to determine your marketability. It provided an object lesson for me only a few years ago, as at one time recruiter calls began to diminish. As it turned out, my resume (which boasted of very strong C++ and Carbon skills) made nary a mention of Objective-C and Cocoa. Callers who did contact me made it clear that this was quickly becoming an important skill set. This information became a wake-up call for me, and allowed me to be ahead of the game once Apple's *"Death to Carbon"* pronouncement was made at WWDC 2007.

I found another unexpected benefit to my policy of keeping my resume continually posted. I had just started working for a small company, and apparently the CEO liked to keep track of his employees by monitoring for their resumes on monster.com . If he suddenly sees a resume for one of his employees pops up, he knew that they were interested in leaving. Once I was hired, he had expected that I would mark my resume as inactive so that it would no longer be publicly searchable by other employers. However, I never did take it down. After a time, this CEO very indirectly brought up the topic about resume searches to me, and I happen to mention that I always kept my updated resume online simply as policy. Once this understanding was made known, it allowed me the flexibility a few years later of looking for other opportunities without communicating that fact to my present employer.

Handling Recruiters

Getting calls from recruiters is an occupational hazard for any Mac developer wishing to test the waters for a new job. Recruiters come in different grades of quality, and sadly the worst ones become more numerous in down economies. After all, with a larger number of fresh people looking for work, one can quickly start up a business by simply collecting online resumes. All you need to do is send out emails to the world about some vague "opportunities" that require "immediate responses", and watch the replies come in. And since recruiters make their commission whether or not the job is the "right fit", many of these recruiters will persuade, cajole and pressure you into taking whatever job into which they can place.

Some recruiters will even undermine other job opportunities you have lined up, just so they do not lose their commission. This happened to me about 15 years ago, when I was asked by a recruiter to tell him what other interviews I had lined up (asking under the pretext that he did not wish to duplicate those same efforts). I naively told him what else I had scheduled for the next week. I didn't think anything of it until on the day of one of those interviews, I had found out that this recruiter called this company's CEO, telling him of my other interview options, and placed me into a rather awkward situation.

Do not give to a recruiter any personal information (beyond that which is reasonably useful for job searches), unless you have a long standing and trusting working relationship with this person. There is too much temptation for such people to compromise your situation so as to pad their bottom line.

Fortunately, there are also some excellent recruiters out there as well. The good ones will tell you as much they can about a company who is hiring. Sometimes they cannot give complete disclosure, but they will do due diligence in ensuring that this would be an acceptable option for you. Where bad recruiters will barely read your resume and attempt to fit you into a non-Mac related position (due to ignorance or apathy or both), good recruiters know what you are truly looking for and will filter out inappropriate options.

Good Example: As I do not wish to endorse any particular agency, I will mention one which is sadly no longer doing business: Scientific Placement http://web.archive.org/web/20051224002500/http://www.scientific.com/. Back in the pre-internet days, readers of MacWeek http://web.archive.org/web/19981212015423/macweek.zdnet.com/ would recognize Scientific Placement's ad in the classified section over the many years. Scientific Placement was one of the best Mac recruiters in its day, and its reputation only grew due to its professional integrity and individual personal attention to its clients. Run by Dave Small and Allyson Pardue, this team of recruiters represented the best of the best. To them, you were a person first and a client second. They were genuinely try to find an appropriate match for both you and the hiring company.

Bad Example: There are so many bad ones that I don't mind naming names. Here's one that has annoyed me most recently. I received an email a couple of months ago from a guy representing "BigMoneyJ*bs.com" saying he found my resume "nice" and wanted me to call him back for a immediate job opportunity. Of course I knew immediately that this bozo simply skimmed my name from a web scraper searching for resumes and that there was no "immediate" opportunity. I knew that in all likelihood he was trying to build a database of Mac engineers, just so he can market this to companies looking for people. But I figured, "Fine, I post my resume on his site. Who knows, can't hurt, can it?" As long as I am with other Mac developers, at least I'd be in good company.   So, I go to this recruiter's web site, and clicked on "Post a Resume", I got a server error indicating an incompatibility with Safari. So I email him back mentioning that his web site is not compatible with the most popular web browser on the Mac, and that this was not the best way to attract Mac engineers. I send him the full server trace and error log, with a recommendation on what he should do. Despite my detailed explanation of his server problem, this genius here came back with "try and type in the address by hand." I realized quickly that this guy was about a sharp as a bag of wet mice, and so I wrote him off and forgot about it. That is until about a month later when I received nearly the identical email about an immediate opportunity again. I emailed him back that he already emailed me, and told him to remove my name from his spamming list, and not to contact me again until (minimally) he fixes his web site. Yeah, right. I now see a new email from him every month about immediate opportunities. Thank God for spam filtering.

Lesson: Life's too short to deal with morons. Do not waste too much time with recruiters in general until they have proven themselves to be best of breed. If they are, they will do so. If not, you save yourself a great deal of grief.

Coming Up Next Month: In Part III, we will discuss interview techniques. See you in 30!

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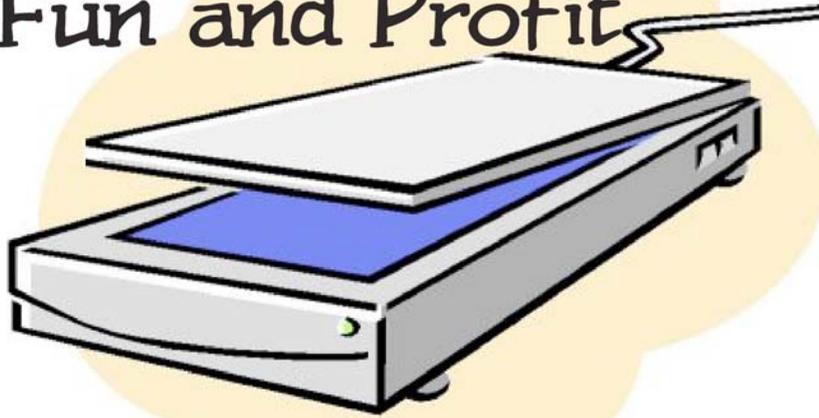
Dan's Scans

PreSonus FireStudio Project and GarageBand

Reviewed by Dan Robinson

Presonus Audio Electronics, Inc.
7257 Florida Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
Phone: 225-216-7887
http://www.presonus.com/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PreSonus
Specs: http://www.americanmusical.com/Item--i-PRS-FSPROJECT-LIST
$699 USD ($499 street price)
Requirements: GarageBand, Mac OS X 10.l4 or later, FireWire, 1 GB RAM.

Strengths: Ease of use for professional results.

Weaknesses: None apparent.

(This started out as a narrative . . . and got out of hand.)

Every once in a while, as a full-time Mac consultant and a sometime performer, serendipity happens.

I knew about Garage Band, and played with it a bit, doing a four-part harmony, a cappella rendition of Four Strong Winds. I did it as a demo for our Apple Club meeting several years ago. Strictly for fun, using the built-in mic on my MacBook Pro.

Last summer, I became involved with the Carolina Voices organization. CV does a half dozen performances a year, including the 54-year tradition of Charlotte's Singing Christmas Tree.

Now I'm back in my high school days and the 1950s, learning music and singing in the chorus. But wait! I have a Mac!

First, I bought Sibelius, scanning in sheet music with PhotoScore Ultimate and laboriously correcting its many errors. We're talking 24-30 hours to polish a more complicated song. I tried Finale, but not only did it scan in the music badly, it had a much steeper learning curve.

Then I exported the Sibelius file in MIDI format and dragged the MIDI file onto a Garage Band project.

Not perfect, but adequate. In addition to the piano accompaniment, each of the four (or more) voices was emphasized in turn and an MP3 created for chorus members to download and help them learn their parts.

Six paragraphs do not cover the three months of working on the music several hours each night.

There has *got* be a better way!

There are some people who can read music well enough to look at a piece of music and hear the right notes. I wish I were one of them, but I'm not. I have to hear it played.

So for the April concert, we gathered together the best sight singers in the chorus.

I ran over to Sam Ash to see what they had.

What they had was the PreSonus FireStudio Project.

What I had was no time.

I installed the drivers, installed the included Cubase LE 4 Audio Production Software, plugged it in and turned it on and tried the easy setup.

Zilch. The sound from the Microphone(s) was OK, but there was a rhythmic staticky sound. This will not do! And the documentation gave me no clues to fix the problem.

I tried it from GarageBand and the sound was beautiful!

I tried it from Logic Pro. The staticky sound was back.

I have six singers and a pianist coming tomorrow. GarageBand is elected.

In almost no time at all, I had a template GarageBand project set up with individual tracks for each performer. ⌘-D in Finder duplicated the file and I renamed each duplicate for the name of the song to be recorded.

Comes the dawn. I'm up early and go to the rehearsal hall for the recording session. My MacBook Pro is up and running. The FireStudio is plugged into the FireWire port. GarageBand is picking up all eight inputs from the FireStudio. By the way, make sure the FireStudio is on and connected before you start up GarageBand. Otherwise it won't see the eight inputs; same thing when shutting down. GarageBand should be the first to be turned off. If you turn off the FireStudio first, your inputs will be screwed up and you'll have to reset them in GarageBand one at a time.

The microphones arrive. Two different makes and three models! Two Shures that didn't take phantom power and six Electro Voice mics that did. I put one of the Shures inside the grand piano on a mini desktop tripod standing on a piece of foam. I have yet to listen to the output on my good speakers, but I'm willing to bet it will be professional quality. Using GarageBand, I am seriously impressed!

The six singers had the EV mics. I separated them from each other as much as possible and coached them to get closer to the mics to decrease the amount of pickup from other singers and the piano.

They start running through the first song and I tweak the inputs on GarageBand and FireStudio to give me some wiggle-room. Then we do the recording for real. I'm here to tell you that it went beautifully! From nine a.m. to noon, we recorded five songs.

The use of the FireStudio Project was flat out perfect. There was no learning curve. It was as close to plug and play as you can hope for. Problems with inputs were quickly identified and corrected with a tweak of the blue knob. Phantom power? Press the little blue button. Really. How much simpler can it get?

This is a piece of professional sound equipment. Granted it can get a lot more complicated. A professional recordist will already know Cubase or Logic and not suffer the newbie blues with which I was afflicted. The on-screen mixer panel that came with it, I didn't use at all. But I'm looking forward to stretching my wings as we record the polished songs.

Inputs are eight combination plugs that take either the standard three-pin XLR microphone plug or a quarter-inch TRS (phone plug).

GarageBand continues to impress. It dealt with seven tracks with ease, putting the piano centered and the emphasized voice 75% on the right channel and the other voices 75% on the left channel.

See Also

PreSonus FireStudio Project Overview
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUB7MHPLmQI presonus

PreSonus How to: Recording drums...
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8KUFRBIAcs

LinkedIn Profile
http://www.linkedin.com/companies/presonus-audio-electronics

Ivory Tower - April 2009

Just because it's portable doesn't mean it is good!

By Ted Bade

Perhaps it is just me getting older. You might have heard the old tale, one's eyesight begins to give out, requiring the use of "reading glasses" to read a book. Along with this seems to comes an attitude that things one uses should be to one's satisfaction. The true beginnings of the crotchety old man.…

Making portable electronic equipment smaller generally seems like a good idea. If its smaller, it's more easily portable. It also probably requires less power to operate, which either reduces the size of the battery it requires, or means it will perform for a longer period of time between charges. These are all desirable things.

Where this model fails is when one tries to shrink a video display. The other day I was trying to see if I could use the iPod touch to display a PDF document I wanted to read. What I found was, if I got the text large enough to comfortably read, all I could see was part of a sentence. Which means I lost the sense of the document and found reading to be very disjointed. If I got the document small enough to see it's layout, I couldn't read it. So I tossed the Touch and used my MacBook Pro. I find that a 15" screen is pretty good for reading documents, looking at web pages, or watching a movie.

On a similar note a friend related the story of a guy coming to a social gathering with one of those new mini-portable computers. He was wowing everyone with how small it was. Then they decided to use it to visit a web site. Ooooh, isn't this fun, now you get to view **either** the left side **or** the right side of the site's main page. Wow, I am impressed.

Then again I heard an advertisement for a new cell phone device that includes the ability to "watch" TV shows on it. Yes you can fit it in the palm of your hand and still watch broadcast quality TV! I remember asking myself, why did I bother to buy myself a 40" LCD HDTV for the

living room? Why didn't I just buy a 2" one, it would definitely been at least as good! I could carry it around the house and never have to worry about action scenes making me queasy…

Sure, the portability of this device would be nice, but I don't see how I could enjoy watching a show that small. I think I could **remember** more detail about the show I watched on a regular sized video display then I could actually **see** on a 2" screen! (By the way, what was the logo on that guy's hat?

Hey, even the guys at Pixar implied this was an issue. If you saw their animated movie Wall•e you might recall the scene where he is watching an old VCR tape using an iPod as a display. Yet even Wall•e, the robot with obviously advanced visual sensors uses a magic magnifying glass plate to bring the iPod's video up to a useful size. (Or was that simply for the "old" guys in the audience? ☺)

Small and more portable is good, but not for video displays. Until the engineers come up with a display that is 2" but looks like 50", I am going to stick with a regular sized laptop! Maybe Apple will add one of those nifty pull out extension displays to their laptop like one PC laptop manufacturer offers? Perhaps one day we will have displays that appears room sized and in 3D! I can't wait.

Finally! Apple updates their desktop computers. - While the improvements aren't extremely stunning, they are significant improvements. Since I am a fan of Apple computers, and this particular article is mostly about what happens related to Apple computers, the news of March 3rd was very significant to us.

Apple updated the MacMini, the iMac, and the MacPro. Let's take a brief look at these updated machines.

The MacMini, which I consider the ultimate low end machine, gets some impressive additions. The biggest change (IMHO) is the inclusion of a real graphics card. We have a first generation Intel MacMini, which has the onboard Intel graphics chip. The lack of graphical ability is probably the biggest negative aspect of this otherwise great machine. Some other interesting features include a "greener" set of components; the machine doesn't have a number of toxic materials and is supposed to use only 13Watts of power when in standby, which is said to be 45% better then the previous machine. While the stock processor speed up is only to 2 GHz, you can upgrade to a 2.26 GHz one. The hard drive size has been increased, the optical drive is 8X, and the wireless card is version n. As with the previous MacMini, this isn't a powerhouse, but it is a low end machine with everything a basic user will ever need. My wife has been happily using her first generation Intel Mini for years. I thinks she will look forward to this new one! To check out these new Mac Minis, visit: (http://www.apple.com/macmini/)

Apple also updated the iMac. Some of the new features include either a 20 or 24" screen, only the low end iMac offers the 20", the rest are all 24" screens. Graphic cards have been enhanced to slightly better NVIDIA cards. The highest end iMac can have either a NVIDIA GeForce GT 130 512MB or an ATI Radeon HD 4850 512MB. There is a lot of hard drive capacity as well. For more information on these new iMacs visit: (http://www.apple.com/imac/features.html).

Finally Apple also upgraded the MacPro. This powerhouse machine has several new features that a power user might love. First of all the processors are now the latest Quad-Core Intel Xeon "Nehalem", which is faster then it's predecessor. Expansion is even easier on this machine. due to the redesigned interior. (Take a look at this page for details: (http://www.apple.com/macpro/design.html#expansion). Graphics is improved by the options of either a stackable NVIDIA GeForce GT 120 512M (can stack up to four) or an ATI Radeon HD 4870 512MB. If you want to see a real super computer, play with the Apple Store's configuration options!) For all the details on this new machine visit: (http://www.apple.com/macpro/).

I am personally really happy to see an update to Apple's computer line up. Still, I truly wish Apple had a fourth machine, a consumer level desktop. It would be a step above the iMac, without the attached display, include options for some expansion of drives and graphics cards, and other cards, but with the less expensive core duo chips rather then the quad core. Don't take me wrong, I love my MacPro with it's Quad core Xeon chip. I would still like the option to buy a similar machine with a core duo and all the other bells and whistles I am interested in.

Macs in government agencies - It appears that more and more government agencies in the US are including Macs in their computer workforce. I have seen a couple of articles in print magazines that talk about this. One such article on the internet is: (http://macdailynews.com/index.php/weblog/comments/20308/). But this isn't the only article. Most of this info and some extra was in a nice little article inside a print magazine called "Government Computer News" (http://gcn.com/articles/2009/02/23/mac-in-the-enterprise.aspx), February 23rd 2009 edition.

This is really good news for the Macintosh community (and even more so for the government employees.) Frankly, I am tied of trying to access a government related sites only to be told that I "need to upgrade my browser". This is modern parlance for: "Our web people use Windows. They have convinced us that we NEED Internet Explorer's security features. So go get a PC is you want to use this site!"

My own state's department of IRS gave me this message. I have to admit they were kind enough to tell me that if I was a Macintosh user, I could use FireFox. I guess this means they don't want to make it too hard for the cyber-pirates to get access to our information. ☺ .

Apple wireless technologies now includes a "Guest zone" - This is a neat little idea that has been around for a bit. One of the biggest hazards of wireless routers is allowing access to unknown computers. One of those unknown's might be a hacker. But being a friendly person, I wouldn't mind sharing my wireless with others.

What Apple has done is to include a Guest Zone in their wireless routers. This zone is completely isolated from the network your Macs use. Guests can access the internet from this zone, without access to the Macs or other computers on the inside zone. Cool idea.

Talking Shuffle - Leave it to Apple Engineers to come up with an elegant solution to not having a display! The recently released iPod shuffle will speak certain pieces of information!

This new iPod shuffle has fixed two of the major problems I have with the older Shuffle. I bought and use my Shuffle when I take walks / go jogging and when doing yard work. As I start whatever I am doing and often while I am doing my thing, I have need to grab the shuffle and move it. With the controls placed as they are, invariably I press the skip forward or back buttons, abruptly ending the current piece of music. With this new shuffle, the control functions are on the earbud cord, so when I grab it the Shuffle, I am not going to hit the skip functions.

However, and this is a big one, this means that one must use the Apple earbuds. Not something I usually do. I use my shuffle when doing yard work, like running the leaf blower or lawn mower and other noisy equipment. I have created a modified set of hearing protectors (the big cup ones like airline ground people use). I disassembled a set of stereo headphones, and put them into the hearing protector. Now when I run the noisy lawn mower, I can listen to my tunes at a moderate level. The roar of the lawn mower is just a faint sound in the background.

So the issue with this new Shuffle is that I won't be able to use my hearing protector headphones. And of course, it also means one is stuck using Apple's earbuds. Personally, I hate earbuds. I expect that some third party company will come up with a cord one inserts between an alternate headphone set and the shuffle. (Hurry, please!)

Right after the release of the new Shuffle, rumors were flying that the required earbuds had some type of DRM (digital rights management) chip hidden in them. Apple denied this allegation. I haven't heard anything firm on this. I expect that people are just being suspicious. However, I wouldn't put it past Apple to do something suspicious ☺

The other thing is that the Shuffle will now, when asked, speak the name of the song and artist you are currently listening to. Probably one of the biggest complaints about the Shuffle was the lack of display. There is no way to see what is currently playing. With this new Shuffle, you press and hold the middle button and a computer voice will tell you the name of the song and artist you are currently listening to. Continue holding and the Shuffle then lists the name is the playlists on the Shuffle. To select one of these playlists, press the button when you hear the name of the playlist you want. This is a really cool feature.

It is amazing how much technology Apple has placed into this tiny device. I don't know for sure, but based on the description, I expect the new version of iTunes "reads" the information using the parent computer's voice, then uploads this file along with the song. Really, the magic is in iTunes, the Shuffle simply plays back the information when asked. Nevertheless, it's cool!

Until next time, keep on using you Mac...

LIVE H2O--Concert for the Living Water!

Get In Tune

By Dr. Leonard Horowitz. DMD

June 19-21, 2009. Mark your calendar immediately, if you have not done so already, to be a part of making musical and spiritual history!

