

The Macintosh Professional Network Presents

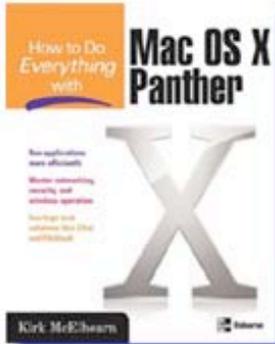
macCompanion

Your Guide To All Things Macintosh

March 2004 Issue 3 Volume 2

\$1.00 USD

Books



Shareware



Software

Look Ma! No Keyboard!



Type With A Click Of The Mouse!

Software



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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

Bandwidth and Eyeballs

By Robert Pritchett

I hope you've been monitoring our macC BLOG on our website. There is a lot of interesting stuff going on, and you might as well keep up-to-date on it there, rather than clicking on links here once a month.

Marketing gurus will tell you that traffic is not just desirable, but the be-all and end-all of all website financial success. There are well over 1 billion US dollars being spent online annually. Is it any wonder that the Apple Store is so successful with iTunes®? And I read this month that Apple is way out in front with 552% increase in sales over last year. Way out in front of anyone else in the Computer Industry. Way out in front.

And while computer politics are heating up, remember that this is a voting year for governments as well. My wish would be that some of that political funding would sift over this direction via our *macCompanion* donations link instead of going into other media coffers. It seems such a waste that hundreds of millions of dollars are spent so some guys and gals can run for 2 or 4 more years in a power struggle. Or that newbies try to get into the cogs of the political machine without getting turned into political pulp, while getting stuck between the gnashing gear teeth as their personal lives are shouted from the rooftops. I'll avoid the temptation to express my political views here. I hope that you will feel better for it. (Hey, I know! You could pay me to keep my mouth shut!) Anyway, vote for us by clinking some coins down in our non-political donation machine.

Over on AppleLinks, I expressed my concern about the promise of the Computer Revolution and how it was promised that it would make our lives easier. I wrote about the Computer Backlash Revolution (or CBR) instead of Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation (or CPR) for the alternate platforms we tolerate. I see a ground swell of activity as folks begin to see that they have a real viable and effective choice moving to the Mac®. We are even turning busy company president heads this direction. It is simply a matter of time.

Something else that has us excited over here at *macCompanion* is that we are not just seeing a hiccup in time for eyeballs. We are really getting some volume in hits on the site. Really big volume. And a good chunk of it is coming from folks using alternative platforms and operating systems. We are talking Gigabits of bandwidth being used. Success begets success. The tidal surge is growing into a tidal wave and maybe we have found the crest and are riding that wave. It feels good. Real good!

And finally, we have the Mac-Music contest going on and invite all to join in putting song and dance together as we give Apple Computers glory, laud and honor about the Macintosh®. The contest ends April 30th and the prizes will be distributed shortly thereafter. They are here and ready to go to the winners. Maybe you can be one?

Letter From the Editor

By Robert Pritchett

For a Leap Year, it sure has been a short month. A number of our reviewers were unable to get their articles in on time, so expect their reviews to show up next month. Meanwhile, take a load off, prop your feet up on a nice comfortable cushion, sit back, relax and enjoy some of the fruits of our labors as we finally enter into Spring after a challenging, difficult and hard winter.

Please check out the Feature article on **KeyStrokes** and by all means, enjoy Harry's poem to Scott Kelby in his **Mac OS X Conversion Kit, The: 9 to 10 Side by Side, Panther Edition** book review, along with the rest of the articles and reviews we published this month.

Oh, and if you are looking for feedback on our previous edition's articles, those can be found on our website at <http://www.maccompanion.com/feedback.html>.

Views from the Ivory Tower

By Ted Bade

There are many different groups out there using Apples. I hear about them all the time. The problem is, admitting to using a Macintosh or even worse, actually thinking the Macintosh is a better platform, isn't something most people will willingly do in public. Doing so marks one as an outcast, different from the rest; alien to the comforts of the crowd (or should I say mob?). So there are a lot of people who would use the Macintosh, but are afraid to because their "friends" or coworkers would think less of them.

Those of us who openly admit to using a Macintosh often find ourselves becoming aggravated, shields up, weapon systems charged and ready. So many times have we been attacked for our decision to use the Macintosh, we often over-react. Simple comments like: "I hear you use a Macintosh." become heard with derisive inflections. This only perpetuates arguments and discord.

Since I openly admit to using a Macintosh I often hear a list of adjectives about myself. He's a Mac-head; He likes.... Macs?; When are you going to get a real computer? As well as the softer, yet no less vindictive: "I read an article about Macs the other day, the guy actually made them sound good" (as if this were the most terrible thing conceivable!).

I bring this all up because I want to show my admiration for those of you who use a Mac and deal with this type of abuse on a daily basis. Also, my admiration to those people (and groups) who actually admit to using a Macintosh. Its tough being a Mac user, not because using a Mac is difficult, but because it's not what everybody else does. Not only do you use a platform that isn't the most supported, but since it isn't the most popular platform, you also admit to being a maverick, separate from the crowd. I say, "Good for you". Dare to be different. ;-)

Apple's "Think Different" commercial gave us a memorable perspective of this. You don't become remembered as someone special by being just another member of the crowd! It's okay to be different, (to be a Mac user).

Using Macs – Still, with all the controversies surrounding it, companies admit to using or even moving to the Macintosh platform. In late January a major law firm in New Zealand announced a \$165,000 upgrade to Macintosh, over-ruling a planned move to PCs. The story was covered by the *New Zealand Herald*. In that article the general manager of the law firm Brookfield said:

"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."

To read the whole article, visit the *New Zealand Herald* web site using the URL:
<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storydisplay.cfm?storyID=3544420&thesection=business&thesubsection=technology&thesecondsubsection=information>.

We have all heard this before. Running a Mac shop takes less Information Technology (IT) people. While this is a good thing for productivity and for business, it isn't necessarily good for the IT department if it means they have to cut back on personnel. Am I off-base thinking that perhaps some IT departments might resist Macs for this reason alone?

FBI makes use of Macs – In a recent article on the Security Focus website, Scott Granneman posted an article called "A Visit from the FBI". The article discusses a class he teaches and a visit with an FBI agent he arranged for this class. The article has some interesting information about security and computer crimes, as well as information about Macs.

Most interesting was that they (the FBI) use Macs because they can run Unix, Mac OS and Windows and because they are secure right out of the box. The article also had some other interesting things to say about computers and security. An important point being that the FBI uses non-Mac laptops because of cost. They need to cut costs like any other government agency. However, they are not allowed to connect these laptops to the Internet, that's unsafe and against regulations! [Editor: Go to the January's archived macC BLOG http://www.maccompanion.com/macblogarchive/2004_01_01_maccompanion_archive.html and drill down, or go here: <http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/55/35175.html>.]

But I am used to the pain – One wonders why people and companies insist on continuing to use a computer that is known for its security leaks and the viruses that are created for it. Perhaps people have grown accustomed to the problems.

One answer to the question why is discussed in an terrific article, "How to get a free Xbox (or, Your Potential. Our Passion. My Ass.)", by Kirk Hiner and is definitely worth reading at http://www.applelinks.com/pm/more.php?id=619_0_1_0. Posing a hypothetical situation about a web site name, he wonders how Microsoft would react. His suggested name sounds like Microsoft when pronounced. One paragraph in particular grabbed my attention. Let me quote the article:

"So many people work so closely with Microsoft products these days that they'll just accept whatever compost Redmond shovels our way. Can this be blamed directly on Windows? The fact that it's still unstable, unsafe, and quite often unusable has actually worked towards its advantage. People have grown tired of fighting it. Microsoft has worn its users down. I've honestly worked with people who just shrug—sometimes even laugh off system crashes as just part of the routine. "Oh, that crazy Windows and its wacky general protection faults! What a nut!" After all, why complain? Who's going to listen?"

Wow, talk about computer apathy! I think he nails the problem on the head. People are just used to it. They are reluctant to change, actually (IMHO) it is more than reluctant, it is more like violent opposition! It can be likened to a drug addiction, even though the addict knows the drug is doing damage, that continuing to do it will cause him and others harm. If he stops his life will improve, but he continues. Consider that the next time you deal with a Windows addict!! But then the same could be said about a dedicated Mac user. The difference is that I know things will get worse if I move to Windows! Perhaps it is laziness on my part, but I don't want to spend my time on the computer fighting security leaks and virus problems, I want to play games and do my work.

Definitely read the whole article by Kirk Hiner. It is worth your time.

Apple uses Apples – In a recent article posted on the C|Net news.com site, Staff Writer Ina Fried discussed information about Apples IT department. <http://news.com.com/2100-1045-5137846.html>. Like other companies, Apple uses a variety of hardware, including Sun Microsystem servers and IBMs, but the mainstay is the XServe. For software, they use Microsoft's Office™, but also use their own iApps such for mail, web browsing, and instant messaging. Its nice to hear that Apple uses its own products!

We admire Apple – Recently Fortune magazine published a list of the most admired Computer industry companies. Mac News Network listed some information from the article in a recent posting at <http://www.macnn.com/news/23550>. Apple placed just below Xerox, Dell, and IBM with its score. (The article didn't list Microsoft's position in this survey.) In order to read the complete article, one needs to be a subscriber to Fortune magazine. If you are or wish to subscribe, visit: <https://cgi.timeinc.net/cgi->

[bin/mso_login?url=http://www.fortune.com/fortune/mostadmired/subs/2004/industrynapshot/0,19409,114,00.html&attempt=0&zone=FMA](http://www.fortune.com/fortune/mostadmired/subs/2004/industrynapshot/0,19409,114,00.html&attempt=0&zone=FMA).

Apple in Consumer Reports – I was very surprised the other day. A co-worker asked me about Macs. He is a very late adopter of computers and is thinking about buying his first one. He told me that Consumer Reports magazine gave Apple a very good rating and even though he had first considered buying a Windows PC, because of this article he wanted to consider getting an Apple! I answered a bunch of his questions and invited him to my monthly "Mac OS X for beginners" meeting.

That night I popped open my copy of Consumer Reports and there it was. They gave Apple the highest score concerning Customer satisfaction with Technical support. Apple scored 74 out of 100, Dell scored 62, Gateway 61, HP 54, and Compaq 51. The companies were scored by readers in a survey on four different areas. (The categories were Problem solved, Support staff, Waiting on phone, and Web support.)

Apple received best marks for three of them and the other was just less than the best. Of the other four PC companies mentioned none received anything more than the middle mark, except for Gateway's web support. Apple also scored best on the repair history chart, followed by Dell, IBM, HP, and the rest.

Pick up a copy of Consumer Reports for March of 2004 to read the entire article. Keep copies around to give to your friends! [Editor: If you are a subscriber, you can also log in at <http://www.consumerreports.org/main/home.jsp>.]

Macs don't crash – Another technology based newsletter ZDNet's AnchorDesk, recently featured a lead article by the editor David Coursey (the newsletter's executive editor). In this article he speaks about a number of Windows machines he uses and how they have failed him by crashing, having problems with installed virus software, and just hardware problems in general. He paints a bleak picture of the Windows PC life. (especially considering he has been dedicated to them for so long and is pretty much a computer expert.) He ends the article with interesting comments about Macs. To quote the beginning of this paragraph:

"The nice thing about Mac OS X is that it's darn near uncrashable. No matter what programs I install or uninstall or how I use it, OS X just runs."

It's a nice commentary on the Macintosh and Mac OS X. Definitely read the article if you get a chance: http://reviews-zdnet.com.com/AnchorDesk/4520-7297_16-5122766.html. While you are there sign up for the daily email newsletter, it only sends the headlines, you visit the website if you want to read the whole article.

Not only do they not crash, but they are the most secure – The London-based security expert mi2g, recently claimed that Mac OS X and BSD UNIX to be the World's safest Operating System! To quote the beginning of the article:

"The world's safest and most secure online server Operating System (OS) is proving to be the Open Source family of BSD (Berkeley Software Distribution) and Mac OS X based on Darwin."

The article goes on to mention that Linux is the most breached and that Windows is improving. Great statistics, but will anyone act on this? Probably not. Perhaps if any readers are in a position to make waves they can post a copy of this article.

The security they are speaking about concerns attacks against networks and servers. The results were posted in an article carried by the UK version of MacWorld.

http://www.macworld.co.uk/news/top_news_item.cfm?NewsID=7980. It's a good article and worth the read, especially if you are involved with computer security.

