

macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH



The Cult of The Mac...

In this issue

- Apple Dei
- Mac Security 101
- Creative Computer Crafts
- Reason 3.0.5
- PANTONE™ huey
and Much, Much more...

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 6 June 2006

CRYPTEX PHOTO © 2006 JOHN RIVIELLO

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Thanks to Daniel Counsell of Realmac Software Development (<http://www.realmacsoftware.com>) who graced these pages and our website with newer rating stars.

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

Apple Dei

by Robert Pritchett

I figured I'd have fun in the June issue with possibly working on the beginnings of a *Da Vinci Code* parody of Apple. Maybe we can get Joseph Nilo over at *The Mac Pro Podcast* to run with a video!

A *Da Vinci Code* Spoof on Norman Rockwell was created by Alfred Thomas Catalfo at <http://www.thenormanrockwellcode.com/>. It is an excellent on-line video.

So what is the buzz all about? Try *The Da Vinci Code* at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Da_Vinci_Code with Ron Howard creating the movie version from Don Brown's book. My personal views are in the **Book Reviews** section this month in *What Da Vinci Didn't Know: An LDS Perspective*.

Scenario of *The Steve Jobs Code*

Steve Jobs as Saviour of the Music Industry. iTunes as the catalyst to the Holy Grail of Macintosh and the dissemination of the gospel of Mac OS X. With the Apple Cube on 5th Ave, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6BFhRkUJEI> we now have a start in Cupertino in a garage (manger of humble beginnings), resurrection of the Steveness, as he comes back (resurrected) to save Apple from pending doom and the Cube in New York City on 5th Ave as the penultimate place to be. (Kingdom of 5th Ave? No, the Temple of Cube! With a little Yin/Yang thrown in for good measure.)

The Macintosh could play the role of Mary Magdeline and the Knights Templar could be the Mac Fanatics and fanboys of the last three decades.

We need to identify who could play the Opus Dei of Apple. (Watch the *History Channel* about this one. <http://www.historychannel.com/>)

The *Priori of Sion* could perhaps be from the "Babylon of Microsoft". Who would be the Albino? Steve Balmer? Michael Dell?

We will try not to offend the sensitivities of the *Mac Faithful* without also getting blasphemous or heretical. May the Saints preserve us.

By the way, did you know the Cryptex password in *The Da Vinci Code* is "apple"? <http://web.mac.com/jamesbogard/iWeb/Da%20Vinci%20Code/Welcome.html>

Darren Barefoot has taken it up a notch with *Apple Dei* at <http://www.icryptex.com/>.

Okay, who wants to run with this and put it up on YouTube? <http://www.youtube.com>

And I don't mean this - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Kw4z28ydZk>

According to Hoyle...

Cross-Platform Software Development from a Macintosh Perspective: Basic Compilers (Part II)

by Jonathan Hoyle Copyright © 2006 Jonathan Hoyle

jhoyle at maccompanion.com
June 2006

Since last fall, we have been examining various cross-platform software development options for Macintosh developers, including:

- **Intro:** http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/september2005/Columns/According_to_Hoyle_1.htm
- **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>
- **REALbasic:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/january2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Runtime Revolution:**
<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/february2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **AMPC:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/march2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Java compilers:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/april2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

We are now reviewing of Basic compilers on the Macintosh. In last month's column, we detailed the history of Basic on the Mac:

- **Basic compilers (Part I):**
<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/may2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

Now having thoroughly examining the past, this month's column will look at the present and the future of Mac Basic compilers.

REALbasic 2006

<http://www.realbasic.com>

Price: \$99 USD Standard/\$399 USD Professional. Annual Renewal: \$49 USD Standard/\$199 USD Professional.

As shown above, a dedicated review of *REALbasic* is available in the January 2006 column link. Without repeating that article in great detail, we can sum it up with: *REALbasic* is the most powerful Basic compiler available on the Macintosh, with rapid application development capabilities and has the largest marketshare in the Mac Basic field. Furthermore, the Professional Edition is fully cross-platform. With that said, the natural question is: why bother considering any other Basic compiler? The answer is simply that there are features available in competing products which are not available in *REALbasic*, and these features may be critical to you. Consider the following:

1. Although the \$399 Professional Edition is cross-platform, the \$99 Standard Edition is not. There are other cross-platform Basics which are much less expensive.
2. *REALbasic* no longer supports 68K, whereas some other products do.
3. The *REALbasic* Standard Edition does not allow you to create console applications. And although Professional Edition allows you to create them on Mac OS X, no version of *RB* creates console apps in Classic (whereas virtually every other Basic compiler does).
4. *REALbasic* costs money.

With this in mind, we will review other Basic environments relative to what *REALbasic* offers.

FutureBASIC 4

<http://www.stazsoftware.com>

Price: \$169 USD new license, \$99 USD annual license renewal.

The first and foremost alternative to *REALbasic* is *FutureBASIC* from Staz Software. Although not cross-platform, its support of the Macintosh is very strong. Not only does it fully support both native Mac OS X and Classic PowerPC compilations, *FutureBASIC* continues support for 68K compilations, the only commercial compiler that I know of which still does. Moreover, it even supports building apps that will run on pre-System 7 machines! The same project can be used to build an app to run on a Mac Plus running System 6.0.5 or as one to run on a Power Mac G5 running Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger. That's dedication, man.

While *REALbasic* enforces an *object-oriented coding* paradigm, *FutureBASIC* allows for more *structured programming*, a simpler and more common approach for most Basic programmers. For those who need to be jump started, *FB* also includes a rather large number of sample projects to start you off with. Although *FutureBASIC's* pricing may appear higher than that of *REALbasic*, *FB* is in fact cheaper over time. Both are subscription based, but a new \$99 *REALbasic* license is only good for 6 months (thus \$16.50/month), whereas a new \$169 *FutureBASIC* license is good for a full year (and thus about \$14/month). It is only when you move onto *REALbasic's* cheaper license renewal plan does the monthly price swing back into *RB's* favor.

Chris Stasny, head of Staz Software, was kind enough to talk with me about *FutureBASIC*. This past year has been an exceedingly difficult one as Staz Software was directly hit by Hurricane Katrina, knocking them out of business for three full months (ouch). Even today, phone lines remains down and internet access is sketchy. Despite this, he was still able to deliver Release 3 of *FB4* in April, a significant accomplishment. Chris says that he definitely plans to support universal binaries in a future release, but (understandably) could not state exactly when this would be delivered.

When I first went into researching this article, I was admittedly pretty skeptical about *FutureBASIC*. However, after thoroughly reviewing the product, I have come away very impressed. For those looking for an viable alternative to *REALbasic*, this author recommends *FutureBASIC*.

True BASIC

<http://www.truebasic.com>

Price: \$39 USD Bronze/\$195 USD Silver/\$495 USD, Gold/\$19 USD Student Edition (same as Bronze).

True BASIC is written and sold by John G. Kemeny and Thomas E. Kurtz, the professors at Dartmouth College who invented the Basic Programming Language. That's right, these guys invented the actual language itself; furthermore, they have been selling *True BASIC* for more than two decades. Plus it's cross-platform, supporting the Mac, PC and Linux. That's one hell of a track record.

Unfortunately, that's the best that can be said about this product. *True BASIC*, particularly for the Mac, has been languishing for years without updates. It doesn't even support Mac OS X, running only in Classic mode. It is also ridiculously priced. The \$39 Bronze version is essentially only an interpreter. To compile a standalone application, you have to use their *BIND* tool which comes starting with the \$195 Silver Edition. *True Basic* contains only minimal set of GUI elements for building apps, as it appears to be marketed toward the educational community. While proficient as a "How to Learn to Program in Basic" tool, it succeeds in very little else.

Despite repeated attempts to contact True Basic, Inc., my emails have gone unanswered. Its web site does not appear to be updated in at least two years, as their *What's New* section describes a special upgrade price available "from now until 6/30/2004". The demo can still be downloaded, but since it is a Classic application, you will not be able to use it on an Intel-based Mac. And despite the web site's assurances that "a native version of True BASIC for Mac OS-X [sic] will be available in the future", this author believes that no such update will ever be seen.

True BASIC was a great application a decade or two ago, but it is not viable product today. Even the freeware *Chipmunk Basic* (see below) is preferable. Unless you plan to be a museum curator of historical software curiosities, I cannot recommend *True BASIC*.

Chipmunk Basic

<http://www.nicholson.com/rhn/basic/>

Price: Free

Chipmunk Basic is self described as *an old-fashioned Basic interpreter which runs on almost all Macs*. This is no exaggeration, as there are versions of this compiler available going back to System 6.0.7 on a Mac 512KE. There is also a version of *Chipmunk Basic* available for Linux x86, and one under development for Windows XP. Despite considering itself *old fashioned*, this product has an impressive array of modern technology, including use of QuickTime and AppleScript.

Although lacking a sophisticated GUI, *Chipmunk Basic* remains a very solid compiler. The user has a choice to launch *Chipmunk Basic* either through a command line scrolling window in the Finder, or as a console application within the Terminal window. The command line interface is not the nicest of interfaces for Macintosh users, so it is recommended that you use an external text editor, such as *TextEdit* or *BBEdit*. The documentation is also surprisingly good for a freeware product such as this.

For those not afraid of the command line interface and are looking for a free Basic environment, I recommend *Chipmunk Basic*.

The Future of Basic for Mac OS X

Now that we have reviewed the past and the present states for Basic on the Macintosh, the obvious next question is: What does the future hold? To answer that, I would like to mention three new cross-platform Basic environments showing the most promise:

The first is *ExtremeBasic* [<http://www.extremebasic.com/>] by Andrew Barry, the genius behind (and original author of) *REALbasic*. When Geoff Perlman discovered the product (then called *CrossBasic*), he invested in it, changed its name and *REALbasic* was born. In 1999, Andrew left REAL Software to start off on his own again, and *ExtremeBasic* is his current project. *ExtremeBasic* is still under development, with alpha versions available to download and try out. Despite its recent origins, *ExtremeBasic* has shown surprising growth, and I expect it to become a major player in the marketplace someday.

The next is *wxBasic* [<http://wxbasic.sourceforge.net/>], an open source Basic compiler written with links to the *wxWidgets* toolkit. Although currently available only on Windows and Linux, some work has begun for compiling Mac OS X version [see <http://wxbasic.sourceforge.net/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=896&highlight=mac>]. Since *wxBasic* is an open source project, it seems that it is only a matter of time before a native Mac OS X version will be completed by some enterprising young programmers. If and when that happens, *wxBasic* will be poised to be one of the most powerful cross-platform Basic compilers available.

Finally, *KBasic* [<http://www.kbasic.com/>] is a Basic compiler with VB 6 syntax and linking to the *Qt* toolkit. It is an object oriented and event controlled programming environment, which supports Windows, Linux and now Mac OS X. *KBasic* comes in two flavors: the free Personal version (not available on the Mac), which is essentially just the interpreter, or the \$25 Professional version (which is available on the Mac), which can compile standalone application. Thus, you can get the Mac OS X, Windows and Linux compilers all for a combined price of \$75, far cheaper than even *REALbasic's* Standard Edition.

As these three young products mature, the face of the Basic market on the Mac is sure to change. As I believe that competition is a good and healthy impetus to any industry, I am very optimistic for the future of Basic on the Mac.

Next Month: Converting Legacy Frameworks. See you in 30!

Ivory Tower

June 2006

For Pete's Sake! Enough Already!!

by Ted Bade Copyright © 2006 Ted Bade

Only one month of “playing” with XP on my Intel Mac and I am already sick of it! Working with Windows is like working with an idiot. Have you ever had a coworker who has a relatively good education and a reasonable amount of experience and who is always annoying you with stupid platitudes, reminding you of things that don't really pertain to what you are doing, and generally acting like a compete moron? That is a lot like my experience with XP has been. I'll call my daft coworker Pete.

Pete is always reminding me about trivial things with my computer. Little windows pop up alerting me to the fact that my computer might be at risk, (yeah, I know the Window's part truly is!), if I unplug the network connection (I just feel unsafe leaving a Windows OS machine plugged into the Internet for long periods of time), it tells me I am disconnected. Well, duh, I wasn't using the Internet when I unplugged it, so why does it matter? The Mac mini I have also has a wireless card in it. I don't use that card because there is no wireless network where I live. But 'Ol Pete keeps reminding me that there is no Wireless network to connect to. Then there was the first time I tried to look at files on my Windows C: partition, I was told that doing this is a naughty thing and I had to give myself permission to do it. If I was an excessive compulsive person, I would get absolutely no work done on this XP machine, since I would spend my entire time clicking closed those little reminder windows! God, it is awful. I wonder if this is why so many people like Windows, it gives them that safe feeling of being in a Kindergarden classroom ;-). Since the computer is so obviously stupid, it is a lot “safer” and less scary ;-)

But the computer runs well and fast. There was only a couple applications I really wanted to run under XP and they all performed as I expected. The best thing about having XP on the Mac is that, when it gets really bad, I can just reboot into the warm and comfortable arms of Mac OS X.

Anti-virus vendors salivate at the chance of a new market - I find it truly amazing how much press Mac OS X is getting lately. A day doesn't go by when some security “expert” or another issues a press release about the soon to be discovered vulnerabilities of Mac OS X. What we don't see is anyone reporting and confirming any specific virus, spyware, or malicious attacks. It is all conjecture.

Mac users are sore spots with anti-virus companies. For some reason, (-;) they don't buy this type of software. One possible way to get Macintosh users to start buying, is to use scare tactics. You don't have to lie, just explain that there is this or that *potential* problem. Say that enough and people will become nervous and buy the software as a security blanket.

There are millions of Windows-based computers out there that either have been infected or are currently infected with some form of malicious software. This is so common that no one bats an eyelash when another Windows virus hits. But if one Mac user thinks he may have had an attack, it is headline news! Lets put this problem in perspective: Compare the numbers: six people out of the ten of millions using Macintosh computers, versus say over 50% of the hundreds of millions of Windows users.

All my Wintel friends send me articles on a daily basis. “This happened to me, don't let this happen to you. Protect your computer.” They say that in a concerned way. It is frightening the society of fear, dread, and lack of confidence that has been fostered on average people when it comes to computers. Actually, it is sickening.

Using a computer should not be about fear and trepidation. It should be fun and rewarding. What is scary is that the computing world today is so much like Apple's 1984 commercial. The average user a dull minded clone, drinking in the words of the great leader, never thinking to question or even wondering if there is a better way. They are not worthy of their computers, they must do as the leaders say or else...

As Macintosh users we need to help awaken these clones. We need to show them there IS a better way. Perhaps not as violently as in the commercial, shattering the screen with the words of the leader while being chased by the purveyors of computer fear and trepidation.

What we need to do is to use our Macs and have a great time doing it. Look forward to creating a new project on your Macintosh, you don't need to worry about a prevalence of crashes or software that crashes the system or simply doesn't perform as promised. We shouldn't be flippant about the security of Mac OS X, but we shouldn't worry about it either. Use all that extra time you get because doing something on the Mac "just works", to learn to better use your machine. Learn to not be a "stupid user", learn the basics on keeping your machine up and running and protected, not in a fearful way, but the "take charge" way a Mac user should.

While I was writing this article, Apple released a series of TV commercials about the Mac and the PC. If you haven't seen them, visit Apple's web site and watch all of them, they are very well done and quite entertaining.

What amazed me most about these commercials, was that Apple is saying what I have been ranting about, but in a fun and humorous way. More than that, people have actually come to me and asked about the Mac. They can identify with the PC guy in the commercial and would really like to identify with the Mac guy!

As you might imagine, I am a bit annoyed on how the "media" is handling things on these issues. Please share my comments with other Macintosh users. I truly believe that a good positive attitude is very important for successful use of a computer.

Network Neutrality and you - Warning! Big business and possible elements of the US government want to censor parts of the Internet. You might not be aware, but the US government is in the process of reworking the Telecommunication Act and as this is happening, big media companies are using high-powered lobbyists to ensure these companies are given more power over how we use the internet.

Playing on fears associated with the Internet (stalking, dangers for children, fraud, and identity theft to name a few), these companies are trying to get words included in the new laws that would give them the ability to control access. However, it seems obvious to some people that it would be very easy for company's to use these controls to reduce competition or block information in a variety of ways.

If you have a moment, visit the "Save the Internet site" [<http://savetheinternet.com/>]. They have a lot of information about the issues, a petition to sign, and a page where you can send email to your local Congressmen and Senators. Take a moment to do this and read the volumes of information about this crisis.

Is the treat real? The above web site lists several instances where people controlling the Internet limited access to information they didn't want known. To quote their FAQ page:

In 2004, North Carolina ISP Madison River blocked their DSL customers from using any rival Web-based phone service.

In 2005, Canada's telephone giant Telus blocked customers from visiting a Web site sympathetic to the Telecommunications Workers Union during a labor dispute.

Shaw, a big Canadian cable TV company, is charging an extra \$10 a month to subscribers in order to "enhance" competing Internet telephone services.

In April, Time Warner's AOL blocked all emails that mentioned www.dearaol.com — an advocacy campaign opposing the company's pay-to-send e-mail scheme.

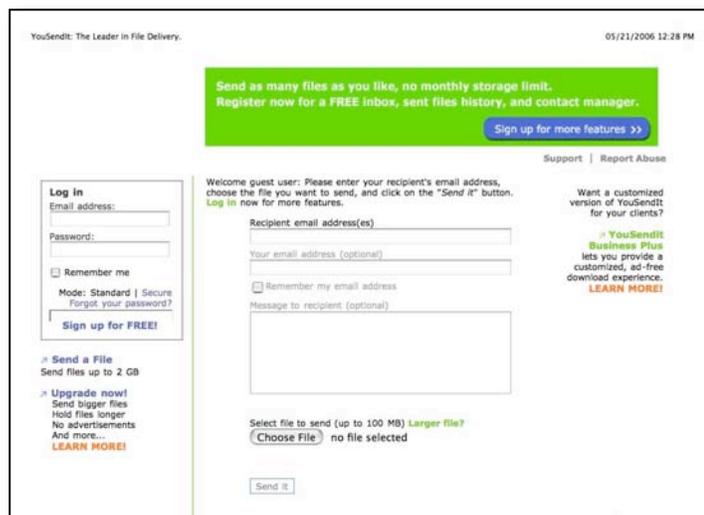
Another way they could adversely affect competition is by slowing access to competing company's sites. For instance, a company that competes with the iTunes Music Store, could slow access to that site, so downloads would be slow. This could easily be applied to other companies that sell goods or services a company would like to block. The SavetheInternet site's FAQ lists a number of possible situations. Rather than fair competition, we would give companies unfair advantage over other companies.

There is some hope. Some US leaders have introduced bills of their own to ensure what they are calling Network Neutrality.

It is scary to think that these big companies can use the profits they take from us to give them even more power to control how we use the Internet. I urge every reader of this magazine to take a moment and sign the petition, send an email to your local government officials, and educate yourself on this issue.

As we go to press, the US government passed a bill that provides for Neutrality for US citizens. I don't expect the problem is over, so you should still take the time to visit the site and add your comments.

Files can now be up to 2 GB in size, and “YouSendIt scans all files for viruses (not being a virus-infected Windows user, I don't know what happens if they discover a virus in something you send). Files remain available for 7 days and allow only a limited number of downloads to prevent abuse. The recipient can also click a link to delete the file after downloading. If you want secure transfers, you can switch to a version of the page that uses secure HTTP for both you and your recipient; of course, that assumes you trust YouSendIt in general. You can even put a link like the one below on your Web site that others can use to send you files via YouSendIt.”



I too haven't used YouSendIt that many times, as Adam noted, “it's hard to find a negative point, short of the lack of progress feedback when uploading a very large file via a Web browser. The company has a reasonable privacy policy and terms of service ... YouSendIt also publishes a DMCA policy regarding the illegal distribution of copyrighted materials.”

I also checked out another item listed by Adam, YouShareIt, but the side did not seem to be functional. <<http://s3.youshareit.com/>> . I then checked the *Dropload* site, which has a 100 MB file size limit. It appears to follow the same model as YouSendIt., <http://www.dropload.com/>. Since most of my contacts have both broadband with about a 100 MB size limit, I did not check our this alternate service. In any case, its good email manners to let someone know you'll need to be sending him or her a large file and asking them how they want that handled.

I too suggest as did Adam that you give it a try next time you need to send a file that's too large for email. --- Article modified from Adam Engst TidBITS #764/31-Jan-05; Reuse governed by Creative Commons license.

PS:

And if you have tips to share send them to me at hbadad at maccompanion.com ——— I'll also share them with Paul Taylor

doc_Babad



The Mac Night Owl

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Perpetuating the Myth of Expensive Macs

by Gene Steinberg

Over the years, I've weighed in on the fact that claims that the Mac is much more expensive than a comparably equipped Windows PC are not true. This is one of the myths that has survived since the early days when Apple did charge a large premium for its products, but things have changed substantially in recent years.

One major cause of this perception is the fact that Apple won't sell stripped computers, models lacking the iLife digital lifestyle suite, FireWire, and so on and so forth. Yes, you can find competing models that appear to be much cheaper, but as soon as you click "Customize" on the ordering page, things change considerably.

Sadly, some tech writers continue to be taken in by the illusion of costly Macs, and that's unfortunate, because they should be in the forefront of providing facts rather than repeating misleading information. Of course, the same can be said for all that FUD (fear, uncertainty, doubt) some are spreading the Mac is as vulnerable as Windows to malware, and it will only take a higher market share to inflict misery upon us. Just you wait and see, they say. But the real truth is that such issues are not yet serious, except for social engineering-related threats, such as phishing scams.

Well, over the years, I have had mixed feelings about CNET, a major source of online technical news and reviews. I once worked for the organization, and I do recall being told on a regular basis to make a strong effort to unearth potential negatives about a product, which I resisted when it seemed I was pressing the issue beyond logic.

That posture persists, alas. Take CNET's review of the [MacBook](#), just released. It garnered a 7.2 rating, which is "very good," but hardly stellar. Among the negatives is the claim that "higher-end configurations are much more expensive than similarly configured Windows laptops." Writers Justin Jaffe and Michelle Thatcher make the mistake of using a \$1,400 Sony VAIO SZ for comparison, because it has a PC card slot and media reader, two features the MacBook lacks.

Taking them at their word, I went ahead and attempted to configure the Sony at the company's site, just to see how it really compares. Understand that the cheapest VAIO SZ comes with a 1.66GHz Intel Core Solo processor, same as the \$599 Mac mini. There was no way to eliminate the two features that are not part of the MacBook's feature set, but I did arrive at \$1928.99, which is extremely close to the basic MacBook Pro. Even if you subtract \$100 for the value of the card slot and media reader, the Sony is clearly much more expensive than a MacBook.

So where does CNET come up with the claim that the MacBook is more expensive?

All right, a Sony isn't the cheapest PC on the planet, so I checked out another notebook used for comparison, the Dell Inspiron E1405. Understand that configuring a Dell is difficult, because prices and special offers change often. But I tried to keep things as fair as possible. Now a base system starts at \$699, but when you begin to check off the option list, things add up quickly. The closest match was an Ultimate Home Entertainment version, which, when the appropriate extras were selected, came in at \$1,554, but it didn't have a Web cam, nor gigabit Ethernet. Since it offers a 100GB drive, compared to 60GB on the mid-range MacBook, and a dual-layer DVD burner, let's call it a wash.

Now if you look hard enough, I'm sure you can find lower cost models from second-tier manufacturers, and perhaps they will end up being somewhat cheaper than a comparable MacBook. But it won't be a night and day difference.

So, basically, CNET's claim is pure fiction, and that's unfortunate, because it seems that they made a concerted effort to give the MacBook a thorough examination. Maybe they inserted this negative just to have something extra with which to fill "The bad" category, but I would think telling the truth ought to have a stronger appeal.

Regardless, I can see where you might make the claim that Apple should build special models that lack a few features for the educational and business markets where they may not be needed, and might, in fact, create potential security complications. Take the remote control and Web cam, for example, and these alone would strip more than \$100 from the price of admission. You could also make the argument that wireless networking and Bluetooth could be excised as well, and that's another \$100.

I realize, however, that Apple isn't playing in that market and it probably keeps production costs down to restrict themselves to only a few model variations.

In any case, you will continue to see articles that spread misleading information about Apple's premium pricing. Conventional wisdom, even if it's not correct, is awfully hard to correct, and I don't expect my humble efforts to make much of an impact.



Mac ReviewCast

<http://www.surfbits.com>

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Mac Freeware of the Month

Tim Verpoorten

<http://www.macreviewcast.com>

This has been a busy month and I almost didn't get the freeware of the month article into *macCompanion*. Somehow Robert twisted my arm enough and I managed to come up with a list of Mac freeware that we talked about on the MacReviewCast podcast in May. I hope you find one or two that fits your needs. I always do!

Let's start with a few iTunes apps;

Amazon Album Art Widget

<http://www.widget-foundry.com/widgets/amazonart.htm>

You all know how much I use Dashboard, mostly never, but here is a reason to open dashboard. The Amazon Album Art widget makes filling in the gaps in your iTunes album art collection a breeze. Search for album art from Amazon's comprehensive catalogue, then import it into iTunes with the click of a button. This is a very simple solution to a common problem. That's what good software does.

Aurora

<http://metaquark.de/en/software/aurora>

Aurora turns your Mac and iTunes into a handy alarm. For any given time and date (be it recurring or non-recurring), Aurora will wake your Mac from sleep and start playing your favorite iTunes playlist. If you like the idea of picking the music or podcast that you awaken to each morning rather than some idiot Disc Jockey yelling at you to buy a used car, this little freeware is just what the Doctor ordered.

Let's get away from iTunes apps for a bit and talk about a former shareware application that Yahoo bought out and turned into freeware. Do you remember which app that was? Let me give you another hint, Apple thought so much of the idea that they designed Dashboard in Tiger to do what this program did.. give up? I have one word for you, Konfabulator.

Butler

<http://www.petermaurer.de/nasi.php?section=butler>

Butler is a launcher, but it's so much more. You can open files, open preference panes, manage your bookmarks, search the web, run applescripts, extend the pasteboard, enter text snippets, simulate keystrokes, control iTunes, accelerate Spotlight, move and copy files, all with a simple keyboard combination, mouse click, menu docklet, or hot corner.

Due to its unique variety of triggers and tasks, Butler is as flexible as any other utility you've seen before. So don't worry if you don't have a use for all of its features right from the beginning. Just start using Butler and discover a new feature every day.

DeliBar

<http://www.rknet.it/program/delibar>

Delibar is a Delicious client, it will store all your bookmarks in the system bar so you can easily access it by selecting the tag and the link. Usage is very simple, launch delibar, you will be asked for your delicious account info, put username and password, or if you don't have one go to Delicious and make one, then delibar will download and display all your bookmarks. When you put new bookmarks, simply tell delibar to reload the bookmarks, and you will be up to date. If you remember, last week I told you about an app that did this, but placed them into Safari, called Delicious2safari, so now you have two options for handling your delicious bookmarks.

del.icio.us 2 safari

<http://tuxtina.de/software>

Import your del.icio.us bookmarks into Safari.

- Imports your bookmarks as a flat list, or let delicious2safari organize them into folders according to their del.icio.us tags
- Lets you choose between downloading to a folder in your Bookmarks Bar, your Bookmarks Menu, or your Safari bookmarks
- Fast, small Cocoa application
- Uses Mac OS X Keychain for password storage
- Once your del.icio.us bookmarks are in Safari, you can also use them with third party applications, such as Quicksilver!

GimmeSomeTune

<http://members.chello.at/eternalstorms/try.html>

GimmeSomeTune is a utility that works hand in hand with iTunes. It is a status item in the right menu bar and hides itself behind a musical note. Every time a new song starts up in iTunes, GimmeSomeTune fades in a floating, translucent window with information about the song for a duration that you specify. After this time, the GimmeSomeTune window disappears again. You can specify the color of the text and window, the duration of how long the window shall pop-up, and set the translucency of the info window. Shows cover, name, artist, album, duration, and rating, or whatever song-information you want it to show. You can also use hotkeys to control iTunes, like in- or decreasing the volume, play or pause, or play the next or previous song, or rate the currently playing song.

iChartwork

<http://yreuxsoftware.com/iChartwork.html>

iChartwork is a preference pane, and will sync your avatar on iChat and/or Adium and the artwork of the song playing in iTunes. In other words, if iTunes is playing while you're chatting, your chat image will change to the cover art of the song or podcast playing on iTunes. If iTunes pauses or stops, you can specify a new avatar for that.

iTele

<http://www.defyne.org/dvb/iTele.html>

iTele is a Mac OS X application that allows you to watch and record Digital TV (including HDTV) on your Mac. It works with the hardware drivers found on the iTele's homepage. If everything goes according to plan, when you run iTele it will initialize all the Digital TV input devices it finds, and then present you with the Channels window. If you haven't run iTele before then this window will be empty. So when you run iTele for the first time (or move cities), you need to scan for channels, just like with a TV. iTele has the capability to do time shifting. What really

happens is that the live stream is being written to the disk at the same time as the previously recorded one is being read to display it for you. If you are using a satellite input device, before you scan you must first fill in some information about the antenna network connected to your tuner. Click the Edit button and enter the details of your LNB. Currently only simple LNB settings are supported.

iTunes Remote Control

<http://them.ws/itrc>

iTunes Remote Control (iTRC) is a network remote control for iTunes. It allows you to control iTunes on a remote machine with full track changing support and basic but functional playlist support. All you need to do it enable Remote Apple Events on the computer with iTunes on it and remember its network name.

