

macCompanion

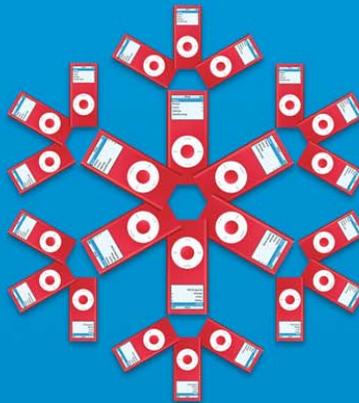
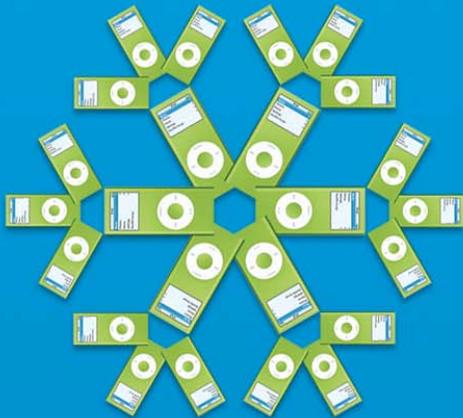
YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH



Happy



Holidays!



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- **Overflow 2.0**
- **Finale NotePad**
- **Ubuntu Linux**
- **EyeTV 250**
- **and much more...**

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Masthead

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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!

In addition, thanks to you, our readers, who make this effort all possible.

Please support this effort by going to the back of the magazine and to our website and clicking and purchasing from our affiliates and advertisers. THEY WILL APPRECIATE IT EVEN MORE THAN WE DO!

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Letter from the CEO

Happy Holy-Days!

By Robert Pritchett

Okay, now that is out of the way, let's get down to business.

This month we look at a few things that interest us and hopefully will interest you.

We have some "lists of 10s" for Freeware, Shareware and Mac Security by Harry {doc} Babad, Tim Verpoorten and Kale Feelhaver, as we look back at 2006. We also added Leland Scott's excellent 10 Podcast apps to the PDF version of the magazine.

And we also have our *macCompanion* MagCast and AudioCast over on iTunes and Wayne Lefevre does a great job talking those up in his column this month in MacFever.

And we gathered a few more columns, reviews for books, games hardware and software for your enlightenment and enjoyment by excellent *macCompanion* staff. Without their invaluable input – and yours – *macCompanion* would not be possible.

I Love My Mac Campaign

In anticipation of MacWorld Expo in January - and beyond - we have begun the Macintosh Professional Network (MPN) "I Love My Mac" campaign. We are garnering subscriptions for the websites and podcasts that make up the Macintosh Professional Network. Register on those sites, subscribe to the podcasts and go to the link above to fill out the Gift-Away form so we can get back to you if your name is picked from the list. Oh, and please let the rest of the world know so they can join in the fun as well! Our goal is to pump up to over 3 million page views per month and aggregate that across all our fellow macCompanions, who are a part of MPN. You can make it happen! Just talk us up and spread the news. Shout it out!

Go to the link at <http://www.macompanion.com/IloveyMacGiftaway.html> and sign up for a chance to receive a copy of ClamXav and possible be picked for one of the other gifts we are gathering each week, until we do the Gift-Away February 24th 2007 on the *Mac ReviewCast* podcast with Tim Verpoorten.

What else is going on? We will be working on a new look and feel for the *macCompanion* website and to *macCompanion* magazine, as we improve the format, etc. in 2007. We want to make the articles online "commentable", so we can get some real-time feedback and give you your "15 minutes of fame". And expect to see some kind of hard-copy version of *macCompanion* Magazine in 2007 as well. Plans currently are for it to be based out of Great Britain as a print-on-demand quarterly.

Meanwhile, please patronize our affiliates and advertisers at <http://www.macompanion.com>, so our Holy-days will be bright.

May each of you have a prosperous and healthy New Year, as you continue to learn and experience the Macintosh environment. Please be safe during the Holy-day season and enjoy your families!

Buying that first Mac

By Robert Pritchett

<http://typicalmacuser.com/wordpress/?p=181>

Victor Cajiao, host

Disclosure

I'm a former Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer with a few other certs from Microsoft under my belt. I'm also a certified Apple Product Professional, and we sell Apple products on our website at macCompanion.com because we do not have an official Apple store anywhere near where we physically live, here in the Tri-Cities area of Washington State in the US. I just renewed that paperwork for 2007.

Over at *macCompanion* <http://www.macompanion.com>, we've been providing information to Mac-wannabees for over 4 years now on a monthly basis. We've been around a lot longer than that, if you've ever heard of the *MacNut Magazine* that started back in 1995 and officially ended in 2002. We have close to 30 staff members that provide content, and so far their homes are located in the US, Canada, Great Britain and Spain. We have had *macCompanion* Alumni that have gone on to be successful in their own right and resigned in glory as they moved on. It is wonderful to see that perhaps we actually helped them in some small way to springboard on to financial success. We just need to make that reciprocal. We could still use some more representation from other countries and languages, but that will come with time. And we are still acting as an incubator ourselves, as we continue to morph the mag and grow the Macintosh Professional Network.

Our focus has been more on how we can literally capitalize on the Mac experience and provide a place where the curious lurkers and seekers or war-weary Windows-only refugees can feel at home, without feeling like they are being accosted by Mac Fanatics, those cultish Jobsian flamesters that ardently feel that Apple Corporation can do no wrong, and has the best of interest in its customers. Make no mistake, Apple is a major corporation that suffers from major corporation-itis, answerable only to the Securities Exchange Commission, its stock holders and even later, to its growing clientele. They have a great business plan and are following it.

About *macCompanion* and MPN, LLC

All of our *macCompanion* staff use both Mac and non-Mac systems, so we walk in the moccasins of those who read and listen to us both on our website, on the weekly podcasts at *Mac ReviewCast* <http://www.macreviewcast.com> with Tim Verpoorten or in either our MagCast or AudioCast over on iTunes. We feel their pain and anguish every day of the week. We are them! We tend to express our own experiences with products, whether they be books, games, hardware, software or training packages.

We did a gigantic gift-away in July during our 4th anniversary celebration and distributed well over \$7,000 USD of gifts to readers and listeners around the world. We are doing it again in February 2007, the month of Love, with the 'I Love My Mac' theme that Daphne Kalfon made into song a couple of years ago. I think we could honestly say that it pays to read our mag online or as a PDF and listen to our AudioCasts!

To get to either the MagCast or the AudioCast, the *Typical Mac User Podcast* listeners can search for *macCompanion* under Podcasts over in iTunes.

We are looking at possibly providing a hardcopy version as a quarterly print-on-demand coffee table mag distributed out of Great Britain in Winter Quarter 2007 or possibly in book form. And we are soliciting investors and advertisers and continue asking others in the Mac communications industry to join the Macintosh Professional Network.

Regarding buying a Mac for the first time, I guess first, we have to overcome the angst that folks experience by going out and purchasing something new and unknown.

1) We have nothing to fear!

To assuage any fears regarding lack of support after the buy, the FUD (Fear Uncertainty and Doubt) issues that have spread epic-sized myths by the non-Mac vendors for the last 3 decades still need to be overcome, as Apple garners mindshare as well as marketshare. With billions of dollars in the bank, Apple is not a fly-by-night operation by any stretch of the imagination. It is not going to fold tomorrow or next week, next month or next year. In fact it is one of two companies in the computer industry that has consistently made money each quarter and its stock record has been increasingly improving quarter by quarter. So to first-time buyers, please ignore the FUD. Thirty years is a long time to be in the business. Lots of non-Mac computer companies have fallen by the wayside and more will follow, as the Apple Tsunami continues to swell and flow over the industry. And we don't dance the Macarena!

2) Support

Every once in a blue moon, we will hear of certain individuals that have had a self-inflicted bad experience with their Macs, such as Larry Bodine <http://forum.mac-headz.com/showthread.php?t=229>. He is a lawyer who recently made a name for himself as famous as Rob Enderle <http://www.enderlegroup.com/>, Paul Thurrott <http://www.winsupersite.com/> and John C. Dvorak <http://www.pcmag.com/category2/0,1738,3574,00.asp> who make a name for themselves by badmouthing Apple. His online article turned into a lead balloon real fast. Apple may just sue for libel – and I'm not being facetious either!

I emailed him, since he felt that the only help he could get was from the *Macintosh for Dummies* book and he went and sold off his nearly \$5K system in disgust. He could have read our magazine and here is my buying advise;

a) Before you buy a Mac, make sure you can get in touch with a Local Macintosh User Group or go online and join one of the online Macintosh User Groups, if a local entity is not available.

<http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/mugshots.html>

They tend to keep up on the latest from Apple and everyone is willing to answer questions for free, unlike what I've experienced in non-Mac user groups. Mac User Groups are honest, friendly, self-help clubs and anyone and everyone are welcome to join and participate. They usually do their best to make you feel at home.

b) When you buy a Mac, be sure and purchase the AppleCare package that gives you the care and feeding rights for the next three years. I've yet to ever use it, but it is cheap insurance and if anything ever goes wrong, Apple has you covered and I've bought three for our machines here over the years. We tend to keep our machines forever too. They don't die. They get gifted away.

3) Listen to Mac-related podcasts!

There are a plethora of Mac podcasts with some that have staying power like; *Typical Mac User Podcast*, *Mac OS Ken*, *MacBreak*, *MacCast*, *MacVoices*, *Mac Help from Maui*, *British Mac*, *MacWorld Podcasts*, *MacNotables*, *MyMac*, *The Mac Attack*, *The Mac Roundtable*, *The Mac Observer's Mac Geek Gab* and *Weekly Roundup* and *Mac ReviewCast* among others. There are also other Mac-related podcasts in other languages besides English as well, but these are ones I listen to all the time and keep. I also participate every once in a while with Gene Steinberg on the weekly *Tech Night Owl LIVE* podcast. Okay, twice so far. And once on *MyMac*.

4) Purchasing

If you are a business, lease, at least in the US, to take advantage of the Income Tax laws and be eligible to have the latest equipment and software without an initial outlay for everything. If you are an individual, buy. Buy as much RAM as possible. Oh, and if you don't have an Apple store or Apple affiliate store near by or get the Macintosh sales catalogs, buy from us!

5) Which one? Does it Matter?

I just had to laugh at Jeffrey Mincey's article posted over on *Mac360*:

http://www.mac360.com/index.php/mac360/comments/help_me_im_going_broke_using_a_mac/

I don't know just how tongue-in-cheek Jeffrey is, but I can *empathize* with the sentiment about being an Apple materialist and how easy it is to get sucked up into getting the latest and greatest from Apple. The products are usually excellent, and if not, they don't last long on the market.

The Mactel machines do non-Mac software such as Linux or Windows or other operating systems, if you use Parallels <http://www.parallels.com/en/download/desktop/>, and yes, we do sell their product as well. Apple has their own *Boot Camp*, but it doesn't do other OSes besides Windows, as far as I can tell so far.

So get a machine that does Windows and oh, by the way, it also does Mac OS X! The Mactels are really the best of both worlds in the computer industry. There are no excuses left for school establishments, governments, intelligence or military organizations as well as the Enterprise environments, **not** to get Macs. Previously their sole-source options were "anything but Macs". They can't legally do that anymore. And why? The Mac is battle-hardened against most, if not all malicious software and the Mac OS X operating system has an enviable established reputation of no real viral malware yet. And if you really, really have too, it will run non-Mac-specific software as well.

In reality, it really doesn't matter which Mac you get, just get one!

Personally, I think the Mac mini is a transition toy or taste-test for the geekset who want to try-before-they-buy and toe-dip into the Apple pool instead of jumping in with both feet for the full-emersion effect.

I'm being punny, but the portables are hot ticket items, but if we are stationary types, the iMacs are gorgeous and work extremely well.

The Power Macs are for the Power Users who need a lot of horsepower to move and render movies, etc. and have a budget to match. The portables are for the presenter and road warrior folks. I'd love to get my hands on one of the latest Xserves!

6) And if I buy a machine that becomes obsolete tomorrow?

That is a given in this industry. Get used to it. Wait and wait forever. Buy and see a new machine marketed within a week. It happens to me all the time! And I guess I'm not alone. Dennis Sellers even carried this phenomena over to a Halloween theme about Mac fears and phobias:

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

So for the gold! On our site we have a blog and one of the sections is on Switching and Transitioning. We try to keep up with the stories, but they usually fall into the "I'd wished I'd done this sooner" category. And we love hearing stories from folks like Victor Cajiao, who not only switch but, like reformed smokers, are willing and able to help others quit bad habits and begin new good ones with a new Mac.

The Macintosh Professional Network is here for the long term and *macCompanion* will continue to morph and evolve, as we learn together as long as Macs exist. We look forward to a lasting long and rewarding relationship with our readers and listeners.

Chris Marshall also reviewed the eBook, "Take Control of Buying a Mac, version 2.0" by Adam Engst and it is in this month's issue of *macCompanion*.

According to Hoyle...

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Cross-Platform Software Development from a Macintosh Perspective: Multi-Compiler Strategies with C/C++ (Part I)

by Jonathan Hoyle

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macCompanion
December 2006

We are in our second year of investigating cross-platform strategies from a Macintosh perspective. We have examined a various number of frameworks, tools, compilers over the course of these many months:

- **Intro:** http://www.macompanion.com/archives/september2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle_1.htm
- **Qt:** <http://www.macompanion.com/archives/october2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **wxWidgets:** <http://www.macompanion.com/archives/november2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **CPLAT:** <http://www.macompanion.com/archives/december2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **REALbasic:** <http://www.macompanion.com/archives/january2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Runtime Revolution:**
<http://www.macompanion.com/archives/february2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
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- **Basic compilers (Part III):**
<http://www.macompanion.com/archives/october2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **C++ Application Programming with REALbasic:**
<http://www.macompanion.com/archives/november2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

This month we will look at C/C++ programming from the perspective of using multiple compilers. Cross-platform developers will typically rely upon different compilers from different vendors, each with their own level of language support and bugs. Even within an operating system, there may be many compilers to choose from, and being able to run your code from each of these makes you more robust. This article is Part I on multi-compiler strategies.

Be ANSI Compliant Wherever and Whenever Possible

Unless a particular ANSI feature is simply not available in one of the compilers you need to support, always follow the ANSI standard. A number of developers shy away from supporting the latest standard features, fearing incompatibility down the road with future development environments. Although this is a small risk, it is far outweighed by the fact that C/C++ compilers are constantly being updated to be in closer conformance to the ANSI/ISO standard. Supporting a non-ANSI feature is a much bigger risk for a code base which you wish to keep supporting. The ANSI committee ratified the C++ standard in 1998, and updated the C standard in 1999, and it is these standards to which you should be adhering.

The flip side to following ANSI is to ignore features or extensions that are not ANSI standard. For example, *gcc* (the compiler used in the *Xcode* environment) has switches to support a number of language extensions. Although tempting, the use of these features will quickly become a difficulty once you try compiling with a different environment. A number of these extensions have already been rolled into the C99 specification, but those which have not should be avoided.

Also to be avoided are the use of compiler-defined or operating system defined types that have ANSI equivalents already in existence. The most obvious example of this are the multitude of boolean types that exist, which confusingly take on many more than the two values it should. For example, on the *Macintosh*, the **Boolean** type takes on 256 possible values with **True** and **False** defined for two of those values (although the other 254 possibilities remain). It's even worse on *Windows* with its **BOOL** type, as it takes on over 4 billion values more than the predefined **TRUE** and **FALSE**. It's frightening to see code reading

```
if (myBOOL == TRUE) { ... }
```

when you consider that **myBOOL** could easily be neither **TRUE** nor **FALSE**. The ANSI defined bool type, however, allows for only two choices: true and false, and you can safely write

```
if (mybool == true) { ... }
```

without hesitation.

Fortunately, the development environments themselves will help keep you in conformance. In *Xcode*, turn on C99 and turn off non-standard language extensions. In *Metrowerks CodeWarrior*, check the "ANSI Strict" checkbox in the project settings. For other compilers, read the manual for project settings.

Integral types

Although the ANSI C language defines the **short**, **int**, **long**, etc. types, it is implementation dependent as to what those actual sizes truly are. Until very recently, most compilers defined **short** as 16-bits wide, **long** as 32-bits wide and **long long** as 64-bits wide. In years past, **int** was often two bytes, but today it is more commonly four. Likewise, pointers are commonly 32-bits wide, although they had been shorter a decade and more ago.

With the coming of 64-bit compilation, many of these conventions are changing yet again. As you might expect, pointers will be widened from four bytes to eight to allow for 64-bit addressing. What you may not be aware of is the fact that some integral types are changing. In *Xcode* for example, not only is the pointer size increasing to eight bytes, but so is the definition of **long**. This is called the *LP64* standard (**LP** = **L**ong, **P**ointer). On many Unix/Linux compilers, the situation is worse, as they follow the *ILP64* standard (meaning that regular **int**'s themselves, as well as **long**'s and pointers), will be 64-bits wide. *Microsoft* is doing the sensible thing (surprisingly) for its *Visual Studio* and not changing any integral types for 64-bit compilation; after all, 16-, 32-, and 64-bit wide integers are already available in the 32-bit world via **short**, **long** and **long long** (respectively), so they felt no need to change anything. This is called the *P64* (alternatively, the *LLP64*) standard.

Given the anarchy of integral sizes, one wonders if you can rely on any of these sizes to remain stable. Well, simply put, you cannot. You can however, use the ANSI defined types **int16_t**, **int32_t**, **int64_t**, etc. as defined in the `<stdint.h>` header file. These types, available in both signed and unsigned flavors, are defined to always be the size desired. Most all modern compilers which support the C99 standard include this header file. In the event you must support an older compiler, such as the unfortunate *Visual C++ 6* environment, you can always create your own **stdint.h** file, **typedef**-ing these names yourself.

The problem continues beyond just 64-bit issues. For example, ANSI does not specify the size of **bool**. In some compilers, it is the same as whatever is set for **int**. In other compilers, it is only one byte wide. For this reason, it is not recommended to use **bool** within any structures that will be shared outside your program (such as placed in shared memory or written out to disk). Use one of the integer types to hold the value when writing out to a structure.

Floating point numbers and their format are not detailed by the ANSI or ISO committees, which led to a wide variance in floating point types in decades past. However, another standards committee, IEEE, did outline a particular format, and most compilers today follow the IEEE single precision (four byte) and double precision (eight byte) floating point format for their **float**'s and **double**'s respectively. Due to *Microsoft's* slow adoption of the **long double** floating point type (they essentially make it the same as a regular **double**), it is not recommended to use **long double**'s at this time.

Finally, one type which is easily overlooked is the wide character type **wchar_t**, used for Unicode strings. Operating system difference make this type particularly difficult to use, as a **wchar_t** is two bytes in *Windows*, but four bytes on *Unix* and *Mac OS X*. However, with the importance of Unicode support growing with each passing year, this is one type that really has no workaround.

Warning! Warning! Danger, Will Robinson!

One of the best ways to save hours of debugging is cut it off at the pass by turning up warnings as high as you can reasonably allow. This is one of the benefits of compiling your code across multiple development environments, as different compilers find different types of warnings. Furthermore, make it a policy to rewrite your code to prevent these warnings from occurring. Now granted, a warning is not an error, and often times what is being warning is exactly what you meant. *CodeWarrior* used to warn you when an embedded assignment is found within a while or if statement. Maybe it was what you intended, but there's no reason you can't be more explicit and separate them into different lines of code. *Visual Studio* likes to warn you about a possible loss of data when assigning a **long** to a **short**. Simply adding a cast removes that warning. The more safety nets you put in with warnings, the safer and more robust your code will be.

In addition, always refactor out deprecated function calls or behavior. Continuing to use deprecated code is a time bomb waiting to happen. If you don't fix it now when you have the chance, you'll be forced to do it later, and likely when you're in a hurry. Whether it's operating system level items like *QuickDraw* calls, or language-based behavior such as lacking function prototypes, you'll be happier once you've made the jump. Often times the replacement code is a simple structural rewrite, such as removing some nasty **goto**'s and replacing them with a clean exception handling mechanism.

Always keep your compilers up to date. When dealing with very old code, perform your upgrades one version at a time, as this will make life much easier. Recently, I was in discussion with someone who has a old *CodeWarrior Pro 5* project he wanted updating. Jumping from *CW Pro 5* to *Xcode 2.4* would probably end the project in utter frustration. However, upgrading *CodeWarrior* versions one at a time, from *Pro 5* to *Pro 9* allowed him to make changes more simply and to test these changes on an iterative basis. Once at *Pro 9*, he could then use *Xcode 2*'s importer to convert the *CodeWarrior* project.

Coming Up: More multi-compiler tips and additional best practices for cross-platform code. See you in 30!

MyAppleStuff

The European Perspective

<http://www.myapplestuff.com> Copyright ©2006 Chris Marshall
by Chris Marshall December 2006

November has been a very calm month. My credit card is out of intensive car and my wife is allowing me out for a couple of hours a week, but only under supervision!!!

Probably the biggest bit of news on the personal front, in fact without doubt the biggest bit of news, is that we have adopted a cat! Now I know that isn't exactly Mac related, but take a look at these pictures:

This is Moreno on his second day with us getting to grips with my Mac mini. And here he is with Sand's iMac:

Now isn't that just about the smartest cat you have ever seen?

On the subject of pictures there are more pictures of Moreno on his [Flickr account](#) but of (hopefully) more interest will be this [Flickr account](#) where I am building up a library of Mac and Apple related pictures, specifically workstations so if you have a picture you would like me to post I would be really happy to receive it at my.applestuff@gmail.com.

What part of the month that wasn't taken up by the cat, reading and reviewing a number of excellent books was taken up researching the dual screen problem with the Mac mini, which I cover later, zeroing and reinstalling my PowerBook so I can use it solely for reviews and a couple of media projects, and generally helping Sands get used to her iMac.



My 'Casts

| Fun | General | Mac | News | Review | Sport | Technical |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| French Maid TV | The Daily Mayo | BRITISH MAC | Today | Mark Kermode's Film | The Football Phone-In 606 | AV Forums |
| Ricky Gervais | Daily Breakfast | Typical Mac User | Telegraph | iTunes New Music Tuesday | Nike Football | commandN |
| Tiki Bar TV | | Mac Roundtable | | | The Game | DiggNation |
| The President's Weekly Radio Address | | MacCast | | | Podrunner | Engadget |
| | | MacBreak Video | | | | Life on line with Bob Parsons |
| | | macTV | | | | Inside The Net |
| | | Mac ReviewCast | | | | Sky News Technocrat |
| | | | | | | |

These are all available via the [iTunes Store](#) Note the new name change from Apple ☺

Under Consideration

Nothing this month

Recently Deleted

: TWiT for no real reason other than they stopped broadcasting for a few weeks, I didn't bother to catch up with the ones that were outstanding so I figured I wasn't really enjoying them or was that bothered about them. I also think I was a little "fed up" with Leo, in that I listen to him on Inside the Net and he cops up from time to time on commandN.

: Mac Nation because I couldn't remember the last time I listened to it or why I had subscribed in the first place.

: MacBreak Video. When I swapped Macs I noticed that the feed had stopped working, so I didn't bother to find out why as it wasn't something that I watched religiously.

Just Added

A welcome back to an older 'cast that I decided to give another chance:

:Geek Brief TV

I have also added the Sky News Technocrat 'cast. I enjoyed this segment when I used to watch it live on a Saturday morning so it is a great example of how a mainstream broadcaster can provide 'casts.

Featured ‘Casts – Podrunner

There is very little to this ‘cast. It is simply an hour of high BPM music to run to. Very electric, dance orientated but I can honestly say that I find it easier to maintain a consistent rhythm when I run to these ‘casts and my times are better the higher the BPM. Well worth taking a look if you run. My wife uses them on her Nano, I use them on my 1G Shuffle.

European News

I was intrigued by the news that Apple will potentially release the iPhone “[unlocked](#)”. This would be a big shift away from tradition for the US but would be absolutely normal for Europe where we have pretty much always been able to buy all phones contract free. Maybe Apple sees Europe as a bigger market for the iPhone than the US?

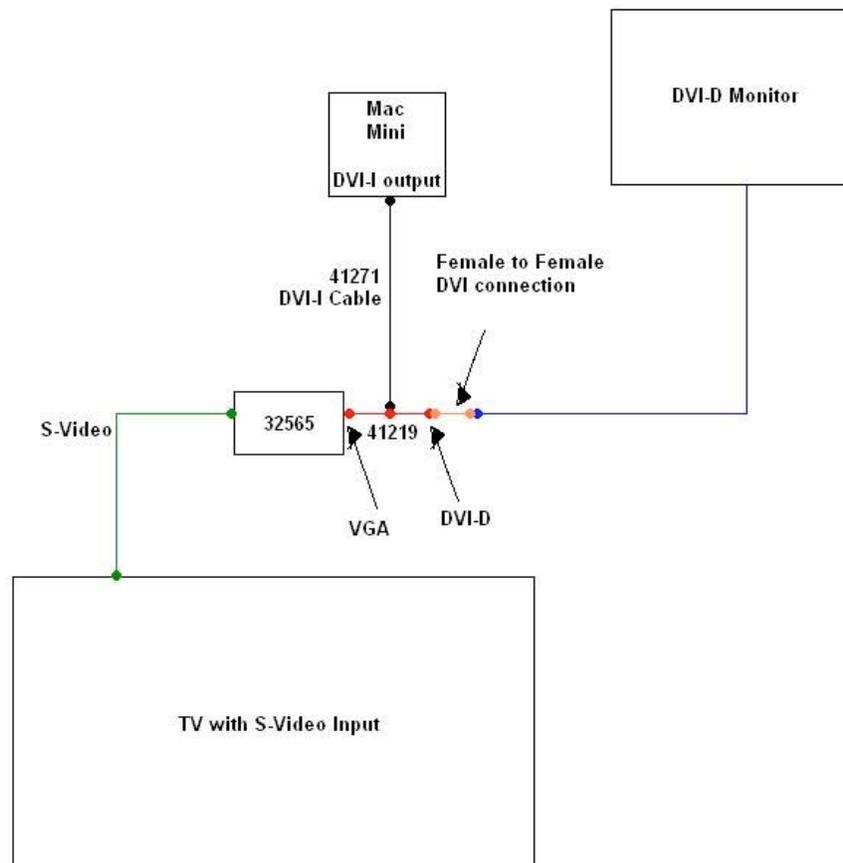
It was absolutely no surprise to read that Air France was one of the first airlines to refute the claims that Apple had set up deals with airlines to provide [iPod connectivity](#) in flights.

Despite England’s current woes on the rugby pitch, they are the current World Champions, so it was good to see Rugby adopting [Macs](#) for their performance measurements and statistics. Not to be left out, [Loughborough University](#) also adopted Macs for their research projects.

Of course I couldn’t write anything about European News without saying congratulations to [Jonathan Ive](#).

Digital Media Solution

I already covered this in my [blogged](#) this month, so I am not going to repeat it here. Suffice to say that attaching the Mac mini to both the TV and the 23” Screen isn’t easy at all. In fact I haven’t actually come across anybody that has done it yet. This is what it entails:



I have managed to hunt down the Female-to-Female DVI adapter, but as this is coming from the USA, I have had to go for the non-powered version, which may be a problem. The 32565 splitter isn't in stock yet, so I won't know if this works until the third week in December. Guess what I am wishing for, for Christmas?

It isn't going to be an iTV if the [Lifehacker article](#) is to be believed. I have to say I am not at all excited about the iTV as it seems to propriety towards iTunes Store media and I only bought music off the store to date. I can already stream a recorded movie between Macs and view on a TV.

And Finally how many iPods do you have?

This is something that has been bouncing around in my mind for some time now. It reawakens every time a new iPod is released and I have to find a justification for the new one.

I have five; a 3G 10GB iPod, a 3G 20GB iPod, a 1G iPod Shuffle, a 2G iPod Shuffle and a 5G 60GB iPod with Video.

My wife has four; a 1G 4GB iPod Mini, a 1G iPod Shuffle, a 2G iPod Shuffle and a 1G 2GB iPod Nano.

Too many I hear you say? On the surface yes – but let me explain my rationale a little. Up until about 3 years ago I used to think that “bigger was best” e.g. I wanted phones that included a camera, my diary, contacts, notes etc. I wanted everything to be duplicated across all of my computers, and I wanted an iPod that held everything.

Over the years I have become much more interested in distributing my data and activities. To be honest, this probably started off as a good means of justifying another bit of kit, but slowly I have come to embrace this philosophy.

So what does this mean in reality? Basically it means that when a new product comes out that I “must have”, my inclination is to look at how I can distribute my workload, data and activities. Let me give you a couple of examples:

I started off with a 17” G4 PowerBook. I recently bought a Mac mini initially to act solely as the hub to our media set up. However I decided to use the Mac mini as my main computer, so now I have cleared down the PowerBook and use it purely for a couple of digital projects that I am working on, for some very specific web sites, and for the reviews that I do. That way I keep things separate, my main Mac is stable at all times and I get to enjoy both machines on a daily basis.

Back to the iPods

My library is still just small enough to fit on the 60GB iPod, so I have everything stored on it. In addition I synchronize my Photo's, Calendar and Address Book. I also have a copy of VoodooPad notes on it as well. Surely that is enough? Well yes it is at the moment, but by next year I won't be able to store all of the above on it anymore, so will I want to buy a bigger model? In the past, yes, but now not at all. I have already backed up all my purchased music and audiobooks to the 20GB 3G iPod and will continue to use this as a means of backing up these files, and optionally listen to them. On the 10GB 3G iPod I backed up our language courses and the music that we like to listen to on the roof, and it is sat upstairs in the InMotion speakers, so we can use it when we are on the roof. My 1G iPod Shuffle I use for running, so it only syncs with the Podrunner music that I run to. The 2G iPod Shuffle has a random selection of my 1* music on it and it lives in my pocket pretty much all the time. So, as you see, I have distributed audio material across a number of devices so not only have I got some built-in data security, but also to avoid exposing more expensive items to unnecessary risks as I use them.

