

macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH



Coordination

Cooperation

Collaboration

Volume 4 Issue 1 January 2006

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Masthead

Publisher

Editor-in-Chief
Consultants

Assistant Editors

Web Masters

Contacts

Correspondence

Robert L. Pritchett
Robert L. Pritchett
Harry {doc} Babad
Ted Bade
Seth Matheson
Julie M. Willingham
Derek Meier
James Meister

webmaster@maccompanion.com
feedback@maccompanion.com

Robert Pritchett,
CEO of MPN, LLC
1952 Thayer Drive Richland,
WA 99352 USA
1-509-210-0217
1-888-684-2161

rpritchett@maccompanion.com

This month's Authors (Alphabetical Listing):

Harry {doc} Babad
Ted Bade
Christopher Duncan
David K Every (Guest)
Dr. Eric Flesher
Eddie Hargreaves
Jonathan Hoyle
Daphne Kalfon
Derek Meier
Michele Patterson
Robert Pritchett
Dennis Sellers
Leland Scott
Steve Stanger
Gene Steinberg
Mike Swope
Tim Verpoorten
Julie M. Willingham

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

Letter From the CEO

Collaboration and Video-Conferencing

by Robert Pritchett

Let's start out this year on the right foot and with the right focus.

I was asked what was meant by "Collaboration" and it didn't dawn on me that what was really being asked was which Groupware app I used. It is much more than Groupware. My understanding of the word is colored by how French collaborators were treated during World War II and how "getting along" with getting along can at times be the same as taking your life into your own hands.

There is an excellent treatise on the topic of collaboration at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collaborative_software and a list of other collaborative efforts can be found at <http://www.hypernews.org/HyperNews/get/www/collaboration.html>. Think about it for a moment. Where else does virtual teaming become seamless? For example, Open Source projects are listed here; <http://www.svpal.org/~grantbow/groupware.html>. Categories can also be found here in an older website of links; <http://web.mala.bc.ca/lizhk/IDesign/collaborate.htm>. This one is a little more up-to-date; http://searchcio.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid19_gci1046320,00.html and this one appears to keep current too; <http://www.kolabora.com/>.

Microsoft's "free" Collaborative answer requires buying their Windows Server 2003 Software first - [SharePoint Services](#).

There are a number of apps in the non-Mac environment that address collaboration, but I've found that Apple tends to pull it all together with iApps as currently used under Mac OS X. We can call it "enabling" software. So what is available on the Mac besides the iApps? A good place to start is here; <http://www.pure-mac.com/bbs.html>.

Then there is iLife... <http://www.apple.com/education/whyapple/communication.html>
And other testimonials -
<http://www.apple.com/education/profiles/vatech/>
<http://www.apple.com/education/profiles/laguna/>
<http://www.apple.com/education/hed/learning/collaboration.html>
<http://www.apple.com/education/macosex/>

Another productivity tool is [iStorm](#).

Element Software - Copper 2005 Web-based Project Management...which we review in this issue of macCompanion. <http://www.thesoftwarenetwork.com/News/2673963/Default.htm>.
Or Green Array: <http://www.greenarray.com/> that we also look at or even AEC's FastTrack Schedule 8 that is also reviewed in this issue and you might want to take a look at ProjectWizard's Merlin designed just for Mac OS X, also reviewed in this issue as well; <http://www.projectwizards.net/>.

Now let's take a look at video-conferencing.

I was asked how I could get everyone at a local company to use Video Conferencing, assuming I had all the budget issues resolved. My answer? Buy everyone an iMac G5 with the iSight camera built-in and use iChat AV 3.0 under Mac OS X Tiger. Their first question was, "What's an iMac G5?" Really! The next question was, "How do I teach folks how to use it?" I said that they could be up and running in 5 minutes and that there were online tutorials if they needed to go there. Where?

And I didn't even say Skype, since the makers of Skype currently still do not have a video solution for the Mac.

<http://www.pure-mac.com/voip.html>

Begin with Mac OS X Tiger and iChat AV:

<http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/ichat/>
<http://www.apple.com/support/mac101/work/11/>
http://www.mvldesign.com/video_conference_tutorial.html

And for older systems there are other options:

<http://www.pure-mac.com/vidconf.html>
http://www.mvldesign.com/video_conference_tutorial.html

For conferencing between Macs and non-Mac systems there also are other options:

http://www.masternewmedia.org/2003/07/06/pctomac_audio_and_video_conferencing_comes_of_age.htm

The next question revolved around security issues and videoconferencing. With Mac OS X Tiger, security is built-in. But no doubt, you want to read more on this subject, so here goes:

<http://www.appleinsider.com/article.php?id=649>

Now is that so hard?

Make life easy on yourself by using a Mac to do business around the world.

Letter From the Editor

A New Day and A New Year!

Welcome to the first issue of macCompanion for 2006. This is going to be the year of Macs and we really will see a technological tsunami sweep over the world. The kickoff will not be CES (though great stuff will appear there as well), but MacWorld in January and WWDC in June will show us even better technology as Apple Corporation reveals what they have had in the manufacturing pipeline.

We look forward to wonderful things that will both excite and ignite our minds and hands into bettering society.

Come join us this issue as we explore books, hardware, shareware and software that makes life just a little less challenging and more productive.

Oh, and we can't forget our columnists either. They have done some really great work themselves on their own websites, Blogs, podcasts and vodcasts, some of what we have captured here along with a guest article from MyMac.

By the way, MyMac interviewed Daphne Kalfon in December. And you really should check out the links to the other staff members on the macCompanion home page. There is a lot of energy and excitement going on there as well. Much of that energy is being generated by those who have been migrating to the Mac from other platforms. They make this fun!

Meanwhile, please take the time to visit our affiliates. After all, they are helping us pay the bills so you can continue to get macCompanion each month.

We hope to report on MacWorld in the February issue. A new day and a new year. Together, let's make it the best yet!

Sincerely, Robert L Pritchett

According to Hoyle...

Cross-Platform Software Development from a Macintosh Perspective: REALbasic

by Jonathan Hoyle

jhoyle@maccompanion.com

For those just joining us, we have been touring various cross-platform programming environments from a Macintosh user's perspective. No longer does the Mac user feel he must choose between the Mac and Windows, as there are a number of development environments which allow him to create software which will run on both platforms (and Linux as well). After our introductory overview article

http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/september2005/Columns/According_to_Hoyle_1.htm, we began by reviewing many cross-platform C++ frameworks:

- Qt: <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/october2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- wxWidgets: <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/november2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- CPLAT: <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/december2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

We leave C++ for now and move on to what is perhaps the hottest cross-platform programming environment available today: REALbasic <http://www.realbasic.com>. Whether you are a hobbyist or a professional developer, you will likely find REALbasic to be an excellent tool to add to your solution set.

REALbasic Overview

REALbasic is a very modern application development environment implementing the Basic programming language, created by REALSoftware. REALbasic is very similar to Microsoft's *Visual Basic*, with the main difference being that VB is Windows-only, whereas REALbasic can target the Macintosh, Windows and even Linux. Furthermore, REALbasic has a conversion utility to facilitate the conversion of Visual Basic projects into REALbasic,

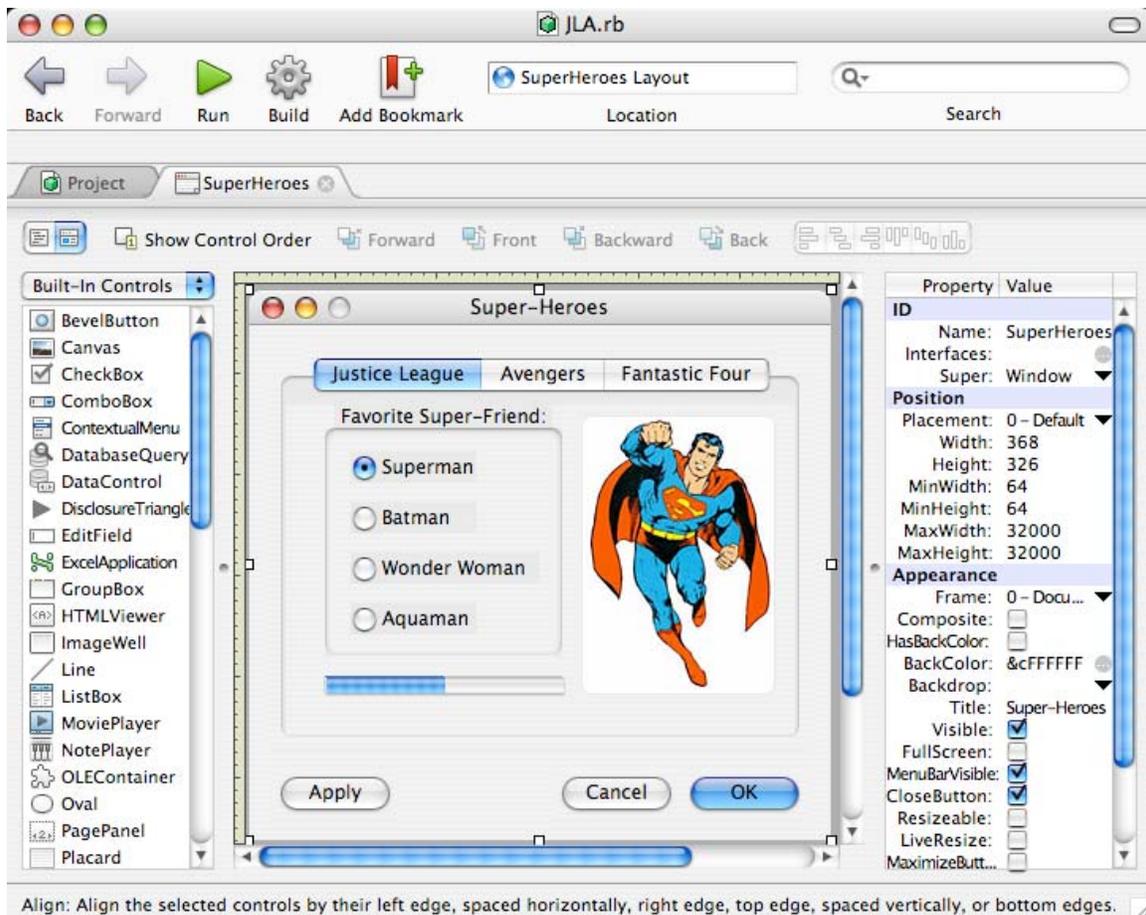
Additionally, REALSoftware has announced that it will be supporting Intel-based Macintoshes in a future release. Beginning with the recent REALbasic 2005 release, this product is sold as a subscription, available two ways: as the platform-specific version called the *Standard Edition*, or as the more expensive cross-platform version called the *Professional Edition*. The Standard Edition runs \$99 for the first six months, with annual renewals for \$49. The Professional Edition runs \$399 for the first six months, with annual renewals at \$199. During your subscription period, any new upgrades are free to download. REALbasic is currently available for three platforms: Macintosh (which includes Mac OS X and Classic), Windows and Red Hat Linux. The Professional version allows you to cross-compile to all the other operating systems, as well as give you more advanced databasing capabilities and support for console application development. Users of the Standard Edition may upgrade to the Professional Edition at any time for price differential of \$299. Academic pricing is also available.

REALSoftware provides a demo version free to download. I strongly encourage anyone interested in developing cross-platform products to download this trial version to experience the powerful capabilities and ease of use of REALbasic. After any purchase on their online store, there is also a generous 90-day money back guarantee if you are not satisfied.

Creating Applications with REALbasic

REALbasic is an extremely intuitive and easy application to use. Windows users who have used *Microsoft Visual Basic* or *Visual C#* will find it trivial to learn; Macintosh developers will find it easier to use than Apple's *Interface Builder*. After starting it up, REALbasic will present you with a default project, containing a window and a palette of controls. You can simply drag and drop controls onto your window, name the controls, set properties, override behavior and add code to a control's event method. In addition to the standard controls you will expect to find (e.g. buttons, checkboxes, edit fields, sliders, etc.), REALbasic provides image wells and canvases for displaying and drawing images, a movie control for displaying QuickTime movies, controls for 3D rendering, TCP network sockets, sprite controls, advanced database controllers, and much, much more. There are a number of books available on REALbasic (see book listing below), any of which would be sufficient to get you up to speed on using it.

Below is an example of a project window created with REALbasic 2005:



Beyond GUI creation, REALbasic is also a full-fledged object oriented language. REALbasic also contains an advanced runtime environment, which makes O.O. programming easy. Code completion is implemented very nicely, similar to Visual Studio.

Mixing REALbasic with C++

"But I'm a professional C/C++ developer...why should I consider REALbasic?"

Ironically, REALbasic can be even more useful to the C/C++ programmer than it is to the Basic developer. One powerful feature of the environment is its ability to interface with C/C++ code. You can use REALbasic as a cross-platform version of *Interface Builder*, by designing your GUI within it, while leaving your core logic code in C or C++. This is done by housing your C/C++ functions inside a dynamic library, while REALbasic is compiled as the GUI application. By doing this, REALbasic essentially absolves you of having to remember those long and cumbersome GUI API calls for each platform. You write the GUI once in REALbasic, and spend the remainder of your time in the C++ business logic of your application.

I created a sample project exercising this model for last year's *MacHack* conference, which can be used as a template for your own projects: <http://www.jonhoyle.com/MacHack>. This example requires REALbasic 5.5 or later for the front-end GUI project, and *Metrowerks CodeWarrior 9.4* or later to build the back-end project. This back-end project contains two targets: a Carbon Shared Library for the Mac and a DLL for Windows. Note that with Metrowerks recently departing from both Macintosh and Windows development, future back-end projects should be compiled as dylibs on *Xcode* for Mac OS X and as *Microsoft Visual C++* DLL's for Windows.

If you would like to see the MacHack sample project likewise updated, please let me know by emailing me at jhoyle@maccompanion.com. If there is sufficient interest for it, I will have it updated in time for next month's column. For more information on creating dylibs in Xcode to use with REALbasic, visit <http://www.nilobject.com/?p=184>.

REALbasic Deficiencies

REALbasic's claim that it is "*cross-platform that really works*" is only partially true: the \$99 Standard Edition compiles for only a single platform. To truly be cross-platform, you will need to purchase two REALbasic licenses, one for the Macintosh and one for Windows. Since the Standard Edition of Linux is currently being given away for free, you can support all three platforms for a total of \$198.

REALbasic, being younger than its cousin *Microsoft Visual Basic*, is a lot less robust. Over the years, a very large body of users has helped make VB the premiere Basic development environment on Windows. By comparison, RB has a lot less time to clean up the bugs in its environment. Furthermore, there are large holes in RB functionality compared with VB. Even now, REALbasic cannot create dynamic libraries or plug-ins. Another area of weakness is in peripheral access. Although REALbasic offers a legacy serial control, there is no generalized USB interface. Getting basic information from a USB device (such as retrieved from Apple's *USB Prober*) is simply unavailable. REALbasic's accompanying documentation could use some improvements as well. For overall general information, it is very good; however, detailed information is unavailable and usually requires me a post to the REALbasic newsgroup: <news:comp.lang.basic.realbasic>.

Most disturbingly, REALbasic seems to be forgetting their Macintosh roots and are targeting Windows users. This is most dramatically seen in the look and feel of last year's REALbasic 2005 release. In previous versions, REALbasic allowed you to have multiple windows open, each for different components and modules, etc., much like the user experience of *Metrowerks CodeWarrior*. REALbasic 2005's look and feel, however, changed to an all-in-one window, identical to *Microsoft Visual Studio's* user experience. Certainly there is nothing wrong with adding a new view, but it is just rude to remove the Macintosh look & feel without warning. REALSoftware ought to take a leaf from Apple's book and allow the user choice on window layout, as they do with *Xcode 2* and *Safari* with tabbed browsing.

Conclusion

REALbasic is simultaneously the easiest and most powerful way to design cross-platform GUIs. Hobbyists can easily begin writing software applications with it, while C++ software developers can use it as a substitute for *Interface Builder*. Although REALSoftware still has a way to go to make REALbasic a more mature environment, it remains an indispensable tool for any cross-platform project. I have been involved in developing a number of cross-platform C++ projects, some large, some small, but in each case, I find that the ones which used REALbasic for GUI development were the most successful. In some cases, the REALbasic GUI was intended as a temporary placeholder for later implementation in Qt or Java, but RB was found to be so proficient, there was no need to replace it. As this author's personal preference, REALbasic is the only way to do cross-platform GUI development. Next Month: What you've all been waiting for...Runtime Revolution!



Apple 2005 Review

by David K Every

<http://www.mymac.com/showarticle.php?id=2173>

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David Every wanted to look at the year in review (in regards to Apple) to reflect on predictions he had made. At the beginning of 2005 I said I expected Apple's stock to hit \$110-\$140 and then split within a year. Turns out I was wrong -- Apple split, then went up to \$70's+ (\$140 pre-split level). I'm pleased that my financial predictions were that dead-on. You can read the original article at: <http://www.mymac.com/showarticle.php?id=1917>.

Of course, even a broken clock is right twice a day. And one lucky hit doesn't make me a financial analyst. Any long-term predictions require luck as well as strategy. Analysts often focus on the minutiae to see how well a company is going to hit their next quarter predictions, while I'm looking more at the industry and company to try to figure out trends for the next year. So let's look at Apple's different operating segments (as they break them down), think about strategy, and look forward.

Computer Hardware

In the past, Apple was limited from bidding on many contracts that required "PC Compatibility" (x86 based computers) or running Windows. That ends this year. Apple is making the move to x86. What does this mean?

1) The x86 stuff is actually outperforming the PPC on most things non-scientific. Also at least some people or companies have been holding out, waiting for the introduction of the new machine. To the users, this is a big leap both technologically and psychologically. To the business, this means higher refresh than normal (larger short term sales).

2) There was the psychological barrier that if you were a PC user that bought a Mac, you'd be locked in. (And computers were expensive). Computers are coming down in price, which reduces the psychological barrier to entry to try a Mac (the MacMini effect). But soon if you don't like Mac OS X, you can just put Windows on it (the x86 Mac effect). To business this means more customers, and with the superiority of the Mac OS, more short AND long term sales.

3) The Mac has been benefiting from the iPod effect; people buying Apple iPods also want Apple Computers. As Apple's iPod sales have gone up 300% last year, we can expect carryover to the Macs. We won't see 300% from this, but even if 1 in 20 iPod buyers thinks this way (5% capture), that means 1.1 million computer sales this last year, and around 3 million Macs next year, not counting cumulative effects.

Apple's Mac hardware net sales grew at a rate of 27% last year or \$1.4B. Apple went from roughly \$5B (2004) to \$6B (2005) sales, and in units they went up by 38% or 1.2M units, with a 7% decrease in unit cost; from 3.3M/year to 4.5M/year. The unit costs went down because of changes in the product mix (more lower end desktop units like MacMini instead of higher end laptops) and general price decreases in the whole industry. But manufacturing margins were pretty flat and Apple shifted more sales from retail to direct (increasing sales margins).

Now if we figure Macs are going from selling an additional 1.1M units to 3M units because of the iPod effect, we're already at 6.5M units this next year (44% growth alone). Throw in lower prices, x86 and Windows, new contracts, major PowerBook and low end desktop refreshes, new Applications, and estimating 50-100% unit growth this next year is not out of the question. That means for 2006 we can guesstimate that Apple will move about 7-9M Mac units, and with some more price decreases, that mean about \$8-12B in gross sales. Not too shabby. This is before factoring in new segment busters, or totally new products or features. (Of which I expect at least one this year).

Mac Software/Services and Peripherals

Apple tracks their OS, Applications, AppleCare and AppleStore, as a separate line item. But it tracks pretty well with their Mac hardware sales; growing at about the same rate. Apple made about \$1B in that area in 2005. Using our Mac unit forecast, that means we can estimate about \$1.5-2B from this unit in 2006.

In truth, I suspect this number (percentage) is conservative. Apple is releasing more Applications, and enriching the ones they have, so in theory, penetration and profitability should increase with sales -- but for a while, they may just put that back into R&D, so I'm going to play conservative and not factor in an increased penetration or operational efficiencies.

Apple also tracks their peripherals and other hardware separately. This "other" unit brought in about \$1.1B, and it too tracks fairly well with hardware sales, but has a more modest growth slope. This may be more correlated to what products they introduce, rather than just how good Mac sales are doing. As such, rather than tie them to hardware growth, I'll just use the current growth slope, and assume that by next year they'll be selling about \$1.3 - 1.5B in 2006.

The end result is these two units will likely go from bringing in \$2.1B in 2005 (combined), to \$3-3.5B in 2006.

Media/Gadget Hardware

Apple is the largest media gadget supplier. The iPod is a raging success. It has good interface, great design. Apple went from roughly \$1.3B (2004) to \$4.5B (2005) sales (248% growth), and in units from loosely 4.4M/year to 22.5/year. Apple is expected to sell over 10.5M units this quarter alone. That's nearly half of last years total in one quarter (42M units if sales stay flat). So on the modest end of the forecast we're talking 100% growth. If we stay at last years growth rate, we're talking 115M units! And that's if we don't anticipate Apple figuring out ways to increase growth. Personally, I'll be very conservative, and figure Apple is only going to sell 60M units (very modest growth over the current quarter).

Apple was selling the average iPod for \$200 in 2005, which was down from nearly \$300 the year before. But that was because of the introduction of the iPod shuffle. The Nano seems to be pushing those shuffle buyers back up the line, and the Video iPod's may help there as well. So I don't see much further erosion down. Even at an average selling price of \$175, that means \$10.5B in sales from iPods. That's a fairly conservative estimate. I expect Apple to consider coming out with a device later in the year like a Phone or PDA iPod, which while wouldn't move nearly as many units, could sell enough to increase average selling price, and keep Apple fresh and cutting edge.

Apple is changing their margins a bit, so there might be some thinning there. But they are also doing things to guarantee their supply chain, with investments and pre-buys into the memory they need for the Nano and Shuffles. This move is likely to stabilize their pricing, and put them in such a favorable position compared to competition, so it will be very hard to compete with iPods/Apple. Apple also has a pretty aggressive product refresh cycle on the iPods, and iPods are cheap enough that people don't upgrade, they just buy new ones (driving up demand).

Media/Gadget Software

iTunes Music Store, and media distribution segment, Apple went from roughly \$278M (2004) to \$900M (2005) sales (223% growth). I couldn't find unit sales, but it appears to be over 50M songs each month, and over a million videos per month and rising as they increase content library. If Apple increases capabilities of players and their computers, we can expect video sales to go up. For now, this number is nominal, even with the larger unit sales cost, and probably won't be significant to the bottom line, but that's just because Music sales are so huge for now. However, this will probably matter more in future years.

There is pressure from record labels to increase the price of some content, but the effects are unknown; increased and variable costs could mean more money and/or fewer sales. But still, if we assume the same growth rate, that means Apple will probably generate about \$2.9B in gross sales. Apple doesn't call out the margins, so we don't know returns. But that's still a measurable amount to their top-line, and exposure, even if we are unsure of the impact to the bottom one.

Apple is now one of the largest music retailers on the planet, and getting bigger, and expanding into video as well. This business is likely to keep growing at an extreme rate, because they have the software and hardware integrated in ways that make it hard to compete. All attempts by a company or companies have been dismal failures. The music alone isn't a big deal to their bottom line, but it is critical to growth in the manufacture of the hardware (players), and market perception.

Sales (Forecast)

	2006	2005	2004
Mac Hardware (units)	8M	4.5M	3.3M
Mac Hardware (per-unit)	\$1,100	\$1,384	\$1,496
Mac Hardware	\$8.8B	\$6.3B	\$4.9B
Mac Software/Peripherals	\$2.9B	\$2.1B	\$1.8B
Media Hardware (units)	60M	22.5M	4.4M
Media Hardware (per-unit)	\$175	\$202	\$296
Media Hardware	\$10.5	\$4.5B	\$1.3B
Media Software/Peripherals	\$2.9B	\$900M	\$278M
Totals (gross sales)	\$25.1B	\$13.9B	\$8.3B

Other

So what does all that mean? Mainly that Apple in gross sales could be double the size company next year as it is right now; assuming a slight decrease in the growth rate. This is also without any wildcards.

What are some of the wildcards? I'm not a rumor guy, I'm more an industry observer and business guy (that has heard the rumors), looking at what I'd do if I was Steve Jobs. But then I probably wouldn't have pre-announced the move to Intel the way Steve did (which worked out fine), and I figured the industry was going to be able to reverse engineer the iPod and undercut them (which they couldn't because of iTMS and iTunes and Music deals and memory deals/supply chain). So I'm obviously no Steve Jobs. Consider that Apple has people smarter than me, and lots of them -- both to shoot these ideas down, and come up with better ones. Still, that being said, I could see Apple coming out with one or two new products among the following.

A real iPod phone; not that cheap and cheesy thing that Motorola created the ROKR. Cell phone companies offer subsidies on hardware, but have lots of annoying requirements like they don't want you to be able to download pictures taken, or use songs as your ringtones. Apple could create a really good phone, with a really good interface, and all the features people really want, and just sell it without the subsidies, or possibly figure a way to negotiate with the carriers. If they do not, in a couple years 802.11x or other new technologies could change the Internet itself into a wireless anywhere kind of function, and the limitations of the cell phones will work against them, as people jump network providers/types. Not a huge impact in bottom line, but more converts and a lot of psychological impact.

Home media center; Mac Mini as media hub. Imagine the PVR/DVR, DVD player, Music JukeBox, Picture Player, iPod dock, WebTV, Streaming Media Player, all in one small device. This killer little turn key hub could move a lot of units. (I also question the gaming station option with a good video card and reasonable processor/RAM -- but I suspect the cost increases would move this option downstream a year or three). Either way this would move a lot of units! This type of thing could be the next iPod in sales numbers. The question is where does it fit? Apple would sell it as a stand along turn-key device, more in the iPod or PVR realm (not as a computer), or leave it as a media computer to move more Mac OS X boxes, and possible software that would come with it or be added. I favor the latter, but Steve has favored some closed appliance options in the past. Either way, this has huge impact if it becomes a reality.

I also suspect there will be some device in the portable version of the media center. Whether that is an ultra-portable media Mac, or a Video iPod on steroids, I'm unsure. I tend to favor the ultra-light Mac realm. Sort of a WinCE without having to run a different Operating System (all your apps run). But a device that lets you watch movies, play DVD's, music, and is a computer. Others think Apple will just add dashboard to the iPod (and connectivity) and give it an optional bigger form factor. Either is a way to blur the lines, where a Mac and an iPod become more similar, thus get more crossover. No need for a PDA as a slightly different finder mode, and Address Book, eMail, Safari, and all that, make the Mac into the ultimate PDA or sub-notebook (or sub-sub-notebook). With Apple's industrial design, I'm sure they could do something cool and compelling.

In the software arena to really help Mac OS X, if I were Apple, I'd do one of two things. Work out with Intel a way that you could run Windows and Mac at the same time, or more with someone else, a way to release Windows porting API's to Mac. If Apple either came out with a Win32 Library that did some/most of the Windows stuff, on top of OS X, or something that helped them port/translate, it could radically increase the number of Apps on the Mac. In the past, NeXT had the ability that if you made your Apps for the NeXT it could run on Windows (with their own library). There are lots of ways to do it, and risks with them all -- but the goal is to reduce the barriers to entry to write more Mac software, which will increase sales even more. As marketshare goes up, Apple will gain Apps anyways. But with x86 working on Mac, some wrapper or remapper libraries or other things could really decrease the costs of making/supporting Macs, which would radically increase the number of Apps, thus sales.

So any of those options could make the projections I made conservative, or be at least the way they help achieve the sales. I'm not sure where they'd put each of those devices. And I'm sure Apple has their own ideas as well. But I expect at least one new thing this year.

Conclusion

People get squeamish about investing in stocks that are 'hot', because they think there isn't any value. But value is based on growth. Let's assume Apple is a little hot (overvalued) right now, with 118% growth (year over year), how long until the current price is considered a bargain? One month? What if they are hot then, are you going to delay again, waiting for it to come down? Each dollar you didn't put in Apple this time last year would be worth \$2.28 now. Last year, I tried to convince my brother to invest; he felt Apple was too hot at \$70/share, so he waited. Later he bought at \$49, after the split, and missed out on 22% growth. Still he made 42%, so isn't complaining. And they say Real Estate is a good investment? I made more on my Apple stock than I made in salary. You know, I'd be perfectly happy if Apple could just repeat last year. Even at half that, I'm plenty happy with the returns, and they slaughter just about any other investment I could make.

If I'm even close to my projections, and looking at price to sales, Apple's stock would have to near double next year just to keep up. Less if you're looking at earnings (thinning margins). Still, Apple has managed to keep good margins in the tightest areas; consumer electronics, thus there's no reason to believe they can't keep that trend. That's without any new revolutionary products, breaking into new markets, or other things Apple is trying to do. Last year, just primed the pump to help them more this next year. iTunes and iPod is leading into more media types. Their stores are profitable and have only 5% penetration. Their websites are huge and profitable, they can start leveraging more with them. The Mac OS X and x86 transition is opening new markets. Video is coming big time. And so on. I see very little risk that Apple will be worth less next year at this time.

If you're looking two years out, then the next year is probably better still. Microsoft is coming out with Vista, with almost 1/2 the features they initially promised. This is going to be a major headache and upgrade for Windows users and companies. Microsoft is also promising an update soon after Vista (could be a year or two behind) to deliver some of the features that they've had to drop to keep hitting the schedule they have already slipped. If users are migrating and paying heavy retraining costs (which they will), and with the fear and dislike of Microsoft, the risk is great for Microsoft. They have to hit every target just to keep close to Apple; and Apple has a new version of their Operating System targeted around the same time (which we don't know the features of yet, and could be a major leap forward). The potential for Apple to make real market penetration in the PC arena is staggering. Apple just has to repeat their iPod recipe in the PC's, tie them together more, or offer some better Windows integration than they already have, and it could be huge for Apple and the entire computer industry.

Remember a few years back when Steve Jobs said to Michael Dell, "we're gunning for you". Most people didn't take it seriously. Dell was 5-10 times the size of Apple by most metrics. By next year, Apple's market capitalization could be 50%+ bigger than Dell. The year after, at these growth rates, or slightly cooling, Apple's sales will surpass Dell, as will profits (earnings). With Apple in multiple growth markets instead of more stagnant ones, and controlling their own destiny instead of being dependent on everyone else. The only problem is that saying that to Michael Dell, wasn't thinking big enough. In 4 or 5 years, Apple could realistically have over 25% of the entire PC market, with their own OS, Applications, and controlling Music and Video distribution, and pushing into streaming media as well.

All investment has risk. I actually see Apple and this growth rate as pretty high risk. The whole world is paying attention and trying to figure out how to beat Apple and break the hold they have on media. But then people had been trying to do that with Microsoft for 20 years. Even if people do figure out a way to beat Apple, it will be hard to keep Apple from responding -- so they'd be lucky to become a serious player in an Apple dominated segment. Apple's evaluation is currently fairly high, based on their growth projections. If they start missing, they could get a short term pounding in the market. But longer term, they're making the right moves, and may be under valued for where they could go. But who knows, things change quickly. Still, I'm bullish on Apple for the next two years -- with this being a high-risk year, and next year being a little higher still. But for now, I see a lot of things coming together at the right time for Apple, and Apple is running with it -- and at this rate, they are going to be the success story of the generation.



“The Mac Attack” - Mac Tips, Tricks, and Hints

An Introduction to Mac OS X Security

by Steve Stanger

<http://thamacattack.us>

<http://www.stevecom.com>

[sstanger@maccompanion.com](mailto:ssstanger@maccompanion.com)

At the core of Mac OS X is Unix. Apple’s version on Unix is called [Darwin](#). One of the many ways Apple ensure that Mac OS X is one of the most secure operating systems available is by making the source code of Darwin available to developers. This is known as Open Source. This allows developers to examine the system security measures and can point out any weaknesses they may find. Improvements can then be made and security holes closed. This lays the groundwork for providing stronger security standards.

The **Keychain** application makes it easy to manage your passwords. Keychain can store all of your password information you use to log into file servers, FTP servers and Web servers. When you log into Mac OS X the system opens your Keychain. OS X can be set to lock your Keychain when the system sleeps or is inactive for a time. The system will ask you for your password the next time you try to access secure data. Other users on the system cannot access your Keychain or its data. The Keychain application can be found in your Utilities folder.

The **Password Assistant** is a user-friendly application that assists users in choosing secure passwords. Password Assistant can be accessed by clicking the “key” button that is present on all password choice dialogs in Tiger. (See the graphic below)

Secure Empty Trash is a form of permanent deletion, which allows you to “shred” your data when emptying trash. This command can be found in the Finders 'Finder' menu. Secure Empty Trash deletes the file listing from the disk directory which is what a normal 'empty trash' does but then overwrites the data with random text to keep it from being recovered.

[FileVault](#) uses the latest government security standard (AES-128 encryption) to safeguard your files. FileVault protects all the data in your home folder. FileVault can be configured in the Security preference pane in System Preferences.

Auto Update can download software updates automatically, so that you stay current with the latest security patches and software releases directly from Apple. Apple digitally signs the updates, so you can be sure they come from a trusted source.



Two Quick Security Tips:

If you are not using file sharing - turn it off. File sharing can be found in the Sharing preferences pane.

In a work or multi-user environment a password should be required to wake the computer from sleep or from the screensaver. Automatic login should be disabled for all users of the system, ensuring that each user must enter their username and password before being granted access.

If you have any questions or comments about this Article please feel free to email me at sstanger@maccompanion.com.

For more information about this topic and other Mac tips I invite you to listen to my weekly podcast - "[The Mac Attack](#)".



The Mac Night Owl

The Apple/Intel Report: Yes, it's Still a Mac!

by Gene Steinberg

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Whenever you read a report about someone cracking Mac OS X for Intel and making it run on a plain, vanilla PC box, you have to wonder whether it's something you need to take seriously. Lest we forget, we're still talking about a beta operating system. You don't know what sort of software and hardware protections Apple will place on its new Macs to prevent such shenanigans.

In the end, even if it happens here and there, it doesn't mean that Mac OS X will be freely available so it can be installed on a \$399 Gateway. There are issues of performance and peripheral drivers and the strong possibility that, even though the operating system may work after a fashion, the applications themselves may present obstacles. There is also a published report from a Mac rumor site that Apple is handing off development of the logic board for the next Power Mac to Intel. I suppose it's understandable that this can lead to speculation that the next generation Macs will be no different from standard PCs except for the form factor and operating system, as if that was a significant development. Why Apple might do this, of course, doesn't matter. It may be, as claimed in that report, to save money and speed product development, and there's nothing wrong with that.