JPEE

<http://www.emailextractor.org/index.html>

JPEE is available as a free, easy to use, highly configurable, email address merger, and mass mailer. Use JPEE to create customized e-mail messages for your friends, associates, business contacts, students, clients or any grouping of email contacts. Some of its features include;

- Unlimited Custom Tag support
- Inline Image Attachments
- Custom Message Style Creation
- Text OR HTML Message Editor
- Custom Mail Header support
- Scheduled Mailings
- Multi-threaded
- Customizable Import from CSV or TSV delimited lists
- Customizable Import from vCard formatted lists
- Create and save multiple messages for each recipient list
- Pre-Delivery E-mail Verification
- Comprehensive Post-Delivery Verification & Feedback
- Multiple SMTP Account support

LittleView

<http://home.online.no/~thorklar/LittleView.html>

LittleView is a program that plays your Quicktime movies in full screen. Make playlists to use in Front Row. Stream from Internet and place them in playlists. Play movies directly from a video iPod. It's a simple little app that does what it says it does.

Service Scrubber

<http://www.petermaurer.de/nasi.php?section=servicescrubber>

The service menu is available for any application that owns the menu bar. It allows you to use other applications to work with the item you have focused currently on your desktop. Now the more programs you install on you Mac, the more services are placed in your service menu. Finally, one day you look at your service menu and it's spread across half your desktop. Service scrubber allows you to pick and choose exactly what services you want turned on or off and which ones you want listed in which sub folders of your service menu. if you're in front of your Mac right now, just open up your service menu and see how bad it is, then head over to Peter Mauers website and download Service Scrubber today.

Whiteout

<http://www.fcots.com/whiteout>

Since its debut inside of iTunes, the brushed metal interface texture has grown to skin just about every iapp that Apple has made. If you're like a lot of folks, you were stoked at first, and then it started getting on your nerves. With the debut of Panther, the Finder, among many other applications, has adopted the brushed metal texture. Now, you may love the interfaces that Apple has produced, but this texture has been extremely overdone. Enter Whiteout. Whiteout replaces a system resource file with a modified version. The metal texture is changed to the original Aqua pinstripe texture.

Xjournal

<http://connectedflow.com/xjournal/>

Xjournal is a Mac OS X client for the Livejournal.com weblog service. It supports a number of advanced features that are not available in any other client. Xjournal supports an offline mode of operation. You can create multiple entries and work on them simultaneously. You can save entries to disk and work on them later. This is especially useful for laptop users!

The History browser allows you to browse through your entire history of LiveJournal entries, and view them in Xjournal. There are also quick-link buttons to open them in your browser for viewing or editing. Xjournal has a built-in tool for creating LiveJournal polls. The Glossary palette allows you to store text snippets for quick drag and drop access. It reads text files found in *~/Library/Application Support/Xjournal/Glossary* and */Library/Application Support/Xjournal/Glossary*. Similarly to the Glossary, there is a palette containing your Safari bookmarks for quick access. You can edit your friends and friend groups in Xjournal. Xjournal will notify you when your friends have posted new entries. If your blog is located on LiveJournal, then you need to give Xjournal a try.

Yahoo Widget Engine

<http://widgets.yahoo.com>

The Yahoo! Widget Engine (formerly known as Konfabulator) is a JavaScript runtime engine for Windows and Mac OS X that lets you run little files called Widgets that can do pretty much whatever you want them to. As in Dashboard, widgets can be alarm clocks, calculators, can tell you your WiFi signal strength, will fetch the latest stock quotes, and even give your current local weather. What sets Yahoo! Widget Engine apart from other scripting applications is that it takes full advantage of today's advanced graphics. This allows Widgets to blend fluidly into your desktop without the constraints of traditional window borders. Toss in some sliding and fading, and these little guys are right at home in Mac OS X. Also, remember that these widgets are on your desktop all the time, you don't have to open Dashboard to see them. The format for these Widgets is completely open and easy to learn so creating your own Widgets is an extremely easy task. For the "skinning" crowd, Yahoo! Widget Engine is a dream come true. You can easily change the look, feel, layout, even functionality of a Widget.

Tag

<http://sbooth.org/Tag/>

Tag is a metadata editor for FLAC, Ogg Vorbis, Monkey's Audio and WavPack files.

Tag has an intuitive interface that simplifies common editing tasks while also allowing direct manipulation of tags. Tags can be dragged between files, or Tag can even add all the tags contained in one file to another in one fell swoop.

For files with incomplete or missing metadata, Tag can guess tag values by matching the filename to a user-defined pattern. Alternatively, Tag can rename files by substituting tag values into a user-defined pattern. Need to make many parallel changes? No problem! Tag can edit multiple files simultaneously, eliminating repetition and saving time.

For advanced users Tag features customizable mappings that allow you to specify which tags are mapped to the various fields in the user interface.

Tag works great with the next program on the list,

Max

<http://sbooth.org/Max>

Max is an application for creating high-quality audio files in various formats, from compact discs or files. When extracting audio from compact discs, Max uses the error-correcting power of cdparanoia to ensure the true sound of your CD is faithfully extracted. Once the audio is extracted, Max can generate audio in over 20 compressed and uncompressed formats including MP3, Ogg Vorbis, FLAC, AAC, Apple Lossless, Monkey's Audio, Speex, AIFF, and WAVE. If you would like to convert your audio from one format to another, Max can read and write audio files in over 20 compressed and uncompressed formats. For many popular formats the artist and album metadata is transferred seamlessly between the old and new files. Max leverages open source components and the resources of Mac OS X to provide extremely high-quality output. For example, MP3 encoding is accomplished with LAME, Ogg Vorbis encoding with libVorbis, FLAC encoding with libFLAC, and AAC and Apple Lossless encoding with Core Audio. Many PCM conversions are also possible using Core Audio and libsndfile.

Changing gears let's talk about a handy utility that does one thing, and does it well;

Loan Table

<http://hummingsoft.com>

A small program that displays an amortization table for a loan, calculates monthly payment and also extra principal. Almost everyone of us have car loans, home loans or maybe some other consumer loan that we need to know what the payments would be with a different interest rate or if we paid off some of the loan. This will do the trick.

MenuShade

<http://www.nullriver.com/index/products>

The Menubar can be so bright to look at on your screen. Plus, what if you want to capture your screen without showing the world what you have in the menubar? Well Menushade will shade the bar from gray all the way to black and make it disappear. It's easy on the eyes and handy to boot.

Is anyone using iWeb out there for your blog or website? Listen up then to this next application.

iComment

<http://web.mac.com/cbrantly/iWeb/Software/iComment.html>

With the release of iWeb, Apple brought blogging within reach of millions of Internet users. While its simplicity and ease of use are unmatched, there are some features of blogging that many users have come to miss. The biggest of those is the ability to add comments and trackbacks to your blog. It is commonly believed that Apple will add this feature in a future version of iWeb, but why wait for comments when you can have them now. iComment allows you to easily add comments, trackbacks, and detailed webstats to your iWeb site. iComment works in conjunction with Haloscan, The free commenting and trackback service.

Finally we look at an add-on application for those of you using the *Camino* browser.

CamiTools

<http://www.nadamac.de/camitools/index.php>

The CamiTools are a Preference Pane for Camino 1.0. They provide you a wide range of options to adjust Camino to your demands:

- a toolbar search engine editor for Camino
- an image and script blocker for Camino
- Flashblock for Camino
- configure many aspects of Camino
- it lets you switch the appearance style (Aqua, Unified or Metal) and hide the status bar
- open your existing Camino profile or create a new one
- define your own styles for the pages you're visiting
- sync your bookmarks with an ftp server

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. HimmelBar doesn't just add all applications to a menu, it displays separated menus for each locations and allows you to customize menu contents and scanning behavior to best fit your needs. SO if you'd rather point and click through your programs and applications, similar to how you did it in the start menu in Windows, Himmelbar is the perfect solution for you.

Cog

<http://cogosx.sourceforge.net>

Cog is a free open source audio player that supports many popular file formats, including Ogg Vorbis, Flac, Musepack, Mp3, Shorten, Wavpack, AAC, and Monkeys Audio. Features include seeking, smart shuffle, and the ability to read unicode tags.

It's small and fast and supports many different tags other than ID3.

Aqua Data Studio

<http://www.aquafold.com/index.html>

This program is free for private or educational use, but charges for commercial licenses. It may sound a little technical for some users, but if you run a blog or website that uses a database, then this program is a nice option for you.

Aqua Data Studio is an SQL editor and developer tool that allows developers to easily create, edit, and execute SQL scripts, as well as browse database structures.

Aqua Data Studio provides an integrated database environment with a single consistent interface to all major relational databases. This allows the DBA or developer to tackle multiple tasks simultaneously from one application. Aqua Data Studio's sophisticated Query Analyzer allows users to work on database scripts with specific RDBMS syntax highlighting and auto-completion to develop and test scripts, including detailed client statistical information and multi-grid results. Its graphical browsing capabilities allow you to understand the structure and dependencies of the database schema at a click of a mouse. It also includes the ability to save your query results in many formats including HTML and XML.

Ultimate Task

http://www.jaanpatterson.com/jaanpatterson_programs.html

This is another great application in a very crowded field, basic maintenance tasks. ultimateTask is a comprehensive utility with a simple, easy to use interface, to take care of some of the more important cleanup/maintenance tasks for your computer. It is especially useful for System Administrators in charge of many Workstations. As I mentioned, there are many great Mac utilities out there, but ultimateTask is (and promises to be in the future) incorporating some of the more essential and useful tasks, into an all-in-one utility. ultimateTask will:

- Repair disc permissions
- Optimize System (update pre-binding)
- Execute CRON scripts (Daily, Weekly, Monthly)
- Delete Log, System, User, Server, Crash, Temp, Core and .DS files
- Purge all Trash files, Internet cache, History, Safari Icons, and Cookies, for the most common browsers. (Cookie deletion [y/n] option soon)
- Allows you to enable/disable Dashboard and Widgets
- You have the option to restart your computer after running the utility, or shutting down.

The last freeware utility I wanted to talk about is;

Battorox

<http://www.branox.com/Battorox/Battorox.html>

Battorox is a very small, about 50 KB, utility to monitor your laptop battery status. It refreshes every 5 seconds and give you information such as the laptop name and OSX version running on it, the capacity of the battery, the current capacity left on the battery, the percent of the remaining capacity, the cycle count, voltage reading, and battery temperature. This is a handy little app for your collection.

That's all for this month, remember to catch us on the *Mac ReviewCast* podcast.

Take care,
Tim



Mac Security 101

<http://www.applemacpunk.com>
applemacpunk@cox.net

Smart Web Browsing: Use More Than Common Sense

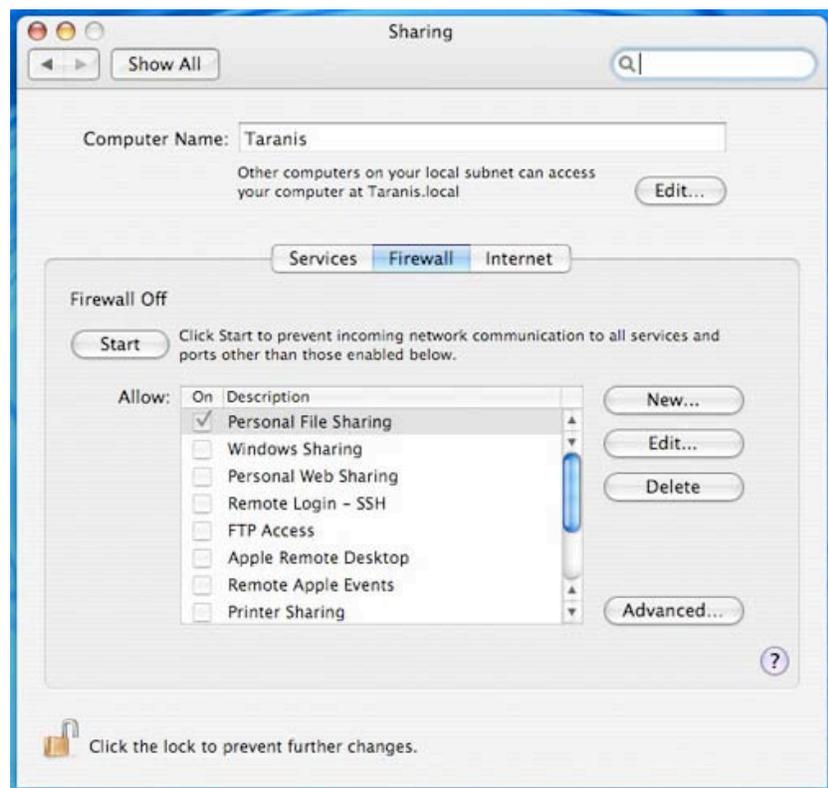
by Kale Feelhaver aka: Applemacpunk Copyright © 2006 Kale Feelhaver

We live in the Internet age. Nowadays, the Internet is more necessary than cable TV. We use the Internet to communicate, get our news, shop, do our banking, and entertain ourselves. The Internet is a huge source of information and convenience, but it is also a huge source of security risks. Thousands of identities are stolen off the Internet every day. As a smart Mac user, you should take a few steps to protect yourself on the World Wide Web.

First and foremost, when you connect to the Internet, use a personal firewall. Mac OS X includes firewall software, which can be turned on by simply launching System Preferences, clicking the Sharing pane, clicking the Firewall tab, and clicking the Start button. Surfing the web without a firewall is like living in a bad part of town, and never locking your doors. Naturally, you would lock your doors to keep unwanted people/threats out. Likewise, you should use a firewall on the Internet.

Hardware firewalls can be used to provide additional security. However, this is beyond the scope of this tutorial. I am planning a future article to discuss hardware firewalls in more detail. Just remember, turn on your firewall software when you are connected to the Internet. If you are a power user, and Mac OS X's built-in firewall doesn't have enough features for you, you might want to look at [DoorStopX](#), [Norton Personal Firewall](#), or [NetBarrier](#).

After your firewall is turned on, you can configure your web browser to provide a little additional security. Many web sites use files called cookies to store personal settings. While cookies can provide some useful information, they can also be exploited to gain private information about a user or computer.



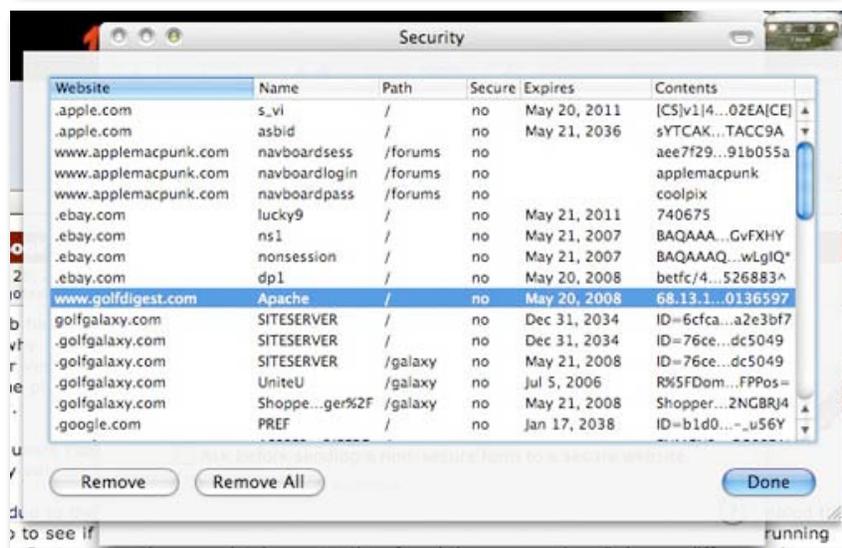
Fortunately, Safari (and many other browsers) includes features to help you manage your cookies. Launch Safari and choose Preferences from the Safari menu. Click the Security icon and make sure that your browser is set to only accept cookies from sites you navigate to. This will prevent “advertiser cookies” which are unsolicited. While you are in there, you’ll probably want to check the box for pop-up blocking. That will also help limit cookies.

To see how many cookies are currently on your system, simply click the Show Cookies button. You can remove cookies one at a time, or simply remove them all at once. You will probably want to do this regularly as a preventative maintenance.

It is also a good idea to run anti-virus software on your Mac. Most viruses target Windows, but that doesn’t mean Mac OS X is immune to viruses. Many people think the Mac can’t get a virus. This is NOT true. Any operating system can get a virus. It is a good practice to run anti-virus software on any computer that is connected to the Internet, regardless of OS. There are many options out there including [Norton Anti-Virus](#) and [VirusBarrier](#). If you have a limited budget, there is a freeware option called [ClamXav](#).

Running a firewall, keeping track of your cookies, and running anti-virus software will help with Internet Security, but ultimately, it is the sites you visit that pose the biggest risks. All Mac users should use some common sense when they surf the web. For instance, if an offer looks too good to be true... it probably is. Be careful about which links you click. Luckily, the Mac provides a certain level of security by simply being a Mac (most exploits are targeted at Windows), but everyone still needs to use some common sense.

Viruses and worms are normally targeted at Windows, but many identity theft attempts are platform agnostic. Always verify the URL in the address bar of your browser. For instance, there are many emails that claim to be from a bank and will include a clickable link. When you click the link, it actually takes you to a different website (which looks like the bank’s website) in hopes that you will enter your login information. The example below shows a fake eBay page (which was linked from an email) next to a real eBay page. The two look very similar, but only one is legitimate.

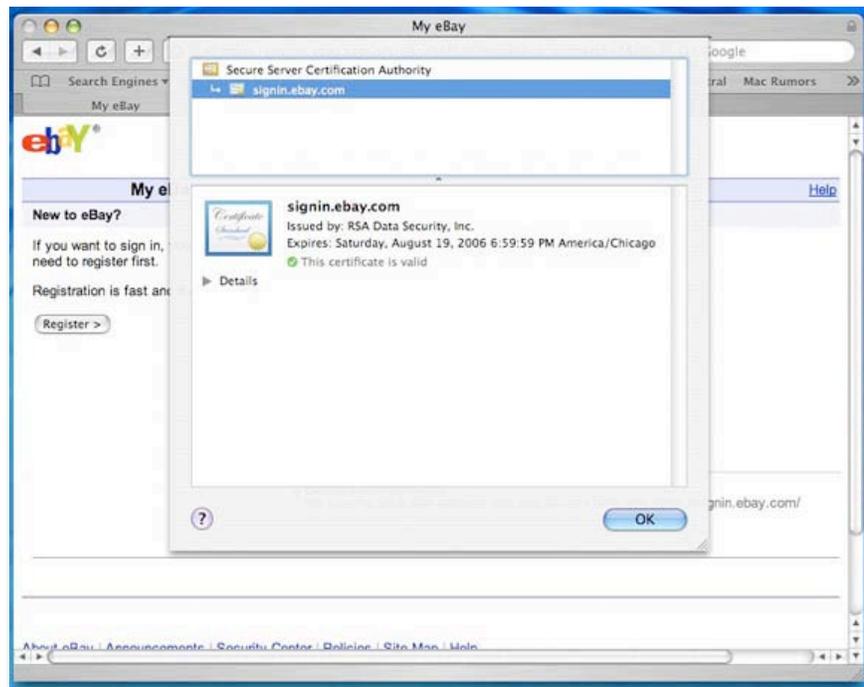
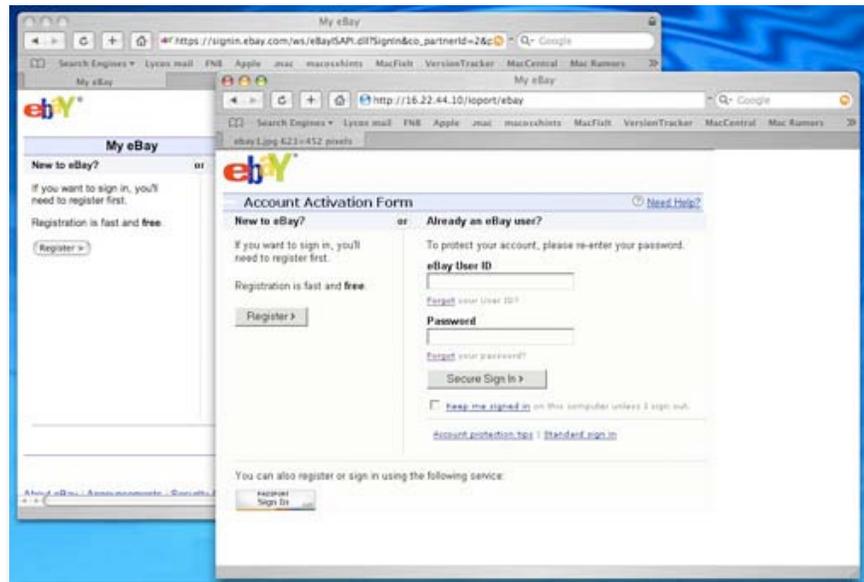


There are 2 important things to notice in this example:

First, the URLs do not match. The legitimate page uses a URL related to eBay (signin.ebay.com), the fake page uses an IP address (16.22.44.10) followed by a string of directories. This is a good indicator that something is not right.

Second, the legitimate page is an HTTPS page, and the fake page is an HTTP page. Most login pages will use HTTPS, opposed to HTTP. The S in HTTPS stands for secure. In addition, when visiting an HTTPS page, Safari displays a lock icon in the top right corner. This indicates that the site uses an SSL certificate. To view the certificate, simply click the lock icon. Look at the name of the website on the certificate. If it does not match the URL you are visiting, it is probably a scam. You can also use this method to see the expiration date of the certificate. If the certificate is expired, something is fishy. A valid certificate will display a green checkbox icon; an expired one will display a red x.

Using these simple steps and a little common sense, Mac users can avoid some of the dark corners of the Internet and protect themselves. Firewall software is a great way to help protect yourself, anti-virus software is even more helpful, and proper browser configuration can further protect you. However, nothing takes the place of common sense. Everybody gets that funny feeling when something doesn't seem right... listen to that feeling! Getting your identity stolen is serious business. Do your best to keep from becoming a statistic. Remember, Mac users ARE smarter.





Musings From Mars

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

Yahoo's Ajax/DHTML User Interface Library Apparently Fails Its Own Test

by Leland Scott Copyright © 2006 Leland Scott

I have been among the developers and observers who have praised Yahoo for the technical strength of their recently launched **User Interface Library**. In my tests for the Ajax/DHTML Scorecard project in March, Yahoo's library was a clear "A" in its cross-browser credentials, and I was very impressed with Yahoo's development team, which published clear and exacting browser standards for their library.

According to Yahoo's own **Graded Browser Support** table, Safari is an A-graded browser, meaning it achieves the highest level of support possible with the Yahoo interface library. Clearly, the thought that went into this table is impressive, and the authors conclude the explanation that precedes the table itself with an appropriate quote from Tim Berners-Lee on the importance of cross-browser support:

"Anyone who slaps a 'this page is best viewed with Browser X' label on a Web page appears to be yearning for the bad old days, before the Web, when you had very little chance of reading a document written on another computer, another word processor, or another network."

It is therefore highly disappointing and disillusioning to discover tonight that Yahoo has released a **preview of its new, Ajax-enabled home page** with support only for Internet Explorer 6.0 and Firefox 1.5. The only logic one can use to justify such a move is based on a totally PC-centric viewpoint, which argues that only Windows users are worth troubling with, since they comprise the vast majority of potential viewers. But this is precisely the viewpoint that must cease if Web 2.0 is to become the fertile melting ground for truly cross-platform interdependence that it wants to be. It's simply not the viewpoint of any company that really cares about Berners-Lee's vision or about the millions of users on platforms other than the virus- and malware-riddled mess that is Microsoft Windows today.

Web 2.0 sites should be built to open standards, and any catering to specific browser extensions should be avoided. If proprietary extensions are utilized, they should have no effect on the site's core functionality, and should not be even noticed by users of other browsers. For example, I've employed a harmless extension to the HTML text input field that Apple developed in order to beautify search forms in Safari. It's nice for Safari users, but has no impact on IE users or on Firefox users on any platform.

From my experience working with Ajax and DHTML in 2006, I am certain that Internet Explorer was the hardest browser for Yahoo to support in terms of time and resources. No doubt the rollout of this new home page had to wait until it worked well enough in IE. What boggles my mind is that if you can support Firefox, there's no earthly reason why you shouldn't also be able to support Opera 9.0 and WebKit (Safari). (OK, you might have to make a few very minor tweaks, but nothing too challenging for a reasonably skilled CSS/JavaScript guru.)

Does this mean that the Yahoo Interface Library isn't as truly cross-browser as Yahoo claims? Does it mean that Yahoo is blatantly disregarding its own graded browser support standards?

In answer to the first question, "Who knows?" All I know is, the new site doesn't work in Safari or Opera. And that's just plain wrong. Using a modern JavaScript library, it's much easier to build an Ajax/DHTML Web 2.0 site that supports Firefox, Opera, and Safari, all of which have A+ compliance with w3c standard, and then figure out what hacks you need to use to get the site to work in IE 6.0. To do the work backwards starting with IE 6.0 simply exaggerates that browser's importance to the future of the web. If Yahoo used their own JavaScript library to build

their new home page, it doesn't speak very highly of that toolkit's abilities.

In answer to the second question, the answer is clearly, "Yes!" Yahoo has blatantly disregarded its own published standards for browser support in 2006.

Yahoo, I'm extremely disappointed, and I'm sure others will be, too. If nothing else, this will push back to a much lower priority my plan to rebuild a number of the Ajax/DHTML functions of Musings from Mars using Yahoo's library... simply for comparison purposes. Now, I'm definitely going to make **Dojo** the next library on my list... especially now that they have that spiffy new home page design, which I can actually use in Safari. (Imagine that!)





Practical Strategy Consulting

<http://www.PracticalStrategyConsulting.com>

Copyright © 2006 Christopher Duncan

Feature Creature

by Christopher Duncan

It was a dark and stormy night... Sorry. I'm an old Snoopy fan and just couldn't resist. Actually, the scary stuff in this particular episode happens in broad daylight. Well, broad fluorescent lighting anyway, for those of us who are inhabitants of Cubicle City. Like any good spook story, it all starts out so innocently. A few programmers get together with an idea for the next killer app, pizza is ordered, coffee consumed and before you can shake a pocket protector, version 1.0 is making waves and getting rave reviews in the marketplace. It's lean, it's mean, it performs like an Italian sports car and is as easy to use as a toaster. Better still, unlike fine automobiles driven by rock stars with more money than hand to eye coordination, it never crashes. It is a marvel to behold, and everybody wants a copy.

If we could roll the closing credits at this point it would seem more a fairy tale come true than the horror story we paid to see. Fortunately for all the ticket holders, there are thrills and chills yet to come.

The time is now 5 years after the initial release, an eternity in our time warped little business. The once proud killer app now takes half the hard drive to install, and performs like a beached whale that's consumed one too many Salmon Twinkies. The only thing less stable than the application is the mental balance of the hapless maintenance programmers who work 60 to 70 hour weeks trying to keep up with all the bugs that come in through the overloaded tech support lines. The original architects of the system have long since disappeared, lost to exciting startup ventures founded on the reputation of their initial product or whisked away into high paying consulting jobs and speaking gigs. It takes a minimum of 4 days to get a response from an email to the support department, which is only slightly more aggravating than the one hour average hold time that frustrated users must endure, all the while listening to cheery little prerecorded voices assuring them that their call is important. The company that once ruled their market with pride is now the butt of industry jokes. Stock prices plummet, cutbacks ensue, jobs are lost, and resumes are besmirched with a job history containing the name of a product now synonymous with disaster. At this point the only thing missing is a ten story tall fire breathing lizard munching on a subway train. For those whose investments or careers have just been vaporized, the lizard might be easier to deal with.

Regrettably, the story just told isn't science fiction. Even worse, it is not only reality, but the norm in the software development industry. For every crime, there must be a culprit. That is, if a suitable scapegoat can't be found. So who do we hold accountable for this mess? Leaning casually against the wall, stylishly dressed in his thousand dollar suit and designer shades, our monster almost blends into the scenery so familiar has he become. Before he fades quietly into the background (or slips out for a three martini lunch), allow me to introduce you to our leading man. Ladies and gentlemen, meet Feature Bloat.