(If you need a copy of the study itself, you can buy it from mi2g by visiting:
http://www.mi2g.net/cgi/mi2g/frameset.php?pageid=http%3A//www.mi2g.net/cgi/mi2g/pres/s/190204_2.php.)

More music – Well the Pepsi iTunes music give away is underway and people have already figured out a way to cheat! I'm not going to tell you how, I think that is dumb. If you drink the stuff, take your chances. If you don't drink it, be like me and beg for bottle caps! (But, if you must know, the article to read is posted at:
<http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/internet/02/19/pepsi.itunes.promotion/index.html> .)

Getting back at the RIAA – People are beginning to think about attacking the RIAA for how they handled the lawsuits against people who illegally shared music. One group is claiming that the methods they are using are like extortion and are countersuing, claiming extortion and violations of the federal antiracketeering act. But then, (IMHO) the way the RIAA has handled music in the USA for years is less than ethical.

Speaking of extortion, I recently received my part of the "Compact Disc Minimum Advertised Price Antitrust Litigation". This lawsuit claimed that certain CD resellers have been overcharging for music CDs (like we didn't already know that). When I heard about the settlement several months ago (actually it was more like a year ago), I immediately signed up. Still, I was surprised to get a check in the mail for almost \$14. Cool – guess I'll go buy another CD at the ITMS and use the rest for a coffee at Starbucks!

Well, that's all I have for this month. Keep on enjoying your Mac. Always remember, when you hit into one of those Mac OS X snags, if you used a Windows PC it would be a regular occurrence and you'd be used to it by now! Be happy you use a Mac. ;-)

THE REAL WORLD

Things I Tripped Over this Slippery January and February

By Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Now, you folks need to understand that those of us on the *macCompanion* staff who live in the Tri-Cities, east of the Cascades, are sheltered from the realities of the remainder of Eastern Washington (e.g., Spokane or even Ellensburg.) Living in the rain shadow of the Cascades, we are spared, in this relatively treeless high desert country that fronts the Columbia River, the worst of winter storms. But not this year! Hey, my lady is a landscaper, and when we designed our yard, with its sharply curved driveway, Oregon seashore contorted pine trees were her obvious choice. So, come the snow and a bit of wind, my neighbors get 4–8 inches and we get 3–4 foot drifts...a dead air space that snow snuggles into. So, our first seasonal *trip* was literally that.

Well, back to things more or less "Mac'ish". In this column I'm going to share other things these two months I tripped over some good, some neutral and a few that I #\$\$@&#*&. So, I'll vent first and then regain my cool.

Print Shop™ X v 1 (Broderbund™ and Software MacKiev™)—Print Shop X.1 can't open documents created in the previously released Macintosh version, Printshop 7.x. This seems to be a pattern with this publisher, forcing me on two previous occasions, to completely recreate my business cards and stationary. Since, in their infinite wisdom, the publisher (in fine print in the ReadMe files) noted that they had abandoned Print Shop Companion – RIP to all of Babad's business cards. Since neither set of software provided an export path to a standard graphic format, the user was truly stranded. Neither Broderbund nor the Software MacKiev who translated the PC version responded to my plea for help. My advice is don't waste your money. Check out the shareware sites. There's neat stuff out there, or, alternatively, use MS Word™, Apple Works™, or with a little more work, FileMaker Pro™.

Internet Fraud Artists, Almost—After checking several “customer satisfaction” sites before purchasing a special Rowenta steam iron, I ordered the iron from one that was highly rated. Since no local merchant carried the iron my lady wanted, we had no idea of its weight and feel. A local store started carrying the iron during the late holiday season and it turned out to be too heavy, so I emailed NowOnSale.com and asked for a return authorization for the unopened shipment. The reply was less than satisfactory. I went back and checked the website and, alas, did discover at the end of a long page of conditions of sale that indeed there was a no return for cash policy. Would you believe that I could return the iron only for store credit that had, according to the fine print on the website, that had a “use before” expiration date. They had already charged my credit card, even before I received their shipment—time being somewhat out of joint. The iron has been returned and I'm waiting for an answer from American Express about reversing the charge. If not, use Internet consumer protection sites such as David Horowitz' <http://www.FightBack.com> site. They can sometimes help, as can various state Attorney General's offices. It turns out that as a consumer you are not protected if you try to return either a product that will not work for you or from a misrepresented shoddy product. You can't get the credit card company to reverse the charges, so you are stuck

with the good will of the supplier. "Let the buyer beware" holds even more in web-space than in the real physical world.

Why Don't the Mothers Want Me to Review their Software? — I want to review two products, one each from Microsoft™ and Adobe™, but big companies are usually unresponsive to requests to review their products unless you are MacAddict™ or MacWorld™. Certainly hell will freeze over before I'll ever get feedback from either Microsoft's or Adobe's PR department, the place you politely ask for a review copy. When I have wanted to review their products, I've had to buy my own copy.

But there are good guys. Both Aladdin™ Systems and Extensis™ were responsive to my requests and I have their software in my queue for review. Both also provided me with a reviewer's guide to their product and a technical contact for any questions raised during my reviews. Don't panic—the reviewer's guide just provides more information about the product than is provided on their website or in the product's quick-start manual. Of course, it's not as good as the manual, but I read that only after I install the software and play with it.

Book Companies Know Reviews Sell Books — Book companies such as Peachpit and O'Reilly, as well as New Riders and Lynda.com are wonderful to work with. Sometimes you even get a note back from the author appreciating your review, and, as needed, kindly straightening you out on some point made in the review. Way to go!

January's Hero, Dymo™ Corporation — There are other very customer-oriented companies out there. My latest Macintosh hero is the Dymo Corporation. You know, the folks that make the compact, almost "beetle" shaped external label printer. Mine was almost a year old. Since there were flaws in the software version I was using, I rushed to download version 6.1, which is native in OS X and supports Panther. Of course, I deinstalled version 6.0.x and the new installation went smoothly—well, almost. No matter what I tried, and I won't bore you with the details, the print driver I needed was not recognized. I emailed the company and within two days, got a message that asked me to talk to their technical support staff. A day later, after a good focused talk with their technical support staff, at no cost to me, my CoStar LabelWriter Turbo Model 330 was on its way for a firmware update. Then about two weeks later, it's back, and running on my desk. Total cost, the postage for the printer return. Total elapsed time: 18 days. The only fly in the ointment was that if I were a PC user (yuck), I could have downloaded the firmware update codes.

AND NOW A FEW TIDBITS

Put the Folder Back Where You Dragged it From, a Finder Shortcut.—A book by Scott Kelby reminded me of a long-lost shortcut that I used in OS 9.x. Command-Z, in Jaguar, not only "undoes" folder and document name typos but also puts a dragged folder back where you found it. This works only if its the next move you make before any further mousing around!

Saves and Stuff in Microsoft Word—Check out the Word icon in a Word document's title bar. It starts out bright and obvious when you open either a new or existing document. Type something and the icon fades so that you know your copy is not saved. Then save it and it gets bright again. Subtle, but a great reminder to keep saving your documents. Even with Jaguar, you can lose material if the application quits. You already have, in MS Word preferences, under the save preference option, elected to have auto-recover save you great epistle every 4 minutes; haven't you? No, then you deserve what fate and chance bring you! Experience can indeed be a

bitter thing. Before learning this the hard way, I discovered that no matter how clever I pretend to be, the second retype of a document is never as good as my memory of the first.

Another ‘saving’ hint— In Word, using its powerful *customize* feature, found under the tools menu. Open customize, select the *commands* tab and find the save command in the *file* menu listing. Drag the floppy disk icon onto any of your tool bars and quit the customization window. Now you are only a mouse click away from another way to save your stuff. All you do is click on the floppy icon, and it save saves your information. And before this section my the column gets too obnoxious, don’t use MS Words fast save features. It saves your document as pieces in RAM that can be lost if Word crashes. Turn it off in the save preferences.

Make Better Looking Media Labels—You can find CD/DVD labels with the smaller hole on the Neato.com website, along with an applicator to get the label onto to your disk. The large hole was only about 2 square inches of space, but it sure makes your labels more professional looking with the center more completely filled in. (I do hate it when I end up with a big hole in my tediously created graphic.)

Adding an Eject Icon to the Menu Bar in Jaguar—The usual way to eject a CD or DVD is to click on its icon and press the eject (or F-12) key on your keyboard. Command-E also works, as does using the contextual menu. Now, if you want to do this from the menu bar, you can, by installing an Eject menulet. To find the menulet installer, go to the root of your hard drive and open System: Library: CoreServices: Menu Extras. Inside that window, double-click on the icon called Eject.menu. Now look at your menu bar, and you’ll find the new Eject icon. Use it as a dropdown menu and choose the drive or disk you’d like to eject. (Paraphrased from the Mac Secrets Column in *MacWorld*, August 2003) I also found, but did not download, shareware that installs an eject button in the menu bar. Happy hunting.

Ejecting a Repair CD in your Stuck Drive at Startup—You folks probably all know that Apple has not allowed, at least in Jaguar, a third party vendor complete access to the Finder functions. This means that when using software such as Alsoft’s DiskWarrior to repair your file system, you can’t get to the traditional start-up disk control panel (now system preferences) to start from your newly repaired hard disk. You can shut down your computer (but not from the repair CD/DVD) and use a pin made from a heavy-duty paper clip to remove the CD. Not elegant, but it works. Alternatively, at start-up, which happens automatically when you quit DiskWarrior 3.0.x, hold down the mouse button to pop out the CD. Now, I’ve tried this only with an Apple keyboard and mouse that I use only to do any check or repairs on my startup disk. I’ve never tried it with my standard Logitech wireless mouse and keyboard. If you folks out there know of a better way, let us know and you’ll see your name in print.

Happy Mac’ng and Stay Vigilant!

Feature

KeyStrokes™ 3.1

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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(They have a phone, just not 24/7 coverage, so it is not listed here.)

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<http://www.assistiveware.com/purchase.php>

<mailto:keystrokes@assistiveware.com>

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

<http://www.assistiveware.com/keystrokes.php>

Comparison:

<http://www.assistiveware.com/productoverview.php>

Users:

<http://www.assistiveware.com/testimonies.php>

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Released January 13, 2004.

\$250 USD. Upgrades \$200 USD

Languages: English, Français, (Español soon)

Requirements: Mac OS 9.x with CarbonLib1.5 or higher. Mac OS X 10.1.3 or higher. Mac OS X 10.3 recommended. 10 MB RAM. 22.5 MB hard drive space. Screen 800 x 600 pixels.

15-day try-before-you-buy download.



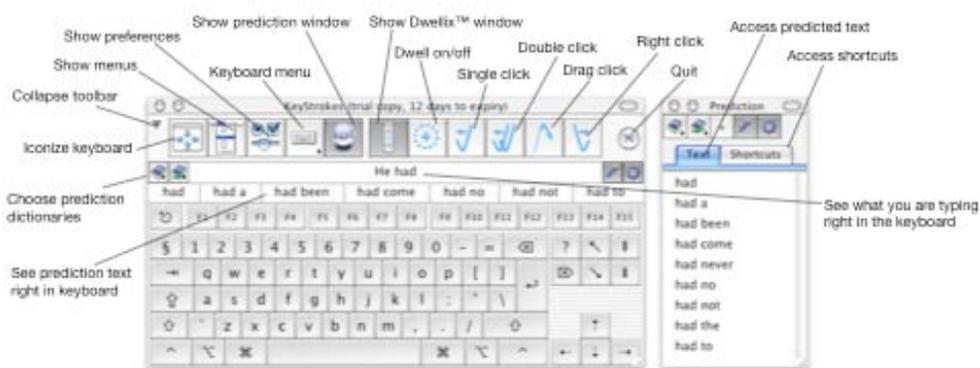
Strengths: Works great for the physically challenged. It is the best product available for Mac OS X. Read the testimonies!

Weaknesses: None.

I've been watching this company for some time since it was originally conceived back in 1996, through birth, puberty and now maturity. David Niemeijer has put his heart and soul into

KeyStrokes 3.1, and now is the time to buy if you are somehow struggling to add input into your Mac due to physical issues. Whether it be an older Mac or a newer one, this application has been, there, done that, and is doing it quite nicely, thank you.