My wife has pretty much done the same, although we have got in a bit of a mess with hers. As she doesn't have anything bigger than 4GB she can't store her whole library on one iPod, but as her library is the same as mine, that really isn't an issue for her. She can borrow my 5G 60GB anytime she travels. Her iPod Mini has her favorite albums, podcasts, diary and address book on. It also syncs with her VoodooPad. The Nano she uses just for running, although it does have her photo's on it and a couple of albums in case she wants to stop and have a coffee mid-run ☺. Her 2G iPod Shuffle is set up the same as mine. It is her 1G iPod Shuffle that is potentially surplus to requirements, although we have enabled it for disc use, added a few albums “just in case” and use it for backing up Quicken and a few other files that we regularly transfer between the Mac mini, iMac or PowerBook for example pictures we have taken.

Will I buy a new Video iPod? No. I don't really have an inclination to watch a video on a device that small. Will I buy a bigger iPod? No. I don't need any extra space at this moment. I think I will buy an old 1G Nano for my running, as I really like the Nike + kit that my wife uses.

Will I buy an iPhone? Well that is a totally different debate for another day – but I am starting to work on the justification ☺

About Chris Marshall

Educated in the UK and USA, I have lived and worked in the UK, USA, and Spain. I currently live in Spain in a state of semi-retirement where I spend most of my time developing my skills on the Mac and understanding the significance and opportunities of the “Web 2.0” explosion.

I have recently started writing reviews and articles for *macCompanion*¹ and for *The Mac ReviewCast*².

From a “day job” perspective I don't really have one at the moment. I am doing some PC training and support locally and have been advising a couple of small start-up businesses. When I do work, it is a business consultant³ with an emphasis on small and start-up businesses and mentoring individuals. I am particular keen to help US organizations establish themselves in Europe. I am also keen to develop my writing skills.

Blog: <http://www.myapplestuff.com>

Digg: <http://www.digg.com/> (MyAppleStuff)

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ourcoolmacpics/>

Family: <http://www.almerimarlife.com>

Personal: <http://chrismarshall.vox.com>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/myapplestuff>

¹ <http://www.maccompanion.com/>

² <http://www.surfbits.com/>

³ <http://www.m2associates.info>



Geek Speak: Random Mac Stuff You Need to Know

<http://www.macfanatic.net/blog/>

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Looking at XCode 3.0 for Leopard

By Matt Brewer

Leopard is big! No matter how you look at it, Apple did developer's right this time around and gave us even more awesome technologies to use in our applications and better tools to take advantage of all that. While we might not see Leopard on new Macs for another few months (or as early as January, just depends if you place your faith in the rumors), Apple has already given developers a really in-depth look at the upcoming technologies and tools at WWDC this past summer and now there are articles available online for everyone, as well as a specialized Leopard area in ADC for the Select and Premier members. I still can't talk about the secret stuff, although most of it has been disclosed at this point, so we're going to take a good first look at XCode 3 that will debut with Leopard next year.

XCode 3

XCode 3 brings a lot of awesome new features to the development environment on Macs. I love XCode because of the integration and workflow management, but there are times that I switch and use TextMate simply because TextMate is hands-down better than XCode's editor in the 2.x versions. That will all change for XCode 3.0.

Stuff that I love from TextMate has made its way into XCode for the new version; better code completion and suggestion, improved syntax highlighting, more syntax coloring options, collapsible functions as well as highlighted code help you view what is important to you at a quick glance.

However, what really gets me excited about this new version is the way that the tasks of Debugging, Building, and Editing have further been integrated into one window. I use the All-in-One view in XCode 2.x so that I can maximize my screen space to see the most code available at one time. XCode 3 takes this a step further in a few ways. First, when you build your application, the build errors will show up as a bubble in the editor window. While you can see this in your code already in the Editor window as a little 'X' icon by the line number (and subsequently clicking on that provides more feedback in the bottom of the window), this method makes much more sense and should help you easily find mistakes in your code and rebuild quickly.



Another feature that I'm really excited about is the way the Debugger has been integrated into the Editor as well. When you use *Build* and *Go* or *Run* in XCode 3, you'll stay in the editor but a toolbar with the Debugger buttons will appear. You will also be able to mouse over your code to view your variable values and addresses as the application is running!

And yet another great feature of XCode 3 is Milestones. Version control, be it Subversion, CVS or any other choice is still integrated nicely into XCode, but with Milestones you can quickly save the state of your code and make changes. If those don't work out, you simply revert to your last saved milestone when you know everything was working fine. A very welcome feature that I first got experience using in the new CSSEdit 2 released just a few weeks ago.

And probably what I find the most exciting of all the features for XCode 3 is re-factoring support. My excitement just goes to show you how much I like to keep my code clean and subsequently find the need to change the names of variables throughout my code. Before, this task was accomplished with a lot of Find and Replace operations. However, you can now use re-factoring to update all of your code. And when I say all, I even mean that XCode will fix your code and keep it KVC-compliant as well as update your bindings in your Nib files. That is amazing, ladies and gentlemen!

Conclusion

While I'm sure there are all kinds of other goodies that we'll find, once we have a final version of XCode to use, the build that I have with Leopard is pretty impressive all the same. The other tools that Apple is providing will make visualizing your running application a reality, thanks to XRay, as well as Dashcode that allows you to quickly turnout professional widgets. I didn't even cover some of the new features with Interface Builder 3, but it's a major overhaul and a very welcome one at that. I talked with a member of the 3 or 4-person team that was responsible for the redesign of this application while at WWDC and she was very excited. Once I attended the session, I could understand why. IB has seen major improvements, but I'll talk about that on another day.

For More Info

To read up more on all this great technology, you can check out the websites below.

Leopard Technology Series for Developers: Developer Tools Overview:
<http://developer.apple.com/leopard/overview/tools.html>

Attend a Leopard Talk to get one-on-one experience with Leopard. And it's free!
<http://developer.apple.com/events/techtalks/>

Contact Info

You can always send me an email at [mbrewer at macCompanion dot com](mailto:mbrewer@macCompanion.com) or visit my website at <http://www.macfanatic.net/blog/> for more information about me and my ramblings. I also produce a weekly audio podcast taking an in-depth review of cool and new Mac applications, along with tips, tutorials, and developer interviews.

Views from the Ivory Tower - December 2006

By Ted Bade

It seems hard to believe that yet another year is coming to a close, yet here we stand facing the last month of the year. December is a month of holidays and goodwill. Here in the North Eastern part of the US, this is the time of year when it begins to truly get cold. Work in our gardens and yards slows to a near stop, and we have a lot more time to stay inside and enjoy the warmth, our families, and our indoor hobbies. It is the time of warm fires, hot spiced apple cider, and enjoying conversation with our friends. Those of us with computers find more time to sit in front of them, working on a project, playing a game, or even conversing with distant friends and family. I hope you enjoy this season as much as I do.

Zune - This time of year is also the time when new interesting things often come to market. Games, software, electronic devices, all things the “geek” in us would love to own. I haven’t heard of any major interesting device from Apple, but Microsoft launched its MP3 player called Zune in mid-November. While this device will never replace the iPod, it does have some interesting features. It has wireless capabilities, which means you can share music with other Zune players. A great and effortless way to replace other file sharing methods such as LimeWire and BitTorrent, the best part being there will be no Internet server holding a record of your transfers. (Of course, you won’t have connection to as many people this way, unless you live in a large city.)

Another fun feature of the Zune is that it apparently will **not play** any songs the Microsoft faithful purchased from the now defunct MSN music site. Specifically this means any that are encoded with the “PlaysForSure” DRM (Digital Rights Management) architecture. This was according to an article I found on the Mac News World site: <http://www.macnewsworld.com/story/6C080wrUKmYVWx/Report-MSN-Songs-Wont-Play-on-Zune.xhtml>

While we are hitting on the Zune player, here is another interesting fact. At least initially, Zune will not be compatible with Microsoft’s new Vista operating system!

<http://www.macnewsworld.com/story/FcdSWQIsqFQ12O/Microsoft-Says-Zune-Incompatible-With-Vista.xhtml>

This would be funny if it wasn’t so sad. Microsoft has become such a behemoth that it’s various divisions cannot seem to keep track of what other parts are doing. Sad, very sad.

Right after its release, there didn’t seem to be a lot of interest in this new player. However, Microsoft has great business sense, if nothing else worth mentioning. They devised an interesting scheme to attract record companies to the Zune. Apparently Microsoft is going to pay record company Universal \$1 for each Zune sold. So Universal gets money, even if the artists they represent aren’t used on the Zune player! The CEO of Universal also went as far as accusing everyone of owning a player that is not a Zune of stealing music!

<http://www.electronista.com/articles/06/11/13/universal/>

I hope somebody takes him to task on that statement. But I think Zune owners get a good deal out of this, because they have “paid” a licensing fee, they apparently can download copies of any Universal music artist without paying any more! Microsoft is truly making giant strides in the music industry, back towards rampart piracy.

I expect that Universal won’t be making a killing on its \$1 from Zune sales, but I do see this as a smart marketing move. If Universal can get Microsoft to crumble to its knees on this issue, perhaps other companies can get Apple to do the same. Not that I want this, but I can see a strategy here. This is something the record industry has wanted for years. Years ago, they fought to get a “tax” on cassette tapes. Their logic was that people only purchased cassette tapes to copy LPs (music). This fee would compensate the record industry for the illegal and less-than-legal copies. Which is exactly what Microsoft’s deal with Universal does in regard to the portable MP3 player. I get the feeling that the CEO of Universal thinks people only buy MP3 players to steal music.

This agreement between Universal and Microsoft says, “Hey, we know you are going to copy illegal music onto your portable player, so we want the money up front to compensate use for this”. I also imagine that this paid fee could be used against the record industry. If they were trying to sue a person for pirating music, a defense could be, “Hey, I paid my dollar, you got your fee!”

Personally, I like Steve Job’s view of the situation. Provide an easy and inexpensive means of buying all types of music and people will be honest and buy it. I would add to this my opinion that there are people who are going to copy music illegally no matter what. It isn’t a good thing, but its reality.

Anticipation - In the meantime, Apple's stock price has gone up in the later parts of November as the market anticipates another powerful holiday season for the iPod and even for Macintosh computers. There are rumors of an Apple-branded cell phone. There are always rumors about what Apple might or might not do. People want something new and innovative from Apple. They have grown to expect this. It would be a great thing for Apple Corporation if they could develop some new device that could turn around another aspect of society as much as the iPod and the iTunes Music Store has turned around the music industry. However, I have no idea what this might be. We will have to wait and see what interesting things come from Apple in the next year.

An interesting potential turn of events - The other day I was reading an online news article related to Apple. It was discussing rumors of Apple working a deal with CPU maker AMD. I have no idea if this is true or not, but it made me wonder about something:

Could it be possible that Mr. Jobs is creating a scheme where CPU makers vie for Apple's business? With two or more compatible chip makers available. Apple would be in a position to choose the sweetest deals for their computers. They could create a Macintosh for every budget as well as to fit every level of computing need. From wimpy but adequate to super machines for the uber-geek!

This is the way Dell computers (and perhaps other computer companies), has done business for a while, but is a completely new thing for Apple. For years, Apple's business has depended upon a single chip. If the manufacturer of this chip didn't keep up with the rest of the industry, Apple couldn't compete. This hurt their business a lot when Motorola failed to make the chip improvements that Apple needed to continue making competitive machines. With a choice of manufacturers and chips, Apple would be in a position to truly expand its marketshare. Couple this with the fact that any new Macintosh can run Mac OS X, Windows, any variety of x86 Linux and even comes with a version of Unix and you have the most versatile personal computer in existence. I cannot imagine why anyone would want to buy anything other than a Mac. But that's me, I am biased!

Happy Holidays!



MacFevre

About that *macCompanion* AudioCast...

by Wayne LeFevre, December 2006

Just in case some of you may have missed it, *macCompanion* has changed its distribution a bit. In fact, if you enjoy the web version of the articles, you might not know about some of the advancements we've made.

Using the RSS 2.0 technology, we've made the magazine able to come straight to you, every month and on time. No longer will you have to go to the website and download the PDF version, unless of course you want to. That will always remain an option.

We've made receiving the magazine as easy as a podcast, and in some ways, that's exactly what it is. In fact, we are calling this our MagCast. Using iTunes, or your favorite aggregator, you can sign up to receive the PDF automatically. After which, at the same time every month you can read it right from iTunes or your aggregator. If you have not tried this, I highly recommend you go to the *macCompanion* website and click on the link, or go to iTunes and search for *macCompanion*. You can always go straight there by using this iTunes link,

<http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=196926454>

This link will give you the straight XML link for your aggregator:

feed://www.maccompanion.com/MagCast/macCompanion_Magazine_MagCast.xml

The next distribution method we have adopted is the AudioMag. For those who are sight impaired, or otherwise unable to read the fine articles and reviews we offer, we now offer the magazine in an audible format. This format is available as an enhanced podcast offering chapters and websites, and recently we have been using Daphne Kalfon's famous *I Love My Mac* song found at <http://www.ilovemymacthesong.com>. Currently, this feed is available at the same feed as the MagCast. Any feedback would be appreciated if you would like it to have it's own feed.

Now since I realize that you probably don't want to hear my voice all the time, I've brought in guest speakers from the Acapela-Group and Cepstral. Yes, they are synthesized third-party voices, but are much better than Apple's own.

The magazine is then split into four episodes per month that are distributed weekly. The first week we read the columns and editorials, and, as Bill and Ted would say, "Our columnists are Most Excellent!" Because they have such great and interesting things to say, this is our longest 'cast, sometimes approaching 2 hours. Trust me, though. It's well worth it.

The second week are book reviews. The third week, shareware and software. The fourth week wraps it up with hardware and any training material we may have reviewed.

This is a critical time in the podcast world, and is still one of learning and growing. We are no different. Maybe one day, you will be unable to distinguish between a human or synthesized voice. The fun thing is being able to produce and bring the print to life. It is not easy or quick, but I hope you can appreciate who it is meant for. I'm always willing to take feedback. You can leave a message on Skype at MacFevre, or e-mail at feedback at macCompanion dot com.

For those who celebrate, have an incredible, and hopefully Love and Mac filled holidays!



The Mac Night Owl

<http://www.macnighthowl.com> Copyright © 2006 Making The Impossible, Inc

The Mac Software Report: A Eulogy for PowerPC Applications

by Gene Steinberg

This entire article may seem a tad premature, but I see the handwriting on the wall. You see, history is about to repeat itself.

Back in the mid-1990s, Apple ditched the aging 68K chip in favor of the PowerPC. When native applications first arrived, they were offered in “Fat Binary” versions, which meant that code for both chips was included. It didn’t take long, however, for companies to excise the 68K code, as more and more PowerPC Macs were sold. In a few years, Fat Binary versions were history.

Now in those days, it took quite some time for PowerPC software to appear at first, nothing like it is today, where, less than a year after the first MacIntel was released, there are well over 4,000 Universal applications. At the same time, less than year after the Intel switch began, many of its products are already in their second generation.

This accelerated release schedule is going to have some huge implications for those of you using older Macs. Perhaps the biggest salvo in what will be a growing trend was the release of the public beta of Adobe Soundbooth.

Contrary to what you might have expected, the application will be available for Windows and Intel-based Macs. PowerPC models need not apply. Of course, the final release probably won’t happen until some time next year.

So why is this happening? Well, Adobe talked about the work required to optimize a sound-editing application for specific hardware. Once it was done for Windows, it wasn’t so hard to port the application to Macs that used the same processor family. There would be extra costs and development time involved in producing a PowerPC version, which would reach a declining user base, so they decided not to do it.

But didn’t Steve Jobs tell us that making a Universal version of an application is a piece of cake, that all you had to do was select a couple of checkboxes in Xcode? Well, that may be true for some applications, but in most cases, a company has additional work to do to optimize performance for both processors and address compatibility issues. The job becomes all the more complicated if a developer has to first import all the code from a different programming environment, as Adobe and Microsoft had to do.

That, and the fact that they’re dealing with applications with millions of lines of code, explains, at least in part, why the Universal version of Adobe’s CS applications won’t appear until next spring and the new version of Office for the Mac won’t arrive till months later. It’s not that they are just sitting back and doing next to nothing, as some conspiracy theorists might want you to believe. Now I am not about to suggest that the successors to these two application suites, which probably won’t appear until 2009 or later, will be Intel only, but that would seem perfectly logical in light of this trend.

This doesn’t mean that you should prepare to toss your PowerPC Macs right now. The movement away from Universal will be slow, and will first involve software that writes directly to the hardware. In addition to a sound-editing application, for example, don’t be surprised if games become part of this growing trend. Of course, when it comes to games and multimedia development, you always do best with the latest, most powerful hardware. Besides, games ported from Windows never worked quite as well on the PowerPC.

As for Apple, they will likely continue to produce Universal applications for several years. Operating systems? The same is true. I expect Leopard's successor will also run on PowerPC hardware, but not 10.7, or whatever it'll be called.

So, if you still like your old Mac, it's not quite ready for retirement, but you should start looking for the gold watch.

Comments on this article: <http://www.macnightowl.com/2006/11/17/the-mac-software-report-a-eulogy-for-powerpc-applications/>



Mac ReviewCast

<http://www.surfbits.com> and <http://www.macreviewcast.com> Copyright © 2006 Tim Verpoorten

My Top Ten Freeware of the Year

By Tim Verpoorten

I spend 365 days a year looking at great Mac Freeware and Shareware. When I was asked to write about the top ten freeware apps for the last year, I was certain that it would be a piece of cake. I listed the top apps that came to mind and before long I counted the list and it was in the twenties. This was going to be a lot harder than it first sounded!

I decided that some really great freeware apps would have to be left out, and for any developer that does not see their application listed here, I apologize, I could have just as easily made it the top 50 freeware apps of the year and things would have been so simple. Next, I wanted to avoid duplication of apps, in other words only one browser, one office suite, you get the idea. That helped to narrow down the field.

So without further delay, here, in no special order, is my ten favorite freeware apps of the year!

CyberDuck

<http://cyberduck.ch>

This FTP client is full featured and free. Everyone needs an FTP client at one time or another and unless you use it for business or on a regular basis, CyberDuck does everything you need a FTP client to do. If you want to take a step up, then I like Transmit from Panic software, but now I'm giving you my top ten shareware apps of the year and that's for another editor.

AppleJack

<http://applejack.sourceforge.net>

Everyone needs a good maintenance utility in their application folder, AppleJack is the one that you'll be the happiest with when you finally need it. AppleJack works off the command-line so that when things get very screwed up on your Mac, you can always count on getting AppleJack to take a look at the situation and doing as much to help out as any utility available. If you have a Mac, you should have AppleJack installed.

AdiumX

<http://www.adiumx.com>

We all love to chat. iChat has some great features, but not everyone of your friends and family use AIM or .Mac, so what about those pesky MSN or Yahoo, or other chat clients? Well with AdiumX, you've got all your chat buddies in one place. AdiumX has as many features as you need and it is skin-able and it's easily adaptable to your taste. This was a simple choice when it came to chat apps.

TextWrangler

<http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/index.shtml>

Everyone needs a handy, functional, fast text editor for text and programming work. BBEdit is the king of Mac Editors, so why wouldn't TextWrangler, from the same developer, Barebones Software, be just as good and free to boot? Well it's good enough for most of us and that's good enough for me! It's a top ten shoe-in.

Firefox

<http://www.mozilla.org>

Browsers are everywhere we look, and Safari is not a bad browser, but Firefox with its extensions and add-ins makes surfing fun again. Version 2.0 is a winner and more than enough of a reason to make Firefox a top ten freeware app.

NeoOffice

<http://www.planamesa.com/neojava/en/index.php>

What's wrong with an office suite that works with Microsoft office documents and spreadsheets and is free to boot? Nothing is wrong with it, nothing at all. Add this little winner to my top ten freeware apps too.

Skype

<http://www.skype.com>

You've never heard of Skype? Where have you been? Free online internet audio and video conferencing and cheap VoIP calls to anyone in the world. My podcast would be boring without the Skype interviews and all this is free. Isn't this a great country?

Quicksilver

<http://quicksilver.blacktree.com/>

What if I told you that there was an application that allowed you to launch any application, document, bookmark, in fact, anything on your Mac without your hands touching that mouse? What if I told you that this same app could not only launch the application, but then make it interact with other apps or documents or photos or songs or anything on your Mac? How much would you pay for this app? Well ladies and gentlemen, this application is free and it's called Quicksilver. Available for download from you favorite blacktree.com website today.

Menumeters

<http://www.ragingmenace.com/software/menumeters>

We all want to know how much free ram we have available, or how much bandwidth we're using or what percent of our CPU we're using right? Well this little menu application or suite of applications is the perfect tool for doing all this and more. Check it out and I promise that your menubar will never look the same again.

VLC

<http://www.videolan.org/vlc>

If you surf the Internet, you'll notice that every time you download a video or audio file it seems to be in a different format with another odd codex. Fear not, with VLC your just an app away from watching or listening to about any format you can find online. Keep this little freeware program in your application folder and I'm certain you'll be using it before you realize.

Well it wasn't pretty, but it's my top ten Mac freeware apps of the year. Mac software developers are amazing folks and the software they create are amazing applications! Thank you for all the great software development. We salute you!!



Macsimum News

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Incompatible platforms to hinder development of digital music?

by Dennis Sellers

Incompatible technology platforms may hinder the development of the digital music market, according to a the [Research and Markets](#) firm. Based on current trends, the future supply of digital music will be controlled by a relatively small number of companies who operate incompatible technology platforms.

Apple, the first player to enter the market, will soon be joined by Microsoft and other companies are also likely to enter the fray – players like Nokia, Sony, Samsung and maybe Yahoo!, according to Research and Markets. I agree, but the Sellers Research Firm disagrees with some of the other conclusions drawn by R&M.

The critical question facing industry executives today is what effect this will have on the development of the market? For instance, as consumers buy more and more digital music, they'll become increasingly locked into their chosen platform. Research and Markets thinks that people may retreat from digital music when they realize the costs and problems involved in switching vendors or, worse, that such problems may mean that large segments of the market won't be interested in buying digital music at all.

I don't think either scenario will happen. You can debate the problems of incompatible technology platforms, but Apple's in the catbird's seat with the iTunes Store, the iPod and the upcoming iTV thanks to FairPlay, the digital rights management (DRM) technology created by Apple (and based on technology created by the Veridisc company) that's built into QuickTime and used by the iPod and the iTunes Store. Every file bought from the iTunes Store with iTunes is encoded with FairPlay. It digitally encrypts files and prevents users from playing these files on "unauthorized" computers. An intentional limitation of Fairplay is that it prevents iTunes customers from using the purchased music on any portable digital music player other than the iPod.

Unless Apple changes its mind about FairPlay (something that ain't gonna happen any time soon), the iPod/iTunes Store will continue to dominate the digital music scene. And while competing companies are in a tizzy that Apple won't open up FairPlay, I find no indication that most end users really care.

And when it comes to the iTV, the only wireless AV system that will work with movie/video downloads will be Apple products. Actually, it's not that hard to crack FairPlay, but the iTunes/iPod combo works pretty much flawlessly—and I suspect the same will hold true of the iTV. In fact, I think this whole scenario will eventually help sell more Macs. After all, if you're a non-Mac owner using Apple products for your music and downloadable video library, it might make a lot of sense to simply buy a Mac the next time you're replacing your computer or buying an extra one. And with software such as Boot Camp and Parallels desktop, your current Windows software collection won't be obsolete.

Thoughts? Write me at [daseller at earthlink dot net](mailto:daseller@earthlink.net)



The Northern Spy

<http://www.TheNorthernSpy.com> Copyright ©2006 Rick Sutcliffe

View From The Telescope

By Rick Sutcliffe - December 2006

As November winds down and we're now six weeks past Thanksgiving (never could understand why it's celebrated in the middle of winter down south instead of in the fall as it is here in the frozen north) and the shopping igloos turn to thoughts of flogging Christmas wares and cash register bells, the Spy is impressed at how iPods fly off the shelves. In one recent visit to a big-box retailer just after the latest model was released, he saw a dozen peddled to the gathered crowd in minutes. Can the MS Zune make a dent in Apple's dominance, now in the eighty-five to ninety percent range, higher in the "cool" market? The Spy sees no reason to suppose so. He's already marked another run-of-the-mill music player down as road kill on the information highway.

Market share revisited

Meanwhile, the Spy notes figures for Apple's share of the computer market in the six percent range overall and twelve for laptops. These are within reasonable sight of previous predictions in this space, and on track to reach ten percent overall in eighteen to twenty-four months, with the likelihood of an acceleration beyond that.

Winter storms abound on the coast of British Columbia this year, with one dumping 350mm of rain in some places during a day, and another cutting off power for two hundred thousand homes and creating a "boil water advisory" for two million people. Seems the water around here is so good, no one has ever installed a filtration system.

If there's a lesson in that for Mac users, it might be with respect to viruses. While malware on that other platform outnumbers bad pennies on the Mac by five orders of magnitude, complacency is the mother of all downfalls. Even in the safest and most pristine environment, you don't drink ditchwater. So take the Spy's advice and make sure you don't have your eMail client or web browser set to unstuff, de-tar, or unzip downloads automatically. Else, sooner or later you're going to end up with beaver fever.

The R/O factor is alive and well at least in Canada, if not elsewhere. The Spy had occasion to require a new PRAM battery for an old G4 tower (well, heavily modified to a dual 1.8G processor and large SATA drives, but still...) and when he checked at the local Apple dealer, they wanted \$13CDN for what he's seen to \$4.99US south of the terra incognita price bump at the forty-ninth. He was over the proverbial barrel, needing to get the machine functional again, so he paid the ransom, but... A day later, a second machine of the same vintage killed its battery. He's thinking of laying in a supply.

Besides being a prognosticator extraordinaire (the kind that never makes mistakes) the Spy is a big time software consumer in at least some markets (productivity, programming, utilities, and assorted other goodies) in Mac, Linux, and Palm. (He doesn't do W*nd*ws or games.)

As such, he has a vast collection of software (had over sixty startup enhancements in OS 9), and isn't shy about offering opinions. Example: the same large company makes the best spreadsheet, indeed the best and most important single software application of all time, and in the same package peddles a poor word processor and the industry's words database offering on record. Go figure. /P>

He's also been a shareware author, and vigorously promotes both that model and open source as the proper Fourth Civilization ways to distribute value-added productivity enhancements. He even eats his own cat food (only one on the block with no dogs) by offering his non-fiction as shareware (programming and ethics texts).

Here are a couple of favourite, and indispensable items from today's shareware marketplace.

Graphic Converter

from LemkeSoft has a simple premise: a utility convert any graphic format to any other, adding a few manipulations along the way. It has grown far larger. The Spy uses GC as his main creation application for creating and editing web-quality graphics for logos, backgrounds, and buttons. You can edit the colour table of a file, apply most of the standard transformations, add text to a figure (any available font), merge graphics, save in GIF, JPEG, and other formats, convert between W*nd*ws and Mac graphics, create and view slide shows, and, and, and....

Now at version 5.9.3, this one's been around a few years, and keeps getting more versatile without becoming harder to use. As with all shareware, you can download and try it out before paying the \$30 shareware fee for a proper license. Unlike many packages, you'll pay gladly when you realize that for most tasks, GC replaces larger, more complex applications costing ten to thirty times as much. Oh, the Spy has those too, but doesn't believe in using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut, so GC is on tap for 95%+ of his routine graphics work. You can't do without GC. Five telescopes.

Drag Thing

Does Apple's dock and its single-mindedness and inflexibility frustrate you? You can see currently running applications and those items you store there, but it's a single dock, not sorted by category, and you can't drag folders to it, only applications. It's useful, but only somewhat

Drag Thing, from TLA*Systems is far more. You can have any number docks around the edge of the screen, each styled the way you like, and each with multiple tabs for layers. Put productivity applications in one, communications tools in a second, utilities in a third, classic items in a fourth. Have a separate dock for folder tabs (hierarchical of course), another for URLs or FTP sites. You still have the option of activating a built-in running process dock, which for fast switching you can put at the top of the screen to complement Apple's dock at the bottom.

Also built in are a dock for mounted drives, and a trash can alias that can be placed anywhere on screen. All the docks attached to the sides can be made to pop out from their tabs on rollover, and can be configured to suit your taste.

Currently on version 5.6.4, this one has also been on the Spy's system since long before OS X, and is in his view the best docking system currently available.

And, while he's giving accolades to TLA, he notes that their scientific calculator application PCalc (version 3.2 reviewed) seems like one of the best of its type also. He's only had it on system for a week or two, but it appears to be everything you want in a desktop calculator: fast, complete, keyboard reconfigures according to mode, fast, has hex, binary, can be configured to present different styles, has a tape and other drawers, also runs with fewer features as a widget, and is in short geeky cool. Course, the Spy once had a slide rule with the periodic table atomic masses as a scale, sometimes still uses his round slide rule for converting grades en masse, and employs for regular tasks a TI Voyage 200 (ahem).

Licenses cost \$29 for Drag Thing, \$19 for PCalc, or \$34 for the bundle. Buy the bundle. Amazing. Five more telescopes.

Putting Your Money where Your Mouth is Department

Sitting under another of his many hats, the Spy is a web services provider, through the various subsidiaries of ArjayWeb.com. His brand shiny new dual Opteron server has loads of speed and bandwidth, so, he's decided to give a little to the shareware community. Starting this month, the above mentioned programs (and others to be added) can be downloaded via **downloads.thenorthernspy.com**. This free service helps authors keep their wares in circulation, but the Spy reminds downloaders that they have an obligation to pay the shareware fee within a reasonable time (say, a month) or delete the program from their drives. Authors of Mac/Linux/Palm freeware and shareware can contact Nellie-at-thenorthernspy.com for an FTP account on the system. Sorry, we don't do games or W*nd*ws. Y'er welcome.