In point of fact, today's Mac contains lots of industry standard components, from hard drives and RAM to support parts that provide USB, Ethernet and various forms of PCI support. Aside from the processor the support circuitry, and the various cooling-related components, there's probably not a whole lot that's terribly different about the parts inside your typical Mac. But does that make a difference? Back in the heady days of the Mac OS clones, various companies slapped an Apple-designed logic board into a perfectly ordinary PC case with standard components from the parts bins, but it made no difference. Why? Because when you turned it on, the screen display told you that it was still a Mac.

Today's Mac, as we all know, is no longer just the operating system. The computer itself has a distinctive look that stands out from the pack. Few PC makers understand or perhaps care about such things, except perhaps Alienware, which specializes in higher-priced gear for gamers and professional users.

So when the first so-called MacIntels appear, what do you expect they'll become? Will they be no different from hundreds of other PC boxes? That's absurd, of course, although I've seen that suggestion raised from time to time. The theory goes that, since the inner workings will be essentially the same as a Dell or an HP, Apple will lose its competitive advantage somehow. The possibility that they will be able to run Windows too may enhance that belief. The Mac difference will eventually vanish altogether, so they say.

At the same time, if you took any of today's Macs and swapped out the logic board with one designed by Intel, and it booted Mac OS X for Intel, would it be a Mac or just another PC? What's the difference if the parts are the same? Of course, that difference remains, and it's the operating system, and the fact that Apple enhances the system by giving it attractive duds is the icing on the cake. Suggestions that Windows and the Mac OS are really quite similar in most respects, which is implied, for example, in the rather lame reviews from *Consumer Reports* magazine, are clearly as silly as they've always been.

Now it's very possible that Apple will opt to put an Intel Inside sticker on the box or even on the computer itself, although you'll no doubt be able to remove the latter with very little effort. No reason for Apple to refuse millions of dollars of marketing cash from its new processor partner. But to most of you, it should make no difference whatever to your perception about the finished product. A Mac didn't become less of a Mac when it went from the original Motorola 680x0 processor family to PowerPC, even though software had to be reworked extensively to be fully compatible.

In the coming months, you will hear that Apple has sacrificed its distinctiveness to move over to Intel. However, the end result will be a sleeker, faster computer. If IBM had managed to produce the G5 chips Apple hoped for when it made its original deal, you'd still have a sleeker, faster computer. And that is both the beginning and end of the story.



Mac Pro Podcast

Shoot Better Pictures and Video

by Joseph Nilo

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

Did Santa leave a shiny new DV cam under the tree this year? How about that new 8+ megapixel digital SLR camera? Ok, what next? Let's all make a New Years' resolution to shoot like a pro.

Many of the techniques used on movie sets and in TV studios can be utilized in your own home while shooting that award-winning footage of your toddler toddling around the house. I'll describe these steps as they apply to video, but all of these items will help you shoot better still photos as well.

Use a Tripod

Probably the most important thing you can do is lock that camera down with a tripod. The least expensive tripods can be purchased at your local Mega-Mart or department store. This is a vast improvement over a shaky handheld camera that will make your family reunion footage look like *The Blair Witch*-- sending everyone for their motion sickness medicine.

But, as in all things, you do get what you pay for with tripods. If you're serious about shooting something more critical, I'd recommend finding a pro video shop or website (B&H Video in New York City and on the web is an excellent first stop) and spend a little more on a tripod. The vital piece is the head-- this is generally a fluid-filled mechanism that allows for smooth pans and tilts and will lock down tightly when needed.

Lighting

Another no-brainer for improving your shots is lighting. Are you on a budget? Those generic "shop-lights" with the silver domes are quite useful and can be found at your local hardware store. On a tight budget? We have a free, very useful source of light available for 12 hours every day-- the sun.

So you bought those shop lights. Now what? There are all sorts of tricks and ways these lights can be utilized, but the easiest way to light your subject is with diffused or bounced light. Pointing that 100-watt bulb directly at the subject will lead to harsh results. Bouncing the light off a nearby white wall or the ceiling will diffuse the light considerably, leading to a more pleasantly-lit scene. Additionally, diffusion gels can be bought online or at your local photo supply store. These are translucent pieces of film that you can attach to the light with clothespins (clothespins are called "C-47's" in movie-talk. Amaze your friends with this knowledge). Once the gel is on the light, you can point it more directly at your subject, and it will yield a softer, more diffused light.

Got a second light? Experiment with it opposite your first light as a "fill light" or behind the subject as "back light". There is a whole other article to be written on lighting techniques . . . in the meantime, perfect the look with your one or two lights.

An effective trick to make your outdoors shots magical is the use of a bounce card. As mentioned before, bounced or diffused light is more effective than a harsh, direct light source. A bounce card is essentially a large white card (try a poster board) that can bounce light at a subject. Gold- and silver-colored bounce cards can yield different effects.

Try positioning your subject with their back to the sun and bounce the sunlight back at them. You'll have to get close with the card and probably shoot pretty tightly on the subject. This will yield a diffused light on the front of your subject, and a nice sunny backlight.

I should also mention the effectiveness of shots taken in the "golden hour" -- the hour before sunset, and occasionally the hour after sunrise. At this point, the sun is low and daylight is naturally diffused.

Framing

The placement of your subject within the frame can yield a more professional look. The "rule of thirds" is a simple rule to follow-- imagine a Tic-Tac-Toe-like pattern in your viewfinder, with two horizontal lines and two vertical lines from side to side and top to bottom, respectively. Where these points intersect are the most interesting points to place the focus of your shot. Try placing the eyes of the person you're shooting in one of the top two intersections of that Tic-Tac-Toe pattern.

Headspace is another concept to understand. It is more aesthetically pleasing to place the top of your subject's head at the top of your frame. You can even "cut off" the very top if their eyes are at one of those "rule-of-thirds" points. The wrong way to capture the shot is having too much headspace . . . a big gap between the top of the frame and the top of the head.

Get close! Don't be afraid to shoot closeups. Utilizing the above rules, and by zooming in and / or moving closer to your subject, you'll get that great shot you are seeking.

Depth of Field

My final tip is the understanding of the concept of Depth of Field. This is the amount, or depth (in 3-D space) of the picture that is in focus. If you're shooting your child's soccer game, you need a wide depth of field, so every kid on that soccer field is in focus. If you're shooting a single subject, many times it's more pleasing to have a shallow depth of field, where your subject is in focus, but everything else around them is softly out of focus.

Shallow depth of field can be accomplished two ways. If you have manual controls on your camera, adjust your aperture (or F-stop) to its most open setting, which is signified by its lowest number (probably F2 or F1.8). Then adjust your shutter speed accordingly to expose your subject correctly. If you don't have manual controls on your camera, you might have a mode that is called "aperture priority", sometimes denoted as "Av" mode. Choose this setting and dial the aperture down to its lowest setting, and the camera will automatically adjust the shutter speed to expose the subject correctly.

Furthermore, moving away from the subject and zooming the camera in all the way will further soften the surroundings.

These are some easy tips to improve your shots. There are plenty of resources on the Internet and in your local bookstore for further tips and in-depth exploration of these topics. With the popularity of DV cams, digital camcorders, and video and image editing software shipping free on your Mac, there's no reason you shouldn't be shooting like a pro!

You can learn more about audio and video production on Macs by subscribing to the Mac Pro Podcast videocast at <http://www.macpropodcast.com> or read about his thoughts and theories on the business and back end of podcasting in his new weblog: <http://podcasterconfessions.blogspot.com>.

Feel free to contact Joseph anytime: macpropodcast@gmail.com



Surf-Bits Presents
The Mac ReviewCast
Reviewing Mac Hardware, Software and Websites

Surf-Bits
Learning Mac with a "Switcher"



Mac ReviewCast

Freeware for the Mac

by Tim Verpoorten

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

Each week when I do a podcast I wonder if this will be the week that there will be no new freeware releases or updates that we have not already talked about on The [MacReviewCast](#). After all, how many great pieces of freeware can any operating system really produce? How many great Mac programs can developers give us day after day and make them free to use, or even donationware? But then I see that many of the freeware programs we talk about each week come from Mac developers that create both shareware and freeware for users. I doubt that we'll ever run out of freeware programs to talk about, not with all the great developers programming for the Mac platform. Support these programmers by purchasing their shareware products and thanking them for giving you free-to-use software in exchange. Without the amazing group of developers, the Mac platform would fade away.

Now let's look at the freeware we talked about in December on the MacReviewCast;

This month we saw TextWrangler update to version 2.1. If you're looking for a free text editor that does more than the textedit application in Mac OS X does already, grab TextWrangler from [barebones.com](#), it's the baby brother of BEdit and being free certainly fits everyone's budget.

Google Maps Plugin: <http://www.briantoth.com/addressbook>

The Google Maps Plugin enables you to look up your Apple Address Book addresses using Google Maps as well as get directions between your Address Book addresses. Google Maps supports street maps for the United States, the UK, Canada, and Japan at the time this was written. We all know how great Google Maps are. Well now you can make them ten times more functional. And we all know functional is important in a Mac app.

myTunes: <http://www.sonicswap.com/mytunes>

With myTunes, you can share playlists with your friends or add new ones from people with similar music collections. Download cover art for all your tracks in iTunes and view discography or lyrics with a simple click. Like a universal remote, myTunes makes it easier to control iTunes, and enjoy your music. Keyboard control over iTunes without interrupting your work. Display what's playing and cover art when a new song starts. Automatically download optimized cover art for all your songs. View discography, lyrics, and background on songs, artists and CDs from iTunes. This program really makes iTunes more functional, and you all know functional is important in a Mac app. Didn't I say that before?

Frontrow enabler: <http://www.andrewescobar.com/archive/2005/11/30/frontrow>

Now you can sit back, relax and let Front Row start the show. Music, photos and video." ...on any Mac! Thanks to an update from Apple, Front Row can now be easily installed on any Mac running 10.4.3 Tiger. While you previous had to rely on quirky hacks, Front Row can now be added to Tiger with full support, including keyboard shortcut and sound preferences. If you wanted to see what all the fuss is about Front Row, here's your chance.

Next are a couple of games;

The first one is **Virus Out:** <http://www.littlegenerals.com/virusout>

Concerned about viruses running amok on your Mac? Are the little devils hiding in your system, waiting to spring upon your vulnerable files? If so, then Virus Out might just be the solution for YOU! Virus Out will take you on a wild safari through your Mac in search of these elusive bandits. When you see a virus, be quick to squash it before it has a chance to cause harm. If you are lucky, you may even recover some funds those little guys have stolen in their journeys.

The next game is a seasonal one by an author that has a ton of great freeware, Koingo Software and the game is called **Christmas Crisis:** <http://www.koingosw.com/products/christmascrisis.php>

Santa's fallen sick this winter holiday. Ms. Claus has been cooking some of her most powerful chicken soup, but even that's not powerful enough! Santa won't be able to make his first deliveries until much later than usual -- but that is TOO late. You and other elves have been chosen to help make up for Santa's missed time! Fly over cities and drop presents down chimneys. Maintain a 70% success rate to save Christmas! Watch out for planes - you don't want to crash! Think of it as a Santa Sim. Have fun with the whole family playing Christmas Crisis.

Weathermenu: <http://www.afterten.com/products/weathermenu/index.html>

Automatically puts multiple icons in the menu bar. Downloads and displays current weather info for multiple cities worldwide. It can put MULTIPLE icons in the menubar for multiple cities. Full Forecast information, inform you of current weather alerts, and it uses National Weather Service Radar. The program has Full Solar and Lunar information too.

Tunatic: <http://www.wildbits.com/tunatic>,

It's in beta and it's freeware. Here's what it does. Ever thought; "What is this song?" Let Tunatic hear it and you will get the artist's name and the song's title within seconds. Tunatic is the very first song search engine based on sound for your computer. All you need is a microphone and Internet access. When you click Tunatic's 'search' button, Tunatic transmits the song's features to the Tunatic server. The server searches its database and returns the matching song. Tunatic can identify music from any genre except classical. It can only identify songs that were indexed into its database, which is kept up-to-date by the community of Tunatic users through a program called Tunalyzer. If you like a particular genre or artist and feel concerned about it's being identifiable through Tunatic, use Tunalyzer to contribute to the Tunatic database (it's easy and effortless).

PTHPasteboard: <http://www.pth.com/PTHPasteboard/>

PTHPasteboard is a pasteboard buffer application. It keeps track of the last 20 (changeable in preferences) items that you copied/cut and allows you to paste them at any time. They suggest that you should move this application to one of your Applications directories and set it to autolaunch on login. It's simple and does the job.

coconutBattery: <http://www.coconut-flavour.com/coconutbattery/index.html>

Did you ever want to know more about your battery than the battery icon in your menubar is telling you? coconutBattery isn't just a tool, which shows you only the current charge of your battery - it also shows you the current maximum capacity of it in relation to the original capacity your battery had as it left the factory. You also get information about the battery-loadcycles (how often did you fully load your battery), the current charger (coconutBattery even warns you if you plugged in a wrong charger for your Notebook) and last but not least, information about the age of your Mac. It also comes with a widget that tells you the same information. It's functional, attractive, and unique. Like all great Mac software.

ThisWeekonXM: <http://www.xmrocks.us/products/products.html>

Do you have XM radio? ThisWeekOnXM is an application that allows subscribers of XM Satellite Radio to download the latest programming events and see what programs are coming up throughout the week. The data is taken from XM Satellite Radio's programming page and XM411.com's schedule pages. It is then displayed in an easy-to-use application, eliminating the need to open your web browser and find the URL's for those websites. It's great for quick access!

Pawns: <http://home.comcast.net/~squarebin/Pawns.html>

Do you play Chess? Well this has a bit of chess in it, but a lot of free spirit. The object of the game is get pawns (whether black or white) to their wooden box. This is done by placing arrows on the board to tell them where to go. Along the way you must avoid obstacles and enemy chess pieces. Sometimes the enemy chess pieces can simply be avoided, but you may need to encourage them to capture each other instead! This is a OMG (Original Mac Games) 2005 contest entry. Visit the OMG contest website for many more free Mac games to play and vote on. <http://www.idevgames.com/contest/downloads>

iTunes Alarm: http://www.johnnarun.com/itunes_alarm

This iTunes utility turns your Mac into the most fully featured alarm clock you've ever owned. It'll gently put you to sleep then quietly does the same for your computer. When its time to wake up, it'll wake the computer first, and then rouse you from your slumber with whatever music or radio station you choose. You can even use it to seamlessly change from one playlist to another, changing the mood at a specific time (a useful tool when its time for your guests to leave.) And, it stores five different alarms, so you can do all this without even looking at your computer.

Hallon: <http://hallon.sourceforge.net>

Hallon can create bookmarks in many applications (like iTunes) that usually can't create bookmarks and they are always accessible from a menu whatever you are doing. You can e.g. bookmark your favorite songs, an email that you have to reply to later that day, some documents that you are working on or the contact information of a friend whom you need to call before the end of the week. And you play the song, open the email, the document or the contact information just by choosing the bookmark in the Hallon menu. You create a bookmark by selecting what you want to bookmark and then press a user-definable hotkey or by choosing "Add..." in the Hallon menu. If you want, you can write notes and set a due date with alarm for each of the bookmarks. Hallon comes with support for Address Book, Finder, iPhoto 5, iTunes, Mail Safari and Terminal but you can yourself add support for many other applications by downloading instructions from the website.

Himmelbar: <http://softbend.free.fr/himmelbar/index.html>

HimmelBar provides an icon in the menu bar to quickly access your installed applications by scanning standard locations such as local, user, network and developer applications. You can also add a custom location such as the Classic Applications folder, or any other folder of your hard disk that contains applications. It's very tiny in the menubar and does a great dropdown list of the programs you want in it.

WakeUpNeo Screen Saver: <http://homepage.mac.com/jpietry/wakeupneo.html>

Do you remember how Neo was contacted by Morpheus in the movie The Matrix? It was on his computer screen. Well this is a simple screen saver for Mac OS X and Windows, which display the same messages Neo received on his computer screen when the first contacted by Morpheus. This is a VERY simple screen saver. Keeps CPU cycles low, and the majority of your screen pixels black, while a very subtle Matrix theme. (Nice for saving my laptop battery as well as the screen.)

Imagine BootX: <http://www.shadowlab.org/Software/software.php?sign=ImBX>

Imagine is a software program to change the boot image shown at the beginning of the Mac OS X startup to any custom color image. You just need to drop an image on the program to create a custom boot image. Make your Mac as unique as you want.

Finally, you know VoodooPad is on my top ten list of Mac software. Well Gus Mueller also gave us a new freeware version of **VoodooPad lite**. So get on over to <http://www.flyingmeat.com> and check out either the freeware or the shareware version. Gus gave us new web exporting features, plugins, multi-alias support, and bug fixes and other improvements. See for yourself and let us know what you think about it.

Till next month, take care and listen to the [MacReviewCast](#) each week.

Macsimum News

Apple may expand beyond the Mac -- but won't leave it behind

by Dennis Sellers

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

As we [reported](#) last week, Goldman Sachs research analyst David C. Bailey said in a note to clients that he expects Apple to gradually expand from its “Mac core.” That has some folks worried (again) that the iPods success means Apple plans to leave the Mac behind at some point in the future. Don’t worry, Bailey’s comments were blown out of proportion, and the Mac’s not going anywhere.

“2006 will undoubtedly mark another major year in Apple’s transformation, but its new markets bring together tougher competition,” the analyst in a recent research note to clients. “If early indications from suppliers prove correct, Apple is likely to move further from its Mac core in 2006, leveraging its brand and building on the consumer success of iPod.”

Bailey feels that Apple may announce new products over the next few months that could shift its center of gravity further into the consumer electronics realm. But note that he feels Apple could announce its first real move into the digital entertainment hub market as early as next month’s Macworld Conference & Expo in San Francisco, in the form of an updated Mac mini that includes a remote control and Front Row software. That’s a Mac mini, folks, as in Macintosh.

I have no doubt that Apple will increasingly move into other areas beyond the Mac and the iPod in the months and years ahead. However, many (if not all the new products) will spring from an iPod and/or Mac OS X base, as will the digital entertainment hub Bailey forecasts.

In fact, with Apple moving to Intel processors for future Macs, I expect to see an increased focus on the Mac and Mac-related products. Look for a strong push for “Mactel” laptops in the first half of 2006. Apple’s core business is still making and selling hardware. Certainly, over time the computer will be merely one component of Apple’s strategy and initiatives as the company grows into a Sony-like company with a variety of product lines—with the Mac remaining one of Apple’s most important products.

After all, Apple’s fiscal 2005 fourth quarter that ended Sept. 24 saw the second highest quarterly shipments of Macs in the company’s history. Both laptop and desktop sales were way up, and Macs accounted for approximately 60 percent of Apple’s total revenue. The company sold 634,000 laptops, which is 41 percent year-over-year growth. Apple shipped 602,000 desktop systems, which is 56 percent year-over-year growth. Expect those figures to be good over the months ahead. The iMac G5 is reportedly selling like hot cakes—and Apple doubtless has some fascinating Mactel systems coming in the next two years as the entire Mac line moves to Intel chips.

Thoughts? Write me at dsellers@macsimumnews.com.



Music and the Mac

Lyric-Writing

By Daphne Kalfon

<http://www.daphna.ca/>

This month I was supposed to talk about third-party plug-ins, and what I had intended to do was post a thread on a forum online, asking people what their favourite third-party plug-ins are that they use with GarageBand, or other sequencing programs. However, with the holidays coming, I thought it better to wait until people are a little less preoccupied.... so.... stay tuned for it next month and thanks for your patience :)

That being said, there's a lot of talk about all the technology that is at everyone's fingertips, but not much talk about the songwriting craft itself, and how to create good songs. This column is going to concentrate on a few of the very basics of lyric-writing.

Many years ago, I took a lyric-writing course entitled "Successful Lyric Writing" by Sheila Davis. It was a book which consisted of ten chapters followed by ten lyric-writing assignments. It was a great way to learn proper lyric-writing techniques without having to pay for an actual course :) There are many such books available if you are interested in furthering your lyric-writing skills, but this one came highly recommended.

A great thing about songs is that they take our common language and reflect it to us in a new light, amplified by music, rhythm and rhyme. In other words, you don't have to go far in your quest for lyric ideas. It can be as simple as reading the newspaper, reading poetry to discover turns of speech and newly coined words, and paying close attention to conversations for slang and lingo such as can be heard on the radio or TV. I can personally espouse these activities for the purpose of generating lyric ideas because they have worked for me.

Try consulting a thesaurus, rhyming dictionary, or colloquial dictionaries, the latter of which can be a dictionary of contemporary and colloquial usage, a dictionary of American slang, or a dictionary of American idioms.

Or, if you'd rather have a software program that helps you organize and sort through lyrics more efficiently, check out a program called MasterWriter. It won "Best of Show" at MacWorld in 2003. I've had a quick perusal through it and it does look like a great little program. In addition to providing a dynamic environment in which to develop your song lyrics, the program also features a simple and easy-to-use recording section, which includes many built-in drum loops to help you select an appropriate groove for your song. These are just some of the features of the program, so if you want more information, visit <http://www.masterwriter.com>.

Another thing you might want to try and which I stumbled on recently is the *tune-up catalyst for GarageBand*. It's a great little dashboard widget that is a free download, and it contains tons of ideas to inspire and trigger your brain into thinking of things you might not otherwise have thought of.

Let's start with the first thing you usually hear of a song, its title. For a title to be memorable, it should be:

- 1) identifiable after one hearing
- 2) resounds with one meaning
- 3) summarizes the essence of the lyric's statement

A strong start is absolutely essential, as it will pull the listener into the song, but it is also just as important to keep the listener's attention throughout the song. Some techniques that will help to hook the ear from the outset: use a question; a greeting; a request; a provocative statement; a time frame; a situation; a setting; an image. Songs can be so powerful because they help people get in touch with their innermost feelings, experiences, and thoughts. They give people a vehicle to express hopes, dreams, and inner conflicts that they might otherwise keep inside. Words carry a lot of power. Lyrics should reflect a universally shared emotion, a universally understood situation, or a universally comprehended meaning. They should conjure up mental pictures in the minds of listeners who will in turn react according to their own belief system, past experiences, and attitudes on various subject matter.

The most effective songs are the ones that involve us in a scene, or one we feel is cut so realistically from the fabric of life that we could be a part of it. Often, the more "commercial" songs are the ones that not only express more personal situations and feelings, but also they do it in a way that everyone else can easily understand and identify with

They should be sequential time-wise (i.e. not jump all over the place), should be rooted in a real-life situation or universal emotion, and should use vivid imagery (word pictures) that appeal to the five senses, and bring out a deep emotional response. Such images allow you to bypass your listener's intellect and connect directly to their ear and their heart. As a songwriter, you've got to get your listeners in the heart, in the head or in the feet.

Make your lyrics so down to earth, conversational, simple, sincere and honest that they strike the dominant chord that connects all of us to one another. This will make your listener come back for second helpings.

Writing songs in the first person, but not about yourself, is very effective. The "I" point of view and the "uninvolved storyteller" point of view are the most effective; the former lets listeners internalize the message by saying "I" along with you; the latter avoids moralizing/preaching and still manages to effectively relay its message. Second and third person are also feasible, depending what you wish to convey and how you wish to convey it.

Let the music show you what words and sounds are needed. This is mostly the way I work. I say "mostly", because I do usually think of a phrase or a catchword first, and from there I let the music guide me. I try to think of a melody that fits those words properly, and from there I compose the rest of the music. Once the music is done, or mostly done, I write the rest of the lyrics. I also just used the word "properly". By that, I mean that the words should flow with the rhythm and meter of the music, without the forcing of any word syllabically or otherwise. If it is awkward to sing the words within the melody you've created, you should probably consider a rewrite, either of lyrics, music, or both.

An effective way of writing words to a melody is to listen to the melody many times with no intention of thinking up words that will fit; instead, simply listen to what the melody says to you: what is it about? what feelings does it create in you? what pictures does it paint? is it a love song? is there a time, a place, a person?

Jot down these ideas and see if you can form any kind of structure for the content of the song. Then follow this up by creating a story containing the specifics you have discovered - time, place and character.

A technique used in poetry seminars to help writers find connections between words is one that's also useful when writing lyrics:

write down 4 verbs, 4 nouns, and 4 adjectives. Then write a few verses about a single subject in which you try to use all of these words. Use other words as well, but see in which direction your list of 12 might lead you.

Variety is very important too. Make sure that your lyrics have changes in density, meter, and rhyme scheme. This holds true for the music as well; changes in the music's intensity, volume and texture, will help people to better absorb your message and most importantly, to remember it.

Earlier, I listed a number of activities you can do and resources you can consult in order to generate fresh lyric ideas. When it comes to musical ideas, many people aren't aware of the fact that many classical, country, folk and musicals tunes are now public domain. Public domain means that you can use the music (melody and harmony etc.) without paying any kind of license fee.

In order to find out whether or not a song is public domain, you can consult either the US copyright office, performing rights societies, or go online and do a search for the music in question.

If the music you are interested in using is public domain, you can then make new arrangements of it, copyright it and publish it with new lyrics (and maybe even collect \$\$ on it!).

In conclusion, a song is a combination of words and music. If your music is weak, your lyrics will suffer, and if your lyrics are weak, your music will suffer. Songwriting is a fine balancing act between those two elements, and mastering that balancing act can take many years of practice. The lyric information I have outlined above contains just some of the most salient points to keep in mind when you are writing lyrics for a song. I hope they come in handy on your next songwriting project!

The above information was gleaned from "Successful Lyric-Writing" by Sheila Davis, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Songwriting but Didn't Know Who to Ask" by Cliffie Stone, "Beginning Songwriters' Answer Book" by Paul Zollo, and "The Complete Handbook of Songwriting" by Liggett.



Musings From Mars

Well, That Took Longer Than I Thought!

by Leland Scott

<http://www.musingsfrommars.com>

This is a tale of two Blogs: **Blogger**, and **WordPress**. When I looked around for blogging tools and software last March, I settled on Blogger (now owned by Google) because it looked like I could get up and running very quickly. And I did! I don't think it took me more than a week to customize an existing template and choose the few options available to get something I was pleased with.

Blogger is kind of like Apple's **.mac HomePage** tool... mostly, you just point and click and make the best of the few options you have. Still, with very little effort you can end up with something that looks very professional. In my review of tools, I noted wistfully the powerful features of tools like WordPress and **Movable Type**. As a guy who likes to design and program web sites, those two blogging systems loomed on the net like two giant chocolate ocean liners. But I knew I had to be strong and ignore them, in order to get the blog up with a minimum of effort.

At the time, I also looked at desktop blogging tools and settled on **Ecto**, which I've been very pleased with. My only complaint is that Ecto's developer updates the software so often I'm always having to download a new version! But it's not much of a complaint, really, since each update just makes Ecto better.

So, with Blogger and Ecto in hand, I happily began writing down many things, delighting in my newfound ability to express my rants in a more disciplined form. As my "catalog" of articles grew, however, I started bumping up against the one feature of Blogger that bothered me in the beginning: No categories. As of this writing, Blogger offers no way to organize posts into categories or to tag them with keywords. This is a pretty serious deficiency, but it only has an impact after you've written more than a dozen posts or so, or if you've started writing about more than one subject.

That "bump" point came for me over the summer, but I knew I would need time to convert the site to WordPress or Movable Type. Various competing priorities in my life forced that project into late October, and it was on November 1 that I finally downloaded and installed WordPress on my G5 at home. Why WordPress and not

Movable Type? They both looked great to me, but a few factors edged me toward WordPress:

- I'm more familiar with PHP than Perl, and WordPress is written in PHP; Movable Type, in Perl.
- Although Movable Type is free for personal use, it's still a privately owned product that uses a proprietary tagging system. WordPress is open source with tags written in PHP, and I like to use open source tools whenever possible.
- WordPress has an extremely quick and easy installation routine.
- WordPress supports subcategories as well as categories
- WordPress seemed to have better support for "skinning" (letting users select alternative templates).
- I got the feeling from browsing the Movable Type website that some plugins cost money, and in fact that I might find myself tempted to spend money in general with that platform. With WordPress, virtually everything is free.
-

Clearly, both blogging systems have a large following, but I was satisfied that WordPress had the documentation and community support I would need to make the most of it.

"Why did you look at only WordPress and Movable Type?" you ask. Well... That would be because I didn't have time to thoroughly investigate everything out there. I looked at [feature tables like this one](#), and the sheer number of possible blogging platforms boggled (or is it "boggled"?) my mind. As much as I would have enjoyed downloading, installing, and trying out each one, I would still be doing that today if I had tried. Somewhere along the way, it became clear to me that WordPress and Movable Type were the "market leaders" here, so I limited my choice to them. (Sorry, b2Evolution, bBlog, Blojsam, Bloxsam, and the rest of you fine blog makers!)

So I jumped into WordPress in early November and didn't look up until the site was converted last Tuesday, November 22. I was also transitioning to a new hosting service, so late last Tuesday night I switched my DNS servers to the new company—[Server Logistics](#)—and made my bright, shiny new WordPress-powered blog available to the public.

Now, when I step back from it, I have to admit that 3 weeks isn't an unreasonable amount of time to launch a new blog with the rich capabilities of a complex tool like WordPress. On the other hand, that's 3 weeks when I wasn't working on any number of other projects, which have now all backed up and threaten to overwhelm my stress threshold.

Could it have been done in less than 3 weeks? Certainly! There are literally hundreds of terrific templates for WordPress, and I downloaded, installed, and evaluated several dozen of them (available theme lists are [here](#) and [here](#)). But being the perfectionist tinkerer I am, I simply couldn't find one that did everything I wanted—the way I wanted. It took me quite awhile to find the template pieces I needed, and the result you see here is a conglomeration of several different themes.

One of the first things you realize with WordPress is that you're not gonna get anywhere in theme work without knowing Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) thoroughly. Now, I wasn't a novice at CSS when I started my WordPress theme a month ago, and even after this I can't say that I know CSS "thoroughly." CSS is *much* more complicated than HTML, and its syntax is nothing like any programming language. Like a complex work of art, admirers come to appreciate CSS only after a long apprenticeship, during which they gaze at CSS from many different angles. It's also important afterwards to share what you've learned about CSS with the world, which is why the web now has so many CSS wise men (and women) sitting on their mountaintop blogs and dispensing pearls of wisdom to those who approach them.

I picked up quite a few new CSS pearls myself over the last few weeks. One of the cool attributes I discovered was **fixed**, which you can apply to page elements to make them stick to certain positions on the page. I first noticed this used with the body tag in some WordPress themes. In these, the designer used **background-attachment: fixed** to make a background graphic stay, for example, at the top of the screen rather than scrolling with the content.

Then I realized that the themes I had seen which appeared to use the old-fashioned (and much scorned) `<frame>` tag were in fact an implementation of the **fixed** attribute. By using **position: fixed** in a style, you can keep a given page element from scrolling with the content. Since I've always been a fan of designing websites with persistent navigation—the main reason I was an early advocate of frames—I took a quick detour in CSS to implement this in my page header. To make the content slide *under* the fixed element, you simply add appropriate **z-index** values to the CSS page elements. This is **way** better than frames!

The next step was to migrate all of my Blogger posts—including all the comments (and their dates, etc.)—to WordPress. Although WordPress has a tool for this, the chatter I read in the WordPress forums indicated that it wasn't very reliable or easy to use. Fortunately, I was able to locate a **useful hack** that I can testify really worked well for me. There's even an illustrated guide to using this "Blogger Import" script. After running the script, I had all my Blogger posts, accurately migrated along with all of their comments, to my new WordPress installation. It

was at this point that I realized everything was going to be fine. The rest was just fine-tuning, and I probably could have shaved a week off the project by being satisfied with rough-tuning instead.

But I wasn't. No, once I had the design settled, and the content migrated, it was time for the fun part to begin: To see what all those WordPress plugins (see [here](#) and [here](#), for example) could do for me.

Once you start investigating WordPress plugins, there's no turning back. I mentioned earlier that WordPress had looked like a chocolate ship to me from the distance of Blogger. Well, wandering through the plugins lists was like walking the decks of that ship, only now it was obvious that the delights were available in many flavors besides chocolate! Here again, it was necessary to restrain myself and stay focused on the goal at hand. I did only a fair-to-middlin' job at enforcing restraint, and ended up installing several plugins that were simply "nice to have" rather than "must have" functionality. Still, I look forward to taking more time, a few months from now perhaps, to wander back into that particular candy ship and sample some more goodies.

Just for the record... and for those who may be interested... here are the WordPress plugins I've used in the initial launch of the new *Musings from Mars* (in alphabetical order):

Extended Live Archives.

This one was a godsend in providing really useful, browsable archives... both by category and by date.

Bloglines Reader

Bloglines is one of the many web services that have sprung up in recent years that are so wonderful you almost feel guilty not paying for them. I use Bloglines for all my RSS newsfeeds and have used their "clipping" service for many months now to organize and store articles of interest. This plugin made it easy to mirror that info on my blog.

Browser Sniff

I thought it would be fun to record the browser and operating system of the folks who leave comments here.

CG-Referrer

This plugin stores information in the database about where visitors link to the site from. It's one of many plugins for the WordPress administration tool that are available out there.

CG-Samecat

I wanted to show related articles in the sidebar, in case visitors wanted to read more of my rantings on a particular topic.

Custom Query String

This mysteriously generic-sounding plugin actually does something quite useful... It allows you to alter the number of posts displayed on a given page, rather than using the systemwide default. This way, for example, I can show only one post (the latest) on the home page, but many summaries on the category listings.

del.icio.us cached

Remember what I said about Bloglines? The [del.icio.us](#) service does for bookmarks what Bloglines does for RSS feeds.

Dunstan's Time Since

I just like this one. Rather than always time-stamping the posts with a boring "Posted on September 7, 2005," it converts the time-stamp to the more elegant "This article was posted 2 months, 3 weeks ago on Wednesday, September 7th, 2005 at 3:28 pm." Very cool.

Enhanced Post List

This is another administrative plugin... it makes editing your posts in the WordPress admin tool easier.

Fold_category_list and Fold_page_list

These plugins just save space on the page by collapsing subcategories and subpages. The subcategories and subpages "fold out" when you select the parent category or page from the navigation menu.

Get Custom Field Values

WordPress lets you define custom fields for pages and posts, but doesn't give you an easy way to reference them in your templates. This plugin makes it easy to do that. I added some custom fields on the Apple Myths and "Dell versus Apple" pages and found this plugin to help make use of them.

Bread Crumb Trail Generator

I tried out several breadcrumb plugins, but this came closest to what I wanted, and it supports the "[permalinks](#)" I'm using as well. Some people interpret "breadcrumb" as being a log of every step you've taken on a website, and its Hansel-and-Gretel origin no doubt inspires that belief in the more literal-minded among us. What it really means, however, is "showing the way" out or back to some logical (safe) destination. I'm sure most users don't really want to return to an important page via the circuitous route they may have taken to get there. Show me the way, but make it the most direct way, please!