As anyone who's been in the software business for more than 45 minutes will tell you, no product that meets with even marginal success ever stops at version 1.0. In fact, I've seen quite a few programs that should have met with an accident involving a bulk eraser out by the back dumpster that have gone on to much higher version numbers. Still, why should we stop with 1.0? To a point, a good idea can always be improved upon and everyone can benefit. Consumers get a better product, developers get another paycheck. Developers like that sort of thing. However, this cycle can, and typically does, get out of hand. While the end result may not sport green scales or have an affinity for New York City mass transportation vehicles as an after dinner snack, it will eventually grow to a problem of, dare I say, monstrous proportions.

There are many difficulties inherent in enhancing an application. You may be more familiar with some of them than you care for. Before you can add a new feature to an existing code base, it's helpful to have a firm grasp of the product architecture so that you can realize the implications of any changes that you make. As we all know too well, an innocent little line of code in one module may wreak havoc throughout the rest of the system. Unfortunately, technical documentation is almost always inadequate if in fact it ever existed in the first place. If you're lucky enough to work in a shop with a good design discipline, you may have the original design docs available for review. However, even in this case, such documentation is frequently out of date, often to the point of being either useless or dangerous. The most common reason for this scenario is due to deadlines that dismiss any work beyond coding as unimportant and leave no time in the schedule for it. As work on the new system proceeds, problems will be encountered, workarounds discovered, and many, many lines of code will change or appear in the final working version that were never accounted for in the original design. After all, the mandate is to make it work, so we do what we have to do to make it happen. At the end of the day, however, after the elation of getting the new system to market (or physical and mental breakdown, depending on how this particular release went), work almost invariably proceeds on either known bug fixes or new features.

I'll spare you the obvious tirade on the concept of shipping a product with known bugs. If management knows that there are bugs, then why would these bozos let the product ship? Oops. Sorry, that one's just too obvious to ignore. In any event, development work proceeds immediately after a release, and that almost always means coding. It's a rare programmer who pops his head up and says, "Gee, shouldn't we take a little time first and get our technical documentation in line with the actual code base?" In addition to the fact that his peers will most likely throw him down a very long flight of unpadding stairs after the meeting (programmers are temperamental creatures who hate writing documentation), management will do nothing more than snort and make a mental note to give a bad performance review to this troublemaker who is obviously not a team player. Consequently, we'll observe a moment of silence for the next poor sucker that gets hired to do maintenance programming. Without adequate technical documentation, you may as well give him that bulk eraser. It will do the system about as much good as the code he's going to write having no hope of fully appreciating the impact of his changes. Furthermore, as a product matures, the code base grows ever larger and more complex, which only serves to amplify the problem. But hey, that's okay, we'll just ship with a list of known bugs and that'll make it okay, right? Wait, are those scales I see sprouting up?

So, right off the bat we're in trouble. Software products evolve, companies want to keep making money by selling upgrades, and we programmers certainly want to keep our jobs. Well, most days we do, anyway. Nonetheless, doing nothing more than enhancing the system without proper maintenance of technical documentation almost assures us that with each new release our system will become bigger, fatter and most distressingly, more unstable.

There is an even larger, though related, issue that lurks on the horizon of every software system on the market. No one ever seems to know when to say "enough". Programs, particularly the flagship product for a company, will continue to be enhanced until the company goes out of business. As we've seen, that day might well be accelerated by such unwise decisions. For some reason, there's a prevailing belief, at least in the marketing departments and executive boardrooms, that you can always add more features, more bells and more whistles to a program for as long as you like. All you have to do is tell the programmers what you want, they type some code, and it happens.

Nothing could be further from the truth, and the end result of this insipid line of reasoning is a market full of huge, slow and buggy software. There is a point of diminishing returns beyond which you are no longer enhancing but are instead damaging your software product. While I do understand that theoretically it is possible to continue adding code to a system forever, or at least until you exhaust system resources, we do not make our living in the theoretical world. We live in the real world and in this reality what we build, no matter how good we are, is a structure with weight limitations. One straw too many and it all collapses. Every time.

This poses a bit of a dilemma, for keeping our focus on the real world is a double edged sword. That second edge is money. Maybe there's a lot of altruistic folks out there who code purely for the joy of doing so with no concern for monetary compensations. I ain't one of them. I love programming passionately, but this is my livelihood and I don't work for free.

Fortunately, there is another choice but it requires both foresight and backbone on the part of the programmer community. Foresight comes into play in your initial design. Knowing that there will always be new functionality to add, design this into your system. Build hooks and programmatic interfaces that will allow you to develop a suite of complementary products, all of which can interact with each other. There are numerous methods of interprocess communications available in Windows. Rather than letting the flagship product become a huge, monolithic monster, think in terms of a fleet of complementary applications. When Marketing wants new features, rather than wedging them into a large and undocumented code base, spin off a new application. A fleet of well coordinated programs will sink a bloated Titanic any day of the week.

Here's where the backbone comes in. You're good enough to make this happen technically. That's never the problem. Like any other change to the status quo, you're going to have to fight for this idea and it's not going to be pretty. However, you probably don't realize how much power a united development team actually has when confronting management. It's much more than you may think. If they fire all of you, who's going to write the code? Them? Not likely. New hires? Good luck figuring out the system. Granted, you can't succeed based on strong arm tactics alone, and rightfully so. You have to sell the idea of a fleet of smaller, faster, tighter applications to management based on the merits. It's certainly easy enough to find examples in the market of where your product will end up if you keep stuffing enhancements into your flagship forever.

We need to change the defacto standards that exist for typical desktop applications away from the model of a single, continually enhanced program. The best way to do that is with success stories. Any time a new product hits the market and does well, everyone else follows suit and copies that model. The benefits of a software fleet will not be obvious to everyone initially. However, when your competitors are on version 4.0 and sprouting large green scales, your product will simply have added a few new ships and all will be running fast and tight. Even the flagship.

So why should we care about such things enough to risk life, limb and income to change them? Hey, who do you think has to clean up after the monster?

Author and speaker Christopher Duncan is President of Practical Strategy Consulting. For booking information, articles, upcoming events and all of the weekly Reality Check series, visit www.PracticalStrategyConsulting.com. Copyright © 2005 Christopher Duncan. All rights reserved.

The Mac is an Appliance

Trends to Watch from 800 Issues of TidBITS

by Adam C. Engst, ace at tidbits.com TidBITS ISSN 1090-7017 Copyright © 2006 Adam Engst
<http://www.tidbits.com/tb-issues/TidBITS-800.html#lnk4>

This issue marks the 800th weekly installment of TidBITS. I know I've said this before, but it's almost unbelievable that we're still publishing TidBITS after all these years, with so few changes to our basic approach. Perhaps that's what happens when you mix a good idea with energy and a deep streak of stubbornness, not to mention support from many thousands of readers over the last 15 years. But the world has changed over these last 800 issues, and to commemorate this milestone, I want to look at three trends that will undoubtedly affect what we write over our next 100 issues.

The genesis for this article came while at Macworld Boston in July. I was struck by how small the show had become of the last few years, all while Apple sold three to four million Macs each year, along with 21 million iPods. Apple has more customers than ever before, but doesn't seem to be able to share with the rest of us - no Macintosh developer, publication, conference, or user group that I know is growing in step with Apple, much as I'm sure we'd all like to. Why is this?

The Mac is an Appliance -- Steve Jobs always envisioned the Mac as an appliance, but he was 25 years ahead of his time. Now, the Mac has more in common with your coffee maker than ever before. But the ultimate appliance is the iPod - you can plug things into the iPod, and you can wrap things around it (including many cars), but from a software standpoint, it's essentially a closed system (yes, you can install Linux, but you won't hear Apple say that). This "appliancification of the Mac," to coin a phrase, is the end-goal of usability and undoubtedly a good thing, since it means that nearly anyone - even a PC user - can use a Mac for basic tasks without special training, much as anyone who can drive a Honda can drive a Toyota or a Ford.

But turning what was once a complex system into a friendly box that hides almost all of its complexity under the hood has consequences for an industry that grew up around simplifying external complexities. Technical book and magazine publishers explained complicated topics for readers who lacked a basic grounding in using computers, but who understood that there was a better way. But as Macs have become easier to use, authors have struggled to find topics that meet the needs of those who like to learn by reading. How many people would buy Dishwashers for Dummies or subscribe to LaundryWorld? Clearly, publishers must focus on the non-obvious topics that interest who still want to do more, work faster, and think different.

The appliancification of the Mac affects software developers in a big way. Even though the Mac remains a general-purpose computer, new Mac users - particularly those buying the least expensive Macs - aren't likely to think of buying additional products, just as few people buy enhancements for their washing machines or vacuum cleaners. Heck, I'll bet at least some people at Apple would prefer a Mac that was entirely closed, like the iPod. Closing the Mac would increase ease-of-use and improve the user experience by reducing confusion from the mere existence of that pesky independent software, not to mention bugs or usage peculiarities caused by using software not from Apple. It's not unthinkable that a new product line could provide what looked like a Mac but ran software only from Apple. In the meantime, strategies for developers struggling with appliancification include setting up partnerships that help them increase exposure to new groups of Mac users and thinking of ways to enhance the communications and entertainment capabilities of the Mac in ways that don't make users learn anything new. Focusing on business software is also a good direction, since business users are more likely to want software that works in a particular fashion, rather than as a general solution.

User groups are feeling the effects of appliancification as well. After all, who attends a dishwasher user group? Most user groups are seeing memberships drop for this reason (the appliancification of the Mac, not too much dishwasher-related content), and they're struggling with how to meet the needs of long-time members while evolving to become relevant to new Mac users. Honestly, I think it's going to be a tough row to hoe, since it's difficult to focus the efforts of a group on a topic, like the Mac, that most people take for granted these days. Perhaps user groups should try broadening out with Mac-related childcare, Mac-enabled speed dating, or Mac-related exercise classes (just try bench-pressing a Power Mac G5!).

One last thought about Macs as appliances. The useful life span of a Mac has always been fairly long, but as Macs become more like appliances and as we've seen computers provide more CPU power than most people need, the average life span will likely increase. That's bad for Apple, since people aren't likely to buy Macs as often, and it's bad for everyone else in the industry, since that point of purchase is probably the main chance to sell the customer additional software or hardware. It occurs to me that we may also see Apple starting to apply the iPod approach to Macs in the future, changing form factors and industrial design - imagine harvest gold and avocado colors to match your kitchen - to encourage new sales without changing the basic functionality in key ways.

Think Inside the Box -- Over the years, Apple has significantly increased the out-of-the-box capabilities of the Macintosh with core Mac OS X programs like Safari, Mail, iChat, Spotlight, Dashboard, Address Book, iCal, Terminal, and more. By bundling the iLife suite - iTunes, iMovie, iPhoto, iDVD, and GarageBand - with every new Mac, Apple has provided enough tools to keep even the most hyperactive Mac user busy forever. It makes sense, since Apple must compete with the ever-increasing capabilities of Microsoft Windows and with the software bundles that come with many PCs. Plus, it's a consumer-friendly move; people prefer to buy an Apple-approved bundle of software all at once, rather than having to choose among a bewildering variety of options later. And it's worth noting that Apple is doing a pretty good job with their bundled software - it's seldom the most powerful or flexible, but it sets the standard. As Rich Siegel of Bare Bones Software commented when making TextWrangler free and thus setting the bar for text editors, "You must be this tall to play."

The dominance of the Macintosh box as the source of Mac software primarily affects third-party Macintosh developers, who have been squeezed into ever-smaller niches (not to mention apartments). Although the very large companies producing Mac software are still around - witness Adobe, Microsoft, and Quark - there has been a significant drop in the number and Mac-specificity of mid-sized developers. Many of the names from the past: Connectix, Casady & Greene, and CE Software, to name a few, have been purchased, gone under, or refactored (Startly Technologies came from a group of CE Software employees acquiring CE's assets and taking the company private). At the same time, we've seen a profusion of new, smaller Macintosh development houses with amusing names like Circus Ponies Software, Rogue Amoeba Software, BeLight Software, the Omni Group, and untold others.

Practically speaking, I think it's important for Mac developers to retain a healthy awareness of their place in the Mac world. All exist at the whim of Apple, and if your product becomes too popular, Apple very well may appropriate the idea, as has happened with technologies like Web browsing and email, not to mention products like Konfabulator and Watson. Attracting customers from new Macintosh buyers will become increasingly difficult for Mac developers, since most lack the curiosity or desire to do more than Apple provides, and they're less likely to read Macintosh-related publications that might alert them to new possibilities. The new product areas that are likely to do well are those that work within the communications and entertainment spheres, but which avoid competing with Apple's programs, significantly enhance Apple's programs, or provide a professional feature set that meets the needs of those for whom Apple's programs fall short.

Assume the Internet -- It often feels pointless to state the obvious, but in this case, it's worthwhile. The Internet has changed everything, making it possible for individuals to become publishers or software developers, and for groups of like-minded people to spring up without ever meeting in person. That's all good, unless your organization still relies on a pre-Internet business model that's going the way of disco music and 80s hairstyles. But it also means that we'll see more small developers and publishers who exploit the way the Internet can make the very small look bigger and work together synergistically to provide solutions that would previously have been the purview of much larger organizations. Our entire Take Control model revolves around this philosophy - we work with independent authors and editors to create books and with eSellerate to sell them. If we didn't have the Internet skills we do, we could probably outsource our Web site entirely as well.

On the downside for everyone who sells Mac-related products, the fact that most Mac users are paying \$20 to \$50 per month for Internet access eliminates \$240 to \$600 per year that might previously have been spent on Macintosh software, books, and peripherals, or sent directly to worthy causes like TidBITS. Even people who are interested in finding and using additional products will look more closely at free and less expensive options for this reason, forcing developers to lower prices to remain competitive for the available discretionary spending. Those lower price points in turn make it more difficult for companies to grow beyond a certain size.

The other compelling fact about the Internet is that it's where the tinkerers now hang out. A programmer with a good idea is more likely to create a Web-based application or service that can be available to everyone (and then be acquired by Google or Yahoo), rather than make something accessible only to Mac users. And the involved users, the ones who used to play with ResEdit and hack startup screens, are now reading weblogs to learn about the latest site that hacks Google Maps or Flickr, listening to podcasts, or evangelizing Web standards and copyright reform. These people may use Macs, and they may squawk when Macs aren't supported, but the Mac itself has merely become a conduit to what's new and interesting, rather than being itself the focus.

The aspects of the Mac community most harmed by the Internet are, of course, user groups and conferences. They were so large and so vibrant in the pre-Internet days because they offered essentially what the Internet does now - information and social networking. Particularly for people who are more comfortable with communicating electronically and who may have less free time due to work and family, the concept of driving to a monthly meeting or flying to a conference seems inefficient and foreign. Society today is becoming increasingly fractured and insular as well, a trend I'm certain we'll regret at some point unless all of us make an effort to interact with others in person on occasion. For many in the past, user groups fit the bill, but maintaining them is real work, and as I noted before, they'll need to evolve to survive and thrive.

The World Has Changed, News at 11 -- Nothing I've said here is particularly controversial, I think, and each of the individual facts may be relatively obvious. And yet, I wanted to set it all down here because it can be difficult for those of us who have spent much of our adult lives participating in the Macintosh community to wrap our minds around how completely our world has changed. More practically, since large numbers of TidBITS readers still make their livings in the Macintosh industry, it's important for us to look at where we're all headed and make sure both that it's where we want to go and that we're prepared when we arrive.

Books

How to Do Everything with Adobe Acrobat 7.0

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



Author: by Doug Sahlin

McGraw-Hill Osborne Media McGraw-Hill Osborne

[http://books.mcgraw-](http://books.mcgraw-hill.com/getbook.php?isbn=0072257881&template=osborne)

[hill.com/getbook.php?isbn=0072257881&template=osborne](http://books.mcgraw-hill.com/getbook.php?isbn=0072257881&template=osborne)

Released: March 28, 2005 [English]

\$25 USD, \$34 CDN, £15 GBP, €21 Euro

ISBN: 0072257881

Audience: Users who want a thorough from the ground-up introduction to Adobe Acrobat 7.0. PC user are more like to directly benefit from the excellent book, for Macintosh users it will take a little bit of extra work. With coverage of Adobe Acrobat Standard and Professional editions, this hands-on resource will help you take full advantage of paperless publishing using the now ubiquitous PDF format.

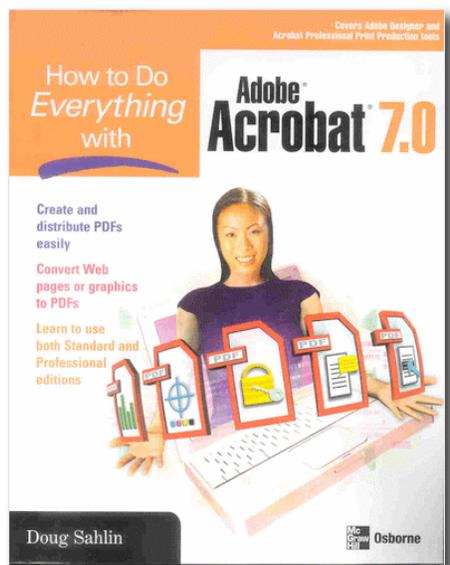
Major Strengths: This easy-to-follow, and well illustrated guide shows you how to generate Adobe PDF files that retain the look and feel of the original documents, share PDFs, initiate and participate in PDF document reviews, and prepare PDFs for print or the Web.

Weakness: Once again Macintosh user are left behind. As one unnamed review noted on the Internet, this book should have been titled *How to Do Everything with Adobe Acrobat 7.0 for Windows Users*. At least Sahlin's earlier book on Acrobat 6 did not pretend. How to Do Everything with Adobe® Acrobat® 6.0 (**Windows**) by Doug Sahlin, ISBN: 0072229462.

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 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

“Create and distribute PDF (Portable Document Format) files using Adobe Acrobat 7.0. This easy-to-follow guide shows you how to generate Adobe PDF files that retain the look and feel of the original documents, share PDFs, initiate and participate in PDF document reviews, and prepare PDFs for print or the Web. You'll also learn to develop interactive forms, secure your documents, and create PDFs from Microsoft Office and other authoring applications. With coverage of Adobe Acrobat Standard and Professional editions, this hands-on resource will help you take full advantage of the premier paperless publishing and collaboration solution.”



for Mac Users



for Windows Users



Review Introduction

I have taught myself the use of Acrobat, having adopted it at version 3.x. For working with PDF, files it and the shareware PDFpen have been among the most heavily used applications on my hard drive.

<http://www.smileonmymac.com/PDFpen/>.

Indeed PDFpen augments and completes the text-associated features on the Macintosh that Adobe appears to have left out. With respect to my use, these PDF oriented products get equal time with GraphicConverter, FileMaker Pro, Toast, and Eudora. Only MS Word and Safari are more heavily used. Of these applications, my ability to use Acrobat frankly put me in wimp mode.

Having reviewed the excellent [4 macCs] *Adobe Acrobat 7 Tips and Tricks: The 150 Best* by Donna L. Baker [macCompanion February 2006, Volume 4 Issue 2], I was left with the feeling that I needed to start at a more entry-level and learn the program from the bottom up. This would if I worked at it enhance my ability to work with PDF by at least an order of magnitude. A secondary benefit would be, in the long-run, saving me both time and lowering my stress and frustration levels. Do I hate feeling dumb! Therefore, I checked out the Internet for available Acrobat 7 books and found the description on the McGraw-Hill Osborne Media website interesting enough to order the book. Wonderful, this appeared to be a book that was multi-platform in scope.

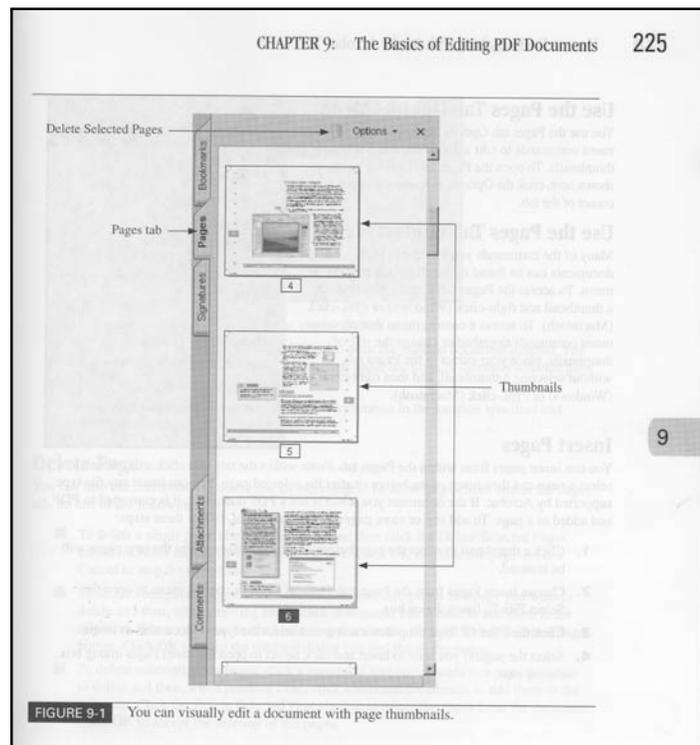
Other Considerations — Other books seemed either aimed at a more knowledgeable audience, or had not been deemed excellent by in published reviews. This review shares both my joy and frustration with what I found in Doug Sahlin's book

I don't remember whether I received a manual Adobe sent with my Acrobat Professional 7, but neither could I find a PDF formatted User Manual. Am I having a senior moment? I have over the years used the product made extensive use of the HELP files, but that is a more narrowly focused option — Alas, I can't learn complex software from a HELP file.

I found this book easy to get my arms around and valuable at rapidly helping me understand and use many of Acrobat Professional's rich features. The well-illustrated book gives me a broader and clearer understanding of what Adobe Acrobat is all about and how to use it more effectively in my daily Macin' around. Much to my surprise, I didn't even have to unlearn any bad habits, only to learn how to do what I needed to do to PDF files in a more straightforward and simpler manner.

The Book Itself

I found the book itself, for the most part, easy to read, understand and full of good illustrations. Although "grey" graphics are not my thing most of the information, shown as PC examples was useable on my Macintosh. From the point of view of my needs both as a nuclear waste management consultant, and *macCompanion* reviewer, the meat was all in Chapters 1-10. Others who live in a corporate environment that uses PDF files as a document production tool, or those of you who create larger multimedia rich documents, will find the rest of the book a must read.



One of the things I like most about the author, is his approach to explaining the concepts. He manages to introduce key concepts in a way that made sense and then carried them through with real examples (especially the *Basics of Editing PDF Documents* section).

I found this book easier to use than the *Hints and Tips* book referenced earlier, because it allowed me to get my arms around the program's rich individual features. This book gives a broader and clearer understanding of what Adobe Acrobat is and how to use it. Much to my surprise, I didn't even have to unlearn any bad habits, only to learn how to do what I needed to do to PDF files in a more straightforward and simpler manner.

The book overall, focuses on how to:

- Read and search PDF documents
- Convert virtually any document to PDF
- Capture documents from a scanner, digital camera, or Web page
- Create bookmarks, links, navigation menus, and use thumbnails
- Add digital signatures and document security
- Optimize documents for print, the Web, or other purposes
- Review, edit, and annotate PDFs in multi-author environments
- Create a searchable index
- Create PDF forms using Adobe Designer
- Add multimedia elements to PDFs

However, you knew that, didn't you? Not all the information the book provides was useful to me. At times, the material was not relevant to my present needs and working environment. Alternatively, what the author shared could not be easily implemented in Acrobat 7 Macintosh. Of course, there is a third possibility; that I simply did not get it... scratch that!

As mentioned in the beginning of this review, it is not easy learn to use Acrobats features. So, a muted hooray for *How to Do Everything with Adobe Acrobat 7.0*.

Kudos and more Kudos

Creating PDFs — On a Macintosh computer one has a number of alternative ways to, given that Adobe Acrobat is loaded, to capture information to create PDF files. One that most user find easy is to use the operating system's print to PDF. A second, if you are a MS Office owner is to use the PDF maker buttons that Acrobat installs in those applications. Indeed, before reading this book, those were the only methods I know, other than scanning to PDF, something that created only an image not an editable *postscript type* file. However, whenever I used the Print to PDF feature from a website or other source, I'd lose my active links. Doug's book explains why. Not only does creating a PDF from a website, using Acrobat preserve more of the web sites functionality (read that as active links) but it seems the PDF is more functional with respect to find operations. Oh, and to allow me to reset active links in PDFs created without them, there's information provided on just that subject.

Scan to PDF – I own an HP ScanJet 8250 with sheet feeder with which I capture paper document to PDFs for electronic storage. Using the provided but flawed HP software requires me to select the format of the scanned image each time I scan a document to file. By scanning directly from Acrobat, as described in this book, I save time and have needed to do less diddling around.

Editing Text in Acrobat Documents — Thanks Doug, I know better understand the limitations of the touchup Text Tool. I get around these limitations with PDFpen, but knowing the limitations of Acrobat, allows me to decide between tweaking material in a PDF or fixing problems by going back to MS Word.

Acronym List — There is so much alphabet soup in this document that having an acronym list would have been a great service to readers. The book is aimed at non-experts, isn't it?

Highlighter Feature — Now why didn't I find this, all these years, when using Acrobat? I found I could even use it on recipe files or hints. [Chapter 10]

Major Help Needed for Macintosh Users

I am deeply troubled by this book but I'm not sure whether my problem is with the Author or the Publisher. If the boo had been entitled *How to Do Everything with Adobe Acrobat 7.0 for Windows Users* as was his earlier book on Acrobat 6, I would have read it avidly. I have plenty of experience translating manuals or books for PC versions of software, to extract methods that work on my Macintosh. Nevertheless, is not so labeled, and therein lies my problem.

I found this book easier to use than the *Hints and Tips* book referenced earlier, because it allowed me to get my arms around the program's rich individual features. Doug Sahlin's book gives a broader and clearer understanding of what Adobe Acrobat is and how to use it. Much to my surprise, I didn't even have to unlearn any bad habits, only to learn how to do what I needed to do to PDF files in a more straightforward and simpler manner.

It is singularly obvious that the author, or anyone else associated with the book, had checked out the detailed methods described on a Macintosh computer.

So I ask, was a multiplatform pitch your idea, or did your editor toss in the trivial Macintosh related comments to enhance sales? *If its the editor or publisher, my apologies in advance, Doug, for the tone of some of these comments.*

Indeed, beyond telling us repeatedly that a Macintosh contextual menu (but only if one uses a one button mouse) can be accessed by control clicking, there is little or nothing in this book to directly teach a Macintosh user. The book doesn't even tell us the differences between preferences and settings; the later for the most part is a PC term.

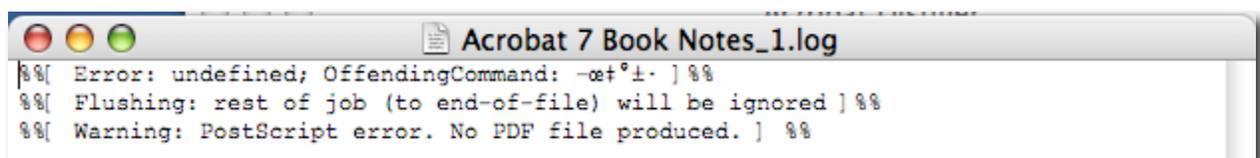
Okay to be fair, in a few places we are informed that a method is PC only. There is an appendix that deals with one-key shortcuts (that I couldn't get to work in Macintosh OS X Tiger). Alas, this otherwise outstanding book is of little *direct* help to the rest of us, who would like to become better users of Acrobat Standard or Professional. *That's the bad news.*

The **good news** is that for the first 10 chapters of the book, I tested many of the methods that Mr. Sahlin describes on my Macintosh. With minor differences due to the Mac OS X interface, they work just fine. However, how many of our readers, who aren't either compulsives or book reviewers will take the trouble.

There are many ways an author, as many have done, can share their knowledge about a program such as Acrobat 7 with users of both Macintosh and PC platforms. At the very least, an author can add icons in the margins of all applicable sections and subsections that indicate that the method is directly applicable to the Macintosh platform. Knowing that something is possible, at least will encourage us to try to translate the Windoze to our Macs. At best, an author can provide both as PC and Macintosh specific write up, perhaps as many have done alternating between them where the interface differences are large.

Other Minor Discomforts

Acrobat Distiller — I could neither get distiller to work or even access and customize the conversion setting on my system. I was, however, able to get some of the desired enhancements, e.g., (better than standard settings) when printing through the Macintosh print dialog box. [Chapter 10, Pages 328 ff.]



