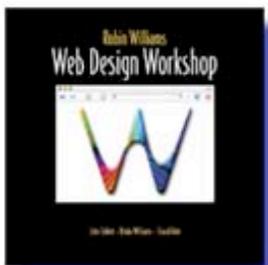
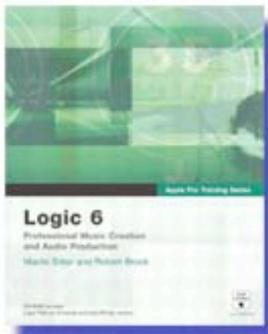
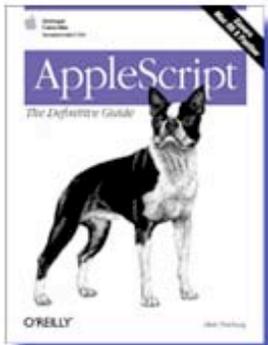


The Macintosh Professional Network Presents
macCompanion

Your Guide To All Things Macintosh

February 2004 Issue 2 Volume 2

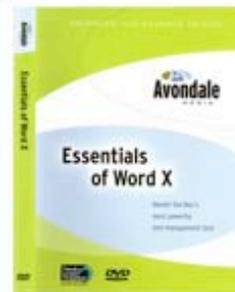
Books



Software



Software



Little Snitch

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Cover by Derek Caudill

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And our special thanks to those who have allowed us to review their products!

Letter From the CEO

We are making History!

We live in exciting times and we are also making history.

See Alex Salkever 's BusinessWeek *Byte of the Apple* article, "Apple + HP = iPod Forever" at http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/jan2004/tc20040114_0255_tc056.htm as the "buzz" at the Consumer Electronics Show as HP grabs the iPod for reselling in the summer and supports the Advanced Audio Coding format.

Then look at Rob Pegoraro's article in the *Washington Post*, "iLife Bundles Sophisticated Tools for Manipulating Digital Media" at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A43758-2004Jan24.html>.

And Bob Massey also does an article in the *Washington Post* about GarageBand, "Music-Making Made Slick" at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A43759-2004Jan24.html?nav=hptoc_tn.

What is happening at InfoWorld? They keep praising the Mac!

Chad Dickerson wrote, "Bluetooth to the rescue" at <http://www.infoworld.com/columnists/chad.html> about his iBook wireless experience aboard a plane that should become a commercial for Apple.

Jon Udell wrote in the same issue, "The Picturephone has arrived" at <http://www.infoworld.com/columnists/jon.html> in how iChat AV and iSight may be the VoIP killer app.

And Tom Yager, Technical Director of the InfoWorld Test Center also wrote, "The era of the PHPC" at http://www.infoworld.com/columnists/tom_curve.html and how he considers the G5 to be the beginning of Personal High Performance Computers.

Then Rebecca Freed, MacSkeptic for *PC World* wrote, "OS X Without Tears" at <http://www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,114464,00.asp>

Now is the time to get Panther™ installed and working on your systems! If you don't have a system that runs Panther, go get one. Panther is sweet! (I finally got my HP printer to work too with Panther.)

We also have some companies that are lining up to provide prizes for the "Macintosh Glory, Laud and Honor Music Contest". Hey, everyone else is celebrating Macs' 20th anniversary. Why not get creative, make some original music and lyrics about it and maybe even get a prize for doing so? And the prizes are not schotkies from MacWorld either! Stay tuned to our site as we unveil the process and contest in the near future.

Meanwhile, why not send an email to notify@maccompanion.com asking to get on the list, and learn when the next issue of *macCompanion* is posted? This is our effort to not send out SPAM, but so you can know when we put our articles, reviews and columns online (and no, we don't publish or sell the list for anyone either).

Letter From the Editor

Love is in the air!

Welcome to the second issue of *macCompanion* for 2004!

February is a month of love and this year, apparently one for politics. Love we can handle. We love books and hardware and software for the Macintosh environment. Some may say we are even passionate about our platform of choice and nearly stress-less lifestyle it evokes. And what is wrong with having a *macCompanion* that helps a person to be creative, motivated and on a constant positive curve?

Find out more by reading this month's Columns, Features, Book and Software reviews. We loved doing it. You'll love it too.

Enjoy!

Views from the Ivory Tower

By Ted Bade

MacWorld Expo in San Francisco provided, as usual, a number of surprises, but not all of them good. (At least in my estimation). The new iPod mini is cool, but only \$50 less than its bigger brother that offers a lot more capacity. I would have liked to see an even less expensive mini iPod, something under \$200. The new version of iLife provides some valuable new features. Garageband sounds interesting and updated versions of applications like iMovie, iDVD, and iPhoto are always welcome. However, as my wife pointed out, what if I want only the iPhoto update? Apple wants me to pay \$50 for the version of iTunes I already have, a new version of iPhoto (which I might or might not find valuable), and several applications I am not interested in! I'd be happier being able to buy iPhoto alone for \$20. But I shouldn't complain, it has been nice getting most of the iApps for free up to this point....

The introduction of the G5 Xserve is wonderful, especially for IT people who want and need lots of power. I wonder if the guys from Virginia Tech wished they had waited for the Xserve version? Perhaps they will upgrade as well! [Editor: Yep, they are!]

There were also a number of other software announcements at MacWorld Expo. These include Office™™ 2004 for Mac OS X, version 7 of VirtualPC™ that works with G5s and Panther, DiskWarrior™ for Panther, Retrospect™ 6, Toast™ with Jam 6, and FinalCut Pro™™ V2, to name a few.

MacWorld Expo is always a treat for Mac users. Not only the major announcements and new software, but also the excitement of getting together with a group of Mac users. I hope this summer brings one to my side of the country (USA East Coast). There has been a lot of controversy about what exactly will happen here this summer. I truly hope we can get past the chest thumping of the big egos and just get an exposition for the rest of us!

Apple Modifications – This has been a pretty good year for Apple. After the Expo in SF, Apple released their first quarter financial reports. While not spectacular, they were impressive, with a net profit of \$63 million (beating the financial predictions – always a good thing). In this period they sold 730,000 iPods (up 235%) and 829,000 Macs (up 12%). Apple announced that the iTunes Music Store has a 70 percent share of the legal music download market! Quite an accomplishment for Apple. Let's hope they can retain that market share! (See music wars below).

Apple welcomed Jim Lawrence, executive VP and CFO of General Mills, Inc. to their Board of Directors. Mr. Lawrence brings a lot of financial experience along with him, both from his position in General Mills and previous jobs. In an announcement posted by Apple he says:

"Apple is clearly the most innovative company in its industry," said Jim Lawrence. "My family and I have been Mac users for many years, so I am really looking forward to working directly with such a talented group of people."

You can read Apple's entire announcement by visiting:
<http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2004/jan/05bod.html>.

Finally, IDC has rated Apple as the number 5 computer company at the end of 2003 with 3.2% of the US computer market share. While this may be good news overall, sales of Macs were down by .2% this year compared to the 10.8% increase in sales seen by the entire computer industry. All I can say is, "Come on guys, get out there and buy some Macs!!"

Xgrid, new tool for the Scientific community – Early in January Apple released an application called Xgrid, designed to tie any group of Macs together to form a supercomputer of sorts. <http://www.apple.com/acg/xgrid/>. (We really need a different name for this grid of networked computers working together). By making it easy to tie Macs together, it makes it that much easier for companies that need the computing power to justify a Macintosh office they can use after hours to get extended computing power.

Consider a research company with a network of Macs used by both the scientists and the support staff. After the support staff leaves for the day, all the Macs in this office could be tied together with Xgrid and used to perform supercomputer computations. If you were ever involved with the SETI project or any other distributed computing project, you have the basic concept. In a world where IT departments require people to shutdown desktop computers after hours to "minimize virus infections", its cool to think that Mac offices will be staying up to maximize computing power!!

In an excellent article posted on the ComputerWorld web site <http://www.computerworld.com/hardwaretopics/hardware/story/0,10801,88989,00.html>, writer Yuval Kossovsky, discusses his experience with using Xgrid. To quote one part of the article:

"I can't stress enough how easy it was to set up this software and get Xgrid up and running. Total time invested was under an hour, including downloading the software and uninstalling it after my tests. This is a great application for any scientific computing environment wishing to take advantage of unused computing cycles or wanting to achieve some form of supercomputing on a budget that doesn't allow for InfiniBand cards and multiple racks of Xserves."

This really drives home the ease of use aspect of the Macintosh computer experience. Great job Apple!

Music Wars – The next big technology battle is now being defined. It is that of digital music. It appears that there are two very popular camps: Apple's iTunes Music Store and Microsoft's Window's Media. You probably know that currently Apple is the leader in this market. But it isn't over yet. In the past, Microsoft has arrived late into a market they missed and bullied their way to the top, defeating other companies and the innovations they brought to the consumer. As much as I hate to say it, Microsoft is poised to take over the digital music market. Let us hope that what makes Apple great, the fact that (IMHO) they let users do things their own way; not forcing them to follow some artificial predetermined method, appeals to enough people to keep Apple ahead of Microsoft.

In an astounding move, Hewlett-Packard corporation joined the Apple wagon by announcing that they would be including the Windows version of iTunes on all their consumer desktop and laptop PCs. They also announced they would be selling a version of the iPod that will be made by Apple but with the HP brand. To read the announcement that was posted on the Apple site visit: <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2004/jan/08hp.html>.

This is a significant alliance, because it puts a major Windows machine manufacturer in both the Apple and Microsoft camps. In an article on the New York Times, HP was quoted as saying that they would work to ensure Apple and Microsoft worked together; something that is important for consumers. I like that. By saying that, HP marks itself as a truly consumer friendly company.

In contrast, Microsoft and Dell are moaning that this alliance between Apple and HP will hurt

consumers. I am sure what they really mean is that they won't be able to grab as much of the market as fast as they could because of the alliance. Just the tone of their statements makes one wonder why so many people flock to their banners. But what else would one expect from companies like that.

Microsoft isn't without its followers. Last year Wal-Mart, Musicmatch, and Best Buy announced they would support Microsoft Media formats. Stay tuned as the battle continues.

Pepsi Pokes fun at the RIAA – I hope you managed to catch the Pepsi ad during this year's Super Bowl. As you probably know, Pepsi and Apple are giving away a lot of songs from the ITMS this summer. Well, Pepsi created advertisements to promote this that feature about 20 of the teens that were sued by the RIAA for illegal news sharing! What a hoot!

My hat is off to Pepsi! Both for bringing some humor into this absurd situation as well as doing something nice for those kids. I still think the RIAA was acting very childish with their lawsuits, but what would one expect from an industry lacking the intelligence to change. Also, Pepsi Co. does a nice things by giving these kids an opportunity regain the money they lost and at the same time poke some fun at the big bad corporate machine they would otherwise have no ability to ever speak back to!

As I write this, I am anxiously awaiting the airing of the first ad. Great Job Pepsi and Apple! To read more about this and what Pepsi did, visit the following location:
http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2004-01-22-sb-pepsi_x.htm.

For more information on the Apple ITMS and Pepsi song give away, visit the teaser page at:
<http://www.apple.com/itunes/pepsi/>.

Special Note: as we were going to press, Pepsi and/or Apple posted one of the commercials on the Internet. If you didn't manage to catch them on TV, you might be able to view them at:
<http://pepsilaw.cjb.net/>.

Why doesn't everyone use Apples? – Recently the New Zealand Herald ran an article on a major New Zealand law firm undertaking a large upgrade to Macintosh computers. The law firm, Brookfields, began a \$165,000 upgrade. In the article the general manager is quoted:

"Our IT staff numbers would need to double if we were to run the equivalent amount of PCs. It is very easy to maintain a Mac network, we have just four staff who manage the website, intranet, staff training and support for 145 Macs."

I always like to share stories of businesses successfully converting to the Mac platform. I like to read about the logic used to make the decision to do this. If you get a chance, read the whole article. Share this information with a business near you! Visit:

<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/businessstorydisplay.cfm?storyID=3544420&thesection=business&thesubsection=technology&thesecondsubsection=information>

Feature

Long-Time Keynote Watcher, First-time Attender

By Eddie Hargreaves

Between the streaming video feed on Apple's site, the minute-by-minute updates on Macintosh-related Web sites, and the Associated Press story that gets distributed to media outlets across the country, Steve Jobs' annual keynote at Macworld Expo San Francisco gets fully explained, right? Sometimes it's what Steve Jobs doesn't say that is actually worth reporting. With that in mind, here are my few thoughts that escaped Jobs' famous "reality distortion field" while I was at the keynote.

Jobs is not one to dwell on the past, so it was surprising and satisfying to see him reminisce a little about the creation of the Mac. The fact that this segment took place first essentially told anyone paying attention there would be no anniversary hardware announced.

Jobs then informed us that there are now 9.5 million active users of OS X, equaling 40 percent of the installed base. This meant, he explained, that the transition to OS X is over. It's been a few years since I studied math, so maybe percentages mean different things nowadays, but I know if I only watched 40 percent of a movie I wouldn't consider it over.

Obviously, an expectation of 100 percent of Mac users migrating to OS X is asking for the impossible. But it remains to be seen if Panther is bringing the OS 9 (and 8) holdouts to the X party or if it's just playing to the 10.1 and 10.2 crowd.

At the least, Jobs' original assertion that the transition would take one year to complete has been proven far too optimistic.

The preview of the upcoming Office 2004 was welcome, since it's the first good news to come out of Microsoft's Macintosh Business Unit since Roz Ho was named many, many months ago. Of course, the demonstration didn't generate too much excitement, but Microsoft probably could have previewed a time-travel application and only gotten moderate applause from the Mac faithful. Although only a Spring timeframe was given for a release date, the inclusion of 2004 in the title practically ensures it'll be released by the end of the year. And the preview of a G5-capable Virtual PC should have included a free serving of crow for all those who said Microsoft only bought the product from Connectix to kill it.

The Virginia Tech supercomputer – System X – was a huge event for Apple last year and garnered plenty of great, deserved press coverage. What didn't get covered too much was the slipped ship date of G5s to consumers. With only days to go before their pre-orders were supposed to arrive, customers saw their arrival dates shift by weeks. Some wondered if the 1,100 G5s ordered by Virginia Tech were the cause of the delays, while most Apple loyalists dismissed that thinking as conspiracy theory. Surprisingly, Jobs admitted as much during the keynote.

The G5 Xserve was the hardware product introduced at the keynote that everyone said would not have/did not have any hardware introductions. The addition of the G5 chip to the Xserve is something everyone expected Apple to do, but didn't know how they could, seeing as the chip runs so hot. Of course, a rackmount server doesn't have to run as quiet as a desktop machine and anyone who's already using an original Xserve isn't expecting the G5 model to be quieter.

The related announcement that Jobs didn't actually announce at the keynote was the free beta release of Xgrid, a computational clustering technology that uses Apple's Rendezvous technology to farm out processor-intensive tasks to any willing machine on the local network. Although a final release may be designed for Xserves, the possibility of including this capability standard in 10.4 is exciting. Most of OS X Server is available in the standard OS X product, simply without a GUI, so it seems within the realm of reality.

The iTunes Music Store was, of course, the biggest story of last year, and whether it's the

competitors or just Apple's own diligence, it's nice to see constant improvements to the experience such as the Billboard Hot 100 charts and 12,000 more classical tracks. And the Pepsi promotion will likely be a big winner for both Pepsi and Apple. Who's selling sugar water to kids now?

Updates to the iLife applications were certainly due, and the new features didn't disappoint those watching, even if many were simply rectifying common complaints (iSight can't be used by iMovie, iPhoto is awfully slow).

The introduction of GarageBand was a classic Steve Jobs keynote show-stopper, ranking up there with the introduction of iMovie and AirPort and making it one of those things you couldn't wait to try out yourself. Of course, with Jobs' actual computer hidden underneath the table (why wouldn't it be a dual 2GHz G5?), you didn't think about what the system requirements might be. And then there's the iPod mini. As the final announcement of the keynote, it's obviously gotten the most attention of all. Most of the keynote attendees were certainly underwhelmed by the \$249 price tag, but anyone who expected Apple to sell it for \$100 hasn't been paying attention to Apple's prices. And most of those attending Macworld Expo either already have a \$300+ iPod or are planning to get one, so of course they aren't impressed. It simply remains to be seen how well they do or don't sell.

The "boring" 2004 keynote was interesting, indeed.

Books

Apple Confidential 2.0 The Definitive History of the World's Most Colorful Company

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Owen W. Linzmayer

List Price: \$20 USD, \$30 CND, £16 UK+VAT

Published: January 2004

344 pages

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Strengths: Covers just about everything Applish.

Weaknesses: Unvarnished quotes make the book R-rated.

Apple Confidential 2.0 by Owen W. Linzmayer is a precious sweet-and-sour book. It is not quite as schizophrenic as the company it presents, but it comes close. I found some repetition. Themes on the same topic, similar to reading the 4 Gospels, I guess. Personal testimonies from different perspectives about the same topic – Apple goofs.

And there are a lot of time-lines and enough trivia to win any Apple User Group Mac-trivia contests. And apparently Steve Jobs is a reformed Commune-based-Hippie-cum-Capitalist-Pig who has an interesting philosophy about how to earn money by sticking it to his friends and associates with a salty potty-mouth that never got washed out with soap – but he made a lot of people millionaires. [There used to be a time when the unprintable wasn't.]

I came away from the book wondering how Apple ever got this far. It began with 2 guys who broke the law by building and selling products that were designed to steal from the telcos and never got put behind bars for doing so. One shafted the other more than once, but the other kept coming back for more. One gives of his time, energy and resources freely, but still ended

up in more than one marriage. The other reached his goal of becoming a ruthless in-your-face Machiavellian billionaire from a life based of free love and chutzpa and more than one family – some say by charisma. And he finally found his blood-relatives. Both love music.

And then there were the timelines of codenamed equipment, software and biographical histories of others who played the bittersweet Apple-management game. The sidebars are littered with some dumb jokes and really interesting information. It would appear that everyone involved in Apple either mellowed with age or grew up after a lifetime of being teenagers. Maybe the lives of those strewn along the path to success made it all worthwhile. I'm still waiting for "one more thing".

There are still a lot of stories left untold and unsung heroes and heroines who might one day, be able to give insight into their life-experiences with the company that promised something for "the rest of us". I missed reading anything about the telecommunications effort that started at Apple and became Voice over IP. Or the Wireless networking venture begun by Apple and carried by so many others. There are lots of "could-have-beens" and "should-have-beens". Some are recognized here. But quite a few I know a little about are not.

There should be another volume written about others who joined Apple to spread the vision and then were tossed aside. But that would make a very sad book.

Did Apple really become a respectable corporation based on "Management? We don't need no stinkin' management!" We are sooo forgiving.

So many things went wrong over the years, yet Apple today has survived Puberty and has reached Adulthood with a dysfunctional family all its own. Maybe it should have been named "Phoenix". It keeps rising from the ashes.

I personally think it has survived because "the rest of us" cousins and distant relatives made it so. That makes it both "colorful" and confidential. So many User Groups who expressed so much faith, hopes and dreams in a company that has taken way too long to recognize their real worth. The book doesn't really acknowledge them/us either.

So maybe ignore the verbage that make the book R-rated in some areas. Just like we keep ignoring the faults and foibles of a company that promises so much in return for the sweat, blood and tears of "the rest of us". I still remember getting my first Mac – a Claris 650 system for \$10K. Then 2 weeks later the one I really wanted was released – that had audio-visual capabilities. The angst is felt in the book.

Humanity is so forgiving, and the Mac-faithful must be Saints with open arms to the Apple prodigal son. Hey, if you like sweet-and-sour and feel a little sado-masochistic, read the book. I did and didn't put it down until I finished it. Really!

AppleScript: The Definitive Guide

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Matt Neuburg

List Price: \$40 USD, \$62 CND, £28.50 UK

Published: November 2003

476 pages

ISBN: 0596005571

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/applescpttdg/>

Requirements: AppleScript in Mac OS X and a desire to use Apple technology to the fullest.

O'Reilly Books

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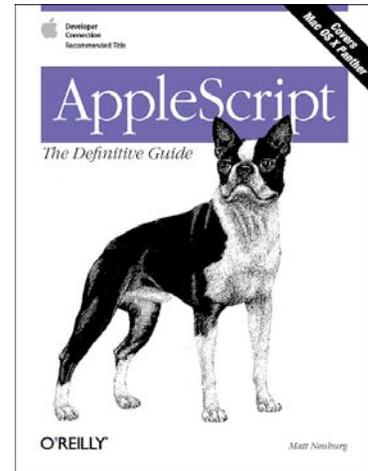
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<http://www.oreilly.com>



Strengths: Walks through both plusses and minuses of the discovery method approach to learning AppleScript.

Weaknesses: Not in the book itself, but AppleScript, after 10 years or more, still needs some refinement. There is a tendency in the book to scare away the faint-hearted who don't want to know some things are still apparently broken but have work-arounds. (And what object-oriented scripting system is perfect?)

AppleScript: The Definitive Guide by Matt Neuberg keeps an otherwise dry topic (object-oriented scripting development) alive and interesting as he processes programming through foibles and failures to bringing out programs and functions that finally work. He shows his thought-processes he uses and excellent programming techniques on how to get from concept to final functionality using AppleScript technologies.

This book has 3 parts: AppleScript Overview (not a history but a foundation for what is to come later), The AppleScript Language (syntax and semantics about the "English-likeness monster", and how to avoid some of the quiriness) and AppleScript In Action (dictionary inadequacies, cobbling and linking disparate programs and using guesswork to make the whole thing magically come together). The Appendices have 2 parts covering other tools and resources.

Mat Neuberg admits up front that this is a discovery process for him too, as he figures out the rules and then documents his findings that haven't been put in print before. He shows where he bumps into dead-ends and roadblocks, backs off and rethinks the process and takes another approach with the tenacity and dogged determination of the Boston Terrier shown on the front cover as he "makes it right". His "lessons learned" are invaluable!

Maybe it is the special mentality of a programmer, but I would have given up long before he did as he works out a FrameMaker™ "find the illustrations and identify them" process as he documents a book he worked on for a publisher. Now that he has that process in place, I bet he can now sell that application to others who have similar needs. And that puts the "coolness

factor" into any project; the "Ahah!" experience.

What is helpful is that this isn't a theory book, but a practical application approach to how we can use macroization (capturing repeated processes and making life easier for "the rest of us") to the max by walking around the eccentricities, quirks and peculiarities that currently still abound in AppleScript and interrelatedness of so-called dictionaries used by other applications ("my Application is AppleScriptable!") in the Mac OS X environment.

I attended the MacWorld Expo training course in NY in 2001 where AppleScript was taught by Apple's finest. Yes, even then AppleScript was touted as "easy" and sentence-like. What was not so clear was that I had to have the equivalent of being an English Major to understand the sentence structure (looks easy, but is hard to master). Matt Neuburg does an excellent job of explaining that learning curve in this book and how to crawl up AppleScript by getting past booby-traps along the way.

"AppleScript programming is often indistinguishable from guessing." **AppleScript: The Definitive Guide** was written to help move guessing to getting answers that get it right and Matt Neuburg even does it with a sense of humor.

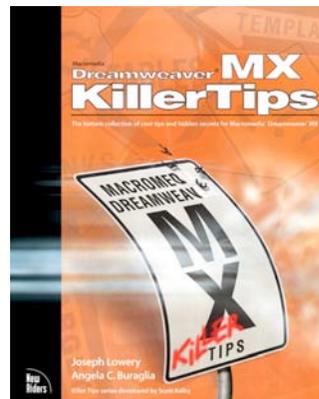
If you aren't afraid to learn something new and need help moving past the frustration threshold of AppleScripting, get this book. Who knows, you might even create something magically marketable.

Macromedia® Dreamweaver® MX KillerTips
Reviewed by Derek Caudill
Edited By Julie M. Willingham

Authors: Joseph Lowery & Angela C. Buraglia
Authors' Website: <http://www.dckillertips.com/about.asp>
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<http://www.newriders.com/>



Strengths: Entertaining, revealing, and intuitive. Wonderful illustrations.

Weaknesses: One tip is incorrect, and there are a few minor grammatical errors.

Miscellaneous Notes: From the publisher's webpage: "Due to a printing error some books were printed with missing pages or out of sequence pages. We apologize for any inconvenience this might have caused. If you have a copy that contains an error of this type, please contact New Riders Publishing at jay.payne@newriders.com and a replacement copy will be sent to you at no charge. Please provide your mailing address and phone number for accurate shipping." The book I reviewed was not the incorrect printing.

If you use Dreamweaver MX to create your website, no matter how your site works, no matter what Dreamweaver MX tools you use to create it, chances are you aren't using those tools to the best of their abilities to suit your needs. In Dreamweaver MX, there are two ways to accomplish one task. There's the quick and dirty way, or the fast and efficient way. In most cases, we usually use the quick and dirty method, as it's the first one to present itself, but there is almost always a better way. **Macromedia® Dreamweaver® MX KillerTips** by Joseph Lowery and Angela C. Buraglia shows you the better way to use the majority of Dreamweaver MX's tools. Along with more efficient tool usage techniques, you'll also be introduced to some timesaving techniques for creating web content, and to features in Dreamweaver MX that you might not have thought existed.

The book is essentially a smorgasbord of tips on just about every Dreamweaver MX subject, from tables to site layout. The authors have collected hundreds of tips and tricks learned over the years and organized them based on common themes. The book isn't meant to be read cover by cover, but to be used as a reference when doing a certain task. Not everyone will be building web applications, so the authors don't expect everyone to read that chapter. The

authors intend this book to be used on a case-by-case basis. For example, if you're working with CSS, check out the CSS chapter to see if there's anything you could do to make your CSS work more efficient. It's that simple.

For the purpose of this review, I did disregard the author's advice about not reading from cover to cover. But for the average person, I would still recommend reading each chapter. I say this because it will open your eyes to all the wonderful things Dreamweaver MX can do. While it's not a training book, and you won't know what they are talking about half the time if you aren't familiar with the subject, it will give you a glimpse into the Dreamweaver MX potential, and give you ideas for further study. I also recommend reading each chapter because quite often a tip will reference another tip, in a chapter behind or ahead. While it's not necessary to follow these references, they provide more insight into what can be done with Dreamweaver MX.