Charles Moore has done an outstanding job reviewing and commenting on KeyStrokes 3 at <http://www.applelinks.com/mooresviews/ks3.shtm>! I suggest strongly that you go see his review. And the good folks over at Origin Instruments Corporation have also done an outstanding job presenting KeyStrokes 3.1 over on their website shown above. Maybe that is why they are a vendor of the product here in the USA. It's that, or they recognized early-on the synergistic effect of combining this virtual keyboard with their own flagship product, the HeadMouse®. And if those don't convince you, listen to the testimonies from around the world from folks with real physical challenges. They know the value of their time and effort using the Mac in being both independent and self-sufficient or at least try to have a quality of life that would most likely be disastrous otherwise. (One of them designed the mousehead icon using a HeadMouse and KeyStrokes, in other words, drawn with just head movements.) Yeah, this is a "killer-app" for the physically challenged. Believe it.



KeyStrokes 3.1 is a true "accessibility solution". Some might complain about the price, but thankfully there isn't a huge market for accessibility devices. Better, yet, there is a niche-market for great products that meet the needs of special people. Many are well-engineered and quality products that have to stay "up" 24/7. If the quality isn't there, the situations could truly become life or death struggles. We don't want that to be an issue with Mac-users, so accessibility solutions have to be not just good, they have to be excellent! And as all Mac-users know, you really do get what you pay for in the Mac environment or the products become has-beens.

David Niemeijer has developed an algorithmic piece of magic he named PolyPredix™. It does word prediction and learns as it goes, so the process speeds up as it is used. Its tough enough trying to write a book with all 4 limbs ambulatory, but can you imagine having to use a Sip/Puff straw to get words to appear on a computer screen? PolyPredix helps with word-construction, and not only helps with one or two letters but can eventually figure out phrases before they go into print on the screen. Not quite mind-reading, but darned close! And David has developed it so it is multi-lingual for Roman, Cyrillic and Eastern European languages (Spanish is coming soon). The program also includes dictionaries for Dutch, French, German, Italian and both American and British English as well as an editor that can be used for additional languages and dialects. In English, speak-back technology is also available with Mac OS X. And it spell-checks on the fly.

PolyPredix is combined with another technology named Dwellix™. This is a dwell-based clicking utility that is pretty nifty even for those of us who are not currently challenged physically. When it is turned on, and the mouse hovers over a link or clickable item, it then sees the command

and acts accordingly. This alone could save hands from carpal-tunnel syndrome. And there are other button options to pick from to enhance the experience.

KeyStrokes 3.1 handles just about any kind of keyboard and can generate key-combinations using 6 different resizable keyboard layouts. I always wondered how someone who either had to use their toes or a mouth-stick could get those key combinations that programmers love so well. Well, now it is less of a challenge than it used to be.

Something else that is just wonderful is that KeyStrokes 3.1 takes full advantage of Mac OS X technology and even goes one better with Smart Transparency™. This is what makes the keyboard "virtual". It gets out of the way and also uses the transparency feature in Mac OS X to go opaque or various levels of invisibility so as not to be "in your face". And the keyboard can be minimized to the blue furry-looking mousehead icon so it takes up even less space until needed.

The only areas that might be a real challenge is in logging in or running secure screen saver passwords. With Mac OS X, I automatically log in, and I don't mess with screen savers, so that might not be an issue for others either.

What really got my interest in the Mac OS X version was that KeyStrokes 3.1 also takes full advantage of Speakable Items so if a person can speak, the keyboard can follow. When I first heard this, I immediately thought of MacSpeech® and figured there had to be a tie-in in there somewhere. If there isn't, there should be.

Oh, and need I say that KeyStrokes 3.1 is also AppleScriptable?

Believe it or not, this product used to go for \$45 USD (Version 2, which runs only on Mac OS 9.2 and earlier [and is still available]), but hardly anybody would buy it. Now it is going for \$250. David wrote, "The price of version 3 is much higher, because over two years of work went into it and because it is also available through distributors and dealers". Hey, engineering costs and overhead, right? Go try it anyway. It is worth every penny.

Afterthoughts:

What would really be neat is if Apple included KeyStrokes in their next release of Mac OS X, (but that probably isn't going to happen anytime soon). Or MacSpeech could combine it with iListen™. Hey, look, if Origin Instruments Corporation saw how good it works with HeadMouse®, synergy could go a long ways in making the Macintosh experience even better, don't you think? Hey, a speakable keyboard, mouse controls with head movement – it isn't that much of a stretch to have the virtual optical computer running off 3rd-dimensional glasses, is it?

Further Study for Mac-accessibility:

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

<http://www.atpm.com/8.11/accessibility.shtml>

<http://www.diveintoaccessibility.org/>

<http://gnuhaus.com/accessibility/>

<http://guide.apple.com/uscategories/assisttech.lasso>

http://www.ldresources.com/resources/macintosh_osx_accessibility.html

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

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

<http://trace.wisc.edu/world/>

<http://www.webaim.org/>

Books

How to Do Everything with Mac OS X Panther

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Kirk McElhearn

<http://www.mcelhearn.com>

List Price: \$25 USD, \$25 CND, £17 UK

Published: January 26, 2004

512 pages

ISBN: 007225355X

McGraw-Hill/Osborne

2100 Powell Street, 10th Floor

Emeryville, CA94608

<http://www.osborne.com>

Beginners to Intermediate



Strengths: Speaks in a conversational tone without a French accent.

Weaknesses: Some minor typos.

How to Do Everything with Mac OS X Panther by Kirk McElhearn has been a long time coming. Kirk left our previous publication to devote most of his time and effort in getting this book published, along with an Electronic Book he also published via TidBITS, *Take Control of Users & Accounts in Panther* and his effort to publish *Unix for Mac OS X: Learning the Command Line*.

This book is intended for the Mac OS X novice. It gently guides us through the various parts and around the corners of the operating system without delving into the Unix side of things. I strongly suspect that those parts of Mac OS X are saved for the up-and-coming *Unix for Mac OS X* book he will be publishing.

Just about every other page has an illustration, intermixed with tips, notes, shortcuts and "How Tos" and "Voices from the Community" along the way. In the middle of the book is a way too short "Writers and their Macs" section. I guess I enjoy hearing and reading about how folks really use their machines to do well in their businesses.

So, what did I learn from this book after having read so many on the same topic? Believe it or not, I marked a lot of pages, especially about Exposé, changing the default Email program, Gimp-Print drivers, working with faxes and fonts and keyboard viewers. I also marked a few of the "Voices from the Community" portions as well. I looked for our magazine in the back of the

book, but we aren't as well known or as long-lived yet as many of those posted in the last chapter of the book on "Get More Help for Mac OS X". Hey, maybe next time!

Now, perhaps the beginner will appreciate the chapters on the Finder as Kirk McElhearn compares Panther to Jaguar based on his experiences. For those of us who have walked that path, it is interesting and the "ahah" light blinks on every now and then.

One thing I noticed about McGraw-Hill publishing, is that they tended to add extra paper in this book. I assume it is "supposed to be that way", but there were two Table of Contents sections (the 2nd more detailed) and extra pages thrown in for title pages for many of the chapters. Other than that, Kirk knows our review criteria (because he helped it along to maturity), and I give his book a 5.

Learning Unix for Mac OS X Panther

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Brian Jepson and Dave Taylor

List Price: \$20 USD, \$29 CDN, £14 UK

Published: December 2003, 3rd Edition

168 pages

ISBN: 0596006179

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/lunixpanther/index.html>

Requirements: Mac OS® X Panther

Beginner

O'Reilly Books

Sebastopol (Corporate Headquarters)

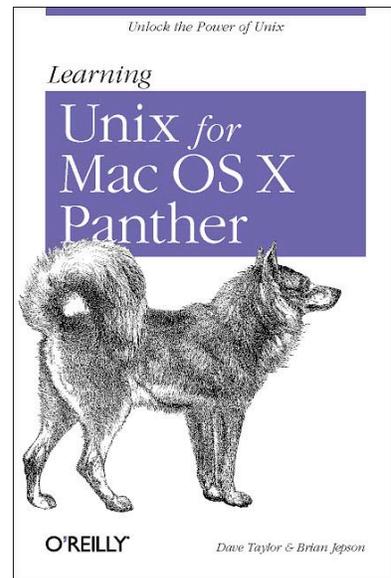
1005 Gravenstein Highway North

Sebastopol, CA 95472 USA

1-707-827-7000 or 1-800-998-9938

Fax: 1-707-829-0104

<http://www.oreilly.com>



Strengths: Gently walks a Mac aficionado through the Terminal process.

Weaknesses: None found.

Learning Unix for Mac OS X Panther by both Brian Jepson and Dave Taylor (reversed as authors on the cover) is a great book for Unix® beginners who are curious to see what is behind that Terminal mode found in *Applications > Utilities*.

This is the 3rd Edition of the book to cover Mac OS® X 10. It could easily be the beginning of a series for Mac OS X folks. I'm looking forward to the Advanced Edition! This one walks through the Terminal mode Unix garden of delights. The Authors obviously know their stuff and are not at all shy about showing how to navigate around Unix as presented in Panther.

The areas I learned the most about were the Remote Login capabilities and Secure FTP. There are 10 Chapters starting with why bother and migrating through redirecting I/O, using multitasking, futzing with X11 and Fink (Lynx, Pine and GIMP) and hints at Perl and Python at the end for those who want to drill deeper.

This book is a quick read and worth perusing if you have any inkling in wanting to get behind the GUI and run with the Command Line that really runs the system.

Mac OS X Conversion Kit, The: 9 to 10 Side by Side, Panther Edition

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Authors: Scott Kelby and
Contributing Author Dave
Gales

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

Published: December 19,
2003

288 pages

ISBN: 0735713898

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

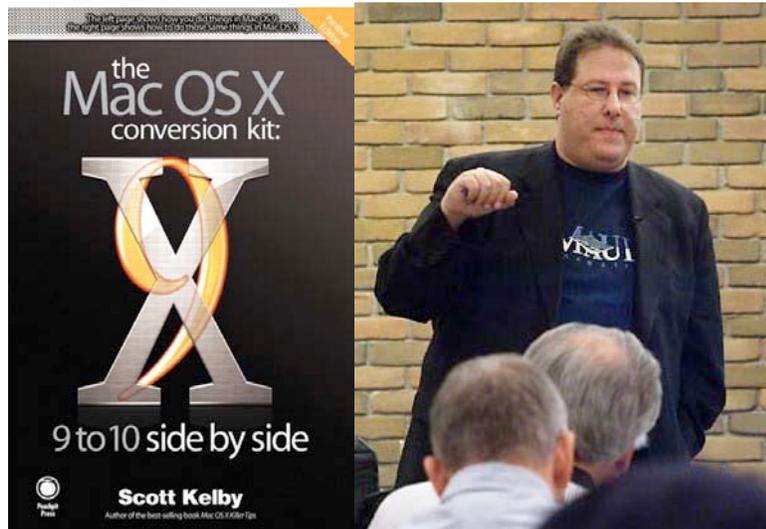
Peachpit Press

1249 Eighth Street

Berkeley, CA 2178

1-510-524-2178

<http://www.peachpit.com>



Strengths: Well-written and fun to peruse. An excellent book for those Mac OS X-deprived individuals who allow defeat to stop them from upgrading their Macintosh OS to the ever-enhanced and more stable Mac OS X 10.3.

Weaknesses: This book is wasted on those whose hardware will not support the Mac OS X operating system, but all is not lost for them.

If your Macintosh computer is over 4–6 years old, it's time for a change. Read this book. It will serve you to create a feeling of deprivation and despair about all you are missing and be jealous of your more forward-thinking neighbors.

Book Overview

Scott Kelby loves to combine software (Hey, an OS is a piece of software), tips and humor in his books. His Mac OS X Conversion Kit shows those traits, and it works wondrously well for me.

The Mac OS X Conversion Kit "takes an innovative approach, showing how an operation is done in Mac OS 9, and on the facing page, how you do the same thing in Mac OS X. Everything from fonts to printing to folders is covered in a clear, concise, visual way. The book is specifically designed to address the most common OS X issues, including networking, fonts, working with displays, connecting to the Internet, printing, installing applications, and more. Perhaps most important of all, the book answers questions such as 'How do I switch between applications, or find the Chooser, or print my stuff?' (Adapted from a review on <http://www.macdesignonline.com/>, Scott Kelby's Web Site).

Scott also gracefully handles situations where there is no direct correspondence between an OS 9 and OS X feature, and other frustrations with changes made between OS 9 and OS X. He adds two chapters focused on "20 Cool Things You Couldn't Do In OS 9" followed by "20 Little Things Apple™ Changed Just To Mess With Your Head."