Live Comment Preview

OK, I admit it. This one is just some very cool javascript-powered eye-candy, which I'm something of a sucker for.

Official comments

This plugin provides ways to distinguish the author's (my) comments from those of visitors in a conversation thread.

RC Custom Comment Text

With this plugin, you get a new field in the database that lets you customize the heading for the comments section of each post. Instead of the default “Comments (0)” you can have “Say What??” instead, if you want.

Tiger Style Administration

The default WordPress administration tool is very plain-jane... boring and only minimally functional from a usability standpoint. This gift to WordPress'ers turns the tool into a Macintosh-quality interface.

Search Excerpt

To quote from the plugin author, “Search Excerpt plugin displays text snippets around found keywords, with matches highlighted, in a WordPress search.” Much nicer than the default behavior.

So, have I employed enough plugins, do you think?

Well, as I said, this rather lengthy list is the result of a good deal of self-restraint on my part... believe it or not.

There are so many more ways to enhance the site with WordPress plugins, I really don't even want to think about it for a few months. I've already had to go back and fiddle with the CSS style sheets to make the site look reasonably OK in Internet Explorer, which of course doesn't support standard CSS the way the Mozilla and Webkit-based browsers do. The site still has some lame parts in IE, but hey, it's **too cool for IE** anyway.

Now that I'm done with the programming and design part, I really want to spend some time writing again!

So stay tuned. I've got a list of planned articles that'll easily carry me through 2006. And now I've got a blogging platform that ~~I can waste a lot of time tinkering with~~ can grow with me.

Practical Strategies

Dog Eat Dog

by Christopher Duncan

<http://www.PracticalStrategyConsulting.com>

Since I've been known to make more than my fair share of jokes about cats, I thought it only fair to give their furry counterparts equal time. Perhaps, in the final analysis, cats really are more civilized. After all, no one ever talks about the rough and tumble, cat eat cat world of business. No, this honor falls to the dogs. In fact, depending on the current state of affairs where you work, you might even be moved to observe that business in general has simply gone to the dogs.

In any event, regardless of your allegiance when it comes to small, four legged mammals, one fact remains clear. No matter what industry you call home or what part you play in the overall effort, the corporate jungle is a highly competitive place. Those who fail to grasp this reality are quite likely to find teeth marks on their ankles.

In fact, I often use battlefield metaphors when referring to the workplace, and for a very simple reason. Like war, business is a competition for territory and resources, often leaving only two groups of people - those who win, and those who lose. Naturally, many people are uncomfortable with that comparison, and for good reason. Conflict and conquest are unpleasant realities, especially when you're on the receiving end of things.

However, unless you're an ostrich, poking your head in the sand and pretending these struggles don't exist isn't a terribly effective way to protect yourself. In fact, since I've seen a few recipes for ostrich soup, I'm willing to bet that it doesn't work out all that well for them, either.

If you don't want your life to be continually inconvenienced by the manipulative or aggressive actions of others, you have to learn to cope with these situations effectively. The first step, therefore, is recognizing that danger does, in fact, exist. Only then are you able to take appropriate measures to ensure that your work and your career will remain unaffected by the ambitions of others.

It might seem overly dramatic to speak of danger in the workplace or illustrate that concept through visions of canine cannibalism, no matter how much the latter might entertain the feline faction. Nonetheless, when you get stuck with countless hours of overtime because of someone else's plan, or watch that well deserved promotion go to a less productive but more politically adept coworker, it gets personal in a hurry.

I was once fired from a job because I ticked off the wrong person. Although the owner of the company felt obligated to back up his manager, he was nice enough to tell me that he knew it was a purely political move. He also pointed out that politics were just as much a reality as any other aspect of a job, and that I was smart enough to know that. He was right about the reality part, but obviously I wasn't smart enough in my youth to realize this or I wouldn't have been fired in the first place. Live and learn.

Because companies are just collections of people, ambition, personal agendas and human nature will always be an undercurrent to the task at hand. That doesn't mean that you have to join the ranks of the politically ambitious or change your core values. It does, however, mean that you must always keep an eye out for the potential problems that manipulative or unscrupulous people can cause, both to your personal career and to the health and well being of your company as a whole.

At minimum, this will allow you to see trouble coming and take the appropriate steps to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place. However, awareness of political realities will also allow you to accomplish great things. In the dog eat dog environment of the business world, the alternative is to resign yourself to life as a chew toy.

Christopher Duncan is the best selling author of *Unite the Tribes* and *The Career Programmer*. In addition to his seminars, he's a popular speaker and frequent guest on radio shows across the country. He's currently working to improve companies and careers nationwide through his work with the *Campaign for American Excellence*.

Views from the Ivory Tower

Innovations

by Ted Bade

Happy New Year to all my readers! I hope you had a great winter holiday season, no matter what celebration(s) you take part in. Let us hope that the new year leads our world down a path of peace and prosperity.

As our blue planet reaches the point where it is closest to that fiery orb we call the sun, Apple Corporation is making ready its next leap into innovation. Many of us are looking forward to what new things will be displayed and perhaps even offered at MacWorld Expo later this month. Will Apple have an Intel-based Macintosh ready for market? What for m factor will it take when released an iMac, iBook, or perhaps a PowerMac or Powerbook? Will it be a success or a flop? Perhaps we will see streaming videos, more networks offering a downloadable versions of their older shows. Will Steve Jobs surprise us with an exciting new electronic toy?

It has been a good year for Apple. You know you are a successful innovator when all the media can say bad about you is that you cannot keep up the innovation forever! While ultimately, this is true, I believe that as long as Steve Jobs is at the helm of Apple Corporation, we will continue to see more interesting items.

I am looking forward to watching the Keynote and will be sure to share my comments in the next edition of this article ;-)

Selling houses with an iPod - There are a lot of things one can do with an iPod. I recently read that Real Estate Agents have learned to use video, made for the video iPod to sell homes.

The Real Estate Home Show web site <http://www.therealestatehomeshow.com/> provides information on upper scale homes across the US. If you visit this site, you will see that some properties sport an iPod symbol. This means that there is a movie designed for a video iPod that you can download that shows and describes the property.

This is a pretty cool use for the iPod. I can see other agencies across the US using this as well. An agent could come to a prospective buyers home, show a number of short videos on the iPod (or even on the TV). This can help weed out homes without the cost of driving all over the place. Very interesting.

iPod 101 - If you are new to the iPod (yeah right), or know of someone with more questions then you have answers (or at least time for), Apple has made a site for you. The iPod 101 site. [<http://www.apple.com/support/ipod101/>].

The site is broken into various topics, each topic is broken into specific lessons. For instance, the "iPod Anatomy" section offers four different lessons, each discussing a different aspect of using the iPod. While this site might not offer any of the tricks and tips you would get from a good book on iPods, it will get you into the basics of using one.

If you have some time, take a look, even if you are an experienced user, the site is nicely done and easy to use.

TV on the iPod - While we are on the subject of iPods, what do you think about the video iPods? As an older Mac fan, my eyes are weary enough that I have come to enjoy large screen TVs. But being able to download a video episode of my favorite show is a pretty cool idea.

Personally, I would like to see a lot more classic shows for download. With a Tivo or a similar service through a cable company, it is really easy to catch newer shows at odd hours. But being able to catch a really old show that you remember from when you were a kid, that would be cool!

I think Apple has the right idea with the video and the time is ripe for it. However, I still say, as I have said before, that the video iPod should be a very different form factor than the audio one. It needs a bigger screen. I realize that Apple gets a lot of sales off the fact that newer iPods look a lot like the earlier ones. But I think this portable video thing would be a lot more popular if the screens were bigger! But that's my opinion.

In the mean time, more and more networks are making shows available through the iTunes Music Store. (When are they going to rename it the iTunes Media store I wonder?). If you are interested in TV shows or music videos, take a moment to check out those areas at the store.

A hole made by the people who fill the holes - Here is one story that caught my attention. Apparently Norton AntiVirus can be confused in such a way as to allow a virus to insert itself! Scary.

Check out the following article from PC World

<http://www.pcworld.com/resource/article/0,aid,124058,pg,1,RSS,RSS,00.asp>

In a nutshell, when NAV scans a rar file, the virus program can attack NAV and cause a "heap overload", which can then be exploited to allow the virus to insert itself on the computer. (you can get a lot more detail on this by reading the article).

If find this scary. The guys who are supposed to be protecting you are now part of the problem. Of course, it isn't their fault, somebody spent a lot of time figuring this out. What is even more interesting is that this could affect a Macintosh! (Of course, the virus code might not work on the Mac, but the overload would.) I guess in this case, my decision to not use NAV again until there were a few Mac OS X viruses that I needed to worry about is a good idea in this case :-)

Apple recognized as a pacesetter - Apple has made a number of great advances in the technology corner over the past several years. First there was the iMac, then the iBook, and then the iPod, all three devices made waves in the technology arena. The iPod was not only a major innovation, but Apple has used its success with the iPod and the realm of digital music, to shape the way we listen to and buy our music. Definitely setting the pace in the US and many other countries.

A recent article, published on the Seattle Times web site, pointed these facts and more out very eloquently.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/business/technology/2002704276_btview26.html

In the article, author May Wong calls Apple a Pacesetter. Apple moved from being an "afterthought" company to the front lines over the past five years.

It is all about innovation and giving the customers what they want in a new and interesting package. There were all-in-one computers before the iMac, but Apple gave us one with colorful pizzazz! It wasn't the ease of use, for which Apple is renown, that sold the iMac, it was its colorful exterior and appealing shape. However, the iMac would never have succeeded if it had been just a pretty package. Once people brought an iMac into their homes and began to use it, they learned how easy it could be to use a computer. So the cool colors were followed with ease of use and the computer could become a tool and a source of entertainment for everyone.

It is the same with the iPod. There were mp3 players long before Apple released the iPod, but Apple designed one that applied the Macintosh ease of use rules, and people fell in love with it! Then Apple did something that really shocked the world, they embraced the Window's world and released a version of iTunes for Windows. (Steve Jobs joked about this at a Keynote speech, using the term "Hell just froze over!") Suddenly the iPod wasn't a Macintosh thing, it was a consumer thing, and boy have people bought them!

As with the iMac, once people bought and used the iPod, they discovered the ease of use Apple puts into their products. Many people spoke about the halo effect. People buying and using an iPod would perhaps say, if this iPod is so easy to use, then Macs are probably easy as well, perhaps I should try one. Sadly, this effect didn't really take off, although iPods continue to sell in great numbers, Macs sell as they normally do.

So now I wonder, about the so called Mactel computers, Macs with an Intel chip inside. Could people owning a Windows based machine be coaxed to replace it with a Intel Mac, that has the ability to run all of their Window's based applications, but also has a Macintosh side to it? Could this experience be enough for them to realize that running a computer with Windows is nowhere near as elegant (or as easy) as doing it on a Mac? Perhaps shifting many people from Window's to Macintosh? Dare we hope?

If Apple releases a really appealing consumer type of Intel-based Macintosh, than I would truly wonder if this effect was something they have in mind! No doubt we will hear about this in the next few weeks.

Have a happy and prosperous new year!

Books

Applied Software Project Management

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Andrew Stellman,

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2454>

Jennifer Greene, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2455>

<http://www.stellman-greene.com/aspm/>

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

\$40 USD, \$56 CDN, £28.50 GBP, €36 Euro

Published: November 2005.

Pages: 322

ISBN: 0596009488

Requirements: A desire to do software project management.



Strengths: Shows how to manage software projects based on lessons learned.

Weaknesses: None found.



Applied Software Project Management by Andrew Stellman and Jennifer Greene offers us not only tools and techniques to do software project management, but also shows how to implement them.

All the common sense seems to have been wrapped up nicely and neatly in Chapter One with such sage advice as telling the truth all the time, trusting your team, review and test everything, treating everyone as equals, doing the project right and an intro to the other two parts of the book on tools and techniques and using project management effectively.

Part I from chapters 2 through 8, covers each phase of a project, whether planning, estimating, scheduling, reviewing, knowing the software requirements, designing and programming and software testing using “process scripts”. Towards the end of each chapter there is a diagnosis section where the tools, techniques and practices do indeed help resolve issues. In Part II, chapters 9 through 12 discuss project management and team leadership itself by understanding change, responsibility, authority and accountability, managing outsourced projects and learning when process improvement is or is not useful.

If you do any kind of project management in the software industry, the tools and techniques found in this book are immediately available for application. Why not give it a try?

C++ Cookbook

reviewed by Jonathan Hoyle



Authors: D. R. Stephens,

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2426>

C. Diggins, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2336>

J. Turkanis, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2456>

J. Cogswell, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1789>

O'Reilly

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

Released: September 23, 2005

Pages: 592

\$45 USD, \$63 CND, £32 GBP, €41 Euro

ISBN: 0596007612

Audience: Intermediate C++ programmers.



Strengths: Good practical examples, exercises in STL containers and algorithms, compiler independent.

Weakness: Too focused on command line tools, no information on graphical IDE's.



As a C++ programmer, do you often find you have rewrite some of the same utilities over and over again, each time you start a new project? Some might be simple things like converting numbers to strings and back again, or performing date/time arithmetic. Others are more sophisticated, such as implementing the best STL container class for the job and using the appropriate STL algorithm. Whether it's fine tuning some high performance mathematics for a scientific application, or subclassing your own stream class, *the C++ Cookbook* will have a solution for you.

Many C++ books have a strong Windows bias, typically assuming *Microsoft Visual C++* as the user's compiler. *The C++ Cookbook* however is truly a cookbook for all platforms. In its introductory chapter, it reviews the many command line compilers supported, including: gcc, Visual C++, Intel, Metrowerks CodeWarrior, Cameau, Borland, C++ Builder, Digital Mars and others. A frank review of how good these compilers are and their likely usefulness in the future is also given. With so many C++ books feeling they must walk some politically correct line on compilers, this one is refreshing and informative.

The authors are thorough without being overbearing. Case in point: an explanation on how (and why) you would build static and dynamic libraries for your project. The information is separated by compiler and speaks directly to the necessary steps to follow, without dragging the reader through "beginner" explanations. Building the Boost framework is done similarly.

Although *the C++ Cookbook* may lack the useful design diagrams found in similar books, its layout is clear and concise and obviates much of the need for them. Each chapter opens up with an introduction to the topic it covers, with an excellent overview of what is to follow. Then individual problems are introduced, each broken down into three parts: the Problem, the Solution and the Discussion. The Problem is a simple sentence or two indicating the problem. The Solution goes into technical detail, with pragmatic approaches for the solution, or solutions if there is more than one. The Discussion is the most interesting part in my opinion, giving many of the caveats related to the problem and solution.

The first chapter is a thorough introduction of the compiler choices available and steps to build the Boost framework. Chapter 2 covers various header file gotcha's, things every programmer hits at some point in his career, such as double #includes, multiple instances of a single variable, namespace collisions and the like. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 cover common needs and optimal implementations for such things as number/string conversions, text manipulation, and date/time management. Helpful techniques in using STL containers and algorithms take place in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively. Chapter 8 is a delightful collection of class usage, with everything from singleton classes and operator overloads to templated classes and superclass virtual functions. Chapter 9 describes custom exception classes, and Chapter 10 teaches you how to subclass your own stream class.

Chapter 11 is one of my favorite chapters entitled *Science and Mathematics*. From the simplistic problems of computing the number of elements in a container, to the advanced computation of Fast Fourier Transforms, you'll find it here. The most valuable part of this chapter, for most developers, is likely to be the section on fixed point numbers: getting floating point behavior out of the speed of integer math. Multithreading using Boost is covered in Chapter 12, internationalization in Chapter 13, and some common XML solutions shown in Chapter 14. The final chapter is an interesting assortment of miscellaneous problems, including the use of function pointers as callbacks, pointers to class members and others.

The wide range of topics in *the C++ Cookbook* realistically covers modern problems that software developers will encounter. The examples are useful and serve as templates for code for which virtually every programmer will have a need. This is another fine edition to O'Reilly's excellent line of C++ books.

The Cult of the iPod

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham



NO STARCH
PRESS

Author: Leander Kahney

No Starch Press,

Book Series – No Starch Press' *Cult of books*.

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/1593270666/index.html>

Released: November 2005

Pages: 160

\$25 USD, \$34 CDN, £25 GBP, €22 Euro

ISBN: 1593270666

Audience: All iPod lovers. A book best enjoyed with a cup of espresso or some green tea while your favorites play in the background. Learn all about the iPod *troika* and more.

Strengths: A four-color, well-illustrated, easy to read and enjoy monologue on iPod lore and legend and culture.

Weakness: I'm not an iPod addict, so was not as taken with this book as I was with this author's *The Cult of the Mac* [macCompanion, January 2005, Volume 3 Issue 1.] Oh—interesting book or not—grey print in about an 8 point sans serif font is not my favorite way to read.

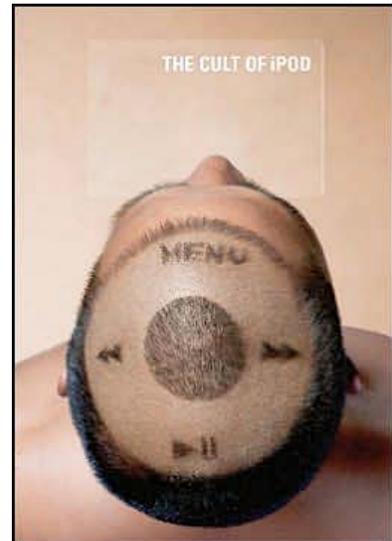
Where appropriate the instructions in the book was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under Mac OS X 10.4.3.

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Publisher's Overview — *Wired* news editor Leander Kahney follows up his bestselling *The Cult of Mac* with *The Cult of iPod*, a comprehensive look at how Apple's hit iPod is changing music, culture, and listening behavior. "*The Cult of iPod* includes the exclusive back story of the iPod's development; looks at the many ways iPod's users pay homage to their devices; and investigates the quirkiest aspects of iPod culture, such as iPod-jacking (strangers plugging into each other's iPods to discover new music), as well as the growing legions of MP3Js (regular folks who use their iPods to become DJs)."

Review Introduction — I do not yet own an iPod, but will inherit my grandson's iPod shuffle at Christmas. He'll now have the new 30 GB, video capable iPod. The challenge to me, of course, will be making up my mind which parts of my extensive CD collection I want to reduce to 100 songs to fill my head as I treadmill along. With the shuffle's limited capacity, am I going to want to mix folk, blues, and jazz, or stay more narrowly focused on one or more subsets of jazz? Poor Josh, he'll have to work with up to 7,500 songs.

All of which brings me back to why am I reviewing this book. I am, as you well know from my articles, both an Apple junkie and a music junkie; and I am old enough to remember assessing a new acquaintance's interests by checking out the books in their library and their record (yes, I mean vinyl) collection, the latter on hands and knees.

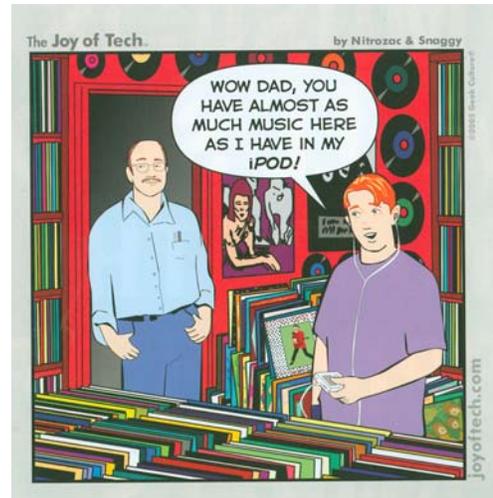


I'm showing my cultural bias when, I admit that without my portable FM radio (a Walkman) and a book, I feel naked.

However, these days, according to Leander Kahney, it's all hanging out on people's playlists. As Charlie White wrote at the CreativeMac website:

<http://www.creativemac.com/articles/viewarticle.jsp?id=35512>

“Sometimes it's illuminating to step back and take a look at a phenomenon that has changed our world. The portability of music is one of these phenomena, and Apple's iPod represents the most user-friendly aspect of that portability. Cramming the equivalent of a room full of vinyl LPs on to a device the size of a deck of cards, the iPod has sold well over 10 million units since its introduction in November 2001. Looking ahead to the future, *Business 2.0* magazine says that by 2010 there will be 500 million digital music players in the hands of people over the world. Phenomenon, indeed.”



So I sat comfortably ensconced in my “reading chair” reading, as an outsider, another cult book. It was time to tune into the cultural changes that had been occurring around me while I was looking the other way. Five or six hours later, I knew I was not likely to become an iPod addict unless I took advantage of an iPod music loading service. But, to my chagrin, I was convinced that collecting music as I still do (as CDs and vinyl) was soon to be as outdated as my reel-to-reel music collection. I, of course, shall remain a “50-quid bloke” [see page 63], but that did not detract from the pleasure I derived from this book. However, there's always an alternative you can learn about on page 110 of *The Cult of the iPod*.

Therefore, after reading the book and doing my usual Internet search, I was intrigued to read my thoughts so precisely at Creative Watch (UK), Mon 12 Dec 2005; <http://www.creativematch.co.uk/viewnews/?91809>. There I read that “Prior to the iPod, what we listened to at home, or on our Walkmans or CD players was a much more limited (certainly in terms of capacity) and generally private affair. Judgments on your musical taste could only really be made by those permitted access to your personal music collection, and they were generally trusted friends or visitors.” [Just as I did those years ago.] “But now that iTunes allows us to share our vast collections of music over a network, people's personal taste is far more open to scrutiny, and not all of it is necessarily going to be positive, as Kahney playfully reminds us. Pointing out the extent to which our taste in music (or lack of) is now being exposed in shops, cafes, homes, at parties, and even - horror - in the workplace, he draws our attention to new iPod related phenomena - *Playlistism*, *Playlist Anxiety*, and *'Playlist Pruning*.”

This review will differ from some I write: instead of showering you with mostly my own ‘purple’ prose, I'll share with you the thoughts of others—folks who said it before I got to this review.

The Book Itself — As noted on both the publisher's website and in Charlie White's review. “The book is technically a paperback, but its cover is made of extremely thick paper, and the book exudes quality from start to finish. Its 144 pages contain more graphics than text and are liberally sprinkled with delightful cartoons, photographs, info boxes, and callouts.

With its contents laid out like an iTunes playlist, Kahney captures you with themes and images like:

iCandy for the Ears	Copy Protection or Business Protection
Music Magic found in Shuffle	The iPod Killer: p Pod
iPod Snobs Unite	iPod users in the Closet
With an iPod, who needs a turntable	iPod Jacking
Playlistism Evolves	iPod Spam and Scams

“Besides its gorgeous design, the principal strength of the book is author Leander Kahney’s precise way of describing the iPod phenomenon and putting it into context, as well as his impressions of the experience of using the iPod itself. For instance, Kahney notes that the record album has been replaced by the playlist, where few people listen to an album all the way through any more, and assemble their own playlists according to their personal tastes. Also interesting was the way the author describes a person’s music collection as a way to peer into his soul.

“The book also covers the way iPods have woven their way into our society, and illustrates how its fans have embraced the iPod to the extent that hasn’t been seen since people fell in love with Macs and TiVos. I particularly like the way Kahney compares listening to an iPod to a cinematic experience, where everyday routines such as walking down the street, going to the supermarket or going on a boring car drive can be enhanced with high fidelity musical accompaniment. Kahney reminds us that the MTV experience is translated into the real world with the help of the iPod and other portable music devices.

“The entertaining subject of musical snobbery and the effect it is having on iPod fans, however, forms just one part of Kahney’s fascination with all things iPod. In the book he also covers the booming industry of iPod related accessories and add-ons, such as iPod skin designs, (one of which features a weiner-riding dominatrix), the growth of MPJs (ordinary people using their iPods to become DJs), Podjacking (users plugging into each other’s iPods to discover new music), ‘Podcasting’ and even ‘Godcasting.’”

Discomforts - My main complaint about the book is in the book author’s apparent espousal of the theories on consumer cyborgism by talking head Markus Giesler (page 139) and the pseudo-sociology that follows. [See: <http://www.markus-giesler.com/>] Okay, I’m a bit hot under the collar, but despite Giesler’s academic credentials—he’s an assistant professor after all—and his being a self-proclaimed expert on the technoculture of entertainment marketing and consumption, including the iPod, I found this chapter too much for its proclaimed audience.

I have no problem with Professor Giesler’s goals: “Now why am I doing research on iPod consumption? First of all, because I’m a proud owner of one of these nice little devices! And, second, because I believe we should find out more about the ways in which we use the iPod, how we interact with it and also other iPod users, in short, our everyday iPod experiences, our stories, our adventures.”

[<http://www.mymacexperience.com/ipod/html/introduction.htm>]

I have no idea whether Professor Giesler is correct about his observation of the effects of the iPod on consumerism and associated human interactions. Nor am I expert enough to predict the direction of the interaction of people with today’s technologies. The concept of the cyborg consumer (one who uses several pieces of technology as a daily part of life), if real, certainly deserves a clearer treatment than possible in this otherwise excellent book. I spend several long hours reading Giesler’s articles, frustrated by *un-diagram-able* sentences containing technical mumbo-jumbo. I still have no better understanding of the subject matter, than you, my reader, might have about the mathematics of quantum mechanics. [Others agree. Check out <http://www.gizmodo.com/gadgets/portable-media/ipod/markus-giesler-ipod-marketroid-031439.php>, <http://digitalmusic.weblogsinc.com/entry/1234000713029635/>].

What I object to is the fact that anyone who introduces concepts of consumer behavior hidden with FOG factors of 20 and above has no place in a well-written book such as *The Cult of the iPod*. Leander, shame on you!

In Closing — I quote from *iCandy For the Ear* (3) “Inside the iPod, a music collection comes alive. There’s delight in loading up a ton of stuff from all genres, eras, and styles and seeing what the machine comes up with. Select Random Shuffle, and the iPod dredges up tunes you might never consciously choose to play, But chosen for you, they’re a delight.

“This mode of play also allows you to discover gems in a collection that previously sat unplayed on a shelf of CDs. Songs previously neglected can become top favorites.” ... Kahney notes that the iPod has changed forever his listening habits. “No longer do I want to hear an album all the way through (with rare exceptions), What I want is a playlist of my favorites...”

Buy the book. If you're an iPod fan or if you're considering buying one, this book will either give you an interesting perspective on your favorite music player or serve as an excellent introduction to the iPod phenomenon. This is an engaging book, and you'll relish the gorgeous graphics and entertaining prose within. Rating **4.0 macCs**

Degunking™ Your Mac, Tiger Edition

reviewed by Julie M. Willingham



PARAGLYPH
P R E S S

Author: [Joli Ballew](#)

Paraglyph Press

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

Booksite: <http://www.paraglyphpress.com/pr07262005.php>

Released: July 2005

Pages: 350

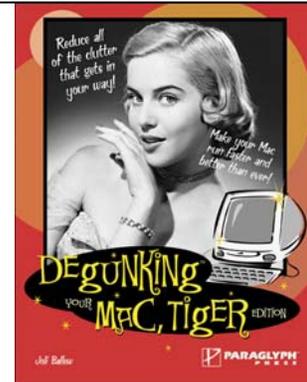
\$25 USD, \$37 CDN, £25 GBP, €22 Euro

ISBN: 1933097051

Audience: Tiger users who want to make their Macs run better, whether new to Macs or not.

Strengths: Systematic; easy to understand; summary of necessary tasks inside the cover.

Weaknesses: None. (The only thing missing is something to give you the ability to actually do what you need to do!)



From the time I opened the front cover to “The Degunking 12-Step Program”, which is followed by time-limit degunking from spare moments up to half a day, I wanted to sit at my computer and use this book.

I am both an information junkie and a packrat, always looking for and saving things that might be useful someday. My desktop is littered with folders I use often, most of them with some sort of icon that I can’t resist showing off, on top of wallpaper that I really like but can barely see under all those icons. (Some of those icons are just attached to empty folders because I like them so much!) I know I should organize so that my husband can find things in my user account, and so that I can work more efficiently, but I never seem to find the time.

The mere title of this book got me interested in reading and reviewing it, and I had great hopes that I could organize and tame things on my computer. And though I haven’t done everything Ms. Ballew suggests, I have made progress. Unfortunately, as with other types of organizing, if you are a procrastinator or are detail-oriented or have difficulty making decisions, nothing can make you actually degunk your computer.

Table of Contents for *Degunking™ Your Mac, Tiger Edition*

Introduction	Chapter 11. Preventing Spam Gunk
Chapter 1. Is My Mac Really Gunked Up?	Chapter 12. Cleaning Up E-Mail Gunk
Chapter 2. Degunking Your Mac	Chapter 13. Optimizing Your Hard Drive
Chapter 3. Getting Rid of Files That Shouldn't Be There	Chapter 14. Staying Organized and Up-to-Date
Chapter 4. Uninstalling Programs You Don't Need (and Tweaking Those You Do)	Chapter 15. The Best Hardware for Mac Degunking
Chapter 5. Organizing Your Remaining Files and Folders	Chapter 16. Maintenance and Troubleshooting Tools
Chapter 6. Cleaning Up the Dock, Finder, and Menu Bar	Chapter 17. Improving Security
Chapter 7. Degunking the Dashboard	Chapter 18. Backing Up Precious Files
Chapter 8. Degunking iChat, VoiceOver, and QuickTime 7	Chapter 19. Using Automator
Chapter 9. Fonts and Font Gunk	Appendix A. Troubleshooting Your Mac with Degunking Techniques
Chapter 10. Degunking Your iPod	Index

I started by reading through the whole book, except for the chapter on iPod (don't have one yet), and the iChat section of Chapter 8 (unlikely to use it). Then I set to work doing what the author suggested, and was pleasantly surprised to find that by following the advice in Chapter 3, I eliminated 1.2 GB of gunk from my Documents folder alone.

Working further along in the book, I uninstalled some programs that I don't use, took Dashboard off my Dock because I have a dialup connection, archived some old e-mail, and backed up the entire computer again. I got rid of all the non-system fonts in languages that I can't read, as well as many that I never liked. I still plan is to put iTunes and all those cool downloaded wallpapers into the Shared folder so my husband and I can both access them without duplicating efforts. (Of course, this will be after I get around to sorting all those tunes and pictures!) And after having fully read the applicable chapters, I plan to use VoiceOver to let my computer read me things that need to be proofread, to improve security, and learn to use Automator.

Joli Ballew explains in plain simple terms what you should do to improve your Mac's performance, why it matters, and how to do it. She includes recommendations for freeware and regular maintenance tasks that will help keep your Mac running well and how to get your hardware to help you. I am really impressed by how simple the actual procedures are and I would recommend this 5-macC book to everyone.

Digital Video Production Cookbook

reviewed by Joseph Nilo



Author: Chris Kenworthy, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2457>

Publisher: O'Reilly Digital Studio

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

Published: November 2005.

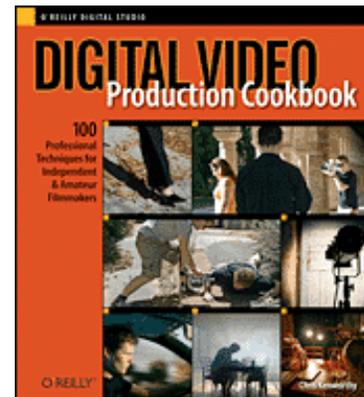
Pages: 192

\$30 USD, \$42 CND, £12 GBP, €26 Euro

ISBN: 0596100310

Strengths: Very well laid-out and easy to read; Geared toward beginners and pros alike; great techniques

Weaknesses: None found.



Chris Kenworthy's **Digital Video Production Cookbook** is another fine addition to the O'Reilly bookshelf. It is subtitled "100 Professional techniques for Independent & Amateur Filmmakers".

I must say I was surprised and pleased upon digging in to this book. I was expecting it to appeal to absolute beginners, but I'm of the opinion that intermediate and professional videographers could learn something from this book, as well. There were more than a few sections that gave me an "Aha!" and got me excited about some new things to try in upcoming productions. For example, shooting a person in a dimly-lit room and adding to an eerie ambience by bouncing a light into a "kiddie pool" and its watery reflections onto a nearby wall. Aha! I hadn't thought of that.

One of my favorite features is the physical layout of the book. Each technique is roughly a page or two, with step-by-step instructions and lots of color pictures-- very handy for those of us who want a quick answer (and have a short attention span). The front and back covers have large, thick flaps that allow you to easily bookmark a page-- nice touch.

In this age of computer-generated graphics and special effects, one might be surprised to learn that many Hollywood "tricks" can be achieved in the simplest ways. This book covers some useful (and some handy but frivolous) techniques, such as creating UFOs, realistic fight scenes and stunts, spaceships, poltergeists, etc.-- all of which a filmmaker can do on a shoestring budget.

As much fun as the sections on "tricks" are, I particularly liked the fact that many of the sections covered some real-world techniques on lighting, shooting and editing. This is where I feel the book shines. Practical lighting, use of silhouettes and shadows, proper rack focusing, "fake dolly" shots-- all of these help you better tell your story.

Now it won't replace all those years of film school or those "basics of video" textbooks gathering dust on your shelf, but the down and dirty and easy-to-read sections will make you want to keep the **Digital Video Production Cookbook** handy in your camera bag.

Hacking Digital Cameras

reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Authors: Chieh Cheng and Auri Rahinazadeh <http://www.camerahacker.com/>

Wiley Publishing Inc.

<http://www.wiley.com>

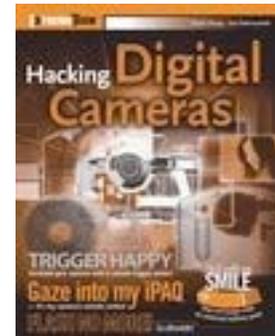
Booksite: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0764596519.html>

Released: September, 23, 2005

Pages: 519

\$25 USD, \$32 CND, £17 GBP, €23 Euro

ISBN: 0764596519



Strengths: Authors cover the techniques and projects in depth. In depth instructions and specific details are well written. Wide variety of applications.



Weaknesses: Some of the projects have a steeper learning curve and may not be for electronic novice people.

I've tinkered with my share of electronics, robotics and other equipment over the years. I've created gadgets for testing heat and cold with thermistors when connected to computers, working with soldering board circuitry and other equipment. One of my friends uses electronics to have software and his Macintosh time photographs during total solar eclipses. I've thought about such an endeavor, but I needed a little nudge in the right direction. Perhaps I have found more information when I found the book named *Hacking Digital Cameras*.