The book features ten chapters, organizing the tips and tricks by their common themes, and also includes a subject index. I like the index feature because to me, it's not always straightforward what category a question might be answered in. So if I want to see all the tips associated with, say, SQL, I simply turn to the index, find SQL, and from there I'm directed to each SQL tip.

The chapters are:

Chapter 1	Built For Speed:	Dreamweaver Interface Tips
Chapter 2	Speed, Grace, and Style:	Power CSS Tips.
Chapter 3	Racin' Down the Rows:	The Best Table Tips
Chapter 4	Speed Daemons:	Browser Compatibility Tips
Chapter 5	Speed of Light Layouts:	Advanced Layout Tips
Chapter 6	Rev Your Engines:	Templates, Library, and Production Tips
Chapter 7	Maximum Acceleration:	Dreamweaver Tip Variety Pack
Chapter 8	Greased Lighting:	Application Building Tips
Chapter 9	Pedal to the Metal:	Cool Coding Tricks
Chapter 10	Customizing Your Hot Rod:	Customization and Extensibility Tips

As you see from the chapter titles, the authors like to take a whimsical license with their writing. This sense of humor is enduring throughout the book, taking away from any boredom with pure technical writing, and actually making the book fun to read. I found myself setting the book down more than a few times to wipe the tears out of my eyes from laughing too hard at some of the puns and hilarious anecdotes. Yes, this may be a reference book, but the writers add so much humor and personality in what they write that I had trouble putting the book down. I especially enjoyed the enthusiasm for their work that the authors showed; it's always a treat for me to see people enjoy their work. There are several tips where an author mentions that this tip makes working fun, and even one tip where an author warns that the results of the tip are so fun, that they distract from working on the site. I find this personality refreshing, and throughout the book it felt more like I was talking with the authors, rather than just reading their written words.

I was confident in what I was reading because the two authors are renowned for their Dreamweaver skills; each has written several books on Dreamweaver. The quality of the source of the information is top notch in my book. Being assured that they know their stuff is icing on the cake. As a side note, Angela C. Buraglia is the founder of DreamweaverFAQ.com <http://www.dreamweaverfaq.com/>, a site that, ever since I found it, thanks to this book, has been an invaluable resource for me.

Since there are two authors, I found it hard to know whose tip I was reading, as that wasn't clearly identified. I assume that the tips focusing on the Windows side were written by Joseph

Lowery, and that Angela C. Buraglia wrote the tips on The Macintosh side. I can't really explain why I assume this, it just seemed that way.

Ah ha, you saw the statement about the two sides; so you might be thinking, "Ok, who is this book for?" Well, the book is for any experienced user of Dreamweaver MX who wants to learn some time-saving techniques and general usage tips and secrets. I say experienced, because this isn't an introductory book to Dreamweaver MX. If you don't have some experience, you won't know what the authors are talking about the majority of the time. I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone who hasn't used Dreamweaver MX, so Adobe GoLive users, stay back! A perfect example of this for me was Chapter 8: Greased Lighting: Application Building Tips. I don't know a thing about SQL or ASP, and I don't use any of the application building techniques on any sites I create because they aren't necessary, so I was lost throughout the chapter. This is a perfect example of, "If the topic doesn't apply to you, don't read it." Or, "If the shoe doesn't fit..."

Since Dreamweaver MX is almost identical on both the Windows and Mac OS platforms, the majority of the tips will work for both platforms. I applaud the authors for indicating clearly when this isn't the case, and for indicating when you can do something in the Mac OS X version that you can't in the Mac OS 9 version and vice versa. A side note: there is only one thing that you can't do in the OS 9 version that you can in the OS X version. According to the authors, that is switching between open documents in Dreamweaver MX by pressing Control-Tab. However, lest you OS X users get too cocky, in my experience, the authors are wrong. I still use OS 9 as my main operating system (proudly, I might add) and do all my Dreamweaver MX work in OS 9. When I read this tip, I was excited because I hate switching between my open documents with the mouse all the time, but when I read it didn't work for OS 9, I was disappointed. I still tried it, and, lo and behold, what do ya know, it worked like a charm! So despite this one erroneous tip, as far as I know, everything you can do in Dreamweaver MX by default in OS X, you can do in OS 9 by default as well! If this isn't the case, you could always create your own custom keyboard commands, as described in a later tip.

See, you can learn from this book!

So, to answer the question, "Who is this book written for?" (in case my digressions took you off the beaten path), it is for any experienced Dreamweaver MX user on either the Windows or Macintosh platforms.

While I've talked about how I love the index, the organization scheme, and how the writers wrote the book, there is one item that I can't praise enough, and that is the illustrations and how the book is put together.

The majority of the tips have a graphic that relates to the tip, usually showing where certain settings are found. Each illustration is either on the Windows or Macintosh side, which is very similar, and they are all in full color. They are large enough to "get the picture", if you will, and the authors focus the readers attention by using the mouse pointer in the image. Besides that, not only the tips' title, but also the window management buttons of Mac OS X head each tip. While this is simply eye candy, it is carried throughout the book, giving each page a clean, steady appearance.

Beyond the illustrations themselves, the publisher, New Riders, did a fantastic job on the quality of print and paper. Each page has clear-to-read text, the letters aren't smudged or too small, and the paper has a nice sheen to it. For a 232-page book, you would think it would be lightweight, but that's not the case. Each page is made of a heavyweight material and this, combined with the tight binding, makes the book a solid piece of work that won't fall apart on you as you search through its depths. If I were rating the book based on its visual and physical properties, it would get top rating!

If you'd like to take a closer look at the wonderful design of the book and its writing, you're in luck! The wonderful folks at New Riders have an entire chapter available for download, Chapter 7: Maximum Acceleration: Dreamweaver Tip Variety Pack. You can download it yourself at the publisher's webpage for this book.

You may be wondering if I took anything away from this book. Well, I did. I found many keyboard shortcuts that I wasn't aware of that have reduced my time spent assembling the pages for *macCompanion's* website. I was please to discover the character palettes, and I am finally able to make proper use of the Quick Tag editor. The many tips and tricks also helped to enforce what I already knew and gave me new ways to use my previous knowledge, as well as teaching me about some features of Dreamweaver MX that I didn't know, such as how to set custom colors for code when I am in Code view. I also learned how to take advantage of the History panel by creating repeatable commands with steps I had already taken. This is just a small amount of what I took away from this book, and the ideas that the authors gave me for future site design are endless.

As I said earlier, I may not have understood every tip, due to not knowing anything about that particular theme, but my eyes were opened to new and exciting techniques that I have already begun to learn and implement.

Some might think that they could get this information by reading any Dreamweaver MX book, and maybe they could, but only by sifting through paragraph after paragraph of stuff they already knew. With this book, all the juicy tidbits, all the statements that think outside the box, and all the diamonds in the rough are all in one easy to access place. The authors do a great job of giving you just the facts without the fluff.

Take my advice and download that sample chapter, but don't think that it's all you need. Even if you think you know all there is about creating tables, and think that you are using them as well as they can be used, chances are you could be surprised. The same goes for any topic covered by this book.

If you are looking for negatives about the book, all I could find was the one incorrect tip, and a few grammatical errors. That's not much, which is a positive for this book in my view.

I wholeheartedly believe that this book should be shipped with every copy of Dreamweaver MX, I highly recommend it to any Dreamweaver MX user, be they professional site designers, or be they personal site designers. Whether you are able to take advantage of the tips as soon as you read them, or later down the road, this book is an invaluable source of information, and a great, entertaining read at that.

This is one of the most useful computer-related books I've read in a long time. For me, it's worth its weight in gold, so I rate it a solid 5.

The Non-Designer's Scan and Print Book All you need to know about production and prepress to get great looking pages

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by: Julie M. Willingham

Authors: ©Sandee Cohen and Robin Williams 1999

List Price: \$25 USD, \$ CDN, £19 UK

Published: January 08, 1999

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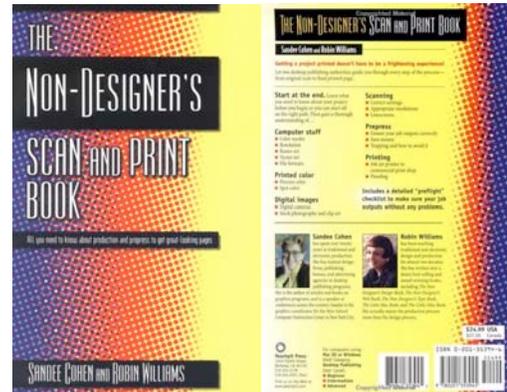
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Experience Needed/Audience—This book is designed to help the serious beginner, as well as intermediate and, perhaps, some advanced level creators of printed documents on both the Macintosh and Windows platforms. The book's focus is on providing the understanding and means to showcase your product in print, whether on your own inkjet or laser, at the nearest copy shop, or at a commercial printer. From it, you can learn the particulars about both preparing your epistle for professional printing and maximizing the use of your scanner to support more professionally printed documents.



Beginner Users



Experienced Users

Strengths—This feature-rich and detailed book, written for editors, writers, and others who find themselves producing documents, is well-written and clear. As a guide to computer printing, it covers word-processing and page-layout programs, scanners and digital cameras, computer color modes, print resolutions, file formats, and prepress, all in a logical order. It will help anyone who is serious about producing other than desktop (laser or dot matrix printers) to produce and print a readable, attractive, and cost-effective product.

Weaknesses—As an individual whose goals for professionally printing my creations are far more limited than those encompassed by the book, I found some of the details intimidating, particularly those in Chapters 8-10, and Chapters 16-18.

Book Overview

For most non-designers, especially beginning desktop publishers, the scanning, prepress, and printing process isn't an intuitive one. Trial and error is often the only way we have to learn the technical basics of producing professional-looking documents. If you're tired of learning the hard way, *The Non-Designer's Scan and Print Book* is for you. Using the format that is so popular in Peachpit's best-selling Non-Designer's series, this latest offering, fully cross-platform, provides a multitude of tips, techniques, and design, prepress, and production principles to help create professional-looking documents. Clear instructions and numerous examples cover the entire process of scanning, prepress, and printing.

Introduction

With thoughtful insight, the author's start at the end of your project, it's *printing*. After all, as I've explained in my of my other reviews on both brainstorming and outlining products, if you don't know where your going, you will certainly either not get there or arrive the long way around.

But it all starts from *"Before you begin to create your printed project—before you type a headline, or take a photo, before you even turn on your computer—you have to know your final goals..."*

Sandee Cohen and Robin Williams clearly want you to learn what you need to know about your project before you begin so you can start off on the right path. Then they walk you through all the essentials of desktop publishing, and all your choices, pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of each choice.

Then gain a through understanding of Computer Stuff, Printed Color. Digital Images, Scanning, Prepress (process) and finally Print (from) Ink Jet Printer to commercial print shop! As its title implies, the book covers the principles of scanners and scanning as well. It also includes basic information on digital cameras and Kodak Photo CDs, as well as the use of stock photos and clip art. As was stated by other reviewers of this product, 'it's always important to know how you plan to produce a publication and what the final output device will be before you begin.'

Details—Details, It's all in the Details

From a readers prospective this is not a classroom or self learn tutorial. While its 21 chapters progresses logically from its Introduction through Quizzes and Projects, it's more of a reference or min-handbook full of explicit and relevant pieces of focused information you need to get from your core document to the final set of boxes containing your copies the printer provided you. It's all about what you must know to get from the starting point (your text and pictures—you have read the other books in the "Non-Designer's Design Series" haven't you?) to the copies you will distribute to their end users. The book's and your end point is when the printer points to a pile of boxes saying, "There's your job right there;" and you're proud of that product.

As previously noted, the first chapter (Know Where You're Going) specifies the questions the user must as about the planned project. Sandee and Robin remind us that many jobs need nothing more than a word-processor and a desktop printer, or perhaps a copy shop if we need lots of copies.

The first chapter asks you to determine the basic things about your proposed final printed document [You know, the who-what-how's.] Common sense kinds of questions are discussed, that include:

- Paper size and characteristics
- How many pages
- Number and kinds of folds,
- Cover styles if needed,
- What holds the pages together (bindings)
- Print colors ... and of major importance
- Who is going to print it

Chapters 2 and 3 continue with discussions of general printer considerations and the basis of commercial printing. The discussion of printer types and their differences, was both eye opening and excellent. Discussion of hardware included printshop equipment such as imagesetters, drum-scanners, and printshop production processes (expert kinds of goodies).

The amateur, like me who will likely go no further then the equipment on their desktop doesn't have to remember all those details. However it's very helpful for a beginner user to know that explicit explanations of these and other items relating to control of the printing and scanning process are readily available in the chapters of the Scan and Print book.

As I read on, the section (Chapters 4-8) of "what is the computer doing" caught my attention. Starting with the more obvious "different types of computer applications, the authors lead the reader smoothly through chapters on "Computer Color Modes" and the wide variety of available (for specific software applications) of image types and limitations. You've read the words check out what is mean by raster (dots) and vector images, as well as details about images and image formats. These sometimes very technically complex discussions are followed by a detailed introduction to the world of color (Chapters 9-11).

I found the overview of the software applications commonly used for DTP projects and how they handle color modes, raster images, resolution, vector images, and file formats compelling but at times well beyond my understanding. In all of these chapters, I know what, in general the authors were discussing, but got lost in the details. After all I'm still using MS Word®, and GraphicConverter® to do my stuff, and only dipping into AppleWorks® graphics capabilities on rare occasions.

But lest we go astray, for those of us who'd like to go beyond just plain text, there's real and easy to understand information in the section entitled "Getting Stuff into the Computer" (e.g., image acquisition.) Its all about "Scanners and Scanning" (Chapter 12), Digital Camera's and Kodak Photo CDs (Chapter 13) and the wonderful world of "Stock Photos and Clip Art (Chapter 14). Robin then reminds of about the world of print and outlines (Chapter 14) in a manner that has links to, but a uniquely different focus (print not design) than her *The Non-Designers Type Book™: Insights and techniques for creating professional-level Type* and *The Non-Designer's Design Book, Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice*, Second Edition; published by Peachpit press and previously reviewed in macCompanion.com. Indeed, printing is the ultimate goal of understanding of both text and graphics design, its *sine qua non*.

And the circle closed on the detailed section on "Getting Your Work Printed" Chapters 16-20, while the last chapter contains a comprehensive "pre-flight check-list." [The authors' note that it's okay to leave some answers blank.] These all appear to be great "nuts-and-bolts" material, perhaps best summed up by know the needs and limitations of your outside printer, and plan your jobs accordingly. So the circle closes.

All of this information is coupled with a detailed nine page–four column index, information on printing related resources (Appendix A) and a dastardly tough set of questions and projects in Chapter 21 with the answers to the quizzes in the appendix B. I blithely skipped.

Just to Maintain my Reputation as a Curmudgeon

Let's start with the confession that although I completely understood what the various sections of *The Non-Designer's Scan and Print Book* were about and their rationale for inclusion, much of the details what I read in Chapters 8–10, Chapter 16–18 were over my head. Overall the book worked for me since, for the most part, kept my interest. I did however; skim stuff I didn't think I'd ever use a bit faster than the items more relevant to how I work and print on my computer. The authors treatment of complex information not only enhanced my understanding of things "printable" but convinced me to keep the book in my library 'just in case.' It provides me with a place to start checking should I ever in a weak moment attempt to self-publish my purple prose.

Conclusions

Authors Robin Williams and Sandee Cohen are two well-known desktop publishing (DTP) experts who have written a number of acclaimed computer-graphics books, and here they do an outstanding job of distilling the core elements of scanning, manipulating, and outputting images from high-tech, obscure details. They have put together a very clear, concise, comprehensive handbook for the non-pro publisher. They walk you through all the essentials of desktop publishing, and all your choices, pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of each choice. Such teachings are always supported a discussion of a "why" or with a graphic example which with typical Robin Williams candor, we can ignore if we please.

There's a Bottom-line Rule oft stated in the book. "If it works on your desktop printer and it makes you happy, then do it!" But if you plan on sending your material to an outside printer you *must* abide by outside printers rules or you won't get the results you expect. [Your project can also go broke trying to correct then things Sandee and Robin teach which you ignored.]

As Gary Coyne pointed out in his AppleLinks.com Review http://www.applelinks.com/reviews/non_designers.shtml.

"Obviously such a broad spectrum of material means that there will be limited depth. Whole books have been written on how to use a scanner, and this book only has some 15 pages focused specifically on the scanner (scanner related information is sprinkled throughout the book). The topics covered are limited to the practical needs and problems that beginners and intermediate users are likely to encounter. The explanation on why one can get (and prevent) moiré patterns is probably the best this writer has seen."

Now I have both a lot of growing to do to gain a relatively complete understanding of this book's contents, but I can clearly see how this book will become an invaluable resource for anyone whose end goal is get it printed. It better look great or your fired!

Author Mini-Bios

Sandee Cohen, a former advertising creative supervisor, has been teaching and training on the Macintosh for the past seven years. She teaches at the New School for Social Research Computer Instruction Center in New York City. She is also a contributing writer for several desktop publishing magazines. Her artwork has been used for book jacket covers, interior illustrations, maps, and technical illustrations.

Robin Williams is a fourth-generation Californian on both sides, born in Berkeley and raised in the Bay Area. She lived in Sonoma County for 15 years, and then in 1993, she packed up her kids, the dog, and two cats and moved to New Mexico. She loves and wears lots of hats!

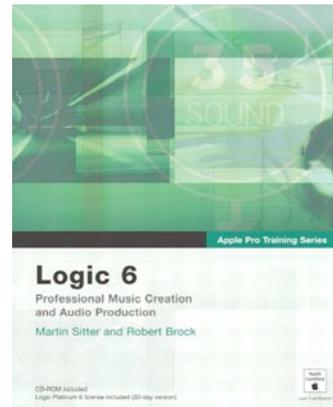
Apple Pro Training Series: Logic® 6 Professional Music Creation and Audio Production

Reviewed by Manuel Fernandez

Authors: Martin Sitter and Robert Brock
List Price: \$45 USD, \$68 CND, £34 UK
Published: July 14, 2003
522 pages
ISBN: 0321200403

Requires Mac OS X 10.2.5 or higher, CD-ROM Drive. Does not work with OS 9. A Dongle to use the CD. For Apple's Level 1 Certification
<http://www.apple.com/software/pro/logic/>

Peachpit Press
1249 Eighth Street
Berkeley, CA 2178
1-510-524-2178
<http://www.peachpit.com>



Strengths: Should be included as the training manual for Logic™ 6.

Weaknesses: Requires a separately ordered dongle (USB port key) to use the CD (from Peachpit Press). A dongle is also required for Logic 6 itself.

In order to understand my point of view for this article, one thing must be said first: I am ultra new to the whole Mac world!

So it is very obvious that the reader will find that some of my insights regarding the Logic® 6 tutorial book are, to some, somewhat basic. On the other hand, I found that many people in the business of making music are more interested in the final product (their creativity) than a whole lecture on the technical aspects in a review.

Enough said about me, let's jump into it full throttle!

I consider myself "a hands-on" kind of guy, so the first impression I got when the book hit my hands was: "Oh my, I hope I don't have to read the whole book before I install the 30-day trial version CD!!!"

My fears dissipated rapidly as I read the introduction on page 1.

I found the book to be very accessible and to the point. Some passages were hard for me to understand due to the Mac-based terminology, but with the help of a good Mac OS X manual, things went a lot smoother.

Like I said "hands-on" right? Well, the tutorials in the CD were just what I've been waiting for in all my years on the PC world. The samples were cool sounding and the step-by-step processes were clearly marked.

The first thing I noticed with Logic is the setup process. No sir, this is not your daddy's music creator program. I found that a lot of setup time had to be invested in order to use the program to its full potential, and that is where the book came in very handy!

It was very easy to set up my G4 to run the trial version in a very smooth way.

Once I figured how to set up the MIDI ports (again thanks to the book) I was ready to take on an easy project.

There is a lot of tech stuff through the book to make you feel like you wrote the program, if you're into that kind of thing. For me it was more to the point and I found what I was looking for, thanks to a well-written index section at the end of the book. Although when I got reading on a specific topic or a section, I would get my answer and then I would keep on reading.

If you are a casual music buff, maybe Logic 6 would be a little bit out of your league. But if you're considering a good quality sound canvas for your project studio or mastering situation, I definitely recommend the program and as soon as you get it, make sure you spend the extra bucks and get **Apple Training Series for Logic 6**. It will give you an extra edge on the program as well as really cool tips and tricks on how to make your music recording experience more rewarding.

Mac® OS X KillerTips

Reviewed by Ted Bade

Author: Scott Kelby

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

List Price: \$30 USD, \$46 CND, £23.50 UK

Published: December 30, 2003

209pages

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New Riders Publishing

800 East 96th Street

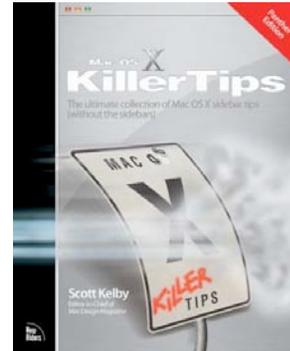
Indianapolis, IN 46240-3770

1-800-571-5840

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

Experience required: Any level of user.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 (Panther)



Strengths: Excellent content, easy to read. Organized in a way that simplifies the task of finding things later. Great use of screen captures.

Weaknesses: Pranks section, why does there always have to be one?

Mac® OS X KillerTips is a book chock full of tips for using Mac OS X version 10.3 (Panther). Even an experienced Mac OS X user who reads this book should be able to add a number of cool and useful tips to their repertoire. Definitely worth reading and keeping on the shelf for reference.

Scott Kelby is an experienced Mac trainer and writer. He has published a number of books including *The Mac OS X Conversion Kit* (a book on moving from Mac OS 8/9 to X), as well as several of books on using Photoshop in its many varieties. He is also the Editor in chief of *Mac Design Magazine*, *Photoshop Users* magazine, and *Nikon's Capture User* magazine, and has produced a number of Adobe Photoshop training videos.

I found his writing style to be easy to read and entertaining, offering a touch of humor. The humor can be best described by looking at the titles of the chapters. While all are related to Mac OS X, they also contain a pun related in some fashion to a song. Okay, a few of them were real **groaners**, but this adds flavor to the book. ;-)

This type of book isn't one you will snuggle up with on a cool afternoon however. You will either need a large supply of sticky notes, yellow hi-liters, or a Macintosh running Panther nearby, as you'll want to try all of the new material for yourself. I combined methods, using sticky notes to mark those tips I would try when I had a Macintosh around. I learned a lot.

The design of Mac OS X KillerTips is interesting. Instead of being a continuous volume of text with tips and techniques stuffed in here and there, this book just has the tips. Each chapter contains a number of pages consisting two paragraphs with screen captures related to a tip. Because of this the book doesn't have to be read in a linear manner, just start with a chapter or tip you find interesting.

Chapter titles include "For those about to Dock" – tricks related to the Dock application, "Icon see Clearly Now" – tricks related to icons (hey, I said there would be some "groaners"), and "She Drives me Crazy" – tips related to stopping those few annoying habits that Mac OS X has. In addition to tips specific to the Mac OS, there are chapters related to applications included with Mac OS X (including Mail, the Address Book, Safari, and iTunes), tips for using the Classic environment, and one on troubleshooting Mac OS X.

The organization of the book lends itself to making it easy to locate a tip some time after the book has been read. This always happens to me, I read a computer related book. Some of the items I read are useful to me as I read them, other items apply to things I am either not currently familiar with or to applications I don't currently use. Then, some time down the road, I begin using the application or change the way I use my Mac, so the information becomes useful. I remember I read something about it, but can't recall exactly where it was in the book. I think finding items in Mac OS X KillerTips will be easier.

With Mac OS X KillerTips, all one has to do is figure out what the item pertains to: the Dock, Icons, the Mail application, TextEdit, or whatever. Then look in the related section to find the tricks. Since some tricks might apply to more than one aspect of using the Mac, such as to both the Dock and a certain application, those tips show up in both parts of the book. A great way to help the reader find information.

So, how useful was this book? While there were a number of things I already knew and some I didn't care about, there were a lot of tips I found really useful. Even more so, because I recently began teaching a group of Mac/Mac OS X novices how to use Mac OS X. I found reading the book gave me a lot of material to include as well as another book to recommend people buy. One might think a book like this is more for intermediate users, but KillerTips is written in such a fashion that even a beginner could make use of it.

Scott Kelby also wrote a chapter specifically for beginners. This information is available on a web site which is also listed in the book. This is a nice way to add value to the book for beginners.

The extensive use of screen captures in Mac OS X KillerTips is a big benefit. We all know the quote "an image is worth 1000 words...", this is really true for computer related topics. (Might I suggest a computer related corollary here? An animation is worth several hundred pictures!). In any case, I found the screen captures complimented the verbal explanation. This is great for people who don't read with a Mac by their side to try the tip immediately.

My only real complaint about the book is that there are some of the nasty tricks in the pranks section. I know it's all done in fun, but....

I definitely recommend reading this book. It is worth the time and expense, especially if you are the kind of Mac user that likes to streamline how you work using all types of tricks and techniques.

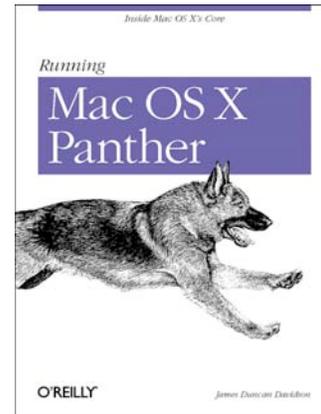
Running Mac OS X Panther

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: James Duncan Davidson
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Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3



Strengths: Drills deeper into the Unix-side of Panther without being snooty about it.

Weaknesses: None found.

Running Mac OS X Panther by James Duncan Davidson was, I thought, going to be a quick read. Hey, I've read it all already. Not! How interesting a book can become once the software is running on a platform. The books come alive. So did this one.

I love the Further Explorations at the end of each chapter and I thank whomever wrote the Preface, because it does such a sweet job outlining what is in the book. 3 Parts, 14 Chapters 3 Appendices and a usable Index and great Table of Contents. And my hat's off to O'Reilly® for having and hosting weblinks for their authors and books.