Introduction

Now, Scott, I have reviewed enough of your books for you to know that I'm somewhat of a contrarian, so read on, but expect the...err...different.

I've, in detail, reviewed the Jaguar version of your book, and alas I had only good things to say about it! So, Scott, I can't say that you've needed to learn much from my earlier feedback; but I've heard my musician friends say the reviewers are the cesspits of the world. [That's not quite right but this is a family Macintosh web site. Not much about my views on this excellent series has changed in this book I t's as lovingly crafted, by you and your support team (I do read acknowledgements), as was the Jaguar edition. Scott, why should I repeat all the favorable and admiring comments I made in my September 2003 macCompanion review? I don't know whether you are prone to blush—not likely since black belts have inscrutable faces, don't they? So, I'm only going to copy the punch line:

'My bottom line on *Mac OS X Conversion Kit 9 to 10 Side By Side, Jaguar Edition* — I shrugged off the author's strong suggestion on how to use his book: I read it from cover to cover. (So, Scott Kelby, you can be miffed or peeved with me if you like. What do you expect from a Macintosh user?) But listen up out there... for all of you who've finally switched from OS 9 to Jaguar and still have withdrawal symptoms, this book is worthy of space near your computer. I give it 4.5 macCs'.

So, what, you might ask, is this review all about? Well, on the best of advice from a Macintosh support person, I'm waiting to install Panther until Apple releases version 10.3.3. But, despite having read what's new in Panther related articles in the print medium, I wanted to get a better look at the enhancements Apple had made in the updated OS. The articles were in *MacAddict* and *MacWorld*, but you know about their page limits. This review was a two-pronged effort. First, I read the book, cover to cover, as is my inclination, highlighting all things that caught my fancy. (You know, the usual stuff one stuffs into reviews.) Then I opened the Jaguar edition of your book and did a bit—well, really more than a bit—of side-by-side comparison between the two editions. When I'm uptight about making any significant changes to my operating system, I go out and get a book to read. Your book was at the top of my *stamp out fear* list. Your *Mac OS X Killer Tips* is next. Ted Bade reviewed it in the February 2004 issue of macCompanion. Last but not least I waiting until April for Robin Williams forthcoming *Mac OS X Book, The, Panther Edition* (PeachPit Press.) You'll of course note that I've worked out a well thought-out and guilt-free way to practice avoidance. It's like our fathers in Washington DC, 'let's do another study by a carefully selected advisory committee.

The Book's Contents

The book contains almost everything you need to make the conversion from OS 9 to Panther a minimally painful experience. Let's face it: any major OS upgrade causes angst, so back up your hard disk, read this book, and plunge right in and install Panther. Or is it plunge right in and then read this book?

Scott, help! The information and illustration-rich chapters cover "The Apple Menu, Windows Icons and Stuff", "Customizing your Mac", "Crank Up the Jams", "Monitors, Fonts and Printing", "Networking and the Internet", "Other Stuff", "Troubleshooting", "Don't Freak Out", "20 Cool Things you Couldn't do in OS 9" and last but not least, "20 little things Apple Changed Just to Mess with Your Head".

I also found the "where is it now?" table most helpful, as will other readers.

So, Scott, What Did Your Books Teach Me About Jaguar and Panther?

To torture a wonderful Tom Paxton song, let me tell you “What did you learn that’s cool today ... dear little boy of mine.”

*I learned that security is cool today and Panther has the tools, I’d say.
And printing and faxing is Panther’s way, I’ll fax from in-apps any ol’ day.
...That’s what I learned was cool today, that’s what I learned was cool.*

*I learned we have an Expose™ to keep desktop clutter from being right,
And document labels now glow with light but text in color is ne’er as bright.
...That’s what I learned was cool today, that’s what I learned was cool.*

*I learned the keyboard viewer is fun, and to see my fonts the Apple way.
In folders new not to let them stray, but I’ve lost some shareware along the way.
...That’s what I learned was cool today, that’s what I learned was cool.*

*I learned with the Apple menu there’s more to play and there’s lots of Action™ on its way.
And I can trash my files in a secure new way, so no one with them now can with them play.
...That’s what I learned was cool today, that’s what I learned was cool.*

*With screen shot pictures I can better play but don’t take my Snapz Pro™ away.
New desktop printers have come to stay after the bad old Apple took them away.
...That’s what I learned was cool today, that’s what I learned was cool.*

*Now sidebars are an added treat, they make the menubars quite complete.
So mommy and daddy let me stay, with my brand new panther It’s quite complete.
...That’s what I learned was cool today, that’s what I learned was cool.*

Wishes for your next OS Side-by-Side Edition—Something I hope you’ll write when Apple move to a new bigger, faster and I hope user useful OS

Scott, in your next book of this type, how about adding a table of side-by-side shortcuts, to the book's appendix. It would beat either turning pages or using the (admittedly excellent) index.

Also, although the book is aimed at helping those who want to switch from OS 9.x to OS X 10.3, I would have welcomed a flag on pages that contained goodies that had not much changed from Jaguar to Panther. It would have made my search for things new in Panther a bit easier. But, then again, I would have missed your commentaries and quips. Oh, while I'm wishing for things, please ask your publisher to enable the enlarge feature on your images so my old eyes will see them more clearly. Larger images would do even though the book price might increase by a buck to two. They use the enlarge feature for your book cover image at their website.

...And unanswered questions

Oh, Scott, what is the relationship between the image on page 201, “Booting From Your Systems CD OS X” and the text? Perhaps I’m having a senior moment, but although I understand the text, the associated image leaves me speechless. Also, on page 221, “Disk Images and Packages”, you forgot to tell me that such packages also serve to assure your system and mine that we have the permissions to install the new software.

Conclusions

If you want or need to switch from OS 9.x to Mac OS X, buy this book—today from our macCompanion.com link to Amazon.com. (So we get a few shekels—you think maintaining this great eZine is cheap?) Make yourself a cup of hot chocolate or whatever; relax; read the book;

savor Kelby's humor and his iconoclastic attitude. It's all a plot to teach you about OS X and wean you from OS 9. You'll find the book eases the pain of switching better than either two aspirins or an antidepressant.

If you already own the Jaguar edition of the *Mac OS X Conversion Kit*, buy this book and enjoy seeing what has changed, either before or after you install Panther.

A Warning: This book is not for everybody. Some readers, even among my friends, find that there is no place, even in Macintosh books, for satire or sarcasm. They don't just approve of rock throwing, even for a good cause, at the stuffiness of both of our Macintosh "family" or the powers to be at Apple. Some folks even get angry about your asides, rants, and ramblings about things generally Macintosh. Nirvana for them is a manual they must, according to procedures, follow. In line with your assertions in *Macintosh... The Naked Truth™*, which I lovingly reviewed in the December 2003 issue of *macCompanion*—I believe those poor folks must have inherited a PC gene somewhere, or their brains were exposed to a Microsoft virus or nanobot.

This is another great book, Scott, and is worthy of 5.0 macC's, but only when I stop smiling or giggling.

Security Warrior

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Anton Chuvakin and Cyrus Peikari

List Price: \$45 USD, \$66 CND, £32 UK

Published: January 31, 2004

552 pages

ISBN: 0596005458

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

Security-minded Sysadmins

O'Reilly Books

Sebastopol (Corporate Headquarters)

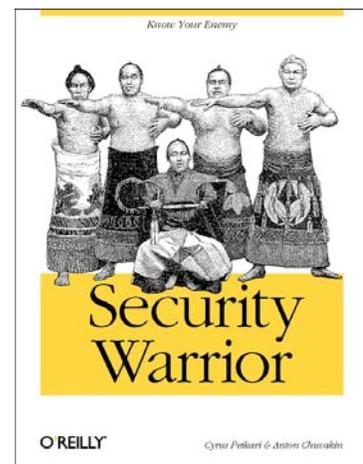
1005 Gravenstein Highway North

Sebastopol, CA 95472 USA

1-707-827-7000 or 1-800-998-9938

Fax: 1-707-829-0104

<http://www.oreilly.com>



Strengths: Digs deeply into which technologies are used to compromise your computer systems. Covers 2/3rds of the current platform OSes.

Weaknesses: A few typos. No Mac-based topics.

What has Security Warrior by Anton Chuvakin and Cyrus Peikari (reversed names on the cover) to do with Macs? Nothing, really, unless of course, you are running a network or servers with Unix®.

The book is based on the premise that in order to conquer your network or computer nemesis, you need to know as much as he or she does. Security Warrior goes a long ways in reaching that goal, but it leaves a wide, huge gap and lack of knowledge regarding the Macintosh environment. (I'll try and find a book that covers that arena as well as these two authors have done for the Linux/Unix and Windows environments.) And the book looks like it was rushed to print, because I see a number of niggling little typos and those make me wonder if the program lists also have similar issues. (Thankfully, O'Reilly has an errata page out on the link shown above and they have caught at least one really bad typo already.) What is really good is that as true University-level professors these two authors have included excellent References lists at the end of each chapter for further reading and knowledge.

The book is divided into 5 parts:

Part I addresses software cracking at the Assembly language level, Windows, Linux and Windows CE reverse engineering and overflow attacks. I dug into the Windows and Linux sections after really getting into the Assembly Language section because I have to deal in those environments. I skipped the Windows CE (Wince) section.

Part II is an area I got very interested in because it deals with Network Stalking on TCP/IP Analysis, Social Engineering, Reconnaissance (malware [mal in Spanish means "bad"]), OS Fingerprinting (spyware) and hiding tracks. What an eye-opener! Needless to say, I heavily

marked this section. Social Engineering will help me as I have dealt with folks at the Technical Support Level who teamed up on me once to get information about the software I support at the company I currently work at. I kept nodding my head in agreement as I read the techniques used to get information at the "wetware" (human brain) level, having been on the receiving end of this process. It should be required reading for all folks who answer phones at any company that has intellectual property that needs to be protected.

Part III covers Platform attacks, and this is where the Mac-connection could be made, because it discusses Unix defense and attacks (Mac OS® X is Unix® FreeBSD), then Windows client and server attacks, SOAP XML Web Services Security and SQL injection (again an area I will be encountering) and Wireless Security (See my other book reviews on Wireless Security as well).

Part IV discusses Advanced Defense techniques on Audit Trail Analysis, Intrusion Detection Systems, Honeypots, Incident Response and Forensics and Antiforensics. I actually started here and read this section first before going to the beginning of the book. This is really good! There are lots of tools to use that are either free or can be bought to do the job and are brought out of obscurity here.

Part V covers SoftICE commands and breakpoints as the Appendix. SoftICE is a debugger for x86 systems, so will be a total sleeper for Mac® folks – unless of course, you really, really want to get into the soft belly of Intel® architecture.

If you have been subject to Worms, Trojans and other Internet nasties, this book will help you counter a lot of the nonsense Sysadmins face on a daily basis in the Linux/Unix and Windows environments. You may even feel a little empathetic with their plight after you read this book.

Feel confident that we (Mac® folks) have chosen a better system to help avoid a lot of this challenge to our ability to use the computer technology that was originally intended to make our lives less challenging. Get ready for battle, because once the bad guys are done ravaging the rest of computerdom, we (the Mac-based environment) will be NeXT. "Know thy enemy."

The Wireless Networking Starter Kit, 2nd Edition

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Adam Engst and Glenn Fleishman

List Price: \$30 USD, \$46 CAD, £23 UK

Published: November 18, 2003

560 pages

ISBN: 032122468X

<http://wireless-starter-kit.com/>

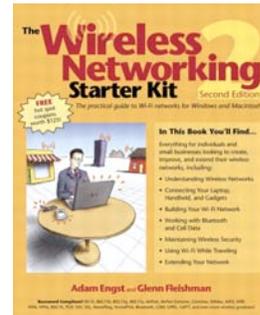
Peachpit Press

1249 Eighth Street

Berkeley, CA 2178

1-510-524-2178

<http://www.peachpit.com>



Strengths: Soup-to-nuts cross-platform wireless.

Weaknesses: None found.

The Wireless Networking Starter Kit, 2nd Edition by Adam Engst and Glenn Fleishman has been beefed up enough now to be considered by me to be called the Wireless Networking Bible. Based on personal experiences and lots of feedback, they have really added quite a lot to this book in the 2nd Edition. Now I can show it to one of my co-workers and he will read this one. He's working on a wireless link between his home and the office and is trying to do a line-of-site experiment. Some of the information in this book will even help him as an experienced technician and Ham Radio operator.