Hacking is not illegal, although the term seems to indicate such deeds. The author says "to hack is a modification to a device that produces something useful that was unintended in the original design. Chien Cheng, an engineer who graduated from University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, created the book where I received my doctorate. So this book immediately elevated my attention. He left the University and did not take pictures of the beautiful campus. From this longing, he decided to create this book to encompass a series of projects for digital cameras and related equipment for related projects that he thought about and tried after he left campus.

This book comprises a range of projects for designing equipment that will work with digital cameras. Some of these tasks are more difficult than others and cost more than others and require more materials and knowledge to complete. While the Canon EOS is covered in this book, other digital cameras can be modified in similar fashion and with a little extra work (the author reminds us about watching for terminating warranties, but as always, some of these techniques are at your own risk. Although they are not dangerous when tinkering, you must be careful).

The book covers 519 pages in five parts. Each of the 27 chapters has different projects that are identified and explained in detail. The innovative gadgets that can be build will do a myriad of different tasks combined with your digital camera. They range from the use of electronics to just using equipment that does not involved electronics but that will help assist with your cameras, videocameras and other pieces of equipment. If you like to tinker with electronics and related gadgets, some of these projects may be ones to try. You really have to look at what they entail before you decide to try them. It also will depends on whether you have a Canon EOS, as it is mentioned the most in this book. However, I use a Minolta Dimage 7 (a 5 megapixel digital) and while I will try to use the schematics using this camera, you can try these projects with your own type and make of digital camera.

Here are the projects:

In Hacking Cameras, 5 chapters in Part 1, the focus is on sensor, tripod and controlling your camera. Chapter 1 deals with building triggers; Chapter 2 Adding a Tripod to your camera; Chapter 3 Accessing raw sensor data; Chapter 4 Hacking Power; Chapter 5 Controlling your digital camera from afar; Chapter 6 Improving your Canon EOS Digital Rebel. From these, I might try

Part 2 features Hacking Lenses as the main topic. Chapter 7 Using accessory lenses; Chapter 8 Making accessory lens adapter; Chapter 9 Changing the lens magnification; 10 Making your own pinhole lens; Chapter 11 Extending the lens on Canon EOS cameras; Chapter 12 Making reverse macro adapters; Chapter 13 Modifying the Canon EF-S Lens for use on Canon EF mounts.

Part 3 Creative Photography Hacks has you working with these projects. Chapter 14 Hacking with filters; Chapter 15 Shooting with infra red pictures with your digital camera; Chapter 16 Eliminating the IR blocking filters from your digital camera. I might not try these but will focus on other chapters first.

Part 4 Building fun camera tools. Now this is a series of chapters that I will definitely will read and use. For example, Chapter 17 Building a car camera mount is perfect so that I can set up my camcorder for my stormchasing exploits. Chapter 18 Building a headrest camera mount might come in handy too. However the other ones (Chapter 19 Building a spycam mount for your bicycle; Chapter 20 Building a camera stabilizer; Chapter 21 Building a flash bracket; Chapter 22 Building a monopod; Chapter 23 Making a 500 Watt home studio light), are not ones I might try. I don't have any need for them as yet (I don't use a bicycle for example).

Part 5 Flash memory hacks are interesting if you have these flash products. The main question to ask here is with these projects, Hacking and removal, "why do it?" Well the authors say that you might want the memory for something else (if your player is broken or don't need or you just want to prove that you can hack with it. Chapter 24 Modifying memory hacks; Chapter 25 Removing the 4 GB Microdrive from the creative nomad muvo2 M3 player; Chapter 26 Removing the 4 GB Microdrive from Rio Carbon 5GB mp3 player; Chapter 27 Removing the 4 GB Microdrive from the Apple iPod mini.

These parts of the book will give you some basic information about techniques you might or might not know. Appendix A soldering basics; Appendix B Circuit symbols; Appendix C Glass cutting basics; Appendix D Photographer's Glossary.

The step-by-step instructions, photographs, schematics and 5 hacking insights included in the Appendix sections will give you a good understanding for trying one or more of these projects. The instructions are thorough and specific. Some projects are definitely not for the novice. With help and the instructions and perseverance, you can complete many of these projects. If you are completely new at hacking and electronic tinkering, you might want to take a trip to Radio Shack as well. The author even leaves his Email address and website for future communications about these projects and hacking. The website also has more hack ideas, reviews, tips and more.

This book has elevated my interest to get back to hacking. The headrest and car camera mounts are my first project for the next 2006 stormchasing season. That will definitely help. The others ones I am not sure as yet. But if you like to "Hack" you will find one or more of these projects helpful to think of projects for starting your endeavors. Then more projects will come about after that. Try this book and see what hacking potential is in your bag of tricks for your digital equipment.

Hardware Windows XP Ste-by-Step Extreme Performance

reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Joli Ballew

McGraw-Hill/ Osborne

2100 Powell Street, 10th Floor

Emeryville, CA 946068

<http://www.Osborne.com>

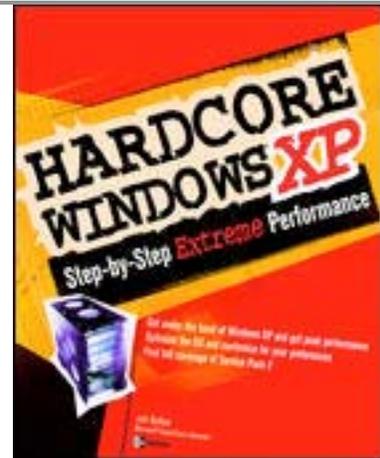
Released: April 25, 2005.

Pages: 288

\$30 USD, \$40 CND, £18 GBP, €26 Euro

ISBN: 0072258659

Requirements: Microsoft Windows XP.



Strengths: Task-based information that allows tweaking the operating system to get maximum productivity in many ways. Focus is on productivity, not how the operating system works. One learns about the operating system through the tasks. The author has written a well-laid, step-by-step guidebook in depth and informatively written.



Weaknesses: Mostly text based, with screenshots. Not very visual, but the book is well laid out and easy to read.

I don't use Windows XP, much as my school system's computers still use windows 98. But I was curious to see what the author (a Microsoft XP expert Zone columnist and a best selling author of more than a dozen Windows XP books) had to offer concerning the operating system and its nuances for its latest round of software updates. But I really was on a mission to see what this system had to offer in comparison to Macintosh OS X. So I decided to have an in-depth search and look comparison. Could the author explain the operating system in a clear manner that makes Windows clear?

What I like about the book is that the 288 pages are full of many task-oriented instructions that allow the user to better deal with Windows XP. The 11 chapters go beyond just explaining how Windows XP works; each chapter has numerous task based suggestions that involve using the operating system's inner works for troubleshooting, dealing with peak performance, learning how to tweak the system via valuable tips, improving game performance and much more.

Red titled tasks introduce each area of concern or chore. Within the pages of each chapter there are 5 symbol-icons that appear throughout. These provide additional helpful information that come in 5 difference ways: notes; quick tips; "watch outs" – looking for pitfalls to avoid, work-around; element cool utilities; where to go for more information. These are very helpful for giving a more in-depth look and feel of the tasks at hand and ways to broaden your knowledge of working with the operating system. These chapters are meant to be "picked through at will, to find what you want." It is not meant to be a book that you read sequentially in order, but of course you can do that if you want.

Chapter 1 focuses upon the user interface. What I like about this chapter is the information about working with the Speed Tray (icons that detail what is running) and the ability to automate everything you can increase boot up performance. Tweaking the desktop and toolbar, personalizing the start up menu, creating and displaying screen savers and desktop background is nicely illustrated. There are hosts of other suggestions beyond these, which make this chapter a good starting point.

Chapter 2 deals with Windows Applications and services. Stop unwanted services (updates etc), stopping the error reporting service, stopping the indexing services and more, are all displayed here to learn about.

Chapter 3 has information about Email and the web, new tips and tricks about Email, fighting spam and more.

Chapter 4 is about working remotely and getting the most out of the remote desktop.

Chapter 5 Safety first offers information about the service pack 2, which is an update to Window XP. This pack can be uploaded over the Internet but an easier way, if you don't have high-speed etc, is to acquire the CD based set of utilities. The rest of the chapters capably assist you in working with the pack of utilities and information.

Chapter 6 Staying in the Game has information about optimizing your PC for games. More RAM, updating sound and video cards and optimizing your system by using the Direct Diagnostic Tool (which tells you whether your current system meets the specifications for a game you want to use).

Chapter 7 Get the most out of the digital photos and multimedia has helpful information about organizing pitters, backing up pictures, burning pictures and arranging music with automatic playlist.

Chapter 8 Networking: Getting (and staying) connected toed home networks, sharing Internet connects using set up wizards are outlined here.

Chapter 9 Improving system performance, is probably the chapter you would want to start with first. Cleaning up your hard drive, getting rid of unnecessary programs, updating drives dealing with and using antiviral protection can all be found here.

Chapter10, Media performance and fun includes resizing images, creating slide shows, creating a mobile photo library, using the Windows media player, dealing with performance and security are all covered in a well done fashion.

Chapter 11 Built in utilities and administrative tools has managing user groups, local security policies, using advanced systems diagnostics and more.

This book is a no-nonsense, direct step-by-step guide to many tips and tricks to better use your PC with Windows XP. Possibly many PC users do not go into the depths of the tools and utilities that can made the machine a better one for you. The author has laid out a direct series of tasks that each user can learn to made Windows XP less formidable leaving a sleeker and possible more easier to use operating system to use. While the information is mostly text based with screenshots, the author has written a concise series of informative instructions to help each user with the chapter topics.

While I will not say that this book helps make Windows XP a more elegant system, the author has done a fine job in covering the tips and tricks that make the operating system easier to use and defining Windows XP capabilities. I like the way the author has approached the depths of the operating system. This concise, informative and instructive book will allow you to discover more about the operating system and making your PC a leaner, mean fighting machine.

Head First HTML with CSS & XHTML

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Elisabeth Freeman

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2002>

Eric Freeman

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2003>

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

\$35 USD, \$49 CND, £25GBP, €31 Euro

Published: December 2005.

Pages: 694

ISBN: 059610197X

Requirements: A desire to webify thoughts and information.



Strengths: Starts at the beginning and rapidly advances through the basics.

Weaknesses: None found yet.



Head First HTML with CSS & XHTML by Elisabeth and Eric Freeman is the latest in the head First series and it rocks my world. No assumptions are made and everyone who enjoys webbing thought and information are going to enjoy this book as it touches both sides of the brain and walks through the basics of HTMLing.

Do you need prior experience? No. Is the book “complete”? No. Is a commercial HTML package required to make the concepts and techniques work? No. By working through all the various learning modes, will you have grasped the concepts? No doubt.

If you have read earlier Head First books, this one also follows the time-tested training format of engaging all parts of the brain and intellect. In fact, the Freemans make this process practically painless and fun to learn in a way that the concepts stay with you after they have been read. And isn't that what learning is really all about anyway?

There are 14 chapters that help us understand hypertext, web page building blocks, adding images, understanding standards compliance, getting into XHTML and CSS, styling with fonts and colors, understanding elements, digging into divs and spans, layout and positioning, tables, lists and forms. And the Appendix has the usual top ten topics not covered.

If your mind tends to gloss over deep topics, yet you need to get a grasp of the HTML environment, I think you will find that this book will engage your brain like no other and you will be able to wrap your brain around the concepts quite easily.

The Freeman have put fun back into learning!

Just Say No To Microsoft: How to Ditch Microsoft and Why It's Not as Hard as You Think

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham



Author: Tony Bove

No Starch Press

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/159327064X/>

Pages: 256

\$25 US, \$34 CDN,

ISBN: 159327064X

Audience: All readers with an interest in computer history will find it worth reading. Moreover, some of you may take its contents seriously enough to start saying *No!*

Strengths: A well-researched and entertaining overview of the computer desktop world and wars, which feature detailed and practical information about available alternative operating systems and programs that will help Microsoft captives exercise their freedom of choice.

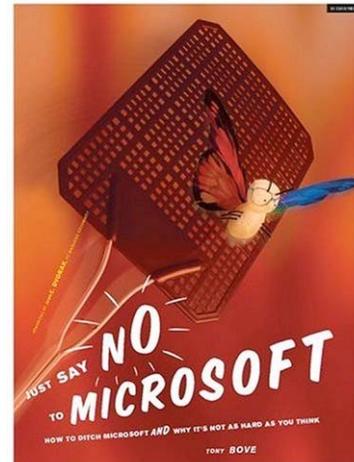
Weaknesses, if any: Although I am paranoid by nature and heredity, the book sometimes overplays the 'dark empire' theme. Nevertheless, the world that Tony Bove describes is real, and we are reaping the grains of vulnerability that Microsoft has, intentionally or not, sown.

Read Chapter 4, *Slay The Word and You'll Be Free*, on the Internet.

Where appropriate, the instructions in the book were tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.3.

Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

Publisher's Overview - *Just Say No to Microsoft* begins by tracing Microsoft's rise from tiny startup to monopolistic juggernaut and explains how the company's practices have discouraged innovation, stunted competition, and helped foster an environment ripe for viruses, bugs, and hackers. Readers learn how they can dump Microsoft products and continue to be productive. Includes full explanations of alternate operating systems, such as Linux and Mac, and outlines various software applications that can replace the familiar Microsoft products.



Review Introduction

When I came across the promotional material for this book, I was intrigued. As a Macintosh (or at least Apple) user from day one, I have had only cursory contact with both DOS and the Windows operating systems. Although I led a life sheltered from the vagrancies of what was soon to become a Wintel worksite, I soon realized that my friends and coworkers were having more problems than I was in both using their computers and keeping them stable.

As my computing skills evolved, I caught the Mac evangelism bug and watched Microsoft crush my favorite browser, Netscape, and then other products I liked. My sense of malaise blossomed. The Apple vs. Microsoft wars over the graphic user interface increased my discomfort, as did a series of flaky and flawed releases of Microsoft Word that crashed my system when I stretched to use its more advanced features. Then there was the advent of Microsoft's open season for various attacks by malware beasts, targeted predominantly at my Wintel-using colleagues, who, alas, by then dominated the world of commercial and government personal computing.

In my reading of biology and geopolitics, I found that the lessons from the world of green revolution and plant genetics appeared to parallel what was occurring in the world of personal computers. Monoculture species (genetically engineered) were much more vulnerable to disaster by outside forces than the varieties of species normally produced by nature. It seemed that Microsoft's dominance of both operating systems and major user applications might lead us toward ever more vicious computing plagues, and security breaches that jeopardize privacy and threaten newfound Internet communication and sharing of information.

I have a good collection of articles about the damage that the juggernaut that is Microsoft bequeathed to the personal computing world, but until I read *Just Say No To Microsoft*, I wasn't truly aware of both how pervasive and how potentially destructive its influence was. Although I don't often subscribe to conspiracy theories, this book makes me wonder.

The Book Itself [in part from the publisher's website]

This book offers up some possibilities to wean a user away from the expense of a Microsoft license and its limitations. It explains how you can have the same relative power on your desktop as you would if you were using Microsoft, but by using free or lower cost software without sacrificing your connection to the broader world that Microsoft holds in thrall.

"After tracing Microsoft's rise from tiny startup to monopolistic juggernaut, *Just Say No to Microsoft* chronicles how the company's practices have discouraged innovation, stunted competition, and helped foster an environment ripe for viruses, bugs, and hackers. You'll learn all about the many available replacements for Windows and other Microsoft products, and how to interact successfully with your less-fortunate friends and colleagues who are still tied to Microsoft. Maybe you can even free them, too!"

I've listed the book's chapters below, but this review is not going to be a blow-by-blow exposition of the book's contents. Instead, I'll share with you bits of the book's essence, both from my own and other's perspectives. Read the review and then get the book and delve deeper. Only you can make the decision as to whether you will *Just Say No To Microsoft*.

PART I: YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION

Chapter 1: Playing Monopoly Is No Longer Fun

Chapter 2: All You Need Is a Mac

Chapter 3: Linux: Land of the Free, Home of the Brave

PART II: REHAB FOR YOUR MICROSOFT ADDICTION

Chapter 4: Slay the Word and You'll Be Free

Chapter 5: De-Microsoft Your Office

Chapter 6: Media Lib: Microsoft-Free Music and Video

PART III: THE WHOLE NETWORK IS WATCHING

Chapter 7: The Message Is the Medium for Infections

Chapter 8: This LAN Is Your LAN

Chapter 9: Browsers and Your Own Private Identity

PART IV: GETTING ON WITH YOUR COMPUTER LIFE

Chapter 10: Twelve Steps to Freedom from Microsoft

Chapter 11: Where Do You Want to Go Tomorrow?

Appendix: The Truth Is Out There

Citations – All the reference materials you could ask for.

“Bove injects a healthy dose of humor into *Just Say No to Microsoft*, but his objective is sincere: to help you break your Microsoft addiction and free yourself from reliance on its ubiquitous software. After tracing Microsoft's rise from tiny startup to monopolistic juggernaut, *Just Say No to Microsoft* chronicles, and documents, how the company's practices have discouraged innovation, stunted competition, and helped foster an environment ripe for viruses, bugs, and hackers. From there, *Just Say No to Microsoft* outlines the many available replacements for Windows and other Microsoft products, including the Office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook), Media Player, and Internet Explorer, and explains why your computing life will be better if you make the switch. With Bove's thorough explanations of alternative operating systems like Linux and Mac and open source solutions, you can kiss the entire Windows operating system goodbye.”

Bove, as noted in *Totally Obscure* (11-28-05), gives a great list of software you can install and use, some of it open source, some from other vendors. Such software can reduce your reliance on software from Microsoft. Despite the fact that, at least for the Macintosh, Bove's list is partial, it's a great place to start. Linux, Mac, and Mozilla are, of course, touched upon in the book, but so are OpenOffice, CD-making software, Microsoft-free music and video, LANs, and browsers—even alternatives to PowerPoint and Excel. This is definitely NOT a highly technical book.

The last two chapters look at how to get on with your computer life: twelve steps to freedom from Microsoft, and where do you want to go tomorrow. Particularly useful to those who care about getting away from a Microsoft-associated computing life is the author's 12-step approach (Chapter 10). Those who know they have a Microsoft problem will feel comfortable with Bove's easygoing but focused tutorial style to gain the information to get out from under the giant of Redmond's heel. Step one is to "admit that you are powerless over your addiction—and that your computer system and software have become unmanageable." A relatively complete index gives you the means to find the new computing operating systems and tools mentioned earlier in the book.



In Chapter 11, the author's outlook about our computing future, he shares his thoughts on "Where Do You Want to Go Tomorrow?" For those who want more than just a blunt computing tool, this book is a good and thought-provoking read. Last, but not least, the appendix entitled "The Truth Is Out There" provided me with detailed, web-based information about many of the problems that people are having with Microsoft and some of the actions they are taking.

I agree with Erik Eckel, who, in a December 1st 2005 article, noted, "Ultimately, Bove's seeking to accomplish three goals. First, he wants readers to understand Microsoft has inhibited innovation. He provides numerous sourced examples toward that end. Second, he demonstrates that most every computer user can function perfectly without Microsoft products. He examines the Macintosh, Linux, and OpenOffice as just some of the alternatives available to disgruntled computer users. Third, he seeks to help Windows and Office users avoid many of the common issues that plague those Microsoft platforms by providing instructions and recommendations for eliminating problems and improving security." <http://techrepublic.com.com/5254-6257/0.html?forumID=99&threadID=173921&messageID=1895153&id=3334484>

Two Kudos and One Gripe

Real References — During my review of this book, I took the time to check some of the references cited by Tony Bove, as well as those cited by a few contrarians. My compliments to you, sir! Yours is one of the few computer-centric books I've read where someone has taken the trouble to put references to back up where their mouths were. As a scientist, I thank you for your efforts to allow the reader to dig more deeply.

Specifically for Macintosh users — I invite you to check out Reviewer Brian Burnham's maccentric article at <http://www.macmerc.com/reviews.php?op=showcontent&id=128>.

What a Nice Thing to Say About the Macintosh — Ain't the truth wonderful.

WHY MACS ARE SAFER THAN WINDOWS PCS

It's mainly because the Mac user base is not nearly as big a target as the Windows user base, and virus authors like big targets. But there are other, more technical reasons why Macs are safer, including these three obstacles to the installation and dissemination of viruses that Windows XP lacks:

1. Installer programs for Mac OS X require authentication to run, while installers for Windows XP don't. Authentication stops the installation process to get your password. If something starts to install itself on your Mac, you'll know because it will ask for your password.
2. Even as the sole user (a.k.a. *administrator*) of a Mac OS X system, you don't get access to system-critical files (known as *root* access in the language of system administrators). Administrators in Windows XP do, thereby allowing applications such as viruses access to those files too.
3. Security experts say the automation features in Windows make it a potential breeding ground for viruses, and that Microsoft often ships software with settings at the least secure positions. For example, Mac OS X starts out with filesharing and related services turned off—you have to turn them on to use them. Windows XP starts with these services on, assuming you want to immediately share files with other computers on the network.

While there are at least 50 known viruses written for the older Mac "classic" operating system (version 9 and earlier), there are no known OS X viruses.

Macintosh Alternatives to Microsoft Word — Although the substitutes and workarounds for MS Word were discussed in Chapter 2, the author at a minimum should have mentioned *Nisus Writer Express*, *ThinkFree Office* and *Mariner Write*, all of which have been previously review for macCompanion. Although not perfect, they are a potentially viable alternative to the recommended OpenOffice.com Writer since they can both export to rich text format and to MSW.



The Contrary View

One critic of this book (Oliver Rist, a noted IT expert) noted on December 8, 2005, that “It seems written mostly for folks who've already made the no-MS jump and are looking for justification. (It's) mostly political at that. For those who haven't, Mr. Bove concentrates on single users, power users, and PC enthusiast-types.” Rist then goes on to discuss what he views as an insurmountable reality that makes things MS (and especially Windows) so omnipresent. These are the number of specialized vertical business and other special and mission critical applications that only run on the windows platform.

“You want to win the hearts and minds of the Microsoft set, give them clear examples. Show a specialized accounting program (e.g., Intuit's MRI) user, for example, that he can download a full open source application today and start customizing to get the same feature set. Admit that not every open source app is as clean as commercial Windows-centric ones. Show him how to get around that, or pick out the best ones for concentration ...”

Tony Bove responded to the Oliver Rist's review – check this out:
http://weblog.infoworld.com/smbit/archives/2005/12/just_say_no_to.html

The dialog makes an interesting, but perhaps irrelevant, counterpoint to augment some of the themes in this book. From my perspective, none of Oliver Rist's arguments counter the reality based on the documented evidence cited in *Just Say No to Microsoft*. As noted by Bove, Microsoft's practices have helped foster an environment ripe for viruses, bugs, and hackers, for which this reviewer believes they should at the least be held accountable—after all they own the software that makes all of the carnage possible. They should be held responsible just as they would for medical malpractice.

In Closing

John Dvorak says in his introduction to the book, "You are about to read one of the most interesting overviews of modern desktop computing history that's ever been written." I agree.

This book, a combination of technical, economic, and political thought, takes aim at the Microsoft Empire and offers you, the reader, an alternative. As a Macintosh user, I am partially weaned from the Microsoft influence, at least from an operating system perspective. Browserwise, I use Safari and, at times, Firefox. But I'm still bound to the MS Word umbilical cord. I may take Bove's advice and try out my downloaded copy of OpenOffice and see if I can wean myself, at least from MS Word. If I'm successful, I'll share what I discover.

Although the book probably isn't for everyone because it requires some technical background, for those tired of dealing with viruses, spyware, or just sick of the MS monopoly, this book is for you. Do you want to learn more about getting off of your MS addiction? Go on: buy the book and read the rest of the details!

Rating: 4.5 macC's

Author BIO

Tony Bove has been in the computer industry since 1976, editing the influential Inside Report on New Media newsletter and writing for magazines including *Computer Currents*, *Nextworld*, the *Chicago Tribune* Sunday Technology section, and *NewMedia*. He also co-founded and edited Desktop *Publishing/Publish* magazine and has written 20 books on computing, desktop publishing, and multimedia. Offline, Bove plays harmonica and sings classic rock with The Flying Other Brothers band.

An Afterthought

One Microsoft thing I keep wondering about. (I'm not an attorney and the only legal training I've ever had was associated with Patent Law 101.) I wonder why none of the businesses, governments, and just plain folks just don't get together and collectively hold MS responsible for all the damage the kludged Windows OS and other software weaknesses have caused them. Just like in the tobacco industry settlements, in the beginning you loose, but if you license an MS product, there should be fundamental protections against losses incurred from faulty products. The FDU factor (fear, doubt, and uncertainty) used by IBM in the past and well learned by MS, to our detriment, should not be allowed to dominate our lives. Here I disagree. Tony Boves "How to Ditch Microsoft and Why It's Not as Hard as You Think" is too slow a means to undo the damage MS continues to do by compromising our computer security and compromising our privacy.

doc_Babad

Phishing Exposed

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors:

Lance James

<http://www.securescience.net>

<http://www.syngress.com>

Booksite: <http://www.syngress.com/catalog/?pid=3350>

Code: <http://www.syngress.com/solutions>

\$50 USD, \$70 CND, £28 GBP, €43 Euro

Published: September 2005

Pages: 416

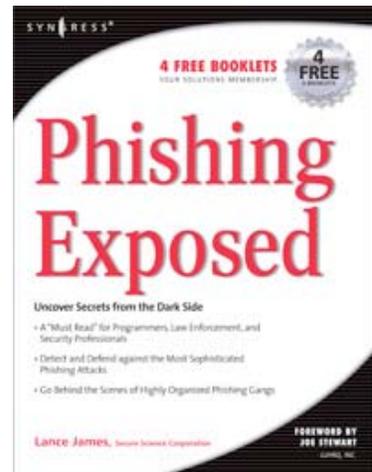
ISBN: 159749030X

Requirements: A desire to expose the bad guys.

For programmers, law enforcement and security professionals.

Strengths: Lance wants to catch your phish!

Weaknesses: None found.



Phishing Exposed by Lance James isn't an exposé on finding secret fishing holes and the science of catching fish. Rather, it digs deeply into the pheno of that next wave (tsunami-like) of online crime where nefarious crooks steal identities and if you aren't very, very careful, your hard-earned money.

It is getting harder and harder to be able to use legitimate websites without being taken advantage of by those who would take away your finances by illegal activities. This is not a malware or scareware book. It is an aware book that offers ways to know how and who is scamming you. And this isn't a computer platform-specific activity either.

If you have examples (and who doesn't nowadays) of phishing expeditions, Lance want copies sent to him for analysis at sendmephish@securescience.net the spoofed website and who is getting phished as he tries to commit tracksploitation against the neirdowells.

There are seven chapters on identifying three classes of Phishing Attacks (impersonation, forwarding and popup), uncovering phishing servers and blind drops (nasty servers that tie to anonymous Email accounts that contain stolen data), bots, crawlers, SSL exploits, international money-laundering (of which I have personally been a victim), and even DNS poisoning and pharmng techniques.

Each chapter follows the excellent Syngress format of Summary, Solutions Fast Track and FAQs. Like I write to the Email response after I find out what the real email sender Email address is – Go Phish!

Point & Click OpenOffice.org!

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Robin 'Roblimo' Miller

<http://www.roblimo.com>

Prentice Hall PTR

<http://www.phptr.com>

Booksite: <http://www.phptr.com/title/0131867164>

Released: November 29, 2005.

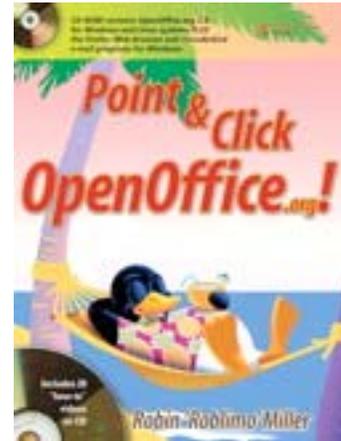
Pages: 216

\$30 USD, \$42 CND, £17 GBP €27 Euro with 2 CDs.

ISDN: 0131879928

Requirements: A desire to use Open Source office productivity software.

CD Contents: OpenOffice.org for Linux and Windows; Firefox and Thunderbird; 2nd video has 20 videos on OpenOffice.org tasks.



Strengths: Cross-platform content. "Free" alternative to commercial office productivity software.

Weaknesses: No Mac software on the CDs. The book does point to NeoOffice however.

See how OpenOffice.org is being used in business:

<http://www.eweek.com/article2/0.1759.1571626.00.asp>

Point & Click OpenOffice.org! by Robin 'Roblimo' Miller Is an Open Source alternative to "professional" word-processing, spreadsheeting, drawing, presenting and databasing apps. Robin 'Roblimo' Miller is the editor-in-chief of the Open Source Technology Group.

At just over 200 pages, this book is intended really to be a taste-test for folks who are very, very familiar with the other office software that hails from Redmond, WA. In fact, the book goes to great pains to insure and assuage folks that there isn't much of a difference. In fact, there are even one or two things OpenOffice.org does better, such as database manipulation and creating Flash slide shows.

Besides the CD that only has Linux and Windows versions on it, Firefox and Thunderbird for browsing and Emailing are also included so as to round out the alternative to Redmond.

When I did the pre-press review of the book, I asked if he would include NeoOffice on the CD and I was told it is still too much in beta to be included. OpenOffice.org is now in rev 2.0.

I would consider this a companion-book to OpenOffice.org Writer we reviewed back in November 2004 at <http://www.macompanion.com/archives/november2004/books/OpenOffice.html> where we showed links, etc. to NeoOffice. The alpha version 1.2 of NeoOffice was released November 23, 2005, so you can see why Robin Miller opted not to include it on his CD. After all, the alpha version is 124 MB in size. NeoOffice/J is also available and it is a 126 MB download for Java-based environments.

Was there room on the CD for NeoOffice? Yes, but would you publicly distribute an Alpha version of anything? Me neither.

The other CD is where we get to see Robin Miller up close and personal with 20 Open Office.org tasks he walks through with some excellent videocast-quality tutorials.

The book is divided into three sections and spread among twelve chapters and two Appendices covering both basic and advanced Writer, Impress (the slide show presentation app), Draw, Calc and sharing files with Microsoft Office and how OpenOffice.org is a community effort. The last section discusses Firefox and Thunderbird, which at first blush, looks like they are out of place since the book is about OpenOffice.org, but would you expect anything different from the Open Source Technology Group? They want all apps to be Open Source!

The appendices talk about what is on the CDs and also list other resources. Of course, if you really wanted to, you could go spend \$80 USD on StarOffice at <http://www.sun.com/software/star/staroffice/index.jsp>, but I think you will enjoy OpenOffice.org and NeoOffice as alternatives to more expensive software.

All you've got to really loose is some bandwidth if you use a Mac, or some hard drive space if you use non-Mac systems.

Practical Perforce

reviewed by Jonathan Hoyle



Author: Laura Wingerd, <http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2372>

O'Reilly

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

Released: November, 2005

\$40 USD, \$56 CND, £28.50 GBP, €36 Euro

Pages: 358

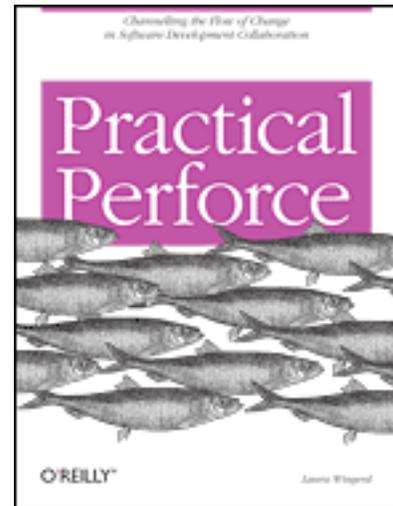
ISBN: 0596101856

Audience: Users new to the Perforce configuration management software.

Strengths: Very thorough overview of PerForce, both client and server.
Good use of design diagrams.

Weakness: Windows centric, unfriendly to Macintosh or Unix developers.
Too light on system administration issues.

Perforce: <http://www.perforce.com/perforce/loadprog.html>



Aside from the compiler itself, it's hard to imagine a more important part of software development than source control. Without configuration management, a software project quickly spins out of control. One of the rising stars in configuration management tools today is *Perforce*, which is quickly catching up to *SourceSafe* and *CVS* as the developer's choice. Whether your project runs on the Mac, Windows or Linux, *Perforce* can be considered for source control management.

What does it mean to check out a file? What happens when multiple people make changes to the same file at the same time? How does one label the source base? How do you merge non-text files? This is where *Practical Perforce* comes in. Designed more for the user than the System Administrator, both the newcomer and the expert will still find it very useful to keep a copy of this book around.

A user new to *Perforce* will find the early chapters most useful, as the basics of the depot, file usage and resolution, branching and labeling are covered in the first six chapters. Chapter 3's discussion on file merges from multiple users is particularly important for developers who have dealt only with source control which locks checked out files. These chapters are not detailed tutorials but rather (in the author's words) "*a whirlwind technical tour*". Fundamentals of *Perforce* concepts are covered, as it is assumed that the user has access to the original documentation for reference material.

The remaining five chapters cover more advanced topics, including best practices and recommended implementations of the items discussed in the first half of the book. The story of the fictitious *Ace Engineering* software company leads off Chapter 7 to illustrate typical problems that can occur during a product's life cycle. *Ace Engineering* is used throughout the remaining chapters to highlight specific issues, usually due to shortsightedness or errors in methodology, and serve to make the author's points very well. Although *Ace* may be fictitious, it truly lives within many software companies today.

The most unfortunate part about the book is its *Microsoft Windows*-only perspective. In only a single page of an appendix is there even a hint that Perforce runs on Mac OS X. Nor is there even a word about the Mac OS X native client, which is young but coming along nicely. There are *Perforce* compiler plugins for the Mac as well, some written by Perforce Software (such as the *CodeWarrior* plugins) while others written by the compiler writers (such as Apple's plugin for *Xcode*). The differences are important and worth discussing, but you would know none of this from *Practical Perforce*, nor would you learn of the many differences between the Mac OS X client application from the Windows version. This is particularly surprising given that the author, Laura Wingerd, is the Vice President of Product Technology at Perforce Software and should presumably know better.

Despite these criticisms, *Practical Perforce* is an excellent resource for any Perforce user. It combines both the practical explanations of source control uses along with a lesson on best practices with regard to configuration management. Any software project using *Perforce* would do well to have a copy of this book on hand.

Raw 101: Better Images with Photoshop and Photoshop Elements

reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Jon Canfield

Sybex

1151 Mariana Village Parkway

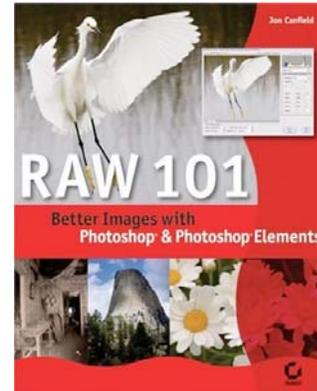
Alameda, CA 94501

<http://www.Sybex.com>

Pages: 176

\$25 USD, \$35 CND, £18 GBP, €28 Euro

ISBN: 0782144322



Strengths: The author does a fine job with not only explaining about RAW images but how best to make the best of RAW and the multiple latitude that these images provide. Well laid how book,. Can be used with Photoshop CS (can possibly use other versions) or Photoshop elements. Nice screenshots and good use of photos to illustrate how to work with the tasks.