--The Northern Spy

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

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

URLs

The Northern Spy Home Page: <http://www.TheNorthernSpy.com>

The Spy's Laws collected: <http://www.thenorthernspy.com/spyslaws htm>

The Spy's Shareware download site: <http://downloads.thenorthernspy.com/>

WebNameHost : <http://www.WebNameHost.net>

WebNameSource : <http://www.WebNameSource.net>

nameman : <http://nameman.net>

opundo : <http://opundo.com>

Sheaves Christian Resources : <http://sheaves.org>

Arjay Books: <http://www.ArjayBooks.com>

Booksurge: <http://www.booksurge.com>

Fictionwise: <http://www.fictionwise.com>

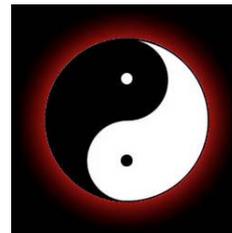
LemkeSoft: <http://www.lemkesoft.com/en/index.htm>

TLA*Systems: <http://tla-systems.co.uk/>

Internet Recipe Hunting and Recipe Reformatting Tips

A Tutorial in Three Parts - Part I: Hints for the Intrepid Internet Recipe Hunter

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



Introduction

It's been a bit less than a year since I've given serious thought to the how's and why's of recipe hunting. Although chasing recipes is relaxing for me, from my partner's perspective it is a frivolous, if harmless, exercise. Part of her reasoning is that with only the two of us in the house, we cook less and less. True, at least until she needs a special recipe for a special occasion. I also cook a little, sometimes creating from scratch and available ingredients to suit my fancy.

At other times, I pick something of interest from my very large collection of digital references. And since I remain an information junkie, if my messing around in the kitchen or on the Internet turns out well, I might as well capture what pleases me. This article and the two parts that follow serve as a chronicle of my recipe hunting habits and how I tweak, add to, or capture recipes to create final, collectible copies that have all of the Internet sites' extraneous material removed.

So, you might ask, if I don't cook very much anymore, why do I insist on chasing more and more recipes? First, since I have a good imagination, I can almost taste the recipes I read. I've spent years cooking the foods of many nations and cuisines, as well as, when lucky, eating at some great restaurants. If I lived in a major urban area, I'd likely eat out several times a week at the small local ethnic places that have great food at retiree prices; but I'm here in the Tri-Cities, where such opportunities are few.

So when reading about food, sensing its taste becomes an almost vicarious thrill. (Don't knock it! When you're seventy plus years old, lots of things become a bit more vicarious.) First of all, it's fun to see the pictures and read the stories of foods of the world. I'm also somewhat travel averse, so I haven't taken any of the great foreign food tours that have become popular in the last 10-15 years. Therefore, unless a miracle happens, I'm not likely to get out for a grand-taste tour.



Since much of Part I contains lots of words and links, I thought I'd spice up things for you by dispersing great food pictures I've downloaded, to whet your appetite. Since I've named each dish, it should be a no-brainer for you to find the recipe on the Internet.

Fortunately for me, the recipes in my food magazines are all on the publishers' websites, as are many of the stories. In addition, though I don't watch TV much, sites such as the Food Network also have great online food-oriented recipes and articles.

Nonetheless, as noted in previous food-oriented columns and reviews, I've always been vaguely dissatisfied with both the contents and appearance (layout) of the recipes I've captured from the Internet. This is not a problem when inputting my own recipes into MS Word, where I control the content and overall appearance of the recipe, complete with inserting the cooking-related images I capture or create. (For my earlier thoughts on this topic, check out "Rants, Raves, and Revelations – March 2006. *Annotating and Making Text Recipes Pretty – It takes more than one tool*", in which I shared information about enhancing simple recipes.)

Tutorial Overview

So, my purpose in this three-part tutorial is to share a few of my favorite recipe sites and talk a bit about the issues associated with downloading from these websites and others. I'll also discuss how I clean up and customize recipes captured from the Web.

- Part I – Hints for the Intrepid Internet Recipe Hunter
- Part II – Take a Shortcut to Recipe Capture with MS Word
- Part III – Complex PDFs and their Customization

In this (first) part of my article, I focus on sharing information about where I chase recipes, and the features and limitations of those sites with respect to capturing and modifying their contents to make them look good and easier to use. Whether or not the sites please your taste buds depends on what you eat and cook, something I'm not going to get into your face about.

Parts II and III of this article will involve working with three pages of Darlene Schmidt's multiple-page, multi-image recipe, *Easy Thai Green Curry Chicken*, found at <http://thaifood.about.com/od/thairecipes/ss/greencurry.htm>. The focus of Parts II and III will be on extracting the meat (bad pun) from an eight-segment, detailed, and well-illustrated set of web pages, and converting that material into a crisp, easy to read, two-page recipe to add to my collection. They will appear in the next two issues of *macCompanion*.

So Why Bother Editing Recipe Downloads?

There are three reasons to clean up a PDF file of a downloaded recipe captured by printing it to PDF (also true when dragging it to MS Word):

- to trim unneeded information for the recipe, thus shrinking the file size;
- to add an image to the recipe;
- to modify the recipe by changing the ingredients, adapting the cooking instructions, or adding other information.

Note that my criteria for a *clean* recipe are one that consumes the fewest PDF or MS Word pages, can be easily read when printed, is well laid out, and contains minimal white space.



Whenever I capture a website recipe by printing to PDF, I use the printer-friendly version, if available. This will automatically remove website-related sidebar information and general headers that have nothing to do with the recipe.

Alas, that sometimes removes the image, so you will need to add it to the recipe, if a picture is worth – to you – a thousand words.

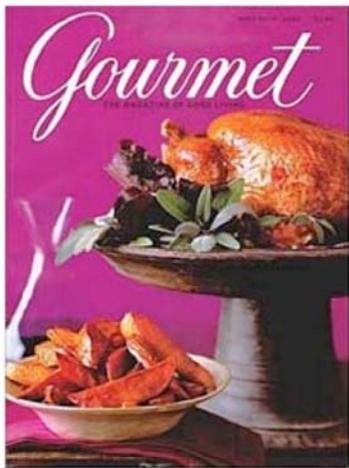
If no printer-friendly version is available and you want to save the recipe as a PDF, you're going to need to use the Acrobat *Crop* tool in its *Trim* mode to get rid of the unwanted stuff. Hint: Before going this route, print the recipe to PDF and see what you captured. Some sites automatically strip away the unneeded material when you select print.

You can also, on some sites, print the recipe in 3 X 5 or 4 x 6 recipe card sizes, if you collect recipes in file boxes.

Okay, Let's Go Recipe Hunting

There are as many ways to chase recipes as there are people. Let me list the general ways that I get where I want to go:

Do a search for a recipe or main ingredient — This is my method of choice when I've come across the name of a dish and want to know more about it. The good news is that you'll get thousands of hits on Google and will have to check them out in further detail. The bad news is that this may be a tedious process. But whenever I find a really good site the hard way, by accident, I add it to my list of links that I may again visit.



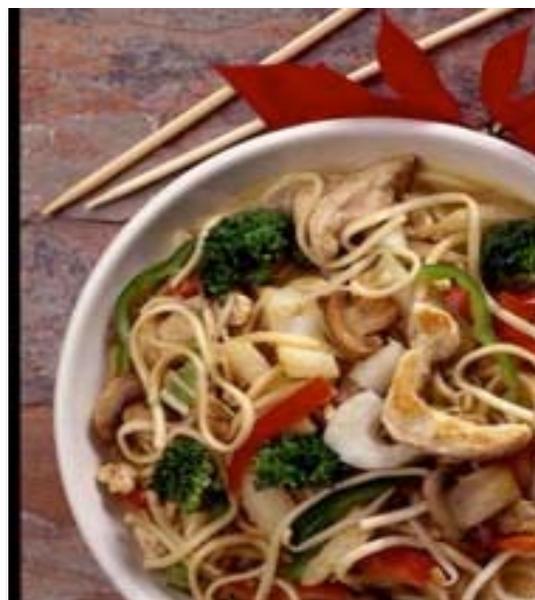
Search for recipes from food magazines you read — Obvious and often easy to do, although sometimes the article title and dish name differs from the actual name of the recipe. That's okay; you might stumble onto something else you'll like.

Search for a specific dish whose name or picture you run across in a food- or travel-related blog — What's this about, you ask? Well, an example won't hurt. I found a great recipe for beef satay on the Epicurious site, but it was not illustrated. I went to Google Images to find a picture to illustrate the recipe, found a great picture of beef satay without skewers, and added it to my PDF recipe. But curiosity drove me to explore more fully the site that featured the fine beef satay image. Wasn't I surprised to find hundred of posts about food, many with recipes that looked like fun. That site was http://www.stefmike.org/mt-archives/cat_culinary.html.

There were great pictures of these dishes on the stefmike.org site, but, alas, no recipes. Foods that seemed interesting included Thai Chap Chye and Chye Poh noodles, rack of lamb oriental, chicken noodles four seasoning soup, bacon spinach pizza, and Gai Lan (Chinese broccoli). So I put a few of these images that had no recipes, labeled with the names of each dish, into a folder to chase on another day.

Pick a site and browse for your favorite ingredient or cuisine — I routinely look for Chinese or Asian recipes, Greek food, lamb in all of its variations, and seafood, especially shrimp. I found great seafood dishes at <http://www.pastrywiz.com/archive/category/seafood.htm>

To show how rich in recipes a site can be, check out the Hungry Monster site <http://www.hungrymonster.com/recipe/recipe-search.cfm>. On the day I started writing this tutorial, it contained 500 Chinese recipes, about 400 Greek recipes, and a bit more than 200 recipes to meet my needs for lamb. I wasn't aware that there were 750 recipes for sauces, plain or fancy, nor that there were over 2000 recipes, should you like to cook on your grill.



Thai Coconut Chicken Curry Bowl

Check out the name of a dish in Google Images and follow the links to the recipe — This one is the most fun, although back-linking can lead you to dead ends. You can also sometimes come up with some interesting variations on what may seem an ordinary dish.

How Many For Dinner? — Many recipe sites allow you to change the number of servings, allowing you to copy that recipe so you can serve it at the church buffet or at a family dinner.

Recipe Rich Blogs, A Treasure Trove — If the recipes I want to capture are in a long blog, either all words or pictures, I copy the text and images to separate MS Word documents. Although this is slightly more effort, it's great for easily capturing the blogger's comments in addition to the recipe itself.

When Document Size Matters

I now have two almost identical versions of Darlene Schmidt's recipe: one obtained by tweaking and rearranging PDF files, and another by using drag-and-drop for key parts of the recipe into MS Word. The size of the combined PDF pages before deleting unneeded material from them was 10.7 MB, yet my final consolidated PDF version was only 666 KB in size.

The file created directly from the Web by selectively dragging web contents to MS Word ended up being 1.6 MB in size. When I changed the MS Word document, from within, to PDF using Adobe's PDFMaker (installed in MSW as a part of Acrobat) the file shrank to 252 KB in size. So which tool you use to convert MSW documents to PDF files makes a difference. For example, printing the MS Word recipe to PDF using Apple's *print* command left me with a 1.6 MB file. Guess which version I kept for my collection?

In Closing

Although I prefer my captured recipes in PDF, it is easier and faster for me to use MS Word for the original capture and then to reformat it than it is to completely reformat a complex series of PDF documents. For simple "add a picture" techniques, I find using Acrobat to be faster, especially with images found on Google, Yahoo, or other websites. I alternate between both techniques, in part by guessing which will be less work. But, tuning up your downloaded recipes should be done with tools you have and that you can comfortably use.

As for annotating recipes by adding an ingredient or changing the amount of an ingredient, there is, as in most cooking, no right way to modify recipes. Fix the ingredients quantities to the amount that you think will taste best. More garlic and adding chili flakes or other hot spices!



Thai Pork Prik Khing

Check out Parts II and III for the rest of this tutorial. They deal with capturing recipes directly from the Web with Microsoft Word and with tuning complex, multiple-page recipes with Acrobat.

Do remember most of the material you captured has been copyright protected, but the fair-use clause allows you personal use. You can't publish, sell, or otherwise commercially use the material without the copyright owner's permission. Play nice, enjoy the recipes you collected and tuned, and work out a bit to leave space for more of the collected recipes you've cooked.



Mac Security 101

<http://www.applemacpunk.com>

applemacpunk at cox dot net Copyright ©2006 Kale Feelhaver

Top 10 Mac Security Tools

By Kale Feelhaver aka AppleMacPunk - December 2006

As a tribute to 2006, and to welcome 2007, I thought I'd do an article about my favorite Mac Security Tools, and tell a little about each one. These are the tools I use nearly every day to make sure my Mac and/or my other systems are secure. *NOTE: Security tools can be used for good or evil. Please respect other people/systems and only use these tools for good things.*

1. **ClamXav** <http://clamxav.com>

ClamXav is the ClamAV open source virus scanner ported for Mac OS X. Free virus protection is hard to top.

2. **SSH** <http://www.openssh.com/>

A free utility that comes with Mac OS X. Use SSH to securely manage Linux/Unix/Mac servers on you local network, or even over the Internet.

3. **KisMac** <http://kismac.de/>

This handy little piece of freeware is great for sniffing wireless network traffic. This is the Mac OS X port of the popular Kismet wireless packet analyzer.

4. **DoorStopX** <http://opendoor.com/doorstop/>

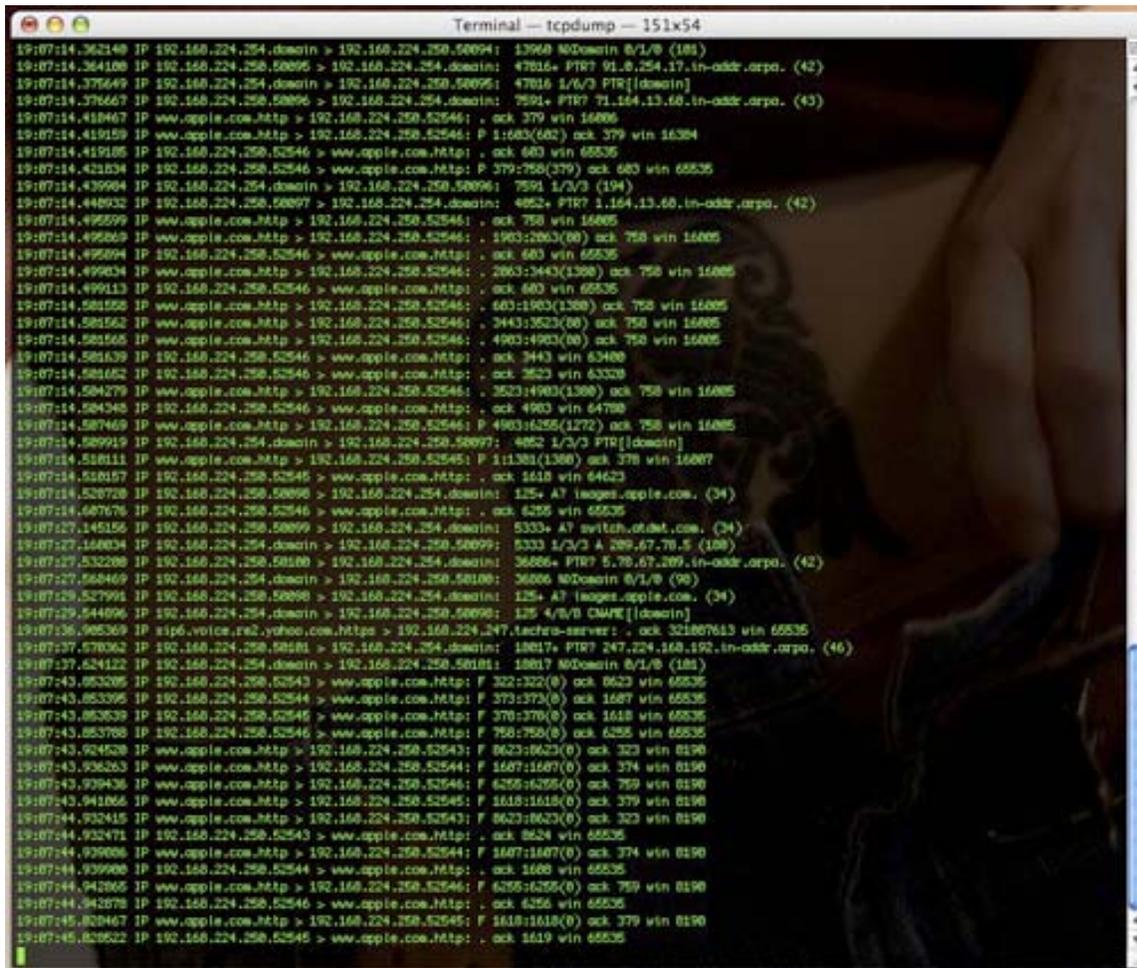
A fully featured software firewall (shareware) for Mac OS X, it does everything the built-in firewall does and then some.

5. **Nessus** <http://nessus.org>

The popular open source vulnerability scanner now has a Mac OS X client. Nessus is a favorite of security professionals worldwide as it is a great tool for checking servers for vulnerabilities. The Nessus team constantly updates the plugins so your scanning is always up to date.

6. **TCPDump** <http://www.tcpdump.org/>

A useful free command line utility included with Mac OS X. Simply run TCPDump from the command line to analyze packet information on your network.



7. John the Ripper <http://www.openwall.com/john/>

John the Ripper is a freeware password crack utility that has been ported to Mac OS X. This utility will allow you to crack passwords if the root or admin password is ever lost.

8. Paranoid Android <http://www.unsanity.com/haxies/pa>

This little freeware application can be configured to warn you when malicious software tries to modify anything on your system.

9. Nmap <http://insecure.org/nmap/index.html>

This is a lightweight open source command line vulnerability/port scanner. Nmap is a lot faster than more robust vulnerability scanners like Nessus.

10. MacScan <http://macscan.securemac.com>

This is a shareware spyware/adware/kelogger scanner for Mac OS X. An easy way to find malware on your system.

Situational Ethics and Quotes that last a Lifetime

by Robert Pritchett

It's Just Business

Do you remember the Blue Fairy from Disney's Pinocchio? She said;

"A lie keeps growing and growing until it's as plain as the nose on your face."

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0032910/quotes>

In our line of work, we hear certain individuals on occasion saying, "It's just business", when referring to situations that tend to take black and white and turn it into grey.

Sir Walter Scott once wrote;

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive".

<http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/27150.html>

And nowhere do I see a commandment that says, "Thou shalt not lie - except when doing business".

A very interesting read can be found about *Situational Ethics* over on the Wikipedia website at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situation_ethics that expounds on the topic of Christian ethical theory as purported by a Joseph Fletcher back in the 1960's, where moral principles could be cast aside "if love is best served". Herein is where we slip down the slope of the philosophies of men, instead of obeying higher laws.

I don't like grey, when it comes to doing business. Do you?

I personally prefer the simple Benjamin Franklin quote that has lasted the test of time;

"When in doubt, don't". http://www3.thinkexist.com/quotation/when_in_doubt-don-t/200748.html

We should think twice and act once, when determining how we do business and treat others. **Without them, we have no business being in business!**

The Golden Rule isn't either; "He who has the gold, rules", or "Do unto others before they do unto you", rather, it is, according to Tai Shang Kan Yin P'ien in Taoism;

"Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss."

<http://www.teachingvalues.com/goldenrule.html>

Hostile Takeovers

Perhaps in a few more months I can reveal experiences I've witnessed with a hostile take-over company that followed the Microsoft way of "innovating" by eliminating competition through acquisition. I was told I didn't understand. That this was just "doing good business". I don't care for that quote, because destroying a perfectly good company that is making a profit, has the best track record in the industry as far as customer satisfaction and retention is concerned, without gouging them financially and gaining loyalty to the point that the clients would rather die than switch *and* refer *their* competitors to the product, because it is that good, just doesn't make any sense to me. I don't get it. Do you?

Goodwill and trust is earned over a long period of time. It has value. It cannot be given away, but is gained through hard work and consistent and at times, heroic effort, by placing the customer first. Always first. Why? Because they paid for that service and they want the service they *paid* for. The employees delivered. But soon, no longer. All because a larger competitor bought that company out and in order to push their own inferior competing, yet more expensive product, they *must* kill off the money-maker.

I won't say anything for a few more months – and you can quote me on that.

Final Judgment

I wonder what will become of “Situational Ethics” when we stand to be judged before our Maker after this life? How will we respond on how we treated our fellow man? I hope I can say that my soul stands bruised, but unblemished and unspotted before Him at that last day. I hope I can say that my business decisions built purpose and meaning into the lives of my fellow men and did not destroy them in pursuit of the almighty dollar or whatever money system is used.

The Bottom Line

This is a time to reflect during these Holy-days. What are you doing to improve the lives of those around you? Do you follow the precepts of men or do you act on behalf of higher laws that transcend mankind?

Do we “seek for earthly riches” or pursue “riches in heaven” by blessing the lives of those around us through “good works”?

Moral Fiber

Let me be one to say that following Situational Ethics is going after a false god and not in the direction of truth and honesty, of right and integrity. A diet of “moral fiber” is a good thing. I hope those who do business, do it with good intentions. What will you do?

Holy-Days Introspection and Jacob Marley's Ghost

From Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge asks the ghost of his dead partner, Jacob Marley, why he is dragging chains behind him, he replies: "The chains I wear I forged in life. I made them link by link."

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

<http://www.literature.org/authors/dickens-charles/christmas-carol/chapter-01.html>

Perhaps you should watch or listen to *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol* this season?

<http://www.woodsideavenue.com/jacobMarley.html>

http://www.swlanz.com/shows/jmcc/2006_09_01_archive.html

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

Remember that human civilization is based on certain policies and procedures that “polite society” lives by called “Commandments” – and not “Suggestions”:

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

And those are quotes that last a lifetime.



Musings From Mars

<http://www.musingsfrommars.org>

Ten Ways To Make a Podcast, Plus One

by Leland Scott – December 2006

*Update 11/24/06: Added **Übercaster** to the list of podcasting tools for future review. Übercaster is a high-end recording tool, similar to GarageBand, that's currently in beta testing.*

Update 11/20: Revised FeedForAll review with information for version 2.0.0.5.

In August 2005, I was all pumped up to make my first podcast, and the webosphere was full of great advice, new tools, and lots of encouragement from Mac zines and blogs. I was particularly excited to put together an "enhanced" podcast using the new iTunes extensions Apple had released earlier that summer. With enhanced podcasts, you can embed "chapters" into a single audio file, and mark each chapter with text and images. That way, when the podcast plays in your iPod or in iTunes, the text forms a set of hyperlinks so the user can hop from one part of the podcast to another, while your chapter pictures help set the mood. This was a great new publishing medium, and obviously publishers all around the world were excited to adapt their ideas to it.

The podcast tool market was still in its infancy a year ago, but already there were quite a few choices. There were fewer choices for doing enhanced podcasts, but I had no trouble finding a good piece of freeware for my experiment: **ChapterToolMe** was awkwardly named but easy to use, and in no time I had a podcast to submit to the iTunes music store.

The aim of my podcast experiment was to publish the latest mp3 snippets added to the **Classic 45's** "Jukebox," and I planned to include a brief, spoken narrative about each 45 rpm record. I used **Soundtrack Pro** to assemble the audio file, and that was the time-consuming part. Stringing the mp3 bits together didn't take too long, but getting the narrative just right did. After doing one, I decided I simply wouldn't have time to make a series out of this, and my life moved on to other creative endeavors. (To my surprise, I see that my original podcast is still in the iTunes inventory... you can find it by searching for "Classic 45s Jukebox" or perhaps trying **this URL**.)

In the last year, podcasting has become mainstream, and every organization that was publishing RSS feeds the year before is now getting podcasts out. I haven't honestly subscribed to enough podcasts to know how many publishers are preparing "enhanced" 'casts, but given the continued popularity of iTunes, I assume that format is still quite popular. All the while, the back of my mind has kept returning to the question of doing a podcast with the rich storehouse of music in the Classic 45's Jukebox. After all, I make the mp3's and write the descriptions up already. Since the snippets are only about a minute each, have very low-quality audio, and are typically from recordings that are no longer available commercially, I didn't think copyright issues would be... well, an issue.

A few months ago, I finally sat down and adapted my PHP script that updates the regular RSS feed for Classic 45's to create a new feed just for jukebox items, including an enclosure tag for the mp3 files. Then the project lay dormant until last week, when a possible method of automating the podcast process suddenly hit me.

Rather than putting together one big audio file, with recorded narration, and then dividing it into chapters using an enhanced podcast tool, I could just release each mp3 file as a separate episode. Each episode could include the text narration and facts about the record, plus the label or sleeve scan I normally include on the site. I wasn't totally sure this would work, but it seemed worth testing. If it worked, I could release a podcast without eating away up any more of my precious spare time. When I pointed Safari to the mp3 feed I'd made earlier, it loaded the "podcast" right up, displaying the HTML and image content along with a link to the enclosed mp3 file for the last 36 jukebox items. I then went to iTunes and entered the feed URL as a new Podcast subscription, and lo and behold, iTunes also loaded the feed, even providing little buttons for subscribers to download each episode they want.

So, the concept seemed sound, and the next step seemed to be a tools review. Was there some cool new application that would help me with the project? Perhaps there were new capabilities of the podcast specification that I could leverage. Thus, the usual sequence of my life played out again: One project led to another!

Somehow, I thought I'd still need the capabilities of Apple's Chapter Tool to embed images or text into the media, so my review would include "enhanced" podcast software as well as "regular" podcast makers. For those who aren't hip to the different kinds of podcasts, it boils down to these three basic kinds:

- Podcasts adhering to the **RSS 2.0 specification**.
- Podcasts adhering to RSS 2.0 spec plus Apple's **iTunes extensions**, and
- iTunes podcasts **enhanced with Apple's Chapter Tool software**.

The first two kinds refer solely to the XML code and content within the RSS file itself. (The main difference between podcasts, vidcasts, etc. and regular RSS feeds is that the 'casts have a media-file "enclosure" that becomes linked content for the feed.) Enhanced podcasts actually have a different **kind** of enclosure: An MPEG4 AAC file that has embedded meta data, which can include text and/or images. Apple introduced the free Chapter Tool software and this new kind of podcast with the release of iTunes 4.9 in June 2005. (How time flies!)

OK, lesson over...

Besides the ability to create enhanced podcasts and my usual exacting standards for the software's user interface, my ideal Podcast-making tool would have the following virtues:

- Import existing podcast feeds.
- Support for the iTunes RSS extensions.
- Support for the full RSS 2.0 spec.
- A built-in RSS validator.
- Built-in publishing of feeds to FTP/SFTP, Webdav (including .Mac), and local folders.
- Preview for HTML content in episode descriptions.
- Support for editing HTML content
- Ability to play the episode's audio content within the interface.
- Ability to easily add images for the feed and episodes.
- Built-in search for podcast and feed content.

So, what did I find from my podcast tools survey in November 2006? A heckuva lot of great podcasting software--- that's what!

Honestly, I don't think I could actually pan any of these tools. There are clearly some shining stars here, but no black holes this time out. I did testing and took notes on the following 10 applications for developing and publishing podcasts on Mac OS X (the "shining stars" are labeled with a checkmark:):

1. **Cast Life**
2. **ChapterToolMe**
3. **Feedati**
4. **Feeder**
5. **FeedForAll**
6. **Podcast AV**
7. **Podcast Maker**
8. **Podcaster**
9. **ProfCast**
10. **Vodcaster**

Once again, I know there are a few knowledgeable readers who are wondering why **GarageBand**---Apple's own Podcast-making tool---isn't on this list. There are several reasons:

- First, GarageBand isn't primarily intended for making Podcasts---that's just a new feature Apple tacked on to the 2006 version.
- Second, GarageBand was very flaky in the podcast department when I first tried it, starting with the fact that I couldn't get its podcast template to work. Every time I selected "Podcast" from the list of possible projects and enter a name for the project, GarageBand would return me to the "Starting Points" screen to select a project. That got old really fast.
- Third, about the time I figured out I could make an ad-hoc podcast by choosing that track type in any old GarageBand file, I realized that using GarageBand was going to be like Soundtrack Pro all over again. Its idea of a podcast is someone manually piecing together some tracks of music or some narratives and then lovingly massaging it with chapters, text, and images. But I'd decided I didn't have time for that.
- And finally, I realized that GarageBand was missing a key functionality: It couldn't import my remote podcast from its XML feed.

So, although GarageBand clearly doesn't suck for its main intended use, it definitely wouldn't be useful to me in my new podcasting enterprise. GarageBand was the first software I tried, and it just never made it onto my DevonThink spreadsheet. However, as you might notice when looking over the applications I did review, GarageBand would be perfect for someone who *does* want to make an enhanced podcast and doesn't care about automation and remote XML files. Plus, if you have a new-model Mac or have purchased iLife '06, you already have GarageBand on your hard drive!

For a wrapup and a few notes on lessons learned, see the **Addendum**.

CAST LIFE

Cast Life is a beautiful little Mac OS X Cocoa application that is marvelously easy to use, but somewhat limited in its abilities. At \$10, it's the least expensive shareware product here, but you get quite a bit for that price. Cast Life has great range, handling regular text (news) feeds as well as photo, video, and music feeds (otherwise known as podcasts). The first time you start it up, Cast Life gets you going in grand visual style, with a Quartz ripple effect to transition the user from the starting points sheet to the feed data entry interface. Also noteworthy is Cast Life's excellent search tool and flexibility in publishing options.