The walk through the various iterations of Apple® OSes over the years adds a nice tone to the beginning of the book. I did a quick look-see at first thinking, "Oh yeah, another Mac-Unix book", but after I sat down with it and actually read each chapter, I kept bookmarking the heck out of it. There is a lot of meat here.

I really wish all my Linux buddies could read this book. Many of them have already quietly migrated, but this book will bring the rest of them over to this Apple platform.

Do like I did, open the book and breath deeply as the aroma of Unix wafts up from the pages and shows the BSD Unix Core while allowing me to drink from a few power user tips and tricks. Hey, why not become a Tim Taylor of Panther and impress your friends?

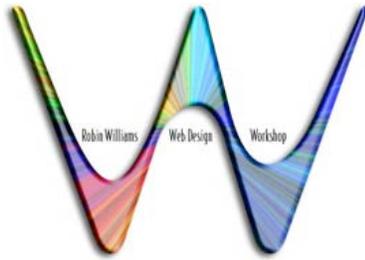
The 1st Part of the book will win many trivia contests for you. The 2nd Part sounds intimidating, but it really isn't. It has to do with tweaking the OS. The 3rd Part could be considered to be the Power Users paradise because it digs deeply into Directories, Printing and Networking services. This book shows how things work.

Not a Mac Guru yet? You will be if you can remember everything James Duncan Davidson wrote here.

Robin Williams Web Design Workshop

Reviewed by Derek Caudill

Edited By Julie M. Willingham



Authors: John Tollett, Robin Williams, and David Rohr

List Price: \$40 USD, \$60 CDN, and £30 UK

Published: July 25th, 2001

356 Pages

ISBN: 0201748673

Book Website: <http://www.virtuallastchapter.com/>

Audience: Website designers

Peachpit Press

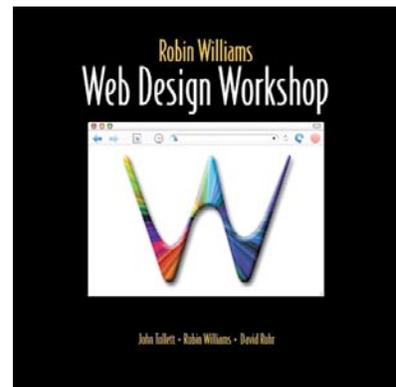
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<http://www.peachpit.com/>



Strengths: Educational, inspiring, a great supply of resources; wonderful implementation of the last chapter.

Weaknesses: The sections and chapters are unordered. At times the tone comes off as very commanding. The bias against the abilities of designers and programmers is frustrating. Section Two is for large web site design firms mostly, not for the little man.

Miscellaneous Notes: Don't visit the book's website; you will get more out of it if you read the book first!

Robin Williams Web Design Workshop isn't a "how to book", but more of a "This is how we suggest doing it" and "This is what's out there" kind of book. It's not really for beginners, but beginners would benefit by taking cues from how the authors organize their web content. A lot of what it discusses would lose people who weren't already familiar with web design. This is especially true in the applications it discusses. The authors claim to not favor any one type of web authoring application or graphic application, and they do a good job of explaining the basics of what they do so it can be done in various programs. But when they do show how to do advanced things, if you don't know their applications of choice, you could get lost. I was already familiar with most of what they used and discussed, but even I found myself learning new things that I wouldn't have picked up if I had been a beginner.

How is the book organized?

Robin Williams Web Design Workshop is separated into three sections, with a total of twenty-five chapters. Each chapter has either a detailed summary or a list of resources to find more information. Each chapter also begins with an explanation of why the material should be used, and is full of graphics that accent the written explanations and examples. The majority of the graphics have detailed captions that explain what's going on in a concise manner.

The Table of Contents was very impressive to me, as it gave a small, but detailed description of what each chapter covered. I've never seen this done this well before, but have always wished that more computer-related books did this. There is also a very thorough index of all the topics covered.

General Impressions

The first section, "A Prelude", gives examples of different design techniques, how to make graphics look more interesting, and how to use clipart effectively. Vocabulary used in the world of web design is also discussed, giving a brief overview of the more common, and some uncommon, technologies used. Many resources for finding clipart and fonts are available. The differences between designing for print media and the World Wide Web are thoroughly explained, focusing on the differences between fonts and page layout.

The second section, "Idea Source", was the hardest to follow for me. It focused not on the design of sites, but on all the work to be done before a site's design is even started. Topics included drawing site maps, writing site reports, and site/client contracts. The authors spoke in detail on building the relationship between the designer and the client. This appealed to me because I've personally experienced a lot of the problems that clients can cause. The authors gave ideas on how to handle troublesome clients, and gave a good lesson on being firm and not compromising the design integrity when clients don't know what they are talking about. Compromise techniques were also discussed, and resources and ways to educate the client on the limitations of web design were given. I appreciated their thoughts on how nothing can be accomplished if both client and designer refused to cooperate. The main lesson taught here is the benefits of both parties having patience.

Types of technology to consider using in a site are explained, as well as the cost and requirements of such enhanced functions. One example that the authors spoke highly of was Content Management Systems. Tips are given to the designer on how to organize not only the content of a site, but also how to organize the workflow. This section is real big into telling how a large web design firm would work, going so far as defining employee roles and responsibilities. After reading this, you would think that a website firm needed twenty employees just to get started. I found this rather disconcerting, because the one or two man outfits out there were basically made to feel as if websites couldn't be made with only two people. While I understand that many websites are made with several people involved, I would have liked to have seen topics concerning small outfits and their organization. I found that in my web design work I fit into several categories that the authors designated as other people's jobs. I understand that this section was mainly for the big firms, but the authors shouldn't forget the little man.

It was heavily suggested that a lot of web design work be contracted out to other people, mostly programmers. I believe that was the main consensus because the authors are designers, and made it clear several times that programmers and designers are very different: a programmer has no sense of design, and a designer can never program. This bias surprised me, because even though I fancy myself a designer, I still am interested in programming. After reading the opinions expressed here, my interest in programming would look to be worse than a cardinal sin!

This section did do well in giving ideas for planning how a site will look and function--on paper that is. I especially enjoyed where they spoke of how they made design comps. Basically, they create in a graphic program, ideas that they have sketched out on paper so they can see what it looks like on screen. Only one or two pages are made, and they are just graphics. Testing the site in several different environments and getting user feedback was a lesson pounded and pounded upon, and tips for making sure search engines could find your site were also heavily discussed.

The third section was what really interested me, despite it being the largest to read. Finally, there were ideas and instructions on better design techniques, and more detailed discussion of web technologies to consider implementing. I enjoyed how the authors used many graphics to explain step-by-step what they did to create sites they reference in the book. While I've used all of the techniques they mentioned, they showed me new ways to use them that have opened my eyes up to all sorts of great ideas. Telling me exactly why they did what they did gave me a larger understanding, but also kept my feet on the ground, lest I get ahead of myself with some of those new ideas.

The pros and cons of each technique were discussed, and I was happy to find that they were able to utilize more than just one web authoring application and more than just one graphic manipulation application in making their sites. They showed that such a thing was possible, and showed the benefits of not sticking with just one suite of programs.

Finally, what has to be the coolest thing, and my favorite thing, was the very last chapter, which is just a reference to <http://www.virtuallastchapter.com>. This chapter shows the majority of the websites created for examples in the book, and shows how different technologies interact. There is a thorough list of resources to everything discussed, as well as a page made specifically to help clients understand that web design is harder than it looks, which is something that I took great note of. The best thing about this last chapter has to be the sample websites, which have more detailed explanations than the book. This last chapter really brings together visual learning and informational learning. I also like that there are little surprises throughout the site, for those that like to click around.

My Various Thoughts

It took a long time to read this book; it's a very hard read, not due to the abundance of content, but to lack of order. The chapters seemed to be in the wrong order, like you're reading the book backwards. There are constant references to things five or more chapters ahead, and by the time I got to those chapters, I had lost track of what those references were discussing. Worse yet, those chapters would reference different previous chapters. The chapters seemed to be just thrown in at random--one chapter would be discussing client relationship, and the next one would be discussing what enhanced site functionality to include, a topic that might have been better further down the road. A perfect example was the first section, which was full of design ideas and tips and techniques. I think that it should have been with Section Three, which discussed those things, not in a section all its own, and certainly not before the second section, which discusses how to lay out and prepare a site.

With all the chaos, I was very thankful for the overviews at the end of the majority of the chapters. They provided the main points that were discussed. There was so much information that getting lost and forgetting what had been previously read was very easy to do.

Despite the terrible informational layout, the graphics were great. Each graphic is full color, and printed very cleanly. They really accent the authors' written explanations and are perfect examples. As far as the writing, it was decent. The explanations were thorough, and the few anecdotes were entertaining. My main complaint here was just that there was a little too much writing, and the authors' biases and opinions really showed through.

The one thing to remember when reading this or any other web design book, is that this stuff isn't set in stone; everyone does this stuff differently, in ways that may work perfectly well for them, but not others. I got the feeling that if I didn't do it the authors' way, I had no business even surfing the web, much less designing for it. I hate to say it, but this book was a lot like a boot camp regulation manual. It had a "You will do it my way, or you won't do it at all" kind of feel to it. I kept waiting to be called a scumbag and to hit the floor to do fifty. Thankfully, that tone did weaken eventually, but I constantly wondered when it would. When the authors weren't being army sergeants, they had a good attitude, and the book was pleasant to read.

I was able to take a lot from this book. The different ideas and techniques were what really kept me interested. Sure, surfing the web is a great way to get ideas, but it can't beat having those ideas explained in detail. I learned ways of integrating slices and tables that I had just never connected before, and I even learned little tricks about stuff I already knew.

The first and third sections for me were the most interesting ones, worth reading over even. They were well written, inspiring, and, thankfully, not as monotonous as Section Two.

My favorite chapter, as I said earlier, was Chapter Twenty Five, <http://www.virtuallastchapter.com/>. The extra information and examples of techniques here were priceless; more books should do something like this. The only thing I wish that was there are the actual site files to download. While I can backwards engineer the HTML code, I would've liked to have had their source files in DreamWeaver to help make things a little clearer.

My Final Impression

I would highly recommend this book to any experienced web designer. While the topics covered may be general in nature, the authors do a great job of showing different angles to each topic. They are able to take stuff as simple as page background textures and explain the appropriate and common sense ways to use them. They expand basic knowledge to new horizons. I really like that. The book is also a great refresher for the basics, and as a supply of resources for different technology, is outstanding.

For beginners, I would suggest reading this book after they had played around a little bit making websites, and using the different applications out there. Doing so would give them a general feel for what's out there, and reading this would then broaden that feeling, opening their eyes to new possibilities.

While I would recommend this book, I would do so with a warning that it's not a quick read. The lack of organization became a hurdle--it slowed the reading down and made things confusing. It was sort of like being taught multiplication without a fundamental knowledge of addition.

Despite that blaring problem, I, for the most part, enjoyed the book. I didn't agree with all of the authors' advice, such as their tendency to make the home page so small that it doesn't scroll, and their insistence on web safe colors, but when this book was written, web safe colors were still a viable guideline to follow.

I became real excited with Section Three, and I love the implementation of the last chapter. For those of you not reading the headers, don't go to that website until after you've read the book. You'll get a lot more out of it if you read the book first.

Overall, it's a good book with a lot of good information, and it's educational, but, due to the lack of order, I have to give it a rating of 4 macC's.

Shareware

Haxial Disk Catalog 1.3 Eases Transition to Mac OS X (Jaguar & Panther)

Reviewed by Mike Swope

Haxial™ Software Pty Ltd

Australia

\$20 USD through <http://www.haxialsoftware.com/shop/> (Free download try-before-you-buy)

<http://www.haxialsoftware.com>

Requirements: MS Windows 95 or better

Mac OS 9 with CarbonLib 1.3.1 or better

Mac OS X (10) or better

Novice through Professional



Strengths: Simple, stable, fast; multiple operating systems; small disk footprint; customizable using Appearances available for download from publisher's web site so suit individual taste; users can create their own Appearances; Appearances shared across all Haxial software products

Weaknesses: Search results window requires contextual menu to access catalogs; commands in unusual "hidden" place in windows and not duplicated to standard Mac menus at top of the screen; generates a lot of windows when performing heavy searches

A Good Day to Transition to Mac OS X

It was a bright and sunny summer month. With the release of QuarkXPress 6.0 and the announcement of Panther, we anticipated moving to pure, unadulterated Mac OS X by the end of the year. But our group's project archive on CD had to make the move with us. We had been using an application called Catalogue 3.0b in OS 9.x for our archive, but it is unstable and has not been updated for MAC OS X, or updated at all in the 3+ years we had used it that we could determine. So we set out to find an alternative that runs in both MAC OS X and OS 9 to mitigate our transition between the two.

We started our quest at VersionTracker <http://www.versiontracker.com> and compiled a short list of shareware alternatives, and tried them out one at a time. Though the applications performed the same task, there were great differences between them. Some were clumsy. Some were ugly. Some were slow. One which at first seemed to be an attractive solution inexplicably didn't perform at all (even the developer couldn't explain the problems). After several hours of testing and trial, we finally settled on the simple and unassuming Disk Catalog 1.3 by Haxial™ Software of Australia.

It Is True, the Best Things Do Come in Small Packages

You would think that disk cataloging is simple enough. Just compile catalogs of files on disks (DVD, CD, Zip, floppy, hard disk, any storage device, including USB flash pen drives) and make these catalogs available for browsing and searching by an array of attributes, including but not limited to file name, creation date, modification date, and file size, or any combination of these. A number of shareware applications do this. Iomega® (maker of the revolutionary Zip drive) even offered a freebie application called FindIt® at one time, but its development was discontinued some time ago. Apparently few users adopted FindIt.

We are pleased to have stumbled upon Disk Catalog. Disk Catalog weighs in at a trim 321K download from Haxial's web site, and expands to a lean 632K. Heck, if you are still using floppy disks, it will fit easily on a floppy! But don't let this teeny, tiny footprint fool you. Cloaked in this lightweight frame is a disk cataloging behemoth, arguably the best shareware disk cataloging utility available for Mac OS X and Mac OS 9, and probably Windows too. It is simple, stable, and fast. No other application that we considered could compete. No matter how large or small, how beautiful or ugly. Not one.

All About Simplicity

Apple Computer® has made its fortune and will make its future fortune on a simple but hard-to-define quality called elegance. The same can be said of Haxial (though Haxial develops for multiple operating systems). Among disk cataloging utilities, Disk Catalog is, in this reviewer's opinion, the *crème de la crème* because its pure unadulterated minimalist user-centric simplicity (aka elegance) makes it useful.

Disk Catalog is a simple application. Download it from Haxial, expand the .sit file. Start using immediately. No installation required. Drag the Disk Catalog folder wherever you like. It doesn't matter. It doesn't need any outside resources to do its thing. It installs nothing else in the system.

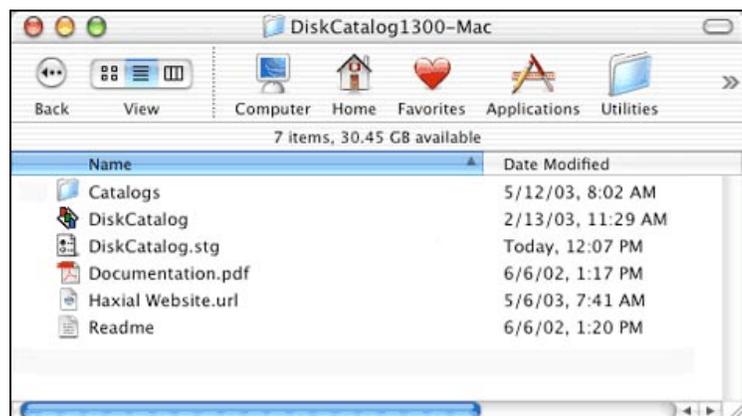
Like all disk cataloging utilities, Disk Catalog does not catalog file contents or thumbnails, only file names, file types, file sizes, creation dates and modification dates. When Disk Catalog

is first run, it creates a folder called Catalogs in the same folder as the application. As one might guess, Disk Catalog stores the catalogs it creates in this Catalogs folder. If this Catalogs folder is moved, Disk Catalog creates a new one when launched. So it is advised not to move this Catalogs folder. It is part of Disk Catalog's simplicity to use one folder to store every catalog. This way, users can search all their offline disks without opening this catalog, or that catalog, or another catalog. They're all under one roof.

Haxial also takes the user's habits into consideration, attempting to identify and understand their needs and match the software product with those needs. Other disk cataloging applications require a key combo or menu selection to search their catalogs, but Haxial gets right down to business with Disk Catalog. When Disk Catalog is launched, the list of catalogs are loaded into the Browse window, and the Search window is available immediately. Searching is, after all, what most users will be doing with just such a utility.

Much Ado About Reliability

One of the most frustrating things about Catalogue 3.0b, our previous disk cataloging utility, was its unreliability. This utility was not fully tested before we adopted it. I believe now that Iomega's FindIt cataloging utility might have performed better. But our Art Director had selected Catalogue 3.0b and the rest of the group (myself included) followed his lead. We didn't look any further. That's our fault. Soon, we had dozens of CDs in our archive in Catalogue 3.0b, so we just continued to use it, like lemmings (a la Apple's late 1980s television commercial).



There were several problems with Catalogue 3.0b. First, the b is for BETA, or software not fully bug-tested and fixed. Second, this application crashed nearly every time its window was resized. Third, it was slow, especially when searching 300+ catalogs – Catalogue 3.0b took 18 seconds to perform a search for one of our common project terms. Similar delays occur with every search as Catalogue reads data. Fourth, Catalogue had a limit of 3000 results for any search (while it is true that likely no one would look through more than a couple hundred results, this is a limit nonetheless).

Despite our unconventional use of aliases for the Catalogs folder in Disk Catalog, and the size of our archive (469 items to date), Disk Catalog has never crashed or faltered either searching or cataloging disks, enlarging windows, browsing the catalogs, or performing any other operation. It has been rock solid from day one. It's also fast – a search of the same disks with the same common project term as performed with Catalogue 3.0b returns results in one second in Disk Catalog! That's right. One second. Disk Catalog also displays all 4000+ results of this search since it doesn't have the same limitation as Catalogue 3.0b.

There are only two bumps in Disk Catalog's autobahn. The first is the load time for catalogs. Disk Catalog, of course, reads all the catalogs in the Catalogs folder at launch. This takes some time. For our archive of 469 catalogs, Disk Catalog takes approximately 30 seconds to finish the launch cycle. Thereafter all searches in that launch session of Disk Catalog takes a second or less.

The second delay with Disk Catalog occurs only if users don't pony up [the U.S. \$20/license shareware fee. The longer Disk Catalog is installed on machine without shareware registration, the longer Disk Catalog takes to grant access to its catalogs. For purposes of this demo, I've also used Disk Catalog on my PowerBook 1 GHz at home for several months, but I do not have a license for that machine. At

home, I have to wait nearly 6 minutes to access my meager dozen or so catalogs. Other shareware applications make users wait a specified amount of time (usually 20 or 30 seconds) if they haven't paid the shareware fees, but Disk Catalog is the only application I know that INCREASES this delay as time passes, to a maximum of 300 seconds (or 5 minutes). This is an effective, not-so-subtle method to encourage users to pay their shareware fees. Five minutes doesn't seem like a long time, until you're watching Disk Catalog count down to access the catalogs of your disk archive to find a file that you need ASAP. Personally, I wonder why Haxial doesn't remove the 300-second restriction and let the delay continue to lengthen. After a while, the user would either find it thoroughly inconvenient to use Disk Catalog, having to wait longer and longer to access their catalogs, or the user would decide to purchase it as the wait increased to 10 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, and longer.



Just Browsing

When Disk Catalog is first launched, Disk Catalog displays the Search window and the Browse window [All of Disk Catalogs windows are free floating and can be placed anywhere on the screen. But Disk Catalog also offers a dock feature (separate from the Mac OS X dock or the Windows application bar) to reduce screen clutter from intense searching. To dock any Disk



Catalog window, the user need only click on the icon in the upper right hand corner of the window (the target will change with the selected theme or Appearance, see below) to dock that window. Like its windows, the Disk Catalog dock is free floating and displays a vertical of the windows available in Disk Catalog. Clicking one of these list buttons opens the corresponding window to its previous size and location.

The Browse window is exactly as its name implies. This window lists all the catalogs in the user's Disk Catalog archive. The user may browse these catalogs by single-clicking on any disk listed. That disk's file hierarchy is then displayed in a separate window split into two side-by-side panes. This window is reminiscent of both Mac OS X and Windows. The left pane displays the disk's folders in an expandable list. Here, folders which contain other folders are marked with a + icon. Single-clicking the + icon expands that folder to display its contents. The user may expand any such tree until there are no further folders to expand. The right pane displays all contents of the folder selected in the left pane. Clicking a folder in the right pane then displays that folders contents. The user may also navigate back through the disk's hierarchy using the dropdown menu at the top of the window.

It is here that one weakness in Disk Catalog becomes apparent. The user can browse the hierarchy of as many disks as



Name	Size	Items	Date Cataloged
CD #15	558.6M	367	01 May 2003, 12:08
CD#100	606.5M	720	01 May 2003, 12:30
CD#101	614.7M	601	01 May 2003, 12:30
CD#102	638.9M	511	01 May 2003, 12:30
CD#102	638.9M	511	01 May 2003, 12:30
CD#103	642.3M	305	01 May 2003, 12:30
CD#104	636.0M	389	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#105	590.5M	612	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#106	636.3M	772	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#108	639.9M	196	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#109	629.7M	161	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#110	522.7M	8	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#111	632.5M	297	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#112	629.2M	752	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#113	620.6M	1,316	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#114	608.3M	358	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#115	607.4M	1,661	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#116	596.7M	1,561	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#117	638.4M	597	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#118	635.7M	993	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#119	602.5M	743	01 May 2003, 12:40
CD#12	595.5M	287	01 May 2003, 12:08



they wish without closing any windows. Of course, this can quickly result in a multitude of open windows filling the screen. Even though these windows can be docked, I only recently discovered the dock feature while writing this review, after I had performed thousands of actual searches. The user's natural propensity is to avoid lots of open windows. So the user will adapt by closing windows when they are not likely to be referenced again shortly. Just as I have been doing. The dock isn't a common feature in most applications, so it's easy to overlook here in Disk Catalog.

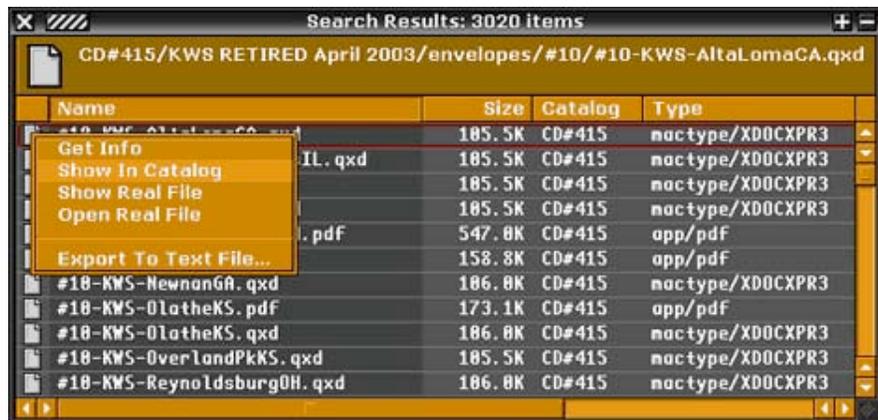
To Search or Not to Search. That is the Question

At launch, the Search window offers just a simple text field for search terms to be entered. Users may enter more than one word separated by a space. Disk Catalog processes such multiple word entries using the 'and' operand to return a list of filenames. For example, a search for "cmyk brochure" returns results whose filenames contain both "cmyk" and "brochure."



But as with most search features, Disk Catalog's Search window also offers additional options to help narrow a user's search. Clicking the More Options button displays the additional Search options, including the ability to search for exact phrase, file type (i.e. tiff, image, eps, etc.), range of size in kilobytes (KB), range of creation date, and range of modification date. As noted previously, Disk Catalog is not able to catalog file contents or thumbnail images.

Searching is Disk Catalog's higher purpose, so it is important that the feature is as elegant as possible. Disk Catalog does not disappoint. All search results are displayed in the same window. This is handy to keep window clutter to a minimum. Perform one search, results are displayed. Perform another search, those results are displayed in the same window.

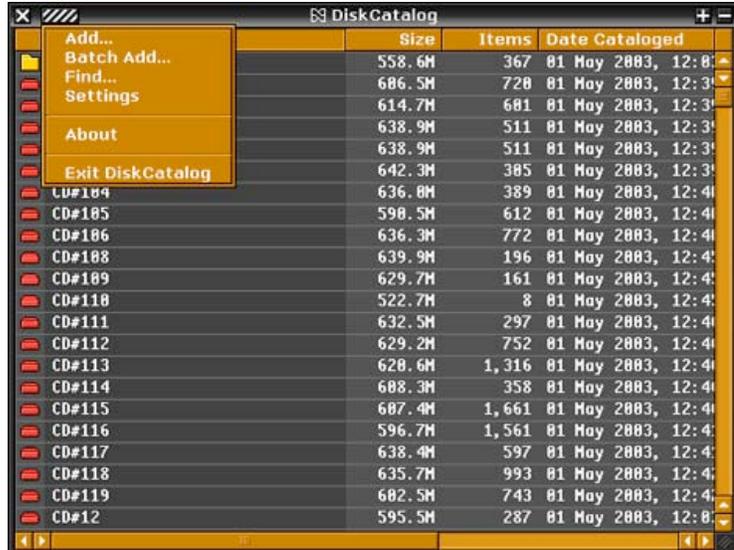


The only weakness in the Search scheme is that the process is interrupted after the Results stage. To view a found file in the Catalog, in the hierarchy on the disk where the file resides, the user cannot single or double-click the file in the Search Results window. Nothing happens. To view the file in its disk hierarchy, the user must use a contextual menu (control+click on the Mac and right+click on the PC) to perform this action. This process is not at all intuitive. This change in the process stops the user in his or her tracks. For those not accustomed to using contextual menus, this step is even more confusing. But if they can get past this roadblock, they will be back at the two-pane Catalog window to browse the disk hierarchy.

What's Your Preference?

