



macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH



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Publisher
Editor-in-Chief
Assistant Editors

Consultants

Advertising and Marketing Director
Web Master
Public Relations
Contacts

Correspondence

MPN, LLC
Robert L. Pritchett
Harry Babad
Michele Patterson
Harry {doc} Babad
Ted Bade
Dennis Sellers
Robert L. Pritchett
Robert L. Pritchett
Webmaster at macCompanion dot com
Feedback at macCompanion dot com
1952 Thayer, Drive, Richland, WA 99352
USA
1-509-210-0217
1-888-684-2161
rpritchett at macCompanion dot com
Skype: maccompanion

macCompanion Staff

Harry {doc} Babad	Ted Bade
Matt Brewer (MacFanatic)	Dr. Eric Flescher
Kale Feelhaver (AppleMacPunk)	Steven Fyffe
Jonathan Hoyle III	Eddie Hargreaves
Daphne Kalfon (I Love My Mac)	Wayne Lefevre
Daniel MacKenzie (Tech Fanatic)	Michele Patterson (Dixie Graphics)
Mike Potter (For Mac Eyes Only)	Robert Pritchett
Dennis Sellers (Macsimum News)	Gene Steinberg (TechNightOwl)
Rick Sutcliffe (The Northern Spy)	Mike Swope (Swope Design)
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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.

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Columns

Letter from the CEO

Safe Predictions?

By Robert Pritchett

On Apple

There will be lots of exciting things Apple will present at MacWorld Expo 2008 <http://www.macworldexpo.com/> and some of our staff members that are able to attend will be there to offer first-hand experiences in the February issue of *macCompanion*.

(I will be in Florida retaking an exam for my RCDD certification during the BICSI Conference http://www.cepro.com/article/bicsi_winter_conference/K340 while the MacWorld Expo is going on.)

Will the Apple TV be “done right” this time with DVR capabilities? Will Apple offer a subcompact notebook? Will the iPhone “get it” with voice dialing, VOIP capability, video recording and a better camera? Will touchscreens be integrated into iMacs? Will Apple stock valuations continue to grow? Perhaps. Stay tuned. <http://www.apple.com>

Daniel Eran Dilger made his own predictions - <http://www.roughlydrafted.com/2007/12/29/ten-big-predictions-for-apple-in-2008/>

We also might see another software campaign from MacHeist - <http://www.macheist.com/>

Alternative Energy Solutions

Meanwhile, I’ve been busy establishing a *LinkedIn* Solar Energy Consultants Group at <http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/47674/6B718533E884>

I’m looking forward to improvements in alternative energy systems such as Octillion’s spray-on nanosolar cells that make normal windows into photovoltaic see-through windows http://www.octillioncorp.com/OCTL_20070820.html. I want to see nanoSolar’s thin film technology they can produce profitably on thin sheets of metal for roofing material <http://www.nanosolar.com/technology.htm>. And I’m evangelistic about Infinia’s distribution of their solar stirling engine <http://www.infiniacorp.com>. I also want to see comfortable, family-sized all-electric vehicle manufacturers <http://freeenergynews.com/Directory/EV/index.html> using super-capacitors <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supercapacitor> that can recharge in 10 minutes and go the distance without having to stay somewhere overnight to recharge to continue highway driving.

Other Predictions for 2008

Good will overcome evil, peace will reign upon the earth. There will be no more pain and suffering or poor among us. Oops, wrong year.

Okay, how about the establishment of the Amero, <http://www.amerocurrency.com/amero.html> the European equivalent of the combined government of the North American Continent known as Mexamericanada <http://blog.reidreport.com/2006/06/making-mexamericanada.html>? The official name will be the North American Union http://www.augustreview.com/issues/general/toward_a_north_american_union_200608181/?gclid=CMSC6eSiy5ACFQacggodeQrjWA Perhaps not this year...