Here is a link to a new press release and several news stories in the press room at LIVEH2O.org: http://www.liveh2o.org/press/

As you can read, those organizing the Hawaii venue have pledged to give all profits to develop a Native Cultural Center. In addition, a school (K-12) is planned wherein gifted (Indigo) children will teach other children how to express their inherent gifts. How WONDERFUL!

Speaking of gifted "Indigo" children, LIVE H2O is honored to announce a pledge by the world renowned child prodigy, master artist, Akiane (See: http://www.artakiane.com). Akiane will be producing for presentation and auction during LIVE H2O a painting honoring "The Living Water" with proceeds going to help fund the school.

LIVE H2O has 30 venues currently evolving worldwide. HealthyWorldStore.com is honored to be one of several Founding Sponsors for the global educational/musical/spiritual event featuring

the "LOVE Water Experiment"--a prayerful chant to bring lasting "Peace on Earth, World Health & Universal Prosperity" to our global village. So make sure you are participating with family and friends on Sunday, June 21, 2009, by going online to www.liveh2o.org or joining others at a venue near you. You can even create your own gathering if you wish! Just be there, any way you can, to lend your heart-felt loving intention to this project. We are literally going to "baptise this planet for the LOVE of God!"

Here are links to two samples of the incredible musical entertainment you will experience during LIVE H2O--genius performers playing in LOVE (528Hz frequency). The first is world famous violin virtuoso, Tony Salvage, playing with White Eagle Medicine Woman and GrandMother Drum. WOW! This is powerful healing music!!!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIATqJ3pxDQ

Listen to Scott Huckabay, the "Universal Guitarist for the Spiritual Renaissance," playing in 528Hz, by clicking this Google Video link below:
http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=335926032257944965

Another outstanding LIVE H2O performer is Bear Dyken from the Clan Dyken Band. Get a preview of the Clan's performance with this rendition of "No More Silence." Indeed, it is time to speak out and celebrate the global awakening!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H14bQuQ-2a8

Do not forget to celebrate Grammy Award Winning, Native American, Bill Miller, also performing for LIVE H2O.... Bill is AWESOME and SPIRIT FILLED! He and Dr. Horowitz prayed for LIVE H2O's success in Sept 2008. Now look at what is happening! Listen to Bill Miller here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGnn8XxlQZg

Finally, in case you have not enjoyed Dr. Horowitz's incredible presentation before the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine wherein he shares about The Living Water, go to his "HYDRO-ENGINEERING FREEDOM FROM INFECTIOUS DISEASES" lecture here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTpKP9QVhaU

Want to eliminate infectious diseases on planet Earth? It is all about the Water from Dr. Horowitz about OxySilver, another leading LIVE H2O sponsor by clicking here:
http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=8792282961674245782

Notice how enthusiastic Dr. Horowitz is explaining how OxySilver works "miraculously," in ways no other infectious disease fighter in the world operates.

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1-888-508-4787

Note: And yes, you can order OxySilver through the macCompanion website.

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

April 2009 Edition

By Harry {doc} Babad   © 2009

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Reviews were carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X version 10.5.6.

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

> *Acknowledgements — 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. If you have tips to share send them to Paul — paul@mac-hints-tips.com. I also use user group published tips with their consent if I can make the contact with the appropriate officer. Where I use any one else's tips for this column, I acknowledge both their source and their contributors. Yes, I do write down and share some of the tips I've discovered while Macin' around. If a tip or hint comes from a more traditional commercial source, I both acknowledged that fact and almost always modify the tip to personalize it for our readers*

Where a sentence or paragraph is italicized, it's my contribution unless other wise noted. 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 that information at the end of that specific write-up.
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Tips I've provided this month, as always in a random order, include:

- Find Out How To Do; Do Whatever on Your Macintosh
- Google—An Inadvertent Wild Card Spelling Checker and Dictionary
- Causes of Hard Drive Failures
- Change Graphics Formats Easily
- Use Email Aliases to Avoid Spam
- Why You Don't Want to Use Any Old Ink in Your Inkjet Printer
- De-Cluttering Your *Physical US* Mailbox
- A File Selection Trick for Finder windows
- Converting JPG Image Collections to a single PDF "Book"
- Displaying the Date on the Macintosh's Menu Bar
- Using a Backup Versus Cloning Your Drives
- Checking Combined File Sizes

– –

Find Out How To Do; Whatever on Your Macintosh

While a good book is arguably the best medium for learning new things about your Mac, it can be good to have easily accessible, bite-sized pieces of information that provide an illustrated introduction to various topics. Apple has recently consolidated its copious and varied tutorial materials, both text and video, in a website at <www.apple.com/findouthow>. So if a retail store and the genius bar are not available, don't fear Apple's still here.

Note: In browsing the introductory "Basics" page with its many links below the main graphic, don't overlook the fact that there are links to other main sections of the site (Photos, Movies, Web, Music etc.) above that graphic. Each page on the site has considerable depth; so don't forget to scroll down as you browse.

It would certainly take quite a while to chew through all that's there. Just be mindful of your download allowance if you enjoy the videos!

AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
Courtesy: Paul Taylor *Hints & Tips* February 2009
paul@mac-hints-tips.com

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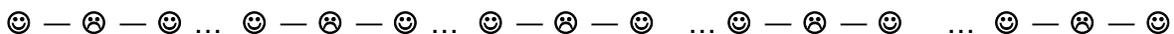
Google—An Inadvertent Wild Card Spelling Checker and Dictionary

Do you ever find yourself in the following circumstances?

- A word you spelled so badly that none of your spell checkers can handle it?
- A foreign language phase that you can't quite spell correctly?
- An exotic ingredient in a recipe that you can't identify or find a substitute?

Play a wild card — Google it! It works for me most of the time. For misspelled words or phrases, you usually get a <u>did you mean</u> alternative that is usually correct. It's much faster than trial and error in a dictionary or thesaurus.

At times, for recipe ingredients, Google provides the description/definition either as a Wikipedia link or in a link to a cooking dictionary or glossary. This beats the heck out of sequentially checking the 26 *Food Dictionary, Cooking Glossary, Culinary Terms & Cooking Definitions* sites I've bookmarked. On the other hand, as an aside when indeed to do conversion in a recipe from metric to English units, I still use a *Cooking Conversions—Cooking Calculator*. Standard calculators, even the one in Google are too much fuss. For example, rösti is a Swedish Latke, potato pancake or Frittata; Aubergine, or brinjal are eggplants, and a Courgette is a zucchini**.**

As far as the foreign language names and phases, that taking potluck — but better than any alternative I found. [joi de vivre is spelled Joie De Vivre (Joy of Life)] and [Bistecche alla Pizzaiola are Sicilian Sirloin Steaks in Tomato Caper & Olive Sauce.]

Harry {doc} Babad
www.macCompanion.com

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Causes of Hard Drive Failures

An article in the Proceedings of the 5th USENIX Conference on File and Storage Technologies this month offers perhaps the most in-depth study of hard drive failures to date.

Google uses hundreds of thousands of hard drives to store its data, and a sample of one hundred thousand of Google's drives was studied for five years to determine common causes of failure. Since this very interesting article is a little dense to read in its entirety, I thought you would enjoy reading some highlights.

Going against conventional thought, the study determined that increased temperature and/or activity had little or no correlation to failure rate. By extension, it was found that drives spinning up and spinning down most often had the highest failure rates. This means it's best to uncheck the "Put the hard disk(s) to sleep when possible" box in Energy Saver — at least in terms of hard drive health.

Some SMART (self monitoring and reporting technology) parameters are excellent indicators of impending mechanical failure. Among failed drives, a good chunk gave no warning by SMART, even though SMART- monitored parameters were to blame for failure.

For this reason, SMART is most useful as a statistical predictor of failure for a population of drives rather than on individual devices. With that in mind, if your drive reports SMART errors you should at the very least immediately perform a full backup.

About 3% of drives failed in the first three months, 1.8% in the first 6 months, and 1.7% in the first year. From there, failure rates jump to approximately 8% in the second year, 9% in the third year, fall to 6% in the fourth year, and jump back to 7% in the fifth year. The whole article can be read at:

Matt Klein Small Dog Electronics

http://labs.google.com/papers/disk_failures.pdf

Courtesy: Paul Taylor November 2008

paul@mac-hints-tips.com

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Change Graphics Formats Easily
If you want to change the format of almost any graphic, drop it on the icon of Preview in the Dock. Pull down Preview's File menu to Save As, and you will see options to change the format to TIFF, JPEG, Photoshop and several others. Various other options will appear below the Format: item, depending on which format you chose for your image.

Doc Sez — I prefer to use my old standby, Lemke Software's Shareware *GraphicConverter*, now version 6.4. *http://www.lemkesoft.com/content/193/key-features.html* In addition to graphic format conversions, it has as my rich features for graphics manipulation as Adobe's Photoshop Elements

Phil Russell
Mouse Droppings, Corvallis OR

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Use Email Aliases to Avoid Spam

For quite a while now the .Mac service has allowed you to create aliases for your email account. This means that you can create up to five alternative email addresses that all forward the mail they receive to your main .Mac email address inbox.

The greatest benefit of these aliases is their ability to protect your main address from spam. For example, you can use an alias to sign up to websites, forums, and newsletters. If the alias becomes flooded with junk mail, it is easy to just delete it and create a new one.

Mail 2.0 (bundled with Mac OS X) provides a simple way to manage your email aliases. In Mail, click on the Mail menu and choose Preferences (Command/comma (,)). In the Accounts tab select your .Mac account and click on "Edit Email Aliases." This will open up the .Mac Webmail preferences. (You may be prompted for your .Mac password.) Scroll down to the bottom where you can add e-mail aliases and change their colors.

After you save the settings here, messages sent to the aliases will be forwarded to your .Mac inbox. Moreover, when composing messages in Mail, you have the ability to send messages from these aliases by selecting the relevant alias from the drop down menu.

www.macosxhints.com via MacCHUG Line, Macintosh Chico UG, Oroville CA
Courtesy: Paul Taylor — November 2008
paul@mac-hints-tips.com

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Why You Don't Want to Use Any Old Ink in Your Inkjet Printer

Inkjet is NOT merely spraying "paint" like painting a house, where any wood will take any paint.

Inkjet printing is based on a complex chemical bond, wherein the ink itself (which is either dye-based or pigment based) is chemically designed to adhere best to a substrate, which has a complimentary chemical surface coating.

Think of it as glue, if need be. We all know that some glues are for wood; some are for plastic; and some are for fabrics, and some are for metal.

Yes, you can glue two pieces of metal together with wood glue. If it holds at all, however, the bond will be weaker and less durable than if you'd used the proper metal glue.

There is nothing stopping you from using one glue where another is recommended, just as there is nothing stopping you from using one set of inks with a different set of papers.

But if you want durable, long-lasting results, you'll choose the proper combination of inks and papers: They are chemically designed to go together.

For more information, visit either the Epson or Canon site, or go to <www.wilhelm-research.com>.

Incidentally, those little "snapshot" printers, usually limited to 4 x 6 prints, are the *worst* when it comes to longevity. If you want prints to pass to your grandkids, choose a better printer.

TechX 18 by Tracy Valleau
Mouse Tales, NorthCoast MUG, Berea, OH
Courtesy: Paul Taylor — November 2008
paul@mac-hints-tips.com

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De-Cluttering Your *Physical US* Mailbox

Remember when going through the mail was a thrill? These days Americans get an average of 18 pieces of junk mail for every personal letter. From catalogs to credit card solicitations, our mailboxes are increasingly clogged with clutter. Dealing with unwanted mail not only wastes our time (eight months over the average lifespan) but also bears environmental costs. Paper spam eats up an estimated 100 million trees each year, with 44% of junk mail ending up--unopened--in landfills.

To address the problem, Forest Ethics, a San Francisco--based environmental group, has launched a national Do Not Mail campaign, modeled on the successful Do Not Call Registry. So far, 19 states have debated Do Not Mail proposals. But none has passed--and who knows if any ever will. Will Craven, a spokesman for Forest Ethics, says that's partly because marketers pour millions of dollars--and lobbying savvy into manipulating our mail: "We now have a runaway supply of junk in the face of shrinking and even resentful demand."

For example, the city of Denver has a stamp out junk mail program. Specifically Denver Recycles offers a free Junk Mail Reduction Kit to Denver residents. The kit is now a series of pre-addressed letters to the largest direct mail companies in the United States. Check out http://www.denvergov.org/recnew/JunkMailKit/tabid/425971/Default.aspx

One-reason politicians may be unlikely to declare war on direct mail is that it yields an estimated $646 billion a year in sales. (The magazine industry, including TIME Inc., which publishes TIME, makes frequent use of direct mail.) "Mail works," says Don McKenzie, CEO of Direct Group, a direct-marketing company. "It's one of the best advertising methods out there." Which means that free-market solutions are likely to remain your best ally in combating mailbox mess.

A slew of new services aim to give you at least some control over what mail you receive. One of the most popular, CatalogChoice.org focuses on ridding your mailbox of unwanted catalogs. You tell the nonprofit which ones you want to stop getting, and the site will contact mailers on your behalf. More than a million people have signed up since the free service was launched last year, and it has no doubt lightened many a mailbox. But the site isn't perfect. For starters, some companies simply ignore its entreaties. Others beg you to let them send at least one catalog a year.

Junk mail — it won't go away on its own. Marketing organizations are experts at finding you and sending you the catalogs, offers, and promotional mailings that clog your mailbox. Odds are good that if you do nothing, your junk mail pile — and recycling bin — will continue to grow.
That's why there is MailStopper, [http://mailstopper.tonic.com/] the leading junk mail reduction service. MailStopper service. For $20 a year, combines an in-depth knowledge of the direct marketing industry, effective partnerships and proven processes into a comprehensive solution that gets rid of your junk mail, once and for all.

Jeremy Caplan notes if $20 seems like a lot of green, ProQuo.com [http://proquo.com/] is the most comprehensive free service. Type in your name and address, and the site lets you opt out of credit-card solicitations, catalogs, Valpak coupons, sweepstakes announcements and other postal plaque. In addition to eliminating unwanted mail, the company plans to generate ad revenue by letting consumers specify the kind of offers they actually want to receive. What a novel concept.

P.S.

Doc found one blogger has an even more interesting simple solution. "Just Say No: I have a secondary strategy to rid our family of excess mailings now that I feel freedom is in sight. I just printed up a bunch of quick notes to send in the postage-paid envelopes that are often enclosed with junk mailings. Feel free to copy the text of the note below. You'll notice that it's a bit snarly, but sometimes that's what it takes to get off the list!" [http://greenbabyguide.com/2008/03/]

By Jeremy Caplan — Thursday, Dec. 04, 2008
Excepted, In Part, from Time Magazine
http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1864428,00.html

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A File Selection Trick for Finder windows

Here's a simple hint (that many long-time Mac users may already know) for navigating Finder windows in anything other than Column View mode. As you're probably aware, you can use the Finder's View -> Show View Options menu to control the sort order for Finder windows. If you're working in a client's folder, for example, you might want to sort by date, so that the client's newest files appear at the top of the file list.

But when working in such a view, what do you do if you want to find a file that may be named similarly to one near the top of the list? Perhaps you keep multiple copies of design variations, for instance. Sure, you could reach for the mouse or use the arrow keys to move through the files one by one, but that's time consuming. Instead, try this trick: just press the Tab key.

When you press Tab, the Finder will automatically select the next file in the current folder based on sorting by name, regardless of what sort order you've applied to that folder. If you press Shift-Tab, the Finder will select the previous file based on sorting by name. (You can also use the first few letters of a file's name to select it, of course, but that won't let you easily browse all the files in the folder in name order.) Each time you press Tab (or Shift-Tab) again, the Finder jumps to the next (or previous) file, again using a name-based sort. (In column view windows, the Tab key won't work in this manner.)

If you remember this simple technique, you can keep key folders sorted the way you wish, and yet still have a relatively easy way to browse the folder's contents based on filenames.

By Rob Griffiths May 29, 2008 — Macworld.com
http://www.macworld.com/article/133665/2008/05/finderwindows.html?lsrc=mwhints

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Converting JPG Image Collections to a single PDF "Book" — Let's get it all together.

Wayne LeFevre of macC recently asked: "I'm trying to take a bunch of JPGs and turn them into a PDF type book. Any suggestions? I have a bunch of old magazines that I have only the articles of interests saved in a jpg per page format. I would like to put them all together into one PDF. Sort of a best of the bunch type *collection.*"

Our jonhoyle@mac.com responded — You could paste each image into a Word document, placing page breaks between them, and then print to PDF. Alternatively, you could place all your images inside a folder, open GraphicConverter and select "Print Folder" and the Print to PDF.

Doc_Babad noted — Batch convert them using Adobe Acrobat 8 or 9 Pro. After that you can use the software to Pro trim, page-by-page unfortunately, any unneeded material from the new consolidated PDF. {Acrobat 8 or 9 > File Menu > Create PDF > From Multiple Files.}

There are a number of shareware tools that will also do this but I've not checked them out Just check out the MacUpdate web site after searching PDF.

http://www.macupdate.com/search.php?arch=all&keywords=PDF&os=macosx

Harry, aka doc Babad
macCompanion Staff

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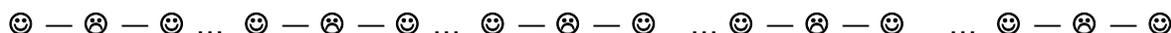
Displaying the Date on the Macintosh's Menu Bar

The date can appear in your menu bar without installing another piece of software. It can be added

manually in System Preferences although it is not an obvious checkbox or dropdown option. Follow these step-by-step instructions:

1. Open System Preferences (located under the Apple Menu at the upper left)
2. Open International (under the Personal section)
3. Click on the Formats tab.
4. In the Dates row, click on Customize.
5. Arrange your date in the format you want to appear on your menu bar by rearranging each item within the blue box. Use the down arrows on each element to choose between formats (January, Jan, 01,1, etc.)
6. Select the entire date format within the blue box (CMD + A) and copy it to your clipboard (CMD + C). Click OK.
7. In the Times row, click the Customize button.
8. Next to Show: using the up/down arrows, choose "Medium."

9. Paste the date format (CMD + V) next to the time format, and click OK. Your date will now appear next to the time in your menu bar.

It works!

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Using a Backup Versus Cloning Your Drives — To Do or What to do?
When you clone a hard drive, you are making an exact duplicate. Since this new duplicate is like the original in every way, you can use it just like the original. All of your files, the operating system, and applications will be exactly where you expect to find them. In most cases, your drive clone is bootable as well, so you can use it in place of the original if you need to.

Carbon Copy Cloner, from Bombich Software, is one application that can handle drive cloning without any problem. If CCC isn't your style, another nice option is SuperDuper, from shirt-pocket software.

Backup in simple terms — Backing up involves duplicating critical files so that if the originals are lost or damaged, the copies are available to take their place. If you aren't following a regular and reliable backup routine, you will lose important files. It's only a matter of time.

While a cloned hard drive does make a perfectly fine backup, it's usually more efficient to copy only the files that have changed since your last backup. That's where backup applications come in handy: They track your changed files and back them up on a regular basis so you don't have to remember to do it yourself. Both Carbon Copy Cloner and SuperDuper offer data backup options along with their cloning features. Mac users can also take advantage of Apple's Backup application — it has been serving me well for some time. After installing Leopard,

Time Machine is an option, too. — My personal routine includes nightly backups to an external hard drive, weekly backups to my Mac account, and twice-monthly backups to DVD. I don't like to lose data.

Making sure you have extra copies of your important files, either through backing up or cloning, needs to be a regular part of your computing routine. Even though things tend to go smoothly when installing new versions of Mac OS X, it's a really good idea to backup the files you can't afford to lose — you never know when something unexpected will happen and things go horribly wrong.

The moral of this story: Backup your files or lose them.