As much as I like Cast Life, however, the "whaddaya expect for ten bucks" question popped up several times during testing. Most significant are the tool's tendency to crash, the absence of preview functions, and the limited support for RSS extensions and options in developing your feed. Although Cast Life has a nice iLife media browser, it gives you no way to browse your hard drive outside of the iLife content to import artwork and sound files. Still, I think it's a great starter podcasting tool, given its low price, ease of use, and good coverage of the basics.

| Cast Life (Version 1.4, \$10) | |
|--|---|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses Sparkle! • Beautiful interface, with a gorgeous animation when starting a new feed • Excellent first steps, makes setup as simple as can be • iLife integration: You can choose music, video, and photos from CastLife's chooser • Can play audio files in CastLife (but not attachments that don't come from iLife) • Supports video, file, and regular news casts, too. • Very fast import of episode data. • Great live search through podcast episodes instantly narrows choices. • Publishes to .Mac, FTP site, or local folder. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't use images from outside Pictures folder • CastLife crashed when I tried to publish to a local folder • No support for enhanced podcasts • CastLife repeatedly hung when I accepted its offer to import the cast's artwork. It would import the artwork, but not the episodes. • Interface is a bit rigid... no panes can be hidden during work, and the description field is unusably small. • No previews of content or attachments. • Doesn't provide access to full list of meta data for RSS 2.0 and iTunes (though the important ones are there). • When publishing a small photocast, Cast Life succeeded in finishing, but the images published didn't show up in the feed. |

CHAPTER TOOL ME

ChapterToolMe is pretty much the same application I used in August 2005, having had only one or two minor updates since then. As a free tool for developing enhanced podcasts, it still can't be beat and is definitely a step above working with Apple's free Chapter Tool software on your own. However, it doesn't have most of the basic functionality I'm looking for this year, so it wasn't hard to pass on it this time. If you have GarageBand, you're probably better off using that, since ChapterToolMe can only do the enhancement to your audio file. You then need a separate tool to prepare your RSS feed. With GarageBand, you just send the podcast file off to iWeb, and it will make a nice HTML page and the RSS feed to boot! It even lets you submit the feed to the iTunes music store (something a few of the other tools here do as well). What I'm saying is that time seems to have passed ChapterToolMe by... any Mac user today can get the same (and better-looking!) tools in the iLife suite, plus the rest of the podcasting "life cycle."

| ChapterToolMe (Version 1.4.3, Free) | |
|---|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to use.• Supports creation of enhanced podcasts using Apple's ChapterTool utility | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can't import existing feeds, so all work in setting up the podcast has to be done manually.• Doesn't support a podcast feed consisting of single-song episodes.. it only does chapter-style podcasts built on a single audio file.• Doesn't actually write the XML file. |

FEEDATI

Feedati is so new it's only at version 0.1 today. According to the writeup on Feedati's website, it's incorporated the very cool Sparkle autoupdate framework, but thus far users haven't had a chance to make use of it. Clearly, Feedati is just at the beginning stage of the developer's vision, and only time will tell if that vision gets fleshed out further or Feedati fades into the very large background of fellow apps that time (and their developers) forgot. Not that there's anything seriously wrong with Feedati... it just has fairly limited functionality at this point, plus one or two very annoying bugs (for which I finally found a workaround). Two big drawbacks from my personal standpoint are that Feedati is iTunes-tag-specific (meaning it doesn't support the standard RSS 2.0 elements or options), and its XML export function is broken. Still, it's free, and might be worth a look for that reason alone if you have a very tiny (or zero) budget.

| Feedati (Version 0.1, Free) | |
|---|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imports existing feeds.• Clean, good layout• Rich details it picks up from existing feeds.• Easy access to iTunes-specific tags. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First time I ran it, I couldn't import a feed. This occurred after I had started to make one by hand. Second launch, I imported a feed first thing, and it worked.• When I exported a feed or an episode, the XML file was essentially blank.• No support for enhanced podcasts.• Inflexible interface... neither window nor any pane can be resized.• No drag/drop support for adding content, and no content previews. |

FEEDER

I distinctly remember **Feeder** from my look at tools in the summer of 2005, since it has the same distinctive icon. Then, as now, it doesn't support enhanced podcasts, and at \$30 it's not cheap... both reasons why I didn't use it for my first podcast experiment. However, clearly the Feeder developers have been very busy in the last year, because their podcast software today is among the most polished and well-rounded of the bunch here.

The thing that struck me most when I tried Feeder last week was what a terrific job it does at previewing your feed. It defaults to a view that looks just like the standard Safari RSS template, faithfully displaying your HTML formatting and images. Feeder's user interface is very well designed, making it simple to find everything you need... while hiding the complexity of all the potential things you don't yet know you want. Feeder has full support for the iTunes extensions as well as the standard RSS 2.0 spec, and it's the only app here that provides a working preview of how your feed is going to look in the iTunes interface. On top of that, Feeder is one of only two apps here that provide a good HTML editing environment for designing your feed's description field, which---as the screenshot shows in one of my sample episodes---can also include images, hyperlinks, and all the rest.

Aside from one or two small bugs, the two deficiencies I noted in Feeder were its lack of support for enhanced podcasts, and its inability to attach a separate image to each episode (outside of the description field).

| Feeder (Version 1.3.8.1, \$30) | |
|--|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beautiful interface• The best overall previewing interface of the bunch so far• Excellent navigation through episodes, by both title and preview.• Full use of all the latest Mac OS X user interface niceties.• Imported existing XML feed• Supports iTunes extensions as well as RSS 2.0 options. For iTunes subtitle and summary, shows number of words remaining.• Supports templates for different kinds of feeds, which are customizable• Includes built-in editor that lets you edit in either HTML source or plain text.• Has built-in preview for iTunes store• Has slew of built-in ping services• Provides feed validator tool.• Successfully published podcast to my .Mac account, but Feeder also supports FTP servers and can publish locally as well• Has built-in support for PodTrac service (subscription separate)• Toolbar search field makes quick work of finding specific episodes or content in a feed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Couldn't drag image from preview to the image well, even though it showed a + as if it would work.• View library menu item didn't work.• Doesn't support enhanced podcasts, after all.• Feeder can attach an image to the feed, but doesn't support separate images for each episode. |

FEEDFORALL

(Note: Updated 11/20 with information for version 2.0.0.5) My initial impression of **FeedForAll** was "Yuck!" However, that was simply an irrational, visceral reaction to the software's obvious Windows XP roots. Not only does it have those awful, childish-looking icons, but when I first ran FeedForAll, it was so much slower than all the other Mac tools here I was certain it had simply crashed. Turns out I was wrong about that... it's just extremely slow. Eventually FeedForAll will finish loading itself, and when you ask it to import a remote feed, it *will* eventually finish loading the feed. You just have to be patient. Of course, the developer could help out here by following Apple's user interface guidelines, which suggest use of a progress indicator when a process is going to take awhile. All you get in FeedForAll is the spinning beach ball, which most of us have come to associate with a hung application rather than one that's just working hard.

Once I was ready to give FeedForAll a serious workout, I was impressed by the depth and breadth of its abilities. FeedForAll is a serious tool that has all the power most publishers will want from a podcasting experience. The first thing that impressed me was FeedForAll's built-in RSS validator: It helped me knock out a few syntax errors that might have caused trouble down the line. FeedForAll won't even import your feed until you correct the errors, by the way---this could be annoying or pleasing depending on your personality. Also impressive is the application's useful HTML editor and its ability to preview your HTML content. Another notable virtue in FeedForAll's favor is the wealth of PHP scripts the developer makes available to its registered users for manipulating RSS feeds in various ways.

On the downside, FeedForAll is the most expensive tool available for the Mac. At \$40, that's only \$10 more than its competition, but it's hard to justify given the quality of the \$30 tools here. Although FeedForAll has a useful HTML preview, it doesn't let you preview your audio or video content, and it has no support for enhanced podcasts. FeedForAll is also unable to associate an image with an episode, providing a feed-level image only.

Finally, as a non-Cocoa application, FeedForAll misses out on a lot of user interface tricks and functionality that Mac users are coming to expect---like sheets, panels, resizable drawers, and the like. Contrary to what I've heard from some naysayers, these Cocoa user-interface widgets make it possible to design much more functional and attractive software than is possible with Java, XUL, or COM interface objects. More than mere eye-candy, the Cocoa framework widgets simply make for better software design. (Or so it seems to me.) Given all of these "cons", I find it hard to fully recommend FeedForAll, but it's definitely a good Podcasting tool and might be worth a look if the features that are negatives for me don't mean that much to you.

| FeedForAll (Version 2.0.0.5, \$40) | |
|---|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggested and made corrections to feed syntax. Provides a window showing all the suggested changes and their reasons.• Includes useful HTML editor for the description.• Provides access to every possible RSS 2.0 and iTunes-specific attributes and settings for your feeds.• Provides a preview of the episode descriptions, including any images it contains.• Provides window for viewing the XML source, and comparing it with your original.• The preferences let you save individual setting and attribute defaults globally and per feed.• Provides a built-in feed validator.• Downloads feeds and uploads to FTP sites as well as to .Mac and local folders.• Allows access to a range of useful PHP scripts for use in managing content in RSS feeds. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Godawful ugly interface and icons• Took forever to launch and then hung up forever.• Eventually the spinning beach ball stopped and I tried importing (downloading) the test feed. This process again took an inordinately long time, to the point that I was sure the software had just hung up.• Most expensive tool reviewed.• No support for .Mac or local folders.• No support for iTunes extensions to RSS.• No support for enhanced podcasts• Can't associate a separate image with each episode.• Not a native Cocoa application, so it's missing a lot of built-in functionality from the Cocoa frameworks.• No preview function for audio or video content.• Minor user-interface bugs (e.g., dialog boxes that don't accept mouse clicks)• FeedForAll provides a search option, but I'd prefer to have one right on the toolbar... a location Mac users are becoming accustomed to nowadays. |

PODCAST AV

Podcast AV is kind of like a professional-grade ChapterToolMe. Its basic functionality is pretty much the same as ChapterToolMe and GarageBand, but it has a much better user interface than the former and bests the latter by virtue of its simplicity and focus. I love software like Podcast AV that offers to start you out with a little interactive tutorial, and this tool's tutorial is both longer and more interactive than most. For my purposes, however, Podcast AV won't cut it, since it doesn't import existing feeds, can't actually prepare a podcast feed itself, and in fact can only help you prepare the audio file for one episode at a time. If you're planning on taking advantage of the enhanced podcast features, this app is definitely worth a look. For now, it's free, though the developer's site indicates they plan to charge for it whenever it gets out of the pre-1.0 beta stage.

| Podcast AV (Version 0.8.7, TBD) | |
|--|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nice tutorial available on launch• Clear, attractive interface and toolset• Supports creation of enhanced podcasts using Apple's ChapterTool utility• Easy export of podcast file | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can't import existing feeds, so all work in setting up the podcast has to be done manually.• Doesn't support a podcast feed consisting of single-song episodes.. it only does chapter-style podcasts built on a single audio file.• Doesn't actually write the XML file. |

PODCAST MAKER

In terms of sheer interface ingenuity, **Podcast Maker** gets my vote for the brightest star on stage today. Fortunately, its good looks and interface smarts are matched pretty well by its well rounded functionality. Podcast Maker does have a few missing features, but by and large it would probably be my top choice if I were buying one of these apps today.

Besides its stunningly cool user interface, which is so nice I had to capture it in a brief movie, Podcast Maker shines through its sheer speed in importing external RSS feeds, its top-notch support for iTunes extensions, its built-in support for enhanced podcasts through use of chapters, and its ability to add an image to each separate episode of a feed. Great publishing options, search, and audio preview capability add luster to its other virtues.

However, Podcast Maker is *not* my ideal "podcast maker". The main things missing for me are its surprising inability to preview content stored remotely, its willingness to ignore the standard RSS 2.0 enhancements in deference to Apple's iTunes extensions, its lack of built-in previews for HTML content (there's a Preview function that I could never get to work), and its lack of support for editing HTML. Still, Podcast Maker is a pretty young tool, and it wouldn't take much to take it to the must-have level for podcast publishers.

| Podcast Maker (Version 1.2.8a, \$30) | |
|---|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nice video tutorial on website• Beautiful, compact, functional interface• Terrific use of screen real estate... context-sensitive interface widgets work great• Imports external feeds quickly• Includes ability to add images to each feed episode• Has built-in support for episode chapters• Top notch support for iTunes extensions• Very user friendly interface tools for all activities, including adding external content• Built-in support for Podtrac service (with subscription) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can't import a local XML file• Podcast Maker won't preview audio files that are on external servers• Podcast Maker won't let you set up chapters or otherwise add meta data to mp3 files residing on external servers; you have to add local copies to do this.• The software copies your iTunes summary content to the RSS description element, thus eliminating the ability to have the two fields contain separate content.• No built-in feed preview of HTML content. Preview function never worked and occasionally |

- Lets you easily set up publishing settings to use external servers (either FTP, SFTP, or .Mac) or local folders.
- Terrific built-in search form for finding specific episodes.
- For locally created podcasts, you get a great built-in audio preview (and possibly podcast preview, though I couldn't get it to work)
- Includes a few built-in Ping services, and the ability to add more, for announcing your new podcasts
- Developer made the probably-wise decision to make each podcast a separate "document", rather than showing all feeds as a list in the same window, as most of the other tools do.

- crashed the software.
- No support for editing or creating HTML content for the episode descriptions.
- Doesn't support the full RSS 2.0 specification.

PODCASTER

Podcaster is one of the oldest tools here, having been released soon after the enhanced podcast spec came out last year. It and Podcast Maker are the only tools in the bunch that give users the tools to build both enhanced podcasts and regular ones, and similarly they alone can accomplish the trick of associating a unique image with each episode of a podcast. Naturally, it follows that both of these tools lean heavily toward the iTunes version of RSS and virtually ignore the RSS 2.0 standard. In fact, the basic functionality of Podcaster and Podcast Maker are virtually identical.

So, why have I put a checkmark by Podcast Maker but not Podcaster. This is where attention to detail really makes a difference, folks. Though Podcaster can do nearly everything Podcast Maker can, it does so with little if any finesse and with a number of annoyances. For example, to start with, Podcaster makes you download and install (by finding the right file and dropping it on Podcaster) Apple's Chapter Tool software in order to make enhanced podcasts. Until you do this, it displays an ugly "Install Chapter Tool" button prominently on its face. Another example: When you import an existing feed, Podcaster insists on taking the time to download every attachment it contains... which can take quite a long time in a case like mine with 36 episodes. (Occasionally, Podcaster will hang after such an import, forcing you to re-do it.) This might be worth the time if Podcaster could then let you play the attachments within its interface... but it can't!

Podcaster has the same limitations as Podcast Maker, and then some. Besides those already mentioned, the application provides no help file whatsoever for end users. That's just *wrong*! And although it has a compact interface, it's compact in a rather clunky way, thanks to its Carbon user-interface foundation. Podcaster comes in a \$15 basic version, and apparently you have to pay another \$15 to enable publishing to FTP sites and local folders; otherwise, it publishes only to your iDisk.

| Podcaster (Version 1.1.9, \$15/\$30) | |
|---|---|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imports existing podcasts, including all enclosures of that podcast. • Supports creation of enhanced podcasts as well as "regular" ones. • Can publish to local folders, FTP sites, or your iDisk (these options are available only in the \$30 version) • Allows adding an image to each episode. • Compact user interface puts all functions in easy reach. • You can selectively publish feeds by using the checkbox beside the feed's title. (Though this isn't clear at first.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires installation of ChapterTool as a separate activity in order to make enhanced podcasts. • Software made the subtitle, summary, and description fields identical when publishing the feed. • No preview of HTML content, and no tools for editing or preparing such content. • When you publish, the tool publishes all feeds. It does seem to detect which ones have changes, however. • Even though the tool downloads all attachments for a given feed, it doesn't let you preview the content (e.g., play the audio file attachment) • No built-in Help file or link. • Not a native Cocoa application, so it's missing a lot of built-in functionality from the Cocoa frameworks. |

PROFCAST

ProfCast is clearly designed and marketed for educators, and as such it has some features I don't need, while lacking some I do. Prominent selling points that don't sell the app on me is ProfCast's built-in voice recording function and its ability to handle attached presentation files. I'm sure these are of keen interest to teachers and professors who want to publish podcasts of their lectures and presentations, and in general ProfCast seems like an excellent tool for that use case. Along those lines, ProfCast comes with plugins for Keynote versions 2 and 3, so clearly lecturers who use Keynote will find ProfCast particularly worthy of a tryout.

Other nice aspects of ProfCast are its ability to import existing podcasts and its easy-to-use interface for managing the podcast and adding new episodes. It also has all the bases covered for publishing. The ProfCast site says it has support for enhancing files with chapters, but I didn't see that capability when testing it. Instead, I noticed that ProfCast has a plugin for GarageBand, which lets you shunt your episode audio over to it "for further editing"--- which I took to mean adding chapters and such.

Aspects of ProfCast I didn't like were its import behavior (similar to Podcaster), which included a tendency to crash repeatedly when trying to import my test feed. Its ability preview the audio files it spent so much downloading is also quite flaky, and its "Import to iTunes" feature was grayed out most of the time. Finally, ProfCast provides no HTML preview of your episode and no tools for editing your episode description. At \$30, ProfCast is priced at what seems to be the norm for podcasting tools, and it's probably worth that if you value its lecture-focus functionalities.

| Profcast (Version 2.0b3, \$30) | |
|--|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Imports existing podcast series.Has easy-to-use interface for managing the podcast and adding new episodes.Includes audio recorder for recording episodes.Particularly good for podcasts that include slides... i.e., for teachersIt's possible to preview audio using a widget at the bottom of the left-hand pane.Profcast lets you set up a wide variety of possible servers for your podcast, including .Mac, other webdav servers, FTP, and local file system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Took a long time to import feed. Appeared that Profcast was downloading all of the mp3 files in the feed.No support for chapters.Very odd left-hand panel that can't be resized and is much too large.Profcast crashed repeatedly when trying to import the test feed a second time. I was finally able to import by using the little widget at the bottom of the left-hand pane rather than the File menu.No HTML preview or tools for editing description content.Most of the time, I couldn't get Profcast to do an audio preview, though occasionally I could. The "Import to iTunes" feature was also grayed out most of the time. |

VODCASTER

Vodcaster is the best overall freeware product in this review. It easily imports existing feeds, either from remote URL's or from local XML files, and has an advanced options drawer that you can have Vodcaster pack with (nearly) every RSS extension in both the RSS 2.0 and iTunes repertoire. If you don't want that many options, just uncheck that selection in Vodcaster's preferences. Vodcaster also ably writes your RSS feed for you and lets you add new media files---either video or audio---with its built-in chooser. If you have an attached camera such as an iSight, Vodcaster can also record video (with audio) right there on the spot (but it has no video editing tools and can't enhance your media with chapter markers and images).

In general, Vodcaster has a nice interface, but there are some quirks, as noted in the table below. Perhaps befitting its nature as freeware, Vodcaster can't preview any HTML content you have prepared for the description, and it provides such a tiny rectangle for this field that you couldn't possibly enter or edit anything much there. And though Vodcaster can publish to .Mac or a local folder, it can't publish through FTP. Despite these drawbacks, Vodcaster is stable, has most of the required basics, and even has a few advanced touches. Well worth a try at \$0, I'd say.

| Vodcaster (Version 2.5, Free) | |
|--|--|
| Pros | Cons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imported existing podcast feeds • Easy to add new audio files • Can record video (with audio) with built-in tool • Simple interface, easy to understand • Good access to iTunes details • Supports video casts, too. • Lets users set up a library of images to use with different pod/vodcasts. • Can preview audio and video files in its interface if they're added from local drives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saw no way to add chapter breaks • Can only publish to .Mac or a local folder • Interface offers options that aren't relevant (e.g., the "image preview" element only works if you are publishing a movie or photo/image) or are confusing (you can't drag/drop a feed image onto the image well for that field) • Offers no preview, and doesn't display HTML in descriptions (just source code) • Incorrect/incomplete mapping of some XML elements in imported feeds. For example, Vodcaster failed to import the itunes:subtitle field for each episode since apparently it doesn't support that field at the episode level. |

ADDENDUM

Unlike previous forays into the software market here on Mars, this time I'm not certain I'll be buying any of these tools. Obviously, given my enthusiasm for some of them, that's not because I didn't find anything worth buying. Rather, it goes back to my need to keep my time commitment for this project to a minimum. Since I'm capable of writing a little PHP script to generate an RSS feed from the Classic 45s MySQL database, I don't really need a tool to do that for me.

One thing I didn't know prior to this project was how to attach an image file to each episode. I had already added an image to the feed item's HTML description field, but how would I get that image to show up in iTunes, which doesn't support HTML in its feed descriptions?

As it turns out, the information for a given feed or episode that you see in iTunes is a combination of the podcast's RSS content and the mp3 file's **ID3** tags. In particular, the ability to add a separate image for each episode is only possible through ID3 tags, because it's not something the RSS specification supports. The only image you can add in RSS is at the feed level, and RSS supports only one image per feed. (Not counting "photocasts", in which the episode's enclosure tag consists of a photo.)

But how do you add an ID3 tag with an image to your mp3 files? Two of these applications can handle that task---Podcast Maker, and Podcaster. Since these tools also do enhanced podcasts, they're already quite agile at adding metadata to your media files, and that's what the ID3 image tag is.

And yet... once I figured this out, I realized I can just use iTunes for this. In fact, that's what happens when you add an image to a song in your iTunes collection: It becomes part of the mp3 file's ID3 tagset. What I didn't know is that when you post such an mp3 on a server and someone else downloads it, the image goes along with the file and all of its other ID3 tags, and it shows up in the user's iTunes listing. Pretty cool. So, since that's precisely what I want in this case, I don't really need a podcast-making tool that can similarly add an image to my episodes via ID3 (although it's a nice touch).

So the main value-added features these tools offer a geek like me are feed validation, ping-service submissions, and a few other esoterically advanced features. And I suspect those are things I can get for free off the web somewhere.

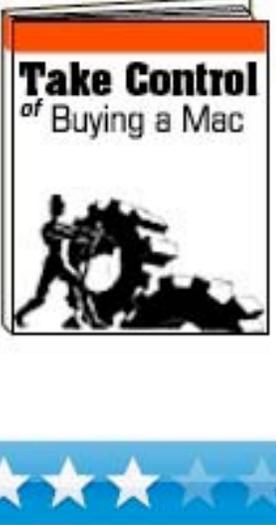
Of course, if you have some content you'd like to podcast and you're not a coder, a good podcast-maker will definitely come in handy. The good news is that there are a lot of great choices at reasonable prices. The bad news is that I can't help you out by recommending just one. But then, if you're a software addict like me, you'll want to download and try out a bunch of these anyway, and I hope this review will help get you started doing just that.

Oh yeah, and in case you're interested, here's a link to my new **Classic 45s Jukebox podcast**. I'm currently working on a Dashboard widget for the podcast, which will let you see the text and images and play the music from within the widget. What fun!

Book Reviews

Take Control of Buying a Mac, version 2.0

reviewed by Chris Marshall

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|  <p>Author: Adam Engst http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/buying-mac.html Released: 25 October 2006 (Version 3.0) \$10 USD ISBN: 0-9759503-6-3 Pages: 91 Audience: Apple prospects.</p> <p>Strengths: Works well as a guide.</p> <p>Weaknesses: This is a simple overview and not a detailed guide.</p> |  |
|--|---|

What they say: What Mac should I buy? When will Apple release new Macs? Where should I buy my Mac? Adam has answered these questions countless times over his 20-year Macintosh career, and now he has distilled the answers into this 91-page ebook. You'll learn how to predict when Apple will release new models and when you can get the most bang for your buck. Worksheets help you decide whether you should buy a desktop or laptop Mac and pick the model that's right for you. When you're ready to buy, Adam helps you compare Mac vendors and tips you off to three little-known ways to buy a Mac below retail!

What I say: I know a lot of people don't like eBooks and I can understand that. I love the smell, feel and look of a good book. I spend enough time reading things off a screen that I really don't want or need to do that socially, but I have to admit that with a regular book it can be difficult to keep switching back and forth between pages, sections etc.

I love the Take Control books, although I think they are really guides, and for that reason they work really well as an eBook.

What do I need to know about buying a Mac? After all, I have bought three this year alone!

Why would anybody want a book on the subject? Just google "top 10 Mac reasons to switch" and you will get 1,140,000 reasons! If you read through 20 of them you will get a multitude of them, broadly the same, but each mouth watering enough to get you searching for your nearest store.

So is there room in this overcrowded market for a book on the subject? My initial thoughts were, "No". By the end of it, I figured that any guy that had bought 10 Mac Desktops and 8 Mac Laptops over the years has some pearls of wisdom to impart and he does. This book is well worth buying before you buy a Mac or for that friend of family member that is thinking of buying a Mac. You could even buy that PC ludite of a boss a copy for Christmas!

The checklist on page 22 would actually make a pretty good party game in my opinion. In fact, the book relies heavily on checklists throughout to walk you through the decisions that you will need to make, and all in all it does a great job. Of course some of it seems (and is) incredibly basic – but who amongst us can't do with a reminder of the basics from time to time? This can be especially true in the emotionally charged environment of Mac purchasing, where if you don't watch out, that little Mac gremlin will come along, whisk away all that logic you have stored up, and the next thing you know, that credit card is taking yet another hammering!

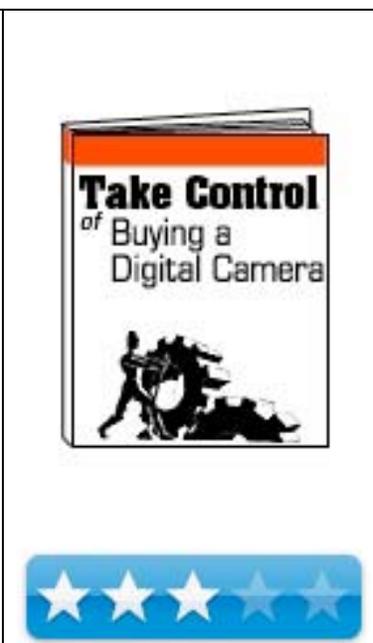
Like many books these days, it has good sections for tips and some interesting case studies. I think it does a great job of pulling together all the main points that the Google search would throw up for you. In particular, it covers the peripherals very well, and gives some good suggestions as to what to do with your old Mac. Oh, you didn't know! You will buy more than one Mac – this first one is just the start of the journey for you ☺

A final point of interest – Page 12 has a schedule of Mac announcements by month since 2002 thru October 2006. It is fascinating!

In summary: I totally recommend this despite the 3 * rating! The rating is purely linked to the “restrictions” of an eBook and the fact that it is a general overview rather than a detailed view. This isn't a criticism at all. I just feel that when reviewing I have to keep a perspective on amongst other things the complexity. This is a “simple” guide that does a great job.

Take Control of Buying a Digital Camera, version 2.0

reviewed by Chris Marshall

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|---|---|
|  <p>Author: Laurence Chen http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/buying-digicam.html http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/default.html Released: 25 October 2006 (Version 3.0) \$10 USD ISBN: 1-933671-07-6 Pages: 107</p> <p>Audience: First time digital camera buyers, people upgrading and people wanting to get more out of their current camera</p> <p>Strengths: Simplifies complex subjects, easy to follow, covers all the bases</p> <p>Weaknesses: A little too basic at times.</p> |  |
|---|---|

What they say: Overwhelmed by choices when purchasing a digital camera? Turn to professional photographer Larry Chen for the practical advice you need to sort through the hundreds of digital cameras for sale.

Rather than bury you with arcane technical details or a myriad camera models, Larry first steps you through a process designed to help you determine how much you want to spend, what sort of pictures you're likely to take, and what aspects of using a camera are important to you. With that grounding, you're ready to learn about the different camera features, separated by those that are actually important and those that merely fill up feature checklists. The ebook even contains a camera comparison worksheet you can fill in while shopping. Additional sections give you pointers on how to read camera reviews (plus a list of the best review sites!), advice about evaluating picture quality, suggestions of where to buy your camera, the lowdown on accessories you might want, and tips on working with photos on your computer.

What I say: I know a lot of people don't like eBooks and I can understand that. I love the smell, feel and look of a good book, especially one with great pictures. I spend enough time reading things off a screen that I really don't want or need to do that socially, but I have to admit that with a regular book it can be difficult to keep switching back and forth between pages, sections etc.

I love the Take Control books, although I think they are really guides, and for that reason they work really well as an eBook.

I have owned digital cameras for years and am totally in love with them – particularly when used with my Mac. But, I am a somewhat frustrated photographer in that I would love to take some really arty photographs, or great sporting pictures but I don't have the camera or the patience. I love the thought of being a "proper" photographer, hiking across the nearby mountains and taking some killer pictures, but at the end of the day I usually end up sitting on the balcony with a nice glass of wine enjoying a book with pictures someone else has taken. I am not sure that this will ever change, but if it does, this book leaves me with no excuses for not buying the right camera next time.

This book provides a great journey through all aspects of buying a digital camera. At times the journey can seem too fast, but that is where the glory of the eBook kicks in with its inbuilt links and search facility. I particularly like the way the book doesn't just preach. Rather it gets you to identify what you are looking for in a digital camera, how you want to use it, what your lifestyle is – in fact it does everything that a good sales person would do. Some of the information is generic to making any technology-based decision and some may seem a little too basic, but for the price it is a great guide for current and future reference.

To close the review – page 86 offers a great shopping guide that you can print out and carry around with you. Now that has to be better than tearing a page out of your book! I am mulling over buying a DSLR and this book has already helped with the decision and when I look at the idea again in more detail next year I will be revisiting this book, and its online updates, again for sure.

In summary: I totally recommend this despite the 3 * rating! The rating is purely linked to the "restrictions" of an eBook and the fact that it is a general overview rather than a detailed view. This isn't a criticism at all. I just feel that when reviewing I have to keep a perspective on amongst other things the complexity. This is a "simple" guide that does a great job.

Drupal: Creating Blogs, Forums, Portals and Community Web Sites

reviewed by Mike Swope



Authors: David Mercer

Packt Publishing

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

<http://www.packtpub.com/drupal/book>

Released: May 2006

Pages: 267

\$40 USD, \$45 CND, £25 GBP, 33,40 € Euro

ISBN: 1904811809

Audience: Beginners wishing to create a personal web site, forum, or blog, write a collaborative book, or launch a community web site. This book assumes some experience with web design and development, but not extensive experience.

Strengths: Step-by-step instructions from installation to launching a fictitious community web site for The Contechst Wildlife Community. Specifically addresses modules useful for community sites such as this. Dips into advanced techniques. Covers Drupal 4.7, the latest stable release.

Weaknesses: Mostly entry-level introduction to Drupal. Frequent sidetracks which interrupt the task at hand. Little discussion of common errors, mistakes or problems, or their solutions.