Restore Keyboard Commands — Despite the information in the Appendix, his did not work on my Macintosh system.

Create PDF Files from MS Office Software — Hmm... Where are the Macintosh versions of office system listed? Can someone give me a hint please?

Enhancing PDF Maker Performance in MS Office Documents — Sahlin is strangely quiet about whether this can be done for Entourage; you know the Macintosh equivalent of Outlook.

Discussions on Dealing with Graphics and Photoshop Elements — Since acrobat's graphics handling features can be enhanced with working with images in Photoshop Elements [PSE], I would have like to have a seen a bit more information on this subject. Yes, I'm aware many folks use Photoshop, but many of the PSE features are a subset of that more feature rich application. I found the information about enhancing graphics, to be imbedded in a final PDF, weak.

The Acrobat Touchup Tool — The author neglects [e.g., Chapter 2, Page 47] to tell us that the Touchup Object tool is great for getting rid of bits and pieces of a capture web-page image that can not be readily cropped away. It's a bit tricky but in combination with the keyboards modifier keys you can effectively prune away unwanted information.

Acrobat Converter Advance Options (Print command related) — Someone seems to have stolen these features from my computer.

Something I Want To Do That Wasn't Covered — As many readers know, I download recipes, in PDF format, and at time add graphics to illustrate them. Now it is easy to add a graphic to a PDF file, what is not easy is to make the space for it so that the graphic doesn't cover up the text. At times just shrinking the size of the image does makes the image too small. I do that by shifting text, where space if available at the bottom of a page in a PDF document, to make room for the new image. I kept hoping that there was a secrete way to wrap text around am image like I do in MS Word.

In Closing

With the caveats I mentioned, I highly recommend this book for anyone who is either new to Acrobat or is looking to extend their knowledge of Acrobat's features. If you're new to Acrobat, or looking to increase your knowledge, this is the book for you. It's easy to read, and the well-illustrated information is presented in a logical manner.

If even casually studied, by using the index to select the feature of interest, PC users will learn how to easily:

- Use and compare various strategies and software options for making PDF files.
- Use Adobe Acrobat to prepare files for print and non-print output specifications.
- Use Adobe Acrobat to exchange, edit, annotate, and modify files.
- Use Adobe Acrobat to establish hyperlinks within a PDF file for interactive media purposes.
- Use Adobe Acrobat to add forms data fields to a PDF file.

With the exception of where Acrobat 7 does not support the described efforts and with much more effort, due to lack of Macintosh specifics, users will also meet those goals. However, it will take more dedication. I expect this book, as my *Acrobating* needs evolve will remain a very helpful reference book.

Rating — 4.5 macC's for Windows users; 3.0 macC's for Macintosh users. With a little bit of Macintosh related annotation, this could have been a great book for the rest of us.

The Book of Visual Basic 2005 - A Review for Macintosh Developers

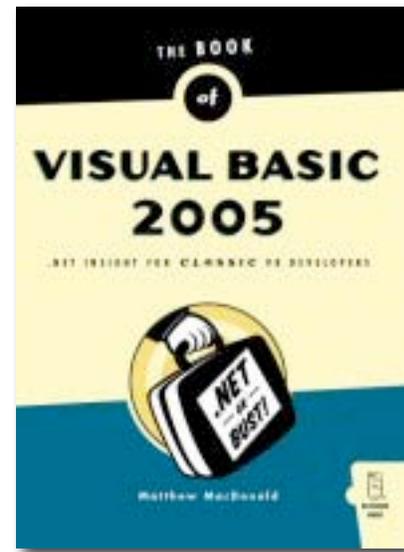
by Jonathan Hoyle



Author: Matthew MacDonald
Publisher: No Starch Press
<http://www.nostarch.com/vb2005.htm>
Published: April 30, 2006
\$40 USD, \$54 CAD, £28 GBP, €33 Euro
Pages: 512
ISBN: 1593270747
Audience: Beginning programmers.

Strengths: Easy readability.

Weakness: It's a Windows book for Windows programmers.



Jon: Hey Tom, what are you working on?

Tom: Oh, just this Windows application I have to put together by Monday.

Jon: Really? But you're a Mac programmer. How did you get roped into this?

Tom: I have been building these utilities at work using *REALbasic*, and compiling it for both Mac and Windows. Well, the boss was pretty impressed and has asked me to create a .NET version.

Jon: Ouch. *REALbasic* doesn't do .NET. So what are you going to do?

Tom: I'm using *Visual Basic 2005*. It's supposed to be the easiest way to create .NET applications for Windows.

Jon: That's true. So how's it coming along?

Tom: Not very well. You see, a friend of mine told me that *REALbasic* was modeled after *Visual Basic*, so I figured that the transition ought to be fairly straightforward. However, this .NET version is very different than what I expected, and I'm a bit stuck as to how to proceed. I wish there was a book on *VB 2005* which was written for Mac developers.

Jon: There isn't anything exactly like that yet, but I think I have the next best thing.

Tom: What's that?

Jon: Matthew MacDonald's *The Book of Visual Basic 2005* by No Starch Press.

Tom: No Starch Press...I've heard of those guys. They do that *Wicked Cool* programming series and the *Cult of the Mac* book, don't they?

Jon: Yep, those are the ones.

Tom: So why this book, instead of any of the other dozens of books on *VB*?

Jon: Most of the other *VB 2005* books are either written for the beginning non-programmer, or for experienced *VB.NET* users. This one is written for the classic *VB* developer, one who has experience with *Visual Basic* prior to the .NET days.

Tom: How does that help me?

Jon: Well, it goes back to your Mac programming experience. This friend of yours was correct in that *REALbasic* was modeled after *Visual Basic*, but not after the .NET version; it was modeled after the classic *Visual Basic 6* API. So the kind of book you need is one that starts from the classic *VB* perspective, which is exactly what *The Book of Visual Basic 2005* is all about. Here, take a look at my copy...

Tom: Hmm, very nice. Chapter 1 covers everything about .NET without my having to wade through pages of introductory programming material.

Jon: Yeah, that's an excellent chapter. It really sets the pace for the rest of the book. Chapter 2's even better as it tours the IDE giving detailed explanations on what has changed with .NET. You can see in the diagrams what has changed, and the differences it points out are essentially what is different from *REALbasic*. Then you have Chapter 3's *VB 2005 Basics*, which is a great reference to refer to whenever you need a refresher.

Tom: I see that each chapter begins with a section called *New in .NET*.

Jon: That's right. Rather than wait for a summary at the end of the chapter, the author gives you the differences right up front when the chapter begins. It makes it easier to follow when you know what to expect.

Tom: Interesting. I wonder why more books don't do that.

Jon: Most books aren't as good as *The Book of Visual Basic 2005*. For example, page through Chapter 4 for a minute.

Tom: Okay...ah, I see what you mean. Chapter 4 is about forms and building the GUI, and it nicely outlines the procedure for doing so.

Jon: Chapters 5, 6 and 7 deal with object oriented programming concepts and classes. Since *REALbasic* already does that, you can probably read through them very quickly. But it is worth going through these chapters just to understand the subtle differences. Chapter 8 on debugging and Chapter 9 on data files should also be fairly straightforward.

Tom: Wow, this looks like it's going to be easier than I thought.

Jon: Up to this point, it should be. However, it becomes a bit more advanced beginning with Chapter 10.

Tom: Why is that?

Jon: Chapter 10 deals with ADO databases, which are quite different than the ones you use in *REALbasic*. Threads in .NET, covered in chapter 11, are non-trivial in any operating system, and Chapters 12 & 13 web-based programming is very different than what you are accustomed to. Then of course we have the final chapter's section on deployment. As a Mac person, you'll want to refer to this one once your ready to deliver your software. You will need to read all of these chapters a bit more carefully.

Tom: I see. Well, thanks for the tip...and the book. By the way Jon, how is it that you always happen to have the right book on hand at the right times?

Jon: Trade secret, Tom. :-)

Tom: Well, I appreciate the help. I don't want to sound ungrateful, but I have to say...I still hate Windows.

Jon: Yeah, me too. You if you have to program for it, *The Book of Visual Basic 2005* is the book you want to have nearby.

Creative Computer Crafts: 50 Fun and Useful Projects You Can Make with Any Inkjet Printer

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Marcelle Costanza

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/2326>

<http://craftypc.com/>

No Starch Press

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

Released: May 2006,

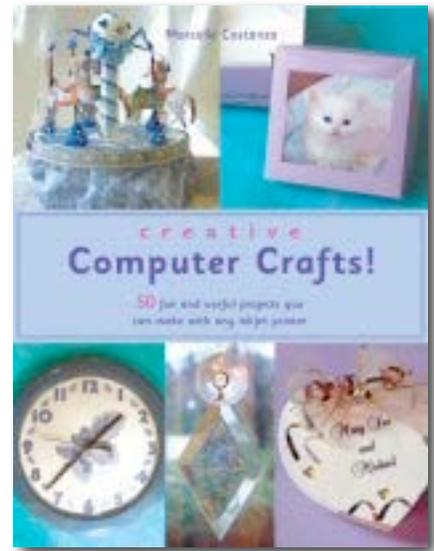
Pages: 160

\$25 USD, \$33 CND, £18 GBP, €21 Euro

ISBN: 1593270682

Strengths: Shows how to do projects and provides templates to “make them so”, and has plenty of sources for resources without tying us to any particular app.

Weaknesses: None found.



Creative Computer Crafts: 50 Fun and Useful Projects You Can Make with Any Inkjet Printer by Marcelle Costanza is an obvious labor of love kind of book. She loves to do arts and crafts, has been doing it for decades and has figured out how to make it pay for itself and she wasn't to share the joys associated with how we too can “get creative” with certain materials and the magic of inkjet printers.

What she doesn't do is tie her creativeness to any particular app. However, if you want to think this is just a front to get us to go to her website, you might be right. She has a website that parallels the book at CraftyPC.com

Some of these projects are really eye-openers; scratch off tickets, stemware shrink charms, rice bags for weddings, transparent bags, popup cards, pyramid boxes, matchbook mints? I liked the candy bar project and figure I might want to give that one a go. This book looks like a coffee-table kind of book because it is full of color and just invites us to want to pick it up and stroke the pages with our eyes. It is beautifully done.

Besides the 50 projects, there are 3 Appendices that provide websites, message boards, places to find hardware, software and crafting supplies and templates for some of the crafts.

If you would like to know how Marcelle Costanza got here from there, she tells u show and what tools of the trade she used over the years before she got to where she turned her hobby into cash. Now we can too. And she also shows where we can go to sell our wares.

Now where is that inkjet printer? We have some candywrappers to make!

The Future of Memories — Sharing Moments with Photoshop Elements and Digital Cameras

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



Author: Dane M. Howard

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

Publisher Peachpit Press

Book Series: One-off books

<http://www.peachpit.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0321383990&rl=1>

Released: January 23, 2006

Pages: 256

\$31.50 USD,

ISBN: 0321383990

Audience: If you own a camera, Then you should read this book. The book is about empowering you to be more effective in preparing, documenting and sharing your memories. It's not about the techniques for using your camera and your graphics software. — You grow into the techie stuff, as you want to more elaborately share of photos with others.

Note: Apparently a similar book by Dane Howard was published by Microsoft Press in February of 2004 called *Sharing Digital Photos: The Future of Memories*. I'd not read that version.

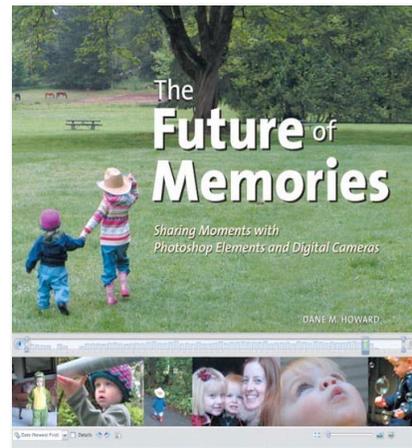
Major Strengths: I own several books on digital photography including excellent ones by Scott Kelby including *The Photoshop Elements 3 Book for Digital Photographers*. <http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321269055> (Peachpit-New Riders Press). There are many books out there on digital photography, mostly how-tos that are basic. None of them induced me to seriously start using my digital camera. What Dane does in this exceptionally well-illustrated and annotated book is attack the issue of picture taking from a completely different point of view - how to use the images to tell a story and how to share those stories.

Weakness: To get the details I was interested in, I too often had to use a magnifying glass or go to the author's website.

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 OS X 10.4.6

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Publisher's Overview — “You have amazing stories to tell and rich new ways to tell them with. Learn how to capture-and share-your life experiences in dynamic new ways! This colorful and innovative guide expertly demonstrates how to turn static photos into rich stories and compelling presentations using your digital camera, PC, and the Web.



“Megapixels and memory cards capture the moments—but you create the memories. In *Sharing Digital Photos*, you’ll learn how to craft great stories—and capture lasting memories—from the images you’ll shoot and share with your digital camera. Discover simple ways to organize photos into a “living library,” find themes in your imagery, and build a compelling narrative. The author, a professional designer and devoted dad, expertly guides you through the easy, effective techniques and tools for exploiting all the vibrancy and immediacy of digital photography—extending the fun and the future of your own memories.

“Discover how to:

- Try new approaches to your photography—freeing yourself from the view finder
- Create a simple system—a living library—to organize, store, and retrieve your photos
- Learn techniques for capturing the impact of the big—and small—moments • Know the key principles for developing great narratives
- Make editing your day’s shoot an easy routine
- Extend the reach of your memories—from prints and e-mail to digital picture frames, movies, and mobile devices
- Experience the digital storytelling expertise of professional designers, photographers, and artists to inspire your own projects.

There are plenty of books out there that can tell you how to create great images using your digital cameras with *Photoshop* or *Photoshop Elements*. However, such individually great images do not equal great stories. Nobody knows this better than author Dane Howard. He draws on his years of professional experience as both a photographer and storyteller to demonstrate how you can use everyday technology to share your stories in dramatic new ways. By focusing on the tale rather than the technology, Dane provides the tactical and practical advice you need to create a compelling narrative through digital images.

In the end, the story—not the tools—dictates the process, and at each step along the way Dane urges you to ask the right questions, set up your shots, organize your images, and use your tools in a way that will advance your stories. With complete coverage of all of today’s photo-sharing mediums (including photo-blogging, mobile devices, image-sharing sites, and more), this colorful, creative guide shows users you how to build visually rich narratives to share with family and friends.

Review Introduction

Okay, We’ve owned a long line of cameras — a lens-rich Cannon A-1 35 mm, several point-and-shoot 35 mm film camera and most recently a Kodak LS-443 Easy Share digital camera. We’ve accumulated the usual shoeboxes of snapshots and for our crafts business, slide boxes of everything unique we’ve ever created. A large collection - Yes; Accessible to share - not at all. Indeed, I found that my wife and I were treating the new digital camera as if used actual film. We continued to be careful not to waste that digital film.

Disposable Shooting WHEN COST = FREE

The economics of shooting pictures has changed ...
Because it saves you money and gives you more freedom
(Page 61)

Dumb – no, uninformed – it seems so. After reading the promo materials on this book, I decided that there had to be a better way to use the slightly dusty digital camera more actively. After reading *Future of Memories*, my interest in using our camera has been kick-started and with a little bit of luck my ability to share the memories, cued by photos of our lives, with family and friends will also become alive.

As so ably noted by [Rebeca Andarias de Prado](#) (Rome, Italy) “this simple and lovely book is not about how to use my new sophisticated digital camera (I will have to study the manual). But it has encouraged me to free my amateur photographer mind from concepts carved {in stone} there like ‘don't shoot until you are pretty sure the scene is good enough and that film is not wasted’”.

The Book Itself

This book gives you examples, instruction and inspiration for action. It is designed to be referenced, browsed, or read in any order that suits you. It is organized into four major sections incorporating the fundamental pillars to personal memories creation. I discuss these later in the review.

This book is about capturing experiences in your daily life to share with family friends or even for your old age. It teaches you how to capture those memories, to create memorable or memory evoking stories, by using photos rather than words as the enabling metaphor.

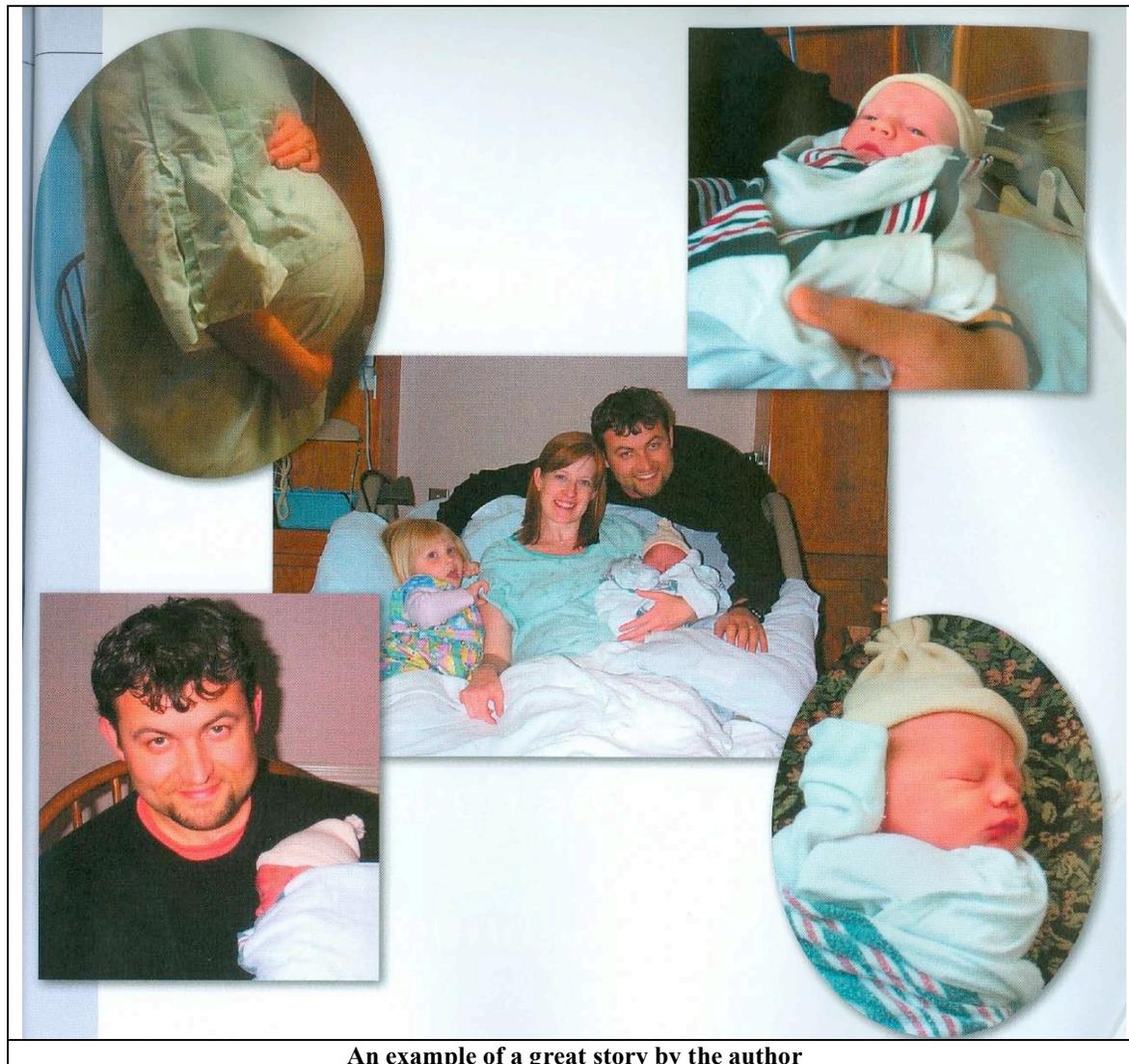
The book is aimed at both the digital photography beginner and a mechanically experienced digital camera buff who is interested in learning how to take and create photos that tell a story.

I love the three key principles espoused by the author (Page 33) that are get closer, be flexible and move around. – Its what you need to make you pictures more interesting. They thus become a better part of any story you tell.

As noted by *Robinstien* (Seattle, WA USA) in a review for Amazon.com entitled *Sharing memories, not just pictures*. April 5, 2004 http://www.amazon.com/gp/cdp/member-reviews/ADZSSIZZR9ZIT/ref=cm_cr_auth/002-7225515-7940860?%5Fencoding=UTF8

“I was originally looking for a book to help me expand the way I use my digital camera when I came across "Sharing Digital Photos". What an unexpected surprise. As soon as I went through it, I knew it was a great find and was amazed at the breadth of possibilities that exist.

“Dane covers a multitude of options available for the digital photographer, and covers various methods, programs, and techniques for sharing, managing, and tweaking images. The clarity and simplicity with which the book delivers this information is refreshing. He delivers clear descriptions of the mythology and uses personal family experiences as examples. These personal stories form the heart of the book and make the concepts easy to understand. Each chapter continuously serves up an honest and straightforward delivery that helps create a solid perspective on the different techniques.



An example of a great story by the author

As I noted below about Dane Howard's website "Access to website links allow you to experience the solutions and further demonstrate the possibilities. He {Dane} uses "easy to follow" language, plenty of photo examples, and well laid out graphics in various combinations to effectively communicate the essential message in each lesson while encouraging you to dive in along the way. This book has changed my [Robinstien] as well as doc_Babad} paradigm concerning digital images so they no longer sit idly in a hard disk!"

... In addition, of course the obligatory description of the books contents.

Table of Contents — After an easy to read and attention catching introduction the author discusses:

- **More Effective Stories, Section 1**, which includes Getting Started, Find, *Your Audience* , *Working Quickly*, and more.
- **More Effective Images, Section 2** — It focuses on both capturing such images with your camera and then in your computer. This chapter although being technical in nature is "newbie" tech, easy to read and understand.

- **Organizing your Living Library, Section 3** — Although I have effectively, for me of course, organized my hard disk to capture documents, it never occurred to me to do so for the images I shoot. This section focuses on *Life-Building* (e.g., collecting you life in images), *Photo Annotation and Key-wording, Location and Mapping* of you images and *Choosing what's Important* (e.g., Photo Editing - Making those Personal Choices.)
- **Sharing Your Memories, Section 4** — *The Share Map* (e.g., to share with whom and how much), *Hard Copies* (The usual cost vs. quality and quantity tradeoffs) and *Soft Copies* (E-mail , Slide Shows & Presentations, Movies and Media and in this world of cell phone and pocket PCs) *Mobile Memories*. [This does not to describe a senior moment, and for the technically adventurous, is worth your time.]

There are several worthwhile appendices and of course a well done *Index*.

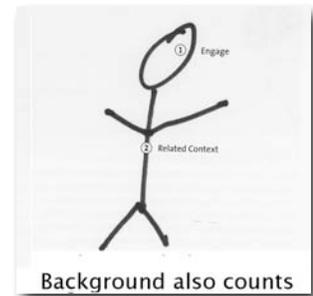
As you read this book, you'll note, as did *Bill Camarda*, “how to coax a compelling story from a day trip, a vacation, a ball game, even a few quiet moments at home. The authors show how to bring immediacy, authenticity, and intimacy into your photos. [Its about] how to shoot and use sequences, how to tie together your vacation photos with digital maps. With digital, you can share your images in whole new ways...but it's even more than that. Suddenly, images can begin to suffuse your life.”

<http://search.barnesandnoble.com/booksearch/isbninquiry.asp?z=y&pwb=1&ean=9780735619920>

Kudos and more Kudos

Individual Chapter Review Lists — These are full of keywords containing checklist that remind you of the messages and methods discussed in that chapter. Mr. Howard has made singularly good use of this teaching tool. If the concepts summarized don't ring a bell in your head, go back and read more slowly.

The Basics: Use Story Stick Figures (Pages 34 ff) — Its all about using the metaphor of a stick figure works to guide you through the mechanics of telling a story with photos. [(1) Closer (2) Related Context]



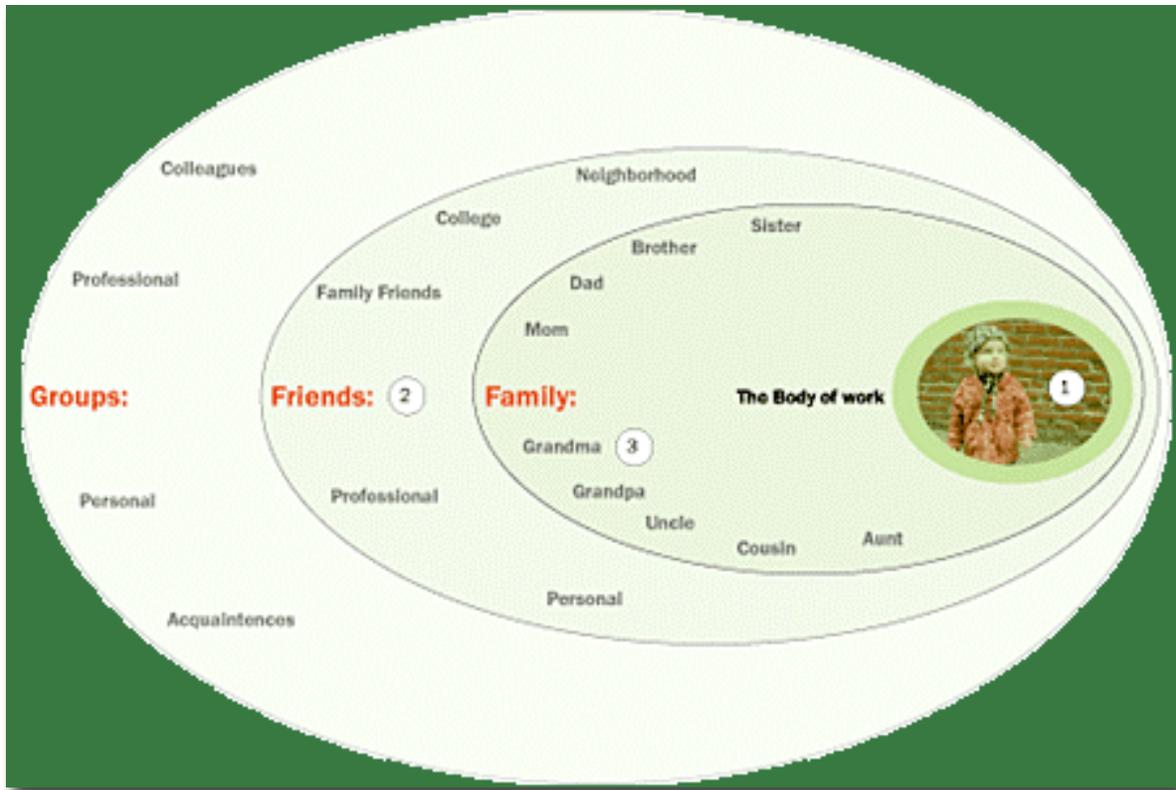
How Big Is Your Circle Of Influence? — What can you or do you want to control when planning and telling your story, to all those with whom you'd like to share it. It makes a difference in what you chose to share. Dane, this is a great paradigm which I always remember when I'm writing but not until now when I'm taking or using photographs!

Discomforts

Despite what may seem to be a long list of gripes about this book, it is indeed wonderful, not perfect, but exceptionally well done.

Glossary, or Lack Thereof — There were unfortunately too few definitions of the technical terms associated with photography and image processing for a novice digital camera user. Alternatively, the author could have provided links that define the alphabet soup of acronyms for novice photographers.

Image Size and Accessibility — I couldn't read text in many of the examples (e.g., Page 30, even when using a magnifying glass to partially decipher the text. Alas, in a number of spots in the book, reading the text in the example was needed to best connect with the author's message.



I'm Still Hungry for More — Despite the additional detailed provided on the author's website, I feel the addition of a CD of examples would greatly enrich my ability to learn more rapidly ho to become a digital photo based storyteller. Perhaps the CD listed on Dane's website — *Sharing Digital Photographs: The Future of Memories* Trainer: Dane Howard, Running Time: 5 hours **Price: 49.95** www.lynda.com/futureofmemories will solve this problem.

Flow of the Narratives — At times the flow and connection between adjacent narratives seemed jerky and somewhat disconnected. Initially there seemed to be no central unifying theme to a group of paragraphs. However, I usually found when I slowed my reading speed to savor a page or two; it all comes together (e.g., Pages 20-27.) My treating the book, as suggested by the author, as a set of individual topics rather than a linked whole; I enhanced my enjoyment of the book and therefore its usefulness to me.