Disk Catalog doesn't use conventional menu placement. So at first, it's difficult to find Disk Catalog's preferences. Preferences in the application menu is grayed out in Mac OS X. The only commands conventionally placed are Disk Catalog: Hide Disk Catalog; File: Close Window, File: Quit and a Window menu. This, of course, is likely to confuse new users. It will likely take new users, if they explore, a few minutes to locate the commands for Disk Catalog.

The commands for Disk Catalog are found at the top of each individual window, hidden behind a cross-hatched rectangle next to the X to close the window. Clicking the rectangle displays Disk Catalog's commands Add, Batch Add, Find, and Settings (About and Exit Disk Catalog are conventional commands with conventional results).



The Add and Batch Add commands initiate the catalog process. Selecting Add allows disks to be chosen one at a time. Batch Add allows disks to be inserted and cataloged as rapidly as possible. Batch Add is very useful for cataloging an existing disk archive. If the user happens to have 2 or 3 drives, Batch Add will utilize all 3 drives in sequence to process disks. Using just two drives, and one copy of Disk Catalog, our group was able to catalog nearly 400 disks in less than 3 hours! Of course, now we generally just Add a disk to the Catalog when we're adding that disk to our archive.



The Find command opens the Search window previously discussed.

The Settings command opens Disk Catalog's preferences. Like most other features in Disk Catalog, its preferences are simple. There are only 3 settings: Font, Use Small Icon in File List, and Appearance. Users are able to select one of only 5 fonts to be used in the Catalog file list: Myoklonika, Tonik-klonik, Grand Mal, Petit Mal, or Panitaka. None are conventional fonts but each is legible. The user's installed fonts are not listed and no means to access them is available. By default, large icons are used in the Catalog file list. Checking "Use Small Icon in File List" changes the icon size by about half, for those who



value screen real estate. Users may also select from 16 default Appearances, aka skins or themes in other applications, that alter in general the colors used in Disk Catalog's interface.

As Close to a Custom Rod as Software Gets!

It's clear that Haxial has created Disk Catalog with the user in mind, but Haxial takes this a step farther than the competition by borrowing the idea of themes and skins and calling them Appearances. By default, Disk Catalog comes with 16 Appearances: Evil Chiaroscuro, Alternate Romp, Amber CRT, Blue Jeans, Blue Tram Café, Bubblegum Crisis, Chocolate Raspberry, Mach Lavender, Oxygen, Sunset Chiaroscuro, Techno Electric, The Dream Scheme (in blue, green and purple), Tropical Water, and Turquoise Hilites. Some, of course, are more pleasing and easier on the eye than others. Some, I might add, are also rather dark and unsavory on the Mac OS, so these same dark themes will be considerably darker on the PC (about 30% darker) and even less pleasant.



But it is this subjective taste that Haxial addresses at every turn. For Appearances, Haxial also offers a means for Disk Catalog (and other Haxial applications) users to roll their own, if they so desire. Appearances created by other Disk Catalog users and the AppearanceEdit application are available from Haxial's web site <http://www.haxial.com/download>). Haxial bundles all the current custom Appearances periodically and provides them in a single download in either .sit or .zip format (Appearances are cross-platform, so it does not matter which file you download as long as you can uncompress it). Haxial had updated the Appearances download at least once while I researched and wrote this review. There are 82 custom Appearances in the August 9, 2003 bundle: Some of the more interestingly-named Appearances include Ace-02, Arizona, BadMoon, BeOS, Bloo Dreeme, BoilerPlate, Cybernet, Dang, Demo Royal Gold, Devil's Ground, Electric Blue (also Green, Pink, Purple, Red and Yellow), Emerald Forest, Gamespot, Halloween, icelKle, Jazz and Blues, MacOS Classic, MacOS9 Icons, Matrix Ice, Merry Christmas, Midnight Whispers, MS Windows 020202, Night-Vision, Nothing Rhymes With, Ocean Floor, Rodent Infusion, Royalty, Silver Angel, Swordfish, TechPants, Tron, Turkish Alizarin, UNx, Vicky Vale, Win2K by Lech, and WinXP.

The average user is likely to find a pleasing theme in the hundred-or-so existing Appearances. If not, the user can create their own Appearance(s) with AppearanceEdit. AppearanceEdit, however, is beyond the scope of this review. But, judging from the various themes that users have created, and the extent to which a few Appearances have been professionally detailed (Gamespot and WinXP for example), AppearanceEdit would seem to be user-friendly and powerful. And if Disk Catalog is any indication, also simple to use.

To use the additional custom Appearance files, the user only needs to create a folder named "Appearances" in the same folder as Disk Catalog and put the Appearance (.hap for Haxial Appearance) files into that folder. These Appearances will then be immediately available through the Settings menu.

As a bonus, all Appearance files can be used across all of Haxial's applications, and not just with Disk Catalog. So if a user utilizes more than one Haxial application and wishes to share Appearances between them, the user can just duplicate the Appearances folder for each application. Alternatively, the Appearances can be stored in a single location and aliases can be used for each application to point to that location, so each application loads the same Appearance .hap files.

Some Room for Improvement

Disk Catalog is the best of breed for reliability and speed and, for the most part, simplicity. But it is not perfect.

In its current version, a minor change could be made to the Search Results window so that single-clicking or double-clicking opens the selected file in the Catalog, instead of relying on an unintuitive contextual menu to perform this task. Another minor but important change to the current release would be to duplicate Disk Catalog's commands to the standard menus where users are accustomed to finding commands. Both of these minor changes would improve usability for new and seasoned users alike.

Another area for improvement regards the number of windows. Disk Catalog is elegant and simple in most every respect, but it generates too many windows. Disk Catalog's dock is helpful, but it does not solve the problem efficiently. The solution should strike at the heart where the problem occurs, the spawning of windows. Improvements can be made to both Searching and Browsing.

There isn't much reason that the Search window can't be a single window which displays its own search results and browses those results in the Catalog, too. A new Search could be initiated in the same window, or alternatively in a separate Search window as needed using a menu command or keystroke. This would reduce window clutter by at least half. Of course, each Search window and its results could be docked.

The same process could be applied to browsing the Catalog. Instead of opening a new window, browsing takes place in one window unless another Catalog window is opened with a menu command or keystroke. The user could continue browsing in the same window, or create another Catalog window as a new starting point, whichever the user prefers.

In Short

Although Disk Catalog is not perfect, it is our group's application of choice to catalog and search our growing CD archive of projects as we anticipate migrating to Mac OS X (Panther). With more than 400 disks in that catalog, Disk Catalog's simplicity, speed and reliability are a huge benefit to our group to help us serve our customers efficiently. No other disk cataloging utility we considered to bridge the transition from Mac OS 9 to MAC OS X matched Disk Catalog's reliability and speed. Download your copy of Disk Catalog today from Haxial.

It is also of interest to note that Haxial, during my communications with them regarding the issue with MAC OS X and NT AppleTalk shares and aliases*, reports that they are currently developing a networked multi-user version of Disk Catalog, much more suited to the environment that groups such as ours where multiple machines are accessing the same catalogs. We look forward to trying out this network release when it becomes available.

*NOTE: On Mac OS X, our group ran into a small problem that cannot be remedied except at the server level since the problem is not Disk Catalog but the implementation of AppleTalk on our NT server. In our case, we have one Mac OS X machine using Disk Catalog accessing the NT AppleTalk network share by an alias. Browsing the list of catalogs recently on this Mac OS X machine, I noticed that many entries were doubled and some were plain missing. I compared Disk Catalog's list with the list in the finder and discovered that Disk Catalog's display was inaccurate. No catalogs were doubled, and those that were missing in Disk Catalog's display are not missing in the Finder.

Troubleshooting and communication with Haxial has indicated that this problem does not occur in OS 9 but occurs in MAC OS X when accessing catalogs on an NT AppleTalk share (an unusual environment for many Mac users to be sure). Haxial has suggested making sure the server is completely up-to-date with the latest patches and revisions (as it should be anyway to be secure from the latest Windows scourge, the W32.Blaster.Worm), but we cannot confirm this as our IT department controls the NT server. This situation may be true of other companies as well. The solution in our case is to connect MAC OS X to the same NT network share by SMB (available, fortunately, to MAC OS X users) rather than AppleTalk and point Disk Catalog to the same Catalogs folder using the same alias technique. Using Disk Catalog in this configuration eliminates the doubled and dropped entries in MAC OS X. It is interesting to note, also, that we can connect to the same NT share by both AppleTalk and SMB simultaneously with the Catalogs alias pointing to the SMB share, so we are not losing connectivity or productivity.

This article first appeared on AppleLinks at <http://www.applelinks.com>

Software

Discreet Combustion™ 3

Reviewed by Shane French

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1-514-393-1616, 1-800-869-3504, 1-800-305-6442
Fax: 1-514-393-0110
<http://www.discreet.com>

Requirements:

Apple® Macintosh®: Power Mac® G4, 800Mhz or higher, Mac OS X 10.2. or later, 20GB main hard drive with ~120MB free space (70MB for the software, 45MB for help), 512MB of RAM, Video display card with 4MB of VRAM (1024x768 display with 24-bit color minimum required).

Microsoft® Windows®: Intel® Pentium® III, Pentium 4 or AMD® Athlon™ XP CPU, 850Mhz or higher, Windows XP or Windows 2000, 20GB main hard drive with ~120MB free space (70MB for the software, 45MB for help), 256MB of RAM, Video display card with 4MB of VRAM (1024x768 display with 24-bit color minimum required).

The MSRP through the corporate website is \$1,000 USD, and through various e-retailers you can find the product for \$800 USD. The upgrade from Combustion 2.1 is \$200 USD.



Strengths: Full 3D compositing environment in a single, unified application for vector paint, motion graphics design animation and compositing. Fully integrated, fully interactive 2D particle system with real-time preview and OpenGL acceleration. Advanced keying, color correction, tracking, grain management, and masking tools. Powerful character generator for animated text, including non-destructive character-level animation and text effects. Fully editable and automated schematic view representing the entire workspace. Resolution-independent with 8-, 10-, 12-, 16- and 32-bit (float) per component image processing. Integration with industry-standard creative tools like Flash, Photoshop®, Illustrator®, 3ds max®, Maya®. Design JavaScript-based Expressions to craft complex animations without having to key frame each parameter and preview each animation in the unique Expressions Browser. Make Macromedia® Flash® animations using the power of the Combustion vector paint and animation tools. Save effect operator presets to create a library and share effects. Create customized brushes.

Weaknesses: RAM and Processor intensive.

Overview:

Discreet's Combustion is a very powerful and unique tool for compositing, tracking, typography effects and vector painting for motion graphics. The list of features is somewhat overwhelming at first, but after working in the Combustion environment for a few months I've come to truly appreciate its' depth and flexibility. The interface is slightly confusing at first but will clearly reveal itself as superior to the competition.

One of the new features I really liked was the ability to customize my paintbrushes, - In Combustion 2.1 the only options for brushes were square or circular. Inside the Paint workspace you can create new brushes from scratch, import footage, or use particles to create textures for seamless keylines and clones.

The new Edit Operator is a very impressive and powerful compositing tool. It organizes and assembles clips to be edited at any time. And it's very easy to add transitions and effects to your clips, output them or use them as layers in a composite.

Also included in Combustion 3 is the RE:Flex plug in from RE:Vision Effects, Inc. RE:Flex brings intuitive morphing and warping to Combustion 3 using roto tools (rotoscoping is the rotated projection of a sequence of usually photographed action image frames so that the artist can trace from the frame or create an image to superimpose on it). The real-time preview shows you exactly how your morph is looking and the automatic alignment feature simplifies the process. RE:Flex is a convenient way to morph animations or warp video for multi-dimensional effects.

The Motion Tracking built into Combustion 3 is excellent. Tracking anything with position data is quite simple with an unlimited number of points for changes in position, scale and rotation. It's quite easy to combine objects to your background animation with Discreet's high-precision, context-sensitive, embedded tracking technology.

Combustion 3's Particle system includes a library of hundreds of preset effects, each one fully customizable. Or create your own particle effects using sprites created from custom bitmaps, or use any element in the Combustion workspace as a particle, such as text or paint objects. Then apply color controls, emissions and behaviors of the particles. With particles you can add lightning, fire, water, explosions, and much more special effects to your composites. Although, here is where you'll need that Dual G5 with loads of RAM.

Another key update is the ability to export Flash .swf files providing Combustion users a reliable and accepted delivery of web based media.

Combustion 3 is a serious compositing tool with professional tracking and effects capabilities. Paint, animation, editing and 3D compositing are combined in an integrated, easy-to-use environment that helps you focus on your art rather than your application.

Essentials of Word X: Subtitle: Master the Mac's most powerful text-management tool

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Presenter: Steve Broback

Avondale Media

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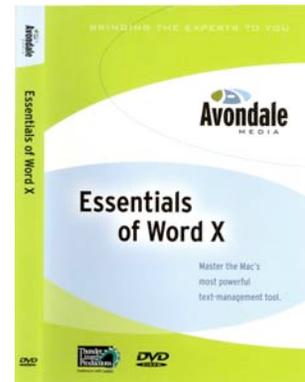
<http://www.avondalemedia.com/>

\$30 USD, available only from the publisher

System Requirements: DVD player for Word X

Software Tested Version 1.0 ©2002 by Avondale Media

Audience: Word X beginner or moderately experienced user.



Beginner Word X Users



More Experienced Word X Users

Strengths: Avondale Media's *Essentials of Word X* DVD will serve to move your Microsoft Word™ skills from that of using only its simple text processor features (e.g., like those in Text Edit) to the high ground of gaining control over that full-featured word processor you own. You can thus gain a more thorough and sophisticated control of many of MS Word X's techniques and features. By using the DVD and trying things taught therein on your own documents, you can easily transition to being an experienced user.

Weakness: Although this CD is focused on both beginners and experienced Word X users, I only learned a few things I did not previously know. I was disappointed that many of the items I know I need to learn, or to do better were not a part of this DVD. Either they were not mentioned in this course, or were treated in such a cursory manner that all I learned was that the feature did exist. Although I agree with Steve Broback, the instructor, that 90 minutes is too short a time to cover all the important features, I still felt a bit deceived by the difference between the publisher's "blurbs" and the reality of the disk contents.

Book Overview: *Essentials of Word X* is a 94-minute training DVD taught by Steve Broback. As noted by the publisher, "With our *Essentials of Word X* DVD, you'll gain a firm foundation in how to start to master this powerful text-management tool—whether you're a *beginner* or *experienced* user. The tutorial is focused on teaching a core set of Word's features and techniques to allow you to gain an understanding of Word's power and to enable you to use it to more easily create documents of your choosing."

Introduction

As a Microsoft® Word™ user, starting with its earliest release on floppies, I have used only that software for doing word processing. I never succumbed, either in my job or at home, to WordPerfect™, although I did use DataViz's™ MacLinks™ to ease the transition—a time when WordPerfect was corporate king. In those days, Word was just a wannabe and its ability to import WordPerfect documents was severely limited.

Before I do my own thing, let me tell you what Avondale says about this training software; "Microsoft Word X is not only the most powerful and approachable word processor for the Mac, it's also built from the ground up to take advantage of the full power of OS X. With Avondale Media's *Essentials of Word X* DVD, you'll gain a firm foundation in how to master this powerful text-management tool—whether you're a beginner or experienced user.

"In *Essentials of Word X*, Avondale has combined that real-world experience along with intimate knowledge of the latest version of Word to create more than 90 minutes of essential techniques that all Word X users should know."

From this publisher's description, I thought the product was aimed at inexperienced and experienced users, but not at power users. I've been using Word since about 1986, yet consider myself only a moderately experienced user. (Perhaps I'm having an identity crisis.) Alas, I found only a few items that were new to me, although I did learn some shortcuts I don't need, because my version of Word is exhaustively customized to suit my word processing needs. I did not find a number of other items I expected to be in the DVD that I'll list later in this review. Read on!

The DVD and its Lessons

The DVD authors had to make difficult decisions on what topics they needed to include in their 94-minute tutorial. The items selected were those of importance to Word X newbies or those who've only scratched the surface of the software's rich and varied features. The DVD's Table of Contents reflects that decision. After a brief Introduction, the lesson segments follow in a logical fashion as listed below. The tutorial lessons all focus on using Word's standard tool bar as a launch point. In addition, the user is introduced to Word preferences (in OS X, found under the "Word" logo) as a means of tuning Word to the way you word process. For example:

- Do you want to see spelling and grammar mistakes as you type, or can you wait till after you written down your thoughts to correct them?
- Have you a preference where the scroll bar arrows should appear?
- Do invisible characters bug you?
- Should graphics, which slow down scrolling be invisible in normal mode?
- The tutorial demonstrates how you can set these and other preferences to satisfy the way you want Word to behave as you create documents. In the chapter list that follows, I highlight a few items that will allow our readers a taste of the depth and breadth of this training disk.
- Getting Acquainted with Word, Ch 2—Introduces the general interface, such as tool bars, rulers, palettes, and navigational elements.
- Editing and Proofing Essentials, Ch 3—This chapter focuses on text editing and selection, grammar and spell-checking, and automating copy and paste with the Office Clipboard. Subtopics introduce the layout, normal and print preview views, and viewing invisible characters. Broback moves briskly along to how to print your documents. The discussion of editing basics is crisp and clear—every time I thought a shortcut or technique had been left out, there it was.
- Font Formatting Basics, Ch 4—This chapter focuses on formatting fonts, including changing font size with the keyboard shortcuts, saving time on these tasks with the

repeat command, and copying font formatting from one area to another. The discussions start by describing the differences between formatting fonts (this chapter) and formatting paragraphs (next chapter). The multiple undo and redo feature, which works from the point of your last save, is introduced, as are shortcuts for growing or shrinking font sizes and their attributes (e.g., bold, italic, underline). Other font formats are found in the format <menu -> font>.

- **Formatting Paragraphs, Ch 5**—The tutorial quickly follows with lessons on how to format paragraphs, including controlling line and page breaks, indenting, and setting space above and below paragraphs. A highlight of this section is how Steve teaches you to create paragraph alignment (e.g., left, centered right) and spacing. Here Steve introduces great illustrations of how this can be done **Horribly**, just plain **Wrong**, and the **Right** way (HWR). The information on using line breaks rather than paragraph breaks to maintain formatting with soft returns is crisp, and should aid all Word users. The shortcut is: shift-return. You can also format text with single line, line and a half, or double line spacing. I use the latter when proofreading—it slows me down so I can actually find my mistakes. Finally, Steve provides another HWR example on creating page breaks to avoid splitting paragraphs or leaving a section title behind as an orphan.
- **Working with Tabs, Ch 6**—It's all about tabs and paragraph indent styles. You know—start entering text on a page from the left, right, or centered. Line up numbers around a decimal tab using the document ruler. Alternatively, align text to the left, right, or center; or justify it by using the tool bar buttons. That clear discussion is followed by an all too brief, for newbies, discussion on combing paragraph indents and tabs.
- **Using Word's Table Editor, Ch 7**—In a very smooth transition, Broback leads the reader from formatting short columnar text to using the more powerful Table tool for that purpose. As with guidance for using Filemaker Pro™, Steve instructs you to lay it all out on paper. Then, step-by-step, you're taught to create and modify overall table structure and appearance. You can, as Steve demonstrates, control the appearance of individual cells or of whole columns or rows of cells. The point of using tables is simple. It allows you to wrap text within a column on a cell-by-cell basis, something you can't do in a paragraph mode. I love tables, and the method Steve teaches is really useful, especially when used with borderless cells. When a borderless table prints, all you get is neatly arranged wrapped columnar text.
- **Working with Pictures, Ch 8**—Skills for working with pictures include inserting a picture with drag-and-drop, and changing picture alignment and attributes. Since doing so is a location thing, all you need is a new empty paragraph as the point in which to place your picture. The lesson follows up with resizing graphics by using handles surrounding the image to modify picture appearance. Although on occasions I add graphics in a hit-or-miss manner to my documents, I'm really a newbie in this area. I, of course, had great expectations when I saw the section title in the list of chapters. Unfortunately, the level of detail in this chapter is modest. It focuses only on creating a setting for your image and importing images from your hard disk, including those from Microsoft Office's collection of installed clip art or your own clip art. (You can, of course, also pick an image from that bargain CD set of 75,000 images you never effectively used.) Steve also mentions that with an Internet connection, you can search larger collections of images both at the Microsoft site or elsewhere. With Office or Word X, you can even import pictures from your scanner or digital camera.

- **Essential Word Tips, Ch 9**—In this section, Steve provides you with additional segments of information that augment your ability to control and flexibly work with Word. This included information on how to use Word's new click and type feature, available only in page layout view. Creation and use of headers and footers, available in layout view or from the menu bar, is discussed. In addition, Steve notes that you can link to the Avondale web site for more Word X tips, as well as to Microsoft's Word site. The Avondale site also provides you with direct links to Microsoft's online how-to articles, and to Word resources such as downloadable templates. This obviates your need to play hide-and-seek on Microsoft's web site.

Newly Learned Tricks, and Other Ruminations

I read a few books on Word a year or two ago, but they never took. Practice is as "un-Macliffe" as reading a manual. I've spent the major amount of my computer time creating a wide array of Word documents, and deemed myself only an experienced user. But after taking this tutorial, I guess I'll need to change my self-image. Somewhere, some when, I seem to have, despite my feeling to the contrary, become a power user of Word. Never-the-none-the-less, there were a few great things in my 2-3 hour visit with the *Essentials of Word X* tutorial. Some information was new; some just provided me information on how to better use the tools and features of Word.

- *Invisible Text*—The use of highlighting invisible character is presented as a means of identifying, in a multi-author document, what has been done with respect to paragraphs, hard line and section breaks, tabs and the like. Steve notes that most professional writers work in this mode, but I find it both distracting and irritating—hey, it's just a click away on my toolbars.
- *Formatting With the Recent Tool*—New to me is using the using "based on recent" tool to replicate formatting you created in another Word document. The discussion was so blindingly fast I wasn't able to follow it. Now that I know it's there, I'll find and learn to use the sucker.
- *Drag and Grab*—It's a new shortcut. By placing the cursor outside the layout view's margins, I can now option-drag across to select paragraphs, whole sections, or even pages.
- *The Office Clip Board*—I had never previously used the Office clipboard's multiple clip storage features. With the MS Office clipboard, you can stash away up to 60 items {text-images, Excel™ formulas, etc) for future use in any Office document. Another Office clipboard, limit that caused me no constraints, is that you cannot add more than 6 MB of data to the clipboard. I had previously thought this could be done with only third party shareware items, none of which I'd tried. "Nice Microsoft."
- *Format Painter Plus*—Totally new to me, this is Word's Format Painter, a tool that remembers multiple single paragraph attributes you initially designated. For working on formatting whole pages, or documents, Word has a tool called Sticky Format Painter (double clicking Format Painter Brush icon in the toolbar).
- **Other Table cell features**— Steve did not mention that you can create bulleted or numbered list in a cell, something that is simply not possible in paragraph mode.

Things I Wish Were Part of the DVD or Taught in More Detail

So what more do I want to know?

- During the Chapter 3 discussions, Steve flashes past the fact that printable margins are a function of your printers' capabilities. This is a condition built into your printers' drivers. (Robin Williams talks about printing in her "The Non-Designer's Design Book". See my review in the January 2004 macC.) "Unfortunately, unprintable text (the text that is outside your maximum print margins) is a real pain... even to experienced users! It causes newbies, who use more than one printer, to panic and tear out their hair. Alas, Mr. Broback provides no cure.
- How to use and create style sheets was not part of the tutorial. It's a feature I barely understand, despite my making hit-or-miss use of it.
- How to wrap graphics around text to create more visually interesting documents and eliminating "white" space. (It's a Robin Williams kind of thing!) There's nothing on it.
- Using borderless table cells to place graphics was not discussed. I use this method as a means for wrapping text around images. This is despite knowing from the menu and tool bar items that there's got to be a better way.
- It would have been helpful if the tutorial had provided examples of, or even just mentioned, how to display and customize toolbars. (Anyone working in Word on my Macintosh will need a driver's manual.) I kept the standard install features, with only a few shortcuts, on my grandson's machine so it would not be hamstrung should I need to use it.
- Steve should also have mentioned that palettes could easily be drag converted to toolbars thereby eliminating screen clutter.
- Last, but not least, I wish Steve had provided examples on how to create and customize keyboard shortcuts.

The Course Instructor, Steve Broback, a Microsoft Word Guru

As the publisher notes, "Steve Broback is an expert who has been working daily with Mac Word since version 1.0 was introduced in 1985. He has an approachable teaching style that enables users of all levels to grasp even advanced subjects with ease. Steve has taught Windows and Macintosh applications classes at the University of Washington, and is featured in over 40 instructional video titles. He now focuses his efforts on Avondale Media and Thunder Lizard Productions.

"Steve does something unique when teaching. He provides some great examples that include the horrible way, the wrong way, and, of course, the right way to do things, like formatting and making both font and paragraph style changes." I'm also a believer in Steve's message of: "when in doubt, first control-click to access Word's context sensitive contextual menus." Folks, that method works for most Macintosh applications, and it sure beats the hell of using Help files.

I, as have others, find that a software developer usually sets up such Help files, totally without taking into consideration the average users understanding of terms associated with that program. The way the user with limited knowledge of the software related terminology about its features asks for information seems alien to most developers. In MS Word, for an example, I need to search sometimes rewriting my question a dozen times before I find a hyperlink to the information I need. As far using MS Word for the creation of complex documents, I have also always followed Steve's advice to type out my message completely and only then do my formatting. Although it is *intuitively obvious to the most casual observer*, formatting really is a secondary concern for wannabe writers. Getting your ideas down and flowing logically is the primary objective of creating documents. As you move paragraphs and sections from place to place in your document, your formatting needs will change. Be bold, and don't waste your time by initially each formatting paragraph. Checkout my review of Inspiration 7.5, in this issue, a tool with powerful diagramming and outlining features that can be used to frame complex documents.

Conclusions

I agree with the publisher that in the *Essentials of Word X* DVD, Avondale has combined Steve Broback's real-world teaching experience along with his intimate knowledge of the latest version of Word to create a tutorial of essential techniques that all Word X users should know. In *Essentials of Word X*, "you'll learn conceptual ideas (such as 'type first, format later'), as well as specific tips and tricks (such as copying and pasting formatting attributes)." This is a must-buy tutorial for the Word user who now treats Word as just another Text Editor. It works acceptably well for more experienced user who has not previously explored the richness and depth of this word processing program. At \$30, the tutorial package is a good to excellent value.