A sure bet will be that the US will have a new president, but it will probably be another rigged election http://www.truthout.org/docs_03/voting.shtml vis-a-vis the Electoral College http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Electoral_College, no matter whom we vote for and the One World Government [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_World_Order_\(conspiracy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_World_Order_(conspiracy)) will be one step closer to becoming reality as US Sovereignty continues to erode http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=45630. But don't let that stop you from voting, if you are a US citizen (snarky remark).

I doubt Ron Paul <http://www.ronpaul2008.com/> will be the front-runner, because he is too much of a Libertarian wearing Republican clothing, posing as a Constitutionalist. It sure would be fun if he had Alan Keyes <http://www.alankeyes.com/> as a Vice President though! They are playing against a stacked deck and the system is using marked cards.

The prices for petroleum products will continue to go up <http://bloomberg.com/energy/> and folks will have to make a harder choice of either feeding their families or feeding their vehicles, but not both <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recession>. "Stagflation" coined (pun intended) in the 1970's, will become a household word again <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stagflation>.

Apple stock will continue to appreciate in value <http://finance.google.com/finance?fstype=bi&q=aapl>.

Oh, and I safely predict that *macCompanion* magazine will continue to be published free of cost (our time, our dime), if you purchase from our affiliates and products pages <http://www.macompanion.com/macc/bazaar/bazaarindex.html>.

Please spread the word about us <http://www.macompanion.com/macc/services.htm>.

It will be great to be alive in 2008!

May peace and prosperity be with you and yours this year.

According to Hoyle...

Running Classic on Leopard, Part II

by Jonathan Hoyle

jhoyle@maccompanion.com

macCompanion January 2008

<http://www.jonhoyle.com>

Last month we investigated three solutions to running Classic applications on Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: *SheepShaver*, *Basilisk* & *Mini vMac*. All three are free and cross-platform, running on Mac OS X, Windows and even Linux. Of these three, only *SheepShaver* emulates a PowerPC-based Macintosh, whilst the other two emulate a 68K Mac. Since it is the unusual Classic application which still supports 68K, *SheepShaver* remains the most important of the three we discussed. Our review detailed usability, robustness and installation details. We also started examining performance of these emulators, concluding that Power Mac users are best served by *SheepShaver*, while Intel users will find *Basilisk's* performance far superior. To read this article, visit:

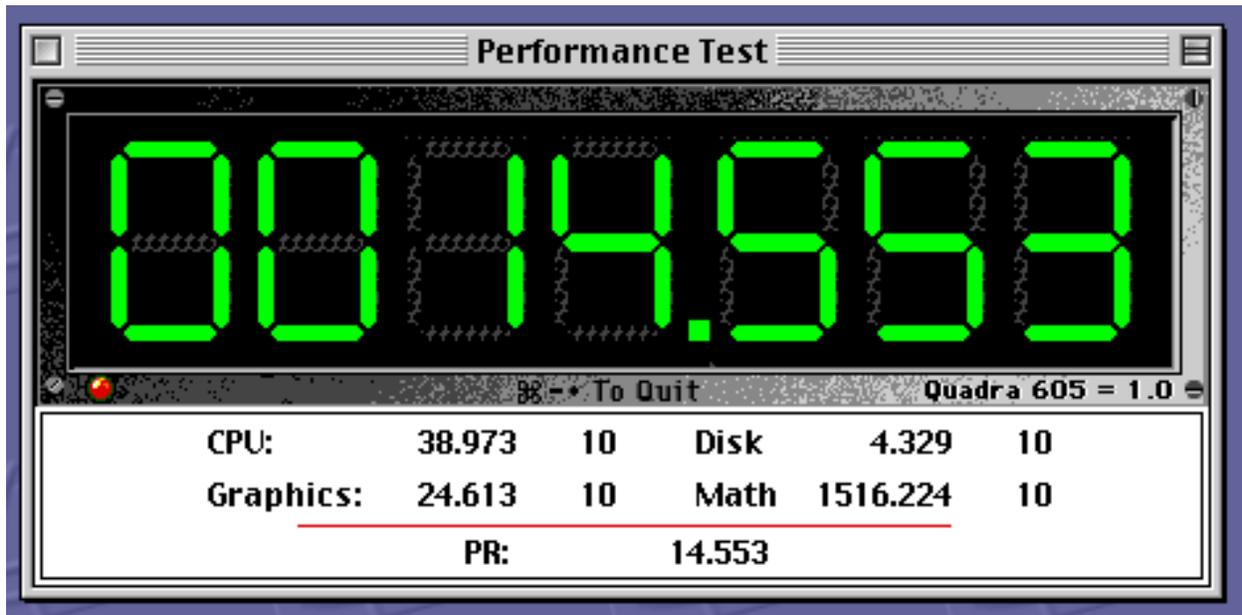
<http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/December2007/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