REVIEW PROPER

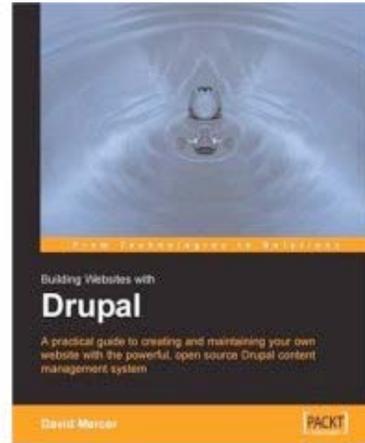
Drupal is a complex PHP Internet-based application developed by an open source community. This means that there are hundreds of contributions to the application that modify or create new functionality in the application. Newbie users will find it nigh impossible to wrap their minds around and encompass all that is Drupal. Where to start? How does this work? Can I do this or add this feature? How do I...? The important thing to remember when starting with Drupal and this book (or any book on such a difficult subject) is to have patience. Readers are learning a new application, with many capabilities not immediately apparent or available. But *Drupal: Creating Blogs, Forums and Community Web Sites* attempts to help readers to understand Drupal's complexity one step at a time.

In most respects, *Drupal: Creating Blogs, Forums, Portals and Community Web Sites* is much like other computer books. It starts at application requirements and installation and moves toward greater complexity. This book also contains adequate diagrams and screenshots on nearly every page, and adequately covers Drupal's basic concepts, configuration and uses, and touches upon more advanced techniques, including formatting content and altering a site's layout through its template. Unlike most other computer books, however, this book specifically discusses Apache, MySQL, PHP and Drupal installation on Windows, rather than Linux. Also unlike other computer books, this book takes readers thru launching an imaginary community web site as the basis for its lessons. Building this demo site is important. If the reader attempts to skip sections, he or she will be lost, since each concept builds upon preceding concepts. In the end, when readers have set the book down, they will have not only become familiar with the basics of Drupal but also experimented a bit further by creating content types with Flexinode, modifying a template, and prepared to launch a site all on their own.

There isn't any magic bullet when working with Drupal, a difficult application for newbies. Thankfully, books such as David Mercer's *Drupal: Creating Blogs, Forums, Portals and Community Web Sites* help familiarize newbies with Drupal, and make working with Drupal simpler, more satisfying and less frustrating. Though readers will have more to learn to create the perfect site to meet their needs, *Drupal: Creating Blogs, Forums, Portals and Community Web Sites* is a primer Drupal newbies will find more than useful.

For more about Mike Swope, go to:

<http://www.macompanion.com/info/AboutUs/mikeswope.html>



Give Me Back My Credit!

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Denise Richardson

<http://www.givemebackmycredit.com>

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

Infinity Publishing

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

Released: September 22, 2006

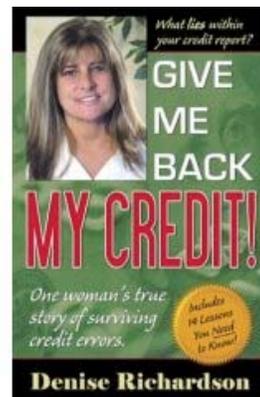
\$17 USD, \$19 CND, £8.90 GBP, 14 € Euro

Pages: 214

ISBN: 0741434741

Strengths: Provides excellent information regarding how to fight back when your credit rating is messed with.

Weaknesses: A couple of unnecessary swear words. Or maybe they ARE necessary!



R-Rated

Denise Richardson relates her life history as her identity is stolen and she fights to get it back. She also discusses at great length her experiences as lessons learned on fighting double-billings, the round-robin with the credit rating companies and trying again and again to clear her name on the books – including court experiences and how she turned her lemons into lemonade as a professional consumer advocate. She managed to do this as she learned to reach out to others for support and realized she wasn't the lone stranger here in the US.

How is your credit report doing? Do you know where to go to find out what is being recorded about you? Do you know how to correct and recorrect the misinformation that may have been put there innocently or by design to ruin your credit history?

I would have given this book a better rating except for the fact that a couple of swear words slipped in to the book and that bothered me. However, I completely understand the frustration Denise Richardson went through as she provides a blow-by-blow of her not-so-uncommon experience in this electronic age where your credit reputation can be stolen, destroyed or besmirched in a microsecond and takes years to correct.

The Macintosh iLife'06

reviewed by Chris Marshall



Peachpit

Essential books for the creative community

Author: Jim Heid

Published by Peachpit Press in association with Avondale Media

<http://www.newriders.com>

<http://www.peachpit.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0321426541&rl=1>

Released: May 23, 2006

\$35 USD, \$47 CDN, £25 GBP, 29 € Euro

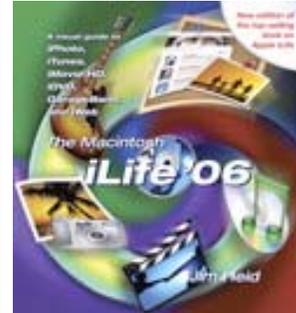
ISBN: 0321426541

Pages: 408

Audience. Anyone with iLife 06 that thinks they know what it does ANF anyone thinking of buying a Mac.

Strengths: A good “basics to advanced” overview, exceptionally well laid out, very easy to follow and understand

Weaknesses: A few more technical concepts hinted at but not covered at times.



What they say:

The definitive iLife reference, completely updated and revised. The Macintosh iLife '06 is the ultimate iLife learning experience, a lavishly illustrated handbook packed with easy-to-follow instructions, essential technical background, and tips for iLife users of all levels.

- Shop 'til you drop at the iTunes Music Store
- Take your iPod beyond music—watch videos, view photos, store contacts and calendars, and more
- Improve your photography and video-shooting techniques
- Create spectacular slide shows, photo books, calendars, and greeting cards
- Refine your photos to perfection with iPhoto 6
- Share photos via email, Web albums, and cutting-edge photocasts
- Explore the latest video formats with iMovie HD
- Record and arrange your own music with GarageBand
- Create and publish your own Web sites, blogs, and podcasts
- Preserve the past: digitize old records, photos, and movies

Each two-page spread is a self-contained tutorial or set of tips. Everything you need is at your fingertips, and every page is updated for iLife '06.

The Web site: Get updates, tips, and much more at this book's companion Web site, www.macilife.com.

Jim Heid is one of the most admired writers and instructors in the Mac community.

A contributing editor of Macworld magazine since 1984, he has been using and teaching each of the programs in the iLife suite since its debut.

What I say:

I am a natural skeptic! I never believe that any book that claims to be the definitive anything can possibly be. Of course, you should never judge a book by its cover, and as I have been using iLife 06 for just under a year, what was this book going to tell me that I didn't already know?

OK, scrub that last bit. I don't use every element of iLife 06, but that is through choice, and I did sort of jump straight in and taught myself, so maybe I don't know everything.

In fact, I question my own comment about the cover – I mean anything with the iLife'06 icons a la Front Row can't be at all bad, can it?

Hmm, I'm batting .333 here, so surely it can't be the definitive book? Well 3 for 3 against me, because as far as any book on an evolving subject can be, this book covers most aspects of iLife '06. If you are wanting an advanced book on specific features - for example Garage Band - you will probably want a more advanced book, but I would hazard a guess that new and intermediary iLife'06 users will be amazed at just how much functionality exists in this suite of applications.

I am not a business user with respect to my Mac. I am lucky enough the vast majority of my computing time is spent messing about with music, video, pictures etc. In fact iLife '06 was the single most overriding reason why I bought a Mac in the first place. I would recommend this book to anybody that was thinking about buying a Mac, or knew anyone considering the purchase of a Mac, or to anyone that has been using iLife for less than two years (so that includes iLife '05).

I particularly liked the way that the book was laid out. Naturally it took you through each application in iLife '06: Introducing iLife; iTunes and iPod : Music and More; iPhoto and Digital Photography, iMovie HD : Making Movies; iDVD : Putting it All Together; iWeb : Your World on the Web.

The two-page spread format works exceptionally well, both as a tutorial or as a narrative. It is a 2:1 book, in that you can read it from cover to cover to provide a more than adequate review of the whole of iLife'06, or you can dip into specific areas when you have a specific project that you want a refresher on, for example Customizing Menus in iDVD, which is something you may not do that often.

The production quality of the book is as high as you would expect of a book discussing something such as iLife'06, with an easy-to-follow lay out, good quality screen shots, and useful tips in sidebars.

For me, the real joy lay in two areas: the realization that even with the applications that I use on a regular basis there are aspects that I don't know about, and secondly, confirmation of just how much enjoyment lies ahead for me as I continue my iLife'06 journey.

In summary: A great book either as a gift for the Mac person in your life, this holiday, or treat yourself. Even if you think you know about iLife '06 this will have something in it for you.

iWOZ — From Computer Geek to Cult Icon: How I invented the personal computer, co-founded Apple, and had fun doing it
reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

Authors: Steve Wozniak with Gina Smith

WW Norton and Company

Link: <http://www2.wwnorton.com/catalog/fall06/006143.htm>

Released: September 2006.

Pages: 288

\$26 USD, \$32.50 CND, £14 GBP, 21,67 € Euro

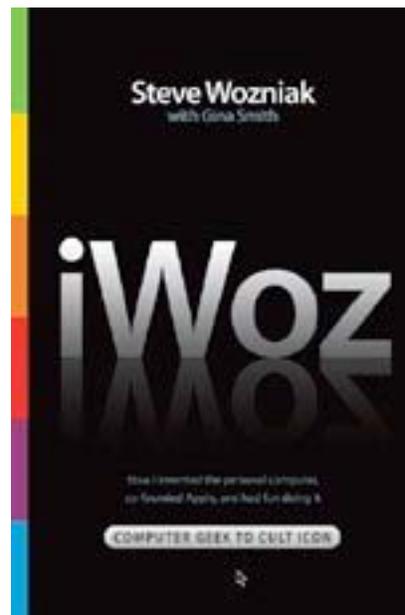
ISBN: 10: 0393061434 and ISBN 13: 978039-061437

Audience — Anyone interested in computing and its history, especially those who love Apple and its computers. It might even benefit those who bash or company and platform, they might learn some real historic truths.

Major Strengths — The book is an easy read. Seldom am I motivated to finish a non-Sci-Fi book in two readings on consecutive days. To say the least, for the most part, I was enthralled to follow what the books publicist pretentiously notes: “The mastermind behind Apple sheds his low profile and steps forward to tell his story for the first time. Okay an exaggeration with a bit of hyperbole, but the Woz is a great man worthy of reading about, what in Yiddish they would call a *mench*.”

Weakness — The book is too blog-like in its flow making for interesting but bumpy reading. In addition the book omits, despite Steve’s saying he cares and feels strongly about them, any real information about relationships other than with his father. Furthermore, the book lacks details about his three marriages, children, Steve Jobs, or even Woz’s beloved dogs. Omitting personal interactions and feelings about one’s influential boss (Steve Jobs) and about his marriages was disappointing. These certainly were among the most influential aspects his personal adult life.

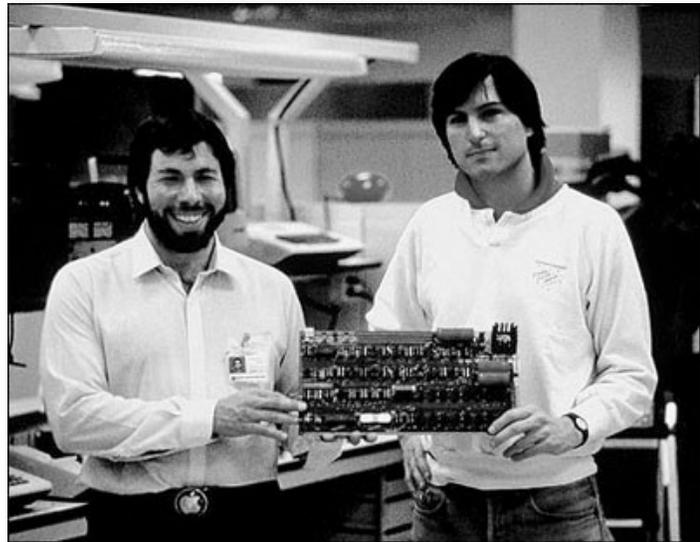
Publisher’s Overview — On the heels of Apple’s 30th anniversary, the inventor of the personal computer, engineering wizard, concert promoter, philanthropist, and irrepressible prankster Steve Wozniak steps forward to tell his story for the first time. *iWoz: From Computer Geek to Cult Icon: How I invented the personal computer, co-founded Apple, and had fun doing it*. Against the backdrop of numerous rumors and inaccuracies regarding his personal and professional life, the elusive cult icon finally steps out of his protective shell to “set the record straight” in this *first* ever memoir by the Edison of our wired age.



Review Introduction

I'm not sure when Steve Jobs will tell the whole and uncensored story of Apple computer. But in both the *iWoz* and in Andy Hertzfeld's *Revolution in the Valley* he will have plenty of viewpoints to contend with. This is a book for you if you like to read about Technology, its history. If reading about the development of and the truly creative minds that most influenced the creation of the personal computer, check out *iWoz*.

In this memoir, Steve Wozniak, the co-founder of Apple computers, tells his side of the story of the intense and exhilarating effort in the 1970s to turn an idea--the personal computer--into a viable reality. He and Steve Jobs, sometimes working out of a garage, did just that with the Apple I and then the Apple II, a forerunner of the Macintosh. Their unprecedented success changed America and the world, and made Wozniak a wealthy man. In the book, he describes how it all happened, and also writes about his life after Apple, including his philanthropic pursuits, conveying a zest for life as he exemplifies the advice to "follow your bliss.



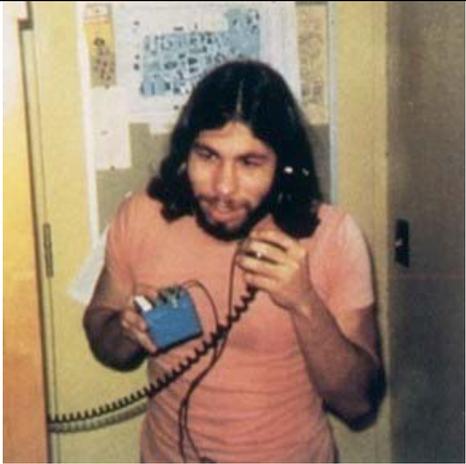
Steve is at his best when he described his ongoing and often achieved drive toward engineering perfection, as he calls it being an engineer's engineer. In this book Steve Wozniak, with Gina Smith's help, shares some of the stress, angst and excitement of that time. Although reading it was a mixed pleasure, I would do it again; skipping over a few of the parts that got in my way to learning about Steve the human inventor and engineer.

The Book Itself

This is neither your everyday chronological treatment of the Woz's life and experiences nor a tour of the factors and feelings that most influenced his life. Rather it's Steve sharing his experiences, particularly those relating to his view of the world and love of things engineering with us in a blog-like episodal fashion.

This has been my first opportunity to learn about Apple's quiet, almost invisible Steve. By reading the *iWoz* book, I could finally get to understanding his pivotal roles un creating what is now Apple Computer Co, maker of the paradigm crushing Macintosh and iPod. I could lean about his childhood and young adult influences and what exactly he was thinking when he invented the off-the-shelf (not a kit) personal computer. I wanted to know more about what the early days at Apple were like, what he did with his life after leaving Apple in the mid-eighties. Also of interest to me was what the Woz thinks of Apple's current products and of its resurgence as an industry giant. Finally, I wanted to know mo0re about his philanthropic ventures, what continues to inspire him to give back. call these things were promised by the publisher in their announcements.

As noted by the publisher "We learn of Wozniak's upbringing in Sunnyvale (never knowing what his father did-an engineer working for a defense contractor at Lockheed), his childhood exploits with the Electronic Kids, and his high school *phone-phreaking* pranks (tapping into the phone system and making free calls throughout the world). In this "homebrew mix" of brilliant discovery and adventure, we are privy to Wozniak's early Hewlett-Packard days as scientific calculator designer, his meetings with the Home Brew Computer Club in Menlo Park, which would eventually lead to the rise of Apple as an industry giant, his eight years as a public school teacher in the nineties, and his landmark contributions as a philanthropist and rock organizer. *iWoz* not only gives us some of the excitement, the serendipity, and the wizardry of invention in the wired age, but also reveals the person behind the personal computer. He's weird, wild, a brilliant iconoclast, and honest almost to a fault."

| | |
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| <p>THE ZALTAIR STORY</p> <p>My best computer prank involved counterfeiting twenty thousand brochures for a phony computer. I did it at the First West Coast Computer Faire, where the Apple was introduced.</p> <p>The big computer of the day was the Altair, so we named ours the Zaltair. We made it an incredible dream machine, with full Altair-100 bus compatibility plus 50 extra connectors. We called this the Zaltair 150 bus and had quotes in the brochure saying things like "And what a motherboard."</p> <p>The brochure compared the Zaltair's performance with that of other machines, including the Apple, and offered discounts for Altair trade-ins. We also had lots of "Z" words, since they were really popular back then. Words like "verZatility," "BAZIC" and "perZonality."</p> |  |
| <p>A Prank or Three</p> | <p>What Number Please</p> |

Book Themes That WOZ

I've listed some of the themes that the Woz returns to, over-and-over again in varying contexts. These themes, which form the core of the book, include:

His Father-His Guide — The best parts of the book were the Woz's remembrances of his father, his leaning how to think and do, and the values he gained s a child and refocused and strengthened as a young man. We all should have such a father or friend.

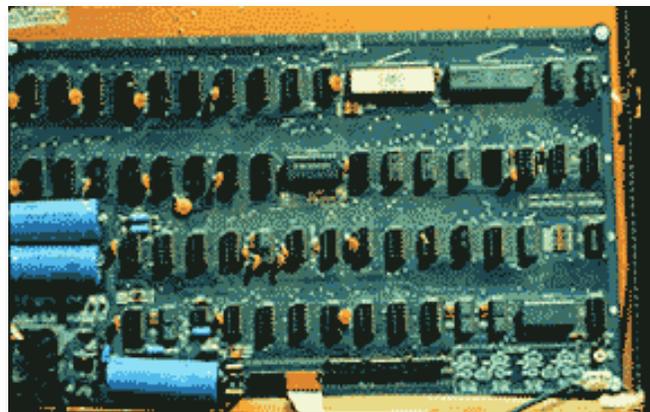
Ethics - Woz talks early on about his Dad imparting the importance of being honest: "...my dad believed in honesty. Extreme honesty, extreme ethics, really. That's the biggest thing he taught me. He used to tell me it was worse to lie about doing something bad under oath than it was to actually do something bad, even murdering someone. That really sunk in." [The Woz]

Genius and Preparation - "Typically, once I started a design, I'd stay up very late one or more nights in a row, sprawled on my bedroom floor with papers all around and a Coke can nearby...I was competing with myself and developed tricks that certainly would never be describable or put in books." [The Woz]

Loss of Political Innocence — "His explanation of how he lost his political innocence when the Pentagon Papers revealed the extent to which the US government had lied over the Vietnam War, is moving and pulls the reader back nearly half a century in just half a page. When Woz opens his heart, he has a wonderful, infectious quality." [Kieren McCarthy <http://kierenmccarthy.co.uk/2006/09/29/iwoz-a-book-review/>]

On Being an Engineer — "He (Woz's father) told me that as an engineer, you can change your world and change the way of life for lots and lots of people" [The Woz]

Passion for Circuitry — "The same gentle passion comes across when he describes his first love - circuitry. All engineers will immediately recognize the joy that a tight, almost perfect design brings, but Wozniak does a wonderful job of explaining that feeling – the obsessive attention to tiny details that results in a working model – (*bringing it*) to a wider audience".



Kieren McCarthy
<http://kierenmccarthy.co.uk/2006/09/29/iwoz-a-book-review/>

Patience – “Patience is so underrated...I learned to not worry so much about the outcome [of my engineering projects], but to concentrate on the step I was on and to try to do it as perfectly as I could when I was doing it.” [The Woz]

Woz’s Secret to Life - “...To find a way to be happy and satisfied with your life and also to make other people happy and satisfied with their lives.” [The Woz]

On Being a Great Engineer – “Don’t waver. See things in gray-scale (*not in black and white*). Work alone. Trust your instincts.” [The Woz] As you can see this is not the corporate American or Japanese team way!

Being An Inventor — From his experience, the Woz advises today's would-be inventors to avoid big, structured companies, where there is less leeway to turn clever ideas into revolutionary new products. “Yes, a person who is technical, a little bit nerdy, not so social, can just do some common-sense things and have it work out great,” he said. [The Woz] To this I could paraphrase the Woz by noting that any device engineered by marketing and engineering group-think (e.g., the Apple III) is likely doomed to failure.



Before moving on to my *discomforts* with this book I need to share Shawn S. Sullivan’s, Amazon.com comment’s about the iWoz book. I’ve copied for your consideration the paragraph that struck a responsive chord in me. “I have often thought of the two as highly different individuals brought together in a common cause with radically different skill sets. Cast The Woz as John Lennon and Steve Jobs as Paul McCartney. Lennon wanted to CREATE something special, something beautiful and something new. Wozniak clearly did this at Apple. McCartney wanted to become huge, well known and wealthy. Jobs did this for all at Apple, very much including the author as Wozniak had other motivations that occupied his very busy mind.

Discomforts

As I will note in my conclusion to this review, I cannot be dispassionate about the way it covers Steve Wozniak’s life and times. At times the book was a *barnburner* and all I could do was to turn pages, reading as fast as I could. In other places, I kept want to scream — *come-on Steve, get on with it*.

This was not the book I expected, despite careful reading the publishers information prior to ordering it. There was much I would have liked to know about Steve the thinking-feeling experience-driven human being. Such personal detail was, to my dismay, absent for the book. Perhaps Gina Smith can work with the Woz to write a sequel called “The Inner Life of Steve Wozniak: getting beyond engineering and design details.”

One of the information voids that perturbed me is that we get less than a dozen lines about the women that the Woz married, despite they’re being such lengthy part of his life. My trouble with the treatment of wives and occasional girlfriend is that there were no basis provided fro the relationships deteriorating other than their interest diverged as time whet by. Comparable the fact that is daughter was her mother’s child doesn’t negate the fact that we learn almost nothing about her or her relationship with her father.

I was able however to find several images of Steve’s dogs on the web, despite the fact that nothing descriptive about them or their part in the Woz’s life appeared in the book. Of course from the word or two and these pictures we can opine that Steve loves his puppies very much.



Morgan – who looks like a sweet puppy. Wonder how big it'll get?



Steve gets a kiss from his Australian shepherd, Cruiser

I must agree with Kieren McCarthy's assessment: "You've just gone through 300 pages of personal narrative about this remarkable man's life ..., and yet at the end of all this, you can't help but feel a bit cheated. Wozniak is a shy, personal and humble man - virtually the antithesis of his famous ex-partner Steve Jobs - and it is for this reason more than any other that it has taken the best part of three decades for him to collaborate on a book about his fascinating life. It's a story lots of people have wanted to hear and as a result Steve Wozniak was able to tell it on his terms. And those terms were 56 two-hour interviews with tech reporter Gina Smith at two restaurants in California."



"The problem is that while Woz comes across as one of the most likeable men you're ever likely to meet, he is not the best storyteller. iWoz is a comforting read but it is all the worse for that. Gina Smith clearly enjoyed her subject's company - in fact it appears that it was only the chemistry between the two that allowed the book to be produced in the first place - and as a result the risk of upsetting him caused her not to pry too deeply into the most intriguing parts of Wozniak's life."

“There were plenty of clues that Wozniak was prepared to talk as well, if only he had been prodded (*by Ms Smith.*) He talks of his deep sadness at seeing his first marriage fall apart, and of how he did his best to save it - but that is all. You get no sense of what it really felt like and what impact it had on him, a shame considering that the written word is the most effective tool we have to communicate complex emotion. We glide over his second marriage breakdown, despite the fact that his third child was born while they were separated. And you hear almost nothing at all of his third. Humble or not, marriages are the most intense emotional experiences human beings have and Wozniak has had three. (*This part of Steve’s life* feels untapped”.



Doc says, “Need I say more?”

In Closing

Much of the evolution of the Woz from computer designer to music event sponsor to education (5th Grade) though entrepreneur were fascinating. Especially descriptions on the manner in which Steve’s basic beliefs and outlook on life were fundamental to his making some of these decisions. The book is full of Steve’s sense of humor and love of pranks. It amply describes his creative drive that was clearly was self-motivated and as important, doing it right technically no matter what the pressure and circumstances.

Much of this was exciting to read. It surely will capture any student of technology history and the folks that our techno-junkie society owes its dept. I deeply enjoyed, at first, some of the pedagogical explanation of various elements of physics and electronics --- but at some point about three-fourths of the way through the book, they became increasingly distracting – by swerving to move me away from my interest Steve Wozniak as a person.

The best way to close this review is to quote from Guy Kawasaki’s preview of it.

“Every engineer—and certainly every engineering student—should read this book. It is about the thrill of invention, the process of making the world a better place, and the purity of entrepreneurship. *iWoz* is the personal computer generation’s version of *The Soul of a New Machine*. It is, in a nutshell, the engineer’s manifesto. I hope that the so-called *innovation experts* and MBAs choke when they read it.”

http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2006/05/gina_smith_the_html

Buy it most of you will like it. Rating **3.5 macCs**

Gina Smith BIO

Gina Smith – Gina Smith is a New York Times Best-Selling Author. Her last book, *The Genomics Age*, explained DNA and stem cell science to investors and interested lay people. *Barron's* named it one of the top 20 books of 2005.

Previously, Gina was on air as ABC News' first technology correspondent. She appeared weekly on Good Morning America and World News Tonight with Peter Jennings from 1995 to 2000. From 1990 to 2000, she also authored *Inside Silicon Valley*, an award-winning column in the San Francisco Sunday Chronicle.

In her words “I am an author and a journalist specializing in tech and biotech -- I consult and write”. She also plays guitar (doc).



Leadership on the Line: A Guide for Front Line Supervisors, Business Owners, and Emerging Leaders, 2nd Edition

reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Ed Rehkopf

Clarity Publications

<http://www.probizcom.com>

Released: August 15, 2006, 2nd Edition

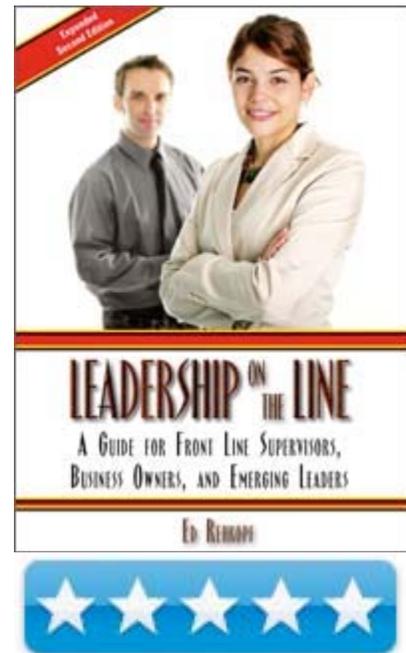
Pages: 175

\$20 USD.

ISBN: 0972219315

Strengths: Leadership lessons learned from the hospitality industry.

Weaknesses: None found. Honest!



Ed Rehkopf brings his rich experiences from the Hospitality Industry and shows how to apply the good ones (and how to avoid the bad ones) to all manners of supervision.

If you ever needed a common sense book on how to lead others and not just managing them, you won't go wrong by reading this book. Think 'Service-based Leadership':

What They Say

At the other end of the spectrum is the ideal of service-based leadership. With this approach, the attitude and primary motivation of the leader is service to others – to customers, to employees, to shareholders. This approach to leadership naturally creates relationships – the deep and abiding bonds that sustain the efforts of the company. This outward focus of the leader sets up a dynamic where:

- Employees are continually recognized.
- There is an open flow of ideas, opinions, and information.
- Initiative and risk are highly regarded.
- Problem discovery and solution is a focus while placing blame is unimportant.
- Every employee feels energized and part of the team and is valued for his or her contribution.
- Prestige is derived from performance and contribution, not title.
- Customers are treated well because employees are treated well.
- The energy and initiative of all employees is focused on the common effort.

With service-based leadership, you will find that good customer service to both internal and external customers is effortless. Less energy is expended in processing complaints, grievances, and conflicts. Work is more fun and everyone's job is easier.

What I Say

Frankly, I was getting a bit jaundiced about management/leadership books, but I actually went cover-to-cover with this one, because Ed Rehkopf had great experiences and what-to-avoids interspersed with what-to-dos. Much of it is basic common courtesy and treating everyone as human beings, if not extended family. Where he draws the line is in getting “too close” to those over whom you are responsible. Much like a parent who is also a full-time teacher who home-schools children and has to demonstrate that he/she is wearing a different hat, based on what role is being played in order for effort to be handled and rewarded. (How’s that for political correctness?) Think disciplined approach with a velvet glove. Hopefully it is not hiding an iron fist, but you never know...

Every section has an executive summary at the end that “qualifies the quantity” of those sections. At the end of the book, there are another fourteen articles that are an amalgam of articles published in magazines over the years by the author – and worth every printed page.

What I gathered from this book is that Leadership on the Line is more service – with love. And that is what separates a leader from a pointy-headed Dilbert cartoon manager. The leader cares about those he or she leads. While the manager is rules from a position of fear. Who would you rather follow or be? Put caring back into management – at least at arm’s length. And also learning that the “right” people are your most important asset – and believing it.

Learn Objective-C on the Macintosh

reviewed by Matt Brewer



SpiderWorks™

Authors: Mark Dalrymple, Scott Knaster, edited by Dave Mark

<http://www.spiderworks.com>

<http://www.spiderworks.com/books/learnobjc.php>

Released: 2006 by SpiderWorks

Pages: 224

\$30 USD. **eBook Edition:** PDF, \$15 USD.

ISBN: 0977784258

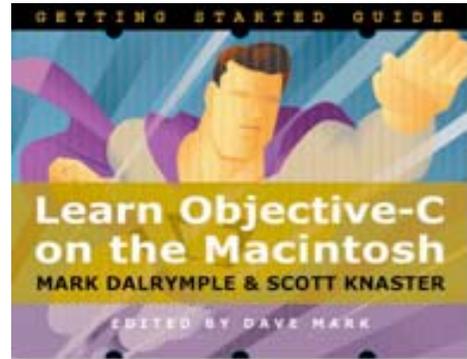
Requirements: Having a basic understanding of any language is a plus in this case, but the authors don't assume that you already have C or any other language under your belt. Good for those that are curious about programming in Cocoa and need the basics.