Jeff Garnet — The Mac Observer via Mouse Tales, NorthCoast MUG, Berea, OH
Courtesy: Paul Taylor *Hints & Tips* — October 2008
paul@mac-hints-tips.com

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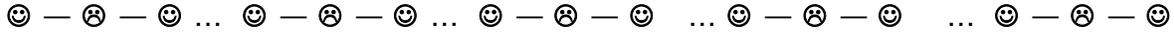
Checking Combined File Sizes

Let's say you have several files on your desktop, and before you copy them all onto your jump drive, you want to find out their combined size.

Here's how it's done: Select all the files for which you want the combined size, then press Command/Option/I, which brings up the Multiple Item Info dialog, complete with a list of how many files are selected and their combined size.

TechX 18 via Mouse Tales, NorthCoast MUG, Berea, OH
Courtesy: Paul Taylor *Hints & Tips* — October 2008
paul@mac-hints-tips.com

– –

That's all folks...
Harry {doc} Babad

The Northern Spy

Surreal Interface

By Rick Sutcliffe

Technology News and Views Since 1983
April 2009

The Internet is replete with warnings

these days over the latest malware, a worm with an unlikely name and modus operandus, and of as yet undermined intention.

To date, the so-called cornflaker worm (aka "Herbert") has merely spread, exploiting vulnerabilities in memory sticks, firewalls and the W*nd*ws OS, and is estimated (in its several variants) to have compromised several million computers thus far. The worm infects at the root level, embedding itself deeply in the system, giving it the ability to open up ports, prevent OS updates, turn off virus checkers, and resist typical removal efforts. As always in such cases, neither UNIX/Linux nor MacOS systems are affected, unless they are running W*nd*ws under an emulator or alternate boot system. The original infection mode (there are now more) was via viewing a specially crafted web page using IE on a W*nd*ws machine.

Comment: Some with little imagination and an axe to grind claim that no one bothers to write viruses to attack MacOS because the number of potential victims (and hence the reward of acclaim from other slime in the viral community) is too small. On the contrary, asserts the Spy. The first person to succeed in compromising MacOS with a genuine piece of malware is likely to achieve infamy for a full eighteen minutes, some twenty percent longer than the norm in our short attention span society.

Whoever the Black Hat mastermind behind this operation, (s)he has already assembled one of the largest bot nets to date. Authorities do not know what cornflaker's ultimate purpose is, as the worm does not yet have its payload code. Infected machines run through a list of internet domains, contacting them for instructions on a daily basis. Presumably, on a day known only to Mother Black Hat, one of those domains will contain the payload and the bot net, instructions in metaphorical hand, will then set about its nefarious task under the direction of this CCC (command and control centre).

Speculation about what that unknown task could be has been rampant. Some think perennial favourite target MS may be in for another round of DNS attacks. Others cite the Pentagon as a likely target. Still others are convinced that this is the opening shot in a new war between old-time enemies Berserkistan and Acnestan (previously known as Ackackistan), citing possible revenge for the time the former hired a mixed group of pre-teen Bosnian and Bulgarian virus coders to take down the latter's national soccer team site.

Yet another theory is that this is a rental bot net, with potential clients including rival biker gangs shooting code bullets over the lucrative internet drug trade, a three way browser war among MS, FireFox, and Safari, or (from competing conspiracy theorists who before their split brought us 911 as a CBS and Girl Scout plot) either (i) a certain large bank or (ii) the US government. Supposedly in either of the latter cases the motivation is a desperate attempt to focus news attention away from executive bonuses by attracting a sympathy reaction from the public after it deliberately falls victim to its own malware.

The Spy's take? If a government is involved, it's a clever but essentially juvenile lot. He regards Internet vandals much as he does boys who pull wings off flies, girls who deface high school washrooms, gamblers and stock promoters whose next bet is a sure thing, politicians, lawyers, and car salesfolk whose opening line is "trust me", or competing wing-nut rent-a-crowd extremists who beat each other over the head during demonstrations for or against the latest trendy *cause de jour*. Grow up and get a life, why not?

In the practical, on-the-ground fight against cornflaker, various internet registration authorities have banded to create an informal information and strategy swapping agency named CEREAL (Centre for Emergency Registry Engagement, Alignment, and Laboratories). Spokesperson Brianna England is quoted as saying: "This is a nasty one, but we're going to shrink the black hats' headbands for sure this time. We have ways of spotting the CCC in its early stages, and promise to take down their CCC site before it can do much harm. When our code dukes it out with theirs, we'll make shredded wheat out of these flakes." Asked if she would speculate on cornflaker's ultimate target, or if she thought this iteration of the worm was only a dress rehearsal for something even bigger, England refused further comment.

The Spy notes that one spread vector appears to constitute an intelligence test of sorts, as it piggybacks on auto-run software situated on memory sticks, compromising any machine whose USB port it gets plugged into--neatly evading institutional firewalls. Anyone failing the test by leaving such software active can apparently be safely presumed also to have an unprotected W*nd*ws computer that is easy to compromise. A second issue of the same sort (see below) involved a wireless router vulnerability, and again, the Spy suggests that anyone so foolish as to leave a wireless router unprotected can rightly be regarded by the black hats as a sucker waiting to be taken to the electronic cleaners. He makes so bold as to refer readers to his second law.

In that last respect, the cornflaker worm is indeed named for its second, more unusual and innovative exploit vector, in which certain specially altered boxes of breakfast cereal have had microdot RFID chips baked into the contents. Opening the box activates an antenna and amplifier embedded in the cardboard, which is used by the chips as soon as they are activated by pouring milk on the cereal. If the infected flakes are within range of a susceptible and unprotected router, it becomes compromised and a number of ports are opened. Scanning software from an already infected machine on the same network class typically spots the vulnerability within seconds and is then able to bypass the now useless firewall and infect all the computers inside it.

At least there are easy avoidance strategies for this vector. First, if the box is opened at the bottom rather than the top, the first activation stage does not trigger. The box is then unable to amplify the signal from the flakes, cutting down their effective range substantially. Second, if one-percent milk is used, the second stage also will not activate, as tests in the CEREAL labs indicate the RFIDs appear to require at least two-and-a-half percent butterfat to bulk out their code. Not eating the cereal isn't an option, as the box is capable of calling your mother and complaining. Third, if the infected chips are consumed, their effective radius is small, and simply staying away from all wireless routers four meters or more (take a walk) until the chips have been digested will also do the trick. Finally, whatever you do, don't send in the box top with the offer of a free condo timeshare in Florida. It will take personal information scavenged from your computer and its local traffic along with it.

On-the-ballmer officials at MS have offered a substantial reward for anyone with information leading to the apprehension and conviction of cornflaker's author, but industry spokespeople have already noted that a thousand autographed copies of W*nd*ws, far from inducing anyone to come forward, is more likely to have the opposite effect. The Spy's preferred bottom line: Be alert. The world needs more lerts.

In other breaking news,
 Della Michael announced today that she is winding up the generic box assembly company she founded and that bears her name. "We've been making trash all these years, and we knew it. Our customers have found us out and deserted us in droves. Our only alternative is to close our doors, sell everything off, and give the shareholders back their money", she lamented at a press conference held aboard the private jet well-known investment banker Stanley and Morgan recently purchased with bailout money. "I'm getting out of the computer business. Its too commoditized and the margins are low. Instead, I'm joining my friends at S&M here in a new project selling junk financial derivatives to gullible governments."

Shortly afterwards,
 the lead executive of a certain well-known competitor of Della's announced he will not be returning to work from his medical leave after all. "Now that Della has packed it in, I've decided instead to make animated Bible features for the Billy Graham organization," he said in an interview conducted on his back porch. Computers are nice, but they are, after all, just toys. He who dies with the most toys may well win; but the pertinent question remains, what is the prize?"

Enough is enough

(an interesting tautology, that) from the ink-stained wretch. He needs to get home to a turkey dinner. It is, after all, fowls' day.

Rick Sutcliffe, (a.k.a. The Northern Spy) is professor of Computing Science and Mathematics at Trinity Western University. He's written two textbooks and several novels, one named best ePublished SF novel for 2003. His columns have appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers, and he's a regular speaker at churches, schools, academic meetings, and conferences. He and his wife Joyce have lived in the Aldergrove/Bradner area of BC since 1972.

Want to discuss this and other Northern Spy columns? Surf on over to ArjayBB.com. Participate and you could win free web hosting from the WebNameHost.net subsidiary of Arjay Web Services. Rick Sutcliffe's fiction can be purchased in various eBook formats from Fictionwise, and in dead tree form from Bowker's Booksurge.

URLs

The Northern Spy Home Page: http://www.TheNorthernSpy.com
The Spy's Laws collected: http://www.thenorthernspy.com/spyslaws.htm
The Spy's Shareware download site: http://downloads.thenorthernspy.com/
WebNameHost: http://www.WebNameHost.net
WebNameSource: http://www.WebNameSource.net
nameman: http://nameman.net
opundo: http://opundo.com
Sheaves Christian Resources: http://sheaves.org
Arjay Books: http://www.ArjayBooks.com
Booksurge: http://www.booksurge.com
Fictionwise: http://www.fictionwise.com

Does Supporting the Constitution Make Me a Terrorist?

By Allison Bricker, March 19, 2009, *The Smoking Argus Daily*, reprinted with permission from
http://smargus.com/tag/missouri-information-analysis-center/

This past week, sensitive documents from the **Missouri Information Analysis Center** were leaked to the public. The **M.I.A.C.** report designated "UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE", seeks to put supporters of Dr. Ron Paul, those tired of the endless banker bailouts, and just about anyone else who dare question the Federal government on par with Neo-Nazis and abortion clinic bombers.[1]

It disturbs me greatly to bear witness as our Federal government continues to expand its program of correlating dissent with domestic terrorism. Fellow readers, this despicable tactic is precisely why many of our Founding Fathers sought to engross humanity's inherent liberties into the Constitution via The Bill of Rights. Among these rights derived solely from nature, is the right to free speech; even speech deemed unpopular or critical of one's government.

http://theloupe.tv/smargus/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/fbi_jtt_az_mcsd_domestic_terrorism_brochure.pdf

Truth be told, the tactic of linking those criticizing the central authority as outright enemies of the state, whether it be king or government is as old as humanity itself. This is how students of

the enlightenment, ergo Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, et al knew the absolute necessity of prohibiting government regulation of speech. The Founding generation witnessed first hand "Royal Governors" and legislatures executing and imprisoning their fellow colonists for speaking out against the crown.[2] These unjust decrees backed by the weight of the sword, were necessary in the eyes of the loyalist governments. They feared dissent would gradually give rise to critical thinking, which in turn would demand answers and accountability, and thus dissent was seen as a direct threat to their ever corrupting grip on power.

Even members of the founding generation were tempted by the corrupting influence of power. Fearing a threat to his own power and pressured by the Hamiltonian faction, President Adams signed into law a series of legislation that went on to become known as "The Alien and Sedition Acts" . Thankfully, the passion for politics by Americans from all walks of life, denounced the acts so roundly, along with the repudiation of the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions, that it helped propel Thomas Jefferson into the Presidency over incumbent John Adams. President Jefferson immediately pardoned all those found guilty of the Acts, which he let expire upon his election.[3]

At the time it was an uniquely American philosophy that power must challenge power, or as James Madison wrote:

"Ambition must be made to counteract ambition… It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government"

James Madison Federalist No. 51 February 8th, 1788

FEMA Anti-Terror Training - Founding Fathers were Terrorists - July 17th, 2001
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awD4OyBeSEQ

Consequently, the eradication of this ideal is repeatedly articulated by the Federal government in its most recent attempt to cast dissent as the enemy to its brand of Neo Patriotism. For this purpose sheds sunshine as to why the central authority and its agents seek to establish an interrelationship by equating the Founding Fathers to terrorists. Regrettably, the video to the right establishes that the central authority has waged their war of reeducation at least since July of 2001 prior to the initial hyper call to nationalism/Neo patriotism following the September 11th attacks.

However, this is just another example of an ever increasing amount of pejorative rhetoric towards the central authority's own compact, the U.S. Constitution. The **M.I.A.C.** report desires to reinforce the correlation made both in the F.E.M.A training video above and the Phoenix F.B.I. Joint Terrorism Task Force/Maricopa County Sheriff's Department's brochure[4] of those who reference and defend the Constitution as terrorists. Moreover it attempts to handcuff supporters of Representative Ron Paul (R-TX) to the likes of Eric Rudolph, the 1996 Olympic park bomber. As a result, if those of us who merely supported Representative Ron Paul during the campaign are dangerous homegrown radicals according to **M.I.A.C.**, then how does one think they view Dr. Paul, who publicly declared himself to be "The Champion of the Constitution"?[5]

During the course of the previous administration, both officials and their old-media shills demonized individuals who dared speak out against the Bush Doctrine as unPatriotic, unAmerican, and/or traitors. Now we are told by socialist scribes[6] that dissenting against the "economic terrorism" *id est* the central bank manipulated credit crisis, is also unpatriotic. If we are no longer allowed to question or criticize the government's domestic or foreign policies without being painted as homegrown radicals, is there any semblance left at all of our republic? Should I instead just pledge blind allegiance to President Obama and be content with my "right" to criticize a group of B-list celebrities or no talent wannabee singers on "Dancing with the Stars" or "American Idol" respectively?

Therefore, since our temporary browser cookie indicates that various members of the U.S. Senate are regular readers of "The Smoking Argus Daily", I respectfully request an answer one way or the other as to whether or not my political philosophy and associations are terrorist in nature. According to the **M.I.A.C.** report, you just might be a terrorist if…

- You display or use the "Gadsden Rattlesnake" Flag/Symbol.
- You have watched the "Anti-Federal Reserve System" - Zeitgeist Movie.
- You support a repeal of the 16th Amendment - the Income Tax.
- You supported the candidacy of Representative Ron Paul (R-TX).
- You are a member of The Committees of Safety.
- You oppose mandatory citizen service for those aged 18 to 24 per Rahm Emanuel's proposal.
- You oppose the Security and Prosperity Partnership being out of the jurisdiction of Congressional oversight.
- You support the abolition of the FEDERAL RESERVE private central bank and favor a

return to Constitutional money.

- You oppose any further restrictions on the inherent right to bear arms.
- You have watched Aaron Russo's "America: Freedom to Fascism"
- You oppose any additional bailout bills for failing banks and/or private companies.

Dear members of the Senate:

Please think of the checklist above as my 21st century "petition for Redress of Grievances". Tis a fact of candid reality that when a government seeks to cast all dissent as terrorism, we are most certainly flirting upon the precipice of tyranny.

Respectfully,

Allison Bricker

Source(s): [1]Missouri Information Analysis Center - Strategic Report - 02/20/2009 • [2]The Trial of Peter Zenger 1735 • [3] "Our Presidents & How We Make Them" by A.K. McClure - HARPER & BROTHERS Publishers © 1905 • [4] Phoenix F.B.I Joint Terrorism Task Force/Maricopa County Sheriff's Department - Domestic Terrorism Brochure • [5]WMUR/CNN Republican Presidential Primary Debate - Manchester, NewHampshire - June 5th, 2007-Part 1 • [6] New York Times "Herbert Hoover Lives" by Frank Rich, published January 31st, 2009

Books

Amazon macCompanion Store
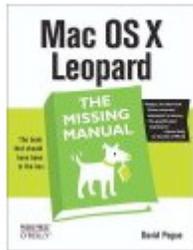
Mac OS X Leopard: The Missing Manual
by David Pogue
$23.09
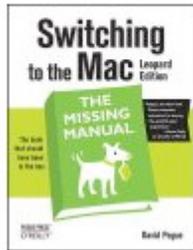
Switching to the Mac: The Missing Manual, L...
by David Pogue
$19.79
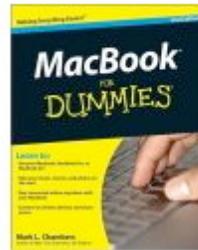
MacBook For Dummies (For Dummies (Computer/...
by Mark L. Chambers
$16.49
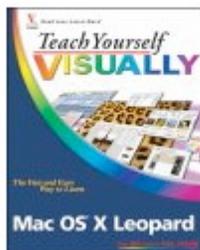
Teach Yourself VISUALLY Mac OS X Leopard (T...
by Lynette Kent
$19.79
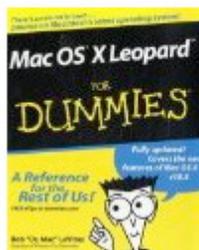
Mac OS X Leopard For Dummies (For Dummies (...
by Bob LeVitus
$14.95
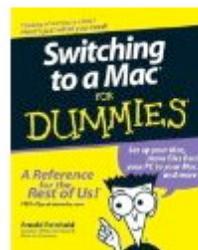
Switching to a Mac For Dummies (For Dummies...
by Arnold Reinhold
$14.95
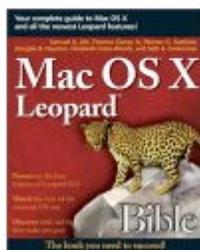
Mac OS X Leopard Bible
by Samuel A. Litt
$23.09
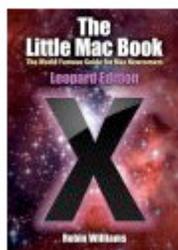
The Little Mac Book, Leopard Edition (Littl...
by Robin Williams
$13.59

The Mac OS X Leopard Book
by Scott Kelby
$14.99

ADOBE AIR 1.5 Cookbook

Reviewed by Robert L. Pritchett

O'REILLY®

Authors: David Tucker, Marco Casario, Koen De
Weggheleire, Rich Tretola
O'Reilly
http://oreilly.com/catalog/9780596522506/index.html
Released: November 2008
Pages: 446
$45
ISBN: 9780596522506
Requirements: Knowledge of Flash, Flex 3,
ActionScript 3 and JavaScript. And a copy of ADOBE
CS4 loaded on your computer would be nice too.
Strengths: A One-stop-shop for ADOBE AIR
implementation.

Weaknesses: None found.
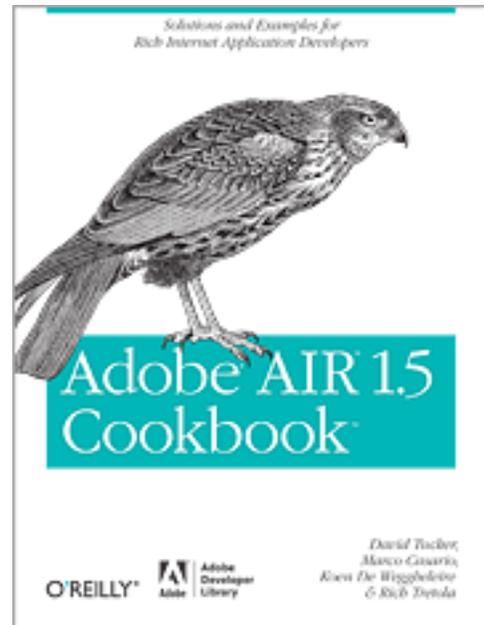
Introduction

Thoroughly vetted by Adobe's AIR development team, Adobe AIR 1.5 Cookbook
addresses fundamentals, best practices, and topics that web developers and application
designers inquire about most. The hands-on recipes in this cookbook help you solve a
variety of tasks and scenarios you may encounter using Adobe AIR to build Rich Internet
Applications for the desktop. It's an ideal way to learn the nuances of Adobe AIR, with
practical solutions you can use right away, and detailed explanations of why and how
they work. These recipes will help you:

- Build an AIR application with Flex, Flash, or HTML and Ajax
- Create a database and connect it to your application
- Put together native menus for PCs and Macs
- Work with the Service Monitor Framework
- Utilize the Adobe AIR Update Framework
- Create branded desktop experiences with custom chrome and custom application
  icons
- Distribute your AIR application with the Seamless Install Badge

And more. Adobe AIR 1.5 Cookbook includes dozens of recipes from rising stars in the AIR development community-David Tucker, Rich Tretola, Marco Casario, and Koen De Weggheleire-along with the best solutions posted by visitors to the Adobe AIR Cookbook community website hosted by Adobe and O'Reilly (http://www.adobe.com/go/air_cookbook). If you're ready to expand your skill set with Adobe AIR, this is the book you've been waiting for.