For truly experienced users, the tutorial can serve either as a refresher course, if needed, or for teaching your friends, kids, and colleagues how to get more out of Word.

P.S.

So, what do I wish for? Steve, how about a Volume II aimed at teaching us more experienced users more of the nuts and bolts of Word X? I've previously listed things I still need to learn about Word—I'm sure your list would be longer than mine. I know there are books out there, but a picture is, of course, worth a thousand words and you teach well. (And yeah, I'd like to be the first kid on the block to review such a training disk, should it happen.)

FileMaker Pro™ 6 MacAcademy Volume 3 (*Summary Reports*)

Taught by Keith Keil

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by Julie M. Willingham

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Series Note: The FileMaker 6.0 [FMP] tutorial series consists of seven CDs priced \$39 USD each, with the whole set occasionally available from the publisher at below \$273 USD. This review focuses on *Volume 3 Summary Reports*.



Requirements: The tutorials can be used both by Windows and Macintosh platform users with computers capable of viewing “video-style” CDs. The CD reviewed will work on both OS X and “classic” OS supported computers. This is a good learning package for those who have the patience to seriously study the details and practice the techniques Keith Keil teaches. Unfortunately, it would have served my needs better as two volumes, for reasons described in the review.

Audience: Intermediate or beginning FMP users.



Strengths: This volume is all about extracting specified data from the individual records in your database and making it easy to view and correlate. Although creating summary reports is not an easy subject to study, the author’s grasp of the material and clear presentation help you overcome the hurdles associated with creating summary reports for information-laden company sales records, which are the framework for the FMP MacAcademy tutorial.

Weaknesses: This volume, perhaps due to its complexity, seems less logically laid out and more fragmented than those previously reviewed. I found chapters 11 and 12 of this volume particularly annoying, because their content and scope was a quantum jump above the level of information in the other chapters in this volume. Metaphorically, perhaps they were just placed there by the uncertainty principal.

Introduction

This volume is all about extracting the individual pieces of data you specify from your stored itemized records, and making them easy to view, summarize, and digest. Remember, these records contain the information you chose to capture in your electronic file cards, aka records. Examples might include all the stuff you put into your Apple address book plus, the stuff that the person buys from your company, and, if so, who sold it to him and when. For this review, I'm sticking close to Keith Keil's business sales model, despite the fact that it is more complex than any db I've created. To do so, the student must learn some of the more complex aspects of using FMP. Despite a long learning curve, creating informative and concise summary reports of your numeric data can be and is rewarding.

The initial lessons in Volume 3 are focused on using company X's multiyear sales records, created in previous MacAcademy FMP volumes, to extract information about customer payment patterns.

Keil notes that creating reports that contain the information you seek becomes increasingly important as your database grows, both in size and complexity. Extracting information stored in complex records from more than twenty such data records (compilations) becomes a daunting task. In your company environment, a firm that sells widgets, reporting is a "coat of many colors".

There are reports you need to do your job. Then your manager wants boiled-down summaries of the stuff you accomplish as a salesperson as well as that information for the others selling the company's products. His boss might need overview information that cuts across broader information categories than that found within individual customer and sales records, perhaps linked to cost of goods sold. The focus of such summary reports can vary from customer demographics and productivity of the sales staff, to identifying the most popular products. From a financial perspective, total sales and net payments by period, are important.

Part of FMP's strength in creating reports is that the software can draw information from any part of a record or records and display their contents from several perspectives. For example, given a list of all items sold during a year, a summary report can show average sales by selected interval or for the whole year. Alternatively, the focus may be on total sales per period or total sales for the year. Such information can be enriched, not only by assessing how much was sold (and when), but also by identifying how much the customers owe when buying your products on payment plans.

Since information you want to incorporate in your report may vary in any variable, providing that information in a single report requires displaying those details in various parts of that report. For example, subtotals of sales by salesperson, by month, by quarter, or by grand total for the year are all unique calculations which report sales data over the various selected periods. To do so, each of these summaries have to be shown separately in reports zones called parts. Parts can include header, body, and footers in your input records. For summary reports, you add sub-summary, summary, and grand total types of information stored in their parts of the reports layout. A key to understanding this volume is the idea that you can do calculations and summarize or average them in a variety of ways, but only when using data fields containing numerical information. Numbers can be crunched and manipulated; words can only be abstracted or, at best, counted.

To create data summaries, you must identify what information needs to be summarized. For some report users, only top-level information may be needed. Other users may require more details in a report, all of which are stored in the individual or aggregate records in the database. This CD is focused on a brief period of sales records for company X, starting from the information collected as a part of individual records (created in earlier volumes.)

Why Me? Who Needs Summaries?

My present need for and use of summaries in databases I've created is only minimal. My most used databases are associated with collectables. Examples of my databases include non-optimized, before taking Keil's tutorials, lists of books, music, computer software and hardware, Beanie Babies™, and, soon, recipes. I also use FMP for compiling tax information (without using MS Excel™ or tax software), keying in information from shoeboxes and folders of information my CPA requires. The software is great for creating address lists as well as for my random compilation of Macintosh help tidbits. None of these require fancy summaries. I don't sell much of anything, except some beaded jewelry at crafts shows, so my number crunching and viewing needs are minimal. My databases, except for tax summaries, contain very little detailed numerical information. When I created our collectables lists, I did not record the price of each purchased book or vinyl record or movie. Nor do I worry about the present value, since we're not collecting as a business, but for sheer joy. My intent for most databases was only to compile a listing of our stuff to avoid buying duplicate copies.

But I'm a wannabe. I want to learn how to more effectively use FMP 6, whether for new database projects or to combine, integrate, and enhance the dozen individual databases I've haphazardly created of the last 5 or more years. Don't get me wrong; the facts are all there. It's just that my individual databases that could be integrated together will take some work, particularly the field names and types (e.g., as mentioned in previous reviews, phone and fax numbers that should be text files since they are never used in calculations.)

So, if I want to become better at database development, I must and did accept having to live with business model based lessons. After all, when I want to use summary reports for the few numbers in my stuff, it will be easier to do than what Keith Keil demonstrates in this volume. So, here's what you can learn in Volume 3.

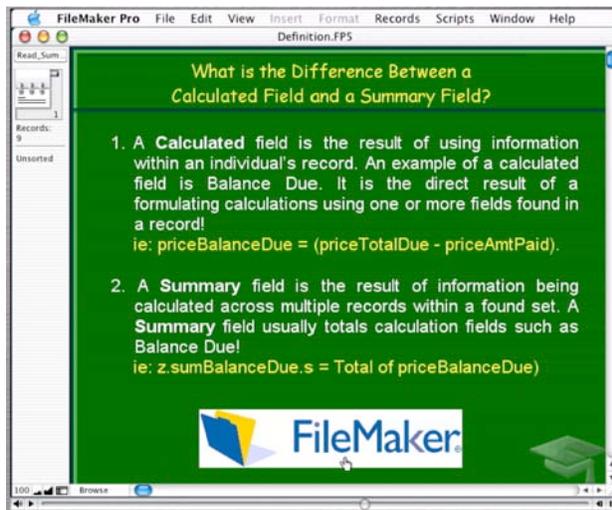
A Somewhat Annotated Description of the Lessons in the Summary Reports Volume

Volume 3 contains detailed examples of how to pull summary information from individual records in a company's sales reports. You learn how to abstract that information, mostly numeric, into summary reports that meet specific company needs. All of the clearly illustrated examples focus on a company's sales records, which contain information about what was purchased, by whom, and who sold the products. Since such records are dated, and Company X sells goods on up to 120-day repayment schedules, amounts due and overdue can be compiled. Examples in this volume focus on customer amounts due and overdue, and the accomplishments of the sales personnel. The latter illustrates both the power and complexity of the reporting process, demonstrating how well each salesperson did based on the amount sold in a given week, month or quarter, by sale, dated itemized amount, and in aggregate, over the period, both in dollar and % form. (Yes, I know, it's a terrible tool, because now management can ding these poor people if sales slip. Ask any insurance agent or used car salesperson: what you sold yesterday does not count.) Keith Keil walks, or, at times, trots us through, using the various features built into FMP. Such features allow the database user to create esthetic summary reports tailored to a diverse audience. Summary reports are a complex concept and difficult to learn skill. Much about creating business reports by using summaries is about collecting subtotals, totals, and grand totals of the information your co-workers or employers are interested in. This spares them having to peer through hundreds of records, calculator in hand...Well, you get the point.

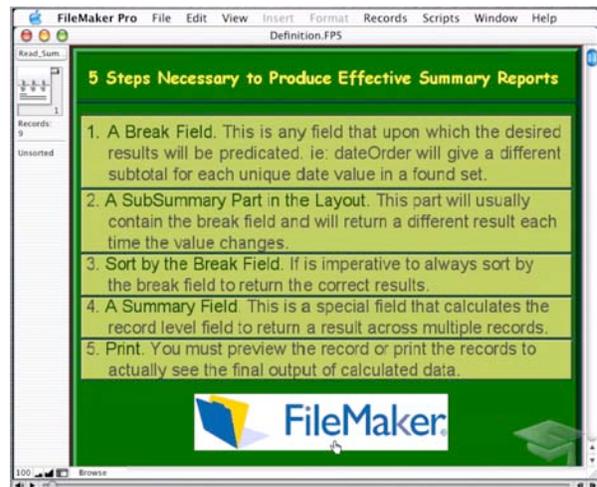
Overall, the Volume 3 (Summary Reports) CD contains lessons on:

1. Explanation Of (the term) Summaries
2. Creating Nested IF Functions (search logic and boundaries.)
3. Single Tier Summary–The simplest kind.
4. Duplicating A Summary (for template use.)
5. Sorting A Summary Field —The method for seeing your reports in the order that works best for you.
6. Adding The Body (re-expanding summary data details for fellow information junkies.)
7. Creating a Dual Tier Summary ... Such complexity minimizes the number of separate reports you create.
8. Using the Get Summary Function...making the reports you want easier to find.
9. Deleting The Body, by thinning the report out.)
10. Creating Bar Graphs In FileMaker Pro.
11. Export Summaries (to other servers) for your networked users.
12. Auto Report Generator illustrates some wonderful bells and whistles invented by Keith Keil to make finding and searching reports easy for non-expert connected users.

In *Chapter 1*, Keil defines the concept of a summary, which, according to him, is the most confusing element of creating powerful and useful databases. He distinguishes between calculations that use info in an individual record, and summary information “calculated” across multiple records. The two items are similar in nature, but differ in focus.



Differences between a calculated and a Summary Field



The 5 Steps Necessary to Produce Effective Summary Reports

The first curve the lesson threw at me was the introduction of the concept of “break field”, immediately followed by the concept of report parts and subparts. The former is used to provide an anchor point for the information to be summarized and sorted (e.g., item sales date). The latter allows the summarization at the sub-summary, summary, and grand total level (e.g., by week, month or year) without overlapping or mixing input data. This material is more confusing than any previous concept in this series. But this is a product review, not a tutorial, so I shall plunge on.

Chapter 2 focuses primarily on creating summary field content boundaries, using Boolean logic constructs (e.g., “what if” or “if-then”) created with *Nested IF Functions* in FMP. Such logic differentiates data intervals for checking payment status (e.g., 0-30-60-90 or >120 days overdue.) The chapter also introduced an alternative methodology, that of “introduced cases” as an alternative to “if-then” sub-categories, but with so little emphasis that it appeared to be an afterthought. The main use of these tools is in manipulating static fields (data in a record) and the calculated fields defined by the DB creator.

Some closure is achieved in *Chapter 3*, when the creation of Single Tier Summary is introduced and illustrated using background information FMP calculates in real time. FMP uses the logic statements created in Chapter 2 to compare “today’s” date with the sale date, allowing the listing of payment status in dollars or number of customers over the periods of interests. The logic tools developed provide the data sort and computation framework for this report.

In Chapter 4, Keil moves on, teaching us how to save time when creating other (new) reports by duplicating a summary as their basis. Obviously, it gets a new name! The duplicated report serves as a template in which you can switch field information or computational functions to create new summaries. In this and all other examples, Keil tests the creation process by constantly checking the “5 Steps” depicted earlier. As he moves on, creating a number of different reports, Keil enjoins us “to make sure you have the right break field, sort orders, totals and grand total or sub-total, whose depth depends on the completely of the level of detail you need. As you switch summary reports selecting proper sort order is critical” or you will not see the data that is keyed to that report. Hey, it works. It’s not my job to figure out why.

A change of Focus from Customers to Sales Personnel

Chapter 5 focuses on sorting a summary field to add flexibility to the way you can view data in a given report. At this point in the volume, the focus passes from customer payment records to the achievements of sales personnel.

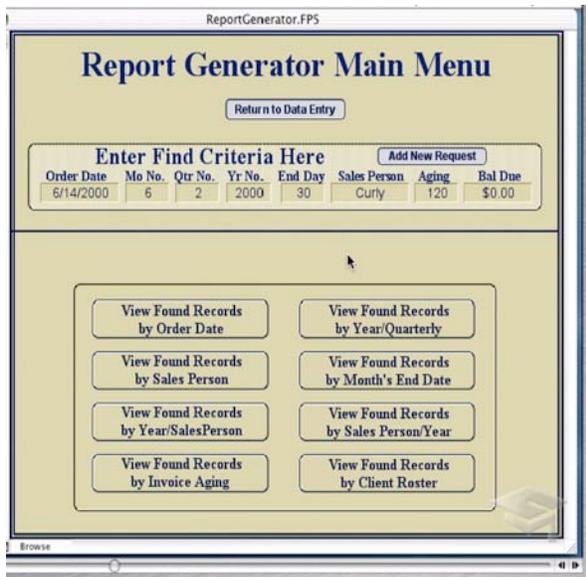
Alas, Keil introduces another item of necessary semantic confusion, since “data sorts” come in at least two flavors. There is the kind you need to do as part of creating and activating a report so it contains the information to do its stuff (see the 5 steps.) There’s also the kind of sort you can do to capture different arrangements of data in a list or table view. Examples include sorting by ascending or descending numeric or alphabetical order, for instance, within a given report. Adding a running total from sub-summary or summary data is also introduced.

Now that Keil has taught you how to summarize, how do you, the database creator, deal with a user who wants more data in that short, crisp report you just created? Well, study *Chapter 6*. It’s about adding incorporating extra information from your records into a new report part by using FMP’s “record parts” tools. Since filling in and expanding on summary reports builds upon information you already have, adding such detail is straightforward, but, of course, not easy. What Keith teaches is ways of using sub-tied information available from information stored in your record or other reports.

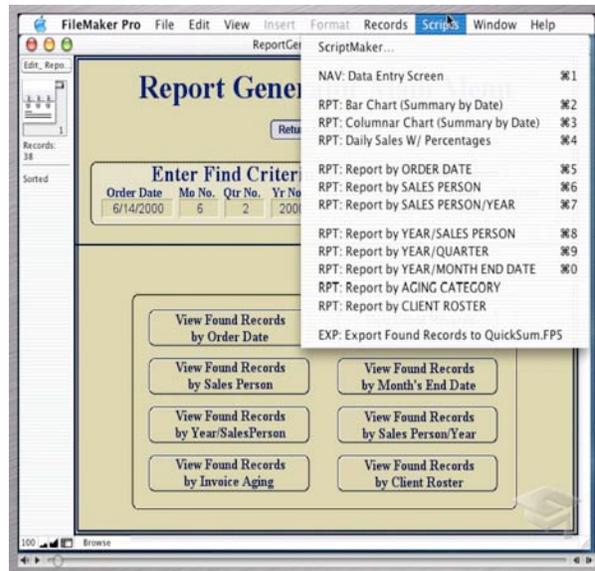
Nothing about summaries is easy, but without using such reports, all you’ve created is a large set of multidimensional index cards (records) whose contents are almost impossible to extract information from or from which to gain meaning.

In *Chapter 7*, Keil introduces the concept (complexity) of creating dual tier summary information, focusing on the folks who sell you Company X's products. This chapter is focused on adding extra levels of detail to existing reports that one of the database users might need. This example builds on the leading and trailing sub-summaries created earlier. Keil's Law is "Always use templates; never type if you don't need to, since errors too often creep into your product." He further explains that by drop-dragging existing calculated fields whose arithmetic or logic functions are already defined, you save time. Specifically, by changing the scope of the records these calculational fields build upon, or their function, you are able to minimize transcription or logic errors. The instructor demonstrates these concepts by adding extra 'tiers' of information about the achievements of the three salesmen in his company. Tongue in cheek, these three *stooges* are, of course, Larry, Moe, and Curley. Once again, the anchor to presenting their sales records is time, again the primary anchor (break field) for these tutorials. Note that a two (dual) tier summary contains information about two somewhat unrelated subjects extracted from your individual data records, saving you the need to create two different summaries to view that information. If adding dual tiers to summary reports sounds complex, it is! Is it doable? Absolutely—with a lot of practice.

There's lots more in this volume, as you can see by reading the chapter names I've included at the beginning of this review. I'll stop discussing the material Keith Keil presents while I'm ahead. I do want to illustrate the fact that allowing user-access report generation can be automated to provide the database user an elegant, user-friendly interface as discussed in Chapter 12. This material, alas, was de facto a teaser for future volumes—but this auto report generator user interface sure looks fine.



Auto Reports Generator User Interface



Auto Reports Generator's Underlying Scripts

A Few “If Wishes Were Horses” Items

Having reviewed the first three volumes in this series, I found some missing information that I believe would benefit FMP users.

- I hate tutorial examples in which pieces of information come floating out of the sky. Keith, nowhere in the first two volumes do you present the student with any records associated with who sold what. You’ve got the “to whom” down pat, but you spring sales personnel on us cold turkey in the middle of this volume, while never even giving us a glimpse of the record which collect that information.
- More importantly, I would have appreciated detailed definitions, up front, for all the terms newly introduced, as well as those associated with previous lessons. The FMP users’ manual does not contain such information, making the search for the meaning of database-related semantics difficult for the average user. This would have taken only a few slides that the student could click back to, should that information be needed. I needed it, and I’ve spent lots of time with FMP in many of its reincarnations. And then there are those accounting terms...
- I would have expected the author to illustrate aligning fields by using FMP’s alignment feature (command-K or Option-Command-K). For all you AppleWorks™ users, this is a more sophisticated version of the feature you use to align parts of a drawing. Instead, Keil used constrained drags to line up field names and their contents, which is, to me, an awkward process.
- I asked myself dozens of times, when viewing volume 3, why does Keil use the term “aging” in a way that has no meaning, in a business context, to the rest of us? Do accountants age money the way vintners and cheese makers do? Why age overdue accounts, when the words *amount still due* would have been easier for the rest of us to identify with? There are lots of others—it’s all a plot to get you to think intuitively.
- As I proceed with learning the material in the MacAcademy tutorial, I more and more wish that the publisher had provided a download or a CD containing Keith Keil’s basic database, in several “variations” for us to experiment with. In their absence, users have to create their own information sets to “fake” up an example database comparable to what Keil has used. Attempting to build such a database for study purposes from the partial set of template snapshots contained in the first three volumes was almost impossible. There was too little detail provided on the lesson example database for me to be sure I had approximated Keil’s examples on which to practice. This is counterintuitive to the educational process, and, by Volume 3, seems to be a form of cruel and unusual punishment of the dedicated student.

Conclusions and After Notes

In closing, gathering the information you've collected in your records is only a small, but tedious, part of database use, namely data input. MacAcademy's FMP 6 Tutorial Volume 3 teaches you how to find, extract, and condense that collected information into summary reports that can be used in making decisions. After all, if the information you have is just stored in a giant electronic file full of documents containing lots of discrete types of data, it's inaccessible. A database that doesn't allow a user the combined ability to find information, sort it, and then summarize it for further use, is useless. For those serious about learning the complex but outstanding features of FMP 6 report capabilities (excepting only chapters 11 & 12), buy and seriously study this course! Chapters 11 & 12 were, in my opinion, non-sequiturs, but the rest of my studies were rewarding. I gained much understanding about creating summary reports, even though I'm not yet, without support from the CD, able to create my own. Even to learn as much as I did, I needed two to three replays of each chapter to begin to capture their contents. After all, MacAcademy teaches weeklong courses about this stuff.

Volume 3 may be a bit difficult to grasp by a new user, but it is definitely worth the effort. More sophisticated users will find it less of a challenge than I did, since I am a creator of non-business related databases. It merits only 3.5 macCs.

Imposer™: Page Imposition Plugin for QuarkXPress® 3.32–6.0 & InDesign™ 2.0–CS

Reviewed by Mike Swope

A Lowly Apprentice Production, Inc.

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Carlsbad, CA 92008

(760) 438-5790

<http://www.alap.com>

Standard: \$200 USD; 5-Pack \$900 USD; 10-Pack \$1,700 USD (Upgrade pricing available)

Pro: \$400 USD; 5-Pack \$1,800; 10-Pack \$3,400 USD (Upgrade pricing available)

Imposer (Standard & Pro) for QuarkXPress

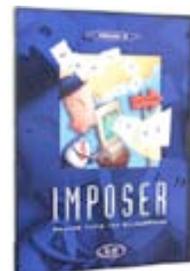
Macintosh: Power Macintosh, System 8.6 or later, Postscript Device or Postscript Interpreter, QuarkXPress 3.32 or later (including 6.0)

Windows: Pentium II or faster, Windows 98 or later, Postscript Device or Postscript Interpreter, QuarkXPress 4.1 or later (including 6.0) \$20 USD

Imposer (Standard & Pro) for Adobe InDesign

Macintosh: Mac OS 9.1, 9.2x or Mac OS X (10.2 or later); Adobe InDesign 2.0.x or CS.

Windows: Windows 2000 or later; Adobe InDesign 2.0.x or CS.



Strengths: Easy to install, easy to use, feature rich and complete, utilizes print stream rather than document pagination

Weaknesses: A bit pricey.

Every Designer's Tale

One of the largest annual projects that we undertake in our creative services department is annual Benefits: summaries and workbooks that span several business entities for our parent and sister companies. Every year, these Benefits projects create noise for our group. Not good noise. Noises of dissatisfaction from the customer, noise that It-could-be-managed-better. No year that we remember has been any different. This year, the Benefits project fell onto my shoulders. I did not relish this "opportunity." The Benefits documents promised to be grizzly to wrestle with. I grimaced at the thought of chasing down all those files and fonts that were sure to be missing, since the Benefits projects were last completed by a designer who had since departed but who did not follow good project and archiving practices.

I wrestled with fonts and Adobe® Acrobat®. I wrestled with missing images. I wrestled with inconsistent layouts and inconsistent stylesheets. I wrestled with bookletized documents. This last was the most time-consuming, manually converting documents from printer spreads to single-paged documents to produce coherent Acrobat proofs for the client. Luckily, the print vendor we had chosen to print the documents did not require documents in printer spreads. So I could send them to the printer in single-page format and keep them in single-page documents for our group for next year. In the design business (any business really), it is better to think ahead than complain behind.

All was well, until I needed to print several dozen finished booklets on an in-house color Xerox printer/copier.

This task, of course, required printer spreads. Previously, we had used Bookletizer™ from Vision's Edge to generate the printer spreads. However, since we had recently upgraded to QuarkXPress® 5, our copy of Bookletizer was incompatible, and no compatible version had been released. So I had yet another dilemma on my hands. Even QuarkXPress 6, the industry leader, disappointingly and surprisingly, doesn't perform this operation without a third-party add-on plug-in. I believed I had to bookletize the documents manually -- a dry, boring, thankless task.

Imposer™: The Ingenious Happy Ending to This Designer's Tale

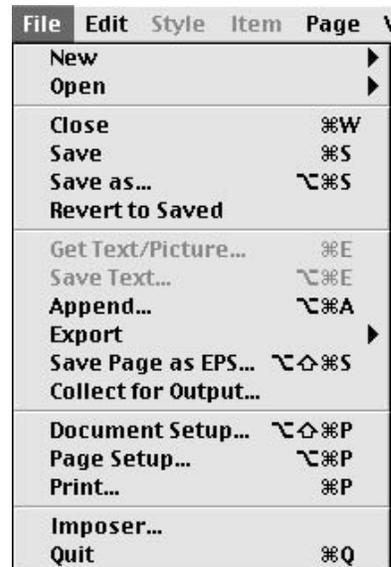
After a couple hours of Internet research to find a Bookletizer update, I gave up that ghost and searched for an alternative, and discovered the ingenious Imposer™ from A Lowly Assistant Production (aka ALAP). In a matter of minutes, not hours, I had printed a properly formatted booklet as a proof, and printed the final document across the network to the in-house color Xerox 2045 printer/copier (which is a city block away). Imposer saved me time and headaches, and enabled our group to meet the tight deadline for the project. And saved the client money, too.

Imposer is a Swiss-knife plug-in for QuarkXPress 3.32 – 6.0 to print documents into 2-up and 4-up (Standard version) and 8-up (Pro version) imposed sheets, the output needed by commercial printers for large parent-sheet presses. In addition to mere standard imposition, Imposer Standard and/or Pro also outputs in work & turn, work & tumble, split web and sheet wise format, and accommodates for saddle-stitching, perfecting binding, spiral binding, comb-binding, and three-hole punching, as well as single cut sheets. Imposer also has the ability to specify the number of pages in a signature and control plate margins, crossover trapping, and creep. Users can also save frequently used settings as imposition styles to reduce redundant labor, and even export these styles to share with other Imposer users!