Macs and PCs — Although PC tools are described clearly [e.g., MS Photo Story, and MS Digital Image Suite – Pages 18 and 166], there are many features of both iPhoto and PhotoShop Elements for Mac (v. 3 or 4) or GraphicConverter that serve the same purpose as those itemized for the PC. Alas, dealing with the strong capabilities on the Macintosh platform to implement Dane Howard's teaching was severely neglected in the book, although it was well referenced on the author's web page. That's a problem since I'm not sure how many readers will take the extra step to check out the information of the web site.

From the Author's Website: "This is the kind of thing missing from the book!

iPhoto is Apple's photo organizing tool. If you have iPhoto installed, you can use Future of memories iPhoto Export to automatically generate galleries using the templates provided. Installation and usage instructions are located here. The iPhoto Export feature will automatically resize your images to 800x600, generate thumbnails, and export the 'title' of the photos from iPhoto so they appear as 'comments' in the gallery. Rather than trying to be fancy with multiple galleries, the application does everything for you. It will give you all the necessary files for every single gallery you make, so you can immediately upload the results to a website."

In Closing

From the moment I starting reading and absorbing to alien to me concepts about digital photography, I was hooked. A paradigm shift – digital pictures are free, at least until you print them! Stop using the viewfinder – it gets in the way of composing your shot. Don't pose folks, they're alive – catch them when you can – you can always toss the duds.

The book is all about telling stories, not just capturing friends on a couch for several hour to show all those slides you accumulated on your trip. *Don't do this too often or you many have to find new friends.* To my greatest amazement, it's like doing a technical presentation. It's the quality and clarity of the material, not quantity that counts. I must be getting a bit long in the tooth, because these Ideas I've used professionally for over 50 years did not, prior to reading this book, spill over to taking pictures to create memories. Rating – 4.5 macCs

P. S. I totally agree with Adam Pratt who wrote “I believe this book will have a lasting impact on the world of photography because it helps the reader capture better pictures, streamline the tedious parts of digital photography, and how to tell effective digital stories with photos. Stories and memories, isn't that's why we take photos anyway?”

Adam Pratt in an Amazon.com Review

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0735619921/ref=cm_aya_asin.title/002-7225515-7940860?%5Fencoding=UTF8&v=glance&n=283155

Author BIOS

About the Author

Dane M. Howard has been telling stories with pictures for 11 years. As a designer and new as a father, Dane is using his background in sequential media and experience-based design to express his passion for sharing the stories of loved ones. His search has brought him to discover existing and evolving technologies that will shape the future of digital photography and self-publishing for the mass market. The reinvention and expression of narrative is carefully observed and evident in his work and research. He maintains a personal project to document the events of his family. The interest in this project www.chloehoward.com spawned this book to help tell others how to document and share life's events.

He has developed creative strategies and products for Microsoft, BMW, Major League Baseball, Avaya Communications, Quokka Sports, NBC Olympics, Rolling Stone, CBS, Merrill Lynch, Pulse Entertainment, and Disney. His clients and collaborators include key management of Design, Marketing, Research and Development, and Chief Executives. Dane currently works at Microsoft Research in Redmond, Washington. He is a Design and Program Manager for their Smart Personal Objects Group, creating and designing new products.

Legend of the Lamp Volumes 1 & 2

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Tina Monson

Sounds of Zion

9298 South 500 West

Sandy, UT 840770

801-255-1991

FAX: 801-255-1998

<http://www.soundsofzion.com>

Released: Volume 1, August, 2005. Volume 2, March 2006. Volume 3?

Pages: 390 - Volume 1. 324 - Volume 2.

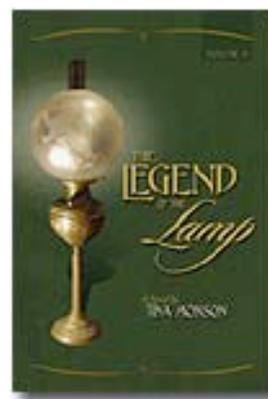
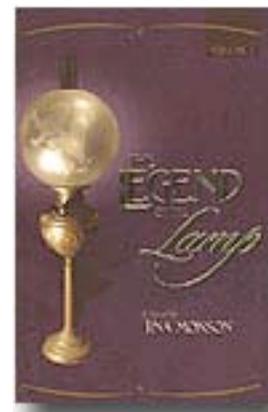
\$10 USD each, or CD; \$20 USD.

ISBN: 193309818X (Volume 1) 1933098317 (Volume 2)

Audience: Latter-Day Saint youth.

Strengths: Great story line. Just remember, it's fiction folks!

Weaknesses: An occasional printing error of a word here and there. Oh, and each ends in a cliff-hanger, so there will be a Volume 3.



Tina Monson finished up her *The Liahona Legacies* trilogy and began on this one on *The Legacy of the Lamp* with two volumes completed.

These books introduce us to LDS Church history in a way never imagined before as four youth go reluctantly with parents on a summer history trip back to where the Gospel was restored back to the earth and their grandfather, who has tried to discover the secrets behind a oil lamp does a masterful job getting them excited about searching for clues to discover the secrets behind the Legend of the Lamp loosely based on the journal writing of Heber C. Kimball who wrote about a hidden cave full of precious writing on sacred records, the sword of Laban, the Liahona, and other items that are written about in the Book of Mormon.

After a romp through a few of the historical sites and discovering items where others never thought to look based on clue-upon-clue, and being chased by some malevolent treasure seekers, Hunter, Hanna, Hayden and Allison read a letter from Joseph Smith Jr. to them written 200 or so years earlier, saying they need to go discover where the Lost Tribes of Israel are located and bring 2 from each tribe back, so those tribes won't be lost anymore and the prophesies regarding the latter-days can be fulfilled.

Volume 2 has them having a few near-death experiences as they walk and run by faith to the underground location where the tribes are suffering under the rule of a prophet-king. He happens to have been running as dictator over the survivors of the 10 tribes and attempting to keep prophecies regarding 4 who would come discover them to bring them back. The youth happen upon a young gal (Kira) whose father is in prison for contesting the king's right to rule and they attempt to get him released.

Volume 3 will hopefully wrap things up, as they figure out how to get back to the surface with representatives of each tribe without loosing their lives in the process.

Volume 1 is on CD.

The story line is great, the clues discovered on cloth and stone are believable. They translate from the Deseret Language that Brigham Young had attempted to get everyone in the State of Deseret (pre-Utah) to learn, since they were all from various countries and spoke different languages with Mormonism being the only uniter. (the Desert Language essentially was an early Esperanto from 1877 and died with him.)

I could see this being made into a movie that would be almost as interesting as...

The Liahona Legacies Series

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Tina Monson

Sounds of Zion

9298 South 500 West

Sandy, UT 840770

801-255-1991

FAX: 801-255-1998

<http://www.soundsofzion.com>

Released: Volume 1, August, 2004. Volumes 2 & 3, December 2004.
Volume 4?

Pages: 330 - Volume 1. 356 - Volume 2, 292 – Volume 3.

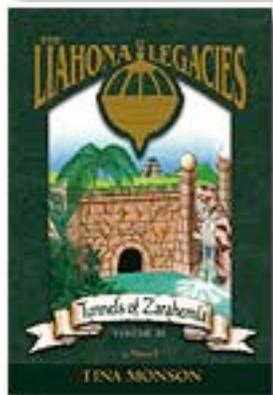
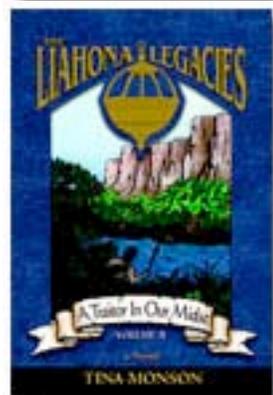
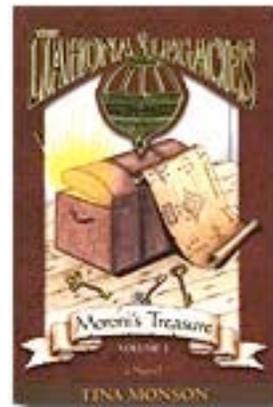
\$10 USD each, or on CD.

ISBN: 1933098007 (Volume 1); 1933098082 (Volume 2); 193309821X
(Volume 3).

Audience: Latter-Day Saint youth.

Strengths: Great story lines. Just remember, it's fiction folks!

Weaknesses: An occasion printing error of a word here and there.



Tina Monson started professional writing career with her *The Liahona Legacies* series; *Moroni's Treasure*, *A Traitor in our Midst* and *Tunnels of Zarahemla*. There should be a Volume 4.

She begins with pubescent and prepubescent team members who have an elaborate treehouse as a clubhouse for The Timber Creek Titans baseball team members. A couple of bad guys escape from prison, enter a house in town and hide out in the attic. The kids go there to clean up the attic and in the process discover an ancient map apparently created by Moroni from the Book of Mormon, while waiting for storms to clear so they can go back to compete in a Baseball Tournament. Hero, Bubba, Runt, Tater, Stick, Butch, Bean KP and Red get permission to go find clues to the treasure, work their way through reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics with the assistance of a librarian (Cheri), who really is an expert on such things. Oh , and don't forget Squeaks, Hero's kid sister, who knows a few things the others don't.

What's fun is that Cheri is able to translate such that the clues rhyme. Hey, it's fiction, okay? Either that or she is really, really good. Anyhow the clues take us through the Book of Mormon scriptures that have key words. At the end of Volume 1, the bad guys who have been following them to capture the treasure are captured themselves after being trick by the kids, and the kids have keys that have unlocked a few places on this treasure hunt to where they find the Liahona.

Hero, Bubba, Bean and KP get sucked back into the past and end up somewhere in the Book of Mormon times.

Volume 2 has them near a Lamanite warrior camp with Bean getting captured and the others trying to get her back without getting killed. They discover they need to help adjust history so it matches what is recorded in the Book of Mormon and somehow are able to communicate back to the present via walkie-talkie. They have 7 "Days of the Lord" to get things straightened out or they don't come back. In Volume 2 they do get things back to normal by discovering who is tipping off the Lamanites who want to destroy the Nephite cities and meet up with the Prophet Alma before poofing back to the present. Next, Runt, Stick, Read and Bear touch the Liahona and get sucked into the past.

In Volume 3, the boys sneak into the City of Zarahemla via the waterways and discover that the Gadiantons have control of the city and are planning on killing the Lamanite prophet before he can fulfill his mission, which is to call the city to repentance. They manage to do so with the help of a local named Tulio, before their time limit is met. When they manage to get back to the present, Bubba's mom, Squeaks, Tater and Butch poof into the past, so expect a Volume 4.

These books are a fun read and do a great job in making the Book of Mormon "come alive".

MacDesign out of the box

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Peachpit

Essential books for the creative community

Author: Andrew Shalat

Inside Mac Press/Pearson Education

<http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321375742>

Released: November 23, 2005

Pages: 272

\$30 USD \$42 CND £22 GBP, €25 Euro

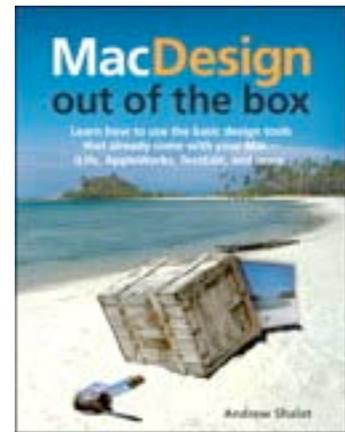
ISBN: 0321375742

Strengths: Shows what can be done – and the possibilities.

Weaknesses: None found. A website would have been nice though.

Novice/Intermediate

Other reviews: <http://www.mymac.com/showarticle.php?id=2301>



This book is a result of years of methodical answers to quick questions with the intent of saving phone calls. Andrew Shalat spices his comments with humor and I can just envision him on the other end of a phone answering questions. I tend to find myself having to get humorous because after the 600th time of saying the same thing to different people, the answers tend to get a little dry and I tend to get a little crazy with my responses too.

The way the book is set up, Andrew first goes to the tools that are inside the box and come with Mac OS X before venturing outside the box. He does this with 4 “Chapters” that cover the following; creating fliers, postcards, logos and business cards, web design, video and movies and he finishes with a few pieces on software speculation. Each section ends with “For A Few Bucks More” so you aren’t left out of knowing that there are basic apps in place with Mac OS X but there are other apps that enhance the experience. You know, like all the major software apps that make up the Mac software industry.

By the way, all the illustrations are full color, making this almost a coffee table kind of book.

Andrew brings all this introduction of ideas and apps back to the Mac and calls that box the Rosetta Stone of design. It’s all really just a matter of learning the language.

RFID Essentials — Theory in Practice

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



Authors: Bill Glover, Himanshu Bhatt

O'Reilly

Link: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/rfid/>

Pages: 276

\$40 USD, \$56 CND, £28.50 GBP, €33 Euro

ISBN: 0596009445

Audience — RFID software and solution architects, and the managers who need to understand the where's and why's of adding RFID to their business management practice.

Major Strengths — A complete overview book on the subject of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) for those who will need to understand or implement such systems. The book is geared to the project manager with some technical background. While it doesn't shy away from discussions of algorithms and protocols, it also doesn't provide details about implementation. It's the kind of book an informed manager wants, in order to be able to ask intelligent questions of his staff."

Weakness — Although RFID systems will be entering and impacting the lives of most ordinary individuals, this book does not serve those readers. [See the references to Joshua Sharf's reviews.]

However, it was not meant to. As for me, I'm likely to get a RFID for *Dummies* book to satisfy my ongoing curiosity. [Note: A quick search on the Internet provided me with an overload of either news trivia or technical overkill, so it definitely must be a book.]

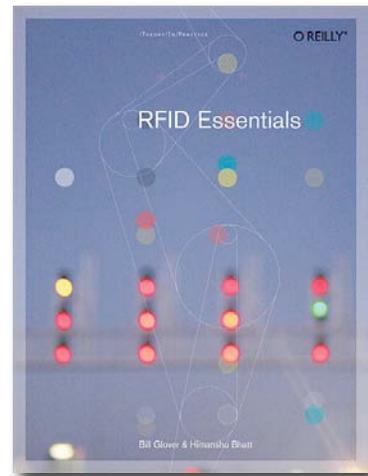
Where appropriate the instructions in the book were tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.3.

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

Publisher's Overview — "Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is rapidly changing the way businesses track inventory and assets. From Wal-Mart and Tesco, to the U.S. Department of Defense, early efforts are already showing benefit, but software, integration, and data processing for RFID still present a challenge. With the knowledge you gain in *RFID Essentials*, you will possess the information and understanding you need to start designing, building, or integrating with RFID systems. If you are a developer or an architect charged with developing an RFID system, this book is for you. Drawing on extensive experience, Bill Glover and Himanshu Bhatt provide you with essential information on this emerging technology."

Review Introduction

Based on my lack of RFID expertise, but low tolerance for BS, I tend to agree; based on my reading of the book with the various experts I've quoted in my review. For example, Jonathan Schwartz, President and COO, Sun Microsystems, Inc., notes that "with the knowledge you gain in these pages, you will possess the information and understanding you need to start designing, building, or integrating with RFID systems."



No, the book didn't meet my needs, though I valiantly read it from cover to cover. That is also why much of this review contains quoted materials from those more expert than I, with whom I agree about the value of *RFID Essentials*. However, at the end of my read, I was convinced that the book provides an exceptional, albeit high-level, yet technically detailed overview of where RFID has been, is, and is going.

For those of you who are interested in the potentially malevolent (well, apocalyptic, really) implications of RFID (Radio Frequency ID) technology on society check out Joshua Sharf's reviews at <http://blogcritics.org/archives/2006/03/10/040151.php> and <http://blogcritics.org/archives/2006/02/07/182236.php>

I can't say that I enjoyed *RFID Essentials* but agree that it covers a great deal of ground on both the technical (how does it work? how can you use it?). Businesses related aspects interested me (what standards exist? how are companies using now?) and are well covered. Computational (what are the algorithms? about what should you be concerned?) are also covered in detail focusing on both the RFID system architects and their managers. That material alas was over my head. As a non-expert, the treatment was not painless, but for one more knowledgeable or driven than I am, its likely to be in a painless manner. If you need to know about RFID and want a book that lays it all out from soup to nuts and beginning to end, this is the book for you

The Book Itself

Reports in business magazines and on the Internet have told us that over one billion RFID tags were produced in 2005 and in five years that could be over thirty billion. What exactly is RFID? How does it work? What can it do? Is it more than that little bit of something under the skin of my cat? These and similar questions prompted Himanshu Bhatt and Bill Glover to write *RFID Essentials* (O'Reilly). Bhatt explains their thinking, "To some extent we thought about writing this book as we were looking for one like it when starting out with our work on RFID at Sun Microsystems."

To quote the authors, "Our book, note Bhatt and Glover, provides a conceptual view of RFID and explains the important components without getting too deep," says Bhatt. "Whenever you are faced with something that sounds brand new, it is important to see how that maps to what you already know so that you can use all your past experience to improve the odds of success. We focus on an architectural view of RFID systems so that important qualities such as security, scalability, manageability, performance, are covered right from the start."

Because of the developing standards and growing demand, RFID has begun to mature as a technology, and according to the authors of *RFID Essentials*, we'll see more widespread usage of it in our day-to-day lives. "When someone needs to keep track of something, more and more often they'll need to at least consider RFID as part of the solution," Glover observes. He believes that RFID will soon be as commonplace as barcodes, but will go places and do things that barcodes never could. "Attaching an ID to physical objects is just the first step in making these objects a part of the growing network of information we use every day. Almost everyone will use RFID in one way or another in the coming years; many of us already do and don't realize it."



As Bhatt and Glover point out, a Google news search on any given day will turn up hundreds of RFID stories. The state of Colorado is hoping to protect elk herds in part by using RFID to track them; drug manufacturers are deploying RFID to help fight counterfeit drugs; sea ports in California are using RFID to improve security; and the US government plans to incorporate RFID into every new passport with initial trials beginning this month.

RFID Essentials is for developers, system and software architects, and project managers, as well as students and professionals in all the industries impacted by RFID who want to understand how this technology works. As the title suggests, this book is about RFID in general and not just the most recent developments, but it will provide readers with the information and understanding they need to start designing, building, or integrating with RFID systems. -- Bryan Tracy, Chief Architect, GlobeRanger Corporation <http://www.wi-fi-technology.com/displayarticle2642.html>

Topics covered in the book include:

- Tags and Tag Protocols including Electronic Product Code
- Readers and Reader Protocols
- RFID Middleware
- Security and Privacy
- Managing RFID Devices
- Architecture

These seem complete in scope, based on my general understanding of system engineering and web research, but as the author's note, their book is only a start for those wanting to design and implement an RFID system. I found the summaries at the ends of each chapter useful in testing my memory of and the authors present understanding of the material. [I didn't get an "A", but didn't fail either.]

The mind boggles when one thinks about the range of an RFID future. One such aspect is described on Page 10, of Chapter 1.

"Physical objects will be tied to the Internet through their digital identities. Just as we expect to be able to do a quick Internet search to find the answer to an obscure trivia question, we will expect to be able to wave a soda bottle past a cell phone and find out where and at what specific time the soda was manufactured and, if we like, the last known location of every other bottle of that soft drink manufactured within the same hour at a particular location. Invisible digital graffiti associated with identities attached to physical objects will surround us in the form of messages posted to the Internet. But this could go far beyond messages like "Joey was here"—for example, a how-to video for using a piece of equipment could be associated on the Internet with the equipment's tagged ID. By this era, we probably won't think about RFID technology any more than we think about electrical technology today. We will simply expect it to work."

Other aspects of RFID future include using the technique for monitoring both food and drug expiration dates or recalls, allowing businesses to quickly find and remove the outdated items.

For insights such as these, I found the book, even its more technical aspects, worth the effort to understand — kudos' to the authors.

Discomforts

Acronyms – A lack of a glossary with at minimum the real names for the alphabet soup of terms used was troublesome, and would be even for professional managers who are not RFID experts. Better yet, would have been an annotated glossary of terms to such readers.

Dealing with Security and Privacy — Although the authors discuss Security and Privacy in detail in chapter 10 their business-like approach seems too soft for my taste. This is in contrast to more alarmists' books such as the *SPYChIPS* by Katherine Albrecht reviewed in *macCompanion* in December 2005. Based on the continual erosion of our privacy, in the interests of national security, I would have preferred something in between.

Excerpts from Chapter 10 Summary

The privacy and security issues discussed in this chapter can be summarized as follows:

- If you are building applications, privacy and security considerations should be central.
- Making informed and responsible choices will require input from both privacy advocates and efficiency and accountability advocates, in equal measure. Effective education and an ongoing, reasonable dialog among the public and decision makers is the only way to ensure that individual rights and safety are not put at risk in the service of efficiency and also that important opportunities to improve the delivery of goods and services don't run into unnecessary roadblocks.
- Even though the consumer privacy issues surrounding RFID systems seem to get the most press, there are other aspects of security that are equally important. Whereas RFID privacy concerns mainly involve what, when, where, and how much consumer data is being tracked by a third party without the consumer's permission or even knowledge, RFID security focuses on securing RFID systems from pranksters, spies, thieves, and other unauthorized entities.
- When beginning a new RFID project, place privacy and security high on the list of nonfunctional requirements and track negative public perception as a risk to the project.
- As with any other mission-critical system, it is important to consider and to plan to mitigate threats to the availability, integrity, and confidentiality of your RFID system.
- Privacy and security need more than technologies and tools. People and processes play an important role in ensuring that the technologies are used effectively.

In Closing

Although I was searching for a more lay introduction to RFID when I found this book, I am forced to acknowledge that the knowledge you gain in RFID Essentials will kick start a business' effort to allow RFID to become part of their business tools and practices. It also supports specifying needs, conceptually designing, developing a plan for building, or for integrating their business with RFID systems.

"Bill and Himanshu have put together a true tour de force of RFID technologies." I agree with them "The breadth and depth of their coverage of this emerging space will leave few wanting. Presented in an accessible yet technically relentless manner, the authors expose the merely curious to more than they bargained for and surprise even the most hardened RFID expert with new insights and understandings. This is a must read for RFID software and solution architects, and is highly recommended for anyone who needs to gain insight into the myriad of components, standards, and technologies that make up an RFID solutions environment." - Bryan Tracy, Chief Architect, GlobeRanger Corporation, January 2006.

Author BIOS

Bill Glover has been writing software since 1981 and has worked as a programmer, lead developer, or architect on systems of all sizes, from small, automated systems controlling dams and feed mills up to a complete redesign and reimplementation of one of the world's busiest travel web sites. Bill first worked with RFID in 1995, tracking individual cattle using ear tags. He is currently a Senior Java Architect with Sun Microsystems, Inc., and works with Sun's RFID consulting practice and the RFID Test Center.

Himanshu Bhatt heads the U.S. RFID Practice and Software Technology Lab for Sun Microsystems, Inc. Prior to assuming this role, Himanshu was responsible for business development and consulting in emerging areas of technology. Himanshu has over 16 years of experience in the architecture and development of distributed, multitier systems using a host of technologies for Fortune 1000 companies. Himanshu has spoken at industry conferences such as JavaOne and the LoneStar Symposium and has published articles on Java/J2EE technologies.

Running Boot Camp – A Step-by-Step Guide to a Pitfall-Free Installation of Windows XP on a Mac

reviewed by Ted Bade



Author: Chuck Toporek

O'Reilly Media

(707) 827-7118

info@oreilly.com

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

Download Site: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/bootcamp/index.html>

Pages: 37 as PDF.

\$8 USD, \$10 CND, £6 GBP

ISBN: 0596527721

Strengths: This is the first manual to help with this issue.

Weaknesses: Could have provided a lot more details on the XP screens and questions.



Running Boot Camp is an effort to make it a bit easier to run Apple's Boot Camp assistant application to install Windows XP on your Intel based Mac. While *Running Boot Camp* is a fun document to read, it essentially reiterates the content of Apple's own document, though it acts to support the reader in a friendlier manner.

This booklet is a 37 page PDF you can buy from O'Reilly.com. Conceptually, these mini books can be a great idea, getting information from experienced people to the consumer very quickly. If you are willing to print it, you can have it with you as you perform the process.

The booklet is broken into several sections, steering the user logically through the whole process. You'll find a section on what you need, updating Firmware, running the Boot Camp assistant, installing XP, and finally on how to switch between XP and Mac OS X.

The Document is well-written and a lot more entertaining than Apple's document. It offers a few pointers, warnings on what could go wrong, and how to avoid or repair them. The author's experience was with a MacBook and he offers a few suggestions pertaining to that computer. I found no information pertaining specifically to other Intel Macs that are currently available.

My personal experience with using this application was completely trouble-free. I found Apple's document to be well written and easy to follow. *Running Boot Camp* adds another person's perspective, which acts as a coach that helps you feel more secure when you run Boot Camp yourself.

There are a lot of screen captures included with this document that help you experience the process before you actually do it! It was a little disconcerting that the images and their captions were one page behind the text of the document that pertains to them. Nevertheless, the images shows what happens as you go through the process.

I also felt a lot more detail could have been provided about XP installation process, since this is what Mac users will be most unfamiliar with! However, in most cases this document gives no more attention to these issues than the Apple one. While I may agree that I really don't need to understand a lot of this XP mumbo-jumbo to use it, this document would have really shone, if it provided information on these issues.

I would recommend this booklet to anyone who anyone who feels they need a bit more information about the whole process of setting up a Macintosh for and then installing XP on it.

The Shutterfly Guide to Great Digital Photos

reviewed by Dr Eric Flescher



Authors: Jeffrey Housenbold and David Johnson

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

McGraw Hill-Osborne

2100 Powell Street, 10th Floor

Emeryville, CA 94608

<http://www.mcgraw-hill.com>

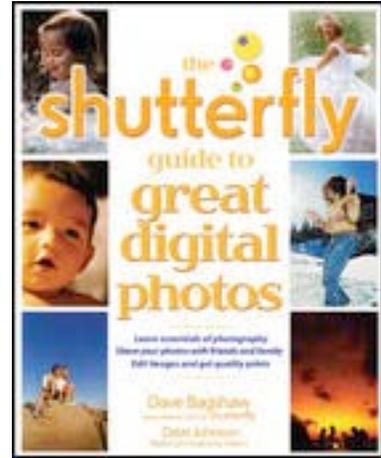
Booksite: <http://books.mcgraw-hill.com/getbook.php?isbn=0072261668&template=>

Released: April 27, 2005

Pages: 256

\$20 USD, \$27 CND, £12 GBP, €17 Euro

ISBN: 0072261668



Strengths: Photos, how to tips, good screenshots are included in the chapters. Includes several nice projects for using digital photos in many ways (jigsaw puzzle, calendar etc). Each chapter begins with a series of learning steps that are highlighted through the chapter (however these are not listed per page to go to these easily and directly).



Weaknesses: Black and white printed pages (except in chapter 6). No highlights related to using Macintosh (as in page 101) when managing photos. iPhoto is not even mentioned. Does not include information about RAW images. If you are looking for more Macintosh related information, this book is not for you. If you are looking for iPhoto information, it is not mentioned at all.

The authors used their collective knowledge to detail information about the use of digital photos. Jeffrey Housebold is the Presidents and CEO of Shutterfly, Inc. while Dave Johnson is an award winning photographer and a best-seller author of several books related to digital cameras. The main idea of the ten chapters in the book is to help you become a better photographer and have a better appreciation and pleasure, using your digital photos. Each chapter has nice set of introductory details concerning what you will find in the chapter.

In Chapter 1, “Welcome to the Future”, deals with shopping for and using a digital camera, choosing and accessories, conserving battery power.

“Composition Essentials”, Chapter 2, focuses upon learning about the rules of composition, taking better snapshots, and taking interesting photos. This chapter also some important points regarding understanding the relationship of aperture, shutter, depth of field (including using to emphasize subjects you are shooting) and applying rules of composition.

Chapter 3, “Exposure Essentials”, include setting ISO settings, ways to adjust exposure, employing depth of field and more.

Chapter 4, "Sports, Actions and Active Kids", emphasizes catching fast-moving subjects, stopping action, and suggestions for "freezing" photos, waterfalls and wildlife.

Chapter 5, "Viewing and Organizing Your Pictures" includes viewing, erasing, Using the memory card, organizing your photos in Windows (only) in archiving your photos on CD-ROM. "Quick Changes for Your Images," Chapter 6, has information concerning learning how to open and edit images saving in different formats. More contains fixing crooked images, convert color to black and white, changing brightness and correcting the color balance. On page 113, PC-only is included and not Macintosh. There are some colorized product results in this chapter.

Chapter 7, "Cleaning Up Your Images", helps working with the images to make the pictures better. Sharpen blurry images and enhance sharpness, using the painting tool removing red eye, using airbrush to eliminate parts of the photos, creating panorama.

Chapter 8, "Sharing Your Pictures," involves sharing images and sending and receiving via email, choosing the right file format, compressing images. Showing off pictures on a handheld PC, display images on a digital picture frame.