We have a wireless network in the office I work at, which just moved upstairs recently. We are experiencing some interference, but the book has some excellent troubleshooting ideas I think we will put into practice. We have a Gigabit network and 802.11g router devices, but we also have a few wireless keyboards and mice added to the mix along with a few cellphones floating around and we have been experiencing intermittent issues and other weirdness. Also, our wireless Macs can see the network but aren't communicating correctly, and the router equipment isn't playing nice. I'll take this book to the Sysadmin and let him puzzle it out, now that I have some print he can follow.

We've also experienced some flooding of the wireless bandwidth by the local telcos as they tested their pathways, which were within one block of our office - and thus, tested ours.

I learned about which of the 14 channels can overlap (1, 6, 11) and which should not.

I also found a lot of print regarding security, what works and what should be checked.

And because we have a hybrid environment, this book also deals with the Linux/Unix and WinTel environments, so this book would be considered "balanced". The others in the office won't be looking at this book as "Mac-only" anymore.

The differences between this book, and the earlier version is the following: 802.11g coverage,

Bluetooth and Cellular configurations, Camera and other Wi-Fi gadget, Centrino laptop, Palm and PocketPC setups, Small-office extensions and multiple locations, long distance networking and Ultrawideband (UWB) information, ISP wireless software, and security issues and resolutions for both home and business, roaming tips and techniques and more troubleshooting solutions than before.

This is a hefty book divided into 5 Sections on wireless basics, computer connections, network buildouts, security, roaming and long-range wireless that begins to almost get into Microwave, yet staying legal. There is an Appendix of sorts that covers Networking basics, settings and troubleshooting. And it even has and Glossary!

The link shown above will also keep this book from not becoming obsolete too quickly. If you want to come up to speed and dig right in to networking without too many wires, this book would be an excellent place to not only start the project, but to also finish it.

Hardware

Contour NoteRiser

Reviewed by Ted Bade



Contour Design
Contour Design, Inc.
10 Industrial Drive
Windham, NH 03087
USA
1-800-462-6678;
International: +1-603-893-4556
Fax: 1-603-893-4558
<mailto:sales@contourdesign.com>
<http://www.contourdesign.com/>

Product site:

<http://www.contourdesign.com/noteriser/>

\$130 USD

Requirements: Used with a Laptop

Experience needed: none



Strengths: Positions laptop screen to minimize neck and shoulder stress. Adjustable for various heights. Folds flat for easy storage.

Weaknesses: Unprotected edges might scratch softer materials such as the table you place it on or a bag you store it in. The price is very high considering similar items available.

The NoteRiser is an elegant although pricey stand to place a laptop on. The NoteRiser raises the Laptop's screen to a height better for viewing and reduces neck and shoulder stress. The NoteRiser, when used with a keyboard and mouse, will improve the ergonomics laptop usage. It is designed to fold up thin, making it easy to add to your briefcase or laptop case.

It is not a good idea to work a long time with your neck bent down. The ideal height for a computer display is that you look in a straight line at it while sitting with correct posture. Obviously, if your PowerBook is sitting at normal table height, you have to look down at it, usually by bending your neck or hunching your shoulders. Ask any Chiropractor and they will tell you that holding your neck in this position for a long time is not a good thing. (If you use a Laptop frequently, you might already have noticed this.)

By placing your PowerBook on the NoteRiser, the screen can be raised to a better position. The NoteRiser provides seven different height settings, so it can be adjusted for just about anyone. It only took me a few moments to find the height that was best for me. As I am writing this

review, I am using my PowerBook, which is sitting on the NoteRiser. I notice that I'm sitting straighter and am more comfortable.

Using your laptop with the NoteRiser requires that you use an external keyboard and mouse. If you frequently use a laptop on the road, you probably already use them. Whenever I get the chance, I plug mine in.

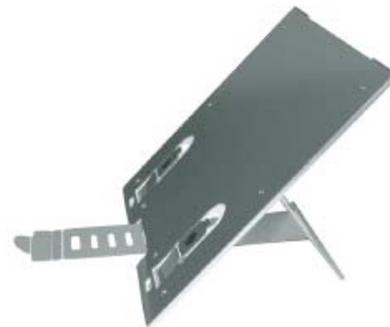
Another benefit of the NoteRiser is that its aluminum body acts as a heat sink, pulling heat away from the PowerBook. Perhaps I am wrong, but I can't believe that sitting the PowerBook on a typical table for a long time is good. Most tables are constructed of materials that don't transfer heat away very well, so the bottom of the PowerBook will get hotter and hotter. With the NoteRiser, the back of the PowerBook sits on its aluminum surface, and the back of the NoteRiser is in the air, giving it the ability to easily transfer heat away from your PowerBook. As the chips inside of laptops become more and more powerful, heat dissipation becomes more and more important. While Macintosh mobility chips are lower powered than their Pentium based competition, they still produce a lot of heat. If you use a Pentium-based Laptop for work, you definitely want to consider looking at the NoteRiser. Those laptops can get so hot you can fry eggs on them!

I must admit when I opened the box and pulled out the NoteRiser, I was a little disappointed. It really doesn't look like much. It wasn't until after I learned how to set it up and use it that I realized its true value. Essentially it looks like a piece of aluminum with some pieces cut out of it. In actuality, the NoteRiser is a well-designed machine. The cutouts provide tabs that fold to provide support for the laptop as well as raise the assembly.



Since the NoteRiser folds into a flat plate, it's obvious that you first have to set it up before you can use it. I won't try to describe the process here. My opinion is that an animation is worth several hundred pictures, and we all know what that is worth! The people at Contour Design have an excellent Flash video that shows exactly how it works and how it benefits the user. I highly recommend, at this point of this review, that you watch the animation. Visit: http://www.contourdesign.com/noteriser/flash_demo.htm.

Okay, the animation makes it look easy, but I had a few concerns when using it. I found adjusting the height of the NoteRiser with my PowerBook on it a challenge. I kept expecting the whole assembly to fall over. It is a lot easier to adjust the NoteRiser height without the laptop on it, but then you have to place it back to confirm the height of the screen. However, once you figure out the best setting for your usage, this should remain constant.



You definitely need a table to put this thing on. It won't work on your lap, or a surface that isn't stable, such as a seat cushion or a pillow. There are some plastic tabs on the NoteRiser, but they are not positioned in a way to provide protection to the surface you put the NoteRiser on when set up properly.

Since the NoteRiser is constructed of thin sheets of metal, you can imagine there might be sharp edges. With the NoteRiser set up, one edge of the metal sits directly on the surface of the table. Although it is more blunt than sharp, an accidental movement of the whole set up with a laptop on it could possibly scratch a delicate surface.

Also, when inserting the NoteRiser into a laptop case or briefcase, I was a little concerned about these metal edges. I can honestly say that I didn't make any scratches or tears, but I was still concerned (not to mention my wife giving me the "eye" while I was experimenting with it on our nice ash dining-room table ;-). I would be a lot more satisfied if the NoteRiser included protective tubes along the bottom edge (the edge that rests on the table's surface). The sides are flat buffed edges where the metal is folded and are not a problem.

My PowerBook's CD drive is accessed from the front. With it sitting in position on the NoteRiser, I can no longer access my CD slot. This is also true of my Window's-based laptops at work. Using the side CD tray on an iBook is possible, although it seemed a little awkward on the iBook I tried.

Folding it up for travel is easy and pretty slick. Both the feet that support the front edge of the laptop and the bar that is used to adjust the height of the NoteRiser fold up and fit into slots created for them, then are held in position by pressing holes in them over rubber tabs, locking them into place. Once folded, the NoteRiser fit nicely into my PowerBook case. It only weighs .84 pounds, so it doesn't add a lot to the total case.



My biggest problem with the NoteRiser was the cost. Speaking with a friend who is Mac reseller, he pointed out the most popular laptop stands are in the \$20 to \$40 range. Although none of the other stands are as elegant as the NoteRiser, and I don't think I liked any of them better, I probably wouldn't want to pay MSRP (Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price) for one. However, if the price were even as much as \$60, I would definitely consider it.

Overall the NoteRiser is a great idea. It improves ergonomics and draws heat away from your PowerBook. I thought \$130 USD seems like a lot for a laptop stand. But if you are in the market for an elegant laptop stand that fits nicely into a standard case, definitely look at the NoteRiser.

Shareware

DiscBlaze 3.02: Shareware Data CD/DVD & Audio CD Burning Software for Mac OS X Jaguar and Panther

Reviewed by Mike Swope

Bryan Lund
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<http://www.radicalbreeze.com>

\$19 USD <http://www.radicalbreeze.com/store/index.html>
Mac OS X 10.2.6 or higher (including 10.3); CD burner or DVD burner compatible with Mac OS X (if your CD/DVD burner works with iTunes® or the Finder it will work with DiscBlaze); Disk Image (ISO & DMG) creation functionality only available under Mac OS X 10.3 or later; 700 MB of free HD space to burn roughly 80 minutes of audio to CD.



Novice thru Expert

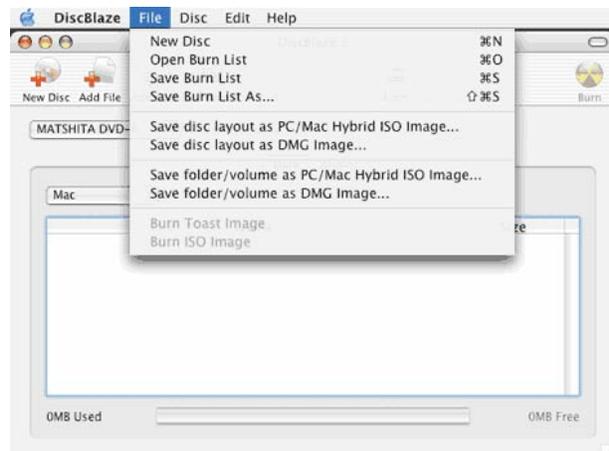


Strengths: Small footprint, reliable data CD, data CD and audio CD burning, disk image ISO and DMG creation, ISO and Toast® disk image burning, really cool icon, frequent updates to squash bugs and respond to user feedback

Weaknesses: No video DVD and Video CD support, could use some user interface enhancements, could use some on-screen descriptions

Since the introduction of CD/DVD burning in the Mac OS Finder, it might be thought that disk-burning applications are slowly being forgotten. But as we've seen with the continued popularity and development of Roxio® Toast®, long the defacto standard for burning CDs and DVDs on Macintosh, there is still room for improvement in disk-burning tools. Some shareware developers, despite Toast's dominance, believe they too can improve upon the disk-burning process and create better value.

Radical Breeze Software is one such developer, recently releasing DiscBlaze 3 (with version 3.03 likewise due within days). DiscBlaze offers core-burning features in a small, inexpensive package. Weighing in at 1.9 MB (down from 3.5 MB for v3.0), DiscBlaze 3.02's cool US \$19 price tag makes it an attractive alternative to Toast for those short on dough (such as this reviewer) with the simplest of burning and disk imaging

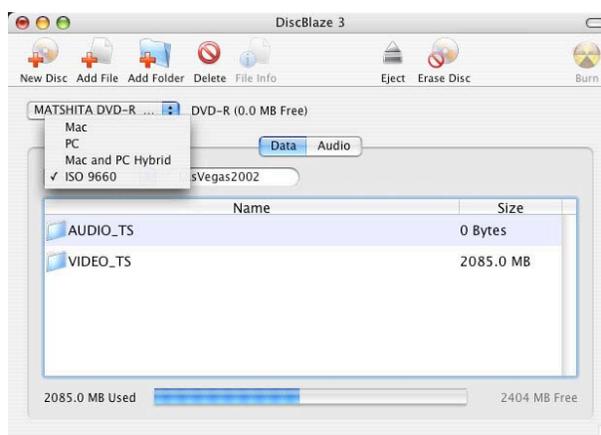


needs. DiscBlaze doesn't offer as many features as Toast, but it is yet a solid choice to burn data CDs, data DVDs, and audio CDs.

Light It Up!

DiscBlaze 3.02 is one of a series of minor updates to the version 3 upgrade (released January 29th, 2003). DiscBlaze burns data CDs in a handful of common formats, data DVDs in a handful of common formats, and audio CDs. For those who prefer them, DiscBlaze can also erase CD-RW disks. And, like Toast, DiscBlaze can create disk images as Mac/PC hybrid and DMG (OS X Disk Image), and burn both ISO and Toast disk images to disk. These features are 80% of all that anyone can ask of a disk burning application.