What I Learned

If you are into the way ADOBE does things with runtime web apps, this is a sister book to Flex 3 and helps understand the machinations behind SWF files and functionality.

Can you believe ADOBE did a competition and then loaded the best programs into this book?

So, why would you care? Because this app goes beyond the browser. However, it only works if the client machine has Air installed. The promise is "program once, run everywhere".

Here are some "showcase" apps - http://www.adobe.com/products/air/showcase/

The cross-platform SDK is free - http://www.adobe.com/products/air/tools/sdk/

The "enablers" to use with ADOBE CS 4 apps such as Dreamweaver, Flash and Flex Builder are here - http://www.adobe.com/products/air/tools/

Aptana also provides 3rd-party support for Ajax and AIR - http://www.aptana.com/air

These AIR apps might also inspire you - http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/marketplace/index.cfm?event=marketplace.home&marketplaceid =1

Amazon Reviews:
http://www.amazon.com/Adobe-AIR-1-5-Cookbook-Application/dp/0596522509/ref=sr_11_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1237664505&sr=11-1

Conclusions

If you don't mind the "Ubiquitous Computing" scenario and possible eventual control over your own computing experience, then find out how it is done with this nuts& bolts book.

Creating a Web Site: The Missing Manual, Revised

Reviewed by Robert L Pritchett

O'REILLY®

Author: Matthew MacDonald
O'Reilly
http://oreilly.com/catalog/9780596520977/index.html
Released: December 2008
Pages: 606
$30
ISBN: 9780596520977

Strengths: It really is "The Missing Manual" for website creation.

Weaknesses: None found.

Introduction

Think you have to be a technical wizard to build a great web site? Think again. If you want to create an engaging web site, this thoroughly revised, completely updated edition of Creating a Web Site: The Missing Manual demystifies the process and provides tools, techniques, and expert guidance for developing a professional and reliable web presence.

Whether you want to build a personal web site, an e-commerce site, a blog, or a web site for a specific occasion or promotion, this book gives you detailed instructions and clear-headed advice for:

Everything from planning to launching. From picking and buying a domain name, choosing a Web hosting firm, building your site, and uploading the files to a web server, this book teaches you the nitty-gritty of creating your home on the Web.

Ready-to-use building blocks. Creating your own web site doesn't mean you have to build everything from scratch. You'll learn how to incorporate loads of pre-built and freely available tools like interactive menus, PayPal shopping carts, Google ads, and Google Analytics.

The modern Web. Today's best looking sites use powerful tools like Cascading Style Sheets (for sophisticated page layout), JavaScript (for rollover buttons and cascading menus), and video. This book doesn't treat these topics as fancy frills. From step one, you'll learn easy ways to create a powerful site with these tools.

Blogs. Learn the basics behind the Web's most popular form of self-expression. And take a step-by-step tour through Blogger, the Google-run blogging service that will have you blogging before you close this book
.
This isn't just another dry, uninspired book on how to create a web site. Creating a Web Site: The Missing Manual is a witty and intelligent guide you need to make your ideas and vision a web reality.

What I Learned

It goes into great depth on Blogging, special characters, and seems top be rather "Google-centric" in many areas, especially when discussing making money on sites.

Watch the author discuss the book and read the reviews located at Amazon.com - http://www.amazon.com/Creating-Web-Site-Missing-Manual/dp/0596520972/ref=sr_11_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1237652415&sr=11-1

Conclusion

You will enjoy this book as a reference, if you are into creating websites.

Head First Web Design

Reviewed by Robert L Pritchett

O'REILLY®

Authors: Ethan Watrell, Jeff Siarto
O'Reilly
http://oreilly.com/catalog/9780596520977/index.html
Released: December 2008
Pages: 495
$50
ISBN: 9780596520304

Strengths: Follows the "both sides of the brain" learning process.

Weaknesses: Not intended for those who use Dreamweaver.
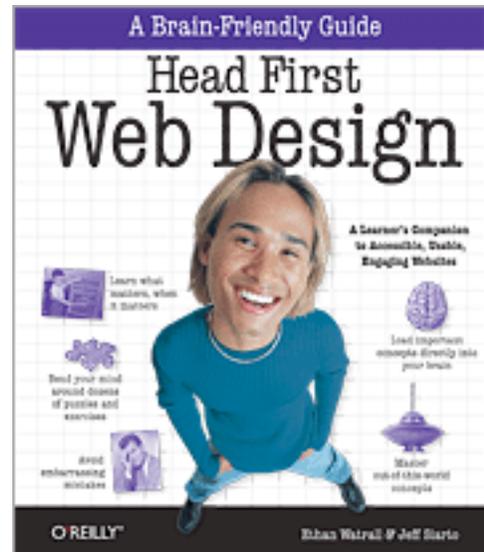
Introduction

Want to know how to make your pages look beautiful, communicate your message effectively, guide visitors through your website with ease, and get everything approved by the accessibility and usability police at the same time? Head First Web Design is your ticket to mastering all of these complex topics, and understanding what's really going on in the world of web design.

Whether you're building a personal blog or a corporate website, there's a lot more to web design than div's and CSS selectors, but what do you really need to know? With this book, you'll learn the secrets of designing effective, user-friendly sites, from customer requirements to hand-drawn storyboards all the way to finished HTML and CSS creations that offer an unforgettable online presence.

Your time is way too valuable to waste struggling with new concepts. Using the latest research in cognitive science and learning theory to craft a multi-sensory learning experience, Head First Web Design uses a visually rich format specifically designed to take advantage of the way your brain really works.

What I Learned

Bend your brain.

In a word: Accessibility. I need to work more on that. But you will learn much more.

Amazon Book Review: http://www.amazon.com/First-Design-Brain-Friendly-Guide/dp/0596520301/ref=sr_11_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1237656519&sr=11-1

Conclusion

If you have not been baptized by fire in using something as involved as Dreamweaver, then this book will be a great way to learn good web design.

The Manga Guide to Databases — A low-stress introduction to databases, in Manga comic style

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad (c) 2009

Authors: Mana Takahashi, Shoko Azuma, and Trend-pro Co., Ltd.
English Edition: No Starch Press, an O'Reilly Media
    Imprint
http://press.oreilly.com/pub/pr/2208

Released: January 2009
Pages: 224
$19.95 (list) $13.57 (Street) USD; Amazon $14.56
CDNS, Amazon £8.69 UK.
ISBN-10: ISBN 1593271905
ISBN-13: ISBN 9781593271909
Audience: Some Beginners and all Intermediate database wannabees.
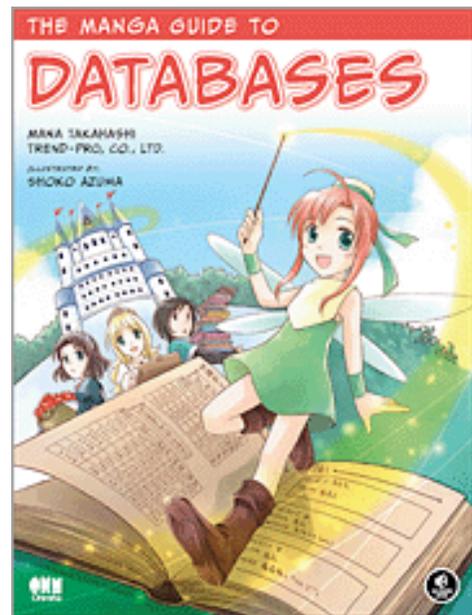
Strengths: Want to learn about databases without the tedium? With its unique combination of Japanese-style comics and serious educational content, *The Manga Guide to Databases* is just the book for most of you. Examples and exercises (with answer keys) help you learn, and an appendix of frequently used SQL statements gives the tools you need to create and maintain full-featured databases.

Weaknesses: The book may be a bit overpowering for database beginners who only skim, rather the read the book.

> Testing of many of Scotts Hints, those I did not know already, was carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X version 10.5.4.

Introduction
This is the second book I've read in the Manga Edu-Comic Book series published in English by No Starch Press. I had previously reviewed the statistics book [*Manga Guide to Statistics Book* {4.5 m} January 2009]; since I'm an avid user of database software, I though I'd check it out.

My primary review interests were two-fold.
First the preset databases I use, FileMaker Pro 9 (soon 10) and occasionally the new Bento 2; both of which hide the mechanics of the *Structured Query Language* [SQL.] That makes it easy to find specific items (data in the form of records) and to prepare specialized formatted, even decorative reports suited to specific end users needs.

> SQL is a database computer language designed for the retrieval and management of data in relational database management systems, database creation and modification, and database object access and control management. It allows the retrieval, insertion, updating, and deletion of data. A database management system also includes management and administrative functions. Most – if not all – implementations also include a command-line interface that allows for the entry and execution of the language commands, as opposed to only providing an *application programming interface* (API) intended for access from a graphical user interface (GUI); *A must for complex databases used out of the home in businesses government, and universities*. Excerpted in part from Wikipedia.

Second, although I've read broadly about setting up and using the database software I use, I've taken very little time to study the rational between using a data base (vs., a spreadsheet) and the tasks/problems associated with aggregating and *usefully* retrieving the data you collect.

Publisher's Description
Want to learn about databases without the tedium? With its unique combination of Japanese-style comics and serious educational content, *The Manga Guide to Databases* is just the book for you. Princess Ruruna is stressed out. With the king and queen away, she has to manage the Kingdom of Kod's humongous fruit-selling empire. Overseas departments, scads of inventory, conflicting prices, and so many customers! It's all such a confusing mess. But a mysterious book and a helpful fairy promise to solve her organizational problems—with the practical magic of databases.

In *The Manga Guide to Databases*, Tico, the database fairy, teaches the Princess how to simplify her data management. We follow along as they design a relational database, understand the entity-relationship model, perform basic database operations, and delve into more advanced topics. Once the Princess is familiar with transactions and basic SQL statements, she can keep her data timely and accurate for the entire kingdom. Finally, Tico explains ways to make the database more efficient and secure, and they discuss methods for concurrency and replication.

Examples and exercises (with answer keys) help you learn, and an appendix of frequently used SQL statements gives the tools you need to create and maintain full-featured databases. (Of course, it wouldn't be a royal kingdom without some drama, so read on to find out who gets the girl—the arrogant prince or the humble servant.) Here's a sample of a comic book formatted page that serve as introductions in each of the book's chapters.
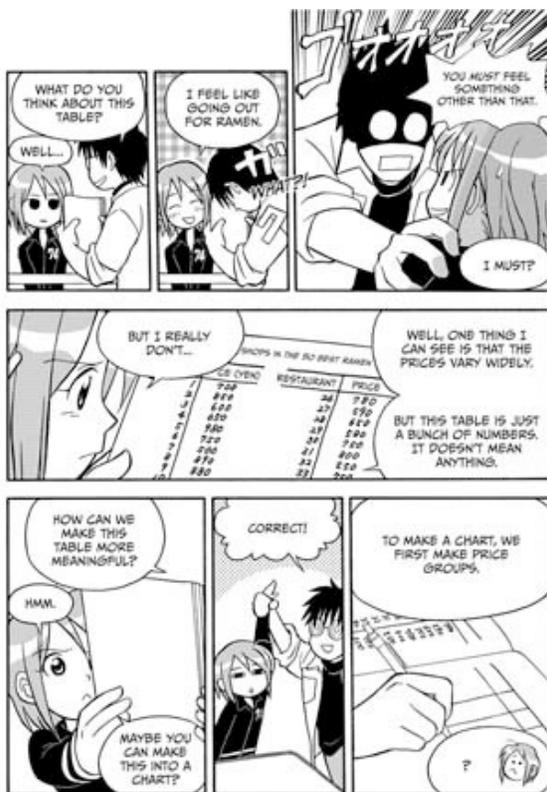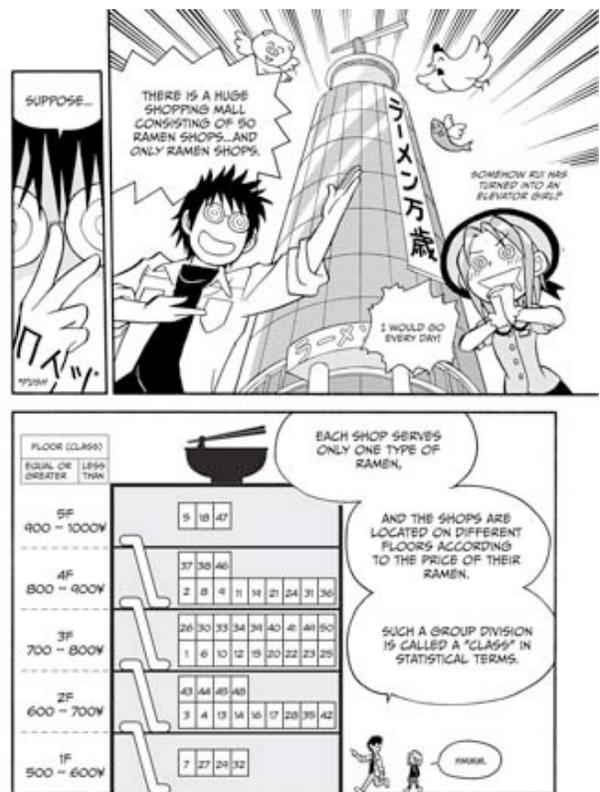
The Book Itself

The first thing I noticed upon cracking this book was the straightforward manner in which information is presented. As a stranger to comic books, I was concerned that the book could distract me fro leaning the information, if it was in comic/manga form.

I quickly found myself drawn into the story of Princess Ruruna, Cain, and the Kingdom of Kod's issues with data management. Each chapter has an introductory set of pages in manga form, and then a number of pages that use text and illustrations to reinforce what was discussed in the first part of the chapter. This provides not only a fun way to get comfortable with the concepts, but also a well written summary of those concepts to make sure you understand them before you move on.

The main and sequential, themes in the book are:

- What is a database? – Its "a system in which data is shared by everyone"
- What are the basic components of Kod's database - each type of fruit has one record that is broken out into field such as product code, product name, unit price, and so on. If a second variety of a given fruit is added (Fuji vs. Johnny Gold Apple) it get a new product code etc.
- The Goal — How do you convert that information into a modern standard relational database? (Chapters 1 & 2)

From there, Tico explains more advanced, and detailed, concepts, such as:

- How to extract data from a relational database using set and relational operations (e.g., SQL operators and their functions.)
- Using database security, user permissions, and transactions to avoid conflicting addition or deletion data operations
- And how to use SQL to insert data or retrieve it to generate various types of reports from one or more tables (Chapter 3-5)

The last chapter of the book focuses on the theme *Databases are everywhere.*

Back to the Kingdom of Kod's Data Control Needs — The book identifies several groups of users who have overlapping needs for data both from a input and output stand point. For example, [1] Merchandise-Old and new products (fruit type and cost), [2] Overseas Business Department (actual and perhaps potential customers), and the [3] Export Department (sales Tables) are the users of the Kingdom of Kod's Fruit business. There was also mention of a Tourism Department, but it got no real *play* in the book, only a single mention.

Obviously, there's a need for an overall administrative and control function, a role served by Princess Ruruna and her talented assistant Cain. Isn't Bureaucracy wonderful?

> I could not figure out why there were so many departments in Kod's fruit business; all having a tree full of affiliated groups (branches) involved in managing the fruit business; or even in my local city government. Tradition, I'm guessing. That however did not distract from my gaining an understanding about the problems that could ensue between the Merchandise Department, the Overseas Business Department, and the Export Department, where the prices of the various fruits were being messed up as they were managed (changed) in as many as three separate places. …Or for that matter for any unmanaged or pearly developed database tool.

THAT MEANS DATA IS DUPLICATED IN EACH DEPARTMENT, RIGHT?

HM, HM

APPLE: 100G

APPLE: 100G

APPLE: 100G

MERCHANDISE DEPT.

OVERSEAS BUSINESS DEPT.

EXPORT DEPT.

GOLD (G) IS THE CURRENCY UNIT USED IN THE KINGDOM OF KOD, RIGHT?

THAT'S RIGHT.

AND EACH DEPARTMENT HAS SEPARATE DATA.

KOLONE SAYS,

"IT IS AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM,"

BUT...

SOMETIMES IT CAN CREATE PROBLEMS.

JUST LIKE THAT CRISIS THE OTHER DAY!!

WHAT IS A DATABASE? 11

Moving Right Along

Databases Are Part of Your Everyday Life — In addition, "databases are essential for any modern IT project, but they can be really intimidating for non-specialists," said No Starch Press founder William Pollock. "The benefits of *The Manga Guide to Databases*, and all of the other books in this series, are that the manga story carries the reader through the book, and the learning happens almost effortlessly. Databases are presented as something fun, not something dreadful.

"Guided by the book's authentic manga style narrative and Tico the database fairy's real-life examples, readers learn how to:

- Extract data from a relational database using set and relational operations
- Apply the entity-relationship model to accurately represent their data
- Set user permissions and use transactions and locks to prevent the entering of conflicting data or unauthorized data deletion.
- Use SQL to update or retrieve data and create reports

In the last part of the book (Chapter 6), readers will even explore advanced topics like security, indexing, disaster recovery, and replication."

As noted by Mark C. Chu-Carroll in a recent review: **"***The book is remarkably thorough for it's length. It manages to cover all of the basics - means, medians, deviations, basic probability, distributions, and hypothesis testing - all in around two hundred pages of comics! And it doesn't just cover them, but it does a good job. By the end of this book, you'll understand when, where, how, and why to apply each of the ideas described in the book.***"**
[http://scienceblogs.com/goodmath/2008/12/book_review_the_manga_guide_to.php]

Kudos and Things I Learned

Things to Make my File Making Easier and More Focused {Pages 106-108} — Perhaps the most useful, to me, was the section on SQL Overview. The information provided, the Princes, Cain and Tico were taking a break, proved a valuable insight into the inner working of FileMaker Pro, my database tool of choice.

Topics ranged from the simple *Searching for Data Using a Select Statement*; through *Using Operators* to create search conditions. I was particularly delighted with the information on pattern searches (use of wildcards) that escaped me in FileMaker Pro. It focused on finding relationships in a complex data set that could not easily be found using a direct-search criterion. And of course the information was followed by a challenging but doable set of exercise, a fundamental aspect of the leaning you can achieve with the Manga books.

Index and an Appendix of Frequently Used SQL Statements. — Every time I got lost, I was able to check the index and catch up to information provided in earlier sections, that I'd missed or forgotten. I also found the SQL statements provided, educational, despite the fact that with FileMaker Pro, at my skill level, I'd likely never need them.

Disappointments and Discomforts

Insufficient Examples in the Section on Relational Operations — Some of the examples provided on Pages 43-47 seemed self-explanatory. But, I couldn't figure out why or when I would use with a *projection, division* or at times the *selection* operator. I guessed that division could be a *neither-nor logic* operation, but who knows.

Introduction to Set Theory — This material was both distracting and *out of context.* — I enjoyed the refresher on set theory (pages 39-41), which served as an introduction to relational operations. It reminded me of taking a course on introduction to symbolic logic at the University of Denver where I taught introductory and advanced chemistry courses. *I flunked the course*, but have been successfully using symbolic logic in my professional work ever since. However in the context of this book, introducing set theory (Venn diagrams) served no apparent purpose since it was neither put to use in later chapters or even again referenced.

Inadequate References for The Book's Projected Audience — None of the references are to introductory materials that could serve beginner users. The targeted readers would have absolutely no use for references aimed at professional database developers or managers. Example references from a quick Google search, I would have considered include:

- Relational databases, Wikipedia, and links therein
  [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relational_database]

- An Introduction to Databases [http://www.interspire.com/content/articles/29/1/An-Introduction-to-Databases]

- Introduction to Relational Databases - Part 1: Theoretical Foundation
  [http://www.15seconds.com/Issue/020522.htm] and links therein.

- *Databases from scratch I: Introduction* (and links therein.)
  [http://www.geekgirls.com/databases_from_scratch_1.htm] and *the step-by-step guides to using databases* [http://www.geekgirls.com/menu_databases.htm.]