Weaknesses: None found.

Raw is one of the “hot buzzwords” concerning digital media. Working with Raw images set on your digital camera is like working with the negatives with regular photographic cameras. All the information is held with the image. None of the photographic-light information is lost. In this case, you can work with the images without compression, the full color set and more. This means you have more latitude to work with your images.

First I had to gain an understanding of the difference between TIFF images and RAW images. I found this book and started reading about the author. Mr. Canfield is a landscape and nature photographer. His images have appeared in PC photo and a host of other magazines as well as a co-author of other books regarding photo finishing.

Before I left to help coordinate an eclipse trip to South Africa in 2001, I had planned to use a digital camera that I bought. I settled on buying the Kodak 280. I specifically wanted it for the fact that it could shoot TIFF mode, which could give me more detail. I had hoped to shoot a photo of the eclipsed sun that might appear in an Astronomy magazine. This worked out (Astronomy magazine picked my eclipse 2001 photo for one of their issues). I did use a TIFF file but there was a limit to I could apply information to the TIFF file. At that time I had no idea or concept about RAW images. I was very happy about my TIFF Astronomy picture but what about the future?

Then I bought a Minolta Dimage 7, a 5-megapixel camera. When I heard about RAW images, I looked and found my Minolta Dimage 7 digital camera can take RAW mode images. Then I began to see the pros and cons for using or not using RAW images. The file size for each picture made, are huge. The (superfine_ size is 9.5 Mb versus a fine (2.1 Mb) so if you want to use a series of RAW images, one needs huge storage file in the way of compact flashcard especially if one wants to take more then a couple of pictures . There are additional extenuating circumstances and disadvantages to dealing with RAW images.

What I think is important and the author rightly proclaims, is that just using RAW images will not make a poor image better. While the book explains how you need to make your RAW pictures better, there is a lot to think about in terms of using RAW images even before you start with RAW, and if that is a way you want have images produced.

The big size of the images also involves dealing with not only the size factor but in different ways other than your storage capacity. Continuous advance mode could not be used with RAW images and the shutter must be released manually. This is partially due to the fact that there is a delay between 30 and 40 seconds can occur as the image is saved to the CompactFlash. Also the monitor will be blank and the access lamp will glow during the period of time when the delay is in action. Raw is saved as 12-bit file. The DIMAGE Viewer Utility software can convert data into 48 bit TIFF files. I also found that the RAW image has a file header that contains white balance information that has changes made to compare and contrast and provide saturation with the digital effects controller including images processed information applied with the settings and changes in sharpness. Color mode, interestingly, has not effect on the final image. A black and white color mode image can be restored to a color picture! The changes are not applied on the camera and if viewed, the color can look unnatural. However using the Minolta viewing software with the computer the natural color is restored. The changes to camera sensitivity are applied to the RAW data, ISO (ASA) values and can be manually set to control noise.

This 156-page book has a series of practical lessons in its seven chapters. The instructions also use screen shots and very nicely done photos. There are a series of valuable yellow notes scattered through the sections that highlight more information. The instructions are well laid out and the instructions and information have a good and easy look and feel to learning throughout the chapters.

In its subsection (page xvi) there is some interesting information about the comparisons and differences also for JPEG and TIFF files which are usually the way to save your final images. While I thought TIFF files were very much like RAW, there is still much different between the two modes, RAW provides more flexibility because you have immediate more control concerning all aspects of the files which hold all the information to work with.

Chapter 1 is entitled “Preliminary workflow.” Workflow is the latest “buzzword” regarding using procedures for a specific purpose. This chapter has information about downloading and organizing images. Rating, selecting images and selecting images for conversion round out this section.

With Chapter 2 and Adobe camera raw, explores using preview mode (rotate, crop etc) so one learns even some of the basic you might know. Bit depth, learning about histograms, adjustment sliders and auto controls and fine-tuning are also important and the author takes you through these important effects and uses.

Chapter 3 explains the raw conversion working with White balance and a series of controls including exposure, shadow, brightness, contrast, and saturation adjustment and sharpness adjustment.

Chapter 4 goes into Beyond the basics, Here is information about color tint adjustment, controlling noise, and noise reduction, converting to black and white and saving and using custom settings.

Chapter 5 Automating Camera Raw shows how to work with applying settings, converting images, quick fix settings, resizing images, using the most helpful “actions,” in Photoshop CS2 only (but possibly can be used with other version of Photoshop as I do)

Chapter 6 Advanced conversion options works with fixing chromatic aberration, adjusting vignettes, using curve controls, calibrating RAW images, and adjusting hue and saturation. Cropping and straightening, custom settings and saving in Camera RAW mode are here too.

Chapter 7 Finishing touches discusses adjusting output levels, removing dust, increasing dynamic range, sharpening and saving in TIFF and JPEG are covered.

The Appendix includes a series of keyboard shortcuts that can be used to make your work a quicker experience.

If RAW is the way you want to deliver your final image(s), then this book is for you. The author has written a beautiful book with good insight and information. The introduction helps you become acquainted with RAW images. Introductions and beginning use of Photoshop or element features are used which is good for novice and intermediate users as well. Then more advanced levels are also included in an well-orchestrated fashion. Photoshop or Photoshop elements are both programs that the author uses (also use of screenshots), for transforming RAW images and what you want to accomplish. Either way you have the versatility to make your RAW photos better by using this book if using RAW images are images for you.

Stopping Spyware: Protecting Your Computer, Your Data, And Your Privacy E-Book

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Laura E. Hunter

Addison-Wesley

<http://www.awprofessional.com>

Released: November 29, 2005.

Booksite: <http://www.aw-bc.com/catalog/academic/product/0,1144,032142106X,00.html>

Pages: 80

\$10 USD

ISBN: 032142106X

Requirements: Either Virtual PC or a PC-based computer system. A PDF Reader and Internet access to download the book.

Audience: Individuals or small businesses.

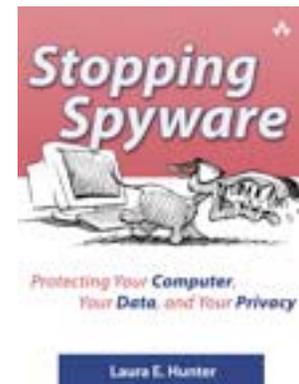
Strengths: Hits all the usual suspects.

Weaknesses: A few typos.

Stopping Spyware: Protecting Your Computer, Your Data, And Your Privacy by Laura E. Hunter is an E-Book that can be downloaded as a PDF. If you deal with the non-Mc environment either using Virtual PC or working at a PC-based workstation and if you have not been paying attention to the malware industry, here is another eye-opener.

Thankfully this kind of self-help endeavor has not been necessary with Mac OS X-enabled Macs, but it is good to see what kind of issues occur as we continue to state that Macs using Mac OS X are still zero after 5 years as far as malware is concerned – compared to the alternative with all it's Achilles heels showing prominently in this E-Book.

Intended for individuals or small businesses, the assumption is that larger businesses are already protected. However, even though I have all the protective software, listed in this book, firewalls, and anti-Spam filters, my system apparently missed detecting a large number of malware items that were discovered on my XP Pro machine over the Thanksgiving weekend. With the non-Mac environment, I spend way too much time doing computer maintenance instead of doing my job.



Like a typical Microsoft-trained individual, Laura's final solution is to shut down and reinstall the operating system when all else fails. The real fix is to stop using the platform and use something else that hasn't been successfully targeted by those who wish to do irreparable harm to our electronic industry.

If your non-Mac system has been suffering from a nasty "case of the slows", more than likely your system has been compromised. Laura does a pretty good job explaining the who, what and why and how to overcome it.

This short book has 6 chapters discussing the menace that Spyware has become, either as Adware, a hijacker or as a keystroke logger. But we aren't left out in the cold. Laura also shows how to secure the PC and web browser and using both software and hardware firewalls. She also presents the usual "solutions" of Ad-Aware, Spybot Search & Destroy, Microsoft's own anti-spyware tool and how to choose. (She suggests using all three). And she also writes about what to do if the system is already infected. (Of course you are. All computers that are non-Macs that connect to the Internet are compromised within 20 minutes.) She also dedicates a whole chapter to what to do if the worst-case scenario has occurred. (Meaning replace the Operating System.) And the last chapter talks about data protection from floppies to zip-drives and beyond and finishes with Windows Configuration. The book finishes with a very short summary and a few trusted resources for more information.

I'd rather avoid the malware scenario altogether by using the platform that doesn't suffer from these issues to begin with. And you should know by now which one that is, right?

Unix for Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger: Visual QuickPro Guide, 2nd Edition

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Matisse Enzer

Peachpit Press,

Series: Visual QuickPro Guide

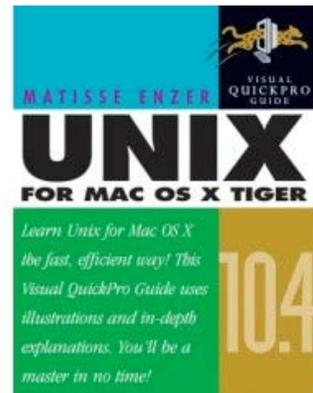
<http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321246683>

\$30 USD, \$42 CND, £22 GBP €26 Euro

Released: September 22, 2005

Pages: 552

ISBN: 0321246683



Strengths: Covers pretty much all things Unix on the Mac.

Weakness: None found.



Unix for Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger: Visual QuickPro Guide, 2nd Edition by Matisse Enzer is a rewrite of edition one and is all Tiger.

Matisse Enzer does a great job coming across and showing that Unix on the Mac is not all that hard after all. Where appropriate, there are comparisons between the Unix code and the equivalent in Mac OS X Tiger. If you have not looked at the Terminal mode in Mac OS X, now is a great time to walk through it and the various commands using this book.

This edition has 14 chapters on why Unix is good, using the command line and getting help with the Unix manual, some utilities, suing files and directories, editing and printing files, configuring , working with permissions and ownership, creating and using scripts, connecting over the Internet, and why I like the book, introduction to System administration and Security, installing software from source code and installing and configuring servers. There is an appendix that discusses Darwin-only Unix commands.

If you don't have a Grep on Unix, why not get this book and jump right in?

Wicked Cool Java

reviewed by Jonathan Hoyle



Author: Brian D. Eubanks

No Starch Press

<http://www.nostarch.com/wcj.htm>

Published: November 15, 2005

\$30 USD, \$41 CND, £21 GBP, €26 Euro

Pages: 248

ISBN: 1593270615

Audience: Basic and intermediate Java programmers.

Strengths: Up to date with Java 5, easy to read, nice diagrams.

Weakness: Too brief.



In the introduction of *Wicked Cool Java*, the author states:

What I didn't want to do was write another "how-to-program-in-Java" book - there are plenty of good books for getting people started in writing Java code. Instead, what I wanted was a book just for the joy of discovering interesting things to do in Java without reinventing the wheel.

In this, the author delightfully succeeds. Covering an eclectic selection of topics, this book skips over the everyday issues that Java programmers know, and concentrates on some of the more interesting issues. The book's eight chapters cover a range of issues from Java 5's new language syntax additions to XML to scientific applications. The use of code snippets is also well done, not overbearingly long source files, but rather you find short and sweet examples of usage.

Chapter 1 leads off with some Java language syntax tips, mostly with regard to the new changes added with Java 5. This section is particularly interesting to those coming from the C/C++ worlds, as it includes those language features recently added to Java: enums, generic parameters (Java's equivalent to templates), variable argument lists and assertions. Other additions to the language are discussed here, such as the new *for* statement, which is similar to the *foreach* statement found in C# and other languages, and the author recounts an amusing story surrounding it. Anonymous classes, nanosecond thread timings and others also enrich this introductory chapter.

The remaining chapters are equally as interesting. Chapter 2 gives one of the best overviews on string utilities, Chapter 3 covers HTML and XML uses, which nicely leads into Chapter 4's fascinating discussion on extracting and process data from the worldwide web. High performance mathematical and scientific functionality is examined in Chapter 5, 2D graphics in Chapter 6, and then multimedia programming is spoken of in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 rounds out the book with some interesting projects, fun topics and open source projects.

Finding a criticism for this book is not easy to do. The best I can come up with is its brevity, as the reader is left wondering how the author may feel about other topics within the Java environment. Java has become such a large arena that certainly No Starch Press could ask Brian Eubanks to consider a *Wicked Cool Java 2*. In particular, more discussion on Java 2D (as touched upon in Chapter 6) and perhaps some interesting nuggets from the Swing API would be welcome.

Wicked Cool Java is written in a very readable style, keeping the interest of the reader throughout. The author's knowledge of the latest changes in the Java language, particularly with Java 5, is quite welcome. The overall topical approach is an enjoyable, which makes me wonder why it isn't more commonly found. No, this book isn't the necessary tutorial that the beginner needs to have nearby. Nor is it the complete reference book that the Java expert wants to keep on hand. However, *Wicked Cool Java* may be the most fun book that the Java programmer will have on his shelf.

Hardware

EvolutionTV (PAL/NTSC)

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Miglia Technology, LTD
United Kingdom

<http://www.miglia.com>

Product site: <http://www.miglia.com/products/video/evolutiontv/index.html>

Released: March 1, 2005.

\$279 USD, £149 GBP, €209 Euro, (all prices are ex VAT)

Requirements: Mac G4 or later; Mac OS X 10.3 or later; USB 2.0 port; 256MB RAM; lots of storage space for recording.

Comes with; EvolutionTV DVR; Infrared Remote (requires two AAA batteries, not included); Coax cable adapter for TV input; wall-wart for power; CD-ROM (no EyeTV software) with PDF user guide; USB cable; 2-year Warranty card.



Strengths: Recording, recording and recording.

Weaknesses: No FireWire port. No EyeTV software comes with it and has to be purchased as an extra. Streaming issues. Software flakiness and occasional lock-ups.

Troubleshooting FAQs:

http://www.miglia.com/Support/evolutiontv_tbst.html

Other Reviews:

<http://www.macworld.com/2005/12/reviews/evolutiontv/index.php/?lsrc=mwrevrss>

<http://www.macsimumnews.com/index.php/archive/6276/>

<http://www.schwarztech.us/reviews/migliaevolutiontv.shtml>

http://www.mymug.org/resources/rev_evotv.htm

Plug-ins: iChat Patch - <http://www.miglia.com/Support/evolutiontv.html>

Tested with Version 2.6 beta of the Evolution TV software on an iMac G5 running Mac OS X 10.4.3 Tiger.

Miglia Technology offers the EvolutionTV (EvoTV) as the Digital Video Recorder (DVR) being initially sold in the United Kingdom and France and the rest of Europe. Recently I was allowed to review it for US consumption. My review has been colored by experiencing the Plextor ConvertX unit reviewed back in November 2005 in *macCompanion*.

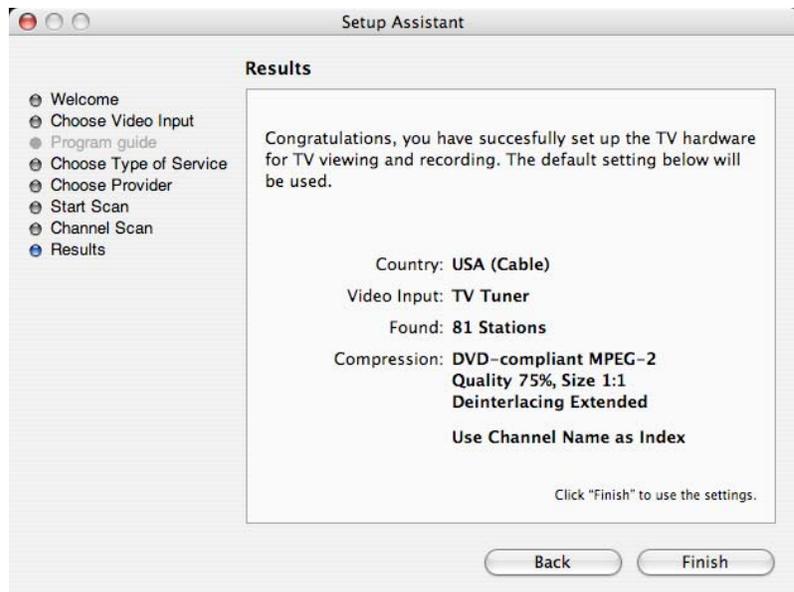
Part of my challenge was our local cable company. While in the middle of testing, the local cable network went through no less than three separate day and night-long outages that seemed to coincide with each effort to review the product over a two-week period during extreme cold weather. Coincidence? Apparently. No, hooking up this device on the cable network did not cause the regional and citywide unplanned maintenance outages. But it really was uncanny that each time it seemed I tried to use it, the network would go down, but not always. Between down times, I was able to record with no problem, but real-time video streaming as a TV on my iMac G5 would show the channel and run for a couple of seconds before freezing the frame while allowing the audio to continue. The Miglia technical team contacted me and let me know that Miglia defaults to MPEG-2 and not MPEG-4. I kept sending them zip files of my log and they kept making suggestions. I felt I was working with a beta product. And perhaps I have been. I set compression to MPEG-4, so the recorded media could be viewed in QuickTime Pro. The default recordings in MPEG-2 format were not recognized.

The free VLC media player that came with the CD is a made-in-France product by the VideoLAN team at <http://www.videolan.org/> and may go away due to recent French Legislation making such software “illegal”.

The CD I received was a recent burn of version 2.5.2 of EvoTV for use with Mac OS X. I’ve never had to deal with MPEG-2 and I was told that Apple sells it separately and it is not included in QuickTime Pro. Frankly, I thought that was not a solution I wanted to deal with.

Finally, after removing a few other files from my machine and doing other software installations unrelated to Miglia, the EvolutionTV inexplicably began working as advertised. I was amazed! Since then, I have been using version 2.6 of EvoTV and it seems to be a little more stable.

I was asked to remove EyeTV, because when the EvolutionTV app would begin, EyeTV wanted to perform. However, removing it made no difference to performance of the EvolutionTV unit. EyeTV does have the EvolutionTV as a DVR option; however, to use it requires a proprietary copy and registration number, which I was not given. I would suggest strongly that if you want to use this unit in the US, get a copy of EyeTV designed to work with the unit. Why? Because there are controls like closed captions that can be accessed, but not currently with the EvolutionTV-only software. EyeTV software for this unit costs another \$80 USD and based on my experience, I’d recommend it in a heartbeat.





Since my Mac doesn't have S-Video, or composite ports, I could only test using the TV Tuner port, which is essentially the USB port. That's right, USB instead of FireWire. And the quality difference of throughput between the Plextor ConvertX unit and this one is noticeable. FireWire throughput video quality is better. The USB 2.0 Port lag in response is noticeable as the Miglia software initializes and offers striated viewing before stabilizing. This may require some toggling between turning the TV Window on and off to get a good signal.

The Miglia techs seem to be more familiar with VLC than they are with QuickTime and kept trying to get me to use it so the MPEG-2 recordings could be seen using VLC instead of using QuickTime Pro. I wanted it to work with what I had. Who really captures TV programming to DVD anyway? Isn't that just begging for anti-pirate legislative activity? I wasn't going to go spend more money for MPEG-2 functionality from Apple anyway. Hey, I have iMovie 5 and with MPEG-4 can use that instead.

The EvolutionTV software has a memory buffer so even while watching in TV-mode, we can go back or forward using the controller. It's called TimeShift.

By the way, I used the on-screen controller instead of the remote analog tuner that required two AAA batteries instead of AA batteries and works with the infrared reader on the EvolutionTV unit.



The physical tuner can support up to 125 channels. The Euro version supports PAL and SECAM (720x576) while the US version supports NTSC and PAL (720x480). Both handle the PAL/SECAM/NTSC video capture through the composite and S-video ports.

Audio is encoded in either AAC or MP3. Video is recorded in MPG. Files can also be recorded as DivX or AVI files.

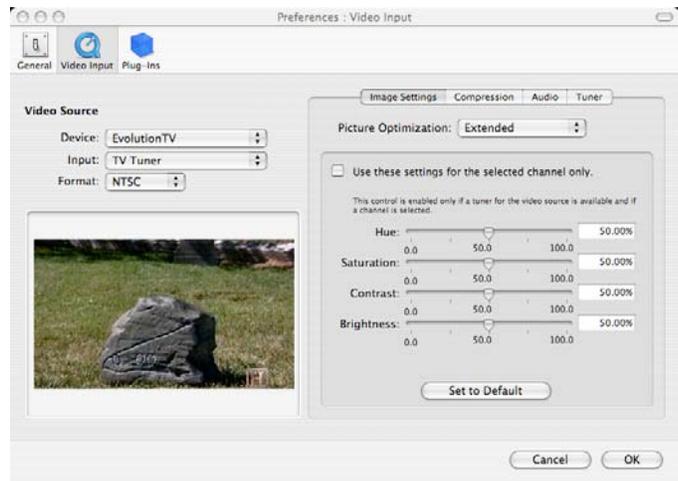
Preferences have three areas; general, video input and plug-ins.



Access to the compression menu and audio and tuner menus are reached from here.

Website TV guide functionality comes from TitanTV here in the US and the recording function can be scheduled out to two weeks into the future with plug-ins. For the Euro TV-types, tvtv integration can do up to 3 weeks of programming and apparently is more advanced than the TitanTV functionality in the US.

But with cross-platform DVR units competing against each other, I wonder what Apple has in store that might bypass DVR external units all together. After all, they moved the iSight technology inside the iMac G5, didn't they?



FS1 High Definition Earphones

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Future Sonics Incorporated
P.O. Box 187
Pineville, Pennsylvania 18946-0187 USA
877-FSI-EARS
+01 (215) 598.8828

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

Product site: <http://www.xtrememac.com/audio/fs1.shtml>

Distributor: XtremeMac.

Released: November, 2005.

\$150 USD

Contains: 1 pair of FS1 High Definition Earphones; 1 set of flanged comfort sleeves; 2 sets of pliable foam comfort sleeves (Small & Large); 3 sets of bullet-style comfort sleeves (Small, Medium & Large); Earwax removal tool; Zippered travel/carrying case; Instruction manual; One year limited warranty.



Strengths: Wider hearing range than competition, using less energy to get there.

Weaknesses: Is the price justified? Check Amazon.com.

Friends, countrymen and women, lend me your earbuds! You need a replacement that will protect your hearing. But should you go with foam or plastic? Anyone with a discerning ear is going to go for foam, because it fills the ear and keeps the outside noise down to a minimum. But are these FS1 High Definition ear-canal phones worth \$150 USD? The older Future Sonic Ears EM3 are \$99 USD now. Are you an audiophile that would plunk down \$99 for a pair of in-your-ear headphones? Or another \$50 USD just to get at the low bass sound? Well, apparently there are a lot of folks who are and are seeking the holy grail of audio input to get at the sounds they are missing while listening to iPods or CD players. Do you think Apple would include a pair of these with every iPod? Why not? It would only add another couple-hundred dollars to the total cost of this fashionable fad.

If you drive a wonderfully engineered car, wouldn't you get the best wheels available for a great ride instead of using spindly tires from a 1920's Model T Ford? Well, in the ear-canal earphone environment there are a few choices to be made, such as equally or even more spendy Shure E-series, Etymotic Research ER-series, or Ultimate Ears super.fi series for that kind of comfortable ride. The FS1's are the latest in wonderful breakthrough-technologies that compete nicely against the other canal-phones.

All strongly suggest having the volume turned way down so as not to cause sound-pressure damage to the inner ears with in-ear designs. If you look at the ilounge.com review listed at the end of this article you will see the earphone structure where the business end of the earphone is a tube. There are various coverings with either flanged, bullet or foam coverings (sleeves) that also have a plastic tube that fits over the "inner-tube" and protects the walls of the ear.

My wife gravitated towards the foam, while our daughters went for the bullet style (seemed like sticking olives in your ears). Neither liked the flange. Having used foam ear protectors for years in the construction industry, I figured the foam was a better deal. I guess I'm not alone. The foam units have a noise isolation rating of +/-25dB not found with the other styles. The earphones have a sensitivity rating of +/-112dB @ 30Hz per milliWatt and impedance of 32 Ohms and a frequency response from a full hearing range of 20Hz to 20KHz.

So what sets this unit apart from the competition? The miniature 10 millimeter dynamic transducer that responds better to low frequencies (Bass) and crisper highs, while using less power to do so. The transducer is dynamic and not an armature transducer giving it a wider hearing range than armature transducers can handle. My research indicates that the reason these units are so expensive is because they are using neodymium magnets instead of ferrite. By the way, these FS1's do not have a color-coded "right-ear, left-ear" designation either, like others do.

My wife noticed immediately upon using the FS1's, that she could hear a full orchestra at a very, very low volume from her CD players (Philips and JVC). She said that by having the volume turned nearly off, that the battery life would be increased. Even our daughters noticed immediately that the Shuffle volume "was too high" when using the FS1's and had to adjust accordingly. Ergo, better sound all around while having the volume cranked way down. So maybe you could justify the price of these as a way of saving your hearing, since we have been hearing lately that misuse of iPods is deafening the rising generation.

Besides the cute zippered well-designed case, the size and surprising heft of a compact (women still carry those around don't they?) for the parts and pieces or earphone accessories, one thing I thought was a great idea was the earwax removal tool. It was designed not for the human ear, but for the ear-canal tube's inner circle. It is a plastic handle with a wire loop, not too unlike the looped end of a hairpin, but as a wire, takes up considerably less space and is small enough to reach inside the tube without going all the way in and possibly damaging the FS1's transducer "eardrum". And one more piece of neat design work? That little cinch that pulls up the two sides of the earbuds ride the wires like they should be there.

Some folks may suffer from eardrum damage or have other issues that would perhaps not permit a good experience with canal-phone types of earbuds. If you can handle foam earplugs designed to protect ears from damage, than perhaps you can handle canal-phones too. Personally, I find certain earbuds fall off, fall out or the pressure on my outer ear after a while just hurts me and I have difficulty using them. Maybe these will work for you and than again, maybe not. Both my eardrums were split when I was younger due to accidents and tend to be somewhat sensitive. To get formfitting "sleeves", a trip to an audiologist might be in order or getting a PodFitKit, perhaps <http://www.podfitkit.com/> might do the trick.

Before you use these canal-phones, I would strongly suggest that you clean out your ears. You don't want to pack earwax against your eardrum. Perhaps a quick trip to the pharmacy to get a Murine earwax removal system might be in order. Than try these on for size. You might just find out that the price isn't so bad after all.

Digging Deeper

Earbud Tips

<http://www.amptone.com/audio/earbud.htm>

In-Ear and Isolation Earphones

<http://earplugstore.com/inearfaq.htm>

Headphones

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headphones>

Other Reviews:

http://www.macsimumnews.com/index.php/archive/index/fs1_earphones_offer_good_sound_aural_protection

<http://ilounge.com/index.php/reviews/comments/xtrememac-fs1-high-definition-earphones-ipod/>

Older earphone discussions:

http://joi.ito.com/archives/2003/01/30/shure_e2c_the_best_headphones_ive_ever_used.html

<http://www.extremetech.com/article2/0,1558,1830689,00.asp>

Linksys Broadband Firewall Router with 4-port Switch/VPN Endpoint BEFSX41 V2

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Linksys, A Division of Cisco Systems, Inc.

18582 Teller Avenue

Irvine, CA 92612

1-800-546-7597 or 949-261-8868

sales@linksys.com

<http://www.linksys.com>

\$80 USD

Requirements: Cable connection with DOCSIS 1.0, 1.1 or 2.0 cable service. Mac or PC.

Comes with: Power supply; CD for Windows environments; Cat5 cable; Quick Install card (needed for the Mac!) and a registration card.

Strengths: Plug&Play for Macs.

Weaknesses: No Mac software on CD. VPN functionality intended for non-Mac systems.

The second half of the Linksys duo (the other part being the BEFCMU10 Cable Modem reviewed last month [December 2005]) for Cable systems connectivity for those who have more than one computer is obviously a broadband router.

This unit also comes with a hard-wired firewall. With Mac OS X Tiger, this tends to be rather redundant. Also since I'm also using the DoorStop X Security Suite (see the review elsewhere in this issue of *macCompanion*), it is really redundant! But than again, I can now run a Virtual Private Network – ad that is why I bought this unit.

Of course, the backside has 4 ports for the local area network and a 5th port to connect to the Internet, in this case to the cable modem.



For the Mac, the CD is pretty much useless, except for the User Guide. The only way to configure the unit is via the browser. The instructions are decidedly non-Mac-oriented, but thankfully, the IP address for configuration (192.168.1.1) works. What is weird though is that the Username has to be blank and I never figured out how to add one. I did change the password from the default though. And the options are plain-vanilla basic.

The User Guide goes up to 89 pages and is mostly Appendices after 5 short chapters. There are 12 Appendices.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to Virtual Private Networking, but if you want to learn how to make it work on a Mac, you will have to go elsewhere.

This is an excellent box, but I could have saved \$30 if I'd known the VPN functionality was meant for non-Mac systems. And I wished that Cisco put a little more effort into recognizing Macs as viable platforms they can sell products to instead of letting us experiment to find out what works – and what doesn't.

The next review is a case in point...

Linksys Wireless-G Broadband Router with SRX200 WRT54GX2

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Linksys, A Division of Cisco Systems, Inc.
18582 Teller Avenue
Irvine, CA 92612
1-800-546-7597 or 949-261-8868
sales@linksys.com
<http://www.linksys.com>

Product link: <http://www.linksys.com/WRT54GX2>

\$130 USD

Requirements: Cable connection with DOCSIS 1.0, 1.1 or 2.0 cable service.
Non-Mac systems.

Comes with: Power supply; CD for Windows environments; Cat5 cable;
Quick Install card (needed for the Mac!) and a registration card.

Strengths: Claims of 6x faster, 2X farther.

Weaknesses: No Mac software on CD. Requires SRX-enabled wireless devices to use the technology. Not recommended for Macs.



This unit may work fine with non-Mac systems, but it sure screws up the bandwidth for Macs! I found it to really screw up the Vonage phone device by sucking up the bandwidth for itself. The iMac with the wireless connection showed the signal strength to be anemic compared to some other units in the neighborhood that was outputting full strength (unsecured wireless).

I'm guessing that the multiple-in, multiple-out (MIMO) antennas apparently were having a conflict with each other and perhaps even canceling each other out. Okay, maybe not, but one has to wonder why this unit performed so poorly. To take advantage of the technology without taking down the rest of the network is to hook this up to systems that have SRX (Speed and Range eXpansion) technology on board. Other systems such as AirPort are going to take a back seat with this device and landlines (wired systems) apparently are affected as well.

Anyhow, I cannot recommend this product for Mac-environments. I was warned and now I know why. But that doesn't explain the poor performance with the Vonage unit.

I also was stymied for a little while as I connected the Cat5 cables to the device. No indicator lights were coming on and I thought the unit was defective. What I had to do was really force the Cat5 connectors to click in all the way and the female connectors were really tight. And this was with all ports.

I took the automatic default instead of picking one of 11 channels. I just can't believe how slow this ran using non-SRX technology.

Linksys even says they do not recommend this unit for the Mac. If it performs this badly with Macs, how well does it perform in non-Mac environments? I sent it back without finding out.

Tough Skin for iPod Video 30GB

reviewed by Michele Patterson



Speck Products
227 Forest Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94301
1-650-463-8914

info@speckproducts.com

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

Product Link: <http://www.speckproducts.com/vid-toughskin.html>

\$35 USD

Requirements: iPod Video



Strengths: The material the tough skin is made from is very tough and durable, it is thick enough to protect without causing the iPod to become overly bulky.

Weakness: The screen will become scratched way before the product is ever in need of being replaced. It has a habit of slipping off the screen and not staying in place.

The Tough Skin is exactly what it says, Tough! I thought to give it a real run I'd put it on my 16 year old son's iPod Video, you know how tough a teenager can be on anything! Well after dropping the iPod out of the car, off the stereo and various other places, it has remained in top-notch condition. Tough skins appearance is masculine and rough, just like the product.



Xpad

reviewed by Derek Meier



EDOVA Innovations, LLC
P.O. Box 5172
Playa Del Rey, CA 90296
sales@Xpad4Laptop.com <http://www.Xpad4Laptop.com>
\$30 USD

Requirements: A portable computer.

Strengths: Lightweight, inexpensive, keeps your laptop running and looking cool.

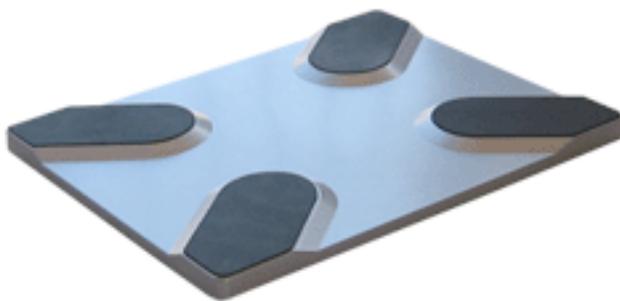


Weaknesses: None apparent.

Laptops today really are not meant to be set on your lap. They can give off a very uncomfortable amount of heat. The solution is; don't use your laptop on your lap or try a product like the Xpad by Edova Innovations, LLC.

The Xpad is a very cool-looking pad. It is made from sturdy ABS plastic and is thin for easy transporting in your laptop bag. Your laptop will ride on 4 risers that leave an air-gap for airflow. On top of the risers are 4 non-slip rubber pads to prevent your laptop from slipping. Three layers of insulation keep your lap cool. On the bottom there is a big non-slip pad. It supports laptops up to 17" in size.

Using the Xpad, you barely notice the extra weight. After lengthy use of my Powerbook, it was still pretty hot, although not as hot as it usually gets. My lap was still cool though, as was the Xpad itself. The non-slip rubber pads on the top four risers worked well tilting the laptop it did not slide. It fared well on my lap as well not sliding much, using it on my laptop stand it did slide quite a bit. It was great to use it on the bed, otherwise my comforter would cover the laptop vents and would cause overheating. Not the case with the Xpad. I can put it on any surface without worry of the laptop vents being covered.



Xpad Top



Xpad Bottom

Other than that, the Xpad serves its purpose well and does it in style.

If you're looking for a low cost and extremely portable solution to your laptop giving you that burning feeling give the Xpad a try. At 30\$ for one you cant go wrong. As a side note, my wife just started playing World of Warcraft on her iBook and the laptop noticeably gets pretty hot. Concerned about the heat as she was, coincidently I was writing this review and told her about the Xpad. Well, needless to say it has not left the underside of her iBook since and I have not heard her complain about the heat since.