This month, we continue by exploring ways to improve performance in *SheepShaver* & *Basilisk* and consider other Classic Macintosh emulators, including *Mac-on-Mac*, *PearPC*, *Executor* and *SoftMac*.

Improving SheepShaver & Basilisk Performance

When we ended last month's examination of *SheepShaver*, we discovered that we obtained quite acceptable performance levels on PowerPC-based Macs (under some circumstances, surpassing even Apple's *Classic Environment*), but found it to be tremendously poor on Intel Macs. The reasons are understandable considering that *SheepShaver's* G4 emulator is a simple "pass-through" on Power Macintoshes, but involve true emulation on Intels. This month, we continue by examining preference settings which can be used to dramatically improve Intel performance.

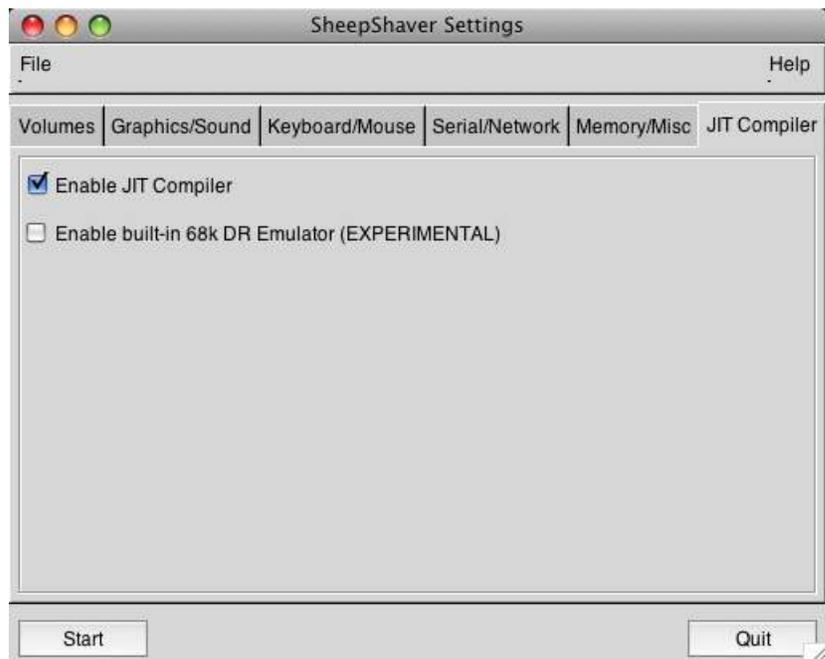
For our tests, we have been using the Classic application *Speedometer 4.0.2*, which we can measure these four areas: CPU, Graphics, Disk and Math, each value normalized to 1.0 = Quadra 605. *Speedometer* also allows you to run these same tests under 68K emulation to see the 68K performance. Since Graphics and Disk performance are essentially the same across 68K and PowerPC, we will not distinguish between them for those tests. Also, since the CPU and Math scores tend to be of highest importance for emulation tests, we will continue to use the convention of a slash-separated pair of numbers to represent these, eg: 38.973 / 1516.224 for the screenshot below.