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Manga Guide to Databases is well-focused technically oriented book that was fun to read. However, I can in fairness only recommend it to either those database novices who have foundation in set theory and an understanding of relationships between information. Alas, both of these subjects are under-taught in our primary and secondary schools. It is indeed a Japanese students beginner's book with a mind catching and attractively presented up overview of databases, served up manga-style. I don't know how well it would play for American secondary school student, whose test score in math are often well below than the world average.

Never the less, from the first few pages of technical detail, its ability to effectively and painlessly plunge into a difficult complex topic is undeniable. Indeed, poorly taught database theory can be a morass of arcane theory, acronym and specialized insider terms.

You won't get to be a Database Administrator after reading this manga-based book. However, reading it will create a foundation so that if/when you study the topic of databases in greater depth, things won't seem nearly as scary or dry as they might have been without this introduction.

After reading, no actually studying the book, I began to better understand the under pinnings of FileMaker Pro and TheRecipeManager software, which of course are *databased*. That alone made the book worth owning.

If you are a hard-core database geek—developer or administrator, you *do not need* to buy the book. I also have some reservations about its usefulness for those who are completely new to the whole concept of databases that I discuss below. For the rest of us in-betweens, should add this book to our collections.

If you plan on going beyond blindly using prefabricated templates in great software such as Bento 2 or FileMaker Pro, this book is a must buy. Aside from the philosophical "*I think therefore I am*; understanding the fundamentals of databases creation and use, you will be better able to use those and comparable tools to manage you personal, small business and even professional data. Don't wait for a holiday or your birthday… act now, there's more to life than following a template.

However, I'm still having second or third thoughts about the book's usefulness for. A counterpoint to my concerns was reported in *Active Anime* blog. "You can never have heard the word 'database' and be able to follow the book and understand the concept with relative ease thanks to the easy to follow process and well broken down steps." I can't get my head around the bloggers premise, in a newbie environment; but others online seem to agree with the blogster. [http://www.activeanime.com/html/content/view/4632/36/]

Buy it, despite the annoying problems I found, you'd like it and use it and therefore will be the wiser for the effort. 4.0 macCs

Photoshop CS4 Photographer's Handbook

Reviewed by Robert L Pritchett

Author: Stephen Laskevitch
Rocky Nook
Strengths: Classy, desktop quality well-written, well organized book. Cross-platformed.

Weaknesses: None found.
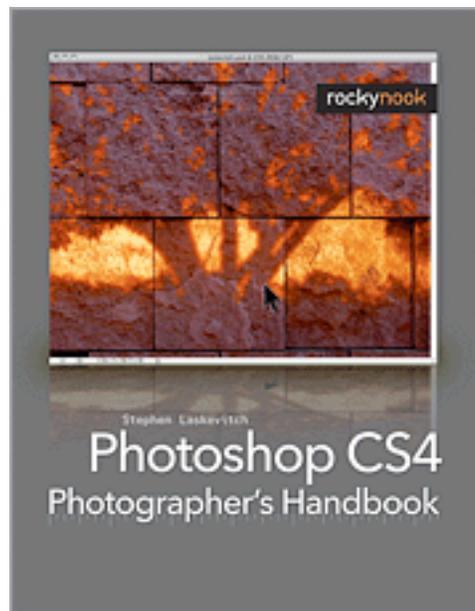
Introduction

Adobe Photoshop is central to almost all photography workflows today. The introduction of CS4 is another milestone in the development of this imaging behemoth. Photographers often feel overwhelmed when starting with Photoshop; the sheer number of tools and options make it difficult for the novice. There is no shortage of instructional books, either, yet very few direct the user to the most significant aspects of the program in a way that reflects a real workflow. Steve has leveraged his experience as a teacher and practitioner to create a step-by-step guide that provides a clear and effective workflow for editing photographs in Photoshop CS4 and its companions Bridge, Camera Raw, and Lightroom 2. Focusing on the critical elements of the workflow rather than covering every arcane feature, the Handbook is designed to get you working quickly in these applications. It provides the essential terms, concepts, and information along with step-by-step methods for Photoshop techniques of all levels. Use the Photoshop CS4 Photographer's Handbook to: Educate yourself or others in the tools and processes used to "develop" photographs in Photoshop CS4 Learn a practical and robust workflow for editing images: organizing, clean-up, global and targeted adjustments, and creative effects Learn specific techniques through step-by-step instructions and the principles to develop your own unique practices.

What I Learned

Stephen Laskevitch took book-learning up a notch. I understood what he wrote, because he not only tells the story, but the why behind the processes. He also annotated the screenshots and did it for both Macs and PCs. But there's more. He also covers Lightroom, discusses Bridge and Camera RAW.

The pages are also color-coded for each topic, making this an invaluable reference book.

Conclusion

No expense seems to have been spared to make this a classy, quality book you would be proud to have not only on your shelf but on your coffee table.

The Power of IP Video: Unleashing Productivity with Visual Networking

Reviewed by Robert L. Pritchett

CISCO

Authors: Jennifer C. Baker, Felicia Brych Dalke, Mike Mitchell, Nader Nanjiani.
Cisco Press
http://www.ciscopress.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=158705342X
Released: December 2008
Pages: 360
$45
ISBN: 9781587053429
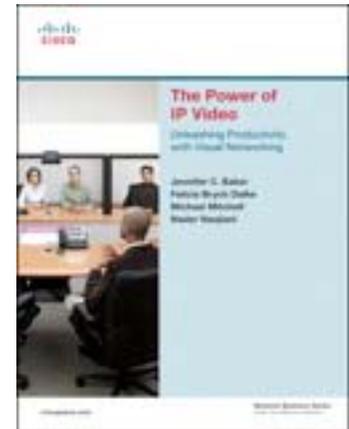
Strengths: Shows various ways to use video to improve business in the "nextgen" Web 2.0 era.

Weaknesses: Does not get into details.

Introduction

The definitive guide to deriving business value from IP video solutions

Using today's rich new IP-based technologies for video, voice, and web collaboration, businesses can streamline and accelerate processes, increase productivity, and improve both top and bottom lines. In The Power of IP Video, a team of Cisco® experts shows you exactly how to make the most of these powerful new IP video solutions. Writing for both business and technical decision makers, the authors present new best practices for optimizing virtually any program or process and for improving collaboration between virtually every employee, customer, supplier, and stakeholder.

Drawing on their pioneering experience working with IP video internally and supporting the top Cisco customers, the authors show you how to make the business case for IP video and offer practical guidance for successful implementation. To demonstrate IP video at work, they also present an extensive set of case studies from large, medium-size, and small companies in many leading industries. Along the way, they demonstrate the real-world application and value of several key Cisco solutions, including Cisco Unified MeetingPlace®, Cisco Unified Video Advantage, Cisco Unified Communications

Manager, Cisco TelePresence™, Cisco Digital Media Management, video surveillance, and WebEx®.

- Use IP video to meet the needs of knowledge workers while reducing travel and other costs
- Extend IP video from the office to anywhere work takes you
- Identify opportunities to leverage IP video in finance, marketing, sales, manufacturing, and R&D
- Apply IP video in financial services, healthcare, e-learning, high tech, sports and entertainment, and other industries
- Use IP video to "scale" the impact of your senior executives
- Use rich media to systematically eliminate barriers to global collaboration while saving money
- Estimate the business value of visual networking applications

What I Learned

Not as much as I had hoped. Look, if you don't "get it" that the next step in the evolution of the Internet is to do video, then you are not paying attention. Google video does large videos online and YouTube does the shorter-length versions. Google is stepping down and relinquishing to YouTube. I'm sure it is due more to bandwidth more than availability.

This book doesn't get into the dirty details. It is more of a sales and marketing overview effort than anything substantive. I was really looking forward to this being a nuts&bolts book. It is not. It shows how Cisco and others do business.

Amazon Reviews: http://www.amazon.com/Power-Video-Unleashing-Productivity-Networking/dp/158705342X/ref=sr_11_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1237662934&sr=11-1

Conclusion

If you want to see how various companies use video productively to create 'business value" then get this book and learn how to "work differently". If you want to get into nuts and bolts of IP Video, look elsewhere.

Scripted GUI Testing with Ruby

Reviewed by Robert L. Pritchett

Author: Ian Dees
The Pragmatic Programmers
http://www.pragprog.com/titles/idgtr/scripted-gui-testing-with-ruby
Released: August 2008
$35
Pages: 192
ISDN: 9781934356180
Requirements: Know Ruby and perhaps RSpec.
Strengths: Teaches software testing with real-world applications.

Weaknesses: None found.

Introduction

Scripted GUI Testing with Ruby is a practical, quick-moving tutorial based on real life, and real-world GUI applications.

Right out of the gate you'll start working with code to drive a desktop GUI. You'll discover the kinds of gotchas and edge cases that don't exist in simple, toy programs. As you add more tests, you'll learn how to organize your test code and write lucid examples. The result is a series of "smoke tests" your team will run on Continuous Integration servers.

Next, we'll explore a variety of different testing tips and tricks. You'll employ a series of increasingly random and punishing test monkeys to try to crash programs. Table-driven techniques will show you how to check dozens of different input combinations. See how to use longer acceptance tests (in the form of stories) to represent the way a typical customer would use your program.

The book uses examples from Windows, OS X, and cross-platform Java desktop programs as well as Web applications. You'll develop test scripts in Ruby; you don't need to be a Ruby expert, but basic comfort with the language will be helpful.

What I Learned

Ian Dees is immensely readable – and he has a light sense of humor that shines through in his writing.

What is learned here can be used in Java-based testing as well.

Amazon Reviews:
http://www.amazon.com/Scripted-Testing-Ruby-Pragmatic-Programmers/dp/1934356182/ref=sr_11_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1237668529&sr=11-1

Conclusion

If you are into testing software, this is a great book to use as a baseline.

Greenware

The Greening Continues — The most eclectic of what I read
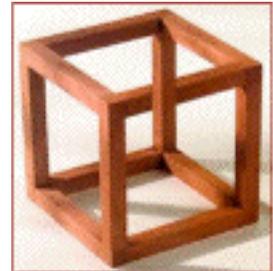
macCompanion April 2009
By Harry Babad © 2009 with Robert L. Pritchett

Source Credits: Most of these items, were located in the newsletter *NewsBridge* of 'articles of interest' to the libraries users. It is electronically published by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratories, in Richland WA. I then followed the provided link to the source of the information and edited the content (abstracted) for our readers. The resulting column contains a mini-summary with links to articles I found interesting.

Send us your referenced favorites (no more than 2-3 short paragraphs long) and we'll share them with our readers. If you have other favorites, we'll share them if they are "polite and seem factual. *No science fiction perpetual motion please.*

Much of what I will share comes from the various weekly science and environmental newsletters to which I subscribe. Their selections are obviously, and intentionally biased by my views.

Now, As Usual in No Formal Order, the Snippets

☺ — ☹ — ☺ … ☺ — ☹ — ☺ … ☺ — ☹ — ☺   … ☺ — ☹ — ☺   … ☺ — ☹ — ☺
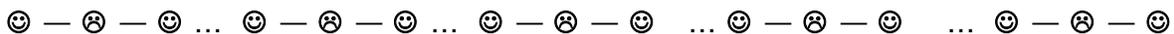
As Asia Continues to Advance Rapidly, Its Energy Demands Continue to Soar — Asia is one of the largest and fastest- growing consumers of global oil and gas imports. The decisions they make to satisfy their energy needs over the next decade will have significant security implications for the United States and elsewhere, potentially impacting global prices, regional tensions, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and conventional arms. The Pacific Northwest Center for

Global Security, which is part of PNNL, is analyzing issues concerning energy security in Asia with the goal of increasing awareness by policy makers and the public.

The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
http://regionaloutreach.pnl.gov/nwtechtoday/article.asp?id=95

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Native Plants Are Smart Choice for Biofuels — Biofuels made from native plants could be the most environmentally and economically favorable option, researchers say. Native perennial plants could be used to make biofuels that are not only more environmentally sustainable, but more economically attractive to boot. Using a mixture of local plants as fuel appears to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve local water quality and biodiversity, according to US researchers at the Joint Global Change Research Institute in Maryland.

The team, led by Cesar Izaurralde, is using field trials and computer simulations to examine the economic and environmental potential of 'cellulosic' biofuels, which are made from woody or herbaceous plants, instead of starch-based biofuels from corn or sugar cane. Plants that thrive on the natural rainfall, temperatures and soil of the region need less care, so less greenhouse gas is emitted while raising them, and they cost less to cultivate, the researchers have found.

The team also wants to find biofuel crops that don't interfere with or replace food production, thereby driving up food prices, as this has been a major point of biofuel criticism in the past. Instead, the researchers suggest, with the right kind of plants, biofuels could be produced on *marginal* cropland – farmland that has been degraded and is no longer suitable for food production. Included in such studies include prairie grass, a perennial and other native plants. According to Deborah O'Connell, a researcher at Australia's CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems in Canberra "The perfect energy crop is also the perfect weed. And of curse there are on going studies on algae that can be converted to diesel fuel, with a minimum of processing, in an 'industrial type" setting.

By Katie Lee, *G-Online* -Technology
http://www.gmagazine.com.au/news/1211/native-plants-smart-choice-biofuels

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Program Seeks To End Plutonium Production & Dispose Of Stored Materials — The United States and the Russian Federation have agreed to halt their production of plutonium, and have been cooperating for the past decade to close their plutonium production facilities.

The Northwest and PNNL researchers are playing an important role in a federal program aimed at reducing the risk of plutonium dispersion worldwide. One goal of the Elimination of Weapons Grade Plutonium Production program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration, is to shut down the last three operating Russian nuclear reactors that produce weapons-grade plutonium.

In accordance with agreements made between the U.S. and Russia, each country will dispose of 34 metric tons of plutonium that has been declared excess to each nation's nuclear weapons program.

The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
http://regionaloutreach.pnl.gov/nwtechtoday/article.asp?id=96

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Science Suggests Access To Nature Is Essential To Human Health — Elderly adults tend to live longer if their homes are near a park or other green space, regardless of their social or economic status. College students do better on cognitive tests when their dorm windows view natural settings. Children with ADHD have fewer symptoms after outdoor activities in lush environments. Residents of public housing complexes report better family interactions when they live near trees. These are only a few of the findings from recent studies that support the idea that nature is essential to the physical, psychological and social well-being of the human animal, said Frances Kuo, a professor of natural resources and environmental science and psychology at the University of Illinois.

"Humans are evolved organisms and the environment is our habitat," Kuo said. "Now, as human societies become more urban, we as scientists are in a position to look at humans in much the same way that those who study animal behavior have looked at animals in the wild to see the effect of a changing habitat on this species."
Humans living in landscapes that lack trees or other natural features undergo patterns of social, psychological and physical breakdown that are strikingly similar to those observed in other animals that have been deprived of their natural habitat, Kuo said.

ScienceDaily Feb. 19, 2009
http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/02/090217092758.htm

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Center for Global Security Blends Science with Policy Analysis — As world leaders struggle with issues of energy, terrorism and nuclear nonproliferation, a Northwest group is helping to resolve these problems to improve international stability. It is the Seattle-based Pacific Northwest Center for Global Security. The Center takes a multidimensional approach to global security: education; outreach; partnerships with non-governmental organizations, academia and industry; and innovative policy analysis projects.

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory established the center in 1998 to address a wide range of global security issues. The Center engages with experts regionally, nationally and worldwide to probe the impact of economic, social, institutional and technical conditions that affect regional stability and global security. One key goal is to educate the next generation of global security specialists in the multidimensional aspects of nonproliferation and other security problems.

http://pnwcgs.pnl.gov/about.stm

An other parallel larger scale international effort, the Vienna Austria based World Institute for Nuclear Security, was started by retired US senator Sam Nunn in 2008. The organization integrates the more splintered efforts of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), the United States Department of Energy and the Institute of Nuclear Materials Management (INMM), in close collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Institute_for_Nuclear_Security]

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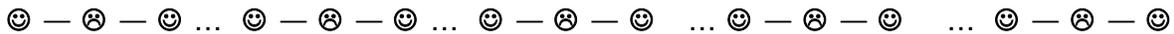
Li-ion battery studies at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) — Lithium ion batteries are everywhere today. From cell phones, iPods, and laptops to hybrid automobiles, Li-ion batteries have changed how modern energy needs are met. However, do not let their popularity mislead you; Li-ion batteries are still being researched and developed NREL. Dr. Kandler Smith came to the Colorado School of Mines last week to discuss the intricacies {*scientific and engineering complexities* <Doc.>} of Li-ion battery chemistry and control. Smith spoke on three main topics: the need for expanded hybrid vehicle research, NREL's current research and development, and his dissertation on Li-ion battery control. "Our main focus at the Department of Energy is light-duty vehicles," said Smith, "they account for about 62% of all transportation. If you can improve the fuel economy of light-duty vehicles it will make huge strides in terms of our use of foreign oil." Smith continued to describe several hybrid and battery operated vehicles currently on the market. "The one downfall of present day hybrids is that they only use petroleum to drive the car."

NREL has played a part in the hybrid world, creating standards, power, and energy requirements for batteries. Furthermore, NREL has focused on energy storage, and, according to Smith, "Our primary focus is thermal characterization and modeling of batteries. Temperature really kills the life of batteries, so you need to eliminate any hot spots and design thermal management systems that keep the temperature between 20 to 35 degrees Celsius." NREL's battery group works for the Department of Energy and has interactions with automakers and battery manufacturers.

By Tim Weilert – NREL Scientist

http://media.www.oredigger.net/media/storage/paper1162/news/2009/02/02/News/Nrel-And.LiIon.Battery.Control-3607088.shtml

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Melting Arctic Prompts Calls for 'National Park' on Ice — With arctic sea ice melting like ice cubes in soda, scientists want to protect a region they say will someday be the sole remaining frozen bastion of a disappearing world. Spanning the northern Canadian archipelago and western Greenland, it would be the first area formally protected in response to climate change, and a last-ditch effort to save polar bears and other animals.

"All the indications are of huge change, and a huge response is needed if you want to have polar bears beyond 2050," said Peter Ewins, the World Wildlife Fund's Director of Species Conservation. National Parks have proven to be one of the most important ways to protect and preserve natural areas and wildlife. First established in the United States in 1872, national parks have since been adopted internationally. But protecting an area outside of a single country's borders could prove to be difficult.

The arctic sea ice is composed of vast plains of three- to nine-foot-thick ice that cover the top of the northern hemisphere. Though some of the ice melts each summer, much of it remains frozen year-round — or, at least, it used to. Summer melts are accelerating, and winter re-freezing can no longer make up the difference. Every summer now seems to be accompanied by news of unprecedented ice loss and more waters open for the first time in known history. If current greenhouse-gas emission trends continue, the proposed protected region will be the only area with year-round ice, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Wired (Science Section) February 01, 2009

http://blog.wired.com/wiredscience/2009/02/melting-arctic.html

{Editor: The polar bears are thriving and do not need saving. They are warm-blooded animals and do not live only on ice. Are we so stupid to fall for this psy-op?} http://www.worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=92557

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Aging Satellites Threaten Climate Research Future

— The U.S. satellites that monitor climate change are aging, and replacements are years away, thanks to more than a decade of budget cuts and squabbling about which federal agency should run the climate satellite program.

—

Scientists say this means the United States will probably have to get along without some critical eyes in the sky at precisely the time it's making multibillion-dollar decisions about how to respond to climate change. "We'll be blind for maybe a decade," says Kathy Kelly, an oceanographer at the University of Washington who depends on satellite data for her research.

Satellite data allowed scientists to track Hurricane Ivan from its formation over the Atlantic Ocean to when it reached Category 5 strength. *NOAA*

As an example, she sites a satellite called QuikSCAT. For the past decade, it's been sending back a stream of data about ocean winds and hurricanes, which are affected by the changing climate. But Kelly says the stream of data from that satellite could end any day now. "It's way past due," she says. "It's amazing that it still works."

In the 1980s and early 1990s, it looked like scientists were going to get the tools they needed to monitor climate change. NASA was designing and launching a good number of satellites equipped with sensors to monitor climate change.