Strengths: The authors have well-placed side-notes in blue boxes throughout the text, highlighting very common mistakes and general advice. The book follows simple design patterns and introduces you to Objective-C at a friendly pace.

Weaknesses: The included sample code is in general, poorly commented. The included comments are no-brainer comments like “//init” that most even remotely familiar with OOP would be familiar with. However, the working code for many methods is undocumented, leaving the reader to decipher what is happening in each line.

Being relatively new to Objective-C and Cocoa myself, I was excited to get my hands on this book. The authors start out with relatively simple examples and build on key principles ensuring that the reader learns the techniques and concepts as he goes. I like the fact that the sample code is included so that the reader doesn't have to go through the textbook and copy large chunks of code into a text editor.

The book covers some very important topics such as memory management and inheritance, but tended to leave me feeling a bit cheated at the end. This book focuses on Objective-C and not Cocoa and there is a difference. My general feeling is that there isn't one book out there that will teach someone all he needs to know about programming. This book gives the reader a lot of insight into the workings of the language, but the reader would need another book to learn more about creating interfaces, bindings, or the Cocoa frameworks.



Publish & Prosper: Blogging for your Business

reviewed by Chris Marshall



Peachpit

Essential books for the creative community

New Riders – an imprint of Peachpit, a division of Pearson Education

<http://www.newriders.com>

<http://www.peachpit.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0321395387&rl=1>

Released: July 24, 2006

Pages: 176

\$21.99 USD, \$29.99 CND, £15.99 GBP

ISBN: 0-321-39538-7

Audience. Anyone interested in, or thinking of blogging, in particular Businesses.

Strengths: Well laid out, communicates extremely well. In depth knowledge of the subject.

Weaknesses: At times reads more as a book for the individual than the business.



What they say:

While personal blogs take up much of the blogosphere, blogs are quickly gaining popularity in business as an inexpensive and amazingly effective marketing tool. It's time for a practical book about business blogging: this is the first book to demonstrate how businesses are blogging and how you can use blogging technology to converse with your customers to build your brand and sell your products.

Written from the business person/designer's perspectives, this book shows how businesses can leverage current, real-world blogging techniques, tools, and platforms to promote and enhance their ventures. The key idea is that the conversation with your market is stronger and more meaningful with a blog. Filled with practical information and a how-to approach, this book provides case studies of companies as large as Boeing or General Motors and as small as Clip-'n-seal. Readers will learn about the types of business blogs, how companies use blogs, how to sell blogs to management and IT, effective blog design, content, and conversation, pitfalls to avoid, how to develop Web presence, and more.

DL Byron has just completed the development of Boeing's blogs. He is currently working on the next Blog Business Summit and rolling out a network of sponsored blogs.

Steve Broback is the co-founder of the Blog Business Summit and the i3forum conferences. Steve manages the editorial blogs rawformat.com and pixelupdate.com which are the center of Avondale Media's marketing strategy.

What I say:

I didn't really get into blogging for a while either in terms of reading them or writing them. It was a bit like that with this book.

Now I am really into blogging; I subscribe and read far too many, try and write more than I should and am even providing some business consultancy on setting up and using blogs. So it accurate to say that I am a BIG fan of blogging, and the same can be said for this book.

I have one criticism of the book that I will get out of the way first. For a book that is targeted at the business community it spends far too much time talking about the public community. Now this isn't a problem in itself as every page of the book is worth reading, but it is a little confusing at times. You have the feeling of been swept pleasantly down one route and then suddenly you are jerked back into the business community side of things. I would imagine that for most traditional businesses this general background will be very welcome, but for more modern businesses it may be a little simplistic.

As far as the structure goes the book consists of nine well-structured chapters:

- Chapter 1: Meet the Blogs, which provides a good introduction to the world of blogs and blogging.
- Chapter 2: Determining Your Focus, which talks about marketing, PR, customers and measurement.
- Chapter 3: How Much Blog – and How Often?, some good solid background information on blogs.
- Chapter 4: Designing for Readers, the fundamentals of design, RSS, comments etc.
- Chapter 5: Tools and Implementation, the mechanics of blogging.
- Chapter 6: Writing Your Blog, how to approach creating your posts.
- Chapter 7: Launching Your Blog and Getting Noticed, as it says!
- Chapter 8: Monitoring and Managing Your Blog, watching traffic, discovering trends and interaction.
- Chapter 9: Beyond Blogging, a quick look at the future of wiki's, moblogging, audio and video.

Things that I liked specifically? The way that it put into context the stuff that I already knew, with the history that I had missed, along with the future direction of blogging. Unless you are "into" the technology the chances are that you will "go along" with the flow when it comes to setting up your blogs and this book does a great job of explaining these things.

Structurally the book is laid out really well with sections for Tips, Notes, key point "blocks" and graphics.

I would hazard a guess that many people will think that blogging is for geeks, fanatics and perverts, and of course it is. However, this book excellently demonstrates that blogging is in fact suitable for everyone, and goes a long way to providing the tools, techniques and confidence required to start blogging.

It is definitely worth a read.

In summary: I would say that this is a "must read" for any business or individual thinking of setting up a blog, or for an intermediate blogger looking to take their blog to the next level. Indeed I think experienced bloggers would learn (or remember) a thing or two by reading it.

Ubuntu Linux for Non-Geeks: A Pain-Free, Project-Based, Get-Things-Done Guidebook

reviewed by Wayne LeFevre



Authors: Rickford Grant
No Starch Press Publishing
O'Reilly

<http://www.nostarchpress.com>

Published: August 2006

Pages: 360

\$34.95 USD, \$20.95 PDF, \$41.95 PDF and Paperback with CD.

\$44 CND, £24 GBP, 35 € Euro

ISBN: 1593271182

Audience: Beginner.

Strengths: An easy, fast, painless way to make the Linux switch. Contains CD that boots and will install Ubuntu 6.06 Dapper Drake version of Linux install distribution.

Weaknesses: Didn't get far into the area of Local Area Networks.

What They Say:

Ubuntu, the South African term that translates roughly as “humanity toward others”, is a low-cost alternative to Windows. Full of tips, tricks, and helpful pointers, Ubuntu Linux for Non-geeks is a hands-on, project based, take-it-slow guidebook intended for those interested in—but nervous about—switching to the Linux operating system. Step-by-step projects build upon earlier tutorial concepts, helping you absorb and apply what you've learned.

The Book

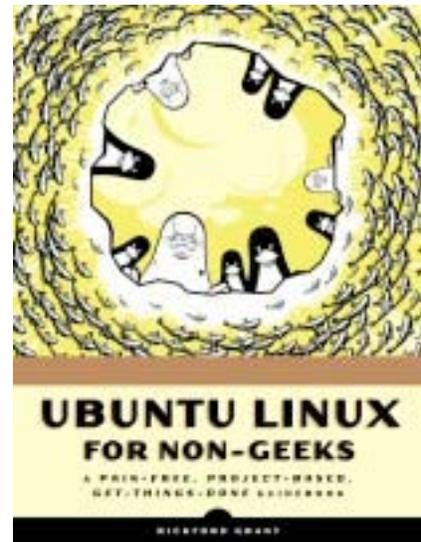
The book comes with the 6.06 distribution of Ubuntu in CD form, which is exactly what I was looking for, but didn't want to go through the hassle of either burning it myself or ordering it online, though it is free. I won't go into a summary of what each chapter is named, but I will tell you what this book will teach you and who it's really for.

This book is for anyone with more than a passing fancy to try Linux. It's for those of us that don't want to jump on the Vista wagon, or maybe have been upgrading our computers and our license has suddenly opposed our new hardware, no matter if it's a legal copy or not. I've had to call Bangladesh more than a few times to tell them I had upgraded my motherboard and processor, and need a new number.

The book is laid out not so much as a reference book, but more of a skill-building text. Taking you chapter by chapter, building your skills taking what you learned in the previous chapter and immersing yourself more and more into the Linux world. Although, if need be, the chapters are laid out logically and within on subject, for reference.

It starts you as any beginner would, what is Ubuntu, a distribution, history and what kind of machine you'll need. It's all in the eyes of Tux, the Linux mascot penguin. You become a “Penguins”, and like a fledgling penguin, you'll learn to wade, dive, run, getting to know home, finding out how web feet can be an advantage. Making a nest, dressing up, dining, working, rocking out and even how to be a couch penguin and watch movies while at the same time defending the nest. They are all goo metaphors that are very apt to their subject.

Wading and diving you learn about the install, or not, as the case may be. With Linux, you can boot and play all right from the CD, without having to install to the hard-drive.



Getting used to home is getting used to your environment. Your desktop and what GNOME is. To have webbed feet is to know how to travel fast, in the right environment. Of course sometimes you'll stumble. Sometimes hardware has problems with Linux, be it because it is old or just an odd manufacturer. Their solution? In the case of a network card, "get a new one!" You'll learn the net uploading and downloading, how to install what you get, (dining.) Even try to experiment with a few command lines in the terminal.

The book takes you extensively through the programs most people will use the most. Mail, web-surfing, office solutions, artistic solution, music, movies, DVD and CD playback and copying. Even how to use your iPod. All in all, an excellent beginning tutorial on how to do most everything a normal computer user would want to do.

Small problems and summary

There were a few problems I had with it, of course. It explains extensively on how to get on the internet and set up network cards and software to do that. However, to do what I wanted? To become that file server machine feeding me songs to my other machines. Unfortunately, it skips over how to become part of a LAN! It skims over how to see your network a little, but as far as sharing itself with others? No. No help here.

This book, however, does exactly what it says. Takes a non-geek type of person, shows them how to install a new operating system and most of the programs they will ever need along with it. For that, I cannot fault it and will highly recommend it to any that fall in that category.

What I Say:

What a fantastic book! If you've ever been even remotely interested in Linux, do yourself a favor and pick this book up. It is truly, "A pain-free, project based, get-things-done guidebook". It is a perfect beginners manual, that steps you towards more advanced undertaking, such as getting into the terminal.

I truly wanted to do this review on *Ubuntu Linux for Non-Geeks*. Ever since I switched to a Mac, I've been also curious about how much I really need a MS machine in the house, so naturally, my curiosity lead to Linux. With the latest stable version Ubuntu, Dapper drake, I knew the time had come. Instead of taking away the family gaming machine, I had an old beige box in the basement, a P3 400MHz that I did not own a license for Windows anymore, passing that on to its successor long ago. I really wanted to receive the ultimate Geek wings and be able to say that I ran Linux. Along the way, I would be able to use the Linux box as a small file server on my home network, but that becomes less of an advantage as HDD prices go down and NAS servers become more common. All comes down to economics and electricity usage!

For all it comes with and teaches, I give it a 4.5 fantastic Mac C's. Easy to read. Easy to follow. Step by step install. Free OS. What could be better?

Games

The Sims 2 along with NightLife, Open for Business and University Expansion Packs reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie



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The Sims 2 <http://thesims2.ea.com/>

\$50 USD, \$50 CND, £40 GBP, € 46 Euro

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.8 or later; PowerPC G4 or later; 256 MB RAM, 3 GB hard drive space, ATI Radeon 9000/GeForce FX5200 video card or later; DVD drive.

Rated: "T" for Teen.

Unbinaried: June 2, 2006

Strengths: Great graphics, awesome game play and low system requirements.

Weaknesses: Some parts aren't very believable.

Expansion Packs

Nightlife http://thesims2.ea.com/about/ep2_index.php

\$35 USD, \$35 CND.

Strengths: New areas for the Sims to travel, get your own car, more objects, adds more to the game.

Weaknesses: Can't make money by making community buildings.

Open for Business <http://www.aspyr.com/product/info/3>

Released: August 23, 2006

\$35 USD, \$34 CND.

Strengths: More objects, you get to make your own business

Weaknesses: Takes away from the main point of the game

University http://thesims2.ea.com/about/ep1_index.php

\$35 USD, \$40 CND, £20 GBP.

Strengths: More actions and objects.

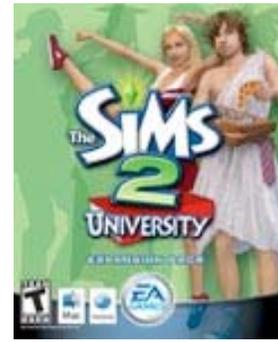
Weaknesses: Same game play, but in a different place.

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December 2006, Volume 4 Issue 12





This review won't just be on The Sims 2, but also on three of its expansion packs: The Sims 2 Nightlife, The Sims 2 University and The Sims 2 Open For Business

The expression "Think of what it would be like if you were in their shoes" comes to mind when I played this game. That's exactly what you do. You get to take control of almost every aspect of their lives, whether they're slackers or they're a wonderful workers, whether they play the social game or focus on work and school. All of it packed into one game. Escape reality and take out your anger out on your virtual enemies with this amazing game. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

You start the game with a choice of three cities to choose from. There are also a series of tutorials for you to get used to the controls. I highly recommend you go through these tutorials, because they explain the game controls and interface in excellent detail. Back to the cities; Each city has it's own story and each of the families in the cities have a dilemma. You can choose to fix the problem or just play like normal. Anyone who has played the original Sims for the Mac, will experience a small change. If you don't like the stories, you can make your own towns and families. You can add monuments and trees to your city. There are pre-built houses in a house bin that you can place, or you can build your own. It's all up to you.

One thing I found particularly interesting was the Family Builder. You can modify every part you want to. The width of the eyes, the fatness of the lips or even the entire face at once. Pick their everyday clothes, their formal clothes, workout clothes and many others. Customize their turn-offs and turn-ons to your liking. Also, if you want a child it, actually takes the features of the parents and makes a child for you. If you have created a Sim which you really like, you can add it to the Sim Bin. This has pre-made Sims, if you don't want to go in and customize them.

The graphics were quite astounding even when playing on an iBook G4. The game looks crystal clear with smooth movements. Of course, there were some hiccups, but that was mainly because my processor wasn't fast enough. As of June 2, 2006 The Sims2 and Expansion Packs became Universal Binaries.

The only downside would be that some of the things they do seem very unbelievable. One example would be sleeping in your breakfast if you're too tired. You would drown in your milk if that happened. Other than that this is an excellent game. I loved it.

Altogether, I would highly suggest that anyone who likes the simulation genre to check out this game. Great job Aspyr!



Expansion Packs

So let's look at the three expansion packs. Another was just released, The Sims 2 Pets, but I didn't get a chance to review that.

The Sims 2 Nightlife adds an interesting spin to the game. You get to go downtown. When you create a city, it will tell you that a new expansion pack has been installed and you get to add a downtown to your city. There is a pre-built downtown or you can build your own. It also gives you the option of building a driveway and buying a car. You can build a building and make it accessible to the community. Make a restaurant, grocery store, and many others, with this expansion pack. Unfortunately, you can't make any money buy making a building like this, because it's a community building and you don't own it. If you need a monopolizing fix, then you should check out The Sims 2 Open For Business.

The Sims 2 Open For Business allows you to start your

own business. Whether it's inside your home or in a specific building in your new shopping area, you can make some money. You get a lot more objects, which allow you to run your business. To get started, you use a phone to call someone to start your business. A sign appears in the top right corner of your screen. These are your controls and stats for your business. The "store" will be open all the time, unless you buy a Open/Closed Sign. You can program the time your shop is open. I really enjoyed this expansion pack. Something that I didn't like was that it took away from trying to make the Sims achieve their goals. I had to focus on running the business. Other than that, this was my favorite expansion pack.

The Sims 2 University lets you take your kid to college. When a child becomes a teenager, you get the option to send them to college. If you choose to send them to college, they will automatically become a young adult. They get put into a student bin. When you exit the neighborhood and enter the college, you can put the students in the student bin in residence on the campus. Each collage has different places that your student can visit when they aren't in class. I personally didn't like this expansion pack as much as the others. It was just the regular Sims style game play in a different place. You do get more actions and objects, but it didn't really appeal to me.

Overall, this one of the best simulation games out there. Most of the expansion packs add even more to a great game. Keep up the great work, EA and Aspyr.



Hardware Reviews

Apricorn Aegis Mini Ultraportable 1.8" Hard Drive – Getting Perpendicular!

reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Apricorn
12191 Kirkhan Road
Poway, CA 92064
1-800-458-5448

<http://www.apricorn.com>

Released: July 2006

Drive: Hitachi Global Storage Technologie's Travelstar C4K60 "Slim"
FireWire 30GB \$159 USD, 60 GB, \$209 USD, 80GB \$259 USD.
USB 2.0 30 GB 149 USD, 60 GB, \$199 USD, 80 GB, \$249 USD.

Contains: 1.8" HDD and enclosure with integrated USB cable, 1-meter extension cable, Soft neoprene travel pouch, Quick Start Guide, CD with Macintosh Apricorn Encrypter, [ShirtPocket](#), [SuperDuper!](#), [Qdea Synchronize! X](#); Windows

[EZ Gig II Backup & Disaster Recovery, Second Copy 2000](#)

[Synchronizing, Cryptainer Encryption](#)

Requirements: Apple G3 with Mac OS 9.2, Mac OS X 10.x or later,
Pentium CPU with Windows 2000 and XP or later, 32MBs RAM, USB,
FireWire, CD ROM.

Strengths: Smallest hard drive possible so far without being a Flash Drive. Quiet. Runs cool.

Weaknesses: The specs show that the FireWire version costs more and runs slower than the USB 2.0 version.

Discussed in the *Mac ReviewCast* Episode 80 -
<http://www.surfbits.com/?p=945>

Would you like a super mini external hard drive and boast you have one of the Hitachi technology units? How about one that comes with various software apps to make things just a little easier for either Macs or Windows systems?

You just have to see the *Get Perpendicular!* presentation to appreciate the technology used to make this kind of drive possible: http://www.hitachigst.com/hdd/research/recording_head/pr/PerpendicularAnimation.html and yes, the presentation is loosely based on the *Schoolhouse Rock* genre: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schoolhouse_Rock!

http://www.hitachigst.com/hdd/research/recording_head/pr/index.html

The standard technology lays bits out horizontally while the engineers at Hitachi figured out how to make them stand up instead of laying down on the job, thus producing a denser storage function in the process.

Apricorn named their product Aegis to symbolically represent a shield or a protection.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aegis>

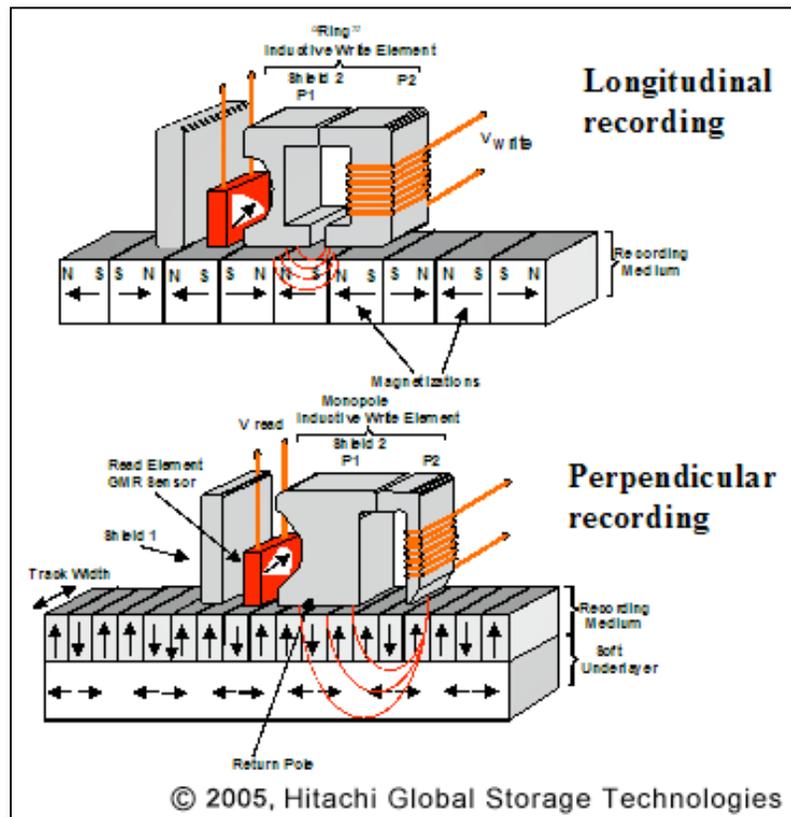
The hot-swappable Aegis Mini pocket sized, ultra-portable 1.8-inch external drive with USB 2.0 or FireWire connection options, uses that Hitachi technology.



The unit we reviewed is a 30 GB system that runs quietly and has a blue LED that flashes when data is transferred to and from it. It can also be obtained in 60 and 80 GB versions. Imagine an 80 GB “pocket drive”!

I learned that the FireWire unit costs more and the throughput is actually slower than with the USB versions (480 Mbps for USB and 400 Mbps for FireWire throughput). I guess I never paid that much attention to the differences before. One listener to the *Mac ReviewCast* episode 80, wrote back feedback and pointed out that this was not based on sustained throughput, where FireWire outshines USB 2.0 and justifies the cost difference (which is \$10 USD). So if you have a portable that doesn't have a FireWire port, you can still use this technology.

The package also has an extender cable (one meter in length), but it comes with a shorter “pigtail” that can be anchored against the side of the unit when not in use. There is a little retaining clip that holds the plug in place. It also comes with a carrying pouch and we are told the enclosure uses rugged 16-point omni-directional shock mounts, but the warranty for the device is only 1 year, so be careful if you are thinking of using it for a hockey puck. Besides, it only weighs 3.5 ounces, dripping wet.



In using special torx screws with a central nib, this device is not intended for consumer maintenance either. There are also no air vents, as if it were hermetically sealed, which I doubt is the case. And it never runs hot.

The included CD is multi-platform with software for both non-Mac and Mac systems. Apricorn calls the apps the *Data Protection Software Suite* and includes backup, synchronizing, encryption software and proprietary hard drive health monitoring software developed by Apricorn engineers.

The *Data Protection Software Suite* contains:

- Macintosh - Apricorn Encrypter, [ShirtPocket](#), [SuperDuper!](#), [Qdea Synchronize! X](#)
- Windows - [EZ Gig II Backup & Disaster Recovery](#), [Second Copy 2000 Synchronizing](#), [Cryptainer Encryption](#)

The outside of the unit is 2.7 W by 0.7H by 3.4L inches and the drive itself runs at 4,200 rpm with a 2 MB memory cache. To hear the drive you have to pick it up and put it next to your ear. It really is that quiet!

If you need something with more capacity than a flash drive and want a unit that requires no extra power except that give by the FireWire port, than this would be a lot of fun to have and hold. If you don't think you need the extra software for either platform, then there are other drives that cost less – but compare that to how many thumb drives you would need for the price. The only thing that comes close are the digital camera micro drives, with 16 GB tops, from IBM. This unit puts those to shame in both price and performance. So get one of these units and go sing the *Get Perpendicular!* song...

Dialog Phone

reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie



Miglia Technology Ltd
The Old Silk Mill Brook Street
Tring

HP23 5EF

United Kingdom

+44 (0)870 747 2988

Fax: +44 (0)870 199 1289

info@miglia.com

<http://www.miglia.com>

<http://www.miglia.com/products/communication/dialogphone/index.html>

(watch the Quickclip).

\$79 USD, \$90 CND, 42.54 BGP, 63 Euro.

Comes with: Dialog Phone, USB dongle, CD, Soft case.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.0 or later; USB 2.0 Port, Internet, Skype, MSN, or iChat AV. Windows XP with Pentium III or later and other requirements as the Mac.

Strengths: Small, compact phone that you just plug it in and use it.

Weaknesses: Pricey, poor audio quality, no rechargeable battery.

When I took this phone out of the box, it looked like a very cool phone. It's sleek and stylish and looks a lot like a Mac product. But after I started using it my opinion changed a bit.

The Dialog Phone is from Miglia which costs \$90 CND, \$79 USD, 42.54 pounds and 63 euros. It comes with the phone itself, a USB receiver, a soft carrying case and a CD with the Dialog software on it. Personally, I don't think that the Dialog software was needed, because you can use the phone directly through Skype or iChat. Now, like it says on the box, you can call anywhere in the world for free. That's true in some ways. You can **call any computer** with this phone anywhere in the world for free. Regular land line phones are different. Skype has something on their website which says that you can call any phone in the US or Canada for free until the end of the year. So please consider this before you buy it. Calling regular phones anywhere else with Skype will cost you.



Dialog Software

It's a plain box that has all of your skype and iChat contacts bunched together. You can click on one of the contacts and press the button on the top right corner of the phone and it will call them. I just think it wasn't necessary since you need Skype installed to use it anyway.

The sound quality was worse than a regular phone. I left a message on someone's answering machine and they said that they couldn't understand what I was saying. The power source is two AAA batteries so you can't just charge it. I would just rather plug in my microphone and call with that.

But still, it does what it says it does. You can call anywhere in the world, but it's not always free. I just think there are better alternatives than this. Miglia has come out with a Dialog+ which might be better. I also find it too expensive for what it is.



EyeTV 250 From a Gamer's Perspective

reviewed Daniel MacKenzie



Elgato Systems
Nymphenburger Str 86
D-80636 München Germany

info@elgato.com

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

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

http://www.elgato.com/index.php?file=products_eyetv250

Released: April 6, 2006

\$199 USD

Requirements: G4, G5 or Intel Core processor; 256 MB of physical RAM (512 MB recommended); Built-in USB 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.

FAQs: <http://faq.elgato.com/index.php/main>

Comparison: <http://www.elgato.com/matrix/index.php>

Previous Review:

<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/July2006/Hardware/EyeTV%20250.htm>

Strengths: Good video quality, cheap for what it does, universal binary, Game Mode works flawlessly.

Weaknesses: Gets hot, bulky, could have more built-in.



I was really looking forward to reviewing this product. I could finally play my PS2 on my laptop. When I pulled it out of the box, that was exactly what it could do. A great plug-and-play device.

The EyeTV 250 is made by Elgato Systems. It's priced at \$250 USD and it's well worth it. It comes with the device, which is a beautiful looking box. It has four ports on it. One for the regular cable line, one for power, one for the USB cable and one other input. You can plug in an adapter, which comes in the box, if you want the regular RCA (red, white and yellow cables) and S-Video inputs. A remote was also included if you want to control the video converter from a distance.

Also, Elgato's award winning video capture software is included in the box. This takes up about \$80 of the price. I absolutely love this software. It's not just compatible with the EyeTV. Go to <http://www.elgato.com/> and check their compatibility charts. You may already have a device that works with this software.

I found the EyeTV 250 was kind of bulky, but if space is essential, then you should look at the EyeTV Hybrid. Also the RCA and S-Video cable could have been built into the box instead of as external adapters. It's just something that you can lose.

The unit also got very hot. After about an hour of use I almost burned my hand.

The video quality was a bit worse than a TV when it was in full screen mode but that's understandable.

Game Mode

Also, for the gamers out there, the first time I plugged my game system into it there was a delay. But then I found this thing called Game Mode. It makes it so there is no delay. It was great!

When you have cable plugged in you can program recordings and get a TV schedule for your area. Pick the record settings from DVD quality or not so good. Everything was easy to use and install. The Elgato support was fast with a detailed response. Everything was excellent.

Overall, this is a great product. I highly recommend it. Also, this is a great idea for people that don't want to buy another TV, people on a budget or gamers on the go. I love it!

Logitech® V450 Laser Cordless Mouse for Notebooks

reviewed by Wayne LeFevre & Kristine LeFevre



Logitech®

<http://www.logitech.com>

6505 Kaiser Drive

Fremont, CA 94555 USA

510-795-8500

800-231-7717 Consumer Sales

Released: August 2006

\$50 USD, \$56 CND, £26 GBP, 39 € Euro

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.8 or later. USB 2.0 port.



Strengths: Small, laser precision mouse cordless mouse that claims to have a battery life of 1 year. Micro-receiver small and installs in base.



Weaknesses: A bit on the smaller side for large hands. No side buttons.

Ease of Installation

Mouse worked excellent on both PC and Mac without any drivers. Both PC and Mac drivers come on the enclosed CD. By installing drivers, the scroll wheel is customizable.

Accessibility

Logitech website has FAQ's, help support, User Forums, and help lines.

Effectiveness

Laser precision works on almost any surface. Micro-receiver installs in base when not in use, which will turn off the mouse conserving battery power. There is also a small button on the bottom of the mouse that will also turn off the power. The scroll wheel is a button, which also has side-to-side capabilities. It defaults as a side scroll, but with the software it can become two more buttons. For example, we have ours set up for previous and next page on our browser.



Ease of use

First thing is this is a laptop mouse. It is smaller than your normal mouse. My wife loves it, but I find it just a little small for my hands, as I like to rest my whole hand on the mouse. Not so much as it can't be used, but a little strange for me, as you move just your fingers/hand and not your whole hand/arm.



The neatest enhancement that Logitech has done to this mouse is the Micro-receiver. I mentioned it in the Effectiveness portion of the review, but it really needs mentioning again. On our old PC laptop, we used an older mouse with a USB receiver that was at least twice as long as this one. Through normal bumps and jostling that happens with a laptop, it effectively broke the USB port on the machine. This receiver, however, sticks out no more than an inch, making it much more likely not to get hit or rested on. Whenever the receiver is pulled out of the mouse base, the mouse instantly turns on, and makes it extremely convenient when traveling.

The laser is precise and doesn't jump about the screen. You can use it on any surface, except glass, and it just works. I highly recommend it for anyone wanting a small, portable mouse for their laptop. The Micro-receiver is ingenious, and the laser is rock steady. The price is a tad on the high side, but the quality is there to back it up.

The SLANKET - “The Best Blanket Ever”

reviewed by Derek Meier



Technipak
149 Old Gray Station Rd
Gray, TN 37615
info@theslanket.com
<http://www.theslanket.com>
Released: January 20, 2006
\$49 USD,



Strengths: Well made, quality material, warm, allows unrestricted use of hands.