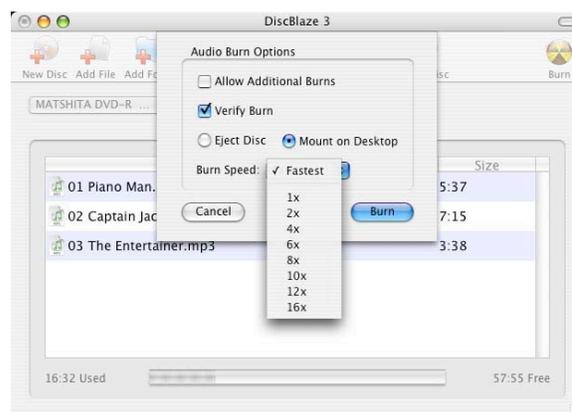
DiscBlaze works as expected burning data CDs and DVDs. Just select the format (Mac, PC, Mac & PC Hybrid or ISO 9660), name your disk, drag your files and folders to the DiscBlaze layout window (or click the icons at the top of the DiscBlaze window to add files and folders), insert a blank CD or DVD disk, click the most-excellent, flame-enveloped, Apple-like burn icon, select your preferred burn speed, choose whether the finished disk should be verified, or ejected or mounted after burning, and your disk is burned. Truly very similar to Toast.



Burning an audio CD is also as simple as Toast.

Just select the Audio button and drag-n-drop audio files that will appear on the finished audio CD. Like Toast, DiscBlaze processes audio tracks from just about any QuickTime® compatible file that contains an audio track. MP3's, WAV's, AIFF's, MOV's, MPEG's, etc are all valid file types. Radical Breeze Software notes, if you can open and play a file in Apple's QuickTime Player, you can turn the file into an audio CD track that will play in any standard CD player.

DiscBlaze 3.02 also offers other features available to Toast. When burning Mac data CDs and audio CDs, DiscBlaze offers the ability to allow additional burns, aka create multi-session disks. DiscBlaze's online help reminds users to always use the same file system for all sessions on a CD, except in the case of an enhanced audio CD (see Slow Smolder section below). DiscBlaze also allows the user to choose to verify his or her disk; specify burn speed in industry-standard increments of 1x, 2x, 4x, 8x, 16x & etc.; and, unlike Toast, choose to mount the finished disk on the desktop or eject it (Toast always ejects the disk).



Backdraft

New DiscBlaze users may be confused by some of DiscBlaze's interface conventions. Although DiscBlaze borrows its paradigm from Toast and uses Data and Audio as burn styles (Toast offers four burn styles – Data, Audio, Copy and Other), I have always found this convention dry and technical, unfriendly to the user. The average user may not be so technical. He or she just wants to burn a disk, and he or she will know what kind of disk they wish to burn, whether CD

or DVD, and how it is expected to be used, i.e. Audio CD, Mac CD, PC CD, Mac + PC Hybrid CD, etc. I believe that users would find it easier to select to burn CD or DVD, and then select the format for that disk, as that mimics the decisions they have made planning the disk. This way, they are certain the disk they burn will perform as expected where expected.

During the review period, I had made the suggestion to Radical Breeze that it might also be helpful to advise users with in-window comments, especially for the definition of each format, perhaps at the bottom of the DiscBlaze window. For example, if Audio is chosen, this message might provide direction by noting, "Burn a CD that will play in most audio CD players." When choosing Mac CD, this message might say, "Burn a CD with data that can be read by Mac OS 8 – Mac OS X." When choosing a PC CD, this message might say, "Burn a CD with data that can be read by PC Windows 98 – Windows XP." Or when choosing Mac and PC Hybrid CD, this message might say, "Burn a CD with data with two partitions: one that can be read by Mac OS 8 – OS X, one that can be read by PC Windows 98 – Windows XP." Or when choosing ISO 9660 CD, this message might say, "Burn a CD that can be read by Mac OS 8 – OS X, Windows 98 – Windows XP, Linux, Unix and other operating systems." Other software titles offer such messages, and new users are certain to find them helpful. In response, Radical Breeze incorporated some tooltips into the v3.02 release just prior to publication of this review. However, tooltips for the Data and Audio buttons are still missing, and for the buttons across the top of the DiscBlaze window. I still believe that format tips will be very useful to DiscBlaze.

One format tip that would be particularly helpful should accompany the audio CD format. In DiscBlaze, the multi-session feature is available when burning to audio CDs. Multi-session audio CDs with two or more music sessions load and open in iTunes® like any other audio CD, but when played on a standard CD player only the first session audio tracks are available. No one would be the wiser that additional audio tracks had been burned in later sessions on the CD. According to Radical Breeze, it is technically correct to be able to burn multi-session audio CDs, also called enhanced CDs, but the first session MUST be audio tracks and other sessions data files to conform to the enhanced CD standard. Few people will know this; fewer still will search out this information in the Help files.

I had also provided other feedback to Radical Breeze while reviewing DiscBlaze. Up to v3.02, the DiscBlaze Online Help system was truly online. It launched the default web browser and went to the Radical Breeze Internet web site, to a directory called 'help'. At one point during testing, I did not have Internet access, so the online help feature failed. With this feedback, Radical Breeze rolled the Help files into the DiscBlaze download, to be accessed from the user's hard disk, rather than from across the Internet. Remarkably, even with the Help files included, DiscBlaze still dropped +/- 40% in file size! Radical Breeze plans to move the Help files into Apple's Help Viewer for v3.03.

Perhaps the most confusing behavior with DiscBlaze is how to initiate a burn. In iTunes, the user clicks the burn icon, and the CD/DVD tray opens and the system requests a blank disk. I had expected similar behavior from DiscBlaze, since DiscBlaze borrows Apple's burn icon (albeit with a nice graphical flourish), but the burn icon in DiscBlaze is grayed out until a disk is in the user's burner. This behavior does not match our past experiences with (virtually) the same icon, and many new users like myself will wonder what to do to initiate a burn and when should a blank disk be inserted. So it would be ideal if DiscBlaze behaved like iTunes. Instead of a grayed out burn icon when no disk is present, the icon should be active at all times and, when clicked, the user prompted to insert a blank disk, if no writable media is present. Of course, if writable media is already in the drive, that disk should just be burned, not ejected, again like iTunes. With the popularity of iTunes, this behavior is expected wherever a burn icon appears. The good news is that Radical Breeze again listened. The always-active burn icon will debut in DiscBlaze v3.03.

Neither Toast, iTunes, DiscBlaze, nor any other OS X disk burning application (that I've heard of anyway) intelligently handles blank disks that have been opened by the Finder. All leave the Finder's blank disk image on the desktop even after the disk has been burned and ejected by Toast, DiscBlaze, iTunes, etc. It would be best if the blank disk image were removed from the Finder when a burn is initiated. This would much confusion on behalf of users, and perhaps some trepidation. This is just good usability design, and would be a feature unique to DiscBlaze, sure to be promptly copied by other developers. Radical Breeze has not said whether they will implement this feature in a future release of DiscBlaze.

There are other changes, too, that would increase user-friendliness. The first is to clarify what "Allow Additional Burns" checkbox in the Options dialogue box. This message, of course, would need to change with the format selected. For PC, Mac & PC Hybrid and ISO 9660 data disks, this option is already disabled, grayed out. It is only available for Mac data disks and Audio disks. A sentence of clarification immediately below the checkbox for these disk formats would be helpful. For Mac data disks, this message might read, "Check this option to burn to this disk again as a multi-session disk; each burn will appear on your system as a separate volume." For the Audio format, this message might read, "Check this option to create an enhanced audio CD, a multi-session CD with one volume of audio tracks and other volumes of data files. The first volume MUST be in audio format and will play on standard CD players. Subsequent sessions should be in data format." Radical Breeze has not said they will implement.

Other important changes in DiscBlaze would be to allow simulated burns, prevent buffer under-runs for compatible drives, and simplify disk-copying, features which Toast already offers. While it is true that DiscBlaze can burn a disk image, which in turn can be used to burn another copy of the original disk, Toast has automated this process so the user need only elect to copy a disk. I believe this will be an important feature to future releases of DiscBlaze.

But the missing features that I desire most in DiscBlaze are the abilities to burn standard video DVDs and Video CDs (VCD). These, too, are important features for many Apple and Toast customers, as video moves deeper into the hearts and minds of consumers. It is considerably easier to take a DVD I've made and simply copy the files from it to my desktop and then burn those files to a video DVD in Toast to make a dupe, than to store DVD projects on my hard drive permanently, just in case I need other copies in the future. I also find it convenient to be able to burn VCDs if necessary. It is of interest to note, however, that I can burn DVD data to an ISO 9660 formatted DVD which some standard DVD players recognize and play as though the DVD adhered to specifications (namely UDF disk format). This happy surprise, however, is unreliable.

Like other notable shareware developers, Radical Breeze has responded to these notes about video DVDs and VCDs. While video DVDs are some distance off (possibly v4.0 release), VCDs are seriously being considered and may be on the visible horizon. Radical Breeze has not made any formal announcement to commit to either format.

Slow Smolder

Unfortunately, DiscBlaze 3 also exhibited a few difficulties of the insect variety during the review period. One bug popped up in the original v3 release but has since been corrected in the 3.01 update. In v3.0, DiscBlaze sometimes burned an audio track twice (as track 1 and track 2) under certain conditions, and in some cases didn't recognize when a track was removed and a second disk burned, so the deleted track still appeared on the audio CD. Radical Breeze responded promptly to reports of these problems and within days had released a fix as v3.01.

Multi-session Mac data DVDs also posed a problem during the review period. Although the multi-session option was available when burning to Mac data DVDs, the first session to DVD-R

failed to close as late as v3.01. With 3.02, the session burns, closes and verifies on a DVD-R, but no other session can be burned to the disc. Radical Breeze has responded to this behavior to state that the culprit is that DVD-R cannot be multi-session, and that they are working on a method to determine the type of DVD disc to be burned to better handle the idiosyncrasies between the DVD formats available.

It's A Three Alarm

Despite the bugs and suggestions discussed above, DiscBlaze is a solid application for basic disk burning, and Radical Breeze significantly more responsive than expected. Each time I've contacted Radical Breeze with a question or to notify them of an odd behavior in DiscBlaze, I've received a response within hours. Radical Breeze also offers an online support forum <http://www.radicalbreeze.com/bbs> for 24-hour convenience, like other quality shareware developers (Big Bang Extensions <http://www.bigbangextensions.com> comes immediately to mind).

In fact, DiscBlaze beats Toast at its own game in several instances. While Toast shows how much data will be burned, it does not show how much space is remaining. DiscBlaze, on the other hand, displays how much space is used and how much space is still available on the disk in the drive, and features a progress-like bar that displays these values graphically. If no disk is in the drive, DiscBlaze indicates only how much space is used. Toast also fails to offer a true PC CD format; while DiscBlaze clearly offers an option to burn a PC-friendly disk.

At this writing, Radical Breeze is preparing yet another update to DiscBlaze, promising a Help system in Apple's Help Viewer, a PDF manual, an always-on burn button that requests a blank disk when none is present, user-definable audio gaps (much requested by registered users), and more error checking and handling above those of v3.02. The 1500 or so registered users of DiscBlaze have made a good buying decision. Priced 80% less than Roxio Toast Titanium, DiscBlaze offers a solid value among disk burning applications.

Download your trial copy today from the Radical Breeze web site shown above. And while you're there, check out their other shareware applications (RadicalPhoto, a photo enhancer and image converter; Macabinet, a themable drawer for storing files; Zephyr, a convenient menu to switch between applications; and RadicalSqueeze, a Zip and Tar file compressor) and the special bundle price for all five applications. If you need any features of these other applications, the bundle price is smokin'! And don't forget to download the DiscBlaze desktops <http://www.radicalbreeze.com/goodies.html> featuring the flaming DiscBlaze icon. They're hot!

(This review first appeared on AppleLinks.com link: <http://www.applelinks.com>.)