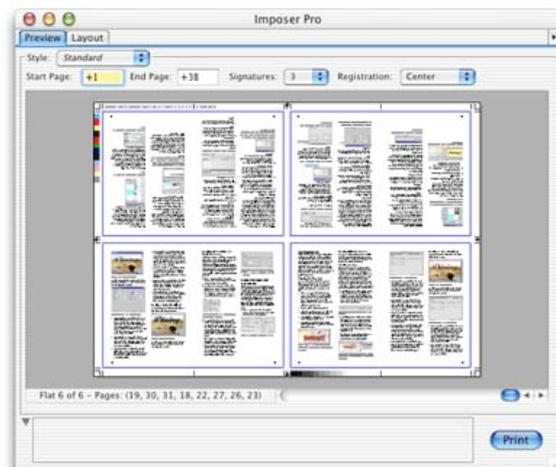
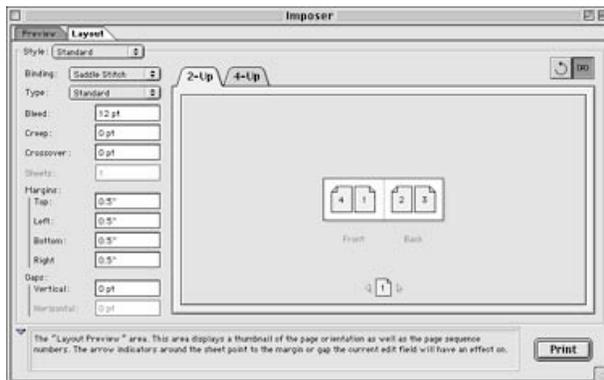
(Note: It is dismaying that Quark has not built this imposition or similar feature into XPress. Commercial printers with larger presses can't be expected to produce finished products without the ability to output imposed pages. We should also remember that PageMaker offered the booklet function as early as v4 in the early to mid-1990s. So despite XPress's dominance in the page layout industry, Quark still may not fully understand the needs of the marketplace. Hence the general tone of the media that XPress 5 & 6 are not feature-rich significant upgrades.)

If You're Not Imposing in the Print Stream, You're Working Hard

Although any such utility is sure to offer similar features, Imposer stands out in the mind of this designer. Bookletizer, the plugin we had used previously to prep booklets for printing, actually alters the QuarkXPress document into printer's spreads, which cannot be undone. It is a dull, manual procedure to convert bookletized documents back into reader's spreads or single-pages. By comparison, Imposer does not disturb the layout of the document. Instead, Imposer works its magic in the print stream, leaving documents unscathed. In fact, Imposer performs as a separate print dialog box, allowing a single document to be imposed in many different ways depending upon the clients' and printers' needs. The other attractive feature of Imposer is that it has been kept up-to-date with each release of XPress. Bookletizer's development cycle apparently ended at XPress 4.0.

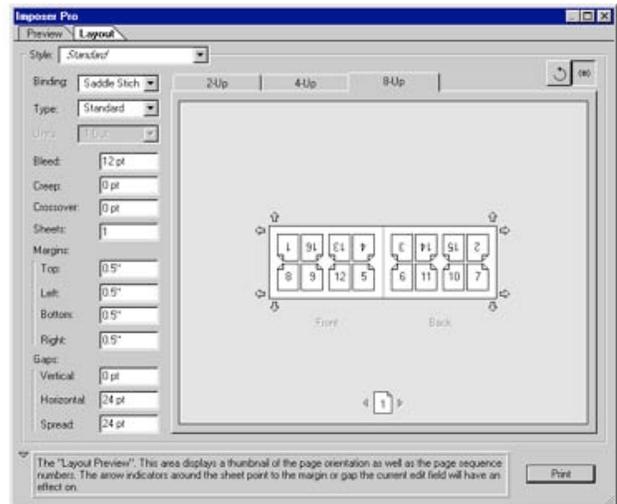


Imposer comes in Standard and Pro versions for both QuarkXPress 3.32 – 6.0 and InDesign 2.0. Fully-functional 15-day trials are available for download from the A Lowly Apprentice Productions web site. For creative groups, advertising agencies and small-format commercial offset and digital printers, Imposer Standard offers features that are likely to be used regularly. For large-format commercial offset and digital printers, Imposer Pro will be indispensable. Among the differences between the Standard and Pro versions is that the Standard version allows a maximum of 4-up sheets; the Pro version [imp2pro-w.gif] allows a maximum of 8-up sheets and additional settings for binding, printing presses, and other characteristics suitable for professional printers. Both versions also allow placement of custom marks in conjunction with MarkIt XTension, a high-powered output alternative to QuarkXPress' standard registration and crop marks, also from ALAP.



'Nuff Said, Just Do It

If you're involved with a creative group, ad agency, or printing company of any kind, Imposer is an indispensable tool that will pay for itself repeatedly, saving designers and pre-press professionals precious time over and over again, and providing world-class control over and flexibility with the imposition process. All by simple, non-destructive means. Download the trial version of Imposer that best meets your needs, and try Imposer for yourself. Like this



designer, you're sure to be impressed with Imposer.

This article first appeared on AppleLinks at <http://www.applelinks.com>

Indigo

Reviewed by Ted Bade



Matt Bendiksen

Perceptive Automation, LLC

indigo-support@perceptiveautomation.com

<http://www.perceptiveautomation.com/indigo/>

<http://www.perceptiveautomation.com/indigo/index.html>

List Price: \$90 USD through RegSoft.com

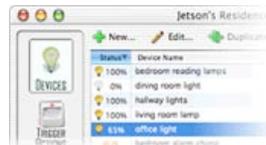
Download site:

<http://www.perceptiveautomation.com/indigo/download.html>

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.6 or better. X10 Interface (either PowerLinc 1132U (USB), PowerLinc 1132A (Serial), CM-11, or LynX-PLC from *Smarthome*)

Experience needed: Software requires moderate experience.

Installing certain X10 devices requires knowledge of and experience with household electrical wiring systems.



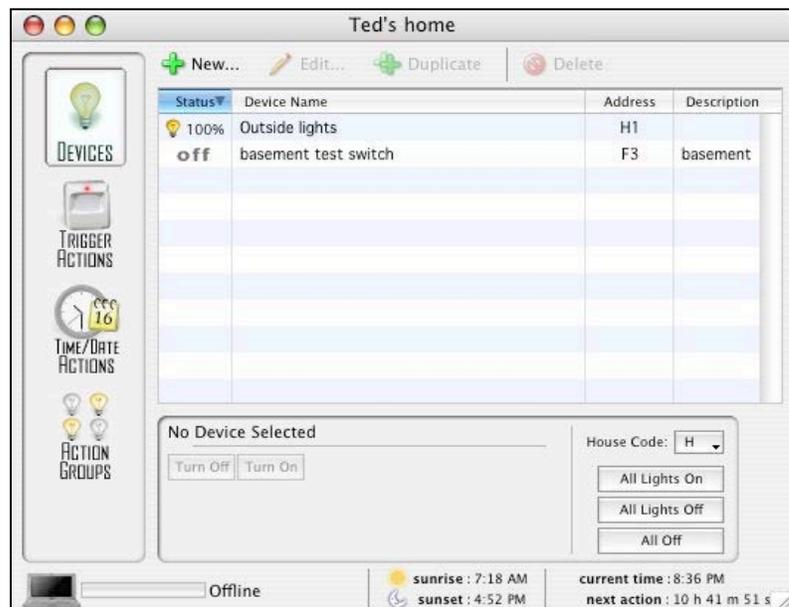
The Control Hub
for Your Home



Strengths: Easy to set up controls using pull down menus. Works with the USB based computer interface, can receive controls via phone, RF, and many other means.

Weaknesses: Doesn't save program in computer interface device for standalone operation. Requires computer to run 24/7 to effectively control home automation.

Indigo is a program that is used to control X10 home automation devices. You can use Indigo to manually turn on and off lights and other electrical equipment and set up scripts to automatically control devices at certain times or when triggered by specific events. Indigo can also be programmed to send email when certain events occur.



Before we discuss Indigo, let's take a look at what X10 is. X10 is a general term for a wide variety of home automation controls that use the X10 protocol. An X10 switch adds intelligence to a standard wall switch and gives you the ability to dim lights, have them come on or go off automatically, at certain times, or if certain events occur. Other X10 devices can be used to control power to larger items such as a coffee pot or heating and cooling system, giving you the ability to control how and when they operate. Actually, the uses of X10 are limited only by one's imagination.

X10 has been around for a while, even longer than the Macintosh! Because of this, the standard computer interface is still a serial one. While some manufacturers now sell a USB-based device, people who actually have been using X10 for a while probably own a serial device.

Indigo provides an interface to control your X10 items in real time. In order to communicate to the X10 devices in your home, you need a computer interface device and a way to connect it to your Macintosh. If it is one of the older serial devices you will need a USB to serial adaptor for newer Macs that have USB connections only. (If you have an older Mac sitting around doing nothing, it will make a great home control center. If it has one of the older serial connections, even better). Indigo also supports the newer PowerLinc USB interface on the Macintosh. Which is great if you have a newer USB only Mac. Although I didn't have an opportunity to try this, Indigo also supports remote controls from a Bluetooth enabled cell phone http://www.perceptiveautomation.com/indigo/clicker_info.html and remotely through any touch tone phone using Ovolab Phlink support. http://www.perceptiveautomation.com/indigo/phlink_info.html

All these methods of controlling your home automation make Indigo one of the most easily accessed home automation control applications around. The only disappointment I found with Indigo was the fact that it cannot save control information into those serial computer interface devices which can store control data. Thus to use Indigo's features, you have to always have a computer running. Which means you must have a computer dedicated to home automation. While this isn't a big problem for many people, it is something to consider.

There is a little set up when you first use Indigo. You need to tell it what type of computer interface you have, by selecting yours from a pull down menu. It will communicate with all the popular interfaces consisting of about 7 wired interfaces and 2 wireless ones. If you already own an interface, check out their web site to see if yours is supported <http://www.perceptiveautomation.com/indigo/index.html?PHPSESSID=e310eb04f62691b817946997c66951a9>.

Once it knows the interface you have, Indigo is ready to begin controlling all of your X10 devices. You then create a database for your home (or wherever) which lists the X10 devices you have installed and how you want them controlled.

Adding a device in Indigo database is a simple means of choosing from a list of stock devices, providing its address and giving it a name that means something to you. (i.e. replacing a useless title such as "generic light switch" with something useful like "outside lights").

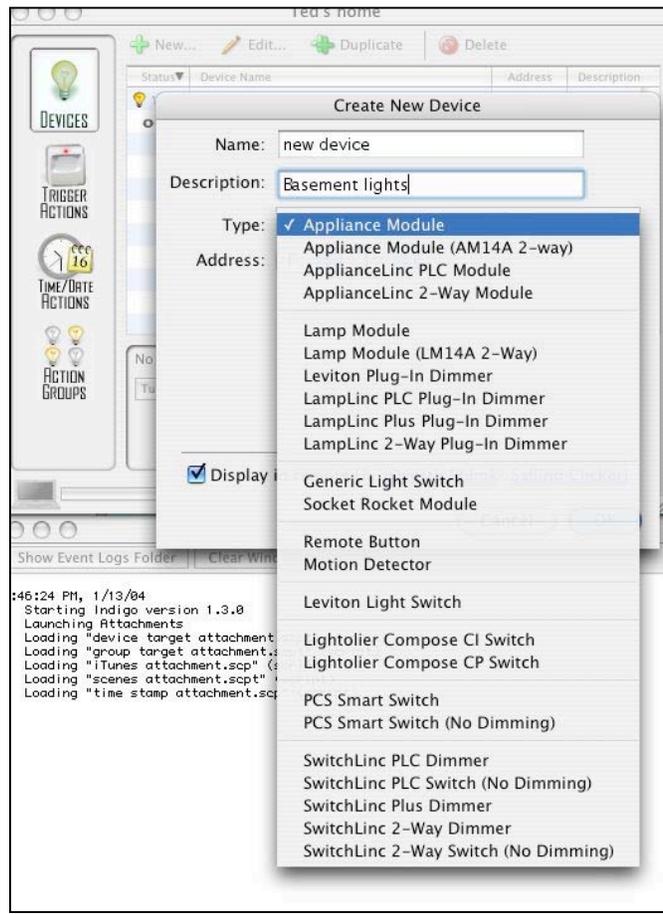
Sure, you can turn things on and off in real time with home automation software, but where these types of programs really shine is with the ability to create automatic control operations. Indigo offers time/date controls as well as a variety of trigger actions in which Indigo looks for certain things to occur before operating a device.

Time actions can be as simple as turn on lights at 7 p.m. and off at 11, to much more complex scripts such as: turn on to 100% for 15 minutes, then decrease to 50% brightness for the next 15 minutes, then turn off. As long as your Mac knows what time zone it is in, Indigo will know the time for sunset and sunrise. Which means you can link events to them.

Trigger actions are similar to time actions, but add a number of additional conditions which can trigger a device on or off. An action can be triggered by another device turning on, an X10 command being issued to another device, a power failure, and more. The triggered event can have conditions, such as do this except during the day or at night. All control actions can execute an AppleScript, send email, or even speak that an event has occurred!

An interesting trigger action a friend of mine uses has to do with controlling lights during a movie at home. Using an RF control, when he is ready to watch the movie in his living room, he just presses the remote. The X10 controller detects this and slowly dims the lights down to around 10% brightness. If, as it almost always does, the phone rings during the movie, a second slick of the RF remote brings the light slowly up to 80%, giving his eyes time to adjust and find the phone.

I was easily able to set up Indigo to turn on my Holiday lights at sunset and turn them off at 11PM, meaning I didn't have to remember to press the switch twice a day. Another set up I used was a security light. I set the light to turn on at 6PM and off at 10PM, but to use a security feature that shifted the time

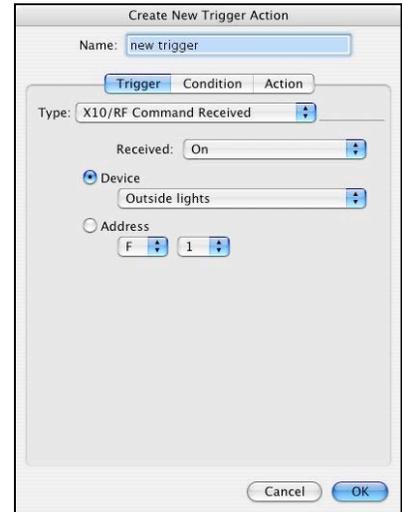


a little, differently each day. So it would turn on at 5:58 and off at 10:59 one day and at a different set of times the next. This gives a "lived-in" look to how the lights operate.

How one uses home automation is a function of one's imagination Indigo provides the tools necessary to use your imagination to create interesting yet functional controls in your home.

If you are new to home automation, the Indigo web site as well as the extensive Mac OS help files included with the Indigo installation, not only show how to use Indigo, but explains the home automation process and how to apply it. Their site also offers a forum for asking questions.

I would recommend that anyone considering running home automation software on their Macintosh take a look at Indigo. It will do an excellent job for you and it runs in Mac OS X. The only downside of this program is that it won't store control items on the computer interface device. This was an issue at my house, since my wife told me there was no way I was going to run a Mac 24/7 to control the lights, especially since we have a \$60 stand alone controller (which is a pain to program), that works fine.



There are a lot of features packed inside of Indigo, many that I have only just begun to think of uses for! It is really important to give Indigo a try. When you do, look over the options and think how you might apply each one to your particular situation. I was amazed at all the idea's I came up with just looking at the options available.

Since Indigo offers a trial period download, download it and give it a try with your equipment, even if you already use a software package. You might find some useful features inside Indigo.

I would recommend trying out Indigo if you are looking for a piece of home automation software. If you already own one, you might want to consider giving Indigo a try to see how it compares.

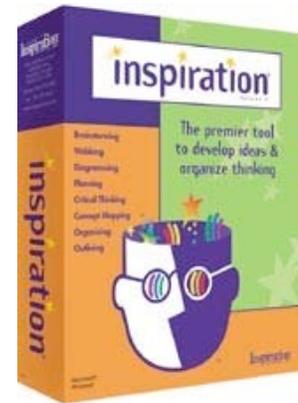
Inspiration™ 7.5 – A tool for brainstorming, planning, and assessing the interrelationships between processes, variables, and events that are parts of most projects

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Inspiration Software, Inc.
7412 SW Beaverton–Hillsdale Hwy
Suite 102
Portland, OR 97225
1-800-877-4292 or 1-503-297-3004
Fax: 1-503-297-4676
<http://www.Inspiration.com/>

Price: \$69 (USD), \$40 (upgrade). Free fully featured trial for 30 days
Operating Systems Supported: Macintosh and Windows
Requirements: OS X 10.0 or higher, as well as System 7.1 or higher.
Recommended accessories: color printer, Internet connection, and, possibly, a microphone.
Tested on a 1 GHz PowerPC G4 Macintosh running OS X 10.2.8.



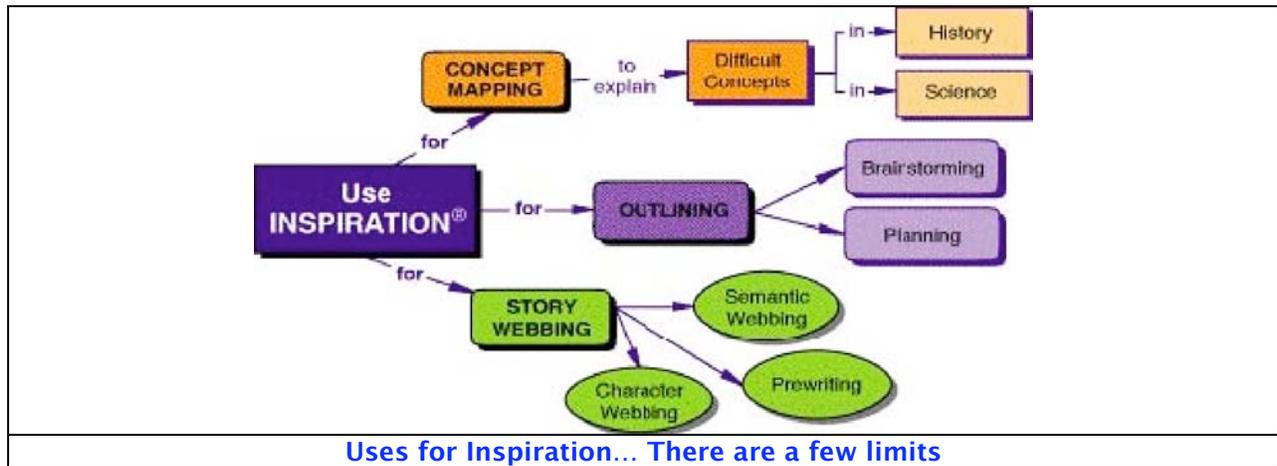
Strengths: An easy to learn and use, moderately priced, intuitive, and well thought out tool to help clarify and organize your ideas and project information (e.g., weddings, speeches, festival plans, and reports).

Weaknesses: As an individual who is not an educator, I found many of the icons too cutesy, and the templates too oriented toward classroom use. Since this software is a great tool for most everyone, I wish that the publisher would add materials to support a general user or business user.

Overview

Inspiration 7.5 is a powerful tool that helps clarify and organize ideas and information in an easy to use visual metaphor. Inspiration's Diagram view makes it easy to brainstorm, plan, and explain the interrelationships between processes, variables, and events. Use it to create concept maps, process flows, knowledge maps, flowcharts, and other visual diagrams. Then use Inspiration's integrated Outline view to help create clear, concise, written presentations, proposals, and reports. The symbols, templates, and example files in Inspiration are designed specifically for diagramming, outlining, flowcharting, knowledge mapping, brainstorming, and systems thinking. They would also serve for the design of multimedia-associated materials. Inspiration organizes information as flow charts, concept maps, design storyboards, and other diagrams. Diagram creation is simplified by the use of templates. Inspiration diagrams can be exported as Web pages and its outlines as text. A one-click Transfer button can be used to instantly move your work into their favorite word processor.

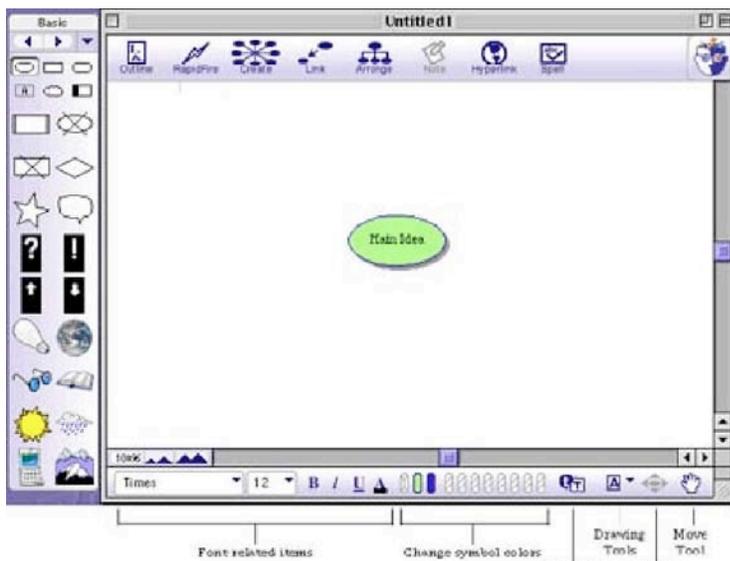
Inspiration is software with well-crafted visual tools that helps users learn how to organize and prioritize their thoughts and associated information. The software is flexible so that as your awareness of a project matures it will allow you to smoothly introduce new knowledge, afterthoughts, and ideas into existing diagrams. The software's intuitive toolbars and interactive templates make it easy to work with.



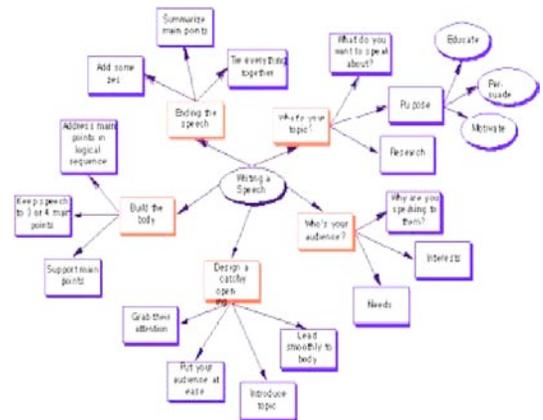
An Amateur Logician's Inspirational Musing

Much of the information you and I collect and, at times, want to organize is, at best, loosely connected. Sometimes we (you, me, or the PC addicts or engineers you interact with) gather information, not in a linear and logical fashion, but often by intuition. Now, intuitive information is hard to think about let alone to organize and justify. The tale of the math student I went to graduate school with fits. In the first months of his thesis work, he found the answer to the problem he was trying to solve. However, he needed to spend the next two years trying to identify the steps he leaped over, organize them, and write them down so his professors would believe his answer.

One approach to dealing with such complex problems is to use brainstorming techniques. (A definition for those who love words: *brainstorm*—to try to solve a problem by thinking intensely about it, hoping it will lead to a clear [and often sudden] understanding of a complex situation.) It's usually a group problem-solving technique in which members sit around and let fly with ideas and possible solutions to the problem. I've often played the solo version of brainstorming—Great! No one there to give me dirty looks for my off-the-top ideas.



Inspiration New Window Diagram



Brainstorming a Speech

It's quite simple, sort of, especially with a good diagramming tool. Without being judgmental, capture in small bites all the information associated with your project:

- What are you trying to accomplish?
- What tools or methods must you use?
- When and under what constraints?

During this process, you must identify and capture all the possible alternatives you and your co-workers come up with; again, I stress, nonjudgmentally. After that step, it's easier. You've got the world—now you get to narrow down your bits and pieces in a controlled rational fashion. As a working scientist and ad hoc engineer, I've found that if you use the reverse approach, starting with a list of potentially viable solutions that your team agrees to, you will miss important options that may be a better solution to your problem. Indeed, you are likely to implement something that will work poorly at best, and the hard way at worst.

At times, we all have such a spider web mix of stuff in our heads that it's a problem even locking onto the snippets of an idea, let alone putting them in some sort of an order we can evaluate. By using the brainstorming (diagram) features of Inspiration you can use this method without worrying about what factoids mean or how they fit together, at least initially. This, as stated earlier, gives you a chance to avoid, early on the needed to decide "Is it right, proper, or workable?" — Things our decision making brain wants to know yesterday.

Installation

A full installation of this software was simple, straightforward, and problem free. The software requires about 35 MB of hard disk space. In addition to the application itself, the installer places the symbol libraries, spell-checking dictionaries, help files, PDF documentation, templates (60+), and examples (22) into the application's folder. I installed the software into my user applications folder—that is not a restriction. As is usual for a Jaguar compliant application, other files are added to your Library -> preferences folder. That's all there is—it's ready to use immediately after installation, for real, after typing in your password, or as a 30 day demo if you don't.

Using Inspiration

Diagram view— The main elements of the diagram window, a powerful combination of easily accessible tools, are described below. You create new documents in Inspiration by modifying a blank diagram or by using a template. You can also import outlines as RTF files, which Inspiration will convert to diagrams. Its diagram view has a single "Main Idea" topic box in the middle of the window. The symbol library palette lies to the left of the content window. The pop-up menu at the top of that palette lets you switch between libraries of templates and images. Inspiration installs a library with over 1,300 colorful, high-resolution symbols, including several hundred photographic quality images and animated symbols.

When first opening Inspiration, at the start of a project, a tool palette appears at the top of the main window that contains the following option buttons:

- Outline (switch to outline view)
- RapidFire™ (quickly make sequential topic entries)
- Create (add a symbol box)
- Link (add a hyper link)
- Arrange (display the arrange options window)
- Note (add a text note)
- Hyperlink (add a link to an external file)
- Spell (check spelling throughout document)

The formatting palette appears below the content window. It has menus for changing the font and font size, buttons for toggling font styles, buttons for changing symbol colors, a button for applying or changing default settings, a pop-up menu of drawing tools, a nudge tool, and a move tool (hand). The formatting tool palette makes it easier to change characteristics of a diagram element.

One feature I've never seen before, RapidFire, allows new ideas to be drawn and documented as fast as they come to mind, using only the keyboard. In other diagramming products I have attempted to use, making changes was both awkward and tedious, and, at times, irreversible.

In some situations, starting with an Inspiration template allows you to get started more quickly. Those templates, organized by topic, are accessed via the Open Template... item in the File menu. Although Inspiration comes with 60+ templates, education-oriented topics predominate. But, templates can be modified to better meet your needs, and can be saved as custom templates for your future use. You also can find downloadable templates on Internet sites, both those from the developer and others posted by users.

Outlining tools—Inspiration's outlining tools are quite flexible and adequate. Remember, the developer has created this software to use diagramming as the user's initial point of entry. The built-in outline prefix styles include Roman numerals (and letters), use of alphanumerics, numbers, or bullets. You also can create a custom outline style; for example, one that mixes alphanumeric with bullets. *Outline* view shows you an outline view depiction of your diagram and provides the organized hierarchical structure that supports incorporating your now organized ideas into a written report. At that point, to complete your document, you just fill in the details—you know...your purple prose accompanied by stunning figures and tables as needed.