But that ambitious program soon ran into budget cuts and delays, says Bruce Wielicki, a NASA climate scientist. And the satellite programs that did make it into orbit are now getting on the hoary side. With no replacements immediately in sight, "we're basically sitting at the edge of a cliff," Wielicki says.

By Jon Hamilton *NPR Morning Edition,* March 6, 2009
http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=101336630

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Cybercrime Threat Rising Sharply — The threat of cybercrime is rising sharply, experts have warned at the World Economic Forum in Davos Switzerland. They called for a new system to tackle well-organized gangs of cybercriminals. Online theft costs $1 trillion a year, the number of attacks is rising sharply and too many people do not know how to protect themselves, they said.

The Internet was vulnerable, they said, but as it was now part of society's central nervous system, attacks could threaten whole economies.

The past year had seen "more vulnerabilities, more cybercrime, more malicious software than ever before", more than had been seen in the past five years combined, one of the experts reported. Risks discussed were Cybercrime, Weaknesses of the Internet System and the threat of Cyber Warfare.

Doc Sez: *A discussion of potential, but difficult to implement solutions was discussed and documented at the conference. This is a global problem and as we've seen on control of (1) disease (bird flue, SARS), (2) defeating hunger, (3) freeing women from third-class citizenship or as being used as property, and (4) on nuclear proliferation global solutions are difficult to implement, at least until major damage has been done.*

By Tim Weber — Business editor, *BBC News Website*, in Davos
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/davos/7862549.stm

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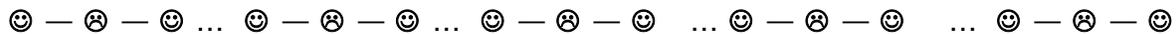
Dark Days for Green Energy — Wind and solar power have been growing at a blistering pace in recent years, and that growth seemed likely to accelerate under the green-minded Obama administration. But because of the credit crisis and the broader economic downturn, the opposite is happening: installation of wind and solar power is plummeting. Factories building parts for these industries have announced a wave of layoffs in recent weeks, and trade groups are projecting 30 to 50 percent declines this year in installation of new equipment, barring more help from the government.

Prices for turbines and solar panels, which soared when the boom began a few years ago, are falling. Communities that were patting themselves on the back just last year for attracting a wind or solar plant are now coping with cutbacks. Wind and solar developers have been left starved for capital. "It's absolutely frozen," said Craig Mataczynski, president of Renewable Energy Systems Americas, a wind developer. He projected his company would build just under half as much this year as it did last year.

Renewable energy sources like biomass, which involves making electricity from wood chips, and geothermal, which harnesses underground heat for power, have also been slowed by the financial crisis, but the effects have been more pronounced on once fast-growing wind and solar.

By KATE GALBRAITH *The New York Times*)

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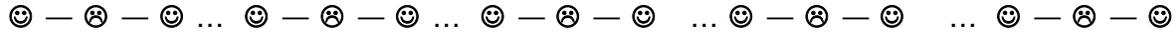
The Tiny, Slimy Savior Of Global Coral Reefs — Coral reefs, already declining in many areas around the world, face even tougher times ahead, say scientists. Warming and increasingly acidic oceans, combined with other stresses could conceivably spell the end for reefs, as we know them, they warn. Heat-tolerant algae could help the world's reefs adapt to climate change, University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science researcher says.

Andrew Baker has a more optimistic view. He thinks that corals have an innate – if limited – capacity to adapt to rising temperatures. And he theorizes that people may be able to help them along. Earlier this year, Mr. Baker, a 2008 Pew Fellow, launched a project to study the relationship between reef-building coral polyps (a relative of jellyfish) and their symbiotic algae. In exchange for a safe place to live, the algae (called zoo-xanthellae) supply their hosts with energy in the form of sugar. But higher temperatures can cause the coral-algae symbiosis to break down. During a so-called bleaching event, corals lose their algae and, greatly weakened, can die.

Baker hopes to preempt such bleaching events, which have become more frequent in the past 50 years as temperatures have risen globally, by "inoculating" corals with a more heat-resistant strain of algae. About 10 years ago, Baker noted that some corals naturally hosted a more heat-tolerant strain of algae and could survive much higher ocean temperatures. In the Persian Gulf, for example, where temperatures routinely reach 93 degrees F. – high enough to cause bleaching elsewhere – heat-tolerant al--gae dominate in corals and the reefs are much more resistant to bleaching. Perhaps more important, certain corals appear to switch to this heartier alga ("clade D') during warm years.

Why is it important that coral reefs survive? Coral reefs host the most diverse ecosystems in the oceans – or, arguably, anywhere on the planet. Earth has 34 major groups of animals, or phyla. Thirty-two exist in the ocean, compared with just 12 on land. Thirty live on coral reefs. People often call coral reefs the "rain forests of the ocean." But as Osha Gray Davidson wrote in his 1998 book "The Enchanted Braid," rain forests might better be called "the coral reefs of the land."

By Moises Velasquez-Manoff Staff Writer of *The Christian Science Monitor*
February 6, 2009 edition
http://features.csmonitor.com/environment/2009/02/06/the-tiny-slimy-savior-of-global-coral-reefs/

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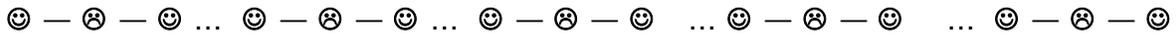
Study Reports Billions Needed to Deliver Wind Power to Eastern Interconnection — It's all in the Grid that is now virtual. The Joint Coordinated System Plan (JCSP'08), the first step of a transmission and generation system expansion analysis of the majority of the Eastern Interconnection, estimates the electricity sector will need over $80 billion in new transmission infrastructure to obtain 20% of the region's electricity from wind generation. This initial, still controversial, analysis, which was performed with participation from major transmission owners and operators in the Eastern U.S., looked at two scenarios to examine transmission and generation possibilities between 2008 and 2024. The first, a Reference Scenario, assumes "business as usual" with respect to wind development, with approximately 5% of the region's energy coming from wind. The second was a 20% Wind Energy Scenario and was based on the U.S. Department of Energy's Eastern Wind Integration and Transmission Study.

We believe that, although JCSP'08 examined a small set of scenarios with limited variables, this study nonetheless gives a clear idea of the scale of commitment it will take to integrate large amounts of renewable resources into the grid," said John Bear, President and CEO of the Midwest ISO. "This is information we believe that our leaders need to consider as they begin work under a new administration and start defining our energy future."

JCSP'08 estimates that incorporating 5% wind energy (the "Reference Scenario") will require the addition of approximately 10,000 miles of new extra-high voltage transmission at a cost of approximately $50 billion, in addition to nearly $700 billion in total generation capital costs by 2024.

The 20% Wind Energy Scenario is estimated to require 15,000 miles of new extra-high voltage lines, at an estimated cost of $80 billion, in addition to $1.1 trillion in total generation capital costs by 2024.

CARMEL, Ind., Feb. 9 /*PRNewswire*
http://sev.prnewswire.com/oil-energy/20090209/CLM04709022009-1.html
See Also: Website: http://www.midwestmarket.org/;
Website: http://www.jcspstudy.org/

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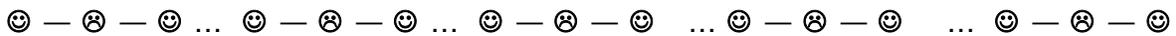
Microscopic Objects May Lead to Large Pollution Solution - These itty-bitty microbes are the most sophisticated chemists on Earth — scientists are forging a new partnership with bacteria. They call it metabolic engineering. Microbes are the most sophisticated chemists on Earth. We have used them for thousands of years to make fermented foods and, more recently, in some chemical manufacturing processes. Now microbial scientists want to carry that partnership to a new level.

They are gaining a deeper understanding of microbes' metabolic chemical skills with an eye to using those skills more effectively, and even reengineering them, to serve human purposes. These include making biofuels, cleaning up pollutants, even removing CO2 from the air.

Reports of research from two universities last month reflect that ambition. Kristala Prather at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology summed up these efforts succinctly, saying, "We're trying to ask what kinds of things should we be trying to make, and looking for possible routes in nature to make them." Meanwhile, MIT's Catherine Drennan is working with bacteria that break down carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide. Some of them break down an estimated 1 billion tons of carbon monoxide in the environment each year, according to scientists at MIT. Professor Drennan wonders, "Can we use this chemistry to do the same thing?" That means understanding the nitty-gritty of how the bacteria's chemistry works. Her team hopes to gain that understanding by deciphering the exact structure of the enzymes involved.

"Biology has a lot of diversity that's untapped and undiscovered," Prather explains, "but the flip side is that it's hard to engineer in precise ways. Nature has evolved to do what it does, and to get it to do something different is a nontrivial task."

By **Robert C. Cowen** | Columnist for *The Christian Science Monitor*
March 5, 2009 edition
http://features.csmonitor.com/innovation/2009/03/05/microscopic-objects-may-lead-to-large-pollution-solution/

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The 'holy grail' of biofuels now in sight: Long-promised cellulosic ethanol is in modest production, but hurdles remain. — With one foot planted in a pile of corn cobs, Mark Stowers explains how agricultural waste, transformed into ethanol, will turbo charge the US economy, boost its energy security, and help save the planet, too.

This holy grail of biofuels, called cellulosic ethanol, has been "five years from commercialization" for so long that even Dr. Stowers admits it's become a joke. But now the research director for POET, the nation's largest ethanol maker, based in Sioux Falls, S.D., says that despite bad economic news and major obstacles, cellulosics time is near. Other scientists agree.

Corn-based ethanol, which many critics argue does not do enough to slow climate change, is nearing US production limits. In Washington, cellulosic ethanol is gaining political traction. And cellulosic technology seems ready for prime time – at last. The proof, Stowers says, lies inside a nearby windowless, high-roofed single-story metal building. Filled with a maze of pipes and vats, this $8 million test facility is a miniature cellulosic ethanol plant that pumps out 20,000 gallons a year of nearly clear alcohol extracted from cobs like the ones beneath his feet.

But looking forward, biofuels could play a far larger role. By 2030, biofuels may reach 60 billion gallons, according to a new report released Feb. 10 by Sandia National Laboratory. That would require 480 million tons of biomass, including 215 million tons of dedicated energy crops like switch grass. Such fuel crops would require 48 million acres of what is now pasture or idle land, the report says. Such a shift would slash annual US tailpipe carbon dioxide emissions by 260 million tons a year – about equal to the emissions from 45 coal-fired power plants. Cellulosic ethanol feedstock crops would require little or no irrigation, a big advantage over corn. The cost: about $250 billion, the same or less than that of boosting US oil production by the same amount.

By Mark Clayton, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
February 13, 2009 edition
http://features.csmonitor.com/environment/2009/02/13/the-'holy-grail'-of-biofuels-now-in-sight/

See you all next month — Remember being energy efficient is less expensive than creating new energy sources —use what you have wisely.

Harry, aka doc_Babad

Pure Energy Systems Network's Wiki

By Robert L Pritchett
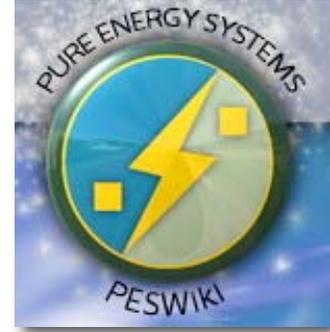
Over the last 13 months, I have been in the employ of the Pure Energy Systems Network (PESN) and working as Web Director for http://www.peswiki.com as well as being a New Energy Congress member, tasked on occasion to review and evaluate alternative or renewable clean energy technologies.

I put in incredibly long hours and I can't complain too loudly about the "merit pay" I received each month, because it kept a roof over our heads, but then the funds began to shrivel, as the cost of fuel dropped and the online store items were no longer being purchased in the volume they were before. I would say that those that had credit cards, perhaps had reached their limits and could not purchase anything anymore. I feel their pain. I'm there too. We have been collectively "tapped out".

I was the first full-time employee of PESN and others came on board after I did. I am the last to be let go as an employee, due to current "economic conditions".

During my tenure as Web Director, I was able to clean up the site, kept daily news items going, created nearly daily feature pages after doing extensive research, edited weekly podcasts, created videos, managed various forums, updated the Top 100 Clean Energy Technologies list, attended fairs and conferences and reported on them, worked with 50 other New Energy Congress members, tried and kept the website sane, oversaw at least one site revamp, relocation and upgrade, fought off those who took over the site temporarily, removed certain pages and blocked individuals in order not to become embroiled in legal disputes, participated in business-related conference calls, worked on the revamping of the business plan and taking it from non-profit mode to profit-mode, identified products that could be sold online, personally became a source for alternative energy proposals projects, promoted PESN and their websites, kept the events calendar up-to-date, proved to myself that hydroxy systems do in fact work in reducing pollution and improving engine performance, obtained legal permission from other sources to post items and was being groomed to "take over", in case the owner "disappeared" for whatever reason. You can see I have been a busy boy. No holidays, vacations, benefits or weekends and kept it going literally 24/7. I was given many of the "keys to the kingdom". Those keys have either since been returned or destroyed.

As you can see, I put in a lot of "sweat equity" in the business.

During my time in the IT seat, I was able to help the site grow to 15,000 pages, have over 5,000 registrants participating, and we at one time were within 500 page views of matching Wikipedia in site traffic. Site traffic increased over 800% under my watch and I understand that the Google Ad revenues supposedly increased to at least to cover my expenses. I was paying my way, but other powers were in play to have me eventually removed.

According to certain individuals, I was "earning too much". They obviously didn't appreciate what they had going for them. I discovered that the hats I wore and what I was doing in any other setting, would command a 6-figure income in IT. I certainly was not earning that with PESN.

Now will anybody *else* actually hire me, after growing in experience through this baptism by fire? We'll see.

When I came on board, there was a decidedly "Environmentalist" bent that ignored or suppressed real scientific evidence regarding actual global climate changes and in promoting other New World Order agendas, because the "news" previously followed the controlled media. I was able to get the "rest of the story" on news items and posted those on PESWiki instead.

I discovered that the world has been in a cooling trend for the last 8 years, instead of going through an "Al Gorish" warming trend. I found out that petroleum is a natural renewable energy source that is not "dino fuel" and is found on many planets and moons in our solar system and ergo, the universe. North America has well over 500 years of renewable petroleum underground at current consumption rates. We could be supplying the rest of the world, instead of importing fuel from other countries! Purely political. There is no "Energy Crisis"™, per se. I also found that Compact Fluorescents are detrimental to our health and well-being, besides being fire hazards and definitely do **not** have a better carbon footprint than incandescent bulbs. Again, it is another political ploy to weaken and control us.

Each of these items and a few others I have not highlighted in this article, tended to be "environmentalist-counter-culture" and pretty much pricked the Gaiast's "save the planet at all costs" balloon. Sadly, today we are collectively being trounced with cap and trade "tax the air we breath" nonsense and I doubt the true message regarding extensive existing resources will be heard and is being suppressed once again, in favor of the "Agenda"™.

Exposing the real truth has consequences. Thank God I still own a means to publish what I know to be true. I'll just say that I am not a "team player", when it comes to expediting the demise of my hard-won liberty. No, I will not allow it to happen.

Yes, there is untapped energy all around us and no, that energy does not come out of a wall socket.

I have learned much from those I associated with in the New Energy Congress. I was exposed to many perspectives and exceptional personalities. But I have been sidelined, so must pursue other venues to support my family. Thankfully, I had the presence of mind not to sell off *macCompanion* magazine. Keeping it afloat, while putting in ungodly long hours on behalf of Pure Energy Systems Network, kept me alive and in touch with what really matters. ;^)

I only hope the best for those that remain behind at PESN. I also hope the things I suggested, be put into practice and actually happen there. If not, it may fade into oblivion and we will once again be back to "the way things were". I've been around long enough to see that happen way too many times.

May PESN be blessed with success. I wish them the best.

I invite all to go see what has been accomplished at http://www.peswiki.com.

I, and many, many others, are delighted with what has been posted so far.

iPhone 3G/2G/Generic Mobile Phone Fish-Eye Lens

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

MOBILE.BRANDO.COM.HK

Mobile Brando
Unit A, 22F
Waylee Industrial Centre
30-38 Tsuen King Circuit
Tsuen Wan N.T.
Hong Kong
http://mobile.brando.com.hk./prod_detail.php?prod_id=03644
Released:
$19.90 USD
Requirements: iPhone 2G/3G.

Strengths: Works with and expands the camera capability of the iPhone.

Weaknesses: Requires a "platform" to handle the iPhone contour.

Introduction

With this lens, you can see the image with range of more than 170 degrees.

Features:
Magnet Mount
Conversion Lens for Mobile Phone and Digital Camera

Package Contents:
One Mobile Phone Fish-Eye Lens
  One Handy Strap
 Two Magnetic ring

What I Learned

This works with the clamshell plastic cover and telescopic lens we reviewed earlier
http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/October2008/Hardware/MobilePhoneTelescope.htm

If you do not have that, it is a real challenge to get the magnetic ring attached to the iPhone, to act as the anchor for the fish-eye lens. The lens is made for .25x magnification. It is also advertised as a 170-degree lens instead of 180-degree lens.

The metal dustcap/lanyard shown above is metal and covers the backside of the lens.

And I'm sure you would like to see some pics on how well this fisheye lens works, so here goes…

Oso and Blaze. (No animals were harmed in this presentation.) You can see how the straight lines have been curved and how quickly the "edges" go out of focus.

Fisheye Photos and Theory - http://www.zeta.org.au/~andrewa/ajaa31.htm
Effectively Using a Fisheye Lens -
http://www.paullockaby.com/journal/?id=2005/11/03/750143095

Conclusion

This is a special effects lens that has been adapted to the iPhone. Use sparingly. I find it to be another cool device that makes the iPhone more useful as a camera.

Mini Capsule Microphone for iPhone 3G / iPod Touch 2G / iPod Nano4G

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Mobile Brando
Unit A, 22F
Waylee Industrial Centre
30-38 Tsuen King Circuit
Tsuen Wan N.T.
Hong Kong
http://mobile.brando.com.hk/prod_detail.php?prod_id=04007
Released: February 2009
$12.90 USD
Requirements: iPhone, iPod Touch or iPod Nano.
Strengths: Helps turn the iPhone into a digital recorder.

Weaknesses: Plastic. Could get lost easily.

Other Reviews:
http://gadgetblips.dailyradar.com/story/mini_capsule_microphone_for_iphone_3g_ipod_touch_2g/

Introduction
"Whether conducting an interview, taking lecture notes, or capturing the sounds of life happening around you, simply attach this Mini Capsule Microphone to your device for immediate voice recording capacities. Just get this Tiny gadget to Optimize your iPhone and iPod!"

Features:

Plug and Play.
High Quality microphone, fine sensibility.
Small, Lightweight and Portable Design with jack cover.
No Battery is required.

Compatibility:

iPhone 3G (need to install recording software, like, iTalk Recorder or Easy Recorder)

iPod touch 2G (need to install recording software, like, iTalk Recorder or Easy Recorder)
iPod nano 4G (Plug & Play)
iPod classic 120G (Plug & Play)

My Experience

It doesn't look like much and the iPhone already comes with its own mic, so how effective is this in comparison to that? It might be worth the price. I tried recording a vocal group without it. I would have done, much, much better with it. I was in the back of the room. The choral group did an excellent job.

I used *Recorder* from the Apple App store. Business, Release: Dec 9, 2008, Version 7, 99 cents from Retronyms. It requires Wi-Fi connectivity to transfer files. The recording without the external mic was not all that great.

Don't use the external mic when tethered to a Mac. It picks up cable signals that interfere with a recording.\, which means it also seems to act a little like an antenna. ;^)

Conclusion

If you would like to have a "better" mic that can go the distance with your iPhone, give this one a try. Just don't loose it!

BTW, it also can be used with the MacBook Pro.