Software

Boris Red 3GL™

Reviewed by Shane French



Boris FX

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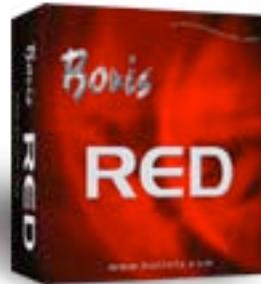
<http://www.borisfx.com>

Tryout downloads: <http://www.borisfx.com/esd/>

\$1,595 USD, upgrade from previous versions of RED, \$295 USD. Upgrade from Boris FX, Graffiti, Calligraphy and Continuum Complete, \$999 USD. Educational version, \$795, USD, also available in 5 & 10 packs.

Apple® Macintosh®; Power Mac® G4, 800Mhz or higher, Mac OS X 10.2.6 or later, 20GB main hard drive with 200MB free space. 512MB of RAM, Video display card with 32MB of VRAM.

Microsoft® Windows®: Intel® Pentium® III, Pentium 4 or AMD® Athlon™ XP CPU, 850Mhz or higher, Windows XP or Windows 2000, 20GB main hard drive 200MB free space, 512MB of RAM, Video display card with 32MB of VRAM.



Strengths: OpenGL Hardware Acceleration, expanded 3D Effects Environment, 2D and 3D Animated Charts, Advanced Title Animation, Direct Placement and Editing of Titles on a Video Image, Over 40 New Filters - 110 Total, Optical Flow Technology (smooth time warp filter), Broadcast Quality Effects, Workflow Enhancements: Keyboard Shortcuts, History Palette, custom workspace, Plugin Filter Manager, Faster Renders, 30% increase over Boris 2, New Hardware and Software Integration, Use as Standalone Application or as a Plugin for almost any NLE,

Weaknesses: Somewhat clunky user interface, not inexpensive.

WHAT IS OPEN GL?

Open GL is a cross-platform standard for 3D acceleration. "GL" stands for "graphics library," and "Open" refers to the ongoing, industry-wide contributions to its evolution. OpenGL has been common in graphics workstations since 1992, and is built into both the Windows and Macintosh operating systems as well as a wide variety of display cards. The technology behind

OpenGL grew out of the desire to display high-quality 3D images as quickly as possible. Specific instructions for drawing geometry, textures, lighting, and special effects have been coded into the chips powering many graphics appliances, including game consoles, and many desktop computer display cards. More details about OpenGL are available from <http://www.opengl.org>.

BORIS RED 3GL FEATURES:

Vector Paint allows you to fully animate spline objects with multiple strokes and fills. Any path created using Boris Red 3GL's vector tools or imported from Adobe® Illustrator™ can be stroked or filled in a variety of ways. Multiple strokes can be applied along the center, inside or outside of the path, with adjustable, animatable preset styles. Each stroked path can also have multiple shadows (drop, cast, and solid), any of which can be adjusted and animated.

Vector Text is an outstanding feature that allows your text to remain fully editable throughout the compositing process, within your favorite editing application. Even create editable text attached to paths. Boris Red 3GL also offers compositing in three dimensions. For titling, that means that 2D titles can be manipulated in 3D space, mapped to 3D shapes or viewed through animated 3D cameras.

The 110 Filters included in Boris Red 3GL give you a vast array of tools to work with. Including color correction, color manipulation, blurs, distortions, generators, effects, and time controls. These high-quality filters can then be combined or manipulated over time with precise keyframe control.

Custom Vector Masks allow you to create unlimited masks per layer, using a complete set of vector and rotoscoping tools. And any parameter related to strokes and fills used to comprise the mask are in fact animatable: softness, opacity, composite modes and jitter are just a few of these.

Onion-skin views are extremely helpful to observe changes simultaneously across multiple frames. And with the unique Boris PixelChooser™ technology, dynamic pixel-based masks can be created using the pixel information from any channel.

Import/Animate/Extrude EPS and Adobe Illustrator files with layers. Edit and animate stroke, fill, and bézier control points. Extrude any or all layers. Perfect for animating your corporate logo or vector illustrations, these imported files retain their original vector information.

Once extruded objects have been created, they can easily be animated in ways not possible with other compositing solutions. 2D and 3D elements can intersect as they pass through each other's positions in Z space, and multiple cameras per layer provide a variety of ways to view the results.

Advanced 3D Rendering/Intersecting Objects let extruded objects interact and intersect in three dimensions, with full scene lighting, reflection maps, procedural textures, and multiple cameras. Bump maps may also be derived from any still or animated image, including video.

Compositing Modes are a familiar tool in Adobe After Effects, but Boris goes well beyond by offering you more choices and the ability to adjust the animation of compositing modes through the "Apply Mix Form" setting. Modes are integral to seamless composites and no other compositing application gives you so much control in this department.

Time Filters: The Velocity Remap filter for smoothly ramping clip speed by allowing users to adjust the frame rate and actually see a visual representation of how clips have been modified.

With Temporal Blur you can sample multiple frames across time, frames can be chosen from forward or back in time and can be weighted with preference to any channel, then composite with animated apply modes. I found Temporal Blur to have excellent results, although for 3:00 minutes of video it took 4 hours to render on my G4 1.33 MHz Powerbook with 1GB of RAM, of course this will vary depending on the complexity of the Temporal Blur setting.

Motion Tracking Filter analyzes a specified region of motion to create tracking data that you can apply to adjust a track's position point, anchor point, or lights position.

Particle System Filter creates true 3D particles, which animate in 3D space with full interactivity, gravity, and motion tracking. Use any Boris composition or imported file to create custom particle shapes. The area from which the particles emit (called the production area) has fully adjustable and animatable width, height, and depth values, so the particles can be set to emit from a single point, line, or plane.

Import Photoshop and Illustrator Files, preserving the layers. Photoshop files preserve apply modes. Illustrator files preserve all bézier points, which can animate at any time, even after the file is extruded. Individual layers may also be combined with other elements.

macCompanion Buying Advice

Boris Red 3GL is a seriously powerful and well-rounded application. For those involved in motion graphics or titling it's a must-have. The price tag is steep, but the sheer number of filters, keying, tracking, vector animation, vector editable text and the fact that it wraps up nicely as a plugin for nearly all non-linear editing applications makes it difficult to pass up.

Dragon Burn Version 3

Reviewed by Ted Bade

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Irvine, CA. 92618

1- 949-421-0720

Fax: 1-949-421-0750

<mailto:Info@NTIus.com>

<http://www.ntius.com/default.asp>

http://www.ntius.com/default.asp?p=dragonburn/dburn3_main

\$50 USD

Download site:

http://www.ntius.com/default.asp?p=download/download_main

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1.5 or better, supported CD burner.

Experience needed: Basic to intermediate.



Strengths: Easy to use. Can be used to burn a wide variety of CD and DVD formats. Great interface.

Weaknesses: Weird colors on help screen menu. Could provide some better feedback.

DragonBurn version 3 is a full-featured CD and DVD burning package that goes far beyond the basic burning features included in the Mac® OS X Finder, yet offers a simple interface. If you are ready to move beyond the basic features of Finder CD/DVD burning you should consider DragonBurn.

Although CD/DVD burning capabilities are built into Mac OS X and they work very well with Macs that have built in CD/DVD burners, you might find these built-in abilities a bit lacking. If you have a Mac with a non-standard burner, Mac OS X burning features might not recognize it, or you might want to create a CD with both audio and data. This is where a program such as DragonBurn can add a lot of value to your disc burning experience.

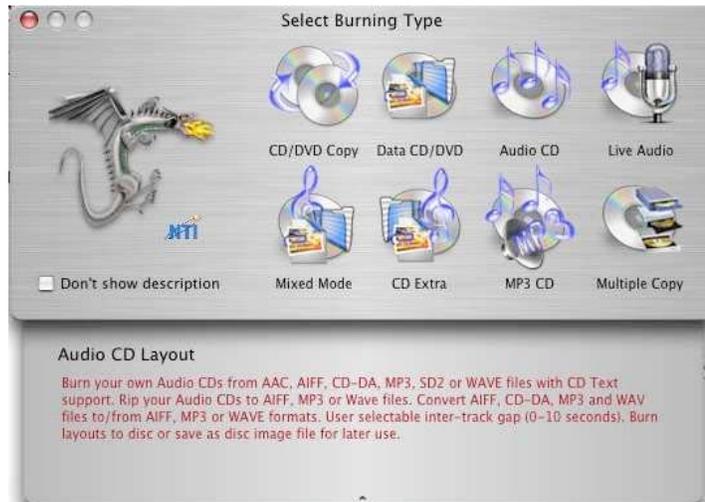
I have been a long time user of various varieties of Toast. Using DragonBurn was at least as easy as using this other more expensive program. Although there are some high-end or professional features that Toast offers that DragonBurn doesn't, I couldn't find any that affected my normal CD burning habits. Considering cost, DragonBurn is a real deal. The full version of DragonBurn is less than the upgrade price of Toast® (moving from version 5.x to 6). Like Toast, DragonBurn includes Discus LE, a label making program for CDs and other media. DragonBurn doesn't include any other add on programs.

Using DragonBurn is easy. A menu window opens when you first run DragonBurn, which provides a list (with icons and names) of the various types of burns available. You can choose from 6 categories: CD/DVD Copy, Data CD/DVD, Audio CD, Live audio recording, Mixed Mode (Audio and Data), CD Extra, MP3 CD, and the multiple copy mode. If you need a bit more

information about any of these choices, sit the cursor over the icon for a moment and a tray pops down with a more lengthy explanation. Most of these choices are pretty standard CD Burning fair, satisfying one's everyday burning needs.

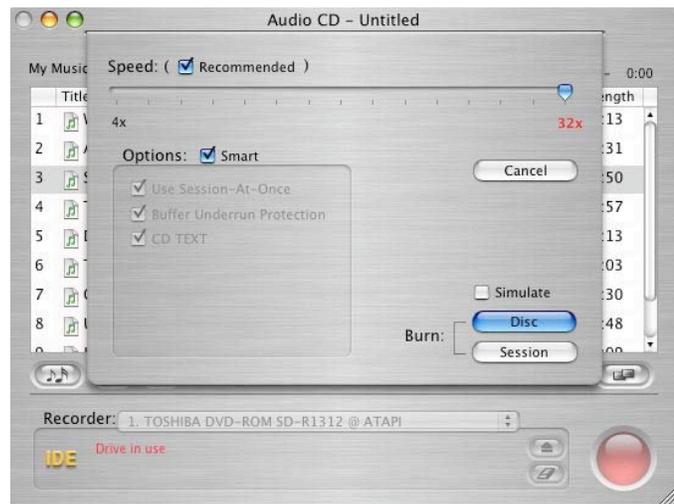
I was impressed with DragonBurn's ability to integrate the process of creating an audio CD starting with an iTunes® play list and ending up with an audio CD complete with label. I decided to follow this process through to give you a look at the DragonBurn process.

First make an iTunes playlist, then export it from within iTunes. (I am guessing that exporting a play list from iTunes doesn't count toward the limit of 10 CD burns for a playlist consisting of music downloaded from the iTunes Music Store. However, I was reluctant to burn 11 CDs to find out!) Within DragonBurn, import the playlist text file. DragonBurn can take this file, locate the songs, and set up to burn an audio CD.



I found the title on the window for this CD confusing, being called "My music CD", and the Window title being "Audio CD - Untitled". It would have been nice to have it include the name of the playlist I just imported. I know the name doesn't pass along to the audio CD, but if I make four playlists to record, I would like to know which one I am currently working on (without comparing the song list). If you save the information for this audio CD, you can then name it. This would be a good thing if you planned to burn another copy sometime later.

Once the window for the new audio CD is opened, you can (as with most programs), choose the length of the pause between songs. Within this window you can also select and play each cut, just in case you want to listen, an interesting feature. One use of this feature is when composing a compilation CD. If the order of the songs is important, you can listen to the music to make sure you have them in the right order. Of course, if your playlist was in the correct order, then the CD order should correct.



At this point you can choose to either burn a CD or make an image, by selecting a recorder or "CD image" from the "Recorder" pull down menu. (The pull down menu lists any CD burners connected to your Mac). Once you select a burner, DragonBurn will equalize the audio levels of the songs in the playlist (if you turned on that feature). Another very useful feature for compilation CDs. (I once made a jazz favorites CD, which was pretty useless, since some cuts were significantly quieter than others. To listen, one had to change the volume on the CD player just about every song! Not a good situation.) Once this process is done, you need to choose how the CD is burned, either as a session or Disc. For the audio CD, we obviously want a Disc.