Weaknesses: None found.

[**Editor:** It was difficult deciding if this was hardware, firmware, software or just wearware...]



With colder weather drawing nearer the struggle to keep warm begins. The warmest weapon in that struggle is the Slanket. The Slanket is an oversized fleece blanket with large billowy sleeves. The Slanket is very well made and keeps you quite warm. The biggest asset of the Slanket is the sleeves. An opening at each end keeps your hands free for typing, video game playing or whatever, while keeping you warm and toasty.

My wife uses the Slanket and she loves it. I prefer it a little cooler in the house and with the slanket she can continue working on her laptop or study for her exams while keeping warm without having the heater cranked up and making me uncomfortable.

So lower the thermostat a few degrees and get the Slanket. You may save a few bucks on your heating bill and stay warm as well.

Shareware Reviews

Folder Glance 2.0.1 — A CM Folder Drill-Down Tool with Launch features

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



Developer: Daniel Stødle

stoedle@online.no

Yellow Lemon Software

<http://home.online.no/~stoedle/YLS/YLS-products/FolderGlance.html>

Released: May 2, 2006

Donationware: \$5 USD Download Size: 1.8 MB

Documentation: A well illustrated and written, almost idiot-proof manual.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later PowerPC or Intel-based Mac.

Audience: All user levels.

Strength — An easy to use, well documented application that enhances finder navigation and can serve as a file launch tool.

Weakness — None worthy of mention.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8. Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

Publisher's Summary

FolderGlance is a small Contextual Menu Plugin for the Finder. When it is installed, it allows you to control-click or right-click on folders to see and open their contents, as well as examine the contents of sub-folders down an unlimited number of levels.

Introduction

Every so once in a while, I stumble across a utility that makes me wonder, "How did I get along without this one before?" EasyFind, shadow Google, and DEVONnote are such utilities; FolderGlance is my latest entry in the must have and use category.

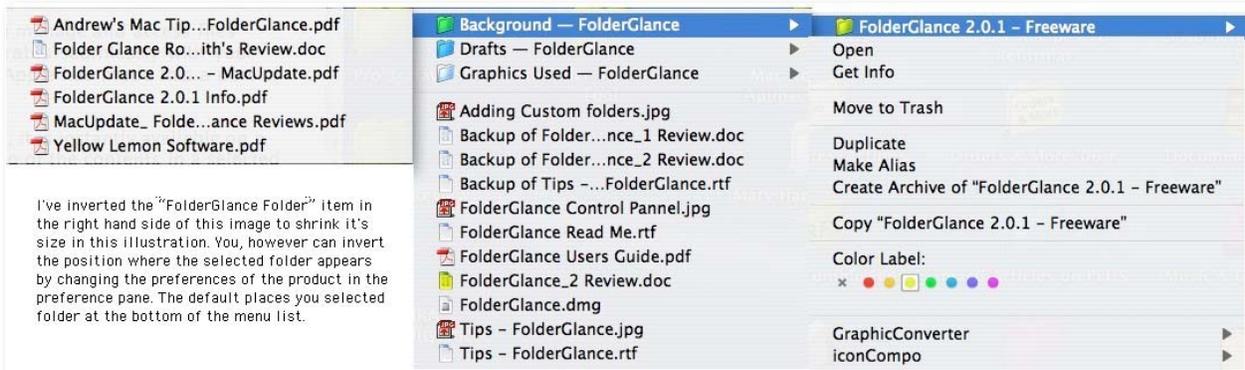
- Are you getting tired of drilling down to the deepest level of a nested folder set to find a document you think is there?
- Do you hate repeatedly clicking in column-view to look deeper into a hierarchy of folders?
- Does flipping triangles in list view and playing the scroll-down game grow old?
- Are you sufficiently uncertain of what you named the file that doing an EasyFind, or if you must, Spotlight search that seems fated to fail.

Then download and try FolderGlance, not tomorrow, get it today!



Working With

Download the product and open the .dmg file; a few clicks later you'll have invisibly installed FolderGlance and can start using it to simplify finder navigation. To use the product in its primary function mode, you right-click on a folder (or volume) and then browse its contents directly from the context menu without actually opening the folder.

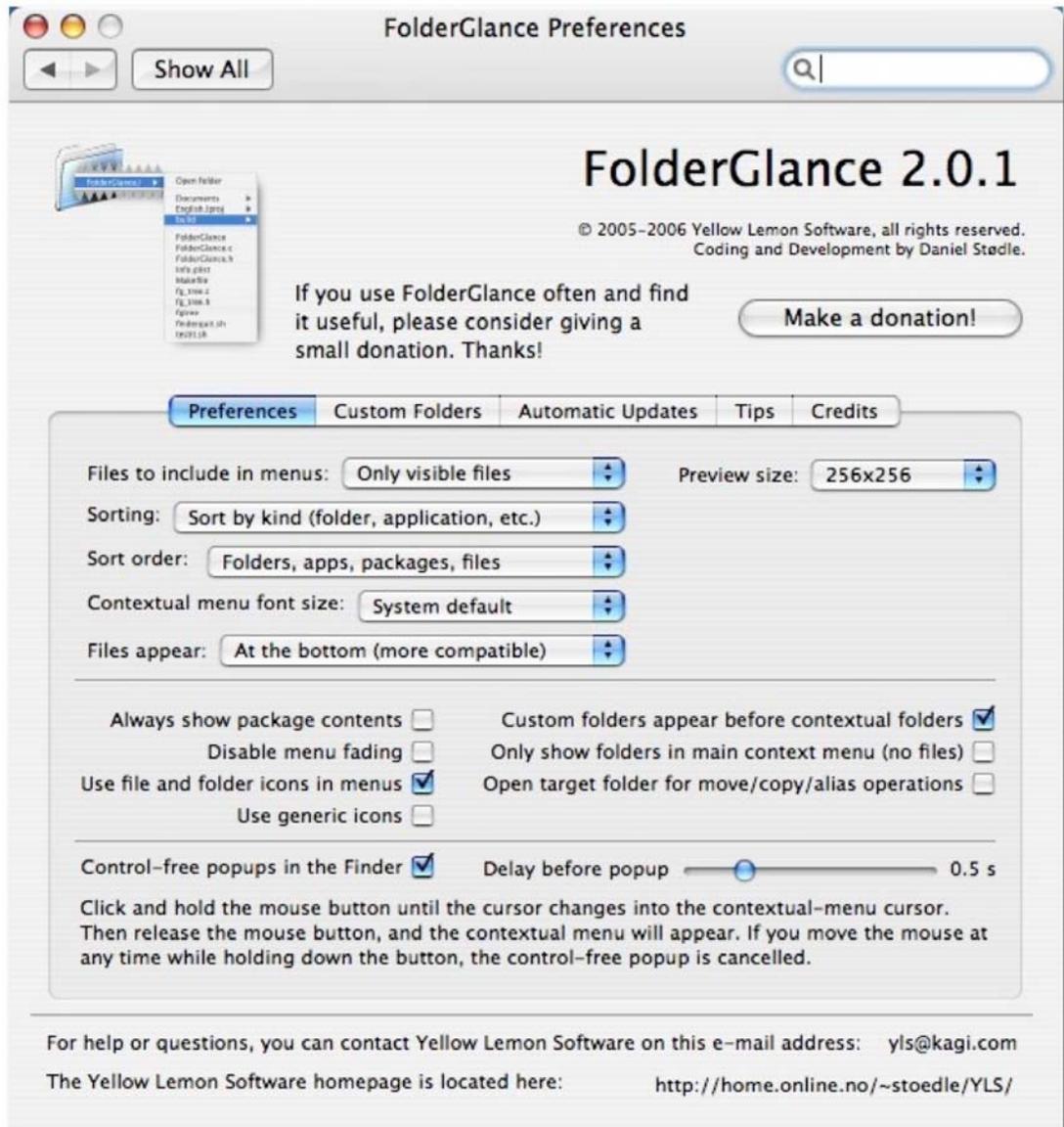


It doesn't take much practice to allow you to:

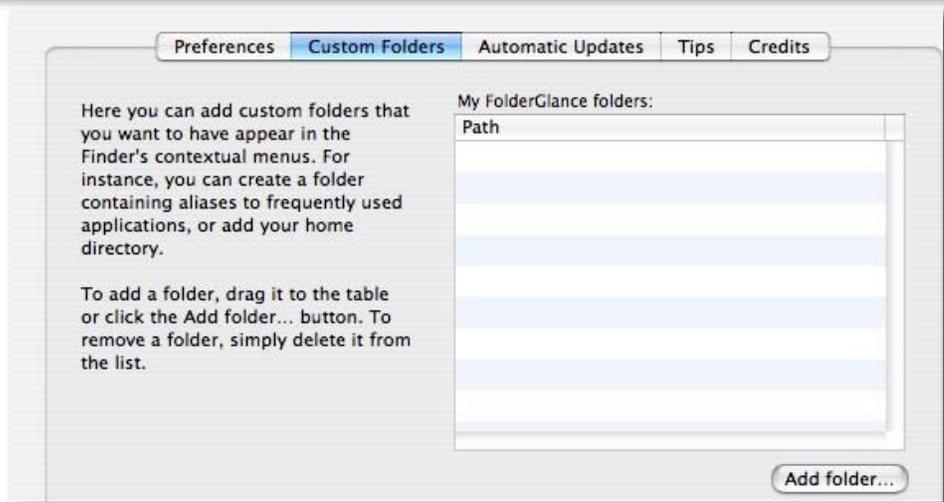
- Grab files and folders from the contextual menu
- Move, copy or make aliases of files and folders
- Move files and folders to the trash
- Preview files right where FolderGlance's navigation takes you
- Open files or a selection of files with a user specified application that differs from the one, which created it.

One nice undocumented feature of the product is that it will drill-down on the alias of a folder as well the folder itself. So if you're like me, and scatter working folders aliases all over your desktop, this product is a "mouse-click" saver.

To customize FolderGlance, access it within your "Systems Preferences" panel [Applications > System Preferences.app] or from your dock. The preference panel allows you to control things like "opening a target folder to enable move/copy/alias operation and much more.



A second operating mode allows you to right-click anywhere within a finder window or from the Desktop to navigate within folders that you have designated to be added to the context menu when using that mode. Which folders are affected is determined from the preference folder. [I've not selected any.]



As noted in Fred Showker's UGN InfoManager review,
http://www.ugnn.com/2006/04/mac_folders_improved.html

"FolderGlance is a powerful utility for browsing files and folders directly from the Finder's contextual menus. Not only that, but FolderGlance also lets you preview files directly from the contextual menus, as well as to move, copy and make aliases of selected files at locations they browse to. Using FolderGlance, digging into packages becomes a simple matter of holding down a modifier key.

"At last, someone had some creative inspiration. Of course it really wasn't creative genius -- all they had to do is ask, "What really sucks about Tiger's Folder Actions?" and they probably got ten thousand answers.

"The main new feature of this latest version is support for control-free popups in the Finder. [Great for users of a one-button mouse.] Now you can now simply click-and-hold on files and folders in the Finder, and after a brief delay, the contextual menu appears."

http://www.ugnn.com/2006/04/mac_folders_improved.html

As many of you are aware, after I write a review, I always check to see what the rest of the world thinks about the product. I was pleased to note that, as Rob Griffiths (whose opinions I respect) in Mac OS X Hint Columns on December 5, 2005, also rated this product highly.

<http://www.macoshints.com/article.php?story=20051205071736666>

Package Features:

Although the remaining features of FolderGlance are interesting and likely useful to many users, I have and use both alternative launcher, and menubar based trash tools. I also seldom need to open a document with an alternative application. Don't get me wrong, these and the others listed below are great tools, its just that I have no interest in using them.

- Adding your own custom folders to the contextual menu, enabling FolderGlance to act as a very versatile launcher
- Control-free popups: Open the contextual menu without holding down the control-key or using a two-button mouse
- Opening files with an application different than the default by using an "Open with..." menu you can tailor to suit your own taste
- Changing the font size used in contextual menus – *I like this feature*
- Disable the menu fade effect, for a more speedy menu experience
- Browsing into package and installation bundle contents
- Optional display of custom file and folder icons
- Customizable sorting and customizable display of hidden files and folders

Kudos:

A first class tips listing is available from the preferences pane, tips that help, almost, to avoid using the fine manual to get the most out of FolderGlance.

To make the most of FolderGlance, keep the following tricks in mind:

- Holding down the option key allows you to copy items instead of moving them, browse directly into packages and display an in-line preview of regular files. It also enables the Network folder for browsing.
- Holding down shift lets you create aliases of the selected items instead of moving them.
- Holding down the shift key also enables the "Open with" menu on all regular files, allowing you to open them with an application different than the default. While browsing the "Open with" menu on one file, holding down the option key while selecting the application to use will open the entire selection with that application.
- Selecting an item while pressing the command-key results in "picking up" that item, allowing you to drag-and-drop it to a different location.
- Use custom folders to enable easy access to commonly used places, like your home directory or your Applications folder.
- Set a custom "Open with" folder! Create a folder containing aliases to the applications you use the most, for a speedier "Open with" experience :-)
- Press Command-I to get info on any file or folder while the FolderGlance menu is open. Pressing Command-Backspace or Command-T will move the file or folder to the trash. Invoking these commands will not close the menu.

Discomforts

The Software was easy to use — My only problem with the product was that it was so intuitive that I had no reason to write the developer asking for help.

Conclusions

This is a simple, low overhead utility to help you manage and access files nested at various depths in your folders. It integrates seamlessly with your day-to-day search habits that that you which Apple has made this a part of the Tiger Macintosh OS.

As a contextual menu item plugin for the Finder, it is instantly available on a two-button mouse to allow hierarchical browsing of the contents in a selected folder. FolderGlance comes with a preference panel allowing customization of folder depth and hidden file display and activating and focusing its other features.

The price is right and the product is well worth a \$5 USD donationware contribution to its developer Daniel Stødle and Lemon Yellow Software. I rate this product **4.5 macCs**.

iPaste 1.1.2 — More clipboards to streamline your repetitive pasting efforts

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: IGG Software

info@iggsoftware.com

<http://www.iggsoftware.com/ipaste/index.php>

Released: February 3, 2006

Shareware: \$13 USD

10 Day Trial Period Download Size: 732 KB

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later, universal binary.

Audience: All user levels .



Strength — Great product, easy to configure and use.

Weakness — I still prefer a menubar solution to my multi-clipping needs.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8. Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

Publisher's Summary

iPaste is a tool to make clippings (e.g. pieces of text, images, PDFs, etc.) that you commonly paste into applications easily accessible via HotKeys and a contextual menu. It is an unobtrusive clipboard manager that has a small footprint so it is forgiving on system resources. No cluttering windows necessary and it can be hidden from the Dock.

Introduction

One of the most annoying things about the Macintosh clipboard is that it only stores one entry. When I'm writing something, it's often useful to routinely have several pieces of boilerplate available. One of my powerhouse tools is a multiple-clip board tool. This is especially true when I'm (1) Reformatting recipes, (2) adding footers and other boilerplate to email, or (3) importing information such as installation boilerplate, hardware software configuration and the copywrite disclaimer to my articles. Other examples include, information I find useful (many times a week) when writing includes (4) the icons for my columns and recipes, (5) often used reference Links (URL and email addresses), and (6) the title/function and contact information for the organizations for which I volunteer.

I know that Microsoft Word has this capability, but I've never been comfortable with its interface. Nuts to having to scroll down a long list to get to the item I need as I work many projects. So I rely on third party software for storing and accessing multiple clips.

I presently use shadowClipboard [macC October 2006] for this purpose. Nevertheless, I am always eager to see what others have done to enhance clipping capture and use; therefore this review.

Working With

Installing this application is simple. Open its .dmg, and drag the application into your applications folder. Double click on the application, enter (or not if in trial mode) your SN, and set your preferences.



There you'll be, ready to start using iPaste. As with many of the software tools I test, iPaste religiously follows the Macintosh interface.

iPaste lets you store any number of bits of information -- text or images, that you tend to use repeatedly. Specifically iPaste supports pasting: plain text, rich text, TIFF, PDF, PICT, JPEG, GIF and more. Once you've stored items as "clips," you can paste them into any document or text field in one of three ways: via the iPaste menu-bar menu; by pressing a keyboard shortcut (user defined hot key); or, perhaps most conveniently, by way of a contextual menu at the insertion point.

Something I didn't need or use was the fact that I could also see your clips in a viewer at any time to remind you which clip corresponds to which keyboard command.

To test the software I set up the sets of clipboards I use with shadowClipboard along with their contents. Then for several days, I worked only with iPaste. A few things I found pleased me. Others, see discomforts, did not.

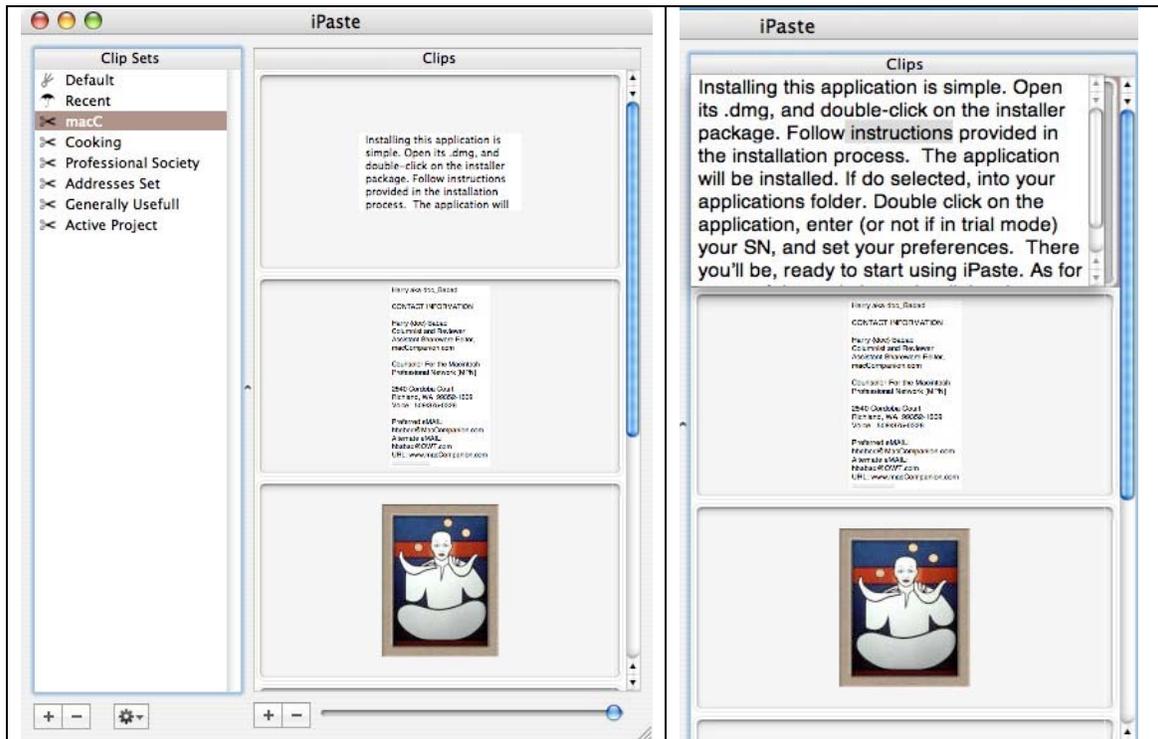
Contextual Menu — I like the contextual menu feature of iPaste, preferring that type of access to its features rather than using hotkeys. The later clutter up my brain if I select too many in the applications I daily use.

Editing Text Clippings — I also am delighted with the fact that, in the main iPaste window, you are allowed to easily edit the contents of a stored text clip, allowing you to correct errors in the original clipping. Such changed clippings remain be accessible and depending on how you've set the preferences for that clipping set, from almost any application. When editing or for legibility reasons, you can expand the clipping's visibility using the slider bar at the bottom of clipping set list, a nice screen space conserving feature.

Clipping Access Alternatives — With iPaste you can choose to not show the application in the Dock. Furthermore, add it to your login items (by going to System Preferences > Accounts.) It thus becomes an integrated background utility that remains available to you as you work.

Recent Set Limitations — The developer notes "As a bonus, iPaste keeps track of the ten most recent Clipboard contents, so you have easy access to anything you've copied of late." (I thought I'd find this number to be severely limiting and would have preferred a way to increase it to 30 or more.) However, in my testing no such limit exists. Had I not carefully read the information on the developer's web site, I would not have discovered this virtual problem.

I've illustrated some of iPaste's features by showing you part of my macC set in normal and edit a clipping mode. The images show my clipping sets, and the editing mode window with it's own scroll bar.



Other Package Features

Multiple Clip Sets — Create unlimited clip sets each of which can hold unlimited numbers of clips. Such sets can either be universal or associated with particular applications. Having all of your *need to reuse* clippings at your fingertips results in increased productivity.

Link Clip Sets to Applications — Set which clip sets you want to use for which applications. When that application is brought to the front, so are the associated clips in the floating panel.

Do a Hotkey Paste — Pressing a few keys. Sure control clicking the mouse can be handy, but using keys is still faster. With iPaste you can paste the information you need by using an easy key combination, regardless of what application is active. — *As previously mention, this is not my bag.*

Discomforts

Naming of Clippings — I often use very similar clipping for different purposes, therefore I prefer a tool that allows me to name my clipping. For example, I have created two versions of the installation blurb for my reviews. One is focused on dragging to the application folder, the other by using a product's installer. The first sentence or two of the clipping are identical, so names are important. More important is the fact that I have eight variants of my home address in my Address set, which differs in minor but important details. Without the ability to name each clipping, I must read them carefully before I can chose the right one — correctness is all in the name.

| Addresses Set | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| | Name | Type |
| 1... | Babad, Joat, jr Address | TEXT |
| 1... | hbabad@macCompanion.com | TEXT |
| 1... | 3RSF - Harry Contact Not Home | TEXT |
| 1... | 3RFS --- Babad's Full Contact | TEXT |
| 1... | Harry Babad Ph. D. at Home | TEXT |
| 105 | macC --- Harry {doc} Babad | TEXT |
| 13 | Home - The Babad's Harry & Joan | TEXT |
| 12 | Joan K. Babad | TEXT |
| 5 | Knot-In-Order Contact | TEXT |
| 4 | Consultant - Harry Babad, Ph. D., | TEXT |

Creating Custom Clip Sets — Moving, a drag and drop operation (alas not a function of a CM) copies but doesn't remove an item from the *recent items* set to the custom set; thus leaving behind a transferred item just adds needless stuff to the recent set which is already limited in contents.

Trying a Macintosh Finder trick - holding down the command key when I dragged the clipping to one of my custom clipboards did not move it; it only copied the clipping to the new location.

Insufficient Memory – The first time I attempted to use the product from what the author calls a “clipping well” I got an out of memory notification. Rebooting, something I read to do in an iPaste review I found on the Internet, solved the problem.

Default Set — I wonder what that is for? Not matter what I tried; I didn't fuss very long, I could not fill this set. Nor could I rename it to make it useful.



Conclusions

The Good News - This is a good product and I am comfortable recommending it to all of you. Except with respect to the number of *recent items* stored, iPaste has no limitation on the number of separate clipping sets you can create and what you can store in them. iPaste allows you to interface with your stored clipping from the dock, a hot key, the menubar and from the contextual menu. So you can choose the most comfortable way you use it.

The Bad News — I still prefer the more narrowly accessible interface shadowGoogle menubar based interface to the one in iPaste so will not switch. I've provided some of the reasons in my discomfort list. Don't let this stop you from downloading this product and giving it a trial run; after all doc_Babad is somewhat set about his ways.

Nevertheless, I overall, agree with Andrew Scott in his MacUpdate review: “I'm surprised iPaste doesn't get more attention even in the relatively crowded clipboard enhancer market. It's unobtrusive and flexible. I like the ability to create a number of distinct clipboards and make some items permanently available. Other applications offer similar features but I think iPaste gets it just right.” I rate this product **4.0 macCs**.

PS

- Much to my surprise and delight, installing and using iPaste did not interfere with shadowGoogle, despite their having comparable function – it's a Macintosh thing.

Finale NotePad

reviewed by Daphne Kalfon



finale
NotePad®



MakeMusic, Inc.
Suite M, 7615 Golden Triangle Drive
Eden Prairie, MN 55344-3848
Customer Service: 800-843-2066 (M-F, 8:30 - 5:00 CST)
Contacts: <http://www.finalemusic.com/contacts.aspx>
<http://www.finalemusic.com>
<http://www.finalemusic.com/notepad/>
Finale NotePad 2007 is a free download for either Windows
or Macintosh OS X from the Finale Music home page.

Strengths: Quick to set up; tutorials are helpful; good starter software for those needing just the basics in a notation program.

Weaknesses: Difficult and somewhat overwhelming task to try to find or obtain specific answers to questions using the online forum and knowledge base features; many limitations in notation features offered. A more comprehensive listing of what the program cannot do is listed at the top of the page at the link below, although the listing may be a little bit outdated:

<http://forum.makemusic.com/default.aspx?f=6&m=105374>

FinaleNotepad has Intel-based Macintosh support, and is fully compatible with Finale 2007.

The website has links to a notation product comparison chart to help you decide which Finale notation software product you should go with based on your needs. The site also lists the system requirements, has a download library so that you can access previous versions of NotePad, and a very interesting and fun-looking feature called Finale Showcase, where users of the Finale family of products can post their music for shared viewing, playback and printing:

http://www.finalemusic.com/showcase/fs_home.asp

Also, NotePad doesn't seem to want to play through my FireWire audio device (MOTU 828 mkII), only through my internal speakers, which really is not helpful. I tried doing a search on this topic to find out what may be the problem, but as mentioned above, finding the answer to one's question can be quite a daunting task. Other than that, one has the option of going to the MakeMusic customer support page, where you must first create an account and then you may submit your question using the form on that page. There is also a phone number, but I didn't try it.

The download process was very straightforward. A password was auto-generated which one must use in order to be able to download the software. The installer then asks for authentication of ID, and I mistakenly entered the auto-generated password, and of course it wouldn't accept it. I've been through this process before and did it correctly, but I was nodding off when I tried to do this - not a great idea. A quick "help" email to product specialist Scott Yoho at MakeMusic Inc. resulted in an equally prompt response and all was well again.

First, I went through all the items I received when I downloaded Finale Notepad. I started off by clicking on the icon “Notepad Entry Exercise” to learn how to use the program. On each page of the tutorial there are two staves, one with notes on it, and one below it, with nothing on it. Following the instructions on the same page, the user is shown how to enter the notes that appear on the upper staff onto the lower staff by using the simple entry palette and mouse. Simple entry of rests, ties, accidentals and tuplets is also covered.

You are then guided through how to enter notes by a much quicker method - keyboard entry. Using the letters on the computer keyboard corresponding to the letters of the musical alphabet along with the keys of your numerical keypad, it doesn't take long to discover just how much more efficient this method of entry can be. I did run into a little snag with accidentals, in that the key on the numerical keypad that is supposed to give me a flat accidental didn't seem to work, and neither did the sign to obtain the sharp accidental nor the “N” key to obtain the natural sign. I tried to use the same keys on the main keyboard, and the ones for sharp and flat worked, but still not the one for the accidental sign.

The literature states that computer keyboard entry is much faster now than was possible with previous versions of Notepad.

The tutorial goes on to show the user how to quickly enter chords again using the computer's keyboard, which can be accomplished by typing in the number that corresponds to the interval between the two notes. And similarly for entering rests.

As one goes along, other tips and shortcuts are explained in order to make entry and corrections as quick and easy as possible.

One also learns how to implement Notepad's ability to notate music in multiple simultaneous rhythms within one staff which it does by way of a system of layers. Four layers are available for this purpose for each staff, each having its own stem default, as well as its own colour to make it easier to work with.

Those were the main points covered in the Notepad Entry tutorial.

I also checked out the NotePad QuickHelp guide to view its contents. Chapters listed are:

Tutorials; What's New to NotePad 2007; File Menu; Edit Menu; View Menu; Document Menu; Window Menu; Key Signature Tool; Measure Tool; Simple Entry Tool; Tuplet Tool; Smart Shape Tool; Articulation Tool; Repeat Tool; Lyrics Tool; Text Tool; Mass Edit Tool; Printing; Playback; Keyboard Shortcuts; and Maestro Font Character Set.

If at anytime you need to refine your search for something, you can go to the top of the page and click on “Help Topics”. A new little window will come up which enables you to try to find exactly what you are looking for.

I went through the steps in Tutorial 1, which shows you the basics of simple entry and how to create a new document using the Document Setup Wizard, and it was really straightforward and easy to get a score set up and ready for entering notes. The setup tutorial included screen shots of each step being explained, which made the process that much easier.

Also covered was the Mass Edit tool, how to activate and use the Simple Entry Caret along with the computer keyboard and number keypad for quicker entry, accidentals, chords, tuplets, adding or deleting measures, playback, setting tempo, and saving your work.

From reading through and doing this tutorial, I learned that NotePad has an Automatic Music Spacing feature, which widens or narrows a measure to professional publishing standards. This is a very handy feature that can save a lot of time as it takes care of the layout for you.

I also found out that choosing any tool from the simple entry palette creates a new menu with items such as “Check for extra notes on mouse entry”, “Fill with rests at end of measure”, and “Playback notes on entry”, among others. The first three mentioned are already selected by default. These features are really handy and can save a lot of time when entering your music. The first item will not let you add in more notes than allowed by your selected time signature, the second item will automatically finish your bar with rests if your note entry hasn’t used up the available beats and the third item will allow you to hear the notes as you enter them.

The next tutorial covers things like Changing the Key, using the Text Tool, entering lyrics, The Repeat Tool, Chord Symbols, Working with Layers, Basic Articulations and Text Expressions, Slurs and Printing Your Music. Another feature of NotePad is that articulations, such as staccatos and other dynamic markings, will actually be implemented when you playback your music - they aren’t just there for show. Well, I did try it and noticed that some but not all articulations and dynamics seemed to sound on playback.

Finale NotePad allows you to create up to 8 staves. If your score requires more staves than that, then the next step up in the Finale family of products would be PrintMusic, which allows for up to 24 staves, or even better, Finale, which allows you to create an unlimited number.