Remember, outlines can easily be exported or imported (as RTF) to or from any word processor. Exports can be used to create frameworks for your final documents or to serve as a storyboard for a presentation. Imported or re-imported outlines can be readily visualized in diagram mode, allowing a quick visual check on their relationship and underlying logic.

Documentation—When you install this software, the supporting documents are added to the application's folder. These PDF files include: Getting Started, User's Manual, Symbol Guide, and Template.

The 37 page, clearly illustrated Inspiration™ *Quick Start Tutorial* takes you from Getting Started (including diagram view), through a discussion of Outline View, to Returning to Diagram View, which allows you to check your work before printing it or before exporting it to your word processor. As you rapidly progress up Inspiration's very shallow learning curve, the 202 pages *Users Manual* can provide you with information that may not be intuitive or that just enables you to grow your skills. A training CD, which I did not request from the publisher, is mostly aimed at teachers.

An additional feature I found quite helpful was the ability to search the Help files using Boolean queries. This feature eliminated, for the most part, the need to play hide and seek which are an all too common part of using MS Office's Help support.



More Details

In the Diagram View, users can easily create and use concept maps, information webs, and other graphic form organizers. With the integrated Outline View, users can instantly transform their thoughts into the structure for a well-organized written project. This results from Inspiration's integrated diagramming and outlining environments, which work together to help users visualize and understand concepts and information associated with their projects. As noted previously, with a single click of your mouse you can transform a diagram into an outline instantly and vice-versa! In Outline View, users can quickly prioritize and rearrange ideas, building upon the visual information relationships they first created as diagrams. Click again, and the diagrams that result from the outline changes become visible so you now see, in outline format, the new relationships you've created.

And so I started testing: Ignoring the developer's instructions, I spent two hours experimenting "cold-turkey" with the software *before* I touched the documentation. Then I read the *Getting Started* guide and dipped into the *Manual*. A bit of a contrarian approach so beloved by Macintosh users, it all worked out just fine. The route I chose allowed me to gain a better understanding of Inspiration's strengths and uses in my own hit-or-miss fashion. I did make "after the manual" corrections to my diagrams and played with moving around elements of my outline. The 45 minutes spent reading the Quick Start guide is well worth the effort. One feature that I particularly liked and needed was the software's multiple undo and redo ability. It

allowed me to more wildly experiment with inputs and information arrangements, with the confidence that none of my initial stream of consciousness ideas would be lost. Users can freely change information and add ideas via the RapidFire feature, secure in the knowledge that undo and redo options are readily available as potential bailouts.

As stated by its developer, "toolbars make using Inspiration intuitive! The major Inspiration functions are at your fingertips with its smart toolbars. No need to memorize keyboard shortcuts or search through menu items to find features — just click on the toolbar and keep working!" As promised by the developer, the documentation provided was clear and concise, offering step-by-step directions for its use. Experimenting with the program made me again think about the details of a mobile teaching laboratory project, presently bogged down in my head, that I am working on with some of my professional colleagues.

Export-import ability—A one-click transfer instantly moves your work, in rich-text format, to Microsoft Word™ or to your favorite word processor. After working in Inspiration to brainstorm, organize, and outline, users can transfer the results to either a word processor or your favorite presentation program. Outlines created in Inspiration and MS Word RTF can be passed back and forth between these applications, with RTF maintaining the levels of the outline. This allows users to finish the writing process and prepare the results for distribution. A user can also export a storyboard built in Inspiration, as viewed in outline form, into MS PowerPoint™.

Minor Issues

I found this software to be too oriented to educational use. Since the software is a great, easy to use tool for non-academics, I wish the publisher would add materials to support a general user or business user. Although I greatly prefer Inspiration, Concept Draw Pro™, now ConceptDraw MINDMAP™ (CS Odessa, Inc., <http://www.conceptdraw.com/>), has 80 such "libraries" (conceptual diagram templates to suit you selected project needs). So in future releases, I hope you folks at Inspiration Software will take my request seriously.

Conclusions

Inspiration is the best product I've tried for creating visual aids to thinking and planning. I found the cost reasonable, and a liberal upgrade policy assures the software will be ever fresh. New users can readily create simple diagrams and outlines, and experienced users can create more elaborate outlines, flow charts, and concept maps. Inspiration is a great tool for anyone who conducts brainstorming sessions, especially if the diagram-in-progress can be displayed on a whiteboard connected to a computer.

This software works well in helping users at all experience levels identify main ideas and subtopics and take notes for every project they choose to organize. These projects could range from writing a speech for presentation at your service club, to organizing a two-day music festival featuring 125 artists and the efforts of hundreds of volunteers.

It deserves 4.0 macCs, more if the next version has more adult task-oriented or business templates and icons.

Review Post Script

In 20-20 hindsight, perhaps I should have used Inspiration to capture my initial Inspiration review concepts and structure. Perhaps I will for my next book or software review for macC.

Little Snitch 1.1

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Heger, Schwarzott, Starkjohann & Tiefenbrunner OEG

Grosse Schiffgasse 1A/7

A-1020 Vienna

AUSTRIA – EUROPE

Phone: +43-1-60936506

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EU VAT Code: AT U46575102

Firmenbuch FN 177499 d

Registriert beim Handelsgericht Wien

littleSnitch@obdev.at

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

List Price: \$25 USD at https://usd.swreg.org/soft_shop/2197/shopsr7.shtml

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.

3-hour demo: <http://www.obdev.com/products/littleSnitch/index.html>

LittleSnitch Mailing List <http://at.obdev.at/mailman/listinfo/littleSnitch-talk>

Archives: <http://www.mail-archive.com/littleSnitch-talk@obdev.at/>

For Mac OS X users who want to see authorized or unauthorized interactivity from their systems.



Strengths: Protection for the paranoid. Alerts when requesting network access to others.

Weaknesses: None.

Interested in knowing who or what is using your computer without permission while you are logged in? Try Little Snitch (LS). Now you will *really* know if information is going to Microsoft or others who say, "No information is being sent to us". LS has been around for a while (and it indeed was a "Little Pest") but version 1.1 seems to be handling problems better than before. And it is not SpyWare. However, it *is* a "blow the whistle" Preference Panel program or "Application Supervisor" for those of us who might feel a bit paranoid about how our computer is being accessed.

"Little Snitch consists of 3 parts: The user interface daemon, a preferences pane and a kernel module. The UDP socket is used for communication between the user interface daemon and the kernel module." Loading the Installer into the Applications folder allows uninstalling of the application. Using LS is going to make you ask a lot of questions such as, "What is xxx.app"? when it asks permission to allow or deny connections based on a bunch of user-definable rules. (Try <http://www.westwind.com/reference/OS-X/background-processes.html> to identify some of the Unix process apps.)

Would you like to know if your machine has any Trojans, Worms or other Internet nasties lurking around and sending out data? Is there an application that sends statistical information to the developer every time you turn it on? Are there certain servers that should not be accessed?

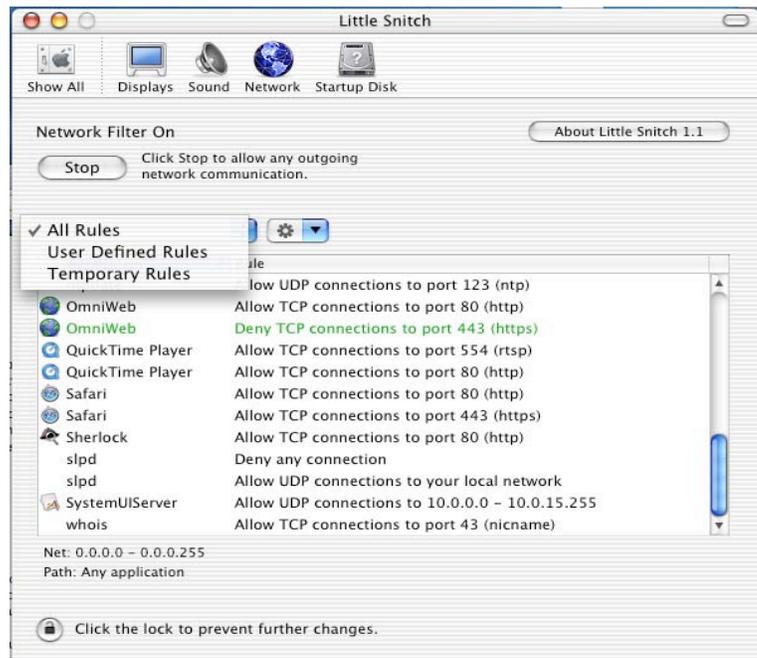
Hey! They did it! When an attempt is identified by LS, clicking on the icon in the upper left corner provides a little bit more information such as the IP address, Unix ID and full path.



So LS doesn't pop up all the time, the rules page can be adjusted as well in Preferences. Of course to do stuff there you need to have Admin. permissions, but you get the point. If you want more information on rule-making, access the documentation on the web page listed above. There is even a Tips & Tricks section.

How does LS know the destination device? It uses a reverse lookup process. Rules can also be changed to monitor local Area Network activity such as Airport or PPP modem connectivity. Be aware that more specific rules override less specific ones and rules run in ascending order so it is "first come, first served", and yes, that can be adjusted. Test "deny" rules as temporary rules first.

Firewalk™ X (it uses a modified kernel module) currently overrides LS so that could be a "gotcha" if you use Firewalk X. For other items, please check the FAQ page on the website.



So far, so good. SL hasn't caused any kernel panics or gotten in the way much. It has caused me to see some interesting behavior I'll need to do more research on later. Right now LS is working fine. Go try it yourself and see what you come up with. Then go participate in the mail list provided above. This is just one more tool to see what is going on around you and from your system. Use it for 3 hours, then decide if you want to pay for it.

Mariner Calc® v.5.2.2

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Mariner Software

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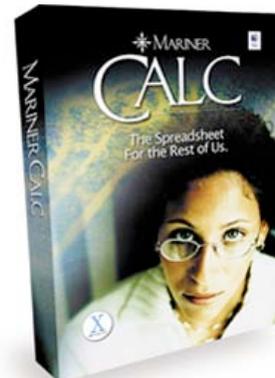
www.marinersoftware.com

Cost: \$79.95 for boxed copy; download for \$69.95 [USD]. It is also available bundled with Mariner Write. (Note, I reviewed Marine Write® for MacC in November 2003.)

System Requirements: Mac OS X (Jaguar or Panther) and Classic Mac OS 8.6. It requires as little as 2 MB of memory. (Tested on a Power Macintosh G4 using OS X, v.10.2.8.)

Download File Size: 3.8 MB

Level: both new and experienced spreadsheet users



Strengths: A well-conceived, well-rendered, Microsoft-compatible, and cost effective alternative to MS Excel for all but the most demanding users.

Weaknesses: It's a spreadsheet.

Overview

Mariner Calc (Calc) is a powerful spreadsheet for the Apple Macintosh designed for the analysis, simulation, and forecasting of numerical data. For most spreadsheet users, it captures most often used features of MS Excel® at a fraction of the price. Graphics and drawing tools enhance the appearance of your documents, and 15 chart types let you view your data graphically. Of primary importance to users of an alternative spreadsheet package is its ability to read and write to Excel. Mariner Calc allows for saves to both SYLK and an Excel customized version of SYLK.

Introduction

As those of you who've read my reviews and columns know, I hate spreadsheets. I would rather use a few hours of my time to create the tool I need in Filemaker Pro® [FMP] than attempt to do the same job in Excel, the only spreadsheet software I've previously owned. (Note: I'm the guy who took three, count this 1-2-3, Excel classes, all paid for by various employers, only to have the information vanish within a week after the course ended.) When opening up a blank Excel spreadsheet, all I want to do is to play "connect-the-dots to create squares", a game from my childhood. From the perspective of those for whom spreadsheets rank as part of their personal nirvana, I am a learning-impaired, dyslexic and totally blocked user of such software.

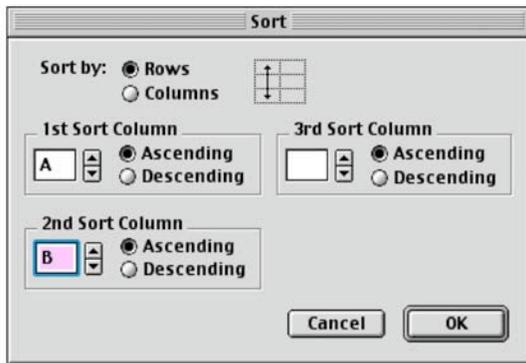
"doc_Babad," you might rightly ask, "why did you consent to review this product?" Well, based on the publisher's blurbs, and a quick check of the excellent and clearly written manual that Mariner provides, I figured that perhaps (for a week or two only) I could make this software work. After all, it looks less complex and intimidating than Excel. It never hurts, I deceived myself into believing, to have an extra tool in your software collection even if it's a spreadsheet.

In order to provide our readers with a full report on this product, I shall be reporting on both my experiences as well as those of Tom Gorham (MacUser UK) and Kirk Hiner (Applelinks.com). This allows me to expand beyond my level of incompetence by citing and, at times, quoting other reviews to augment my obviously meager spreadsheet skills.

I was convinced I should try this software by the publisher's statement, by previewing the user guide, that "the purpose of the program is to get some work done without taking an advanced degree in spreadsheets." I agree that Mariner 5 allows you to do just that. The publisher further states, "And if you want to get fancy and build a really complicated spreadsheet Mariner 5 allows you to do that as well. (*I skipped this part, life is too short.*)"

"The Mariner 5 User Guide is intended to provide you with a working knowledge of the features and interface elements in the program. The key idea is to be up and running, creating useful spreadsheets, adding some graphics, and then getting your masterpiece printed. Now to build a spreadsheet!" But the folks who wrote the manuals did a good job of putting the software into perspective compared to by somewhat bitter experiences with Excel as illustrated by two screen shots.

To sort further within a family:



- 1) Select the sort area in the spreadsheet.
- 2) Pull down Options in the menu bar and choose "Sort..."
- 3) Click "Rows" at the top of the Sort dialog box.
- 4) Under 1st Sort Column choose "A", under the 2nd Sort Column choose "B".
- 5) Click OK and the sort area will be sorted by Column A 1st, and then within a family in Column B 2nd as shown on the next page.

Sorting selected cells is easy

I tried it, and, after fooling around with their examples, I created one of my own—my first ever spreadsheet. It worked for me, but I still hate spreadsheets!

About the Software

Living in a Wintel world, there's no denying the importance of Microsoft compatibility, and Calc offers good integration with Excel. It directly imports native Excel files and provides export support for Excel-hinted SYLK, CSV and various text translations. According to MacUser UK reviewer Tom Gorham (www.macuser.co.uk; Issue: 19/8; Date: Apr 03), Calc does stumble on more complex Excel spreadsheets, such as those incorporating macros, but overall he was very impressed by its translation abilities.

Using Functions in Mariner 5

Functions in Mariner 5.0 are pre-built formulas designed to save the user of the program time and effort. Mariner 5.0 has 140 functions covering a wide variety of analytical tools. These functions cover Mathematical, Trigonometric, Financial, Time, Logical, Worksheet, Statistical, and String calculations.

Each function in Mariner 5.0 is listed as they appear in the application's pull-down menu. After the name of each is a short statement about what each function does. Next, is the format in which variables must be written within the function parentheses in order for the Mariner spreadsheet to be able to perform its calculations.

The last things provided are some examples of the functions with specific variables so the user can see what kinds of results to expect from using that function.

The Language of Formulas

Numbers

Text - must be enclosed within double quotes ("text")

Operators - short-hand mathematical notation used with formulas

Cell or range references - ie., A1 or B1:E5

Functions - ie., =PI

Sample introduction to Calc's functions

If one listens to the siren songs of our fathers in Redmond, Microsoft Excel is indispensable to the Mac platform. Few users ever question the MS paradigm. The result is that inexpensive alternatives, ideal for business users on a budget, are routinely and unfairly ignored. Mariner Software's little-known spreadsheet programs is a cases in point. Although it can't match Excel's feature count or the complexity of its interface, updated for Mac OS X, Mariner Calc is a compelling substitute in terms of usability and value for money.

Key Features Summary

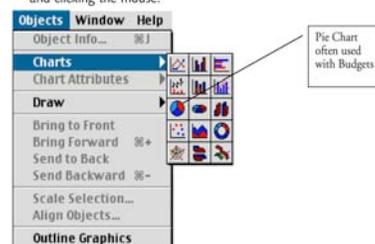
- 32,000 rows X 32,000 columns spreadsheets to analyze large data sets.
- Graphics and drawing tools enhance the appearance of your documents.
- 15 chart types to graphically view data.
- Macintosh drag-and-drop gives you a powerful alternative to cut, copy, and paste.
- Dynamic scrolling lets you see your pages move as you drag the scroll control.
- 80,000+ word spelling dictionary which can be shared with Mariner Write®.
- WorldScript savvy-supports Kanji and numerous other international scripts.
- Multiple undo feature lets you trace your last 9 steps.
- 140 built-in functions and features including, named ranges, split and freeze window panes, print preview, find and replace, sorting, auto sum, protected worksheets and cell borders.
- Save your documents in SYLK, Comma-Separated-Values (CSV) values (great for feeding FMP), and various ASCII text formats.
- Open Excel, SYLK or TEXT file formats.
- Instead of pallettes cluttering up the user's screen, Mariner places many options on a variety of configurable button bars that can be toggled by clicking an icon on each bar. Some options, such as the charting and drawing tools, are located on tear-off menus, again saving screen space.
- Runs on as little as 2 MB RAM
- Mariner Calc ships with two manuals: a 72-page manual for general use, and a 78-page manual for its spreadsheet functions.



Charting with Calc is a No-Brainer

Choosing a graph type

- 1) Go to Objects in the Mariner menu bar.
- 2) Move the cursor to Charts in the drop-down menu.
- 3) Choose a graph type by moving the cursor to the appropriate icon and clicking the mouse.



And now, you choose your graph

A Newbie's Perspective on Calc's Shortfalls

Due to my lack of experience with spreadsheets, a number of the things about the publisher's product troubled me.

- There were too few sample spreadsheets provided. To be precise, there were two. Since the software is aimed at both newbies and experienced spreadsheet users, more sample spreadsheets would be a helpful complement to the excellent user's manual. As a user of products such as MS Word® [MSW] and Filemaker Pro [FMP], I've certainly benefited from both the wealth of templates and the examples available for both the later software programs on the Internet.
- I could find no links to any Mariner Calc user groups that might help in learning the software. Establishing such a site for both Calc (and Write) would not only serve to help existing users, but also help to attract new users as word of mouth spreads.
- The lack of more detailed definitions of terms used in the 78 page manual of functions frustrated me. The publisher states, "The Mariner 5 Function Guide is designed to provide you with working knowledge of the analytical functions in the program and how to get the most out of them. The Guide is not meant to be an encyclopedia that will answer every question you might have about the functions, but rather enough to get you started." I'm not an accountant, statistician, or logician, so much in this document went over my head. I'm not asking for the hundreds of pages a textbook on functions would require, but I'd sure like to know, in plainer language, what the technical words mean rather than trying to search for understanding in the small print definitions in the functions guide. Adding 20 pages would better allow newbies to explore the myriad functions Calc can provide.

Conclusions

With a lot of help from the manual, I extracted the categories, data types, and calculations based on the FMP files I use for tax preparation and turned them into a spreadsheet. After all, all I wanted from a spreadsheet was to (a) input receipts by categories of deductibles and (b) add to auto up totals for my accountant. I even found a way in Calc (easy in FMP) to estimate the cost of driving (business, medical, and charitable work) from the permitted IRS allowable driving allowable costs. So, though I'll never be enthused, addicted, or even tantalized by the spreadsheet metaphor, as a beginner, I got the software to work for me. For users more knowledgeable in the whys and wherefores of spreadsheet use, this is likely to be a great product. Bottom line, Calc has a smaller footprint, more easily understood toolbars, and menus than Excel and the publisher provides a well thought out help-system.

I agree with Kirk Hiner's review (Applelinks.com September 29, 2002) that "Mariner Calc seems to have found that balance between ease of use and power. It's not weighed down with obscure capabilities that get in the way of those that are really needed. On the other hand, it doesn't sacrifice usability in an effort to make it overly simple."

If you're looking for basic home office spreadsheet functionality, Calc will supply, to this newbie's eyes, almost everything you want. And you can't beat getting about 80% of the features of Microsoft Excel at only 25% of the price. I rate this product 4.0 macCs.

Site Turbo Version 1.1®
Reviewed by Derek Caudill
Edited by Julie M. Willingham



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

Single User License: \$40 USD, Two Computer License: \$80 USD,
Three Computer License: \$120 USD, Four Computer License: \$160
USD, Five Computer License: \$200 USD, Site License: \$330 USD.

Requirements: Mac OS X Jaguar 10.2 or later (but works in Mac
OS 9).

Product Web Site:

[\[http://www.intellisw.com/siteturbo/index.html\]](http://www.intellisw.com/siteturbo/index.html)



Site Turbo



Strengths: Small file size, easy to use, somewhat quick, works (surprisingly) in Mac OS 9. It does encode Email addresses, and it doesn't disable template functionality or mess up any scripting code.

Weaknesses: Doesn't really do anything useful, makes a mess out of code layout, and is too expensive for its lack of usefulness. Not the type of application that is needed anymore.

In the World Wide Web, there are many pages full of interesting graphics and multimedia, and many more pages with reams of code. All these graphics and reams of code add up in page load time, and not everybody has a high speed Internet connection. It's best to try to diminish the load time of your pages, and that can be accomplished to a certain acceptable degree without removing your code and /or graphics.

But this takes time, even if you know how to optimize your graphics in Photoshop, and know how to clean up your code in Dreamweaver. Lets face it: those extra steps take time, and we usually forget about them.

But now all that has changed, thanks to Intelli Innovations Site Turbo®

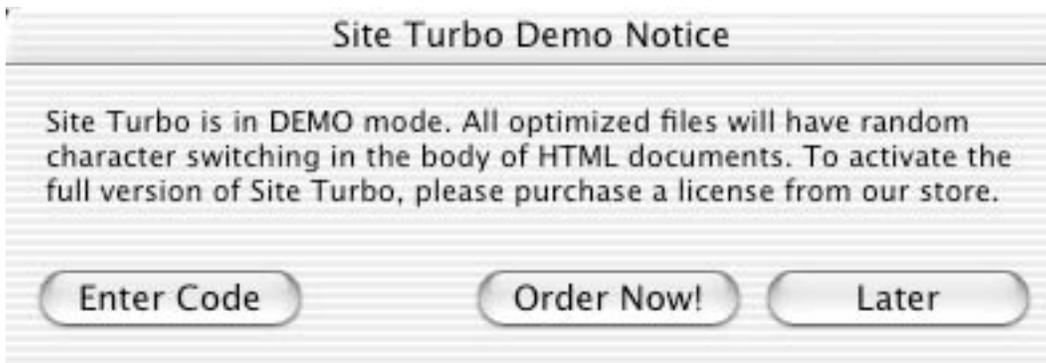
Site Turbo is an application for webpage/site designers who want to make their pages load and parse faster, as well as make their files, HTML and graphic, smaller in size. Site Turbo allows you to do this all at once, with a click of the mouse or by simply dragging and dropping!



The Unstuffed File

How Site Turbo Installs:

Site Turbo is downloaded from the Intelli Innovations website, and comes in a stuffed file that is about 680KB in size. There is no installation application. You simply unstuff the Site Turbo Application and you are ready to use it.



The Demo Mode Dialog

Upon opening Site Turbo for the first time, you will be presented with the usual Software License Agreement, which you must agree to in order to use the software. You will then be presented with a dialog window asking you to enter your registration number, order the product online, or register later. Registering later takes you into demo mode, in which HTML files that you optimize will randomly have the characters in the body switched, making the resulting files unusable because the data contained within the body of the HTML files will be incorrect.

How Site Turbo Works:

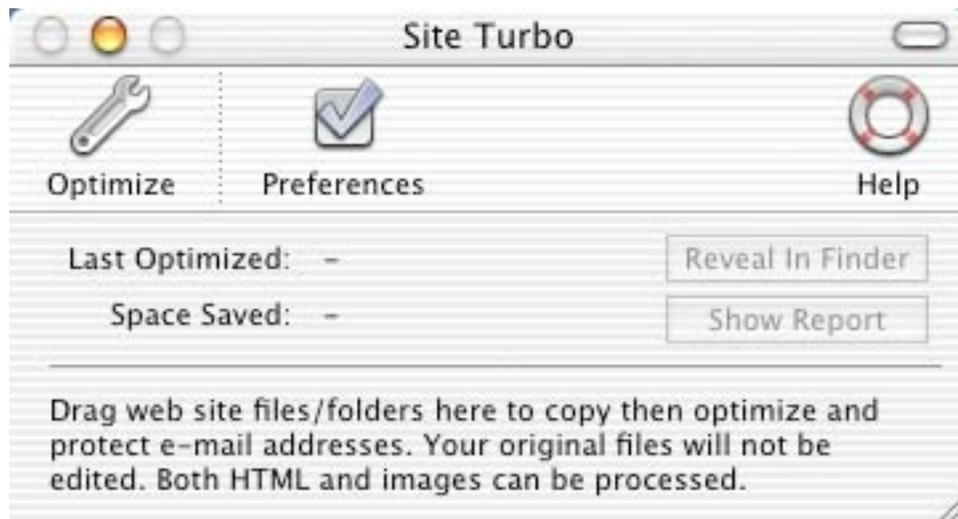
It works by optimizing HTML files and graphics so that they are smaller in file size, take less time to parse, and take less time to load. Site Turbo doesn't modify or remove any scripting in any of the HTML files it works with.

When a file or folder is dragged and dropped onto the Site Turbo window, or a folder (only) is selected via the Optimize button and open dialog, Site Turbo creates a folder on the desktop, "Site Turbo Optimized Files" and copies the files to that folder, leaving the original files where they were and untouched.

Next, Site Turbo will optimize the files for a smaller file size if that option is checked in the preferences. It will then encode any e-Mail address it finds in the HTML documents so that spiders and bots can't obtain the address to use when sending spam. This should result in fewer unwanted e-Mails.