Shareware

Bookdog 2.3.7 — Quickly Alphabetize Your Safari Bookmarks

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Publisher: Jerry Krinock of Sheep Systems

support@sheepsystems.com

<http://www.sheepsystems.com/bookdog/>

Clear and complete help is available from within the software as well as from the publisher's website.

Shareware: \$15 USD

File Size: ca. 4.0 MB

Requirements: Apple Macintosh computer running Mac OS 10.2, 10.3 or 10.4 and Apple's Safari web browser, any version.

Audience: Safari browser at all skill levels.



The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.3.

[Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.](#)



Introduction

I have of the years, even before Apple created the Safari web browser, flirted with a variety of other products. Obviously, prior to Safari, Microsoft Internet Explorer was one such mainstay as was Netscape navigator.

Each of these web tools had, at the time(s) I used them, strengths and weaknesses. My choices were aimed at whatever feature set and comfort level I achieved at the time. Between testing, well playing with is more accurate, various browsers, and finding more sites of interest on the web itself, I created bookmarks in a helter skelter fashion. Of course the longer my collection of bookmark folders because, the more randomly I added the newer bookmarks I wanted to remember. Of course, where possible, I transferred my entire favorites collection to the new browser so I would suffer no lost links. This of course served to double or triple the number of favorites recognized by the browser I used at the time. Does this sound familiar?

Now all I have to worry about, having gotten my Safari Bookmarks under control, is the over 2,000 other links I've collected in a folder collection. Over the years, I've alternated between using tools such as URL Manager Pro and just plain Finder folders to store my bookmarks. I also created a FileMaker Pro database for keeping track of bookmarks, but that was more trouble to maintain than it was worth. As a result, until recently I've not attempted to collect, store and order my bookmarks in my browser. With my adoption of Bookdog, I can easily integrate my collection, weed out duplicates and keep the bookmarks in a well-ordered fashion.



At least for now I have settled on Safari and Firefox, but that still leaves me with a large disordered collection of bookmarks many of which are replicates of one another. Then along came Bookdog. After a few minutes of use, I was delighted by Bookdog's crisp, easy to use interface that painlessly let me sort, manages duplicates and helps, find and fix broken bookmarks.

Publisher's Highlights

"Computers know their A-B-Cs and how to keep up to date. For example, you can throw files into a folder, hit "View as List" and the Macintosh Finder will display them in alphabetical order. Is there an update to the Mac OS? Apple's *Software Update* will tell you about it. However, someone forgot these tricks when web browsers were developed. Today most web browsers, *Safari* included, do no automatic sorting (alphabetizing) or other maintenance of your bookmarks.

"Bookdog, the successor of the popular *SafariSorter* application, knows these tricks so that organized people like you will no longer have to spend time alphabetizing and maintaining your bookmarks manually."

The Software-Its Features

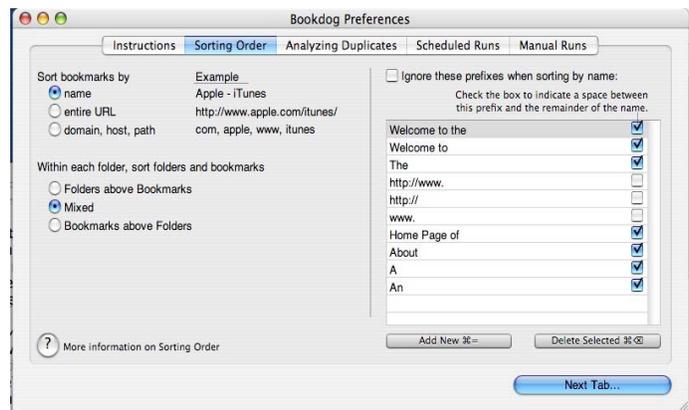
According to Jerry Krinock, its developer, "after you install Bookdog, you spend a few minutes adjusting how you want your bookmarks sorted, click Sort and within seconds your bookmarks are all in order! Done! Just click *Analyze* to find duplicates and then fix them" either one at a time or all at once.

"Give *my* Bookdog a time when you'd like your bookmarks re-sorted every day, and *he* will silently resort to include any new bookmarks you've added. Automatically. Do you seem to have a lot of bookmarks that don't work anymore? Tell Bookdog to *Verify*. *He'll* go fetch all your bookmarks, present a comprehensive report, give you some options on how *he* can automatically fix the ones that have been 'redirected', and finally an easy-to-use dialog which allows you to quickly review and fix the remainder."

You control Bookdog's actions and features either from it's main window, which was all I needed, or by creating a more customized tool by changing the software's defaults using the powerful preference features provided by the developer. Either way, its easy and focused help is just a click away in the unlikely event that you might need it.

Specific Bookdog features include —

- Exclusive *PowerPaws* technology can sort *all* your bookmarks with just *one click*.
- Finds duplicate bookmarks (same URL), and provides an easy dialog for fixing them.
- *Verifies* bookmarks, with options to automatically update various redirects.
- Intuitive interface *explains* and helps you quickly *fix* broken bookmarks.
- May be scheduled to sort automatically every day, without disturbing you.
- Easy to indicate which folders you want to be sorted or not sorted. This is a feature I did not need.
- Can sort by bookmark name, by URL, or by domain/host/path.
- *Bookdog is Safe!* It is not a *Safari* plug-in; does not "hack" *Safari!*
- Product has the best and clearest help, and support pages of any shareware product I've yet tested.



For newbies, the Bookdog website contains a crisp easy to follow *Application (Bookdog) Installation and Reinstallation* guide. Jerry's documentation includes well-written sections on

Quick Start	Sorting Bookmarks	Save and Revert: Your Bookmarks File
Preferences	Analyzing and Fixing Duplicates	Command-Line Operation and Troubleshooting
Main Window	Verifying and Fixing Broken Bookmarks	Uninstalling

Some Folks Just Don't Get It!

I noticed when I downloaded the product at the MacUpdate site that a number of reviewers bitched about the price of the product. From my perspective, even at minimum wage, I've wasted more time alphabetizing and re-alphabetizing my bookmarks that the cost is a bargain. Folks who won't pay for a quality product that save them time ought to get a life.

Conclusions

I have long agreed with Dan Frakes, who, when reviewing Bookdog 1.2 in Macworld September 2005 noted; "One of Safari's most glaring omissions is the ability to sort your bookmarks alphabetically." Bookdog fixes this problem and others faced by browser users who collect long lists of favorite sites as they surf or work with the Internet. I'm back in control. I can, in just a few seconds, sort, manage and verify Safari's bookmarks. Try, it, then [buy](#) the product — your bookmarks will be as well trained when you done as is Jerry Krinock's Bookdog.

Note: Bulldog 3.0 is in beta testing as we write this review. In addition to enhanced functionality for Safari, it will also be able to work with the Firefox and Camino browsers. I'll check the new version out when it becomes available, but why wait — This product, although you many only use it a few times a month, is a keeper.

TidyUp!

reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

support@hyperbolicsoftware.com

<http://www.hyperbolicsoftware.com/downloads.html>

Shareware \$30 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 and later - Full Tiger compatibility

Strengths: Fast, efficient and neat. Flexible actions for finding what you want to trash. Well worth the cost of making your machine more efficient. The program offers versatility that provides flexibility and different opportunities to delete files.

Weaknesses: Only allows 10 tries before you must purchase. The basket system is a little difficult to understand at first.



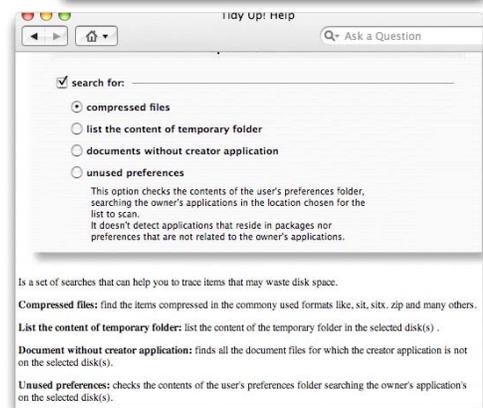
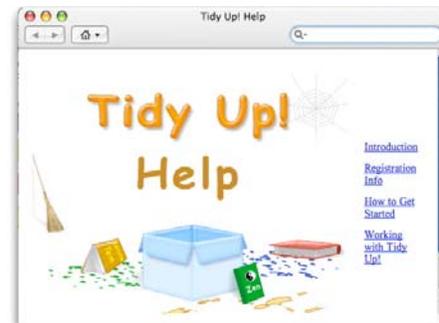
Your Macintosh is fresh with little on the hard drive. But gradually, it fills with documents, pictures, movies, programs and much more. Many times, there are duplicates of the same file that you can't find let alone know how to find, even if you wanted to. TidyUp let's you handle many of these problems and making your Mac a much leaner machine to work with so you can use the space for better needs.

TidyUp! is the next generation version of duplicate finder software and disk tidiness utility. It replaces the program called *Doublet Scan*. TidyUp supports OS 10.4 and later and Tiger. TidyUp is shareware, which means you can download it and then try before you buy. But you can only try 10 attempts and then it is pay up time. Let's look at what TidyUp does before you realize that this program is well worth the price.

The well-done visually pleasing help menu explains registration and the introduction. This menu also does a nice job of explaining how to get started and working with TidyUp.

There are several other options to define your search. Compressed folders can be found and more. There is a lot you can use TidyUp to relieve your clutter.

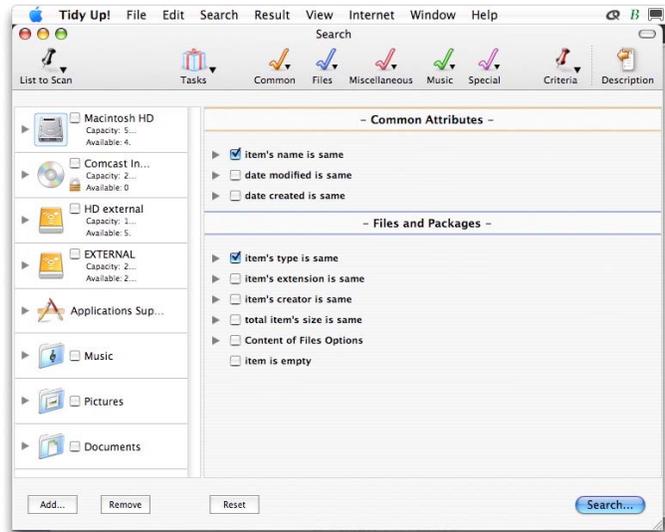
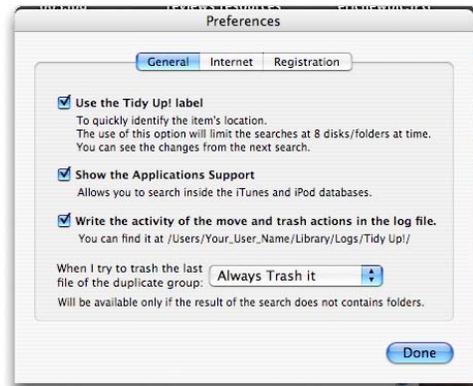
The Preference section is also a good place to define your search and destroy mode. The top menu bars have many possibilities to begin your scan. The Left most icon, looking like a stickpin indicates lists to scan. Just to the right is a goldmine of easy to use attributes labeled tasks, which allow you to find all sorts of items. There are a series of seven other icons that can help as well.



There are several attributes that you can use to find “the clutter.” The program can find any number of attributes to find what you want and trash what you discover. What is nice is that all your hard drive names (external and internal) , music player, pictures folders, music folders, network are displayed. A little check box to the right of the icons can be checked to display the contents of one or more of these. Capacity and availability are also indicated. To the right of the icons, are a series of other search possibilities.

The scanning goes through its search mode. Based on the attributes that were checked and the number of files and more the search takes a certain amount of time. The number of items that were scanned and more are highlighted. After a certain amount of time, after your scan has finished, a listing drops down to show what has been found.

What I found interesting is the way the program can handle trashing items that you find with your attribute-laden lists. A nice feature is that the numbers of items found are registered in the window along with the hard drive space. This gives an idea of how much clutter you want to relieve yourself of. However trashing the collection was more complicated then I thought it would be.



There are four ways to trash/move the found items. These are:

1) Dragging the selected item from the found list to the trash;

2) Once the items are selected, using the contextual menu and choose the "Move to trash" menu item;

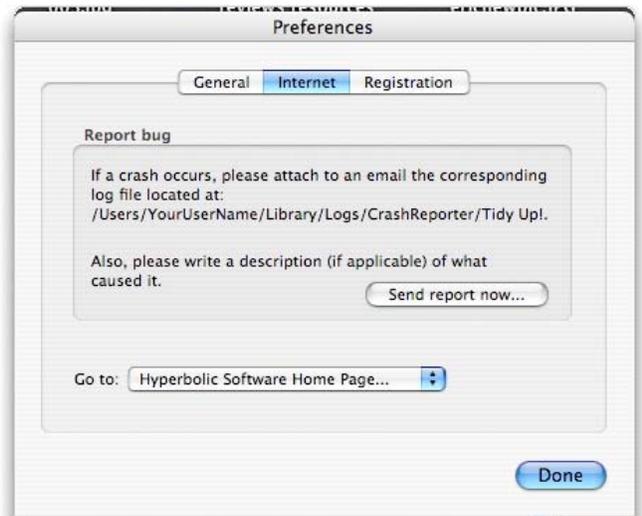
3) Creating manual basket (which are storage files), then fill these it by dragging the items into it and choosing the "Trash..." button in the toolbar;

4) Flagging, through the contextual menu, the interesting items and then trash them by using the "Trash..." button in the toolbar.

Trashing all items can be risky as you may delete items you don't want. However using unflagged items (those not checked) and flagged items (those checked). I found this a little confusing although I understand the author's rationale for creating such a system. Ultimately the program gives more versatility. If deleting is not what you want, the flagged content can be transported to a CD to burn or another folder.

For your registration fee, if a crash occurs, you can report the information and send it to the author to find out what is wrong and help you. I am sure the author will have continual updates as the program is improved.

My wife always tells me about cutting down clutter in the house. TidyUp is a perfect way to find and get rid clutter in your house but in your computer. Less clutter more space can be used for other programs, files and more. Try out TidyUp and see what it does. I think most Mac users that try the program will find it a worthwhile program to add to their collection. The shareware price is reasonable for the versatility that it provides to cut down the clutter. TidyUp is a better name for what the program does. The program does the job and can eliminate a lot of clutter. So try it out. The only thing you have to lose is come clutter and a reasonable shareware fee.



ToDo X 1.9.1 — Despite the complex things you must do, keep track of your commitments, the easy way

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Omicron Software Systems, Inc.
Developer: Kelvin Delbarre
info@nomicro.com
<http://www.nomicro.com/Products/ToDo/>
Released: 22 July 2005
Shareware Cost: \$15 USD
Download Size: 307K B
Audience: All user levels

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.3.

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Earlier Review:

<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/august2004/Shareware/shareware.html#11>

Introduction

I have always been partial to checklist and notepad software finding such tools a convenient way to keep up with a constantly changing list of to dos, tidbits and reminders. In August 2004 macC, I reviewed nine such tools including ToDo X 1.5. At the time, after a quick review, thought highly of the Omicron package. I've kept the software on my computer updated but until recently have not attempted to use it actively. My mistake. This review provides you with a more thorough review (update) of ToDo X 1.9.1.

There are alternatives to using specifically focused checklist and to do software but almost none met either my specific needs or temperament. Why temperament you ask? Simple, if you don't automatically reach for a software tool to capture your ideas or action lists, regardless of how many bells and whistles it has, it does not serve your needs. As a result, I've never taken to either a sophisticated calendar or a Personal Information Manager [PIM] based tool.

Although I've tested more complex project management and brainstorming packages that could serve as data organizers [e.g., Inspiration X 7.6 http://www.inspiration.com/productinfo/inspiration/introducing_7/, Sticky Brain 4.0 http://www.chronosnet.com/Products/sb_product.html and Tinderbox 3.0.2 <http://www.eastgate.com/Tinderbox/> these are overkill for my purposes.

When ToDo X again came to my attention, I decided to put it through its paces.

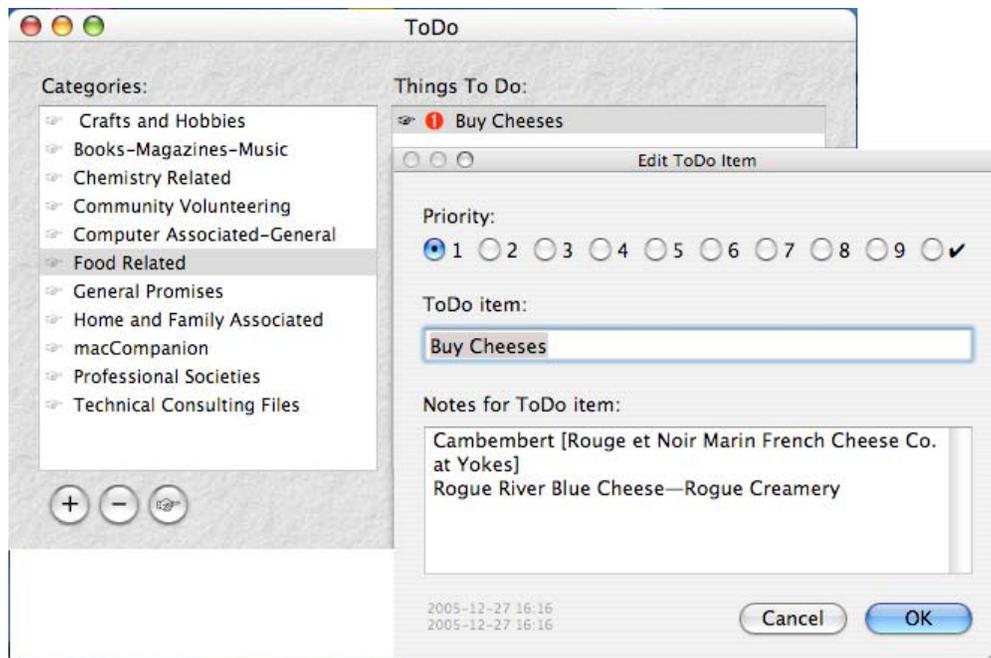
Publisher's Highlights

ToDo X is a native Cocoa to-do list application for Mac OS X. Its user interface is deliberately, almost ruthlessly simplified, yet it provides plenty of power under the hood: it allows you to maintain multiple, prioritized lists of to-do items, each with unlimited attached notes and clickable links to web locations, documents and folders on your hard disk and address book entries.

Initially Using The Software

To get started, just drag the ToDo X application into your applications folder, then start using the product 30 day in trial mode or better yet spend the \$15 and honor the shareware system. Define the categories into which you'd like to post your things to do reminders.





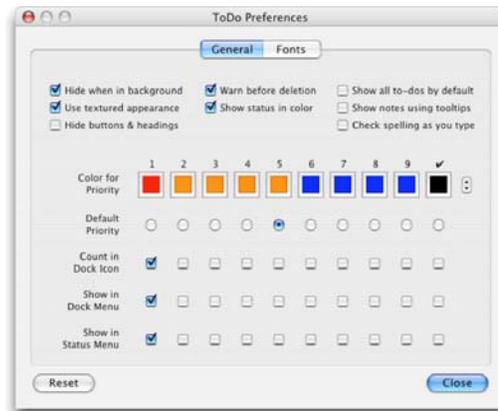
As another test came to mind. I needed to both remember to complete my review of ToDo X for macCompanion by the 28th of December and to remember that Kelvin Delbarre was my contact. I also wanted to store my serial number in the same location as the action item. Since reviewing ToDo X was one of the items I'd added to iNotePad > macCompanion > December Reviews list (see the illustrations above) this was an easy task to do. Adding this review to ToDo X was a simple set of drop-and drags.

ToDo X is sufficiently flexible that you can grow your category systems as you develop needs and actionable items from as simple as the developer shows to ones more complex than my list. Changing categories, adding and deleting to do items is all a few minutes work. Try it you'll like the ease of use and simple but powerful interface.

As a result of my re-review of ToDo, I shall now use both ToDo to manage my to do items and iNotePad to collect my tidbits and tidbats stuff lists. The combination works better for me than using a combination of my calendar software (PandoCalendar) and iNotePad or doing without iNotePad. [I don't like iCal or other Calendar software I tested. So I still use PandoCalendar, the closest thing to the Calendar DA I adopted shortly after getting my first Macintosh.] If you don't collect data tidbits on index cards or in notepad software, and don't organize and make long lists of related items for future use you might want to assign action dates to, you're set. Just use ToDo X to keep track of those items you simply need to do. You know, today, tomorrow or until your conscience stops bothering you. Indeed, by adopting ToDo X, my iNotePad lists became simpler. I could drop out all the items that were simply to do items and concentrate only on collecting all that great stuff I'm getting to old to want to remember.

An Overview of the ToDo X Features

With its ability to color-code priorities and to contain unlimited attached notes this application can meet the needs of almost any Macintosh user. As a native cocoa application, ToDo conforms to the Macintosh “way”. The *Readme* file that comes with the application and the *ToDo Features* file from which I downloaded from the website help file were powerful and simple to use guidance to all the features of this product. Read them first so you can gain a better understanding of the products features and ease of use. I’ve listed some of the software’s capabilities just to provide you some insights of the software features and flexibility.



Linking ToDo X Items — To do items can be linked to multiple lists (categories) and Drag & drop can be used to copy, link or move items among lists.

Searching ToDo X — With easy to use, finder-like search features, it is easy to display, search or print items from selected lists.

Drag and Drop with Ease — You can drag (or paste) web location files, email addresses and address book entries into category or to-do item notes to create clickable links. [e.g., Use an option-click on the *Edit* Item button to launch any links contained in the selected item’s name or notes.]

Dock and Status Menu - When the application is running, its dock icon provides two features to help you manage your to-do list: an icon badge and a dock menu. A status menu is provided in the menu bar as well, which you may find helpful if you prefer to keep the dock hidden. Both the menubar and the dock icons can be configure as alerts to you higher priority items.



ToDo X FAQ and Hidden Feature Exposé — If you cant figure it out your self, read the FAQ. In addition, for those of you who can’t resist customizing your applications, the FAQ its full of helpful hints.

Printing To-Do Lists — You can print all of your to-do items, or just the items from specific categories, or just specific items. The help file shows you the way.

Keyboard Shortcuts for Main ToDo Window — Extensive short cuts just for those who hate to mouse around.

Backing up, Importing and Exporting Data — Backups of your Category and Things To Do data, which is stored in the ToDo X preferences file: ~/Library/Preferences/com.nomicro.ToDo.plist is easy. Do it!

Importing Data to ToDo X — You can import data from Ambrosia Software’s classic Mac OS “ToDo!” desk accessory is you’ve still got that in your classic system, such as Apple’s iCal, that generate industry-standard “.ics” data files can also be imported.

Limited Export Capabilities — You can export to an iPod using the companion application ToDo X to iPod Notes. Other export capabilities have been deferred to a future release.

There’s more, but you can find that out for yourself.

A Single Gripe

When I attempted, on the publisher’s website to check out the “contact” feature, I got into a do loop. Nothing I tried lead me to either a webpage based communication link or to a new email in my Eudora client.

Conclusions

As I've started using this application more actively since August 2004, so I appreciate its simplicity and power. I've still not found the perfect combination of to do list software (obviously event oriented) and notepad (to collect odds and ends) so I will rely on both ToDo X and iNotePad for my *stuff* collection, including due dates and factoids, needs.

Complete with a spelling checker and easily customizable labels associated with the item priorities, this product remains more versatile and complete than others I've tested. Enhancements to its interface and added flexibility is assigning priorities to items in varying categories have resolved weaknesses I identified in my August 2004 review.

Unlike many shareware developers, based on the products release notes, its developer takes and active interest in maintaining and upgrading the features of the fine product. For example, "The formats we choose to support *for export of your notes* and their implementation will be determined by requests from our users."

Buy it! Trust your to-dos to this clean, unobtrusive application. It is extremely simple to use and just contains the features that are essential to its function. Featuritus for its own sake, take heed Microsoft, is completely absent. I'm not sure I want to use the product to replace my calendar, but importing items if you use iCal, too stay synchronized would be easy. I rate this product **4.5 macC's** and look forward to seeing more from this developer.

Software

Copper 2005 – Project Management Software

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Element Software Pty Ltd
15 Oakbank Grove
Pascoe Vale VIC 3044 Australia
Skype: Element Software
USA: (415) 992-5610
AUS: (613) 8300-8777
info@copperproject.com
<http://www.copperproject.com>

Demos: <http://www.copperproject.com/demo.php>

Released: Corporate, February 2005; Standard, September, 2005.
\$499 USD (25 licenses), \$999 USD (50 licenses) Corporate or hosted \$49 per month Standard or \$999 per month Corporate. 14-day trial.

Requirements: Server Apache or IIS, PHP4.0 or later, MySQL 3.23.54 or later.

Strengths: Cross-platform. Web-based. Has Blog and Forum.

Weaknesses: Differences between Standard and Corporate makes one wonder why. See Features Link. See Demos Link.

Features: <http://www.copperproject.com/features.php>

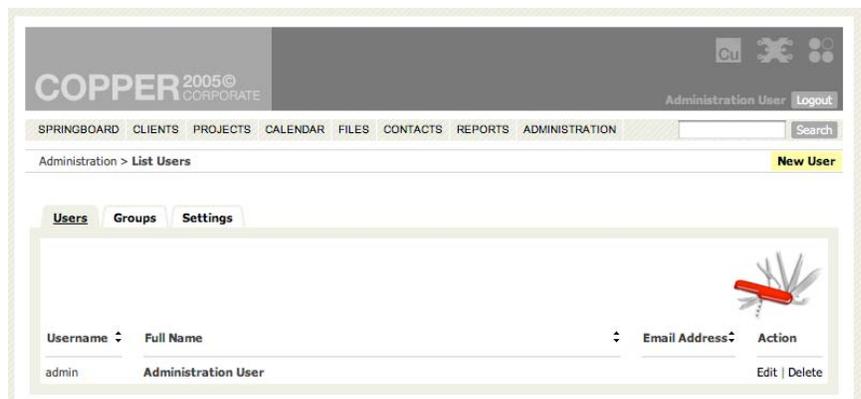
Forum: <http://www.copperproject.com/forum/>

Tour: <http://www.copperproject.com/tour.php>

I was able to run the 14-day demo. Had my own web-based setup and everything. I suggest you take the tour, than you decide if you want to do the monthly fee or pay for the development kit instead. After all, you will need to “roll-your-own if you looked a the requirements – your server, MySQL, Apache and PHP apps in place.

See you do al the grunt work to get this going as both a PM and CM tool. I opted for the host-based and had this site setup in no time:

<http://maccompanion.copperhub.com/index.php?>



The key is the Springboard.

From there you can get going with projects, tasks, clients and contacts, calendaring, file manipulation and reporting and finally, some admin stuff. I'm not going to repeat the tour here. Go there and view it. The tour is the documentation.

So here we have something that sits somewhere between a Mac-based stand-alone, yet webable app like Merlin and a totally not-your-problem always up-to-date, web-based app like Green Array. With CopperProject, you can have it as hosted and have the possible trust/security issues of a hosted-only environment (see the Green Array review) or do the "I'm Admin" concept and pay the price up-front for either the standard or corporate SDK and then be self-sufficient with a Blog and Forum for help from the folks at Element Software.

The screenshot shows the 'COPPER 2005 CORPORATE' Springboard interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'SPRINGBOARD', 'CLIENTS', 'PROJECTS', 'CALENDAR', 'FILES', and 'CONTACTS'. Below the tabs, the user is logged in as 'Brian Setzer'. The main content area is titled 'Springboard (View Completed)' and features a 'My Tasks' section. This section includes a table with columns for Client, Project, Task, Progress, and Ends. The tasks listed are:

Client	Project	Task	Progress	Ends
Adidas	NY Office Launch Party	Analyse budget and requirements	[Green progress bar]	04 Aug 05
Bank National	Legacy system upgrade	Research and requirements analysis	[Red progress bar]	22 Aug 05
Bank National	Legacy system upgrade	Build proposal and management signoff	[Red progress bar]	22 Aug 05

Below the table, there are sections for 'Most Urgent Issues' and 'Most Recent Updates', both showing 'Build proposal and management signoff' on '09 Aug 05'. On the right side of the 'My Tasks' section, there is a 'Quick Comment' box, a '% Complete' slider set to 20, and an 'Hours' input field set to 0. A 'Save Update' button is located at the bottom right of the task list.

It is all basically an issue of your threshold of pain, isn't it? What is it going to cost you in both time and money as well as maintenance. We've given you three collaborative tools to play with, now go run with the ball.

Data Rescue II

reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves

Prosoft Engineering, Inc.
4725 1st St., Suite 270
Pleasanton, CA 94566
(925) 426-6100

http://www.prosofteng.com/contact_us.php

<http://www.prosofteng.com>

Product site: http://www.prosofteng.com/products/data_rescue.php

\$99 USD; \$65 USD upgrade from Data Rescue X.

Requirements: G3, G4 or G5 processor; 512KB of free RAM; Mac OS 10.2.3-10.4.x with HFS and HFS+ partitions; a separate FireWire, USB 2.0, or internal drive to recover files to.

Strengths: Improved interface; scanning speed increased; organizes recovered files by content.

Weaknesses: Cannot preview files to be recovered.



Prosoft had a strong data recovery utility with Data Rescue X, and thanks to improvements to its speed and interface, the Tiger-compatible Data Rescue II is even stronger.

Data Rescue II takes a slightly different approach to the disk utility market by focusing solely on recovering files from a damaged disk and not trying to fix the problem. I've had experiences with the Disk Doctor application of Symantec's Norton Utilities suite where trying to repair a disk resulted in further damage and made the information more difficult to retrieve. So Prosoft's path is a welcome one.

Because of this feature, you are required to have another volume available to recover files to and to use as space for temporary files. This can be any mountable drive or network volume with suitable capacity to accommodate your recovered data.

Another major feature of Data Rescue II is its ability to see disk volumes that cannot be mounted either in the Finder or even in other disk utility programs. There's nothing quite as soul-sinking as trying to recover a volume and not having it show up in the disk utility software at all. Data Rescue is superior to other utilities in this regard.

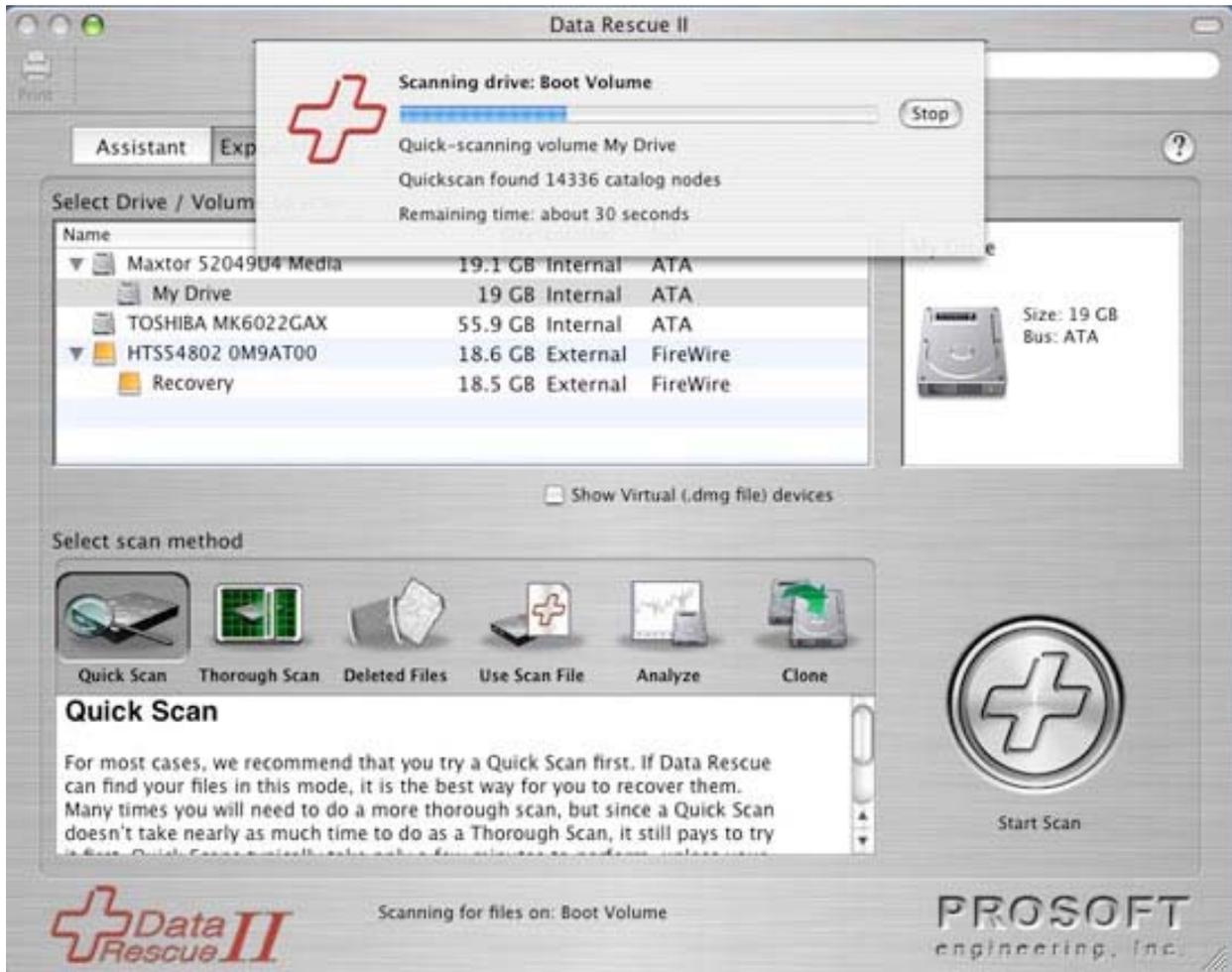
Data Rescue II has been updated for Tiger compatibility and ships on a bootable CD that contains OS X 10.4. But like with all utilities that can be run from a bootable CD, it will always work faster when running from a writable hard drive. Since you cannot scan the drive you're booting from, that means you'd need to reboot from the drive you're recovering the files to.

Data Rescue X's scanning was painfully slow, particularly when booted from the CD. But Data Rescue II's scanning, especially the Quick Scan, is much faster. Even booted from the CD, I was able to scan an 80GB drive in less than a minute.