In conclusion I’d say that NotePad is a great little starter program for those who only need something very basic when it comes to notation software.

PDFLab 2.0.2 — Another useful PDF tool that allows you, if on a budget, to avoid needing to use Adobe Acrobat for joining or splitting PDF files

reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: Fabien Conus

fabien@iConus.ch

<http://www.iconus.ch/fabien/content.php?zone=bd&lang=en>

Released: April 5, 2006

Donationware via PayPal [Page in German]

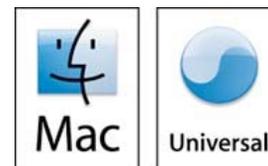


Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later, Java 1.4.2.

Download Size: 2.5 MB

Localization in English, French and German

Audience: All user levels



Strength — Despite having to deal with the program in a non-stand manner, the program always produced the PDF product it Promised

Weakness — In the all the testing I did, over half the time the program hung up during the conversion and I had to rescue the newly created PDF from the *temp > pdflab* folder.



The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8. Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

Publisher's Summary

PDFLab lets you split and join PDF documents as well as insert images and blank pages. You will also be able to easily create PDF documents out of several images.

[And in French... PDFLab vous permet de diviser et assembler de documents PDFs ainsi que d'y insérer des images, des pages blanches. Vous pourrez également très facilement créer des documents PDFs à partir d'images.] Localization is also available in German.

Introduction

Although I am a committed user of Adobe Acrobat (Professional) I recognize that the cost even the standard edition may be out of the budgets of many of our readers. Acrobat 7 [\$90-110 or Acrobat 8 [\$90 – 300.] Therefore I keep looking for freeware or shareware items that either provide PDF manipulation tools beyond that provided by the Adobe Reader application or in rare instances, to add extra functionality to Acrobat. This is one such tool.

Working With

Installing this application is simple. Open its .dmg, and drag it you're your applications folder.

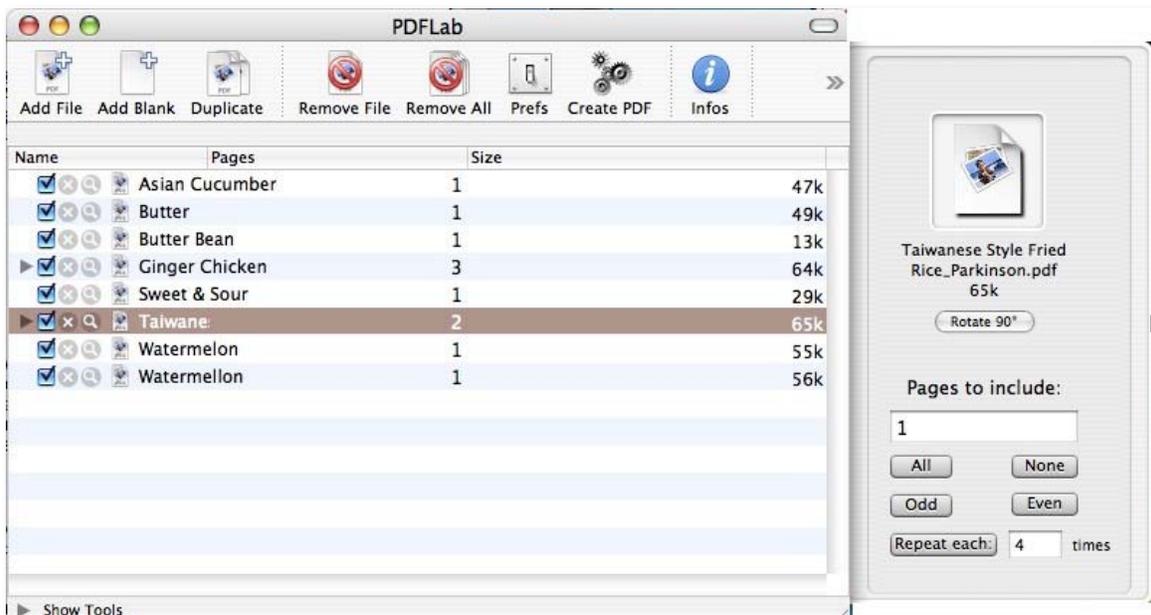
Using it is really simple. My first experiment was to create a single PDF for a 6-course oriental dinner. Creating my menu took more time than using software. You simply add your files to the main PDFLab window. For each individual recipe document you can select the pages you wish to include. [One recipe had not cleanup after downloading it contained extraneous material on its second page. I removed that specific unneeded web based by choosing not to incorporate its second page.] Moving on - order the pages the way you want them to occur in the final document and then create your new Thai Dinner [PDF] document.

Note that the product comes with a well-written help file that can smooth over any routine problems you may have when first using this product.

Types of Files You Can Process - Your list of items to combine can include individual PDFs, blank pages and images. The image of the PDFLab window, below, results from a project in which I created a document called Thai dinner menu. It was designed to contain six recipes, from six individual PDF files. To these, the dinner courses, I added additional image files to lend extra “color”. Those images showed alternate presentations for two of the recipes, just making food look more appetizing.

I also used scanned PDF files, formatted as graphics, in my tests. These differ from PDF files created in MS Word or by Printing To PDF in that they are purely, despite their name, graphics files.

Input Document Origins — The individual source PDF recipe files I used for testing PDFLab were originally created either by a Microsoft Word to PDF conversion (e.g., using the Acrobat plugin or Apple’s Print to PDF function), or captured directly by printing a web recipe to PDF. A few tests were made on purely scanned images either alone or in combination with postscript based PDF files. [As an aside, my input files were 664 KB in size and the final consolidated PDF was 364 KB in size.



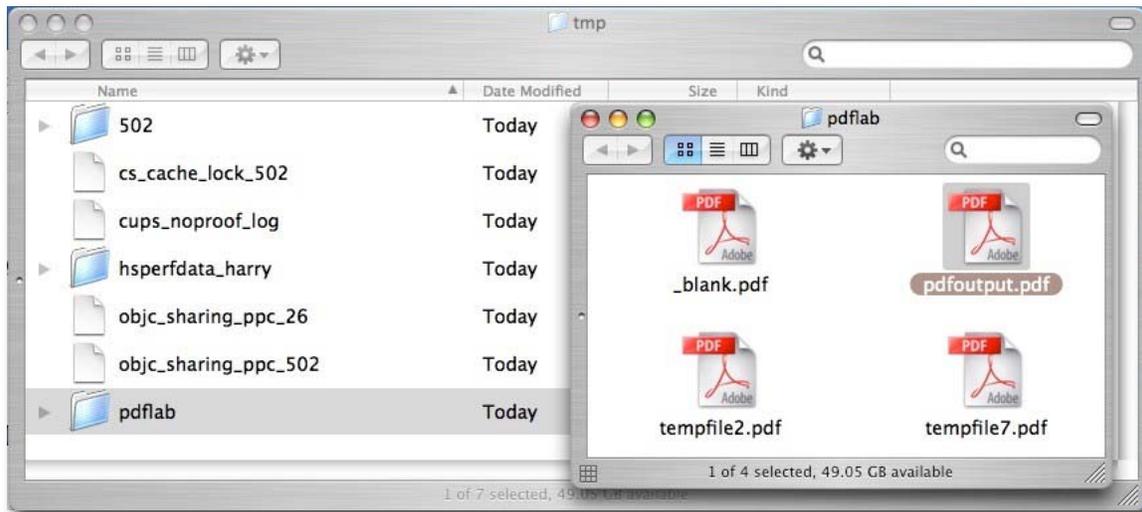
One interesting, but undocumented, aspect from my testing was that I could drag the folder containing my recipes and images into the application window and its contents were transferred. However, when I added a recipe in MSW format to that folder, PDFLab ignored it.

My Test Results

Attempting to convert the 6-recipe to external image recipe folder failed to process completely. Conversion stopped about 90% of the way through. Here’s the error message. Despite the interrupted conversion of my input files, when I cancelled the operation, PDFLab took me to a temporary folder created by PDFLab, a folder buried on my hard disk. This folder contained the temporary files created during document(s) processing. The software directed me to a well-hidden nested folder containing a file named *pdfoutput.pdf*. The later was the *processed* PDF file I was seeking.



I promptly, after checking it out in Acrobat, renamed the *found* file Thai Dinner [Both Adobe's *Reader* and Apples *Preview* can also be used to check the contents of a PDF file, dragged it to my desktop. [*Harry's Tiger > Tiger > Private > Temp > PDFLab > pdfoutput.pdf*] The rescued renamed file was ready send to my friends. [Warning: If you don't remove the file from the temp folder, it's gone when you close the application.]



Trial and Error — I experimented with these eight files, turning them on and off to see if I could isolate the problem. It for some unknown reason was the Butter Bean JPEG image I'd added to further illustrate the dinner. With that “out of the way” I got a completed PDF, minus that image – a perfect conversion.

Pdfoutput.pdf... Is There Anything Broken? — I compared the two files {Incompletely processed *pdfoutput.pdf* and completely processes Thai Menu with the butter bean image removed} and other than size, could find no obvious differences between them. Both document printed identically. Both documents could be manipulated, in the same manner, in Adobe Acrobat. [See my tutorial on *Recipe Hunting and Manipulation* in this issue for examples of tweaking the contents of a PDF document.]

Working With Scanned Images — I used my HP ScanJet 8250 to respectively output a scanned recipe as a PDF, TIFF and JPEG file. The combination of all three files was integrated correctly but only via their *pdfoutput.pdf* File. In addition none of the files were directly processed when acquired by PDFLab one-at-a time.

Overall Test Summary — I created a few more sets of recipes and added external graphics and put them through PDFLab and found, in no explicable manner that I often had to recover the product of using PDFLab, a *pdfoutput.pdf* file, that resulted from combining PDFs.

In several instances, I chose to work with only a set of about a half-dozen PDF files. In several test using differently source files, I got random results. Sometime a set would convert perfectly. At other times I would have to rescue (and rename) the *pdfoutput.pdf* file.

When I worked a number of TIFF or JPEG images into the mix, more often than not the issues was the image file. This despite not changing the core DPDF files in my recipe mix. Alas, without doing many tens more tests, I could not find a pattern that caused the processing failure.

Preparation:
1. Heat 1 tbsp of oil in wok and fry a third of the shallots and garlic until fragrant. Add sausages, shrimp and lastly mushrooms. Put this aside.
2. Heat 2 tbsp oil and add rest of the shallots and garlic. Fry. Add rice.
3. Add sausages, shrimp and mushroom to rice and mix well. Then add dark sauce, light sauce, pepper and some sesame oil. Mix well and fry.
4. As you fry, add the water from the mushroom and shrimp to rice and mix well, and then add chicken stock little at a time. Fry until the rice is cooked.

Other Package Features

PDFLab also ships with tools that let you quickly split a document into many documents, (one document per page or one document containing odd pages and one for even pages). This is useful for double sided printing on a non-duplex printer. You can also encrypt and then decrypt a document a feature I did not test.

I did however add a text watermark to several PDF files, and interleave several documents just for practice. All these features worked adequately when tested on single long and complex documents or 2-5 document sets of PDF and other image files. The features worked; if you allow for the fact too many times I had to retrieve the result of using PDFLab as *pdfoutput.pdf* file.

Discomforts

Major Processing Bug — I wish the software would work as designed. Although I lost no data, and all integrated or tweaked PDFs I created by using PDFLab, ultimately proved abler to meet my processing goals; it should be so. Chasing after incompletely processed *pdfoutput.pdf* files is inappropriate. Indeed, had the software worked as promised, it would have been worth an extra rating point.

PDFLab Main Window Item List — The window only displays a few letters or words of the names of the individual document you are attempting to process. You see the whole name of the individual document you need to use the built in get info window which appears as a drawer on the right hand side of the main PDFLab wind, when selected. [See the Thai Dinner Menu image in the beginning of this article.

Conclusions

The good news – I got the product to do everything the developer claimed it could. If you can live with its work-arounds, it's a very useful product for joining, spitting or otherwise tweaking of PDF files.

The bad news – I needed to use, 50% of the time or more, the author provided work around to get out for about half of the sets of items (images and PDF files) I processed.

I rate this product **3.5 macCs** until it is debugged.

Screenshots Preference Pane 1.0 5.0 macCs — Screenshots Preference Pane allows you to change both the file format of your screenshots as well as where they end up on disk, with just a few clicks of the mouse. However, I have used it only once, since I want my screenshot files in JPEG format. I know I've violated my own criterion as stated on above, but it's a great product. [HB]



Shadow Clipboard 3.0.1 (Now 3.0.4) — My favorite clipboard manager for Mac OS X. It remembers a user definable number of items copied to the clipboard. With a choice of two interfaces (a simple and an advanced) you can choose which item to paste into applications. You create clipboard sets that support the various projects that you do allowing pasting of boilerplate with only two click of a mouse. [HB]



TheRecipeManager 2.0.1 (Now 2.10) — This product is an innovative, award winning software application that allows you to store all your recipes and search through them at any time. Ingredients, photos, instructions, nutritional information, and much more are all accessible from one easy-to-use interface. If you choose, for easier access, to enter your favorite recipes into a database for ease of access, this is the tool for you. With this tool, you can easily play the game of, "What can I cook with what's lying around in my pantry or refrigerator?" [HB] [Editor – Not Shareware]



ToDo X 2.1 — ToDo X is a powerful to-do list application for Mac OS X. it allows you to maintain multiple, prioritized lists of to-do items, each with unlimited attached notes and clickable links to web locations, documents, folders and address book entries. I find the combination of ToDo X and DEVONnote unbeatable. [HB]



Ultralingua Dictionary 6.0 — This English language dictionary and thesaurus that include technical, literary & slang terms, thousands of idiomatic expressions, contextual indicators, irregular forms and secondary. Although I'm not normally at a loss for words, this has become a favorite writing-related tool. [HB]



XMenu 1.7 (Now 1.8) — XMenu brings back the Apple Menu to Mac OS X and also includes a complete application launcher. By adding one or more global menus to the right side of the menu bar, you can easily access your preferred applications, folders (and subfolders), documents, and files.



And that's my list for this year. With lots of staff interested in shareware and my spreading more of the wealth around, who knows what shareware goodies 2007 will bring?

Harry {doc} Babad

Now: Assistant Shareware Editor

Software Reviews

Musicast 1.0.2

reviewed by Daphne Kalfon



support@musicast.org

<http://www.musicast.org>

\$18 USD, \$20.61 CAD, £9.48 GBP, 14,03 € Euro

<http://www.musicast.org/purchase/>

Download: <http://www.musicast.org/download>

Requirements: Mac OS 10.4 or later (Universal Binary). Musicast has been updated for iTunes 7.



Strengths: Fun concept; provides something iTunes doesn't offer; similarly, a unique new addition to all the features already provided by iTunes.

Weaknesses: Configuring your router and/or firewall to enable others to have access to your music over the Internet assumes a certain level of technical knowledge that may not necessarily be present in the person wishing to use it. This may be discouraging and prove to be a barrier to the non-techies who would like to use Musicast. At the same time however, the developers seem to be aware of that and encourage users to email tech support if they are having difficulty.

If you choose to download without purchasing, apparently a "nag screen" will keep coming up to remind you that you have yet to purchase the software, and the number of playlists you can share will be limited - to what number, I don't know. The people behind Musicast are a small team of developers/dedicated Mac users, so if you are enjoying your Musicast experience, please consider paying the \$18 USD.

Once downloaded, it states that future updates are provided to registered users at no additional cost.

Musicast's main purpose is to allow people to share their music by broadcasting their iTunes playlists to the internet as a webpage or podcast. Your playlists can be accessed from any web browser and subscribed to in iTunes, through RSS, a mobile device or podcast software. You can share an unlimited number of playlists.

From the outset Musicast states that it is not intended for the sharing of playlists of copyrighted material, but only for music that you have created yourself or that is available without purchase, for example possibly from indie band websites or a community of GarageBand users or something similar, where no purchase is necessary to download the music made available there.

I had plenty of those kinds of playlists already in my iTunes library so after I installed Musicast, I checked those playlists I would like to share. Then under the *File* menu, I chose *Visit my Musicast* and a separate window came up containing the playlists I had checked off.

At the bottom of that window it says *Copy & paste this URL to your buddies*. Above it is the URL they are referring to. That URL as I found after trying it, is not one that can be used for IP addressing or web addressing. It's an Ethernet MAC address of a computer inside a local network behind a router. What it should show is the IP address to access the router from outside the local network and then direct the IP traffic to the appropriate computer behind the router inside the local network.

To accomplish this, one would have to know how to open up ports and forward them to the correct address through a router to make this possible. This is sometimes called a virtual server on a router. In this case a new virtual server with TCP /IP port 5554 opened for incoming and outgoing traffic to be forwarded to an internal IP address of the computer that is running the maccast software. What is given on the website's support section is a brief albeit accurate explanation, but it doesn't tell you how to go about correcting the problem.

Fortunately, with some help from my techie hubby, I was able to get things up and running to make sure that others could view my playlists and listen in.

Now let's look at the features it comes with. Under the "Musicast" menu, if you choose *Preferences*, you can set several different items the way you would like them. The first is "Musicast". This allows you to give your musicast a title and description, as well as choosing a particular graphic to go along with it. These features allow you to customize your musicast.

The second item you can set is called "Access". You can choose whether or not the people who want to have access to your musicast must provide personal identification. If the box is checked, that means that users will have to identify themselves before being able to listen to any of your music. Users can be integrated into your Address Book contacts. If the box is unchecked, users don't have to be in your address book to listen in.

The third item is called "Serving". In this window, the default server port number is already given for Musicast, and you can also set the number of downloads that can be made from your playlist.

The fourth and last item is called "Display", which simply allows you to choose how you would like Musicast to be displayed: in the Dock and Menu Bar or just one or the other.

Musicast will keep track of who is subscribing to your musicast and which of your songs, artists and playlists are the most popular among those who are listening in.

All in all, Musicast is a fun and useful add-on for your iTunes music library.

Overflow 2.0

reviewed by Michele Patterson



Stunt Software
648 Gertrude Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3M 2M9
Canada

info@stuntsoftware.com

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

Released: October 2006

\$15 USD, \$15 CND.



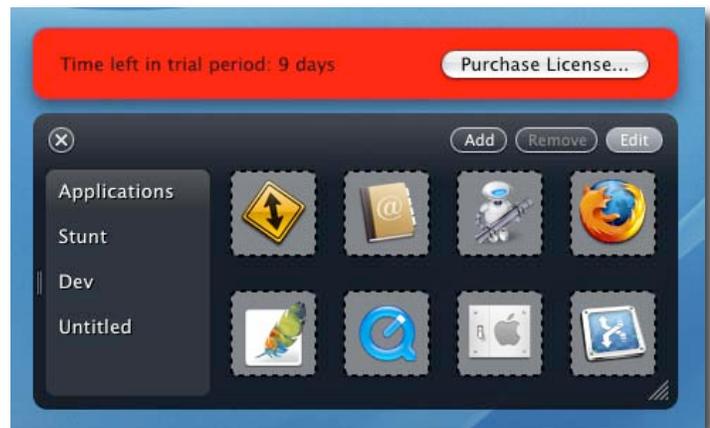
Audience: Mac users who have the need for a program that keeps all your most commonly used programs within a clicks reach.

Strengths: Virtually flaw free, no errors and very user friendly. The ability to keep all your program icons in one easy to access space without having your dock become overly large helps keep your screen free of unneeded icons. A 20-day trial with the offer of a 10-day extension keeps you wanting more.

Weaknesses: Overflow has not as of yet been able to disable to dock that comes with all newer Mac computers. They are looking into it, but as of yet haven't found a way to disable it.

What they say: The new intuitive software is clean and simple to use. Being able to drag your program icons to the dock and then organize them into categories of your choosing out weights the \$14.95 nominal fee they charge.

What I say: Where have you been for the last 3 years of my life? I defiantly won't be letting this gem go anytime soon. It was so labor intensive to pick through my application folder in the past, to find everything I needed took longer then necessary. Other programs have offered this in the past, but this one has been virtually pain-free. I love being able to pop into the *Edit* mode and move things around no chance of accidentally deleting a link or dragging something out and it poffing away! For me screen space is a prize I cannot lose and being able to keep all icons and folders within Overflow has helped with that. I would like for them to override the Mac dock, but until then, I will continue to keep everything in my Overflow.



Summary: If you find that you use 3 or more programs a day and need to maintain all your documents, servers and other icons in one easy to access place, try Overflow for 20 days and see if its right for you. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Webstractor 1.6: the ultimate web km tool?

reviewed by Leland Scott – Original review location at <http://www.musingsfrommars.org>

softchaos

Softchaos Limited
14/18 Ham Yard
London, England W1D 7DT
+44 (0) 20 7434 0775
FAX: +44 (0) 20 7434 0776
info@softchaos.com
<http://www.softchaos.com>

Tour: <http://www.softchaos.com/webstractor/tour/>

Released: July 2005

\$80 USD.

Requirements: Mac OS X.



Strengths: Updates downloaded webpages for extraction and deletes what you don't need.

Weaknesses: Edit Mode isn't exactly easy to get to.

Other Reviews: <http://www.softchaos.com/products/webstractor/reviews/>

Originally downloaded 3/14/06. I was impressed with SoftChaos' Yoink widget, and meant to try Webstractor at some point. \$80 seems like a lot, but if it actually improves on my other ways of saving and accessing web content, it might be worth it. A new release today is an opportunity to add it to my evaluation list.

Update 8/17/06 The first few times I tried Webstractor, I thought it was quite cool and an impressive bit of software engineering. But I didn't think I'd have much use for it... at least, not enough to pay money to keep it around.

The last few weeks has begun to change my mind on this relatively expensive tool. And it really has nothing to do with doing research so much as a very old fashioned function: Making printouts of just the content I want, and printing articles with the least amount of ink and paper possible. Sounds like a hard way to justify \$80, but that's only because without a license, I can use Webstractor for trimming web pages down and rearranging their contents, but I can't save my resulting edits.

I still haven't completely decided to fork over money for a license, but I'm getting close. Besides the mundane, but pretty cool, task of editing web pages down to the essentials, Webstractor will obviously shine at its primary purpose: Letting me browse the web, saving clippings into one mass document that can be easily edited down later, as you would in a word processor.

Other research/knowledge management tools let you get close to this, but nothing quite like Webstractor. (I wonder if there's an equivalent for Windows?) Its highest calling is probably its "radar" system, which lets you set up "watches" on various bits of web content. Radar will either alert you when a piece of data you've used has been updated, or will simply replace the page you were watching with a new version.

Also, Webstractor is somewhat unique in that it maintains your long clipped document in a form that can be easily exported to PDF and shared. In fact, it was this latter function that first made me realize that Webstractor could do one simple thing with web content that no other Personal Information/Knowledge Management tool can. (In this category, I tried the following applications that I either own or am in the process of evaluating: BBEedit, DevonThink Pro, DayLite, EasyNote X, iData 2, Soho Notes, JournalX, Journler, KIT, Mail, Sticky Notes, PadsX, PrintSelection, Quicksilver, ScrapIt Pro X, TAO, TextEdit, TextExpander, Tofu, VoodooPad, Xnippets, Yojimbo, Ecto, iSticky.)

So, what is this mysterious "thing"? As I said, it's quite simple. What I like to do with web pages that have a lot of junk on them (you know what I mean), or that use a page layout that results in a printout with a huge amount of wasted white space (because the column's so narrow), is use the **PrintSelection** application service to print just the part of the page I want. (I'm embarrassed to say that in Windows, this is a native function of the print dialogue box. But at least the great and kind developer Manfred Schubert, who also created that great PDF browser plugin for Safari long before Apple did, thought of it and made a great app service for us to use.) One of the cool things about PrintSelection is that after you invoke it, you get a nice preview of what you're about to print. The problem print job I could only solve with Webstractor was a WordPress blog and its Comments addendum. Most any WordPress blog article will do, but the case in point was this one: <http://alexanderkirk.at/2006/08/09/javascript-tricks-and-good-programming-style/>

I had already printed the article and then decided to print the comments as well. So, I selected them and did my usual PrintSelection keyboard shortcut. Then I remembered: The WordPress code for some reason doesn't print the way the HTML looks. You get a spurious ordered list numbering thing going throughout the comments, with each paragraph in the selection getting its own number and otherwise being treated as an element. When I print the document normally, it looks fine, but when I extract the selection and try printing it separately... or when I paste it to any other Mac OS X application, I get something that looks like this:

I methodically tried using the web service (or just cut and paste) provided by the entire list of applications I mentioned earlier, and none of them could keep from garbling the code like this. I'm sure it has something to do with a bug in the RTF conversion algorithms Apple has built into the Mac OS X text system, but I couldn't just wait for Apple to fix it! So then I thought again of Webstractor.

In Webstractor, you just load up the URL you want and then start snipping. Since you're still viewing HTML when you do this, the comments section looks fine right until you're ready to print. And that, apparently, is what makes the difference. Because after I trim it down and print, I'm still printing an HTML document, rather than an RTF file that has been converted from HTML. And the HTML segment prints just fine. Webstractor further lets me eliminate table layout problems and backgrounds that make the page look funny.

Later, I'll be posting a screencast of the editing process for this file here. In the meantime, here's a list of Webstractor's feature set as SoftChaos, the developer, describes it:

Capture as you browse

Webstractor makes an automatic copy of every page you visit which is then available offline.

Update your research automatically

Know when important web pages change. After capturing web pages, Webstractor will periodically check to see which captures have become out-of-date. Using Radar, Webstractor can also automatically capture to your document a new instance of a web page whenever it changes.

Search content accurately

Webstractor lets you search for multiple words as a phrase or as independent keywords. If I's mentioned on any page you've captured, it's just a click away. If you're a Tiger user, Spotlight also sees into your Webstractor documents.

Edit the content you need

Webstractor can organize and give structure to fragmented information you find on the web. Just use the familiar word processing tools to add, remove, highlight, and edit content to suit your needs.

Organize and retrieve your findings

Are your bookmark folders becoming large and unwieldy? Get thumbnail previews and keep unique Webstractor documents for each topic. Keep and organize your captured pages in topical documents and easily navigate between the pages using thumbnail previews.

Assemble everything seamlessly

Collate information from multiple web pages, add your own content, and create a table of contents and bibliography. (As well as web pages, you can also drag and drop Word, RTF, and text files into your list of documents to collate.) Collate your edited pages in a single document for one seamless information flow.

Collaborate. Print and share

Share more than just URLs. With Webstractor you can print or share a document electronically via PDF, but if your recipient has Webstractor, you can distribute annotated text and original websites in a single document so others can extend your research. Change the way you pass on information from the Internet.

I do feel like I'm getting close to "closing the deal" with this unique, innovative software, and I look forward to digging in to some of its more advanced features that I've been locked out of since the trial period lapsed. The only negative thing to pass along about Webstractor is that I have to force-quit the application every time I quit it. This may be a consequence of running the software in "preview" mode, but it certainly is predictable. Webstractor just won't quit without being forced to. :-)

One suggestion I have for the developers at this point (I likely will have others after using it more) is to make the edit selection mode toggle a bit easier to find. I'm sure there must be a reason why this seemingly important function is so well hidden, but it's not obvious to me and is rather an annoyance. (I won't attempt to explain here, but will point out that there are four different modes, each of which has a slightly different technique for letting you select parts of the web page with your input device: Marquee Hybrid, Marquee Touch, Marquee Enclose, and Layout Flow.) Even now that I know how to change the selection mode, I'd like it closer at hand. Any one (or multiple) of the following places I usually look would be helpful to place this control in the user interface: Contextual menu (top choice), Regular toolbar, Editing toolbar, Status bar, or Drawer.

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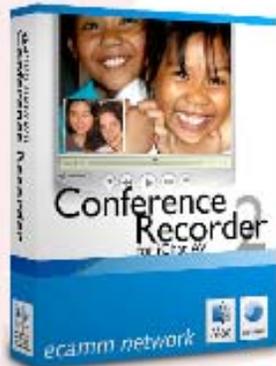
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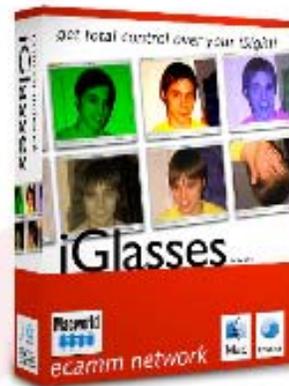
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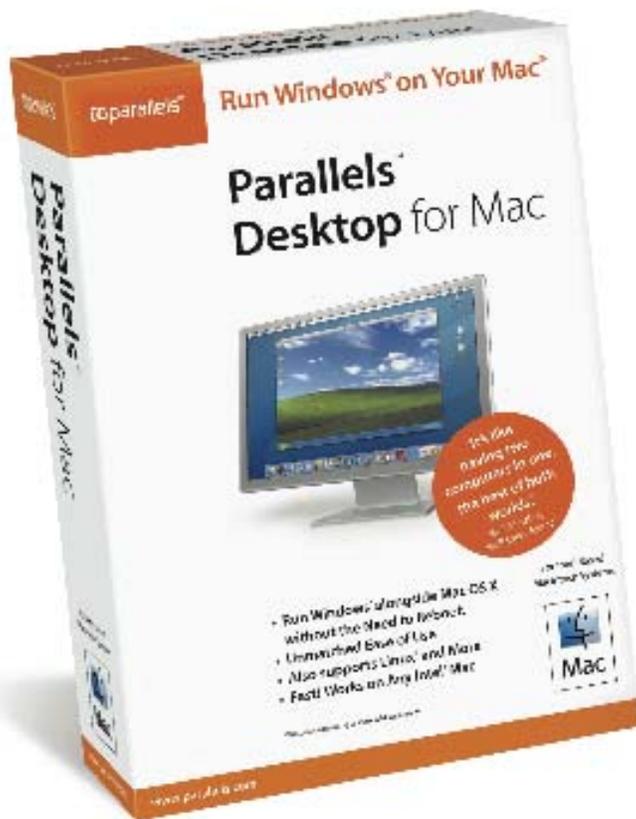
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