Chapter 9, "Printing Your Pictures", ordering pictures from Shutterfly, deciding about resolution and size. Shopping for a printer, choosing right kind of paper, determining size of paper to print upon and caring for your prints.

Chapter 10, "Projects for Parents and Kids", this chapter is for using images to create a whole variety of projects for home, school, family and more. There are some unique applications (as in putting your kids in a jar, shake hands with Elvis, Stage a mystery photo contest, using digital images as wallpaper) and other appealing applications (making newsletters, photo journals, calendars and more).

This book has fairly good ideas for learning how to use digital photos. Its review of learning how to create better pictures is adequate but not extensive, possibly because the main focus is how to use Shutterfly, (after all one of the authors is the CEO of the company), one of several online-digital application for sending, storing and processing pictures and more. For many, using Shutterfly's tools and applications may be enough to create what you want with your photos and possibly even more.

If you are looking for basic applications and information about digital camera and photos and delivering these photos through Shutterfly or at home, this book might be for you. The book is for those who are novice to the digital world and want to learn how to start (especially working with PC). In addition, this is especially evident for PC users, but Macintosh users may have to look elsewhere. If you are looking for good information, but not a lot of other insight and more, this may be a good book to start. However, if you are not using Shutterfly, using MacIntosh, you might want to look further for a book which is more in-depth, has more details in terms of using photos and more.

What Da Vinci Didn't Know: An LDS Perspective

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Andrew C. Skinner and Thomas A. Wayment

Deseret Book Company

PO Box 30178,

Salt Lake City, UT 84130

1-800-453-4532

<http://www.deseretbook.com>

<http://deseretbook.com/store/product?sku=4962740>

Released: May 2006

Pages: 138

\$14 USD and on CD.

ISBN: 1590386086

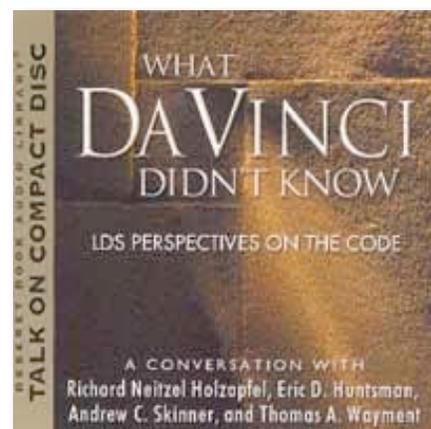
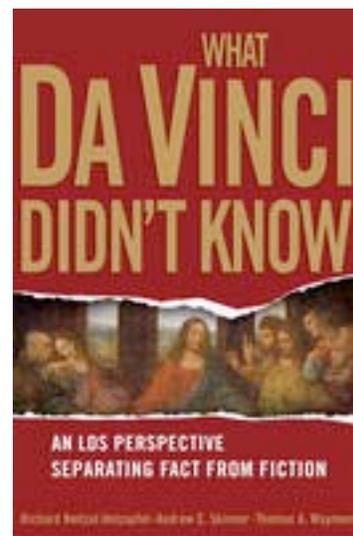
Strengths: Puts sacred history back into proper perspective.

Weaknesses: Tends to repeat quotes often.

Other Reviews:

http://www.ldsmag.com/books/060519davinci_code_casestudy.html

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



The authors of *What Da Vinci Didn't Know: An LDS Perspective* separate fact from fiction by combining their findings instead of creating 3 separate books on the topic of Dan Brown's book, *The Da Vinci Code*

http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci_code/reviews.html and not Ron Howard's movie of the same name.

<http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/thedavincicode/>

They don't make assumptions or bend towards speculation of any kind. They just go with knowledge based on fact and have end notes, a bibliography as well as an index. The chapters are short and cover how history is approached, the suppression of early Christian texts, whether or not the Savior was married (yes he was, but no speculation as to who His wife or wives were), the search for the holy grail, the story of Mary Magdalene, Leonardo's *The Last Supper*, and women in early Christianity.

And their conclusion? The book is carefully orchestrated to attack the divinity of the Saviour and His role as Redeemer of mankind. The legitimacy of the early Christian church is denigrated along with the integrity of the canonical New Testament, the existence of God the Father and His son, Jesus the Christ, the commandment of Chastity and the authority of the original 12 Apostles. The book by Dan Brown passes off fiction as though it were fact and “all descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals...are accurate” may indeed not necessarily be so. At best it is Christian revisionist history, at worst, it denigrates the God of this world. After all it really is a work of fiction and should be treated as such.

The Lord will reveal in His own good time who His wife or wives were and who His children were and are. There is good reason why those facts are hidden from the public view. After all, religious wars have been fought for centuries over much less.

Was the Saviour married? Yes. To whom, we do not have the texts that would tell us at this time. We have a fairly good idea, but we don't preach it as Gospel. Is that information laying around somewhere? No doubt. We continue to find ancient records and we know that there are sealed records that humanity is not ready or purified enough yet to be shown. We've been promised that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Some things are not so important. Like if He had any mortal offspring. Supplanting the divinity of the Son of God with the Sacred Feminine would be considered heresy in earlier times. It still would be. Our understanding is that we may become like Him after this life – as families.

What Da Vinci Didn't Know does an excellent job showing which books were suppressed and shows what is and is not in the Nag Hamadi texts, whether or not Constantine was converted and most importantly, the concept of marriage and the Saviour from a Latter-day Saint perspective. We know he was married or He would have been a hypocrite on the sacredness of Family. He would not ask us to do something He Himself would not have done, right? Just like we have a Heavenly Mother or mothers, along with a Heavenly Father and we are their spiritual children brought to earth to experience mortality before we all “go home” to them after this life.

May we be found worthy to do so. ;^)

Digging Deeper

<http://www.randomhouse.com/doubleday/davinci/>

The movie trailer:

<http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/thedavincicode/>

So who won the Da Vinci Code contest? <http://googlefact.blogspot.com/> The last sequence of the Code spelled A.P.P.L.E.

Sandra Miesel quashes Dan Brown's book grandly at

<http://www.crisismagazine.com/september2003/feature1.htm>

Collin Hansen does more debunking here

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/newsletter/2003/nov7.html>

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/newsletter/2003/nov14.html>

Priori of Sion Demythified http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priory_of_Sion

Apple Pro Training Series - Xsan, Quick-Reference Guide, Second Edition: A Comprehensive Guide to Xsan Setup and Administration

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Adam Green and Mathew Geller

<http://www.metamediach.com>

<http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321375742>

Released: February 10, 2006

Pages: 160

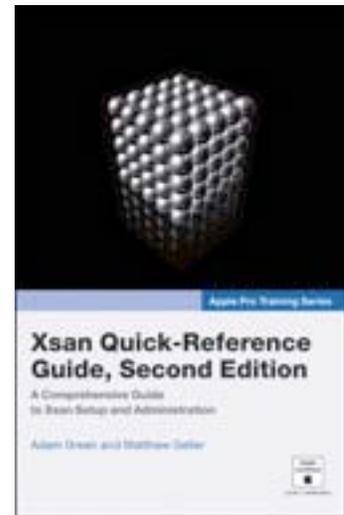
\$30 USD \$40 CND £22 GBP, €25 Euro

ISBN: 0321432320

Strengths: Color-book approach to mass-storage the Apple way.

Weaknesses: None found.

Intermediate/Advanced



Apple Pro Training Series - Xsan, Quick-Reference Guide, Second Edition: A Comprehensive Guide to Xsan Setup and Administration by Adam Green and Mathew Geller shows us through a number of lessons and lots of full-color pictures what Xsan is all about and how to put that technology to good use.

There are 11 chapters called "Lessons" on what a SAN is, what equipment is required, topologies of RAID configurations, how storage is created, and how a metadata controller is used, how clients work with Xsan systems and how Fibre Channeling is used. There is also a chapter on Xsan Administrative configuration and another on how to use the command line. Finally, there is a chapter on troubleshooting. Included is a Glossary and Index.

I've been through the Apple Sales training on Xsan, but this book definitely adds to the experience and is a welcome addition to the Apple Pro Training Series.

Hardware

RadTech BT500 Rechargeable Bluetooth Mouse

reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves



RadTech

4352 Rider Trail North

Earth City, Mo 63045

Phone: 314-209-9993

Fax: +1 314-699-9076

info@radtech.us

<http://www.radtech.us>

<http://www.radtech.us/SpecialDeals/BT500.aspx>

Released: May 12, 2006

\$60 USD

Dimensions: 85.2mm long x 50mm wide x 32.6 mm high

Weight: 64 grams

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.6 or later, built-in Bluetooth antenna or USB dongle.



Strengths: Small & light; ambidextrous; three buttons & scroll-wheel; rechargeable via USB cable; protected from grime and wear.

Weaknesses: Software driver still in beta.

RadTech's original BT500 Bluetooth mouse was the best wireless mouse for mobile Mac users and the newest model improves on that excellence by adding battery recharging capability.

The main problem with wireless mice, Bluetooth models in particular, is battery life. At best you could get a few weeks worth of life out of a pair of batteries, and at worst you could get a few days worth. The new Rechargeable Bluetooth Mini Mouse from RadTech helps alleviate that pain by including a USB cable that you can connect to your Mac to both power and recharge the two included AAA NiMH batteries. The scroll wheel will illuminate red while the batteries are charging and turn green when they are fully charged.

A quick recap of the features that the BT500 has retained from before: Weighing only 64 grams and measuring only 85.2mm long, it's extremely small and light. There are two main buttons and a scroll wheel. The right button is automatically configured as control-click and the scroll wheel will work without configuration.

The scroll wheel can also be used as a third button, but is limited to only the Exposé and Dashboard features of Panther and Tiger, respectively, unless you install RadTech's Bluetooth HID Driver and RadMouse System Preferences pane. The problem with RadMouse is that it's still in beta format. The Read Me notes that "This software is provided 'As-is'" and that "Currently there is no formal User Guide or supporting documentation." Beta software is hardly uncommon today, but drivers are typically not the kind of unsupported software you want to be using.

Originally available in white, to match Apple's consumer hardware, the BT500 now has a silver appearance, matching the pro laptops. There is also an extra gloss coating that helps solve the problem of picking up grime from being handled constantly. And in the thanks-for-not-making-me-cut-myself department, although it's in a blister package, it isn't fully sealed and there's a simple snap-open top and bottom hinge.

Anyone that's used rechargeable batteries knows that they don't hold a full charge indefinitely, and after a number of cycles they will still wear down to only a few hours of activity. The initial life of the included Ni-MH batteries was a mere 1-1/2 working days while a pair of regular AAA batteries lasted a week. I would wager that a pair of brand-name Ni-MH batteries purchased from a retail store would fare much better.

But the recharge feature is an added bonus (and \$5 added cost) to an already stellar wireless mouse that is easy to setup, gives great performance, and provides necessary functionality for mobile Mac users.

EyeTV EZ

reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves



Elgato Systems

Nymphenburger Str 86 D-80636

München Germany

T +49-(0)89-143339-0 F +49-(0)89-143339-99

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

http://www.elgato.com/index.php?file=products_eyetvez

Released: September 21, 2005

\$149 USD

Requirements: G4, G5 or Intel Core processor (Recording quality depends on processor speed, dual G5 or Intel Core Duo processor required for High Quality setting); 256 MB of physical RAM (512 MB recommended); Built-in USB 2.0 port; Mac OS X 10.4 (or later); 589 MB of disk space required for one hour of recorded TV; Internet connection required for the optional online TV guide.



Strengths: Small and stylish hardware matches Mac mini design; Easy to set up and use; Excellent software interface; Many options for export/conversion/burning; relatively inexpensive for dual hardware/software solution.

Weaknesses: Unreliable remote; not well-suited to single-processor G4s.

When Apple released its Front Row software solution, enabling users to utilize their Macs as a home media center, the most notable omission was the ability to watch and record television. If they do add that capability (which I predict they won't) they will have a long ways to go to catch up with Elgato, who has combined Terratec's USB 2.0 TV receiver hardware with their award-winning software for EyeTV EZ, a low-cost, simple, and fun way to watch and record TV on your Mac.

The hardware portion is a 4"x2.5"x1", 125-channel, analog TV tuner that weighs less than half a pound and is enclosed in a Mac mini-style aluminum and white case. Plug your TV antenna or cable feed into the tuner, connect the tuner to your Mac via the included USB 2.0 cable, and the EyeTV software (installed with a simple drag and drop from the CD) will automatically launch and walk you through the setup steps. Because the device draws power from the USB bus, no external power supply is necessary.

The EyeTV software is currently at version 2.2.1, is a Universal Binary, and has an incredibly clean and functional interface that takes its cue from Apple's software but exceeds even that in its ease-of-use. Recorded shows are displayed in a manner that combines the sortability of the Finder's list view, the active image preview of icon view, and the detailed file information of column view. And the size of the listings can be resized on the fly with a slider.

The program guide gets television listings from TitanTV.com, which requires you to create a free account. This also allows you to schedule recordings remotely via the Internet. The EyeTV software will go online to update the listings and check for remote scheduling requests on a regular basis.

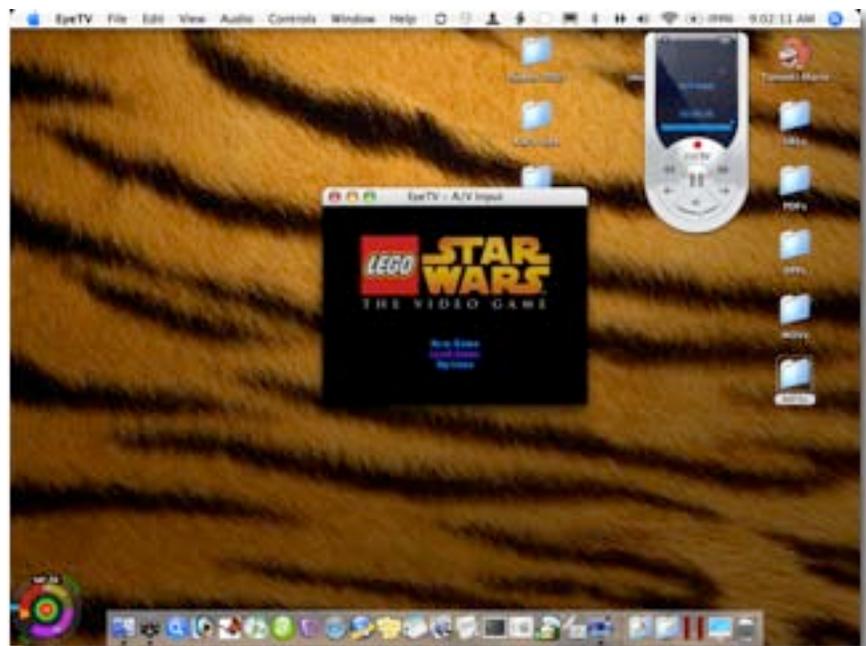
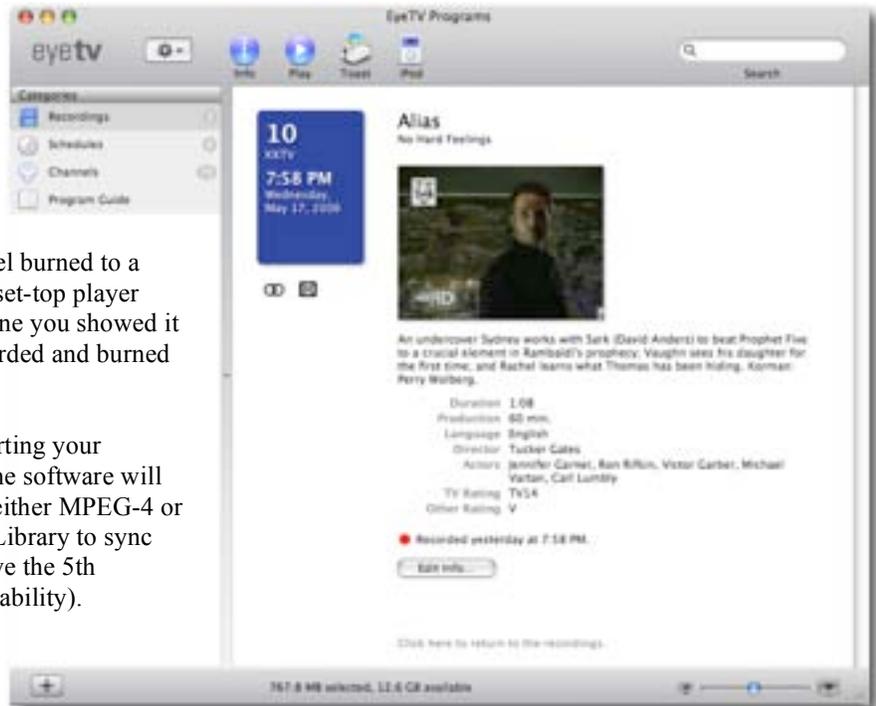
Recording quality is dependent on the processor of your Mac. A G4 can only record at the lowest quality, which is a quite small 352x288 pixels. A dual G4 or G5 can record at the "standard" quality setting of 352x576, and only a dual G5 or Intel Core processor can record at the high setting of 720x576.

An iBook G4 is the model shown in the advertising, and I initially tested it using Apple's last iBook G4 model (1.33GHz). A one-hour episode of ABC's "Alias" used about 700MB of disk space, but quality was certainly lacking. When displayed on a standard television set (the lower resolution can often mask poor quality) visible artifacts occasionally appeared and audio sometimes didn't sync with the video. I also recorded in standard quality using the original iMac G5, where one hour used 1.9GB of disk space. Quality was greatly improved, and display on the same television set showed no visual artifacts or audio syncing problems.

If you want to watch the programs on a television set, but lack the capability or patience to hook up your computer, you can burn the recordings to VideoCD or DVD using Toast. A 2-hour recording of the movie "Starman" from the Sci-Fi channel burned to a DVD via Toast and played via a set-top player looked perfectly normal and no one you showed it to would ever suspect it was recorded and burned via your Mac.

The other simple option for exporting your recorded content is to an iPod. The software will automatically convert the file to either MPEG-4 or H.264 and add it to your iTunes Library to sync with your iPod (provided you have the 5th Generation model with video capability).

The EyeTV software also allows you to export the recording for a number of different uses: E-mail, Web, iMovie, iDVD, PSP, DV, and the list goes on. It helpfully provides descriptions of all the formats and an estimated file size.



The tuner also includes an S-video input and an RCA converter cable so you can hook up a game console and use your Mac as your display. Turning off Deinterlacing reduces the lag between the two devices so you can play the games without a delay between the controller and the on-screen action. Because it's using S-Video, the quality is somewhat poor (and Macs with fast processors would no doubt improve that) but it's a great solution for anyone who wants to use a game console and doesn't have a TV set handy.

You can even record your gameplay, though I don't recommend using a G4 for that as the lag will make you look like you have very poor hand-eye coordination as Mario stumbles around the mushroom kingdom.

A remote and its required two AAA batteries are included, but its range is quite limited and it was somewhat unreliable, requiring trips to the Mac to manually fast forward commercials, change the volume, etc.

The EyeTV EZ follows the Microsoft model of computing: one company makes the hardware, another makes the software, and yet another provides the program guide. But Elgato has succeeded in putting these pieces together to create a compelling product that is incredibly useful, easy to use, and inexpensive. Although it doesn't perform particularly well with G4 processors, it should perform spectacularly with the Intel Core Duo-based MacBook and MacBook Pro as well as the Intel-based Mac mini, which it visually matches. Just make sure you've got a lot of hard drive space available.

PANTONE® huey™: Monitor Calibration Tool for Consumers & Budget-Minded Prosumers Leaves Lots of Questions

reviewed by Mike Swope



PANTONE & GretagMacbeth

<http://www.PANTONE.com/products/products.asp?idArea=2&idProduct=10>

Released: January 2006

\$89 USD

Requirements: CRT or LCD Monitor. **Macintosh:** Mac OS X 10.3 or later;

Windows: Windows 2000 or Windows XP.

Target Audience: Macintosh and Windows users who desire more accurate color from their monitor(s), including amateur and professional graphic designers, digital photographers and other prosumers.

Strengths: Priced right for users on a budget. Easy to install, setup and use. Makes monitor calibration a no-brainer, no more guessing. Multi-lingual installation instructions.

Weaknesses: No instructions about how to use the huey-calibrated monitor or further information about color management.

The PANTONE huey monitor calibration system is perfect for consumers and budget-minded prosumers looking for better color calibrated monitors so they can better color-correct their scans and digital photographs. If you fall into this category and find yourself frustrated by off-color images, the new PANTONE huey monitor calibration tool will help you take the first step to better color in all your projects. Especially since it costs less than most professional royalty-free stock photographs.

The huey monitor calibration system is so easy to install, a grade-school student can install it. You simply open the box, clean your screen with supplied materials, plug the huey colorimeter into an available USB port, insert the CD, drag the huey icon to your Applications folder, launch the huey application, and follow the five onscreen steps. The entire process takes less than 10 minutes, just a minute or two if you've done it before. Once installed, the huey colorimeter continues to monitor your room's lighting and adjust your monitor accordingly, so that you are able to constantly see the details in your images on your monitor, details that you don't want to wash out.

The huey monitor calibration system isn't invisible, once you've installed it. The huey application icon is displayed in the menu bar at the top of your Macintosh screen, alongside other icons such as volume, Airport, displays, and battery (if you've enabled them to display in the menu bar). From the huey menu, users can re-calibrate their monitor at any time, disable compensation for room lighting, adjust for room lighting immediately, and access the simple huey preferences. The huey's preferences can also be accessed from the *System Preferences* panel.

The huey preferences are very simple. Users can turn on/off room light monitoring and specify how often the room lighting should be sampled (default is every 10 minutes). Users can also turn on/off huey's color corrected profile, and elect how they will be using their computer from a list, to which huey makes minor display adjustments. There are settings for gaming, web browsing and photo editing, graphic design and video editing, and others settings for warm and cool display. To be honest, I don't know why anyone would choose to use the settings for warm or cool display, except personal preference. It would seem that to choose the warm or cool settings defeats the purpose of color calibrating the monitor.



If you've ever seen a true color-calibrated monitor, it isn't what you're used to using. The same will be true once you've color calibrated your monitor with huey. It will display colors differently than you've become accustomed over a long period of time. Your display, in fact, will appear grayer than usual, but you need to resist the urge to disable the huey profile. Instead, you'll need to give it a try for several days to get used to the new calibrated profile. After that, the uncorrected profile seems unnaturally bright and with high contrasts.



Original



Hand



Huey

Though the PANTONE huey is inexpensive and easy to install and use, it is only the first step in a useful color managed workflow. No booklet or information about the basics of a color-managed workflow is packaged with the PANTONE huey. When huey has been installed and the monitor calibrated, what should be done next? How should users color correct their photos? With what software? Can they use their current software to correct their photos? Do they need Photoshop? If they're sending photos to be printed, what do they do?

Unfortunately, huey purchasers must turn elsewhere for answers to these questions, which involve a better understanding about how a color calibrated monitor fits into a color management system, especially if they're using Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator with color profiles and sending projects to be printed. About the only option to find these answers is to search for them on Google or buy a book.

Find out more about Mike Swope: <http://www.maccompanion.com/info/aboutus.html#mikeswope>

TVMicro – Your TV Mac Companion

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Miglia Technology, LTD

United Kingdom

<http://www.miglia.com>

Product site: <http://www.miglia.com/products/video/tvmicro/>

Released: April 10, 2005.

\$99 USD, £58 GBP, €82 Euro, (all prices are ex VAT)

Requirements: Mac G4 or later, including the Mactels; Mac OS X 10.4 or later; USB 2.0 port; 256MB RAM; lots of storage space for recording.

Comes with; TVMicro DVR; Infrared Remote (requires two AAA batteries); Coax cable adapter for TV input; Another adapter to connect with the TVMicro port; CD-ROM) with PDF user guide; USB cable; 2-year Warranty card.

Specs: <http://www.miglia.com/products/video/tvmicro/techspecs.html>

Strengths: Smallest DVR yet!

Weaknesses: Okay, doesn't do SECAM, but then, neither do we (outside France and some Eastern European nations). EyeTV cannot acquire PAL channel names and automatically assign an EPG to each channel.

Reviewed with EyeTV 2.1 software on an iMac G5 running Mac OS X 10.4.6 Tiger. (Rev 2.2 came out, but it still has issues, or at least I do.

Watch TV on your Mac. Okay, call it a Mac Companion. I would! Of course, you will need a Mac that can handle the *TVMicro*, but it requires a powered USB 2.0 port.

We reviewed the *TVMicro*'s big brother, *EvolutionTV* back in January and found it to be rather lacking in a few areas. Apparently Miglia listened and *TVMicro* meets or exceeds all those expectations. Of course, it also helps that EyeTV 2.1 is included with the unit this time. What's really cool is that there are not wall warts or electrical cords to mess around with. And the Miglia Remote really works well. So well in fact, that the *TVMicro* can be plugged in directly behind the iMac G5 screen and the control signal still reaches the unit to change channels and do the other things remotes do for a living - so it can't be infrared, right? Wrong.

Oh, and the EyeTV 2.1 for the Mac is very, very nice. The Titan TV EyeTV Programs screen has been improved considerably and looks and acts like it was designed for the Mac. Well, it was, actually! If you were willing to part with \$270 plus the cost of EyeTV software on top of that for the *EvolutionTV* unit, now you can have your cake and eat it too for \$99 USD. This is sooo sweet! Look at the EyeTV 2.1 review elsewhere in this issue (June 2006) of *macCompanion*.

Apple is supposed to come out with a media center-like systems and I think they could very well take the thumbdrive-sized *TVMicro*, license the technology from Miglia and include it inside the next gen Macs just like they did with the iSight camera. I say, "Why not?" Notice that the unit will not run on anything older than Mac OS X 10.4? That is because instead of processing externally like is done with the *EvolutionTV*, this unit relies on the CPU power of the Mac instead. If you want to convert VCR tape, the *EvolutionTV* is a better option. But who still uses VCRs or tape anyway? Most folks I know have gone the DVD route already. Also, while the *TVMicro* supports PAL and NTSC, it does not support SECAM (Eastern European and France) video formats, so I guess they are not selling this in France. Oh, and it records in MPEG-1 and MPEG-2.



I have been blessed with Cable, so there are two adapters that came in my box. One for the micro jack from the opposite end from the USB port and the other adapter that works with cable to connect. It took me a little while to figure out the business ends because the device to connect directly into the *TVMicro* was still hiding in the box. Otherwise, you would need to connect to an external antenna – and no, it doesn't do HDTV. That is the job of the *TVMini HD* we reviewed earlier in March.

Even though the *TVMicro* is the size of an Apple Shuffle or a gum pack, it does tend to run surprisingly warm.

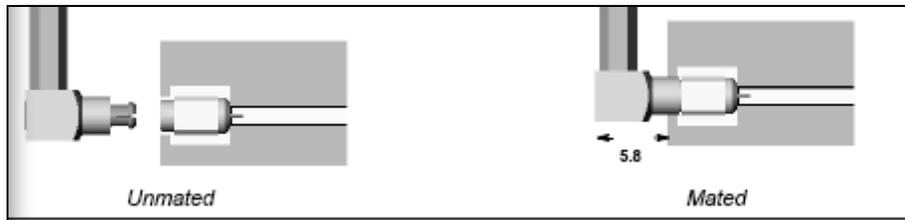
Now look at that jack. It is a proprietary Lucent connector known as an MC-Card connector and Apple uses it for the AirPort base station antenna jack. They originally were with the ORINOCO wireless cards from Lucent. These are gold-over-nickel snap-on connectors that can handle up to 5,000 matings and have a frequency range from DC up to 3 GHz.

An MC-Card plug goes into it as the male end. Only in the *TVMicro* case, the male adapter is straight-through instead of at a 90-degree angle as shown in this picture from Raidall.com



Female end of the *TVMicro*.

The other end of the MC-Card adapter is a PAL jack.



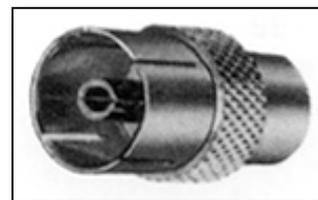
<http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/P/PAL.html>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PAL>

The other adapter is a PAL Male (Plug) to cable TV adapter.

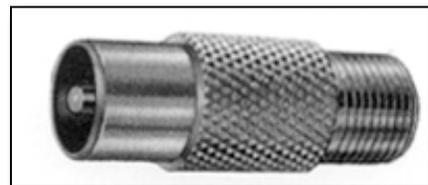


And the cable end is an F-pin (coax) connector jack, also rated up to 3 GHz.