The other downside of Data Rescue X was its unintuitive, ugly metal interface. Although the metal is still there in Data Rescue II, the interface is drastically improved. Buttons are more clearly defined as such, thanks to shadows, and icons are sharper. The all-new Cocoa-based user interface, with built-in features like 'sheets,' makes the application look much more polished and feel more comfortable.

There are two Modes: Assistant and Expert. The first is like a wizard which takes the user step by step through the process and makes everything very clear. The second is more like the original interface except that it opens the results list in a new window that can be searched using the familiar toolbar searchbox introduced in Panther's brushed-metal Finder windows.



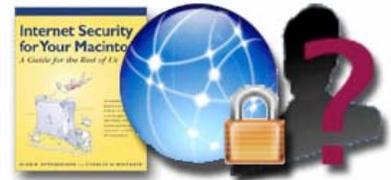
Another of its new features is the Deleted Files Scan, which searches only the free space of the selected volume. Because there are no catalog entries for data in the free space area, Data Rescue II uses its Content Scan method to sort recovered files by content. It will sort them into folders named Audio, Documents, Images, Mail, Misc, and Movies. Each one of those folders is filled with subfolders named for more specific filetypes, such as AIFF, AppleWorks, Office, Illustrator EPS, TIFF, etc. The resulting files do not have their original names, so you won't know if it's the file you're looking for, but you can recover every item of that filetype and check them out after you restart.

Because of the large list of file formats that Data Rescue can recognize, it is also a good solution for recovering pictures or songs from removable flash media, such as the cards you use with your digital camera.

With the retreat of Symantec from Mac OS X 10.4 and no major operating system changes expected by Apple for another year, Prosoft Engineering has secured a place in the disk utilities market with the much-improved Data Rescue II, which is the one product to own if you're serious about recovering files from any kind of problematic drive.

DoorStop X 1.1 Security Suite

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Developer: Alan Oppenheimer
Open Door Networks, Inc.
110 S. Laurel St.
Ashland, OR 97520 USA
541- 488-4127

info@opendoor.com
<http://www.opendoor.com>

Released: December 12, 2005

\$69 USD, Upgrade, \$49 USD, 30-day try-before-you-buy

Download: <http://www.opendoor.com/doorstopsuite/SuiteDownload.html>

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later; Either Mail.app, Eudora or MS Entourage for Who's There?; a PDF viewer.

Included: Internet Security for the Mac, 2nd Edition, Who's There? 2.0 Firewall Advisor and DoorStop X Firewall 1.1.

Strengths: Pulls together three great Internet security products into one seamless whole. Behaves correctly when setting IP addresses to "low".

Weaknesses: You still will need an anti-malware app, like clamXav we reviewed last month (December 2005) and an Email Spam filter, if the ISP connection isn't doing as well as it should. The PDFed book could use a Table of Contents.

History of Mac Firewalls:

<http://www.opendoor.com/doorstop/doorstophistory.html>

TCP/UDP Port List for Macs:

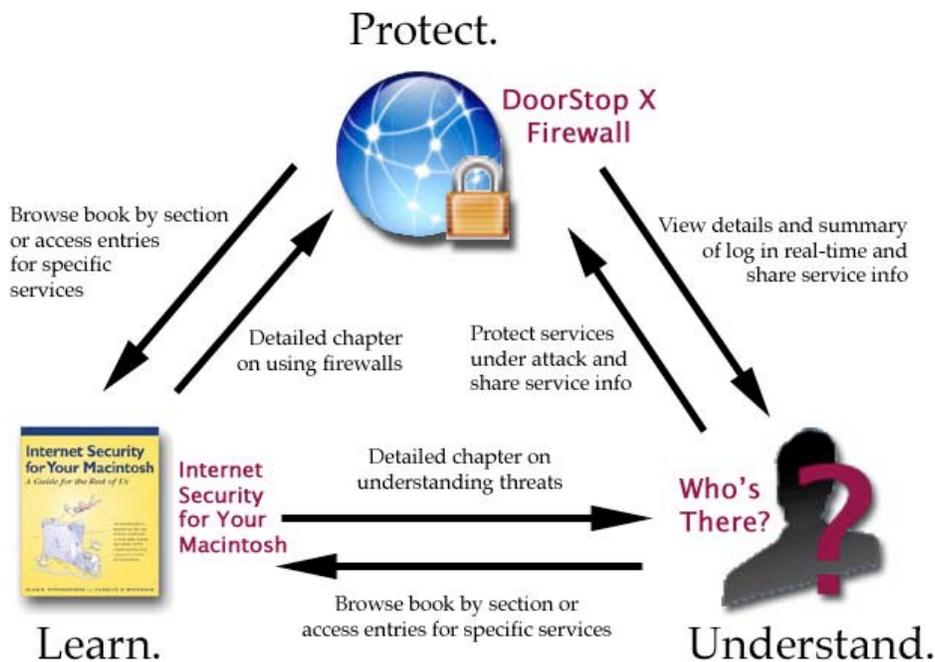
<http://www.opendoor.com/doorstop/ports.html>

Let's say you have Mac OS X Tiger, and you have a router hooked up to a broadband connection. Assume that router also has a built-in firewall. Mac OS X has a built-in firewall. Right now there are no malware apps unless we consider 3 or so rootkits, (one specifically designed for the Mac), but those can't be installed today without physical presence of the attacker and he or she would have to know the root access and password to install it on an individual machine. Hardly viral. So why would you spend more money on a "Security Suite"? After all, few if any of the security vendors for the Mac are still active. Scare tactics only work so long before folks say, "to heck with it" and they run unprotected, living dangerously on the Internet with a Mac and a "What? Me Worry?" attitude.

We've looked at Open Door products in the past, along with other security-minded apps, but it really is hard to justify buying protective software if the threat is less than zero, right? But we need to be paranoid because someday, somehow, the Mac community is going to be caught with its undies down around its ankles and no excuses if malware is successfully released in a viral manner. Like all good scouts, we need to be prepared. It is not a matter of if, but when. So Alan Oppenheimer, who literally wrote the book on Internet Security has come up with a 3-part whole-meal-deal approach to safe computing for the Mac environment, ergo, the *Doorstop X Security Suite* released on an unsuspecting public in December 2005. After all, we can't be too well prepared for the inevitable. Alan also is teaching Mac Security at MacWorld San Francisco in January.

So what are the three parts of the DoorStop X Security triad? One leg is the book, now in electronic PDF form as *Internet Security for Your Mac* and kept up-to-date online. Another is the Whois app known as *Who's There?* Firewall Advisor that also does similar functions as *VisualRoute*. And the last leg is the software version of the *DoorStop X Firewall*. Both *Who's There?* and *DoorStop X Firewall* are integrally connected electronically to the book and it is being used as the Help Desk for both apps.

Okay, once again, why use *DoorStop X Firewall* over, say Mac OS X Tiger's Firewall app or say, even something like BrickHouse? Probably because Alan wrote it and Paul Collins engineered it. No kidding, he has been deeply involved for years in networking Macs and Interneting them as well, so they play nice without leaving any bad aftertaste. In fact, if you want Norton's older Firewall, that too was Alan's brainchild. If you used that in the past, than you will be very familiar with this one. What it has going for it that is missing from Apple's own, is flexibility of being able to optionize and accessorize firewall functions. You know, things like logs for forensics purposes?



I reviewed the book (edited by Charles Whitaker) when it was first published years ago and a few things were added, such as wireless networking and a few other goodies that Apple has provided for us with Mac OS X Tiger such as iLife and the other iApps we've grown to know and love and print has gone to discussing security of other apps such as Timbuktu, Retrospect, FileMaker Pro, Virtual PC and lists a few other apps as well. Each chapter provides both Risk and Security measures. Both *DoorStop X* and *Who's There?* tie to all the chapters in the book. The version I currently am running has about 370 pages in it, but because this is a live document, the pages will both change in content and number over time. One thing I learned is that if Classic is still around, it needs to be disabled or removed. Remember, viruses do exist for Mac OS 9 and earlier. I also found that my Public folder permissions were defaulted to *Read only* by others and needed to be changed to *No Access*. I also learned that Virtual PC does an end-run past the local Personal Firewall and Alan makes a very strong point. By using VPC, *I am intentionally running a virus on my machine!*

There is no anti-virus app with this suite, but because Alan Oppenheimer is very familiar with Nortons, he still gives a lot of print to Norton's AntiVirus and Norton Personal Firewall apps.

Who's There? acts more like a friendly wizard-like mentor as it anticipates assisting with understanding of such mundane things as "events". This app was engineered by Dave Hendrix. I accepted the defaults for analyzing and interpreting the log tea leaves. It also permits Whois lookups so we can locate network admins and draft Email alerts to them regarding suspicious activities.



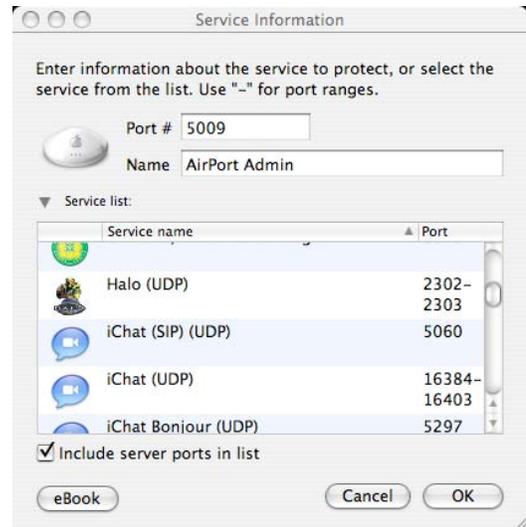
What sets *DoorStop X* apart from Apple's own or even from other firewall apps is that it is more graphically oriented with each of the Internet Services that could become compromised and it works well right out of the box, so to speak. You will need to turn off Apple's own Firewall services in order to fully utilize *DoorStop X*. It also takes those pesky IP addresses and can shrink the range to nil, instead of doing like Apple's Firewall does with all or nothing.



And after highlighting one of the services, clicking on the *eBook* button takes us right to the pertinent information within the *Internet Security for Your Mac* book. Perhaps more importantly, there is the option to go out to set the other Internet services and set the ports as needed. We can also see which ports are used by what services and if the service we pick is highlighted and we need to know more about it, we can just click the *eBook* button and get the information.

Apparently using Mac OS X Tiger networking, more than one configuration can be created for use with *DoorStop X*, a concern voiced earlier about prior versions of the app. And logging is active in the status toolbar. I'm assuming that if there is an event, *Who's There?* will kick in and make some noise about it.

If you are not behind a hard-wired firewall, you may be in a prime position to get this 3-in-1 Security Suite.



FastTrack Schedule 9

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



AEC Software, Incorporated
22611-113 Markey Court
Sterling, VA 20166, USA
703-450-1980

FAX: 703-450-9786

info@aecsoftware.com

<http://www.aecsoftware.com>

Demo: <http://www.aecsoftware.com/downloads/freedemo>

Released: November 14, 2005.

\$349 USD, \$149 upgrade from FTS8 or \$199 USD for earlier FTS.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; 16 MB RAM; 60 MB hard drive space; CD-ROM drive and Internet access; 1024x768 color resolution.

Windows 98SE or later with the same hardware configuration as the Mac.

Strengths: Cross-platform. Networkable. Backward compatible to FTS6. AppleScript and VBA-capable. Mature product.

Weaknesses: No Forum or User Group yet.

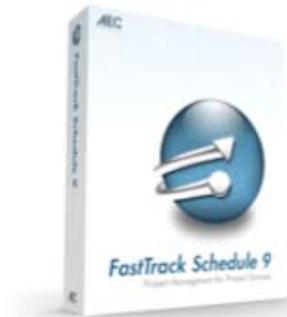
FastTrack Schedule 9 (FTS9) is a cross-platform project management app that plays nice with Microsoft's Project for Windows (opens .mpp files directly) while also working directly with such Apple iApps as iCal. What sets it apart is the ability to consolidate various projects into a single master project file and do linking following recognized Project Management (PMI) standards.

This version allows a Project Manager (PM) to spend more time on the project and less time on babysitting and paper-trailing the paperwork. There are plenty of off-the-shelf templates to work with and they can be easily customized using predefined filters, sorts and layouts. Think "flexible". Think tracking of scheduled revised and actual dates and durations with all the PM tools for charting, graphing, managing budgets and resources. Think sharing. Think quick, clear and effective.

Besides working with iCal, FTS9 also has coding to allow Spotlight functionality on the Mac under Mac OS X Tiger, while also following certain privacy practices that can be defined by the user. There are four levels of security/privacy controls (tri-level passwording, file-locking).

We reviewed FastTrack Schedule 8 a few years ago. In this release there is also a new process called FastSteps for automating repetitive tasks and operations as well as link behavior controls, autosave and autoarchive and easier navigability within a project management file.

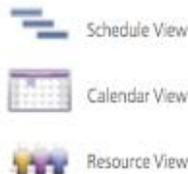
There is an excellent 46-page PDF-based user guide, but the boxed version also comes with a 269-page User manual.



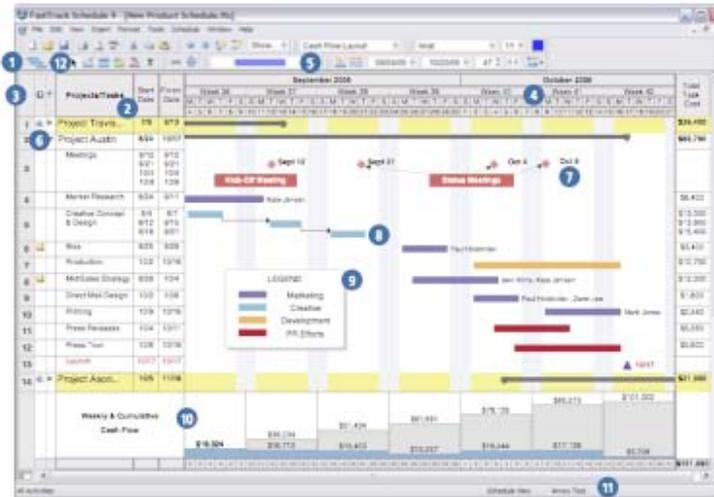
The FastTrack Schedule Environment

Schedule View

1. **Views Toolbar** - Three buttons providing quick access to FastTrack Schedule's Resource, Calendar, and Schedule Views.



2. **Columns** - predefined columns within the Schedule and Resource Views display activity names, dates, durations, costs, resources, calculations, hyperlinks, time, work, ID/codes, numbers, and text values.
3. **Action Columns** - simplify operations performed on activities and resource rows.
4. **Timescale Rows** - displayed in standard units of time from hours to years, as well as fiscal and generic units. Timescale rows can appear above and below the timeline graph, with the width of the base timescale row determining the width of the timeline columns.
5. **Bar Styles Toolbar** - these cells contain customizable bar and milestone styles to graphically represent project tasks in the timeline.
6. **Rows** - each contains an activity, its data, and its activity bar or bars.
7. **Timeline Graph** - shows position of activity bars. The time range, time units, and other aspects can be adjusted within the Format Schedule View dialog.
8. **Activity Bars** - graphical representations of activity start dates, finish dates, and durations.
9. **Graphic Items** - Text boxes, legends, and pictures can be added and repositioned in the timeline graph area or in Print Preview. Graphic items can also be formatted with backgrounds, borders, and shadows.
10. **Column Summaries and Summary Graphs** - summarize values within columns and across periods of time.
11. **Status Bar** - anchors the Application Window, providing key information for the current view of activities and scheduling tool in use.
12. **The Toolbox** - core tools for scheduling and formatting project details.



- Arrow Tool** - all-purpose tool for entering activity details in columns as well as selecting, dragging, and resizing bars, pictures, and text boxes.
- Draw Bar Tool** - draws activity bars in the timeline graph.
- Draw Link Tool** - links activity bars to create dependencies.
- Revise Bar Tool** - changes an activity's Revised start and/or finish dates, times, and durations.
- Bar % Complete Tool** - defines the percent complete and Actual start, finish, and duration of an activity.
- Draw Text Box Tool** - draws and edits text boxes in the timeline graph and in the Print Preview Window.

FTS9 has been released to focus attention on presentation. As a Project Manager in telecom and network installations, I used to do weekly progress reports to vested interests. I had to take valuable time to take a day or two each week prepping and tweaking my presentations in MS Project for Windows and Excel spreadsheets. With FTS9's linking capability, I can pull in pics, or other parts for reporting purposes and I can even set this up so it is webable, meaning I can post online and allow collaboration to occur worldwide if I want to.

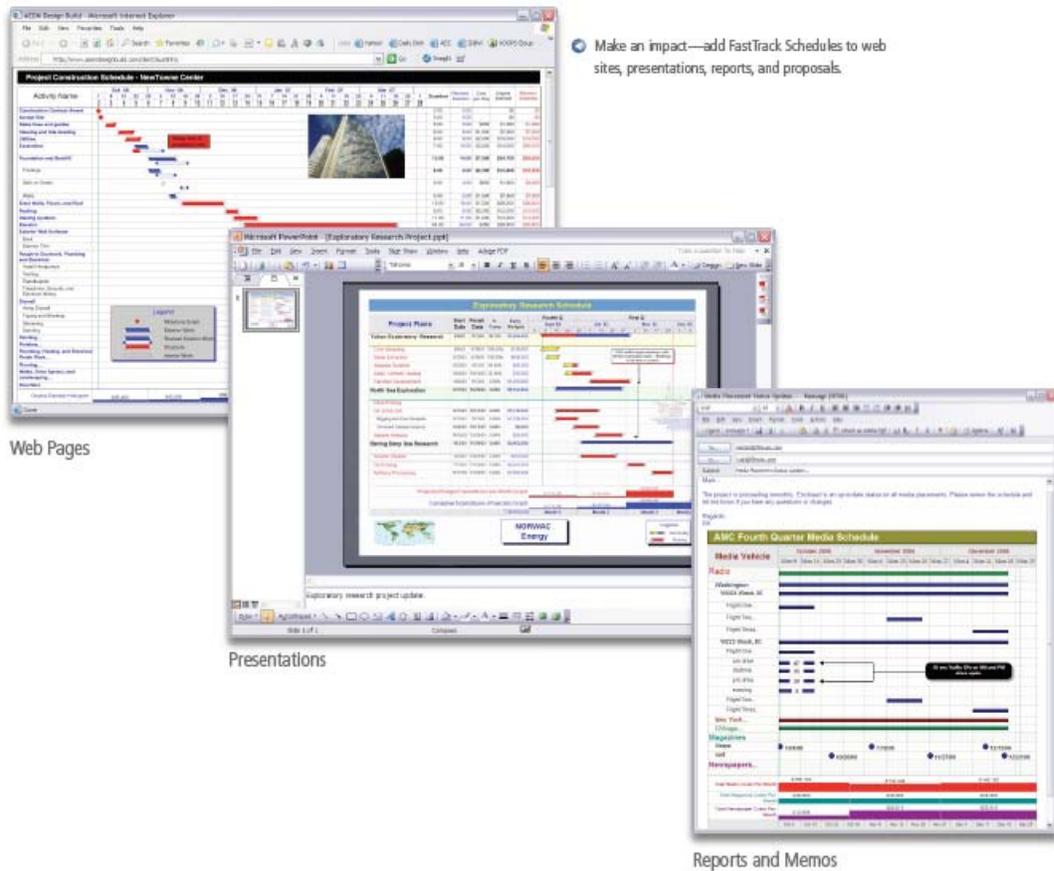
There is a Calendar view that shows time vertically and multiple calendars can be generated based on ranges and configurations. The Resource view is designed to track equipment, materials and people that have been allocated to a given project and makes it easy to see under and over-allocation.

A bar tool has been added to allow entering data graphically instead of textually. The outliner has been updated to include drop-down menus for expanding or collapsing activities. Work Breakdown Structures use the outlining tools as well as works with 10 different separators (periods, dashes, commas, etc.) Project details can be added, arranged and prioritized by dragging and dropping text. Columns are application-defined and organized by date, duration, text, number, ID/code, cost, calculation, hyperlink, time and work. Bars and milestones are completely customizable and graphics can be added for three components; scheduled, revised and actual. There are also powerful filtering, sorting and searching components that allow for hourly, daily to yearly or beyond kinds of schedules. And viewing can be done by ranging across time.

And if you have done any project management activities, you know things just don't go according to plan, so there are eight different constraint types for controlling slippage set up in three categories; Soft, Moderate and Hard. And Critical Path dependencies can be prioritized.

Oh, and don't fret if you are going the Mactel route in 2006 because AEC Software is "there" with Rosetta and it will "go native" as soon as the Mactel systems are released from Apple. The verdict is out on whether this will be a dot release or a FTS10 release. Either way. AEC Software is prepared.

Another plus for this version is that it can go back and forth between MPX and XML and AEC even has a free online Project Converter for conversion from MS Project files to FTS9 format and distribution via Email.



For those ever-so-important presentations, there are six different types of Summary graphs with two types (count and total) that can be displayed as cumulative totals.

FTS9 not only does AppleScripting and Visual Basic for Applications, it also has a built-in FastSteps app for automating tasks. It also uses Object Linking and Embedding technology and can function as an OLE server so files can be linked or embedded in other applications as well.

And FS9 is also scalable so that if you want, you can purchase multiple-licensed versions for network or enterprise environments with Concurrent-User versions.

Curiously, there is no Forum or FastTrack User Group established yet, even though FastTrack Schedule has been around since 1988.

If you are lucky enough to be permitted to manage projects for a living and you work in a heterogeneous environment, you will want to consider this cross-platform app.

Green Array – Collaborative Online Project Management

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Green Array Corporation

404 Bryant Street
San Francisco, California 94107
415.284.3224

info@greenarray.com

<http://www.greenarray.com>

Demo: <http://www.greenarray.com/twominutedemo/>

Free Trial: http://www.greenarray.com/try_now.html Downloads are Linux - 45MB, Mac – 19MB and Windows – 27MB.

Released: December 12, 2005.

\$20 USD per month subscription with 1 GB online storage through February 2006.

Strengths: Web-based, cross-platform, bleeding-edge.

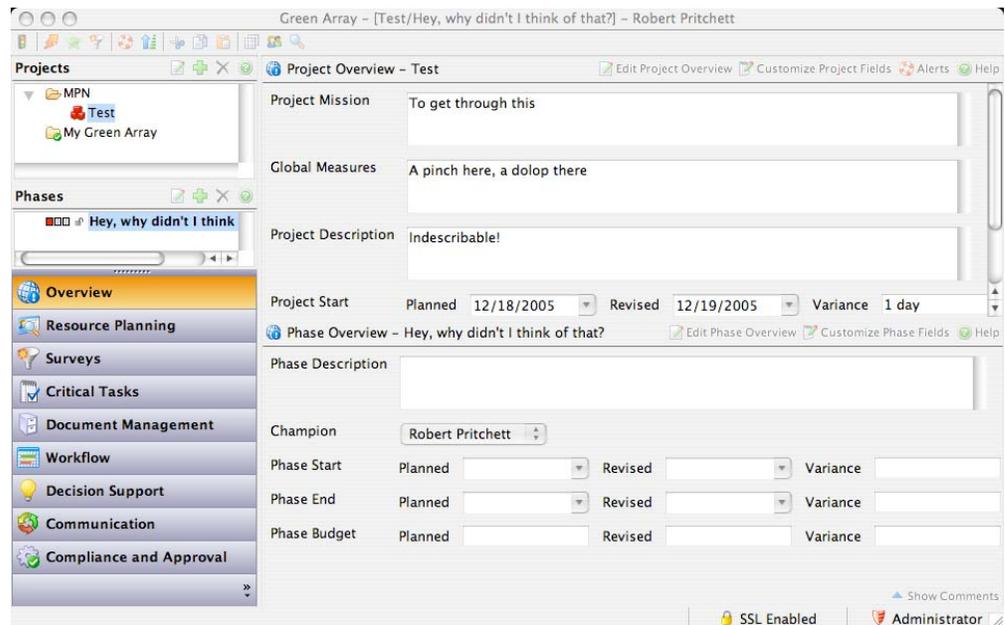
Weaknesses: Web-based only for now. No standalone. And no documentation. Work-in-progress.

Case Studies: http://www.greenarray.com/case_studies.html

http://www.macsimumnews.com/index.php/archive/green_array_ceo_time_is_right_for_adding_mac_support/

Are you ready for next-gen computing? Can you trust being “always on” yet? Are you ready to be on the bleeding edge of technology to collaborate with your worldwide peers? Are you willing to use software that is basically client-server with the server way out of your hands?

Even though I was “down” more than 3 days with our Cable network this past month, I was able to learn more about this piece of collaborative software from the folks that put it together, by spending a lot of time on the phone with them even as the network presentation they were giving me died on my end within 2 minutes of the start of the dog & pony show. We are talking worst-case scenario Murphy’s Law.



Everything that could go wrong did, but the back up (land-line phone communications) worked beautifully.

That said, I can truthfully say, my current situation is not ready for 24/7 always-on around-the-world collaboration just yet. But if my system were fiberized instead of coaxed and I had a world-wide development team, I'd go for \$20 USD per month per seat to make this work, wouldn't you?

See, what happens is each time I log in, the system goes out and checks for the latest updates from Green Array, loads those and gets me to re-login after the changes have occurred. Makes you wonder what the 19 MB of local client for Mac OS X is there for, doesn't it? But it works nice. No CDs to ship, the latest updates are essentially auto-installed and we are ready-to-get-to-work.

The intent is that with a webified collaborative tool, it really doesn't matter what platform is used – and this is the direction and flow software is going – as long as the backbone works and we can trust it, the network, our equipment and ourselves enough to do the job.

That said, I messed with this product for a little while and realized the 2-minute demo helped a lot in getting me to understand some of the mechanics, but not all. In the spirit of intuitiveness, Green Array has done a fair job, but I need to get a hold of some documentation, some sample templates and a hands-on walkthrough and over-the-shoulder guide to help me through the basics. After that I'm good to go!

During the same review period, I was swapping online access between computers, because the router I had been using failed and you will see I reviewed two and sent one back to the manufacturer during the same time I was kicking the tires on this online app. See, that is another thing. Green Array doesn't work yet in stand-alone mode at all. You have to be connected to the Internet to run this app. No safety 'Net, no collaborative effort. So if you are a road-warrior, and you are in-between Internet connections (like on a plane between continents), forget it for now.

The miracle and the magic of Internet connectivity still isn't as good as the reliability of an electric light switch and the local power company (in statistical-speak all things being equal). See, I also swapped computers in midstream as well. My older iMac G5 went to Europe – and back – without me - as a sale fell through and I brought it back online as my main system - again. If you don't have a reliable computer system, that also can create havoc with this app. However, Green Array has made it so that folks who do Macs, Linux and Windows can work together in relative harmony – or at least swap information using this \$20 USD-per-month app. Assuming you also trust Green Array to guard your project information.

Safety and Security issues; yes, Green Array has password-protected your app and as admin, you can invite others in, but who is watching over Green Array and really protecting your data? If your project is high-profile and for-your-eyes-only, should you work in an environment that may perhaps, not be as trust-worthy as you first assumed? I personally believe in “trust, but verify” and I have personally witnessed some bad actors recently online – the kind that make pirates wince.

Just askin' fellas, just askin' ...and hopin' the cable connection works, the power stays on, and...

Read the MacsimumNews article linked above for more.

Merlin 1.3.7 – Perfect Project Management Magic for Mac OS X!

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

ProjectWizards

Developer: Frank Blome

ProjectWizards

Dr. –Maria-Hellamn-Strasse 11

D-49324 Melle, Germany

info@projectwizards.net

<http://www.projectwizards.net>

Released: November 29, 2005

€145 Euro or \$180 USD, single license.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.4 or later.

Features: <http://www.projectwizards.net/en/merlin/features>

Demo Download: <http://www.projectwizards.net/en/merlin/download> (8.2 MB).



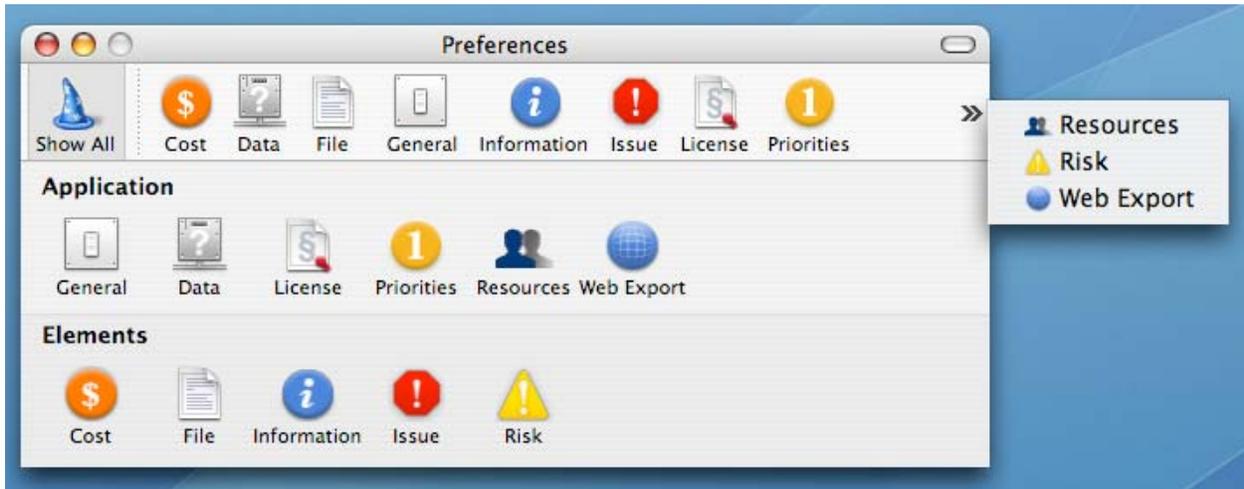
Strengths: Mac OS X-specific. One-window for all tasks. You can take it with you. Webable. Plays nice with others. Excellent documentation.

Weaknesses: Not cross-platform. (But I'm almost ready to say – “So what”?)

Now here is a Mac OS X-specific project manager that takes advantage of all the Mac OS X-specific technologies and combines all that GUI-goodness into an app that uses just one window. Of course, since it is from Germany, the window obviously has 4 smaller frames instead of one big picturewindow, but you get the idea anyway, right? It looks beautiful on my 21-in screen. And because it is Mac OS –X-only, it avoids all the challenges associated with non-Mac environments – and the developers of Merlin are in an excellent position to help those folks Migrate to the Mac – just contact contact@projectwizards.net.

Localizations are English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. There is a 8-page Quick Reference and a 102-page PDFed handbook for version 1.3.6. There is a newsletter. Project Wizards reside in Austria, Australia, Germany and Switzerland.

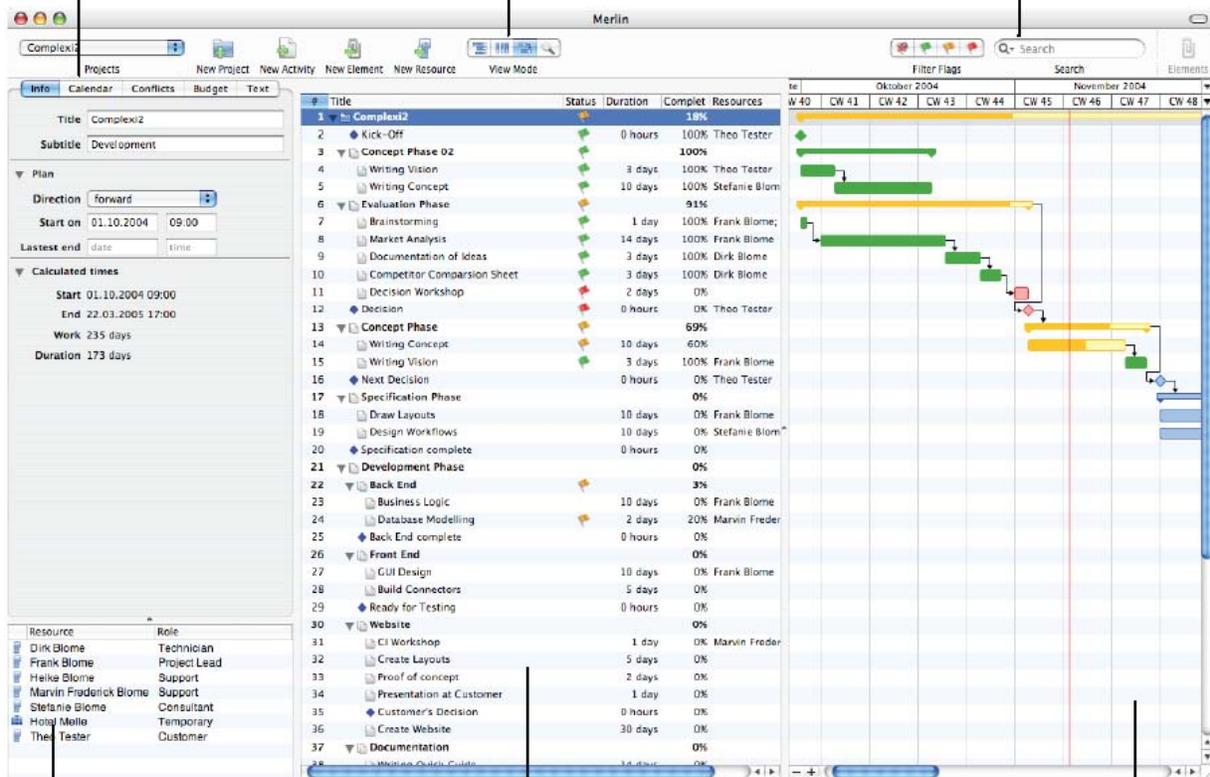
Think of Merlin as both a wizard and an advisor, backed by a network of professionals and designed with precise renowned and excellent German engineering. See, this is the kind of thing that folks at Green Array could emulate, if they really wanted to.



The information area gives the ability to modify each selected object directly.

Three predefined views are prepared for the easy access in the different phases of each project.

Filter for every item of the current project.