Labels & Addresses — Print addresses on labels/envelopes (was Mail Factory)

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2009

BeLight Software, Ltd.
http://www.BeLightsoft.com/products/labelsaddresses/overview.php
http://www.BeLightsoft.com/products/printfolio/support.php
Released: 18 Feb 2009

For a demo of this product:
http://www.BeLightsoft.com/download/download.php
The demo version if fully enabled but leaves a visible watermark on all items you try to print.

Cost: Pricing — Use Google to convert USD to $-CAN or £-Britain
　　　Standard Edition {a 1 GB download} $49.95
　　　Retail Edition {Broadband Download} $59.95
　　　Crossgrade from Mail Factory $24.95
　　　Upgrade to Retail Edition $24.95
German localization also available. [€38.5 + VAT]

Mac OS X 10.4 or later, PPC/Intel and a label or other printer. Disk Space: 100 MB of available hard drive space (1.8 GB required for a full clipart.)

Users: All who might need labeling capability beyond just plain formatted text.
Previous Reviews: Mail Factory 2.5 — Reviewed in macCompanion, June 2007

Strengths: With its minimal learning curve, Letters & Addresses is excellent and flexible package for creating labels and addresses with one at a time or by using it's almost intuitive mail merge features.
Weaknesses: None worth mentioning.

The software was tested on a Reviews were carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X Leopard version 10.5.6.

Introduction

I have long been an admirer of the software developed by BeLight Software, Ltd and appreciate not only their software, which I actively use, but also the quality of their service and responsiveness to problems. This doesn't stop me from being objective in my reviews, but full disclosure is one of my commandments.

One element of my comfort with BeLight's products is that the developers is using a common user interface for all their products, easing the learning curve when adopting a new software module (see the toll bar examples below.)
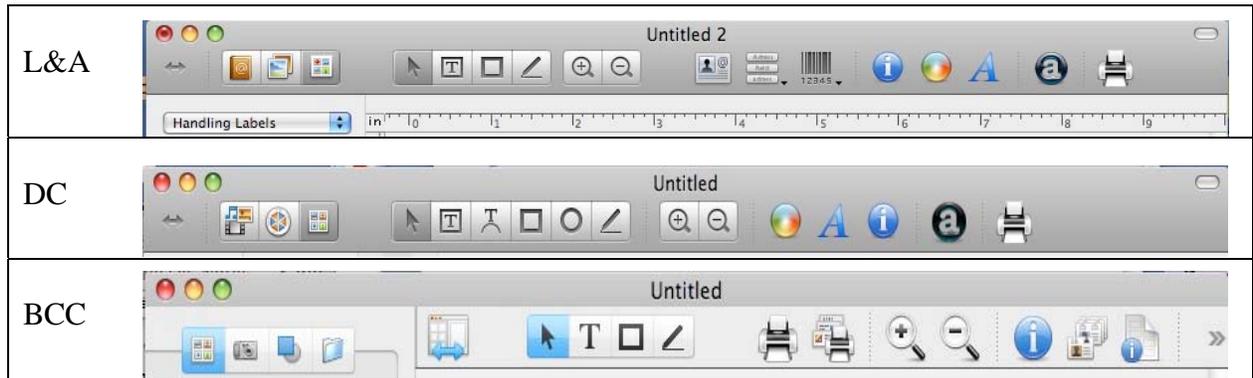
Although I've customized some of the tool bars, you can easily see common interface features such as left of center, the text and image placement tools and those identified below.

Inspector		Art Text	
Fonts		Text Color	

Their Printfolio Collection, which I use almost daily, is a suite of programs tailored to create business cards, flyers, brochures, CD and DVD labels, envelopes and address labels. The suite contains *Business Card Composer [BCC], Swift Publisher*, *Disc Cover [DC],* and the newly enhanced *Labels & Addresses as well as Art Text.* All of these products have been previously reviewed by the macCompanion staff.

Although I had not been using Mail Factory as often as I do the other parts of the Printfolio suite, that's only because, not being a social animal, except for holidays and rarer special occasions, I can make do, KISS, with my DYMO LabelWriter. But I do lust for iconic return addresses, focused on my outreach activities.

Or the most part my label and addressing needs are simple. As with all of BeLight's products, L&A offers a wide selection of professional designs and templates. These can be used to make mailing labels, envelopes, postcards, and even folder labels more visually attractive. For simplicity's sake, I usually skip those options and, as I do in Disc Cover for CDs, use a blank mailing label or envelope.

Publisher's Description

Labels & Addresses (was Mail Factory) is a home and office tool for printing all sorts of labels, envelopes, inventory labels and price tags. The program helps to design and print envelopes, postcards and diverse labels, such as address, shipping, file folder and barcode labels. Merge printing capability makes the program a great tool for Holiday seasons by helping users to design and print personalized and focused multiple greeting envelopes and postcards that can automatically contain substitutable addresses and postal barcodes.

Getting Started

Installing the product was as simple as a drag and drop, entering a serial number, and the as always checking out and tweaking the software's preferences.

Let's cut to the quick and I'll provide you with a summary of the product's rich feature sets.

An Annotated Partial Feature List

Advanced Merging — Address merge printing makes it possible to automatically substitute addresses and postal barcodes for every label or envelope being printed. You can also automatically create and print numerous barcodes from an external data list. Mail merging in Labels & Addresses [L&A] is easier than in MS Word, a fact for which I'm grateful. Most industry-standard barcodes are supported and barcode data can be added manually or from an external resource.

Flexible Address Addressing — Easily import address information in a batch from:

Apple Address Book	MS Excel	MS Entourage	Now Contact - a PIM	FileMaker	vCards or tab-delimited text files

or input them manually, one at a time.

Work, Home or Primary address locations can be selected for each contact. I have not had time to figure out how to export that information from Eudora, my email client, but since I can export my Eudora address book into Apple's, that not much of a big deal.

As an aside: Perhaps the biggest problem with maximizing the effectiveness of L&A's flexible data base systems is caused by your past practices in entering contact data in the listed applications. I have contact information stored in MS Word, FileMaker Pro, MS Excel, and DEVONthink Pro. BUT, few of the entries are complete. Some have names, affiliations and email. Others contain only a phone number or two, or a just postal address. Rarely do I have a complete dataset for each contact, and when I do each program I use for contact information, like Topsey, in different field configurations. I'll stick to manual entry for now and perhaps, a bit at a time, switch to Apple's Address Book as my primary PIM, killing of my FileMaker Pro lists (Maybe — Perhaps — Mañana). [Oh for a Macintosh using student to do this, a chore I'll never have the time to finish]

As a result, transferring-aggregating (batch) contact information from my existing address books or documents was not tested.

Senders
Recipients
✓ Address Book
MS Entourage
Eudora
NowContacts
vCard File
Text File
MS Excel
FileMaker Pro
My Recipients
Print Lists
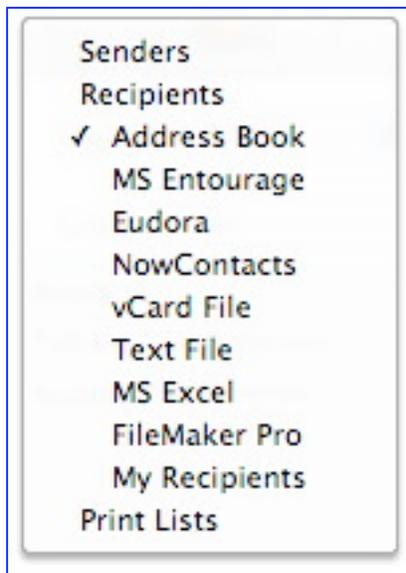
Creating a mass mailings' database to store and edit your 'group' lists is straightforward. The contact databases you create can be sorted by their contact fields (Name, ZIP, etc.) There is also a built-in *Smart Address Recognition* feature allows you to paste an address from any text and then automatically formats it according to the applicable postal standards.

You can even store and edit recipient's details directly in the program's recipients' database, avoiding the need to go back to enter the new data in the original source program's address book. For those who keep both a personal and a contact business database(s), you can easily switch between private, church/club and corporate correspondence.

Available Postal System Formatting Features — The program automatically formats addresses according to the postal standards for over 50 countries. USPS POSTNET, Canada Post and Royal Mail barcodes can be printed for the US, Canada and UK addresses respectively. Indeed, you have 15 address fields' arrangements to chose from, actually more than I'd ever use.

A Well Designed Set of Graphic Tools and Features — These design aides include 100 ready-made label, envelope, postcard, file folder and name badge designs and 24,000 high quality clipart images (1,000 in Standard downloaded edition). I have not checked with the clipart collection in L&A differs from those in other Printfolio modules. In addition, you get an easy to access 100+ handling labels and signs for use on envelopes and packages as well as 100 unique masks and option to use custom image as a mask.

The program can work with TIFF, JPEG, GIF, PDF, EPS and other image formats and you can add to your designs by using BeLight's Art Text if that product is among your tools. There's more, check out both the printer related capabilities and other features that make this pram a pleasure to use. [http://www.BeLightsoft.com/products/labelsaddresses/features.php]

As a bonus there are also 50 Bitstream fonts, but only in the retail edition.

User Tests and Other L&A Shenanigans

Addressing Envelopes — I tried the software with #10 (4-1/8 x 9-1/2") business envelopes, and the more common #6+ (3 x 6-1/") envelopes. I also occasionally use 6 1/2" x 9 1/2 " envelopes either in wallet or standard flap orientation. [See BeLight's link for more information on envelope configuration and formatting. http://www.BeLightsoft.com/products/companion/paper/envelopes.php]. All he other envelopes I use routinely are too large to fit in my laser printer, so creating mailing labels, thank you, works just fine. In case you have an odd size (non-commercial) envelope in mind, you'll get to create custom envelope design to fit the size of the missive you want to mail.

Designing Postcards — You need a special postcard and find email too informal. That too is easy—front and back and/or portrait or landscape. For your two -sided creations, read your printer's manual; otherwise you'll waste paper and ink. I created a few cutsey items as a test, just for fun, but I'll neither show nor use them.

Note: L&A provides wide collection of sizes for domestic and international postcards and envelopes are provided. But if you want to create a design in a new size, you can create your own custom templates and of course save them for future use.

Making Business Cards (Not Possible) — I use BeLight's Business Card Composer for my custom made contacts, a very Victorian or Japanese habit. I also wanted to the *card-making* feature in L&A. Using the business card sized templates provided [Labels > Name Badges (3.5 x 2")]. Some of the labels provided for creating *nametags or badges* appeared to be suitable for creating and printing as business cards. However that is not their purpose. The experiment failed! The available printer paper templates are 3.5 x 2 1/4" in size, a fourth inch larger than business card stock. In addition, checking the lists of label paper, under the assistant function, provided no business card specific items, at least for Avery labels and card stock paper.

Testing Making Custom Labels for All Other Purposes — Mailing, return address, shipping, handling instructions, custom file folders and separately via the L&A Assistant, *XXX*. I was a bit miffed, however by the absence of both the radiation symbol and the biohazard symbol from the *handling* graphics collection — I of course have them in my clip art collection, so can easily use them in L&A as needed.

Printing, in General — I use both a hp color LaserJet 3500 for general printing — documents, envelopes, sheets of labels and ID Tags — and my DYMO printer for creating address 4-line return and address mailing labels and ID labels for boxes, spices, and anything I want to identify with having to open the container. I had no problems printing one or a few (DYMO) or many labels using Avery paper (hp) with L&A.

Create Name Badges — Not only can you design, and print name badges for all occasions. The label fits into standard commercial badge holders by selecting them in L&A Assistant > Labels or from the L&A Menu > File > Change Layout. You can even go on the cheep using single use gummy (self Adhesive) labels, avoiding the illegible name marker trap.

Kudos

One of the things I've admired about BeLight is the attention they pay to details associated with using their software. For example:

Resource Links — Learn about printing labels and envelopes, learn about technology used in dedicated label printers, international postal cost and conventions from the internet, all about {as previously discussed} envelope styles and sizes, more than you wanted to know about label paper, and information about the paper templates supported by L&A.

There is some fine information about obtaining Clipart Collections both free and low-cost, as well as on Font Collection Availability and how to use them.
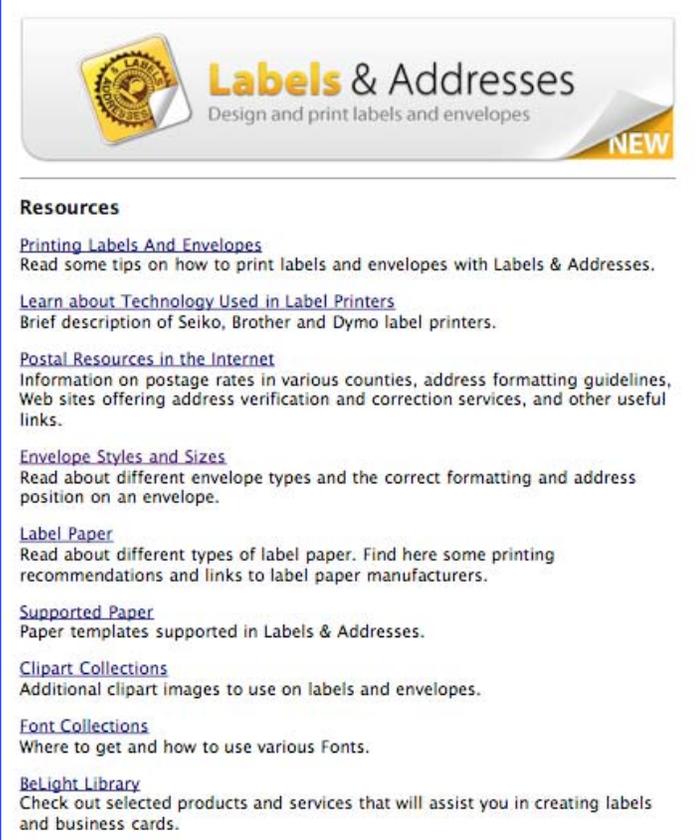
Resources

Printing Labels And Envelopes
Read some tips on how to print labels and envelopes with Labels & Addresses.

Learn about Technology Used in Label Printers
Brief description of Seiko, Brother and Dymo label printers.

Postal Resources in the Internet
Information on postage rates in various counties, address formatting guidelines, Web sites offering address verification and correction services, and other useful links.

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

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

Supported Paper
Paper templates supported in Labels & Addresses.

Clipart Collections
Additional clipart images to use on labels and envelopes.

Font Collections
Where to get and how to use various Fonts.

BeLight Library
Check out selected products and services that will assist you in creating labels and business cards.

Iconographic Address Labels — Although I make almost daily use of my DYMO LabelWriter Turbo 360, I could never master the art of adding a logo to my return address. [Other's have.]

Therefore I welcomed L&A, which rapidly allowed me to create a few custom return address labels (home, consulting, Macintosh club, Folk-Life Society) and print them on the DYMO printer. The contact information remained mostly the same (Street address, City-State-Zip) but my Name varied between Harry Babad, Harry Babad, Ph. D, and Harry {doc} Babad. I also added a second line that identified persona I was assuming (e.g., Consultant & Author, MacEXpert, EWS-ANS EDU-Chair.)

Conclusions and Recommendations

Labels & Addresses is an excellent and flexible package for creating labels and addresses. The program goes far beyond designing simple image and text combined labels and envelopes. You have the ability to add, barcodes, and smart shapes to enhance your artwork. There are also scores of sticker-like handling 'instructions' and warning 'notices' to assure you missive gets the proper 'respect' in most post offices around the world. Unless I missed it, there was no 'hand stamp' sticker available but here were many variation of 'fragile'.

Its configurability, feature-set and versatility is user friendly, a short learning curve that is easier if you've used other BeLight products. The developers provide a sample gallery called *sample tour* that, illustrates their product's versatility.

As Ian Osborne noted recently "although not instantly intuitive, Labels & Addresses is as straightforward as you could hope for, given its rich features."
[http://www.BeLightsoft.com/products/labelsaddresses/reviews/macformatuk.php]

I found the product either in the standard or retail edition was reasonably priced {See the PPS}. It is easily worth 4.5 macCs, and is a superior successor to Mail Factory. [More about that below.]

PS

For more information about the mail merge features and dealing with custom lists read Jeff Carlson's December 2008 review of L&A in Tidbits. [http://db.tidbits.com/article/9939].

PPS

My criteria of a software product's value that I've never previously documented, is simple. It is the value of my time, using poorer or workaround methods to complete a task; ignoring the frustration factor. I evaluate the so called 'hours saved' a month compared to what I could earn working at McDonalds or as a barista at Starbucks.

If a software tool saves me time, depreciatingly valued at $9-10/hr., it's worth buying. With the BeLight products, for a bargain, you can get the five applications at the price of about two, buy Printfolio for $89.00 and get the full version of BCC, Art Text and the other goodies. Of course if a client's tasks requires it, all bets are off — it's part of my business costs.

StoryPlanner Pro – Storyboard and Animatics Software

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett
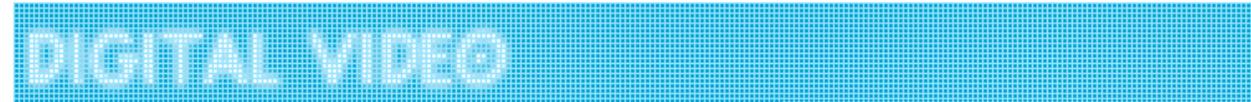
Digital Video S.p.A.
Via Sante Bargellini, 4
00157 Roma (Italy)
Tel: (+39) 06.43.59.93.69 - (+39) 06.43.93.578
Fax: (+39) 06.43.25.15.88
toonz.company@toonz.com
http://www.toonz.com/htm/products/prodSP.htm

View Demos:
http://www.toonz.com/htm/products/prodSPdemovid.htm
Datasheet:
http://www.toonz.com/pdf/StoryPlanner_DS.pdf
StoryPlanner Brochure:
http://www.toonz.com/pdf/StoryPlannerBrochure.pdf
Released: January 2009.
$495 USD, €395, £277.

Try before you buy: http://www.toonz.com/htm/products/prodSPdown.htm
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later, 1 GB RAM (2 recommended), 60 MB Hard drive space. Windows XP or Vista, 20 MB hard drive space.

Strengths: Quickly takes cartoon-like storyboards and convert them into animatics. Sister product to *Storyboard Pro*.

Weaknesses: Doesn't have built-in onionskin or lightbox features.

Other Reviews: http://cartoonsnap.blogspot.com/2009/02/new-storyboard-software-first-look.html

Introduction

Digital Video, creator of the cel animation software Toonz, has released Story Planner and Story Planner PRO are brand new tools for creating storyboards with graphical and textual information, and generating animatics with soundtrack and animations.

The software was developed based on the suggestions of expert storyboard artists', according to Digital Video. Story Planner is a fundamental management tool to facilitate the creative thinking process simplifying the workflow in cinema, advertising, animation and video games industries, and is designed to increase the production speed, saving time and costing.

Story Planner costs €49 (around £34), and allows a streamlined creation of a storyboard with sketches and notes laid out in an unlimited number of panels describing the flow of the story.

Sketches can be created with a full set of raster-based drawing tools, or any image can be imported; captions and notes can be added and formatted.

The story flow can be quickly organized in panels and scenes; camera movements and other graphical elements can be used to define actions in the scenes.

Storyboards can be printed out, or exported as PDF files, according to a custom page layout.

Story Planner Pro costs €395 (£277), and adds to the standard features the possibility to compose complex animatics in a timeline editor. Moreover, the timeline controls the animation of the camera and of graphical elements placed in sketch layers.

Audio tracks can be added and edited to create a sound track in sync with the animatic, and fade and dissolve transitions can be used. After a real-time preview, the animatic can be generated with a single-click command.

Both versions are available for Mac OS X running on both PowerPC and Intel processors and Windows XP, Windows Vista.
(http://www.macvideo.tv/editing/news/index.cfm?newsid=110224)

What I Learned

StoryPlanner Pro allows us to work in layers, and import audio tracks and build animatics. The use of a timeline and the ability to include editable text that travels wherever the drawing goes, along with camera movement indications and the ability to quickly draw directional arrows are also in the application.