PAL Female (Jack)



So the chain from the *TVMicro* to the cable is MC-Card jack > MC-Card plug adapter to PAL jack > PAL Plug adapter to F-pin jack. Now I have this daisy-chain thing sticking out the back of my iMac G5 that is about 5 inches long. If I wanted to, so as not to stress the USB connector in the iMac, I could use the included USB cable instead. But the video is awesome!



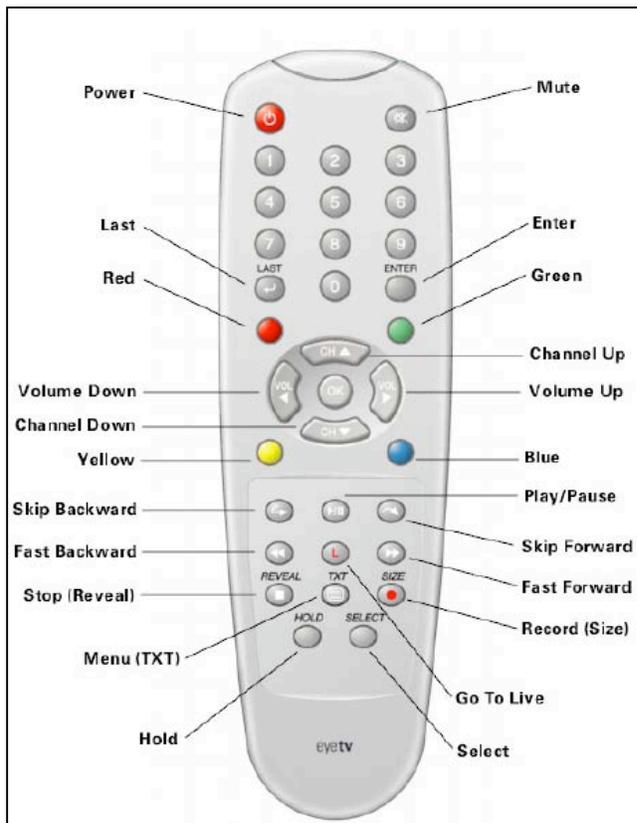
By the way, for technical support Miglia bows to Elgato. Apparently there isn't a whole lot that can go wrong with the *TVMicro* itself. After all it really is a dedicated solid-state thumbdrive. They call it a USB stick.

The video is phenomenal and I have it running in "best" mode.

The line below the lettering on the device has a green LED in it near the antenna/cable connector end and above the "o" is the communications port for the function between the remote and the *TVMicro*. Is it IR or RF? Can't be IR, because IR requires line-of-sight, right? Well the unit is the EyeTV Remote with the Miglia logo on it. And the 5-page *Infrared Remote Hardware Guide* says it is. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infrared>

This explains it; <http://www.hearinglossweb.com/Technology/ALDs/ir.htm> Reflections of infrared can be reflected and bounce around a room. I happen to have a mirrored wall behind my computer. Here is another reason why the USB cable is included, so that folks can get line-of-sight with the *TVMicro*, if necessary. And the added cable helps keep the stress off the USB jack in the computer. I initially put it on the top bezel of the iMac and then dropped it below on the foot. Then I saw the iMac picture on the Miglia website and figured I'd try it that way instead. Just keep the Infrared port free from obstructions and it works surprisingly well.

However, if you run out of batteries, or want to be tethered to a keyboard and mouse, the on-screen virtual remote works well too.



Looking at the Miglia Remote (the picture is from the Elgato *Infrared Remote Hardware Guide* manual) the Red button cycles backwards through open windows on the screen, the Green cycles forwards, the Yellow opens EyeTV Programs and the Blue toggles the on-screen remote on or off.

Now if you want to record H.264, then remember that the processing is going to be done by the CPU of the computer and not the external chip, as is done in the *EvolutionTV* unit.

And Elgato has really outdone themselves with EyeTV 2.1. It is a Ubinary version and works flawlessly on my iMac G5.

So I give Miglia a 4.5 for this one. Here is a petite DVR that works well. Just like a Mac. Now if Elgato can add a few more features to EyeTV and Miglia can work out the SECAM deal with the *TVMicro*...

Software

EyeTV 2 – Digital Recording Software

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

 <p>Elgato Systems, LLC 900 Kearny Street Suite 750 San Francisco, CA 94133 USA</p> <p>Or Elgato Systems GmbH Nymphenburgerstr.86 80636 München Germany http://www.elgato.com</p> <p>Released: January 2006 Requirements: PowerPC G4 500 MHz or faster or Mactel; Mac OS X 10.4.5 Tiger or later. tvtv service in Europe or TitanTV service in the Americas. \$79 USD CD or download or comes with Miglia's TVMicro. Maybe a Video iPod and/or Roxio's Toast 7 Titanium. FAQs: http://faq.elgato.com/index.php/C75 Comparison: http://www.elgato.com/index.php?file=products_eyetvmain_improved</p> <p>Strengths: Exports to Video iPods and other equipment or to DVDs using Roxio's Toast 7 Titanium for archiving.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Manual entry for recording future episodes. Rev 2.2 has some issues.</p> <p>Reviewed using an iMac G5 with Mac OS X 10.4.6.</p>	   
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If you used Elgato's EyeTV in the past, you will like the updated version. They have been actively trying to get folks to upgrade: http://www.elgato.com/index.php?file=products_eyetvmain_coupon

So what is the big deal besides the new onscreen Remote? They added an Electronic Program Guide that looks like it was made for Mac OS X (it was). There are one-button exporting to either Video iPods (H.264 or MPEG-4 video compression) or archiving to DVDs using Titanium Toast 7. Batch exporting is also supported. EyeTV 2 is now a Ubinary. Create Playlists and Channel Lists, including Digital Video Broadcasting <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DVB> and Advanced Television Systems Committee <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ATSC> formats. And recordings can be watched by accessing them via the Finder.

The EyeTV Program Guide content are supplied either by tvtv for European consumption or TitanTV for this side of the pond.

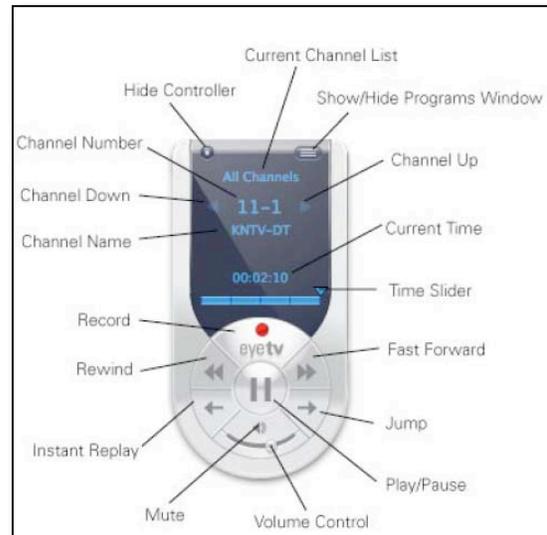
If you use a Mactel, HDTV 702p and 1080i formats can be processed at full resolution.

There is a 63-page EyeTV 2 Software Manual. It shows how to watch multiple programs (live and recorded). Watching two live channels requires two hardware tuning devices. Multifeeds work with non-analog units that use EyeTV 2.

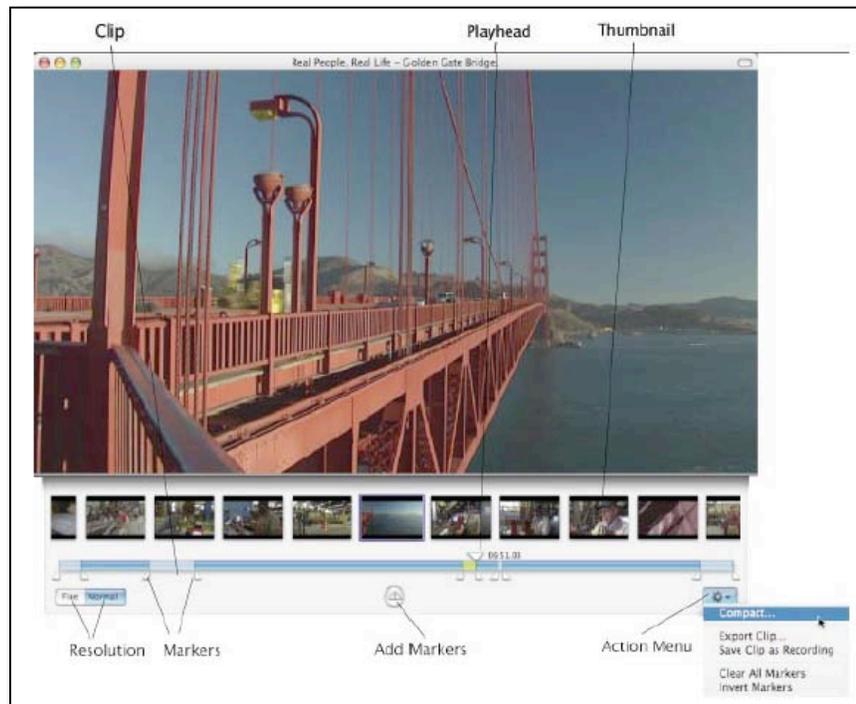
Viewing can be either automated or manually adjusted in either 4:3, 14.9, 16.9 or Wide screen ratios. And closed captioning is supported in the USA and Canada. DVB subtitling is also supported.

The on-screen controller has been updated to look like this.

For recording purposes, EyeTV 2 can wake up a Mac 2 minutes before recording begins or if the mac is turned off, it will boot the Mac to prep it for recording.



There is also an editing feature.



Recordings can also be compacted, but be careful, because marked clips will be permanently removed. And using the EyeTV Program Guide (EPG), recordings can be initialized remotely either through TitanTV or tvtv. Slick!

Preferences are also updated or new for recording, controls, the new guide, display, sound and devices.

And EyeTV 2 can also playback video CDs with the Open QuickTime Movie command in the File menu and also exported to QuickTime. Did you know what you can also export not just to iPod, but also to a Sony PlayStation Portable as well?

It appears the EyeTV 2 also supports most video formats. Those can go to Email, iDVD, iDVD Studio Pro, iMovie, iMovie HD, iPod, PSP (PlayStation Portable), iTunes or Web.

Listed formats are AAC Audio, Apple Lossless Audio, DV, DV 16.9, DivX AVI, HDV 720p, HDV1080i, H.264, MPEG-4, MPEG Elementary Stream, MPEG Program Stream, QuickTime Movie and 3G.

For the iPod, H.264 requires QuickTime 7.0.3 or later. The default is 320x240 or 368x208 600kbps, 25 or 29.97fps, baseline profile, multipass for H.264 video or 48,000Hz, stereo, 128kbps for MPEG-4 Audio.

An EyeTV Archive folder is added to your Documents folder on the Mac, but it can be located anywhere, but you must let EyeTV know the path. It contains the AutoTune log, XML structure and Buffer for Live TV, the scheduling and other EyeTV packages used to create this "TV on a Mac" magic.

There are also tips and techniques for learning how to digitize VHS and Hi-8 tapes or TiVo recordings, accessing EyeTV wirelessly on a TV and links to a few 3rd-party freeware, shareware and commercial apps at http://www.elgato.com/index.php?file=support_tips.

Version 2.2 came out the week of May 15 and it initially didn't work well with the TVMicro. The volume didn't function and I reported it. By the end of the week, they had fixed that issue. Version 2.2 also has a number of other fixes for the various EyeTV hardware devices and it now has VHS Assistant support built-in for creating DVDs from VHS tapes. It also resolves an issue that appeared with exporting to QuickTime movies and AAC audio that became apparent with QuickTime 7.1. However, I'm still discovering some things and I keep reporting them so expect a newer version shortly.

Open your Mac to the TV environment. Go see our review of the Miglia TVMicro in this issue of *macCompanion*. EyeTV 2 comes with it and it costs \$99 USD. Let's see, \$79 for just the software or \$99 with hardware. Hard to resist, isn't it?

iList Data 3.2 — a simple, low-cost database application

reviewed by Julie M. Willingham

Lakewood Studios

Ontario, Canada.

info@lakewoodstudios.com

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

Released: March 22, 2006

\$70 USD (\$50 USD for educational use)

72-page PDF user's guide is included.



Free demo download: “In demo mode, the software will display up to 25 records and is limited to 25 launches. (All of iList Data's features are otherwise fully functional.) After the demo period, iList Data defaults to ‘browse only’ mode.”

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later, 256 MB RAM (512 recommended) G3 350 or faster (G4 or G5 recommended), QuickTime 6.x or later.

Audience: All user levels.

Strengths: Ten easy-to-use, widely different database templates are included; fast developer response to questions; ability to drag and drop URLs and text into fields.

Weaknesses: Appearance preferences applied to all databases; most date entries not in intuitive format (YYYY-MM-DD); fields in new record windows in alphabetical order by field name and can't be changed; no index in otherwise good manual.

The software was tested on a 733 MHz PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 1.25 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.6.

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

Introduction

I read a one-paragraph review of this product in MacWorld (April 2006) and promptly asked to review it. I have loads of text and graphic information that I want to put on my computer, but only if I can sort it, search within it, and print some of it. I've used both FileMaker and Access at work (more than three years ago and not at all since), but don't want to pay for all those features and power I don't need. So iList Data 3.2 seemed like a good database program for me to test, and I was able to make it work for me most of the time.



What Lakewood Studios Has to Say

“iList Data's benefits include:

- ten database templates: Create your first database in seconds
- user designed windows for creating, editing, and finding data
- ten find modes including find on field, find by value, and find parent
- support for text, number, date, and time fields plus integrated support for Boolean, path, URL, color, JPEG, and calculation values
- built-in relational support for searching and displaying data across tables
- on-the-fly calculations and column summaries
- dynamic reports: Retrieve both the data and shell of a report from the database itself **NEW!**
- nine window sets: Save and recall custom interface setups with one click **ENHANCED!**”
- search history and bookmarks
- four batch editing modes including multi edit and auto number
- inline editing and pop-up editing of fields via keyword lists
- inline and summary graphing. View dot, line, bar, and fill graphs alongside your data
- advanced SQL editing for experienced users and built-in help by example support for novices
- a built in resizable image viewer and full screen slideshow mode
- a dedicated thumbnail palette for viewing JPEG and other web-based images **NEW!**
- speech synthesis
- Apple iLife integration: Send images to iPhoto 5 with one click **NEW!**
- Microsoft Office X and 2004 integration: Send record lists to Excel and Word with one click
- and much more...

Most of these benefits are elaborated on further and illustrated on their small but thorough website.

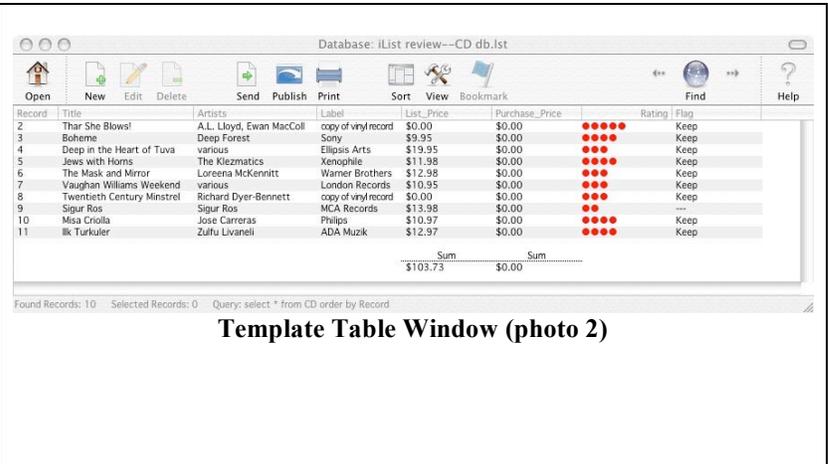
My Experience with iList Data

After downloading the software, I put the application itself into my Applications folder, only to find that it didn't work. By contacting the developer, I found that I needed to put the entire iList Data folder into my Applications folder. (I don't like this method, because I like to scan my alphabetical list of apps for their icons, and the folders don't usually have custom icons.)

Then, just like the website stated, by using the custom templates, I was able to “create (my) first database in seconds.” Actually, I used all the templates a little bit, but for this review settled on listing some CDs, making a contact list of the extended family's pets, answering a survey, and making a to do list. I could make a new record (entry) by using the “New” button in the table window or by choosing *Database > New Record* from the menu bar. In either case, a separate window popped up for me to enter data (photo 1). But after dutifully filling in all the fields, I was puzzled when only a few of them showed up in the resultant table (photo 2), a situation that took a long time to answer.

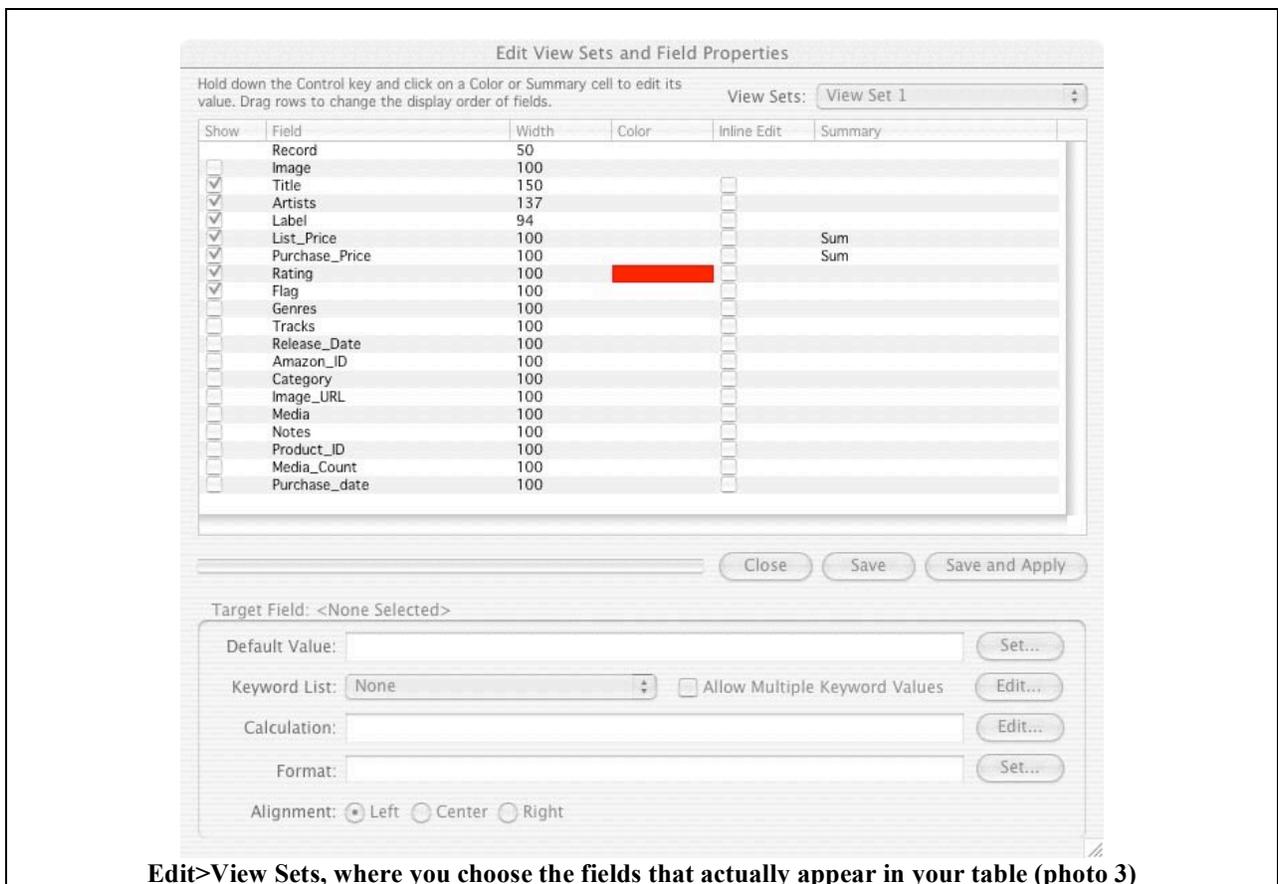


Template New Record Window (photo 1)



Template Table Window (photo 2)

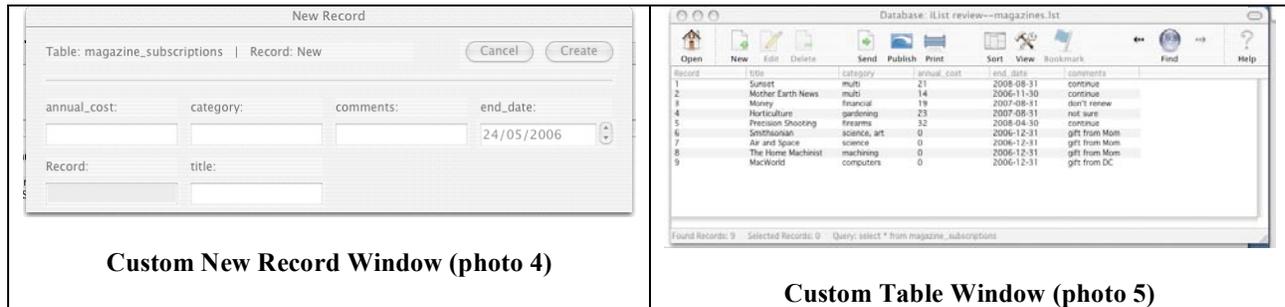
It took a lot of reading to figure out how to make the new record window look like its table: you have to go to *Edit > View Sets* (photo 3) and check or uncheck the boxes next to the fields you want to appear on the final table. It took a lot more reading to figure out how to completely remove fields that appear in the templates (included or custom): you go to *Administer > Drop Field*, and to add fields, you go to *Administer > Add Field*. Simple enough, but why can't all the editing be done from the same place?



Edit>View Sets, where you choose the fields that actually appear in your table (photo 3)

Other things that I wanted to do that were much easier to do included clicking on a column to sort entries by that column, either ascending or descending; rearranging table columns by dragging and dropping them; linking to documents elsewhere on my computer by specifying an entry as a “path” and browsing for a file; and creating a custom database.

For the purpose of this review, I set up a custom database for our magazine subscriptions. *Using File > New Database > New Custom Database*, I entered the fields (columns) in the order I wanted them to appear in the final table (photo 5), but the new record window appeared with the blank fields in alphabetical order by field name (photo 4).



To me, this is wrong: I specified the fields in the order in which I wanted to input information, because when I think about our magazines, their name is the first thing that comes to mind. True, the field “name” appears before “annual cost” in the table, but I would rather have the same order in both windows. Because of this, instead of using the Enter key to move smoothly between fields in the new record window, I had to either jump around with the mouse in the window or jump around with my eyes and brain while reading the paper on which I’d written my notes.

What I Didn’t Like

As I just mentioned, I had to jump around in the new record window to enter information the way I wanted to. For some reason, this window does not support use of the arrow keys, only the Enter key or the mouse.

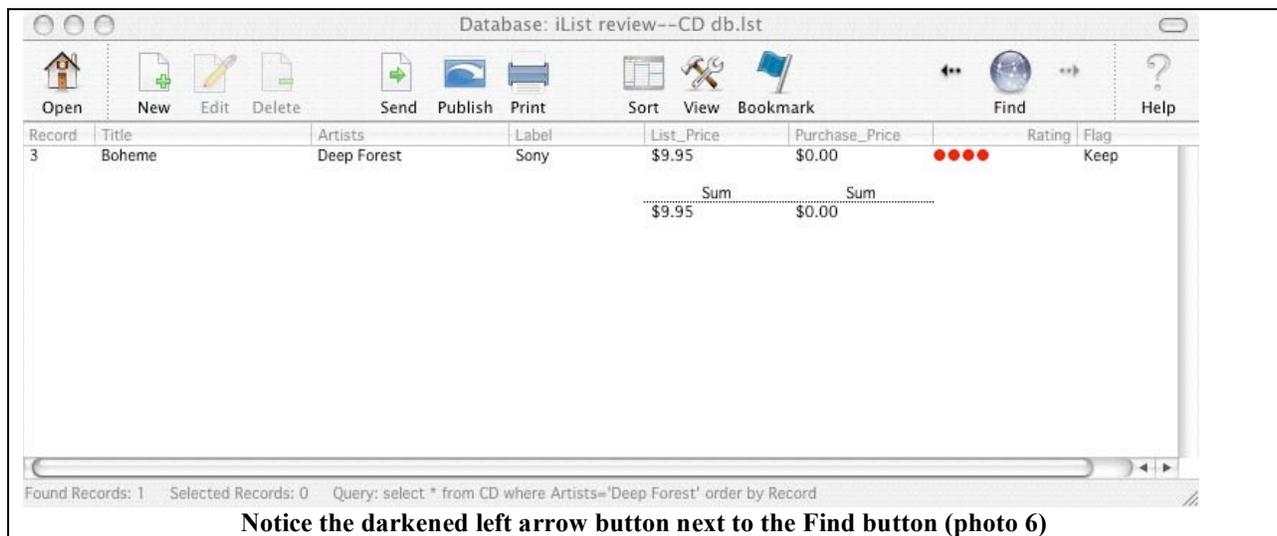
The user’s guide is thorough and has a three-page table of contents, but it has no index. This alone cost me several hours of lost time hunting for confusing situations that actually had simple solutions, once I found them. I finally found it easier to use the Search function that showed up in Preview or Adobe Reader. Lakewood Studios, please consider putting in an index or PDF bookmarks so I don’t have to scroll through so many pages.

It took more reading to find out that I didn’t have to use the record window to edit old records, but that’s the default method in all the templates. It’s a lot easier and more intuitive, I think, to edit rows of information by row, which you do by selecting “Inline Editing” in the Edit>View Sets window *for each field that you want to edit that way*. Why not be able to edit any part of an entire record that way without selecting all the fields?

Why not have text-wrap in the columns? It’s annoying to be entering a long piece of information, whether by inline editing or through the new record window, such as explicit directions to someplace off the beaten path, and have your text gradually disappear out the left side of the cell. Then, in order to see everything at once, you have to widen the column in the table, and you can’t do anything about it in the new record window.

I used the Find function from within my CD database (photo 2), which has only ten records, to look for the CD “Jews with Horns”, by clicking on the Find button. A blank search window appeared, identical to the new record window (photo 1) except for the top line which had me choose “And” or “Or” mode. Being lazy, I keyed “jews” into the title field, and was surprised to find that there were no matching records. Ditto for “Jews”, and for “Klezmatics” in the artists field. Apparently a simple quick search was not as simple as I thought: iList Data wanted me to list the *entire album title exactly as originally entered*, down to the upper case letters in the right places. Why? How is that a simple search? (And no, after that response I did not test the SQL or Boolean search methods.) Again, after a lot of reading, I found that there are ways to do these things.

So then I entered “The Klezmatics” into the artists field to search for a record, and I got a table that looked like the original table with only one record on it. OK, now what? I thought I’d lost my original table, which I finally found by using Find>All Records in the menu bar. Through later experimentation I learned that I also could have used the left arrow button next to the Find button in the results table (photo 6) to return to my original table.



What I Liked

Lakewood Studios states “iList Data is the ideal choice for families, educators, business people, and researchers who require a powerful but easy-to use database solution for personal use. Quickly build multimedia catalogs, to do lists, inventory databases, and other data management solutions.” I believe that this software would work well for all these groups and I am certain that it can do everything mentioned, but “quickly” is a relative term. Certainly data can be entered quickly: the included templates were very easy to use, and custom templates were easy to create, but fine-tuning them was a trickier endeavor.

“Quickly send a table of data to Microsoft Office X or 2004.” At the top of the table window, I clicked on Send (photo 6) and a .txt table appeared on the screen. When I tried saving it, a dialogue box advised me to save it as a Microsoft Word document to keep the formatting. I also saved the same table successfully in Excel. (I am using Office X.)

Prompt and accurate responses to technical support questions.

iList Data includes the following templates, all of which can be modified:

- Appointment Database
- CD Catalog
- Contact Database
- Diary Entries
- DVD Catalog
- Grade Book
- Image Catalog
- Sales Tracking
- Research Survey
- Task Manager

Conclusions

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to test this software as extensively as I liked because I used all my days off from paid work to install a new irrigation system on our farm. However, I learned enough to know that despite its quirks, iList Data 3.2 is worth its price even for the simple tasks that I assigned it.

Based on my experience with iList Data, I'm tempted to give it only 3.5 macC's due to the frustrations I had with it, especially the difficulty in locating information in the "unindexed" user's guide. It probably would have been faster to e-mail for tech support every time I had a question. But everything I tried really did work for me, and since I did not test every function and did not use huge databases, I am willing to bump up my rating to 4.0 macC's. For the price, you probably can't beat it.

Notes:

Discount available: "Students, faculty, and educational institutions can purchase iList Data 3 for \$49.95 U.S. Please fax a copy of your student or faculty ID to us. (If your e:mail address indicates the name of your school or includes an .edu extension this is not required.)"