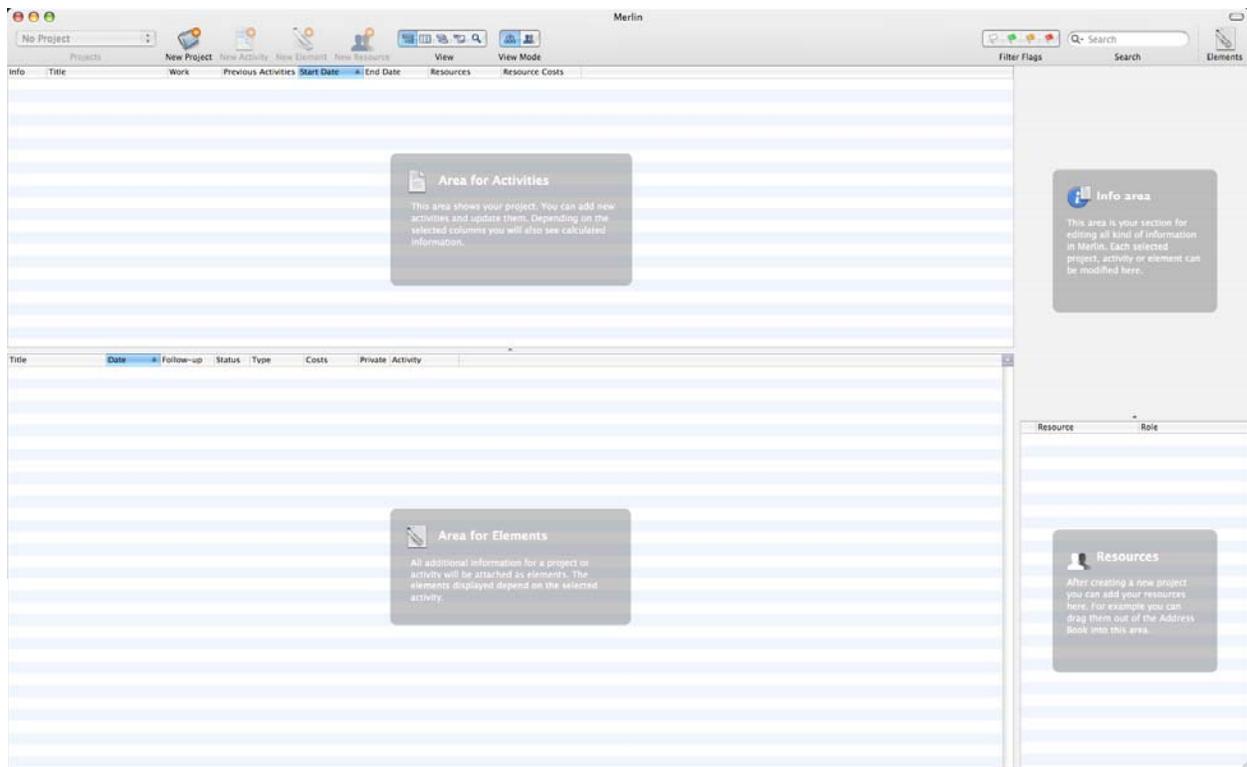


Each project has got its own resources. They are available permanently in a dedicated list for faster access.

Design the project in an outline.

Control the project on a graphical view (Gantt chart).

The walkthrough in the Quick Reference is magnificent as it quickly steps through the must-have features, six steps to perfect projects, inspection panels, calculations, elements, weighing risks. They provide the tools to make project management look easy on a Mac. I strongly suggest you download the “press materials” and look for yourself, so I don’t have to republish their excellent work here.



This one is a keeper.

Readiris Pro 11.0.3 — A Powerful OCR Application for the Macintosh reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



I.R.I.S.

10 rue du Bosquet
B-1348 Louvain la Neuve
Belgium
+32-(0)10-45 13 64
Fax: +32-(0)10-45 34 43
info@irislink.com
1-561-921-0847 (USA)

<http://www.irisusa.com/support/readiris/index.html>

<http://www.irisusa.com/products/readiris/mac/index.html>

Released: September 20, 2005.

\$129 USD and CND, €152 Euro. 30-day Demo version. 17 MB download installed.

Requirements: G3 Macintosh, Mac OS X 10.3 or later including Tiger. A Windows version Readiris Pro 10 is available.

Supported Scanners: Readiris supports all TWAIN compliant scanners. In other words, each scanner for which a Twain module version 1.7 is available is supported!

Detailed Manual and de-installer Provided.

Internationally Applicable: Recognizes over 118 languages and a variety of alphabets.

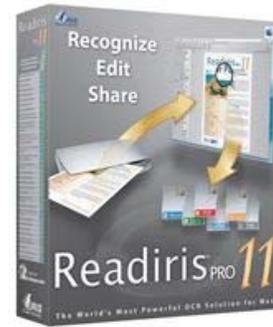
Audience: Anyone who needs to translate scanned graphic formatted text accurately into editable words.

Strengths: Readiris Pro is flexible and powerful and accurate OCR software for Mac OS X. It accurately and rapidly transforms your paper documents, your PDFs and images files into editable information ready to for use. With it you can rapidly *retype* your paper or graphic format PDF documents while maintaining page layouts in the recognized text. The software interface is simple and straight forward (Mac-like) and easy to use and although a function of input quality, the recognition quality is excellent.

Weakness: The last update if the venders Webpage appears to have been February 2004, although the pages do contain information on this new and more recent enhanced version for the Macintosh, it was buried several levels deeper than the PC-Windows information.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.3.

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General Users



Advanced Users

Publisher's Highlights

Readiris Pro 11, the most advanced OCR software for Mac, quickly and easily transforms your paper documents into electronic files you can edit into your favorite application. Readiris Pro 11 not only retypes the text but also reproduces the layout of your original documents until perfection. Columns of text, titles, fonts, bullets, tables, graphics, etc ... are *well* recreated. With the PDF capabilities of Readiris Pro 11 you will be able to transform the information locked in PDF files into editable text and *if desired*, turn your documents into PDF files, offering an optimized file size. Archiving and sharing information become easier than ever! Extremely powerful, Readiris Pro *almost* exactly recreates the original format of your documents and replaces columns of text, tables, and graphics in the output file.

Introduction

I have several uses for Optical Scanner Software [OCR]. I often have scanned (copied) recipes and articles from magazines to my desktop, which generated graphic-form PDFs, which I'd like to edit. I also had a scanner capable of sheet feed and was gradually converting some of my technical documents to electronic format to reduce the amount of paper I needed to store in my all too small office.

In the past, I've been a devotee of OmniPage X, but despite promises to the contrary, ScanSoft has neglected the Macintosh version of the product. The current 2003-2004 version of OmniPage X is completely broken in Mac OS Tiger. Although a free copy of Readiris 7 came with my HP ScanJet 8250 software, I ignored it. My first look at the software, in haste, did not impress me. Despite its quirky interface, it should have. However, at the time I was still using first Jaguar and then Panther as my OS, so could live with the somewhat crash-prone OmniPage Pro X, which I'd gotten used to.



PDF of Scanned Recipe



Readiris Scan Capture

With my adoption of Tiger, OmniPage X become completely broken so I bought (upgraded) to ReadIris 9. I've explored version 9 and actively used it until getting the version 11 upgrade, which I now review. This new version 11, with a simple pt powerful Macintosh friendly interface, really zips along. This power holds despite the acquisition process being driven by flaky HP software required by my scanner. [More about that later.] I have been using version 11 extensively for the last two weeks, upgrading to version 11.03 a few days ago. The only problem I've had with the product occurred when I tried to acquire an additional image, using the latest version of the HP Scan Pro Software, without saving the original Readiris document. Then the HP software froze, requiring me to REBOOT and then reacquire the new image. Yes the HP ScanJet software v. 6.1.3 does not accommodate a forced quit. Shame on HP!

Although Readiris batches multipage documents in a variety of formats, I did not make extensive use of this feature. The product OCR's accurately and reproduces an original's with dual-column plus footnotes very well as RTF output. Although I'm not yet comfortable with this feature, its dual-layered image plus text format, also works well. The images below illustrate my direct scan of Barrio's Shrimp, Crab, and Bacon. & Saffron Bisque, as well as a simple scan to PDF of the original magazine page.

A prime potage depot, intimate **Barrio** has a distinctive Arizona Deco style: Clean, bold lines, a soaring ceiling, chairs backed with wrought iron, and rich Sonoran Desert accents in terra cotta and coppery green all let you know you're in the heart of Tucson. The color and creativity of the New Southwest is also evident in the menu, which features innovative versions of local favorites—for example, a tostada with white cheddar cheese and a whole wheat tortilla instead of the more typical mild Mexican cheese-and-flour tortilla.

But it's his background in classical French cooking that underpins Chef Jeff Glomski's interest in sauces and, by extension, in soups, for which the restaurant has become known. The so-called "soup Nazi of Tucson"—an allusion to the great demand for the *Seinfeld* character's concoctions, not for mention his dictatorial methods of distribution—Glomski comes up with a different metal-in-a-bowl each day. His choice is largely determined by what's been freshly ordered—a small restaurant needs to be economical in using ingredients but you can be sure there'll be a weekly bisque, such as the one featured here.

Barrio 135 S. 8th Ave., 827-0791

Barrio's Shrimp, Crab, Bacon, & Saffron Bisque

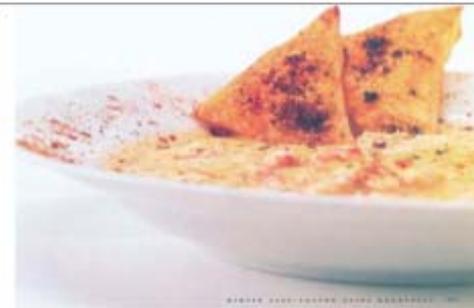
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/8 cup carrot, minced
- 1/8 cup celery, minced
- 1 medium-size yellow onion, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh garlic
- 6 pieces uncooked bacon, diced
- 1 tablespoon lobster base (or shrimp or crab base, if more readily available)
- 3 ounces brie, diced
- pinch of saffron, crushed
- 1/4 cup Chardonnay
- 1/4 tablespoon Jamaican jerk spice
- 1/2 pinch of fresh herbs (basil, oregano, rosemary, thyme-whatever you like)
- 8-10 fresh small rock shrimp
- 1/4 pound fresh pulled crab meat
- 6 cups heavy cream
- juice of one lemon
- pinch of sea salt

Sauté carrots, celery, onion, and garlic in butter until translucent. Add white wine, lobster base, jerk spice, and saffron; reduce by half. Cook bacon on the side to get rid of some of the fat; add bacon and cream. Cook for about 5 minutes, or until cream is reduced by half. Add brie, crab, and shrimp and cook for another 5 minutes (long enough so the seafood is cooked but not overcooked). Add lemon juice, fresh herbs, and sea salt to taste.

Serves 4



Captured OCR'd Scan



Barrio's Shrimp, Crab, Bacon, & Saffron Bisque

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Serves 4

Reformatted Recipe, My Style

More Thoughts About OCR and Scanning with Readiris

In order to directly scan to OCR software, two criteria needed to be met. The software must interact well with your scanner and it must be easy to select the portions of the scanned image you need (either as text, graphics or both) to recognize these page portions for future formatting and editing. ReadIris does both of these quite well.

Indeed, Readiris not only detects the various blocks on a page (called page decomposition), but also logically sorts them. The identified zones are sorted by top down, left to right by default conforming to columnized documents. The block ID numbers indicate the sort order and zone type. These zones can be reordered or unnecessary zones or noise or borders identified as zones can be ignored. You can also choose to select and order zones manually using the ‘windowing tools. Read the manual — check out the details.

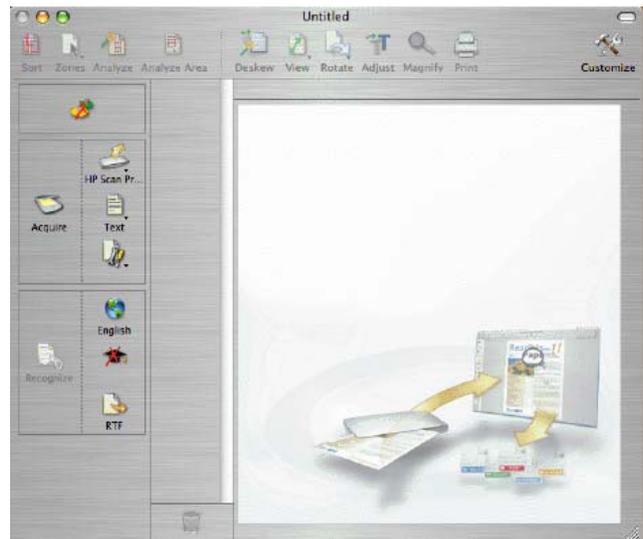
I was generally impressed with the accuracy achieved by Readiris. Although 99.6% isn’t perfect even for good quality originals (4 typos out of 1000 letters; its much better than I can do on a keyboard. The mistakes are obvious to my spell checker. The combination of my HP scanner and Readiris 11 was able to cope with a wide range of documents, admittedly in good condition, arranged in various format layouts, font styles and which contained colored graphic images. Unlike OmniPage Pro X, the software did not balk at black type on blue paper.

The acquisition process is simple: Simply scan your document, recognize it with Readiris Pro 11 Mac, and send it automatically to your favorite application. I tend to use RTF as an output but Adobe Acrobat PDF, HTML, RTF (“Rich Text Format” is available. [I did not test conversion to HTML). Indeed, the process is so easy and straightforward that I am finally catching up on my recipe clippings files after several years of collecting more paper than I’ve captured.

Iris has reworked the Spartan user interface of version 7 and 9 for this release. Two sets of three icons down a left-hand pane now represent the Scanning and Recognition steps. Clicking on any of these icons calls up the relevant options for that step, either as a small pop-up list or within a dialogue window.

A single column of buttons down the right-hand side provide mark-up and viewing tools for dealing with the scans shown in the central preview pane. Page scan thumbnails are shown to the left of the preview pane and individual page information given underneath. This means you may never need to use the program menus.

The huge window for specifying the text formatting and export options is a bit challenging, especially since your choice of export format enables and disables options without explanation. Read the manual, it will all become clear and easy to deal with. Although it’s not possible to save custom options as reusable selections, so if you want to switch between different text formats, you must reset the options manually every time. You can however create scan *style* template with can be saved and reused.



The Software - Its Features

Readiris Pro 11 from I.R.I.S. takes over from the basic and limited optical character recognition programs (OCR) that are bundled with most desktop scanners. After recognizing your documents, which take just a few seconds, you then have an editable copy of it. According to the publisher, Readiris 11 was specifically designed for version 10.4 of the Mac OS operating system ("Tiger".) Its brushed-metal "look and feel" is used across the board (although the user can disable it if he prefers the white "Aqua" look). I've recounted some of its features below. For additional information on this feature-rich product, check out the vendors website.

Fully Configurable User Interface Redesigned in Mac OS X Style — Easily enable actions using one button to acquire a document and another to launch recognition upon completion of settings; - New Readiris setting bar now offers automatic functions to improve OCR, indicate document language, enable or disable interactive learning, and definition of output format;

Excellent and clearly written Manual (both paper and PDF) — These focused exceptionally well on the more traditional aspects of using the software but was too succinct about getting me to understand its enhanced features in a single read, to grasp without practice. Capturing tables fell into that category, but after a try or two, it too became easy.

Text Formatting — When processing a document you can select how you want the recognition result to show in your new document:

"Create Body Text": you get a continuous, running text. The user does all formatting, if any, afterwards.

"Retain Word and Paragraph": the font type (serif, sans serif, proportional, fixed, normal, condensed), size and typestyle (bold, italic, underlined, superscript, subscript) are maintained across the recognition, tabs and the alignment of each block are recreated and tables are recaptured correctly.

"Recreate Source Document" recreates a facsimile copy of the original document with text blocks, tables, graphics, bulleted and number lists recreated in the same place and the word and paragraph formatting maintained across the recognition. You get a true copy of your source document, be it a compact and editable text file. It's no longer a scanned image of your document.



Efficient Batch OCR and Batch Scanning Treatment –

Batch OCR executes recognition on all pre-scanned images in a specific folder while recognized documents receive a file name corresponding to the image file.

You can insert blank pages between documents to separate, recognize and save them to different output files

Handwriting Recognition — For the first time, Readiris 1 offers the *recognition of hand printing – uppercase “block letters” a unique feature based on the company’s ICR (Intelligent Character Recognition) engine*. You can attend a meeting and take *handwritten* notes, scan them afterwards and convert them into editable text with Readiris and distribute that report promptly to your colleagues (Well, you do have to respect a specific writing style. Hand-printing recognition is limited to numerals, uppercase and separated letters (AZ) and some punctuation symbols (comma, dot and hyphen). I found this feature unusable, but that my inability to block print, not the software itself. I'm also a failure at entering ext directly into PDAs.

Locked PDF Conversion - When you convert PDF files and multipage (TIFF) image files, you can now select the appropriate page range. If your objective is, say, to capture just a chapter of a lengthy PDF publication, it doesn't make any sense to load the entire book into Readiris. Indicate the proper range to save lots of time!

More Advanced Readiris' Features

Bar Code Reading — define a “bar code zone” around any bar code printed on a document and the data contained will be automatically re-typed.

Multiple Language Capability — Accurate Recognition of up to 118 Languages: based on 3 alphabets (Latin, Greek and Cyrillic), including East- and West European languages, Baltic and Cyrillic (Russian) languages, Greek and Turkish; A Hebrew, Japanese, Chinese and Arabic modules are also available.

Powerful Image Adjustment Techniques — A new version of the binarization routine gives you extra control over image adjustment: whatever the background color, there's always a way to separate the foreground (the text) from the background by adjusting the brightness and contrast.

Graphics Support — It offers rotate, deskew, contrast-adjustment, and despeckle tools for cleaning imperfect scans and digital photos.

Enhanced Page and Font Analysis — The page analysis was also refined, and is now more efficient at separating text zones from graphic areas of a scanned document. Note that Readiris now recognizes inverted drop letters, for instance! In addition, you can automatically ignore text zones that occur on the page borders: some document scanners tend to generate black borders around the actual document: Readiris 11 sees to it that this “noise” doesn't get picked up by the page analysis.

Working with Colored Backgrounds — Readiris Pro 11 maintains the colors of the text and of the background. Scan text where the titles are in blue and they'll be blue in the recognized document. Text that's placed in a yellow frame will show up in a yellow frame in the output document. (Just disable those features if you don't like them...)

Accurate Color Output Files — Colored text, backgrounds and graphics are fully reproduced with the look and feel of originals with high accuracy. This isn't a feature I needed, but its effects were visually obvious.

Maintaining Links — When web site URLs occur in a scanned document, these are now recreated in PDF output as visible links. Click a link in a PDF file and you'll surf to the mentioned web site...

A Few Gripes

Updater Versions — After some searching, guided by a MacUpdate search I found updaters to the program. However, the absence of a readme files, explaining the changes in the updater, left me feeling vulnerable.

Version 11.0.4 — Although a Version Tracker search indicated there was a version 11.0.4, I could not find that updater.

Language Localizations - Although the text recognition process supports 118 languages, I was unable to save disk space by eliminating the ones I would never use. Such a feature is available in most of the other multilingual packages I use (e.g., OS X or in MS Office.) Although I could open (not boot) the Readiris application, by control clicking on the application, to view its contents) it was not obvious which files to delete so I took the coward's way out.

Automatic Zone Detection Identification — Zone detection was not always accurate in complex pages but seemed to improve as I updated from version 11.0.1 to 11.0.3; but of course I could always get results I needed by manually selecting the location and order of the zone in a scanned image.

Spamhibian Gateway Version 1.0

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Outspring, Inc.
5331 Skylane Boulevard
Santa Rosa, CA 95403 USA
707-523-7711

staff@outspring.com

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

Released: November 2005

\$650 USD for the app, \$325 USD per year for the Spamcaster service included in the price for the first year.

Requirements: PowerPC G4 or later; Mac OS X 10.3 or later; 256 MB RAM; 20 MB hard drive space for the Gateway and Admin apps, 100 MB for the Quarantine folder.

For: Folks who have a clue about Email server technology and can use this app in a Mac-server-based environment.

Strengths: Competes with Barracuda, yet works with Macs.

Weaknesses: Requires a little bit of admin know-how.



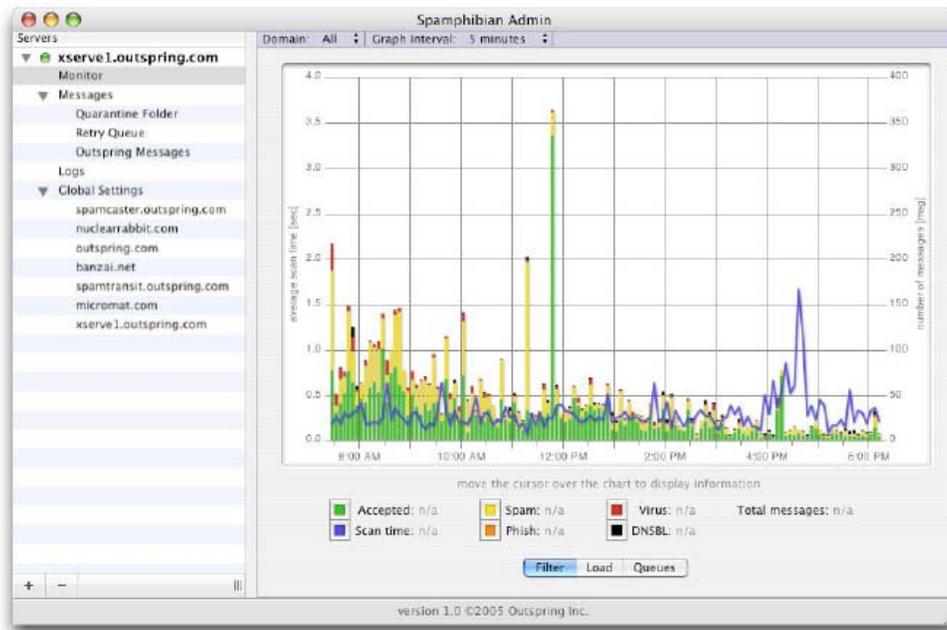
Spamhibian is a two-part process made of a Gateway and an Admin access window that can either be localized or set up to access remotely. I was permitted to try it out for 30 days and you can do so by downloading the app from the Outspring website to see if it is worth the price. Then again, if you could remove Spam without ever having to be bothered with it again, how much is that really worth to you?

The manual I used was updated December 8, 2005 and it is 80 pages long. It says that Spamhibian is easy to set up and use, but the caveats are that you need to know the Email server IP and SMTP information and permission to access from the server side for this to work as advertised. You will need to hop through the manual to set Spamhibian up because of the process involved in getting things going.

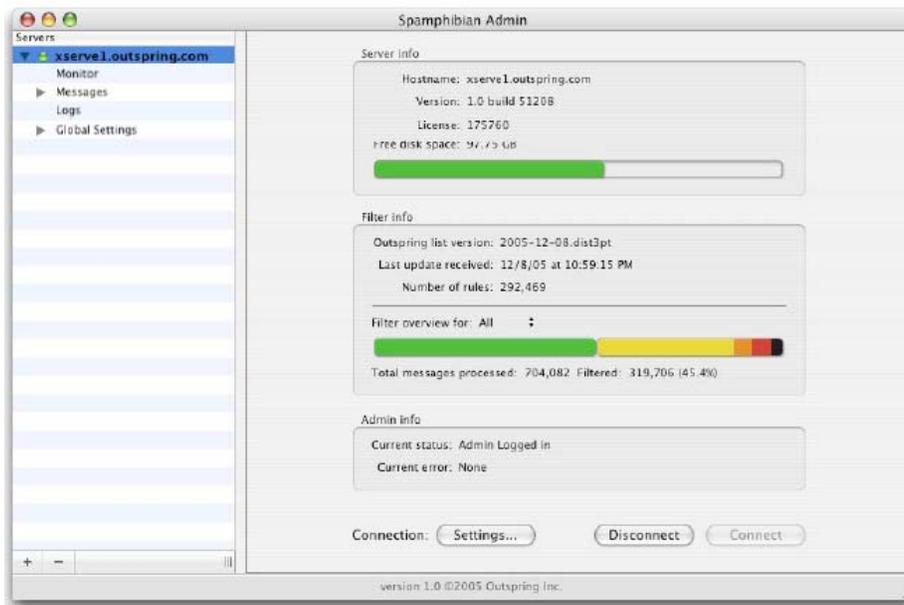
The gateway is a standalone Simple Mail Transfer Protocol daemon filter. For it to function, some changes have to be made to redirect the primary MX records to the system that is hosting the gateway and the secondary MX record pointing to the Email server, wherever that may be located. Help can be found at <http://www.outspring.com/support.html>.

As you can see from the requirements page, a Quarantine folder has to be set up that will hold the targeted Emails for a certain period of time before they are eradicated from the folder. The gateway has to be up and running in test mode before accessing the admin app.

In the interest of privacy and security, I'm going to show you the canned screenshots so my host won't get mad at me for revealing too much about his server.



The monitor pane looks like this. And the Server pane looks like this.



There are also views to load, filtering, queues and logs. Rules can be set for domains or globally. Now the other part of this full-meal-deal is Spambcaster, which is an annual subscription service that takes things up a notch by connecting to the Outspring rules that are updated on a daily basis so phishing expeditions can come up empty and miscreant via filtering. There are six rule types; domain, URL, IP address, text, attachment and regex (regular expression). Each rule has three parts; type, content and action. Actions can be either default, accept, quarantine, tag, delete or bounce.

Along with filtering there is also the Domain Name System Black-hole List (DNSBL) and the gateway uses two of them from sbl-xbl.spamhaus.org and list.dsbl.org that are enabled by default. A third service from bl.spamcop.net is not.

Bottom line? Emails that get through the Rules, get quarantined on your email server and after a while they dissolve. If you use Spamphibian. So hop on over to Outspring.com and download a copy to try before you buy. If you don't have a registration number the product will work for 30 days.

Toast 7 Titanium

review by Derek Meier



Roxio, Inc.
455 El Camino Real
Santa Clara, CA 95050
1-408-848-5594 or 1-866-280-ROXI (7694)

<mailto:sale@roxio.com>

<http://www.roxio.com>

<http://www.roxio.com/en/products/toast/index.jhtml>

\$100 USD (\$20 Rebate for current Roxio or Sonic product owners, or Apple iLife.)

Released: September, 2005.

Requirements: PowerPC G4 processor or faster (G5 recommended for viewing DivX files on your Mac); PowerPC G3 processor and Mac OS 10.2 users, see Toast 6 Titanium or Popcorn; Mac OS X v10.3.9 or later; 300 MB of free disk space to install; Up to 15 GB of temporary free disk space during usage; QuickTime 7 or later; CD or DVD burner and recordable media.

Optional: iLife 05 software; EyeTV PVR hardware (www.elgato.com); DivX Certified player (www.divx.com/hardware); Stereo cable (for converting audio with CD Spin Doctor).

Strengths: Easy DVD copying, Divx support, Disk spanning for easy backups, Music Dvds great for large collections, good quality after DVD compression. Still easy to use.

Weaknesses: \$20 rebate not a significant one for upgrades.

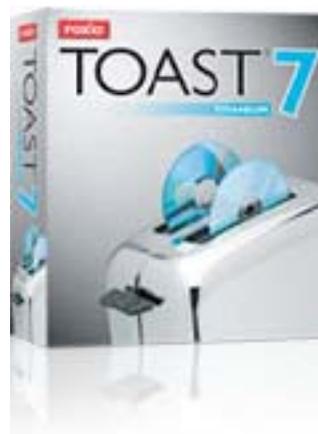
Very few Mac users have not heard of Toast, since it's the most popular CD/DVD recording software available for the Mac. Even with very little competition, Roxio does an awesome job keeping up-to-date and full-featured even with Mac OS X's built-in burning features. Toast 7 Titanium is no exception with a slew of new features. I will cover some of what I deem important additions.

Interface - Toast 7 features integration with the great iLife suite easily access iTunes, iPhoto and iMove from within Toast.

Video - In the area of video Toast features DivX support. You can now burn onto DVDs the popular DivX HD format (see www.divx.com) or you can convert DivX to DVD to watch downloadable content from the Internet. I unfortunately do not own a DVD player that also plays DivX, so I tested the conversion from Divx to DVD format. This is great addition to Toast's features. The conversion does take time, but you can just set it and forget it. Of course you can do this with other third party software before, but Toast makes it very simple.

I downloaded **Revelations**, a Star Wars fan film that I was interested in watching, but I do not like to watch movies on the computer screen. The quality was very, very good. No real noticeable difference or loss in the conversion.

Now also in the video category, Toast 7 has included the features of Popcorn for making backups of unprotected



DVDs. It allows you to back a 9GB dual-layer DVD to standard 4.7GB DVDs with little or no noticeable loss of quality. The compression does take a bit of time. It's great for backing up home movies or non-commercial DVD's. Buying Popcorn separately will cost you \$50 if you purchase just Popcorn.

Also included in the category of Video, which I could not test was the ability to burn a HD DVD disk unfortunately I do not have the hardware to support HD.

Data - One of the cooler new features of Toast 7 is the ability to backup data using disk spanning. When you need to backup data that won't fit on a single CD or DVD, you can now use disk spanning to "span" the data across many pieces of media. Testing this feature seems to work as advertised. Backing up my data across two DVD-R and restoring them worked fine with the restore utility Toast adds to each backup. This provides a good backup solution for the home and business user with backups made easily.

Audio - With your music collection growing and growing, it's hard to achieve the perfect mix CD when your music exceeds the maximum size of the CD. Enter the Music DVD. Now you can create menus, album art and the shuffle with 4.7GB of music and play them on your DVD player for about 50 hours. This is a great feature for parties or just listening to a large amount of music. The Music DVD we created worked in 2 out of the 3 DVD's we tested. The one it did not play it was an off brand and it could not read the DVD. It's too bad you can't play them in your car.

Images - With Toast you can create HD photo slideshows with background music and special effects. As easy to use as iMovie it allows you to create beautiful quality slideshow. Nice enough to give to friends and family.

Conclusion

If you are a current Toast 6 user, I would strongly encourage you to upgrade to this version. Its host of new features make the upgrade more than worthwhile, as well as still being easy user-friendly software. For new users who need more than the basic burning features that OS X or iLife provides, Toast 7 should fit your needs as well. Although IMHO I do think that most CD burning software both on the Windows side as well as Mac are a bit overpriced at \$100, but the features modern CD/DVD burning software provides today are starting to sway my opinion.

Unfortunately for current users, Roxio only offers a \$20 rebate and not more. My most welcome addition is burning DivX to DVD. There is a lot of worthwhile content on the Internet in DivX format that I would like to get put on DVD and Roxio has made it an effortless process. And maybe, just maybe, the new disk spanning will encourage us to keep up with backups, which I know most people are not good at keeping up with.

VectorWorks Designer 12 with RenderWorks – CAD for the Smart-sized Firm

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Nemetschek
Riverwood Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
410-290-5114

FAX: 410-290-8050 7150

<http://www.nemetschek.net/>

Product site: <http://www.nemetschek.net/designer/index.php>

Released: October, 2005.

\$1,795 USD, With Renderworks, \$2,195 USD, upgrade from Version 11, \$500 USD with 4 CDs; 3 installation and one Core Concepts training CD.

Demo: <http://www.nemetschek.net/upgrade/demos.php>

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; QuickTime 6 or later; PowerPC G3 or newer ; CD-ROM drive; 1024 x 768 Screen Resolution: (XGA) Display color depth: 16 bit; 256MB RAM; 1GB Hard drive space. If using RenderWorks, 2 GB hard drive space or Windows 2000 SP4 or later; Windows XP; QuickTime 6.5.2 or 7.0.2; Pentium or newer; CD-ROM drive; Screen 1024 x 768 (XGA) Resolution: Display, color depth: 16 bit and the same hard drive requirements as for the Mac.

Strengths: Contains all the other VectorWorks specialty products: VectorWorks Architect, VectorWorks Landmark, VectorWorks Spotlight and VectorWorks Machine Design. Cross-platform.

Weaknesses: None found so far.

Architosh Interview: <http://www.architosh.com/features/2000/2000-07intev-neme.phtml>

Add-Ons: <http://www.nemetschek.net/community/addons/index.php>

Downloads: <http://www.nemetschek.net/downloads/index.php>

Features: http://download2.nemetschek.net/www_misc/new_in_12.pdf

Forum: <http://techboard.nemetschek.net/cgi/ubb/ultimatebb.cgi>

Gallery: <http://www.nemetschek.net/gallery/index.php>

Training: <http://www.nemetschek.net/training/trainingcd.php>

User Groups: <http://www.nemetschek.net/community/usergroups.php>

Publications: <http://www.nemetschek.net/training/guides.php>



Do it all. VectorWorks 12 Designer has it all, except for RenderWorks. For any views of how VectorWorks works, go to the Demos site listed above and download the 21 or so zip files to learn more. We reviewed version 11 back in November of 2004 for *macCompanion*. Nemetschek has done a whole lot of programming since then! The long list of new features is in the Features link above. Also explore all the other links listed above. You might as well get the information directly from the horse's mouth!

Nemetschek must have liked what we said, because they were kind enough to send us the top-of-the-line package with three installation CDs and licenses for both Designer and RenderWorks. This is by no means meant just for beginning or budding CAD designers. This is really Cadillac-level high-end design software.

If you didn't read the earlier review from 2 years ago, you may not know that I used to work for a few years in an Architectural/Engineering firm as a telecom Designer. We had no choice at that non-Mac shop but to use AutoCAD and while there we went through 3 revs. Their modus operandi for upgrades was top go with the odd rev numbers so as not to have to be suffering from bug-swapping that seemed to occur with each rev. And of course, by doing so, they saved themselves a healthy chunk of change. With 50 or so seats that was a lot of money and licenses were "phased in" over time instead of all at once. As a result, a project I worked on was also revised three times.

I became rather frustrated by the process of getting drawings "perfected" and the turn-around time for minor changes was longer than I would have liked. After leaving that firm, I hooked up with an online bidding dot-com that apparently has since folded. While there, I gave away subscriptions to architects and engineering firms around the country in order to provide online bidding content for the construction industry. It was then that I found out a large portion of the architects that were smaller shops used VectorWorks to make a living. Being cost-conscious Mac-users, they were my first customers. I discovered that these folks were able to nimbly work more quickly and were much more profitable than the larger firms that took years to get a design off the ground and into the hands of construction crews. And if the VectorWorks-based Architects and Engineers had to submit drawings to the larger firms in AutoCAD format, that was not an issue.

Why not read how Jackson & Ryan Architects has been using VectorWorks over on the Apple website?
<http://www.apple.com/business/profiles/jacksonryan/>

The Core Concepts CD demonstrates how to use both 2D and 3D and a mix of both in hybrids using nurbs, curbs and solids and RenderWorks for adding textures to objects. We also see how view ports are used for section 3D rendering.

The VectorWorks User Guide is accessed online via the Help menu. My boxed copy came with both complete hard copies of VectorWorks Fundamentals (about 2 inches thick) and VectorWorks Design Series(almost as thick).

VectorWorks 12 uses an export tool that now seems to be friendly to just about every format, including not just AutoCAD, but also Adobe formats as well.

As items are added or removed from drawings, the items (elements) are reflected in material lists and reports dynamically.

If you are new to professional drawing design, you would be hard-pressed to find anything better than what Nemeschek has released with VectorWorks 12 Designer. They have been doing this since 1985 and the app just gets better with time. By the way, the app is available in any of eight languages with localization in 85 countries.

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