Drawings will need to be brought in from other programs, like ToonBoom's Storyboard Pro - http://www.toonboom.com/products/storyboardpro/

This is a cross-platform app, so you can interoperate from one hardware box to another with ease.

Conclusion

If you are or have been using ToonBoom products or are familiar with other Digital Video applications, you already know this is a quality product. I would call it a sister product to *Storyboard Pro* and rounds out the cartoon genre approach to entertainment and education.

Toast Titanium 10

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre

Roxio Toast Titanium 10 Pro
www.roxio.com

$149 USD, ($185 CND, £103 GBP, 115€ Euro based on
current exchange rates.)
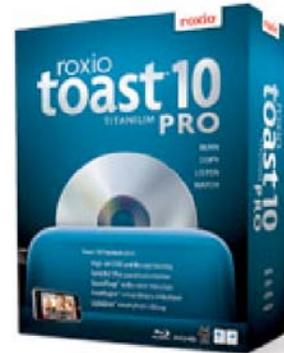
System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5.x or later; Universal binary; 1 GB RAM; 15 GB Hard
Drive Space; CD-ROM/DVD-ROM/Blu-ray; QuickTime v7; Internet connection
Strengths: Some really great applications in the Pro package.

Weaknesses: A very expensive upgrade coming not a year from Toast 9.

Previous Reviews: Toast Titanium

Introduction

I'd like to preface this review by saying that the new Toast 10 Titanium Pro has some fantastic
added applications that really does warrant the purchasing of the Pro package. That being said, I
believe that putting out three versions of the same basic product within a two year period is
very…frustrating. The Extras have some nice polishing to their applications, and even something
new, but add in the Pro apps – now we have something to talk about.

The Pro package differs from the standard package with the added applications that are included,
along with the Blu-ray plug-ins. Those additional applications are Sonicfire® Pro 5,
SoundSoap™, FotoMagico™ and LightZone™. Otherwise, the rest of the applications, sans the
plug-ins, are the same as the Toast 10 Titanium package listed at $99.00. It should be said that
both packages are currently being offered with a $20 mail-in rebate for previous owners of Toast,
or a number of other packages that Roxio makes including Popcorn. Toast 9 Titanium users can
get an upgrade to 10 for $40 off without dealing with rebates at
http://www.roxio.com/enu/upgrade_center/toast/default.html.

Getting Started

Installation was the standard fare of the drag and drop variety. The boxed version had the pleasant surprise of actually including a printed manual, somewhat of a rarity these days, but standard for Toast.

The manual only deals with the core of the Toast program, however. Basically just the actual CD/DVD application, dipping a little bit into describing Toast Extras. It doesn't go over any of the Pro products.

Just Plain Toast with a Side Order of Everything

To be honest, (not that I'm anything but), I can't really see a whole lot of difference between the last version and this one where the actual burning is concerned. I don't see what has changed between version 9 and 10 with the actual core of the program. There are many improvements with the Extras, however. That's not including my favorite portion, the Pro applications.

One of the new Extras is *Mac2TiVo*. It's not quite an Apple TV killer, but if you don't have an Apple TV, and do happen to have a series II or later TiVo, then this just might be your ticket. Similar to the Streamer application, (which now has it's own iPhone app), this will convert your media from whatever format it happens to be in, then sync it with to your TiVo. I can't tell you how cool this feature is, and if you do have a Tivo, it's a great addition for version 10. Oh, don't forget going the other way too, with *TiVoToGo*™

Other features that have been improved is the *CD Spin Doctor*®. It's now able to not only capture your analog and digital streams, and enhance that audio, but to also split it out into individual songs and correctly label them with the correct metadata. This, along with the Mac2TiVo, is another one of those wow features of Toast 10 that I don't see talked about a lot in the press, but I find incredibly useful and fascinating.

There are a few more enhancements to the Extras applications, of course. There's a new *Audiobook creation* tool that will take your CDs and the many tracks that are on them and turn them into one easily managed file. As good as [Audiobook Builder](#)? I don't think so. Better than trying to manage hundreds of tiny files on your own though, and usually a lot easier than doing something like a [Doug's Script](#). Other new tools are Web Video, DVD clip extraction and AVCHD archive. The Web Video is pretty neat, similar to something like [TubeSock](#) or [iTubeX](#). Using the *Web Video* you can easily grab video clips from sites such as YouTube and convert them to other formats, including the ability to burn them or save them for playback on other devices. The *DVD clip extraction* tool lets you quickly save a clip from a DVD for editing or saving elsewhere. *AVCHD Archiving* enables you to easily archive your AVCHD content right from your camera straight to standard DVDs or Blu-Ray Discs.

Rounding it all off there's always the fantastic *Disc Cover RE* Disc Labeling software. Really though, what else is there that you can you say about this great application? If you aren't going to get Toast, at least go to [BeLight Software](#) and download this gem of program as a stand alone. I believe it's probably the best labeling software out there, and it handles my DYMO DiscPainter fabulously. Last, but not least, the *GetBackup 2 RE* and the *DiscCatalogMaker RE*. Another confession, I really haven't had the time to know GetBackup, but the DiscCatalogMaker is another good program for cataloging all the files that you create with Toast. It's a fine program that I think is out-shined only by my personal favorite, CDFinder.
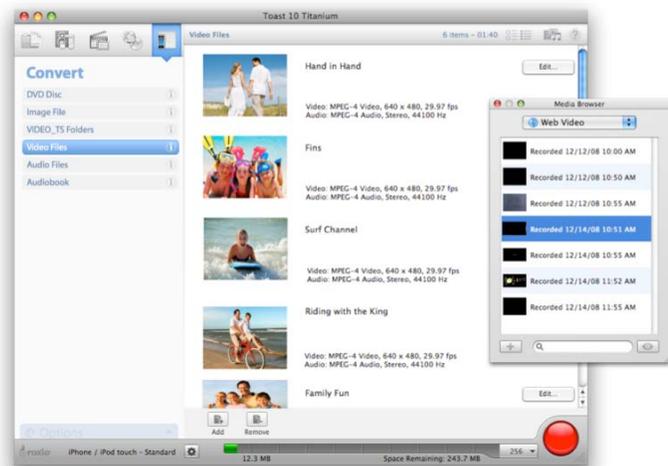
The Blu-Ray Divide

What I do find everyone talking about is the ability for Toast to author Blu-Ray discs. This is where Toast and I part ways and I have a little difficulty with. Roxio touts this as one of the greatest features in the last couple of upgrades. First off, though, if you try to author your own Blu-Ray discs without Toast you are going to find a few surprises. The biggest surprise is probably the amount of money that you can spend authoring those DVDs. I'm not talking just burning them, but actually the full DVD treatment.

If you use Sony's software, you can spend well into 5 figures, so for the average user to be able to do this is really incredible.

My biggest problem is with the entire hardware side of things. Even though all this time has passed since Blu-Ray has "won the war," it's still been a very slow adoption process. Not only that, but bringing Blu-Ray to Apple itself has been an exercise in futility. It seems not even Steve Jobs is willing to put in the effort, even with his ties to Blu-Ray. So yes, you can buy an additional external Blu-Ray DVD drive. You pay incredibly high prices for blank discs, and yet you still can't watch commercial DVD movies with your Mac. So the only reason for getting a pretty expensive external DVD player, and paying another pretty penny for the discs is to only do one of two things. A large data disc, which there are more cost effective methods of doing things of this nature. Or, to use Toast and create your own HD media, to more than likely, use on your own system.

I just can't see it being a big thing right now that everyone is rushing out to do. That's a shame, because I sure would. I don't, though, because I don't even have an HDTV, (strange perhaps nowadays, but maybe not). I don't think that the Blu-Ray market will ever explode until they come out with a sub-$100 commercial player, without it being stuck in a game console. So if the family doesn't have a Blu-Ray player to play your fancy Blu-Ray disc of little Stephanie's Birthday Party, well, might as well stick with SD. Really, it's not just me thinking this. Roxio started Blu-Ray burning with Toast 8. And…? I do have to remind you, though. You can create HD video and burn it standard DVDs. They still need to play on a Blu-Ray player, though, but I'm getting ahead of myself!

If you do happen to want to go HD, I wouldn't hesitate to use Toast as an authoring tool, especially with the added applications in the Pro set.

Toast 10 Titanium *Pro*
Now, it's taken an entire normal review to get to my favorite portion of tonight's programming. The Pro portion of the name. This, is where it gets cool. This is also the part where you don't get a fancy book on the inside of the box. No, you'd probably need a few of Pogue's Missing Manual type of books because every one of these applications is a full featured program that can stand on it's own. There are five of these extra programs, and it really does make all the difference in the world between the regular Toast Titanium 10 and Toast Titanium 10 Pro, and well worth the extra $50. Roxio puts the worth of these applications at over $300. The applications are the HD/BD Plug-In, SoundSoap, Sonicfire Pro 5, FotoMagico, and LightZone.

The **HD/BD Plug-in** is the same that you would normally pay $20 in the non-pro version of Toast. This is the one that will let you take the HD video from your camera and create a finished Blu-Ray DVD, including menu themes. One of the neat things you can do with this use a normal DVD burner and burn a Blu-Ray disk. That disk will not play in a normal DVD player, and when you play it through a Blu-Ray player it will only play as much as the DVD will hold. You will probably be able to fit approximately 20 to 30 minutes of HD video on a DVD. It doesn't need to only come from your camera, though. It can come from your HD TiVo, video from your EyeTV recordings, and any other HD video that has been created or downloaded.
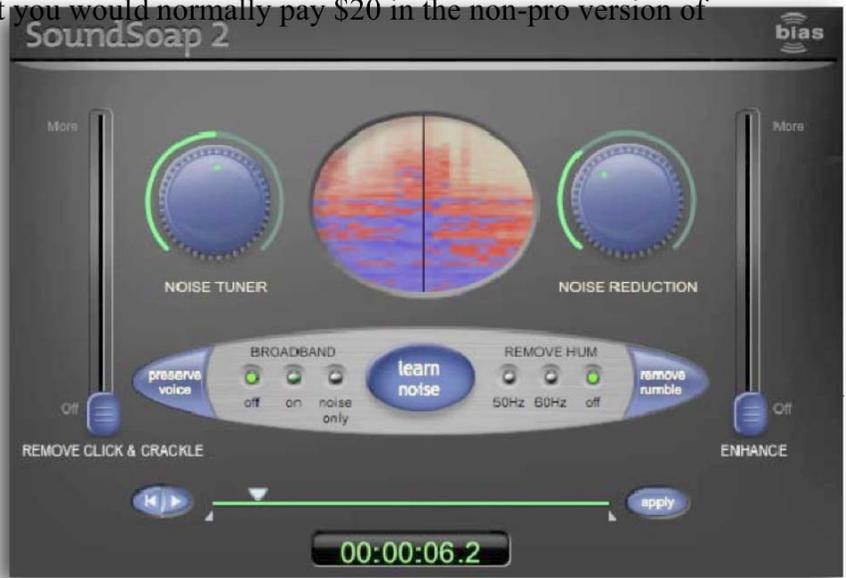
SoundSoap uses advanced filter algorithms to "learn noise" from a short section of audio and then removes that noise from the entire recording. You can use SoundSoap with both music and video, which I have started to use. I produce more than a few videos for our local Access channel. Many those videos take place in less-than-ideal conditions. Recording a meeting taking place in a large auditorium with fans or air conditioners running with only a shotgun mic can really be a challenge. SoundSoap does a surprisingly good job with taking out that extra noise.

The next application in the Pro lineup is **FotoMagico**. This is the same FotoMagico that everyone knows and loves from the great Boinx Software. It's such a known and great application that I don't think that I need to spend much time with it. It makes doing slideshows of photos child's play. To do the same thing with Final Cut Pro would take ages, and not nearly the precision and options that iPhoto gives you. You cannot only do a Ken Burns effect, but actually direct where the camera starts, stops, the amount and type of zoom, and what kind of transitions between the photos. It's a fantastic application that everyone that wants to present photos should have, even if you don't buy Toast Titanium Pro 10.

Next on the list is **LightZone**. LightZone is something that I have not tried before now, but I have heard a lot about. LightZone lets you enhance the lighting in your photos with greater detail and control than Aperture or iPhoto. If you were to do the same thing with Photoshop, it would take many layers and a great degree of skill. To put it simply, you can select different areas in your photos and adjust them accordingly. If you want to bring out the detail and lighten up your landscape, but don't want to touch the incredible sky or totally blow out the sunset, then this is the application your going to want to have in your toolkit.

Last, but certainly not least, is an app that is quickly becoming one of my favorites. It is **Sonicfire Pro 5**. Sonicfire Pro, (including both the SmartSound Express Track and the Scoring Edition,) is an application that can create a soundtrack for videos and slideshows. It's not simply putting music to a video, though. It's a way to mix in different moods with the same piece of music. The music that is available is an incredibly large library, ranging from instrumental pieces that is found in every corporate training video ever produced, to full cinematic orchestrated productions worthy of a motion picture from Hollywood. Within those individual music pieces is
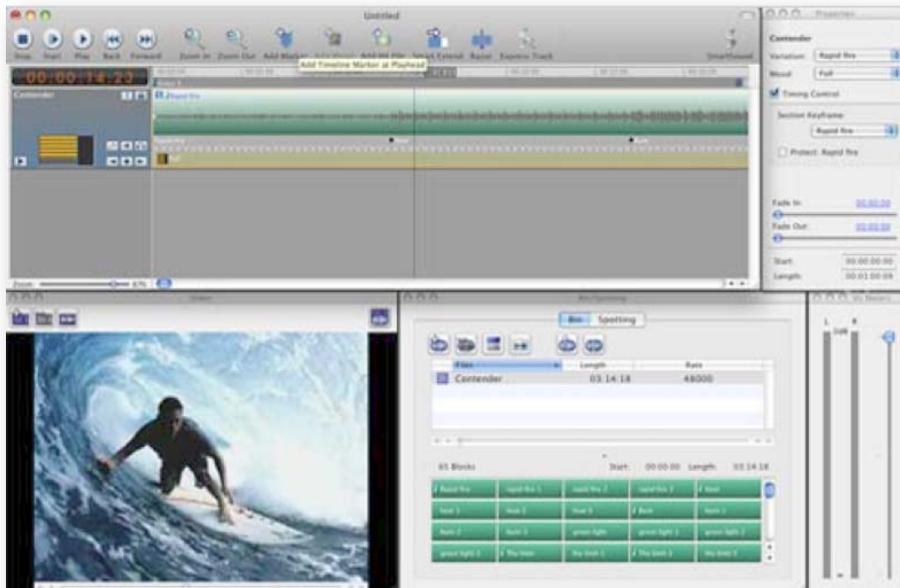
the ability to create different moods on the fly within your own production.

You want to be able to do a voice-over? Simply select the in and out point, select the Mood "Background" or even "Dialog," and that will automatically adjust the music and the gain to match what would best go with a voice-over.

Need to have the music be exactly 2:10;14? I will remix the piece so it will have a beginning, middle and ending, and exactly 2 minutes, 10 seconds and 14 frames long.

I can't believe I haven't played with this application before, and I consider it being included in Toast 10 Titanium Pro to be an astounding bargain, and worth the cost of admission by itself.

Recommendation

The big question is why Roxio is creating a Pro addition to it's already rock steady CD/DVD burning software. That, I can't tell you, but what it does is give you the ability to take your raw media, your photos and video straight from the camera, and turn it into a professional looking, (and sounding,) polished DVD. So why would you want to upgrade? Well, the Toast that we have all learned to love that does a terrific job in burning our discs has fully matured. If you already have version 9, or even 8, and all you want to do is burn DVDs and CDs. Well, you might want to pass. Stay with 9 if you don't have a TiVo, or need any of the Extras applications.

If you do want to do any extra massaging to your media before you burn it. If you really want to impress your friends and family, take a look at the Pro package. If you're a Pro, well this could be a welcome addition to your toolkit. It really does include a surprising amount of very good software. I wouldn't hesitate recommending just skipping the regular Toast 10 Titanium package and jump up to the Pro. For the money, it's an incredible value.
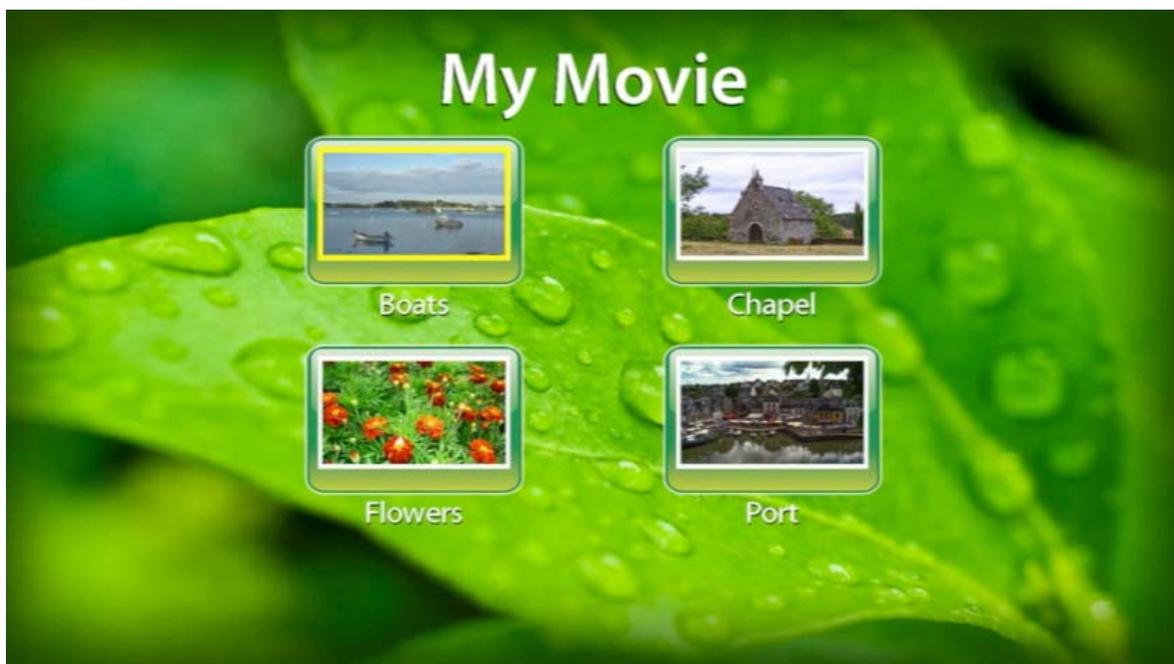
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We are the Macintosh® Professional Network (MPN), Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). MPN, LLC continues to evolve, ever since its creation in 1996 as a way to reach out to those who use computers for a living in an effort to make their lives easier and their work both enjoyable and profitable.

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

Besides our website and consulting efforts, we also create *macCompanion* as a freely available PDF-based monthly. It averages about 100 pages per month. July 2006 was the 4th-year anniversary of this labor of love. The *macCompanion* staff is an all-volunteer team of writers and reviewers from many parts of the globe, and they also have a great wealth of knowledge and experience in their backgrounds. That base of talent also continues to keep growing as the Macintosh Professional Network expands.

Statistical Analysis

We are very excited about our site statistics! The multilingual-capable *macCompanion* website is close to 2 million page views a month and readership continues to increase rapidly through our "whisper campaign".

We continue to get greater visibility every day. Many of the various 35 computer operating systems (with many moving towards the Mac® OS X™ environment), 115 online search engines, 269 countries and domains and 319 online robots have discovered us – and continue to do so. So far, over 201 other websites have also linked to us. Many of our readers have made our site one of their favorites. While nearly 70% of our readership stops by for a quick visit via RSS feeds, over 23% spend between 1/2 to 1 hours at a time going through over 250 different pages on our site (mostly archives). Many of those who quickly drop by, come to get the monthly PDF issue of *macCompanion*. Over 35GB of bandwidth was used in December 2005 alone for download purposes. Previous months have averaged around 20GB. Trend analysis indicates that will continue to increase as folks decide to "Move to the Mac".

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