Read what others have said about iList Data 3.2:

VersionTracker review: <http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/27853>

MacUpdate review: <http://macupdate.com/info.php/id/19304>

MacWorld review: <http://www.macworld.com/2006/02/reviews/ilistdata/index.php>

Print Explosion Deluxe 3.0.1.1 – Print Projects!

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Nova Development Corporation
23801 Calabasas Road
Suite 2005
Calabasas, CA 91302
1-818-591-9600
FAX: 1-818-591-8885

<http://www.novadevelopment.com>

Product site:

<http://www.novadevelopment.com/products/us/pnm/default.aspx>

Released: May 4, 2006

\$50 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later; PowerPC G3 or later or Mactel;
512MB RAM; CD or DVD Drive.

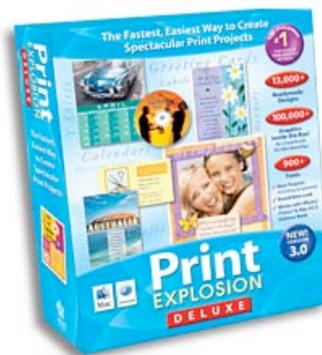
Comes With: DVD and 120-page User Manual.

Supplies: <http://www.perfectshirt.com>

Intended for non-graphics artists.

Strengths: Ubinaryied. Mac OS X personified. Simple Mac-like interface with a short learning curve. Makes anyone look good who wants to print out cards, banners or stationary, etc. Other graphic files can be imported.

Weaknesses: Has a proprietary graphic file format so files can't be transferred to other programs for editing, but documents can be webified.



Even as we try to move away from paper and on towards the paperless office environment, there always seems to always be a need for printed items and Nova Development has been at the forefront for years providing neat, easy-to-use software and resources to make that process to print and distribute eye candy a joy.

They just made it even easier by going the Ubinary route with the latest release of *Print Explosion Deluxe 3.0*. Of course, adding up to 900 fonts helps too. And then there are all those templates, so we don't have to start from scratch and work with both raster and vector graphics. And if you want to play around with morphing text, you can do so. And send that final product to everyone you love or who you think will enjoy your work by doing a mail merge. But if you want to start from scratch, you may.

Earlier versions had some issues, and those were resolved by taking advantage of the Mac OS X technologies. It integrates with the iApps (okay, iLife) and Address Book. Oh, and we can do CD/DVD covers if we want to too.

Now, it took a little while to install, because the final app takes up 1.73GB of space. Yes, you read correctly. 1.73 GB of hard drive space.

There are four easy lessons in the included tutorial on customizing greeting cards, making scrapbook pages (scrapbooking seems to be a BIG THING nowadays...), CD/DVD labeling and even personalizing T-shirts. And if you want supplies, you can even go to <http://www.perfectshirt.com>, which is Nova Development's own on-line accessories store.

If you want to “scratch”, there are choices of paper sizes from 8.5 x up to 110 inches and lots to choose from B to T, meaning; banners, business cards, calendars, certificates, crafts, Email greetings, envelopes, greeting cards, invitations, labels, letterhead and fax, matching stationary, photo cards, postcards, scrapbooks, signs and posters and finally, T-shirts. Or if you don’t want to “roll your own”, there are plenty of templates to choose from. Something like 13,000 templates. Gosh, no wonder it took a while to load! Well no, it really was all those 100,000 Art Explosion clip art images. Or was it? Seems some stayed on the DVD and can be imported as needed. So it IS the templates!

If you need to use CDs instead of the included DVD, you can swap the DVD out for CDs, but you have to call Nova Development’s Customer Service to do so. Also, the 900 bonus fonts all are on the DVD, so as not to clog up the hard drive. Wait a minute, there are “only” 17 MB on the DVD being used. . . Okay, you caught me. I was going to just load them all, but Font Book wants me to not take the shotgun approach to font installations and look at each one and validate before moving on. Sigh. The DVD has 3.04GB used, so obviously, not all of it transferred over to the hard drive. Okay, time to go see if there is an update online. Yep, there is; 3.0.1.1. Speed Download 4.0.1 comes in handy! (Reviewed elsewhere in this issue of *macCompanion*.)

So what I see is that I can access the graphics on the DVD and the fonts as well by opening a template and clicking on the appropriate items in the menus to see and then install whatever I see.

The DVD will be needed as a reference disc if we want to go exploring for either images or fonts. A-ha! Sez I... I can get creative and do all kinds of neat stuff with text and graphics, but if I want to take full advantage, I am going to need that DVD close by – or load the DVD as an image and use the items from there instead. Duh! (Note to self: use the Mac to full advantage, Dingbat!)

Using the Font Book, I noticed after I shut down and restarted that there are a whole lot more fonts in my font folder now on my hard drive, so the transfer function for the *Bonus Fonts* seemed to work.

Do I really want to print out 110-inch banners? I can if I ever feel the inclination to do so.

So now you’ve tripped through some of the discovery stage for this print and graphics app. What I haven’t covered are all the twists and turns and swirly colorful things that can be done with text or customizing graphics. What can’t be done is that even though graphics can be imported, graphics cannot be exported. But what the heck! I think you might want to also grab the other apps that Nova Development has, well, developed.

I personally recommend this app without reservation. It is just a fun app to play with and doesn’t get in the way of creativity. And isn’t that the kind of app we all like to use with our Macs?

Reason 3.0.5 Stand-Alone Music Production Instrument

reviewed by Daphne Kalfon



Propellerhead Software of Sweden

<http://www.propellerheads.se>

Released: May 19, 2006

\$499 USD

Requirements:

G4 or G5 processor, 256 MB RAM, 2 GB free hard disk space, CD-ROM drive, Mac OS 10.2 or later, 10.3 or later strongly recommended, monitor with 800x600 pixels res or better, and also recommended, a MIDI keyboard with built-in MIDI Interface, or MIDI keyboard and interface.

Strengths: With its many instrument and effects device modules, Reason is a highly versatile and powerful software program. In addition, using Reason's unique ability to flip around the rack, users are able to route virtual cables between devices in a limitless number of ways to create a unique configuration for each project. Reason is also a very stable program, rarely susceptible to bugs or crashes.

Weaknesses: Reason cannot record audio tracks, cannot be expanded with third-party plug-in effects and instruments, and doesn't include a notation editor.



In May of 2006, Propellerhead software announced a version of Reason for Intel based Mac computers, called 3.0.5. This version offers full native compatibility with Apple's Intel based computers. In terms of functionality, this version of Reason is identical to the currently shipping version, 3.0.4. Contrary to previous notices, Reason 3.0.5 will be released as a Universal Binary, that is, an application that runs on both older PPC Macs and the new Intel based Macs. This has been achieved without compromises to performance on either hardware platform.

The Propellerhead website (see above) provides a great deal of information on Reason's many features, and I would highly recommend visiting their site. For example, you can download a demo program of Reason, which quits after 20 minutes, but I tried it and it's enough time to go quickly through and check out the various features of the program. You can find it at this link:

http://www.propellerheads.se/download/index.cfm?fuseaction=download_reason_demo

Besides that there is a FAQ page, resource page, samples of sounds created by the various devices, a page where users have uploaded music that they have created using Reason, news, updates, online store, and much, much more.

One drawback to reason that I should mention is that Reason doesn't have the capability of recording audio tracks nor can it be expanded with the use of third-party plug-ins. However, using Propellerhead's ReWire protocol, Reason's modules can be controlled from applications such as *Pro Tools*, *Logic*, *Cubase*, and even *GarageBand*.

Reason comes with 3 discs: the Program Disc, Factory Sound Bank Disc, and Orkester Sound Bank Disc. Also included in the box is a beginner's manual and of course, the authorization card.

Following the steps in the manual, it was pretty straightforward to install the program as well as the two sound discs. During the installation process, you get a lot of encouragement to register your product right away :)

The next chapter in the manual is a "Quick Tutorial". I was instructed to choose the tutorial song and open it. You are shown the general controls on the transport bar, and shown what the controls on the mixer do, such as the faders, pan settings and auxiliary send effects knobs. I was introduced to the delay and chorus/flanger effects devices that were used in the song, and played around with the amounts of those effects being sent to each device, using the mixer. I found it to be easy and straightforward and helped me learn my way around the basics of the program.

Then the next tutorial was to create a Reason song from scratch. The step-by-step process outlined in the manual was once again very easy to follow and guided me through to creating my own setup and selecting the sounds I wanted to work with. First I chose synth sounds from two different synthesizer devices. Next, using the Redrum instrument device, I was guided through to creating my own drum beat. For that I chose a patch/drum kit from the Redrum drum folder, and then, using the Redrum machine, I created my own groove from scratch. Then I added a few more instrument devices to my rack, chose a few more sounds and added some audio effects, and voilà, you can hear the results of that tutorial with my first sample mp3 here:

[http://www.macompanion.com/archives/June2006/Reason first sample.mp3](http://www.macompanion.com/archives/June2006/Reason%20first%20sample.mp3)

After doing the short guided tour in the manual, I then went on to read through several chapters in the manual and found it easy to understand and well laid out, and it answered any questions that came up in my learning process. What I liked too is that if you hold your mouse arrow over a menu icon in the program, it will tell you what that menu item does. Then, if you want to learn more about it, you can do so by looking it up in the manual. I also found that because I've used other music software programs, for example *Cubase* and *GarageBand*, that many of the items in Reason were easy to figure out because they are similar. By that I'm referring to features that relate specifically to the arrange window section.

Speaking of the arrange window, Reason allows you to separate it completely from the "rack" as they call it, which is especially handy if you need to view it at a larger size (everything can be resized by the way), and even better, if you happen to have two monitors, then you can dedicate one monitor to the arrange window, and the other monitor to just the rack, the latter of which can get pretty big depending on what you're trying to do. That's a handy feature.

In addition to the manual, there is an online PDF document, which goes into each chapter in more detail.

I decided I would try to do another music sample, this time using the Dr. REX drum loop player. The instrument device comes with a ton of presets (ready-made drum loops). I chose one from the "Abstract HipHop" bank, and then went on to add more instrument and effects devices to the rack to create what you hear in my next music sample:

[http://www.macompanion.com/archives/June2006/Reason second sample.mp3](http://www.macompanion.com/archives/June2006/Reason%20second%20sample.mp3)

For those first two music samples, I used the sounds from the Factory Sound Bank disc, which are all pretty impressive, as I found when I went through and listened to many of them. In addition to those sounds, there are others that you can purchase that have been adapted to work with Reason.

What I would like say at this point however, is that I think it's pretty hard to really know how to manipulate all the knobs and sliders and settings on the various devices to best effect. I'm talking about envelope filters, oscillators, frequency modulators and that sort of thing. Some of the sound effects devices do come with presets, which is great, but some don't, and the instrument devices as well come with lots of bells and whistles. Even though I used some of these settings myself, I didn't feel like I knew what I was doing, except for the very basic things. This I feel can be a drawback to getting the full use of this software program.

I should mention however, that I did read on the website that a 4-hour DVD has been created to help you learn the program, which you can buy separately or purchase as a bundle with Reason 3.0. I haven't seen the DVD as it wasn't included with my review copy, but I still think I'd recommend getting it because some of the features in Reason are fairly complex, especially what I just mentioned, and the DVD may help the user to better learn how to manipulate all those sound effects features contained in the program.

Besides the DVD, there are a lot of books and other resources to help you learn the ins and outs of Reason, all of which can be found listed on the website.

As mentioned earlier, there was also a disc called the Orkester Sound Bank, and I wanted to see what I could create using only those sounds. I seemed to really like the device called the RV7000 Advanced Reverb. It comes with lots of presets and really does a great job. I mention this because I think I used it in each of my three music samples. Anyway, getting back to the Orkester Sound Bank, I believe I can say that the orchestral sounds that come with Reason are of a very good quality and certainly get the job done when you need to put some orchestral sounds into your music, or to create an orchestral piece.

However, on that last note (no pun intended), I would not personally recommend Reason if what you intend to do mostly is to create fully orchestral pieces. I don't think Reason is geared toward that particular use. It feels pretty clunky to me for that purpose. That probably explains why Reason doesn't come with a notation editor. I would rather go the Sibelius route for something of that nature. But just to add in a few orchestral sounds here and there, Reason is great.

Okay, so here is what I created using some of the sounds from the Orkester Sound Bank disc:

http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/June2006/Reason_third_sample.mp3

In conclusion, I would say that right out of the box, Reason is pretty easy and straightforward to get started making music with, but to master it well, as with any more sophisticated software program, would take some time and effort. However, I believe that any efforts to master Reason would be time well spent given what this powerful, versatile piece of software can do. Hats off to the Propellerhead team of developers.

Speed Download 4.0.2

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

<p>YAZSOFT</p> <p>YazSoft info@yazsoft.com http://www.yazsoft.com/index.html http://www.yazsoft.com/download.html Tour: http://www.yazsoft.com/sitepages/tour.html Free 15-day trial. Released: May 4, 2006 \$25 USD http://order.kagi.com/cgi-bin/store.cgi?storeID=7NT&& Upgrades for \$15 USD. Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.6 or later</p> <p>Strengths: Really does speed up downloads!</p> <p>Weaknesses: None found.</p>	  
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What has happened to *Speed Download (SD4)* since we reviewed it back in January 2004? Yazsoft added a few things to make it a download manager instead of just a quicker way to download files off the Internet as depicted in this diagram.

Have you ever wanted to download files but when you were not actively using up the bandwidth? Now you can schedule a time to download files. Or you can throttle the pipe and let the download do its thing in the background while you work online.

If you work with others who use SD4, you can run encrypted files between locations and connect and control remotely.



If you are a fan of .Mac accounts and use iDisks, SD4 also is integrated to upload and download files from your .Mac account.

And if you ever experienced partial downloads and had to start over, that is a thing of the past with SD4. It picks up where the file left off and if files are over 4GB, it handles them too. And it keeps a log of what transpired too.

If you've been able to wrap your mind around Smart Folders, SD4 knows how to integrate with them.

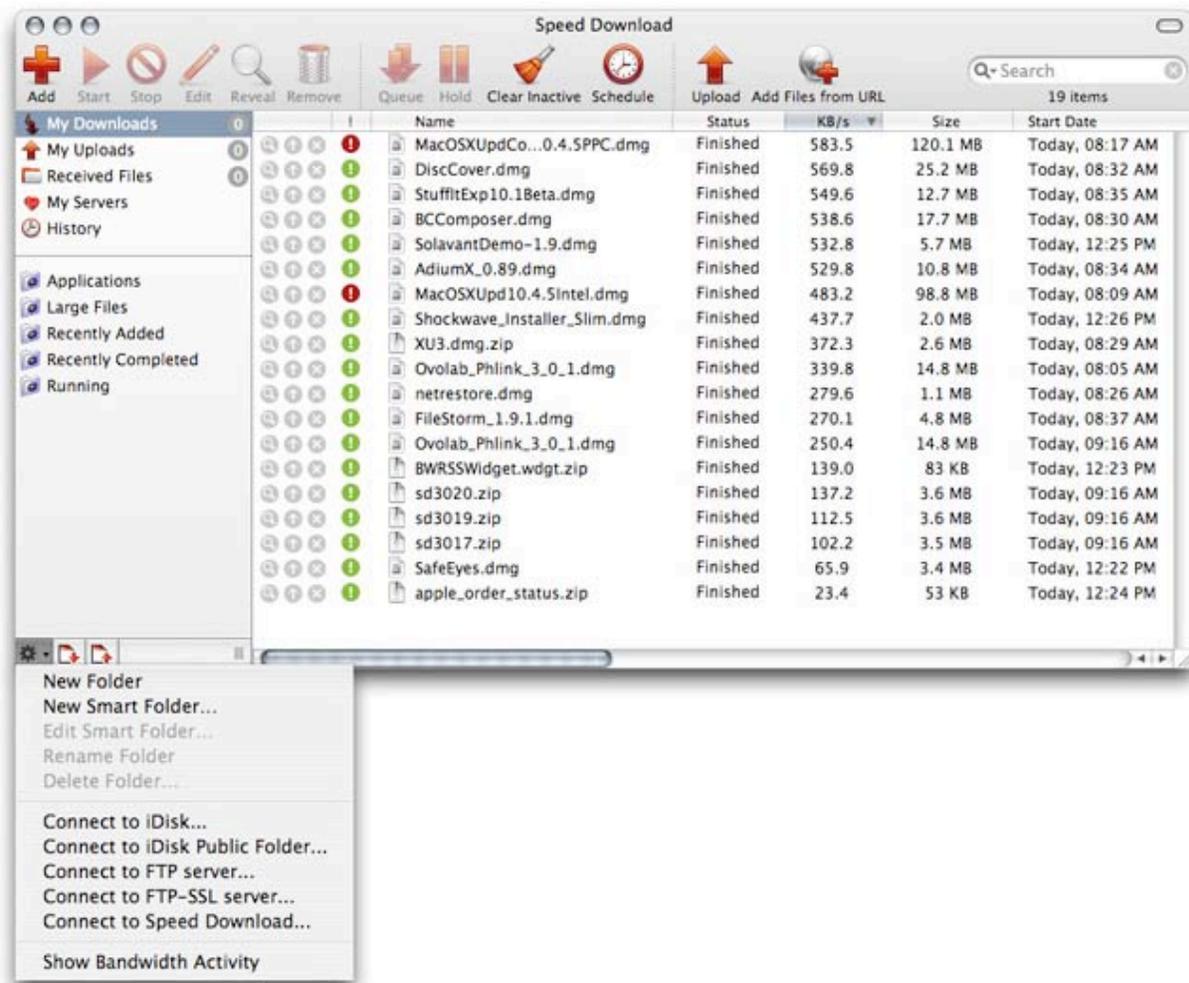
SD4 can be toggled on and off when using Safari as a browser for recalcitrant sites and can even download partially downloaded Safari files. Simply drag the partially downloaded Safari file onto the SD icon in the dock, and watch it resume exactly where it left off!

If you ever wanted to download a whole website and links, you can.

Oh, and it plays nice in synching with iTunes.

It also works with FlashGot (Mozilla plugin <http://www.flashgot.net/whats>) and Growl <http://growl.info/about.php>.

If you want to learn more, take the tour above.



What is not in the tour are references to the BitTorrent app called *Transmission* for cross-platform downloads. <http://transmission.m0k.org/>

I coincidentally downloaded a few updates from MacSpeech (beta of iListen), NetNewsWire, EarthDesk, Macromedia Dreamweaver 8, Skype, Growl and the Sandvox beta. I didn't expect much, but you know something? This app rocks! The KB/s (that's KiloBYTES and not Kilobits, folks) really are similar to the graphics shown above. I'm on a 3MB download link through Charter.net and so far haven't seen anything above 400 KB/s throughput yet and don't really expect to, since Charter does a pretty good job throttling throughput on their own (insert tone of sarcasm here).

I even tested the partial download and restart loading function and that actually works like a dream.

SD4 gives *Transmit* a run for the FTP money by permitting auto-resuming to Put or Get files using SSL to upload or download files from an FTP site. And it can do multiple FTP processes simultaneously.

If you surf the Internet and downloads files a lot, this is just one of those Swiss Army Knife apps that is a "gotta have".

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Apple iLife '06 (Mac DVD)



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iLife '06 is the easiest way to make the most out of every bit of your digital life. Use your Mac to collect, organize and edit the various elements. Transform them into mouth-watering masterpieces with Apple-designed templates. Then share the magic moments in beautiful books, colorful calendars, da... [Read more](#)
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Product Description
iWork '05 is the perfect companion to iLife. It consists of two applications: Pages, a word-processing application, and Keynote 2, a major upgrade to the Keynote presentation application. By combining the graphics power of Mac OS X with the rich media integration of iLife, Apple is building the succ... [Read more](#) ([Why is this recommended to me?](#))

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June 2006, Volume 4 Issue 6

Apple Store for Individuals

<http://store.apple.com/AppleStore/WebObjects/BizCustom.woa/wo/StoreReentry.wo?cid=AOSA10000025758&siteID=%2Foi97eu4uMU-AtGr6EOxXtw%2FizYZGve3Aw&qprm=78313&family=iMac>



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Get to Know iMac

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In the Box

- iMac
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- Apple Keyboard
- Mighty Mouse
- Power cord
- Install/restore DVDs
- Printed and electronic documentation

Mac OS X v10.4 Tiger

Tiger offers the amazing Spotlight search technology, handy Dashboard widgets and hundreds more features. Tiger also includes the following

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<http://store.apple.com/AppleStore/WebObjects/BizAgent?qprm=126559>

The Apple Store (U.S.)

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Apple Store Business

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- MacBook Pro

Macs with PowerPC

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- Power Mac G5
- PowerBook G4

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- AppleCare
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- Digital Cameras & Video Displays
- iSight
- Memory
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- More Accessories...

Servers

- Xserve G5
- Xserve RAID

iPod

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- iPod nano
- iPod shuffle

iPod Accessories

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- Apple Seminars
- Apple Training
- Consultants Network
- Developer Connection
- Software Maintenance
- Volume Licensing
- Xserve Accessories

Work Essentials

- Mac OS X v10.4 "Tiger"
- Mac OS X Server v10.4
- Power Mac G5

Pro Video/Film

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- Final Cut Pro 5
- QuickTime 7 Pro for Mac OS X

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- Adobe InDesign CS2
- Illustrator CS2 v12.0 Retail Mac

Pro Photo

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Lionhead Studios Limited and Feral Interactive - Black & White 2

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



Prepare for the second coming - Black & White 2 is heading for the Mac

Feral interactive is enraptured to announce that Lionhead's latest release, Black & White 2, is bound for the the Mac.

From the creative mind of god game developer Peter Molyneux and RTS-creator Ron Miller, Black & White 2 is the sequel to the critically acclaimed hit Black & White. In this game that mixes up strategy and sim genres, you reprise your role as a powerful deity in search of a following and return to the once idyllic world of Eden. The land, however, has transformed itself. The inhabitants of this breathtaking 3D world have lost their innocence and developed new weapons and technology.

Will you be an evil or benevolent deity? That's the choice you must make upon entering a warring world in Black & White 2. Every decision you take will have an impact. Each action and inaction prompts obvious changes to buildings, flora and fauna, all morphing to reflect your personality. Like its wildly successful predecessor, Black & White, the sequel is all about moral choices.

With the help of your gigantic Creature that you raise from infancy, you must earn the respect and worship of the natives. How you choose to do that, whether through nurturing them or terrorizing them, is up to you. Will your sovereignty herald peaceful coexistence, or domination and conquest?

Check <http://www.FeralInteractive.com> for more information on Black & White 2 for Mac OS X in the coming weeks and months.

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Lionhead Studios Limited and Feral Interactive –The Movies

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



Lights down, roll camera and get into the action - This summer the Movies is coming to a Mac near you!

Feral Interactive proudly presents a Macintosh release of a Lionhead Studios game, based on an original concept by Peter Molyneux.

The Movies™ is a game that enables you to build and control your very own Hollywood motion picture studio. Starting at the dawn of the silver screen, you compete with other budding movie moguls to create a string of box office smashes and rule the industry.

All the things you have ever heard about Tinseltown - from starlet scandals to box-office records, from greenlighting a script to making the final cut - are all right here. A unique mix of strategy and artistry, The Movies™ demands that you do it all, from developing a slate of films to formulating a release strategy, you must manage the introduction of new technology, turn talent spotter and make unknowns into stars and then manage their ballooning egos.

Amazingly, it also lets you get behind the camera as a Director to create your own blockbusters, 'B' Movies or arthouse epics.

Movie mogul, talent agent or film director. You can be one or you can be all three. That's the magic of The Movies™.

David Stephen of Feral Interactive said:

"It's a delight and an honour to announce that we will be bringing the glamour of The Movies™ to the Mac, the world's best personal computer. At this time I would just like to thank my agent, my mother and my therapist for their unfailing support during this process."

Peter Molyneux of Lionhead Studios said:

"We are absolutely thrilled and delighted that the Movies will be coming to a Mac near you soon. The glamorous and artistic nature of The Movies means the Mac makes a perfect home for this game. For this we'd like to thank Feral, without whom this would not be possible."

The Movies will be opening on the Mac this Summer as a Universal Application. Check <http://www.FeralInteractive.com> for more information on The Movies, a Universal Application for Mac OS X, in the coming weeks and months.

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pH Defined: pH simply means potential hydrogen. Every one-point decrease on the pH scale is 10 times more acidic. For example, a drop from 7.0 to 2.0 is 100,000 times more acidic for your body!

Mineralize: Every Sachet of X2O contains calcium, magnesium, and over 70 trace minerals. These essential minerals (electrolytes) become ionic in water allowing them to be absorbed quickly and easily by your body.

X2O is delivered in a pure ionic form, which means it is immediately bioavailable to the body. X2O may also help your body to:

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- Cleanse the kidneys, intestines, and liver
- Protect your body from free radical cell damage
- Increase muscle and joint mobility
- Increase your oxygen levels
- Control digestive problems
- Regulate blood sugar
- Manage blood pressure
- Neutralize harmful acids that lead to illness
- Help in fighting the battle against cancer and other diseases

Revitalize: Alkalinity = good health. X2O transforms your water into a powerful alkaline beverage, which fights against the physical stress caused by today's fast-paced lifestyles.

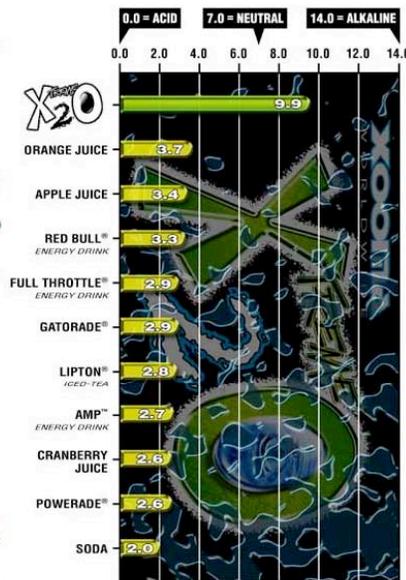
It takes 32 glasses of alkaline water to neutralize the acid from one 12 oz. soda. Each time you drink acidic soda, coffee, tea, and energy drinks your body uses its own buffers (from bone and dna) to raise the body's alkalinity to maintain your healthy blood pH level of 7.35-7.45. [Click here to see how!](#)

The Facts:

"More than 1 in 5 Americans unknowingly drink tap water polluted with feces, radiation or other contaminants. Nearly 1,000 deaths each year and at least 400,000 cases of waterborne illness may be attributed to contaminated water"
 -The New York Times - June 2, 1995
 Clean your water with X2O - [Click here to see how!](#)

ORP Testing:

Xooma X2O has also been tested by an independent laboratory located in the NASA Langley Research Center. The degree of "negativity" of an ORP reading is an indicator of how bioavailable and bioabsorbable a product will be in your body. The lower the test reading, the more ions are available for your body's metabolic functions. X2O is the only product of its kind to register "minus" readings on the ORP meter; a huge benefit over the other products tested.



pH LEVELS

macCompanion Media Kit

We are the Macintosh® Professional Network (MPN), Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). MPN, LLC continues to evolve, ever since its creation in 1996 as a way to reach out to those who use computers for a living in an effort to make their lives easier and their work both enjoyable and profitable.

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

Besides our website, we also create *macCompanion* as a freely available PDF-based monthly. It averages about 100 pages per month. July 2004 is the first-year anniversary of this labor of love. The *macCompanion* staff is an all-volunteer team of writers and reviewers from many parts of the globe, and they also have a great wealth of knowledge and experience in their backgrounds. That base of talent also continues to keep growing as the Macintosh Professional Network expands.

Statistical Analysis

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

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

Advertising with *macCompanion*

We have four advertising options you may choose from, and multiple months will receive a 20% discount for both website and PDF-based ads. All advertising must be paid in advance. We accept credit card payments via PayPal, checks, money orders by regular mail and cash in US currency by hand.

Site Ad Rate

We offer site ads for a fixed-budget price of only \$100 per month on our site. Following the KISS principle, we accept banner ads in only one size at this time - 468x60 pixels (per the [Interactive Advertising Bureau](#) standards for a Full Banner Ad Interactive Marketing Unit.) The ad will be rotated through with other ads, and there is no limit to how many you want to include.

The billing cycle begins based on the first day the ad placed on the site and is renewable on a monthly basis. This can begin immediately or at any time.

PDF Ad Rates

The published monthly version of *macCompanion* has a closing date of the 25th of each month for ads. Our target date for distribution begins the 5th of each month. Placement of the ads will be at our discretion, but we do listen to your suggestions.

Each ad will require a site link so our readers can click on the PDF ad and go to your site. Ads need to be submitted as PDFs with at least 300 DPI resolution.

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