Site Turbo will then remove or replace code in the HTML files based on the settings in the Tag Editing Tab of the Preferences.

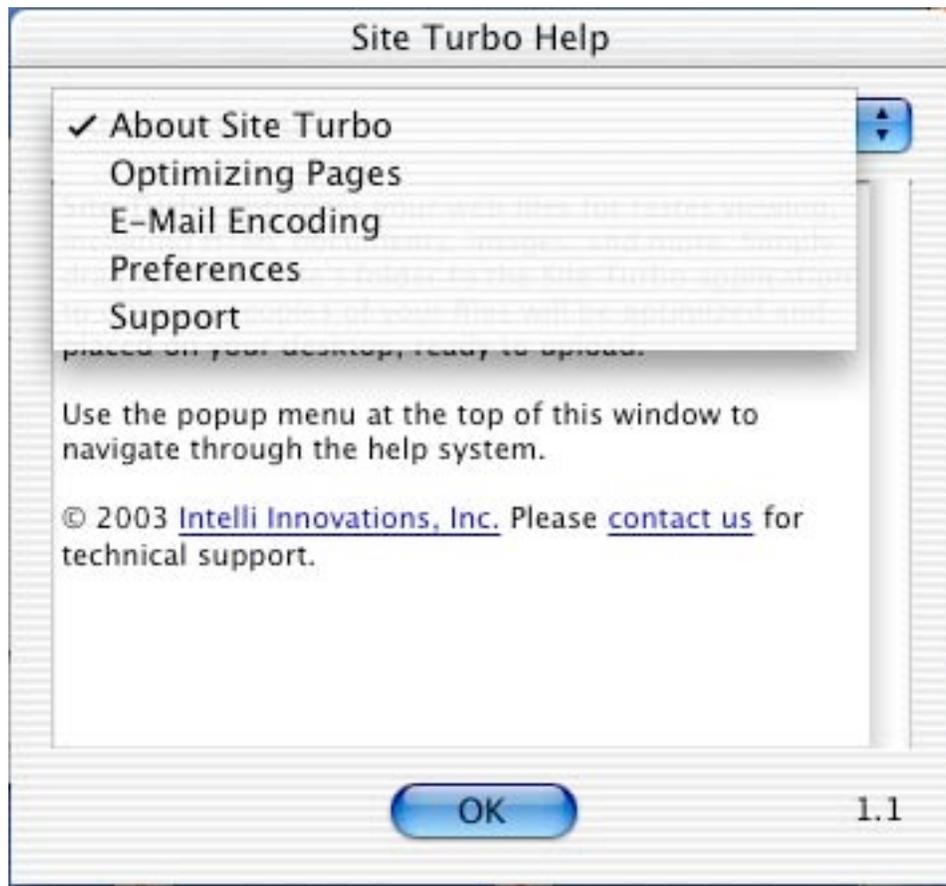
After the optimization is finished, Site Turbo will generate an HTML report detailing what has been saved. That report is available via the "Show Report" button on the Main Site Turbo Window. At this point, the files are ready to be uploaded.



The Main Window

The Interface:

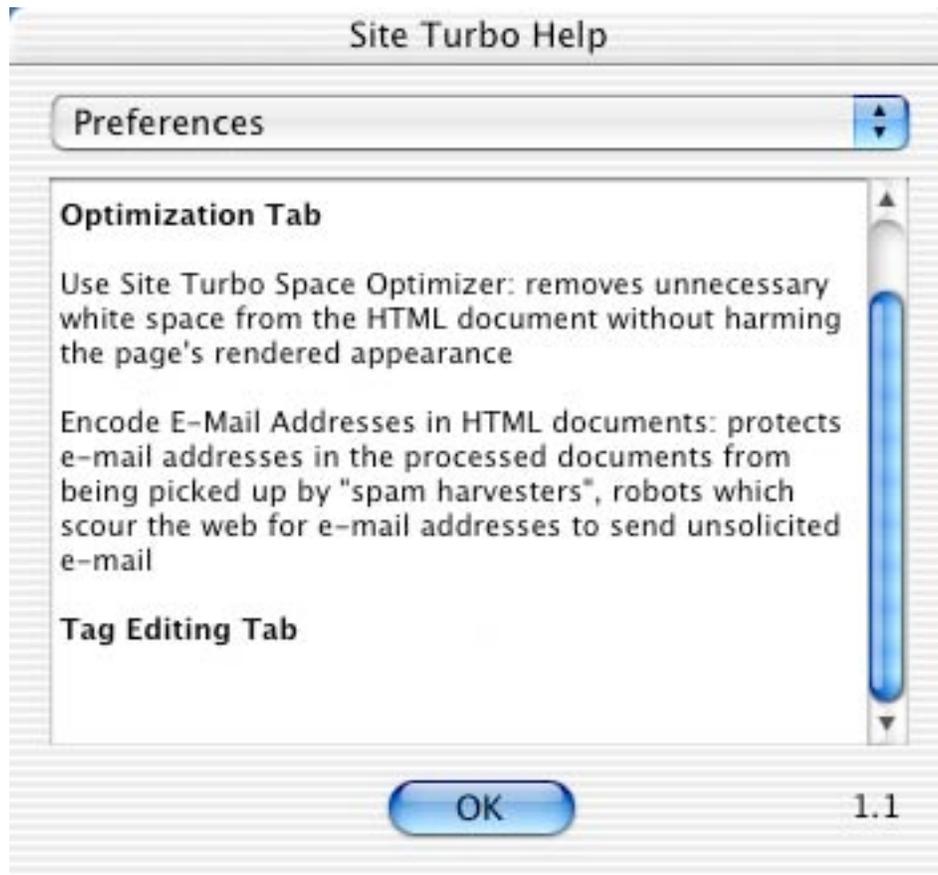
Site Turbo consists of one main window, which gives one-click access to the Preferences, the Help System, and the Optimize function on the same Button Bar. When the Optimize button is clicked, an Open Folder dialog sheet allows you to select the folder of the site to optimize. The main window also lists the last file optimized; the space saved, and allows access to the last Optimization report under the "Show Report" button. Site Turbo also allows you to reveal the location of the last file optimized under the "Reveal in Finder" button. You can hide the Button Bar by clicking the button on the top-right-hand side of the main window.



The Help System

The Help System is available from the main window, or from the "Site Turbo" menu item "About Site Turbo". The Help System is comprised of five sections, accessed from one drop down menu. The version number of Site Turbo is also displayed here. The five sections are:

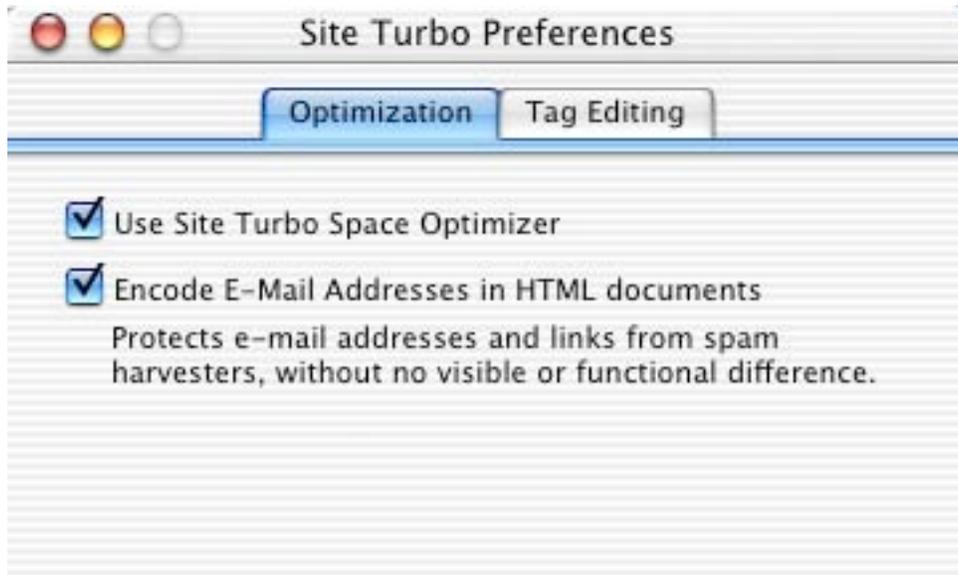
- About Site Turbo:
This describes how to use the Help System, gives copyright information, and tells what Site Turbo does.
- Optimizing pages:
This talks about the procedure that Site Turbo goes through when it optimizes a site, and discusses how no CGI, PHP, or any other type of script will be harmed.
- E-Mail encoding:
This discusses the pros of the built in e-Mail encoding function.



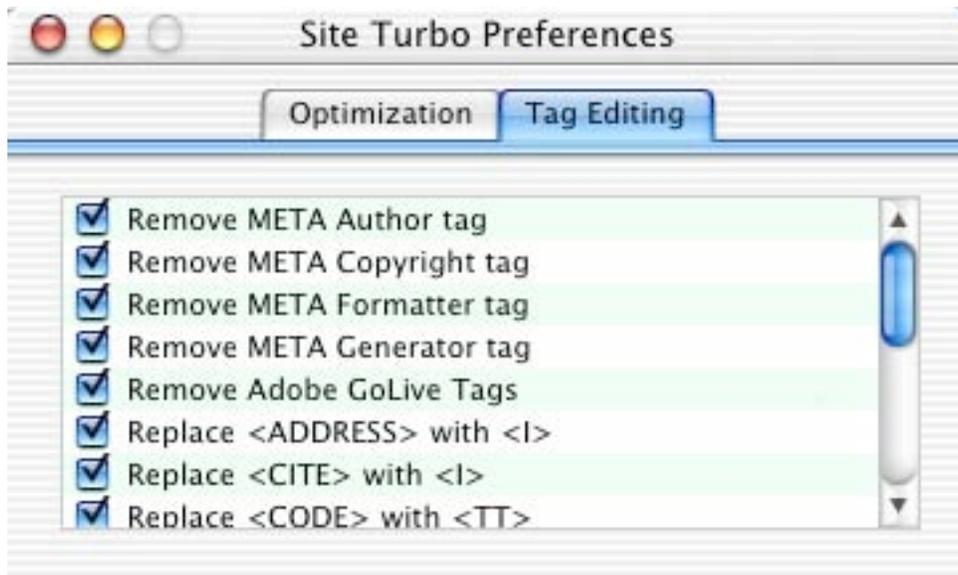
The Unfinished Preferences Help Section

- Preferences: This describes the setting in the Preferences window, and, much to my surprise isn't complete. There is no discussion of the Tag Editing Tab settings, but there is a bold header denoting where that information would be.
- Support: This list the e-Mail address for technical support from Intelli Innovations.

As you can see, there really isn't much information about Site Turbo, which is also the case on the product's website. All the information I've found has been gathered by reading each screen and by using it. The entire Help System would probably equal five paragraphs, and be half a page long.



The Optimization Tab



The Tag Editing Tab

The Preferences window, accessed via the Main window as well, consist of two tabs. The first tab, "Optimization", gives you the option of optimizing for space, and for encoding e-Mail addresses in HTML documents. The second tab is the Tag Editing Tab. There are 14 settings, and they are all selected by default:

1. Remove META Author tag
2. Remove META Copyright tag
3. Remove META Formatter tag
4. Remove META Generator tag
5. Remove Adobe GoLive tags
6. Replace <ADDRESS> with <I>
7. Replace <CITE> with <I>
8. Replace <CODE> with <TT>
9. Replace with <I>
10. Replace with
11. Remove </DD> tag
12. Remove </DT> tag
13. Remove tag
14. Remove </OPTION> tag

The fact that all these are all selected by default worries me, and I recommend that anyone using Site Turbo set their own preferences before Optimizing anything. I say this because several of the META tags that are removed by default are those I use on the macCompanion site. I'm puzzled at their use of non-accessible tags like <I> and . I use and because they accomplish the same visual effects, but they are recognized by screen readers, and are, therefore, accessible. I believe that the W3C even recommends using and for the accessibility reason.

Since Site Turbo tends to lean towards using non-accessible and deprecated tags, I warn anyone against Optimizing without checking the preferences first.

My Experience with Site Turbo:

For the purpose of this review, I performed 3 tests. I have created four separate pages entitled siteturbotest1.html, siteturbotest2.html, siteturbotest3.html, and siteturbotest4.html.

The first test is a comparison between siteturbotest2.html and siteturbotest1.html. These two files are **not attached to a template**, and they are exactly the same except that siteturbotest2.html **has been** run through Site Turbo. Siteturbotest1.html **has not** been run through Site Turbo.

The second test is a comparison between siteturbotest4.html and siteturbotest3.html. These two files **are attached to a template**, and they are exactly the same except that siteturbotest4.html **has been** run through Site Turbo. Siteturbotest3.html **has not** been run through Site Turbo.

The first and second test will check:

- Load time in Safari
- File size of HTML documents
- Number of lines of code

The third test will be comparing two copies of the "images" folder. One **has been** run through Site Turbo, while one **has not been** run through Site Turbo. The third test will check for size difference in the two "images" folders.

Additional Notes:

- I will provide links to all four documents for you to view yourselves.
- I will provide links to the reports for each test generated by Site Turbo. Note: Site Turbo overwrites each report with the newest report; I made copies of each report for your viewing.
- Each page is based on the Version 2.0 design for macCompanion.
- All four pages have examples of JavaScript, CSS, and broken images.
- Each page already has encoded e-Mail addresses. But I will add some that aren't encoded. Note: The e-Mail addresses that are not encoded are dummy addresses.
- Each page's images come from the same location.
- Each page was created with Macromedia Dreamweaver MX.
-

It is important to note that load times will vary for each user, depending on if they are loaded locally, or from a server. So that my Internet connection doesn't play a role, I will be loading these locally. When you view them, your connection speed will play a role. DSL, Cable, T1, and T3 users usually see pretty fast loading already. The main audience who benefits from page optimization uses 56k and below, so please take that into account.

It is also important to note that Dreamweaver optimizes its pages code while it's being created. Dreamweaver is very clean by default, so I may not see much improvement. (I assume Adobe GoLive does the same, but I don't know.)

Line count will be from Dreamweaver MX with word wrap turned off, but the results are the same with word wrap turned on.

How I Test:

Before I load each page, I press Cmd-Option-E to empty Safari's cache.

I test load time by opening the pages in Safari and count the seconds on my digital watch. It may not be the best method, but it does work.

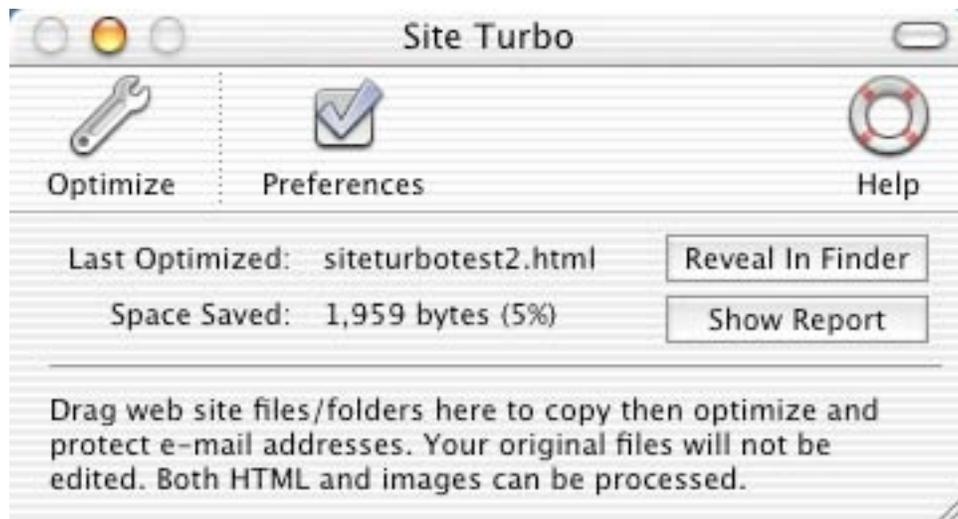
I will run Site Turbo on each file and on my "images" folder by individually dragging and dropping them onto the main window.

I will run the optimization with all options selected in Preferences except for:

1. Remove META Author tag
2. Remove META Copyright tag
3. Remove META Formatter tag
4. Remove META Generator tag
5. Replace with <I>
6. Replace with
- 7.

I will have those turned off because I use those codes.

My Results:



The Results from the first test

The first test:

Webpage Addresses:

Siteturbotest1.html URL: <http://www.maccompanion.com/siteturboreview/siteturbotest1.html>

Siteturbotest2.html URL: <http://www.maccompanion.com/siteturboreview/siteturbotest2.html>

Site Turbo Report: Siteturboreport1.html

<http://www.maccompanion.com/siteturboreview/siteturboreport1.html>

Siteturbotest1.html load time in Safari: 4 Seconds

Siteturbotest1.html file size of HTML document: 36 KB (35,694 bytes)

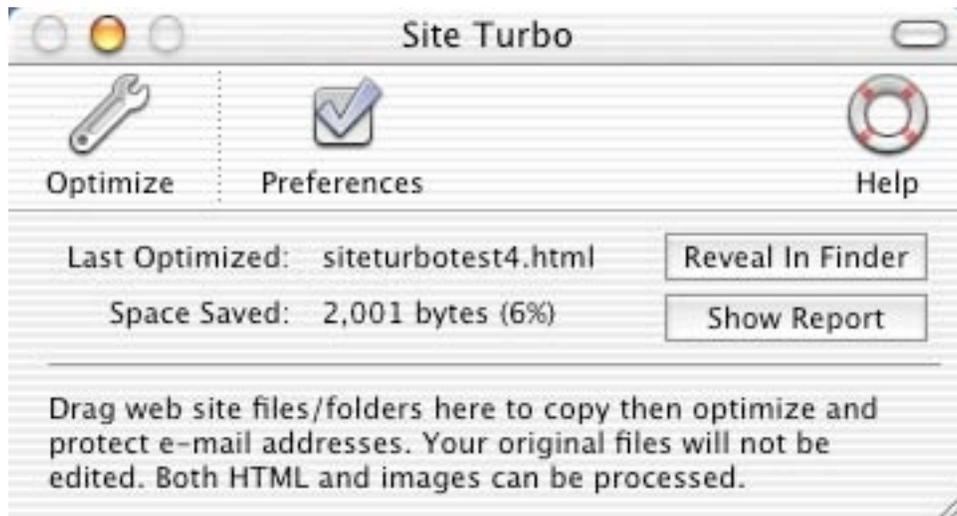
Siteturbotest1.html lines of code: 271

Siteturbotest2.html load time in Safari: 4 Seconds

Siteturbotest2.html file size of HTML document: 36 KB (33,735 bytes)

Siteturbotest2.html lines of code: 30

What Happened: The file was copied to a newly created folder, "Site Turbo Output", on the Desktop. The report was also placed in this folder. The Site Turbo main window reported that I saved 1959 bytes in space, a savings of 5%. The e-Mail address was encoded.



The Results from the second test

The second test:

Webpage Addresses:

Siteturbotest3.html URL: <http://www.maccompanion.com/siteturboreview/siteturbotest3.html>

Siteturbotest4.html URL: <http://www.maccompanion.com/siteturboreview/siteturbotest4.html>

Site Turbo Report: Siteturboreport2.html

<http://www.maccompanion.com/siteturboreview/siteturboreport2.html>

Siteturbotest3.html load time in Safari: 4 Seconds

Siteturbotest3.html file size of HTML document: 36 KB (36,084 bytes)

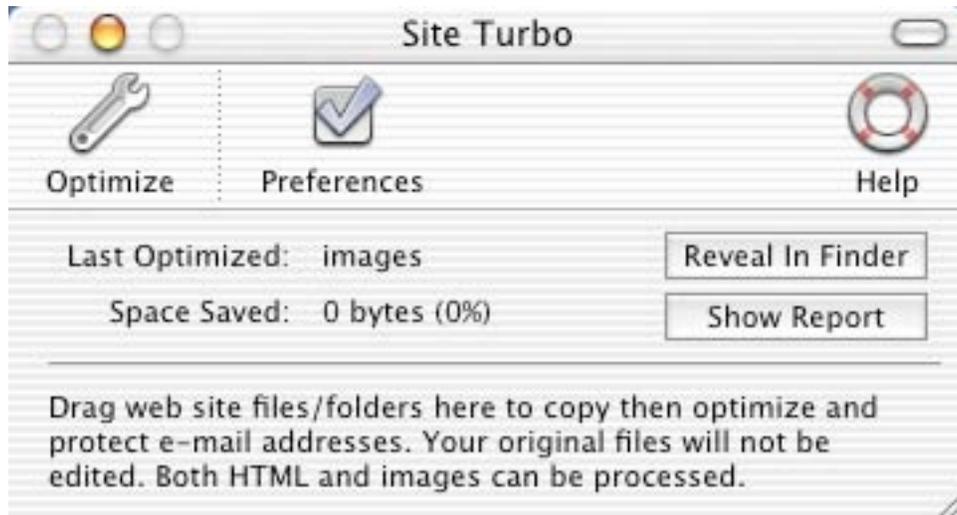
Siteturbotest3.html lines of Code: 276

Siteturbotest4.html load time in Safari: 4 Seconds

Siteturbotest4.html file size of HTML document: 36 KB (34,083 bytes)

Siteturbotest4.html lines of code: 30

What happened: The file was copied to a newly created folder, "Site Turbo Output", on the Desktop. The report was also placed in this folder. The Site Turbo main window reported that I saved 2,001 bytes in space, a savings of 6%. The e-Mail address was encoded.



The Results from the third test

The third test:

Site Turbo Report: [Siteturboreport3.html](#)

<http://www.maccompanion.com/siteturboreview/siteturboreport3.html>

File Size of "images" folder not run through Site Turbo: 2.2MB (1,984,543 bytes)

File Size of "images" folder run through Site Turbo: 2.2MB (1,984,543 bytes)

What happened: The "images" folder was copied to a newly created folder, "Site Turbo Output", on the Desktop. The report was also placed in this folder. The Site Turbo main window reported that I saved 0 bytes in space, a savings of 0%.

My Comments About the Results:

When I first saw the results for the number of lines, I was shocked. So I went into Dreamweaver MX to see if I could see anything that had been removed. What I saw was all the code put into at least 3 blocks separated by type. From The Document Type Declaration to the opening <SCRIPT> tag was one block, the JavaScript code was another, and the Body, JavaScript properties, and the ending of the page was another.

Site Turbo literally squishes everything together in the source code to reduce line numbers. It doesn't touch the JavaScript, but it does remove every extra space and line break that Dreamweaver and the page author put in to make the code easier to read.

While this could account for the slightly smaller file size, it irritated me because searching through this mess would take forever. And the space saved isn't worth it, in my opinion, seeing as it only saved a couple bytes.

The one positive aspect about the line shortening was that the page attached to the template (siteturbotest4.html) wasn't messed up. Yes, all the code was still squished, but it still worked as a template-attached page.

What this tells me is that Site Turbo deletes only what it is told to delete in the Preferences, and nothing else. I like this, as it lets me feel a little more secure that my code won't be destroyed. But since what it deletes adds up to only 9 tags, and those are often used, I really don't see the point in optimizing for space. Most likely, the author won't want any of those tags deleted,

except maybe Adobe GoLive tags. Also, load time wouldn't be affected all that much because size wouldn't be changed much. So again, what's the point in optimizing for space?

I wasn't surprised at the results of the load time. As I said earlier, Dreamweaver MX does a good job of keeping its code clean, so the file size is small and the load time is short. I wasn't expecting Site Turbo to do much better.

I was surprised that none of the graphics were stripped of their extra code. The "images" folder contained both GIF's and JPEG's, and, while I didn't expect anything to be done to the GIF's, I did to the JPEG's because when I created them in Photoshop, I didn't optimize them. The fact that nothing was done with them makes me wonder why the feature is even said to be in Site Turbo. I sure didn't see it.

Site Turbo did encode the e-Mail addresses, and left my pre-encoded e-Mail address alone, so I liked that. But if you want your code in a readable format, and to not have to mess around with moving your files from the desktop back to their original location, I don't suggest using this to just encode e-Mails. If you want to encode your e-Mail address, which I recommend, I suggest using Railhead Design's SpamStopper Freeware. It works well for Mac OS 8.6, 9, and Mac OS X. [<http://www.railheadesign.com/pages/software/spamstopper/spamstopper.html>]

Site Turbo did keep its word by not messing up any of my JavaScript, a plus in my book.

My Final Thoughts:

So, would I use Site Turbo? To be honest, I wouldn't. It just doesn't do anything all that useful. It's fine for making a mess out of your code, but that's about it.

If you use a Website authoring program like Dreamweaver MX, you won't see any added benefits in using Site Turbo. And since it messes up the codes layout, this would almost kill someone who designs web pages by hand.

The lack of finished documentation included seemed very off to me, as did the fact that there wasn't any extra info on the program's single web page. It seemed like this program was just put out to fill up space. My Daddy always taught me to take pride in my work; I guess the developers weren't ever told that, because I don't see much pride to be had with Site Turbo.

In all fairness, this type of program isn't really needed anymore. The Webpage authoring programs and graphics programs pretty much take care of everything themselves: they keep stuff trim, and cut out the fat.

I must give the developers an E for effort, though; it's the right idea, but has a bad implementation, and it's the wrong time.

The only redeeming properties of Site Turbo are the fact that it's small in size, easy to use, and quick. But even then, it would just hang after optimizing a page until I clicked in the main window, clicked onto the Desktop, and then click in the main window again. Unless I went through that ritual, the program's created folder wouldn't appear and I couldn't access the report.

At the price Site Turbo is charging, I'd have to say that it's the same as being mugged, having your pants pulled down, and dropped off at your boss' front door. In other words, it's highway robbery.

I wouldn't suggest this program to anyone, and, while I wish I could give a better report on Site Turbo, I can't.



The Site Turbo Main Window in Mac OS 9

I will mention one other thing: while the system requirements say Mac OS X, Site Turbo functions in Mac OS 9 just the same, a neat little surprise as I do all my work in Mac OS 9. Too bad I still can't use this, though.

Due to its abundance of cons, I should rate it a 1.0, but because it does at least encode e-Mail addresses, (though I still don't recommend using it for that purpose alone.) and doesn't disable template functionality, or mess up any scripting code, I will be generous and rate Site Turbo a macC rating of 1.5.

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