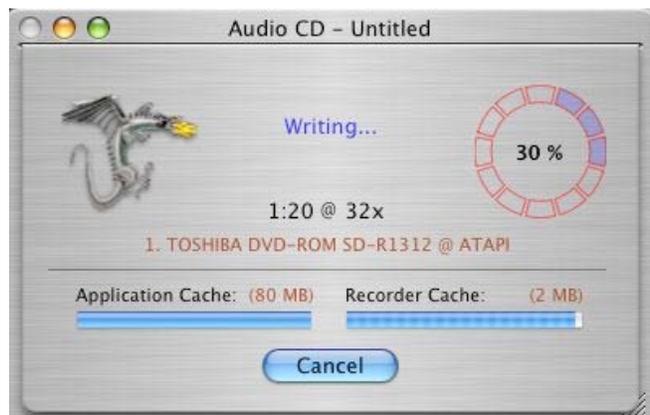


For a data disc, if the data you are recording takes up most of the room on the CD, then the session option won't be available. But if you are recording only a portion of the CD's space, you can choose to create a multi-session CD. In this window one also chooses the Speed at which the CD is burned. This is a feature unique to DragonBurn. It will select which speed to burn the CD at. I don't know if the decision is based on the quality of the CD blank, but I did burn all the CDs for this review at 32X, although I know some of the blanks weren't tested to that speed. Doing this, DragonBurn didn't produce any coasters! Although I let DragonBurn choose by selecting the "recommended" click box, I could have also selected any speed my CD burner is capable of. You might find a need to control the speed of the burn process.

Once you click on either Disc or Session, the burning begins. DragonBurn provides interesting graphic feedback during the burn. A sectioned wheel and words show the percent complete, while a timer times how long the burn has so far taken. (I would rather know how long until the burn is complete). Two thermometer bars show the usage of both the Application and Recorder caches. You know the Burn is almost complete as the application cache decreases from full to empty! Neat visuals.

Finally, DragonBurn verifies the CD/DVD you just completed. In the preferences, you choose if you want a quick or complete verification. Obviously if the information is important, you want a complete verification. I used the quick feature for test-burning audio CDs.

This final window also has a button called "disc label". Clicking on it runs Discus and saves the track/title information of the CD to your hard drive. Once Discus is up you can choose what type of label you would like to create, and import any of the fields from this data file you would like on your label.



The level of integration starting with iTunes and creating a playlist to Discus where we create a nice label for our CD and/or jewel case, is very impressive. It is best described as, well, "Mac-like"! (The Print label export is useless for a data CD as it only saves the date the CD was made.)

The process differs slightly when you burn other types of CDs. When burning a data CD/DVD, you create a new layout, select a type, than drag the items you are interested to the window. If the data is to be shared with non-Mac computers, you can select from a variety of standard data formats from a pulldown menu (Mac OS is the default). You can enter a name for the CD you are burning. As with other programs, the window displays how much data you have designated for the CD. The area near the CD burner tells you how much space is on a CD blank, but you have to do the math to see if what you want to burn exceeds the size of the CD.

Mac OS X lets you decide what happens when a blank CD/DVD is inserted. I changed my setting from the default of running iTunes for CDs to running DragonBurn. When I insert a recordable disc, DragonBurn runs and opens a new layout window which provides some information about the disc. Generally this is how much space is available on the disc. If the disc is a previously recorded multi-session disc, the information is less valuable because it tells you how much was recorded on the disc, not its total capacity, nor the actual space available for the next session. To get this and more information about a disc, insert the disc and select the "disc info" menu item.

Programs like this should be interactive. It would be very nice if DragonBurn kept up a tally of how much space was left on a blank (or multi-session disc) as you added things to the new layout and as well the amount of space left on a multi-session disc. This would be a real benefit when making backups of a library containing many items, such as a digital photo library. You can drop items into the "bucket" until it is full. Currently one is forced to guess and press the burn button. Only then are you told there isn't enough room. Then go back and figure out what to remove.

A feature of DragonBurn that I could have used several years ago is a generic CD burner driver. Say you add a CD burner to your Mac, one that Apple doesn't support. Chances are DragonBurn will recognize it. However, if it doesn't, DragonBurn includes a generic burner driver. This generic driver won't provide all the features the drive might have available, but will let you use the drive. I didn't have a opportunity to actually try this feature, but it sounds great.

Another feature unique to DragonBurn is the use of filters to select what files to burn onto a CD. This feature would become important if you had a folder full of images and other file types. If you want to only burn the image files from this folder, you can set the filter up to only let through say ".jpg" files. To burn the jpg image files in this (or any folder), select the jpg filter and drop the folder of mixed files onto your DragonBurn CD setup. Only the jpg files will be burned. An interesting feature.

I have to give a lot of credit to the DragonBurn customer support people. As I was burning CDs for this review, I ran into a problem with burning an audio CD from a playlist consisting of songs I purchased from the iTunes Music Store. I contacted customer support and within hours, they had verified the problem and within a couple of days after that, a new version was released. Quite impressive. I had to go through hoops just to find a way to contact Adobe support when I found a problem with their product. Great job, NewTech customer support!

The boxed edition of DragonBurn includes a useful manual describing how to use the program, and the CD includes a PDF, which you can read if you are so inclined. Personally, I prefer paper manuals. The program includes built-in help files as well. I was a bit annoyed with the help screen's main menu, the color combination was very hard to read. It's probably a function of my growing older, but I find a bright red background with purple letters a bit tough to focus on.

This color combination gets my eyes spinning, making it hard to select a help category. Once you get past this initial screen, the help files convert to the standard black letters on white background (thank heavens!)

Overall I really liked DragonBurn. It's not perfect, but it comes pretty close and it provides the functionality to support all my disc burning needs. If you do a lot of disc burning, you should definitely consider it. It performs very well, is priced right for the home users, and is easy to use. An excellent program to add to your library. Download the demo version today!

SpamSieve 2.1.2

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Michael Tsai's Mac Software

14 Gates Road

Etna, NH 03750

(Yes, he has a phone number but prefers Email instead.)

mjt@c-command.com

<http://www.c-command.com>

Released: January 24, 2004

\$25 USD from <http://store.eSellerate.net/mt/store>

Free 30-day (or 20 launches) Trial:

<http://www.c-command.com/downloads/SpamSieve-2.1.2.dmg>

Requirements: Between 5 and 6 MB hard drive space. Mac OS X 10.2 or later (10.3.2 or later recommended) Works with Apple Mail™, EMailer™, Entourage™, Eudora 5.2™ or later (Sponsored or Paid), Mailsmith™ (bundled with Mailsmith 2.1), and PowerMail™.

<http://www.c-command.com/spamsieve/>

Screenshots:

<http://www.c-command.com/spamsieve/screenshots.shtml>

Other Reviews:

<http://www.c-command.com/spamsieve/press.shtml>

<http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/9116>

<http://www.apple->

[x.net/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=651](http://www.apple-x.net/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=651)



Strengths: Works from *within all* Macintosh-based Mail applications through training activities.

Weaknesses: Install takes "extra" steps and no Uninstall included.

After installing this package you can almost say, "SPAM? What SPAM?" I was turned on to this software package after working with Jim Gordon on some Anti-SPAMming activities. (He has been instrumental in trying to get a few of the major offenders to stop their activities online with their bait&switch tactics.)

Jim used to get well over 1,000 SPAM Emails a day. I had cancelled one Email account I started with back in 1994 because it had become way too compromised. My current accounts have been handled nicely by the Junk Folder training I had done previously with Apple Mail, except lately I notice my Junk Mail folder has been filling up. I had it set to auto-disappear the Emails when I click on it so I never knew what was in there. I knew I had trained it to dump whatever came from certain locations and SpamSieve accepted that data nicely.

Michael Tsai has been the Editor-in-Chief and publisher of the free monthly ezine, "About This Particular Macintosh" at <http://www.atpm.com> for a very long time. Not too long ago, he

developed and began distribution of a few software applications for Mac OS X. SpamSieve 2.1.2 is one of them and it won a "Software of the Year" award from MacWorld! Good going, Mike! I hope sales will augment the cost of keeping ATPM alive and well.

Now, are there competitors to SpamSieve? Good heavens, yes! Lots!! But none I've seen so far go as far or work as well. This one works from within in practically every single Email-based program and accounts, including AOL, Hotmail, IMAP and POP. Now, does it "kill" SPAM? No. it marks them for what they are and (in my case) puts them in the SPAM folder. I use Apple Mail in Panther on my old venerable iMac. If it will work there, it should work anywhere. As you can see here, I just began the process And prior to this < I didn't get a lot of bad Email because I had Apple Mail trained to dump stuff into Junk already.

"False positives" (Emails that it thinks are SPAM, but are not) work with the "Add Good" AppleScript from within Apple Mail. SpamSieve also uses the "Mark Mail If Spam" AppleScript. It also works with Habeas Headers. And if you don't know what that means, check out <http://www.habeas.com/>.

So what SpamSieve is doing is learning by doing, using a Bayesian Spam Filter process (see <http://www.paulgraham.com/spam.html>).

What I did was load good and bad Email so SpamSieve could learn what I had. Then I checked the "Blocklist" [instead of Blacklist and discovered most of my good Emails (about 181 of them) were there and had to uncheck those since I deal with a lot of affiliate Emails. I also found my own Email addresses there, so please check SpamSieve Preferences once you've begun to run this program on your system. There is also a "Whitelist" for those Emails (it showed 15) that will always go through and not get intercepted when they come into my Inbox. In this case, some of those should have been over on the Blocklist instead, so maybe perhaps there is some Reverse Polish Notation going on here with my machine. Oh, I have the Habeas turned on, so the ADV (advertisement) headers get automatically dumped into the "bad" pile.

I also imported the "Corpus" that filters on words, etc. Apparently money is considered to be bad if it is in the body of an Email. 54,728 words? Ohhh boy!

Now, I don't have a lot of stuff in my Address Book. I prefer business cards that are non—electronic right now, but SpamSieve works with Apples Address Book.

SpamSieve has a Log too. Interesting how it picked up on EVERYTHING that transpired and noted whether the Emails were bad or good. Very interesting.

I suppose I should have begun by reading the 56—page PDFed manual...ya think? Okay, now we're cooking with gas! I was supposed to un—enable the Apple Mail JunkMail, copy 4 AppleScript SpamSieve files to the Mail Script folder, add a Spam folder in Apple Mail, install an Apple SpamSieve plugin, Shutdown and restart Apple mail and let SpamSieve receive all Mail to



Word	Spam	Good	Total	Prob.	Last Used
\$0.25	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$1.8	4	0	4	0.995	02/28/04
\$304	2	0	2	0.997	02/28/04
\$0.00	2	0	2	0.997	02/28/04
\$0.00.....for	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.025	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.04	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.05	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.07	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.10	2	0	2	0.997	02/28/04
\$0.12.	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.25	2	0	2	0.997	02/28/04
\$0.30	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.36	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.40	3	0	3	0.998	02/28/04
\$0.50	2	0	2	0.997	02/28/04
\$0.65	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.75	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.90	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$0.95	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$1.00	3	0	3	0.998	02/28/04
\$1.10	3	0	3	0.998	02/28/04
\$1.17	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04
\$1.2	1	0	1	0.994	02/28/04

determine whether or not it can deduce if the Email coming in is good or bad. I went back and removed all the Email addresses in the Blocklist that should not have been there. The instructions state that I should add them to the Whitelist. I can't just drag&drop though. Oh well...

So did my Statistics page change yet? No. Seems all mail today has strangely been very, very quiet...

Update: Our Email server was down – and still is, so we had to turn to alternate Email sources to keep working – just coincidence? Well, I discovered there is no Uninstall feature, so I had to manually reverse the install process in the previous paragraph. Sigh...

When you get this application, RTFM (Read The Fine Manual) because it helps immensely with the walk-through installation. I got excited and broke one of my own rules. When I got into trouble, I went to the manual. Maybe if the installation process auto-opened the manual first? Nah, too easy.

Anyway, I sure hope Apple auto-installs SpamSieve as an add-on to JunkMail in the next release of Mac OS X. In the meantime, why not download a copy and let it run on your system for a while?

Perhaps you won't be getting hundreds of thousands of Emails that are unsolicited requests for your money that are "in-your-face". Side-line 'em and strain 'em with SpamSieve.

Well, that's it for this month. Come back and come back often to our site, check the macC BLOG, send in a song for the macC Macintosh®, Glory Laud and Honor Music contest, plant your gardens, do well in school and work and keep your families happy. Until next time, this is the *macCompanion* staff reviewing books, hardware and software so you don't have to.

Peace.