Running these tests several times yields varying numbers, as it is highly dependent upon other background activity on your Mac. To average these differences out, we will use *Speedometer's* facility to average over 10 tests, and use only two significant digits.

On a Dual 2.0 GHz Power Macintosh G5, *SheepShaver* scored 35 / 1700 for PPC and 3.2 / 115 for 68K. This same test run on the much faster Dual 2.6 GHz Duo Core Xeon Mac Pro yielded only 6.0 / 1100 for PPC and a lowly 0.6 / 15 on 68K. Graphics tests also demonstrated a similar speed penalty, dropping from the G5's score of around 35 down to an embarrassing 3.2 on the Intel. Is there any way to improve the dismal performance on Mac-Intels?

Fortunately, yes. In *SheepShaverGUI*, there is a **JIT Compiler** tab which is a definite answer to prayer. On Intel systems, there is a checkbox titled **Enable JIT Compiler** (this is not available on PowerPC). Turn this checkbox on and restart *SheepShaver*. CPU performance is improved nearly eightfold: going from 6.0 / 1100 to 45 / 2850, surpassing the G5's numbers. 68K improvements were even greater, jumping an order of magnitude: from 0.6 / 15 to 6.0 / 154. Finally, the faster Mac Pro is outperforming the G5.



Basilisk also has a **JIT Compiler** option, which will enhance its performance. On the G5, *Basilisk* scored 3.0 / 60, slower than *SheepShaver* in 68K mode. With JIT left off, *Basilisk* on Intel ran significantly, weighing in at about 13 / 190. Turning JIT on, *Basilisk* now shines at 45 / 875. Below is a list of the relative comparisons in *Speedometer* tests, with the highest test results displayed in red:

	SheepShaver			Basilisk		
	G5	Intel/No JIT	Intel/JIT	G5	Intel/No JIT	Intel/JIT
CPU-PPC	35	6	45			
Math-PPC	1700	1100	2850			
CPU-68K	3.2	0.6	6	3	13	45
Math-68K	115	15	154	60	190	875
Graphics	35	3.1	24	2.8	9.5	44
Disk	4.4	3.2	4.7	5.1	5.1	5.2

From these results, it is very clear that the JIT setting should always be on for Intel users. Why it is off by default on the Macintosh is a bit of a mystery, especially when considering that it is on by default on the Windows versions of *SheepShaver* and *Basilisk*.

One final point: you may be curious as to the meaning of *SheepShaverGUT's* **Enable built-in 68k DR Emulator (EXPERIMENTAL)** checkbox. It is apparently a 68K Dynamic Recompiler, but how it is used is unclear to me. Mac OS 9 has its own 68K emulator which runs as part of the operating system, so the need for one by *SheepShaver* remains mysterious. In any case, it had no impact on any of the performance tests made.

Other Classic Emulators

Although we spent a great deal of time last month on *SheepShaver* and *Basilisk* (and to a lesser extent *Mini vMac*), there are other emulators available which can run Classic Macintosh applications, each of which is free. What are they, and how well do these operate in Leopard (if at all)? That is the topic for this section of this column. While the aforementioned "*Big Three*" run on both PowerPC and Intel Macs, that is not true with the ones we will examine next. We will first turn our attention to the PowerPC.

Mac-on-Linux is an initiative to run Macintosh applications on PowerPC-based Linux operating systems (such as *Yellow Dog*, *SUSE*, etc.). Since it requires a PowerPC-based machine, *Mac-on-Linux* is more of a *virtual machine* than it is an emulator. Not only can *Mac-on-Linux* can host the Classic Mac operating system (8.6 through 9.2.2), it also runs Mac OS X 10, Jaguar, Panther & Tiger flavors! For more information on *Mac-on-Linux*, visit:

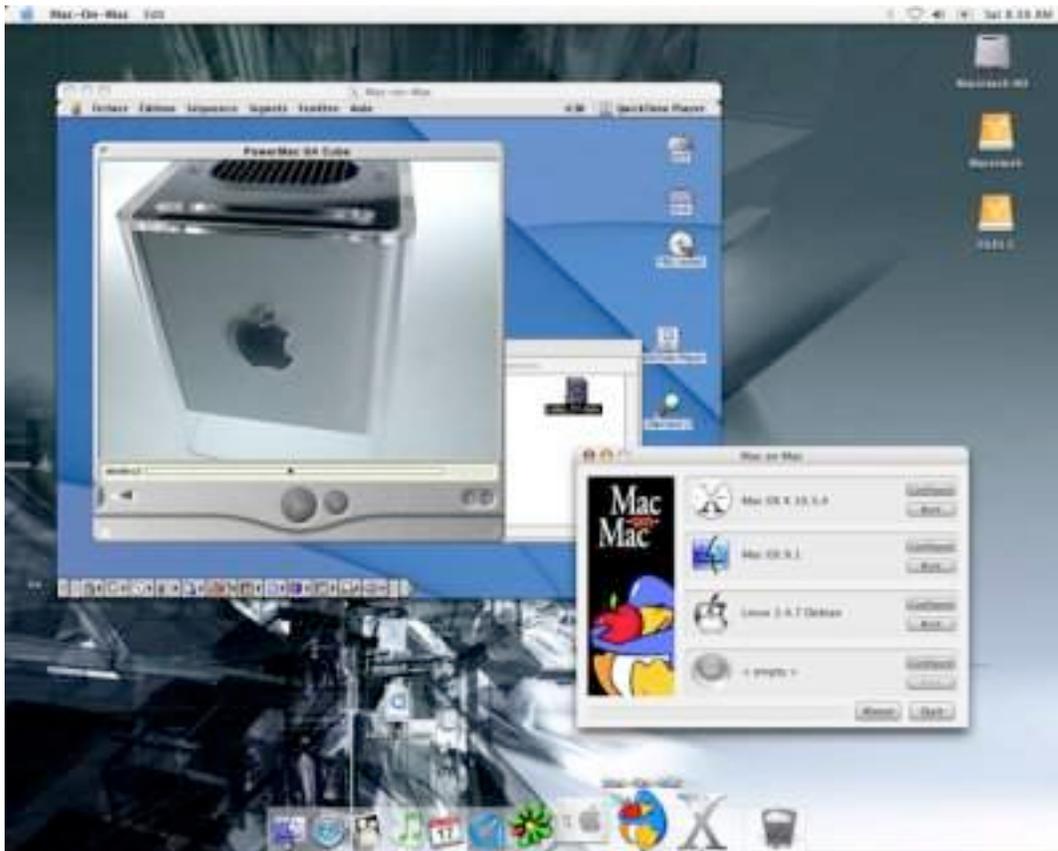
<http://mac-on-linux.sourceforge.net/>

"But Leopard is not Linux, so how does this help me?" you are no doubt asking. You are correct that *Mac-on-Linux* cannot run on Mac OS X, but Mac OS X does come with an optional BSD installation called *X11* that allows you to run Linux-like applications.

A separate branch of this project is a port of *Mac-on-Linux* onto Mac OS X's X11 environment, and this is called the *Mac-on-Mac* project. *Mac-on-Mac* allows a Mac OS X user on a Power Mac to run another operating system within a window, including Classic, Mac OS X and PPC-based Linuxes:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mac-on-Mac>

Below is a screenshot of a *Mac-on-Mac* window with Mac OS 9 running inside:



Unfortunately, active development of *Mac-on-Mac* (as well as *Mac-on-Linux*) was ceased in 2005 when Apple announced its transition to Intel processors. The last version of *Mac-on-Mac* (version 0.2.1 from 7/05) is not compatible with the Power Mac G5, nor will it run under Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger or later. So *Mac-on-Mac* is not a viable option for the Leopard user. Since Power Mac users running Panther and earlier already have Classic, *Mac-on-Mac's* greatest potential appears to be lost.

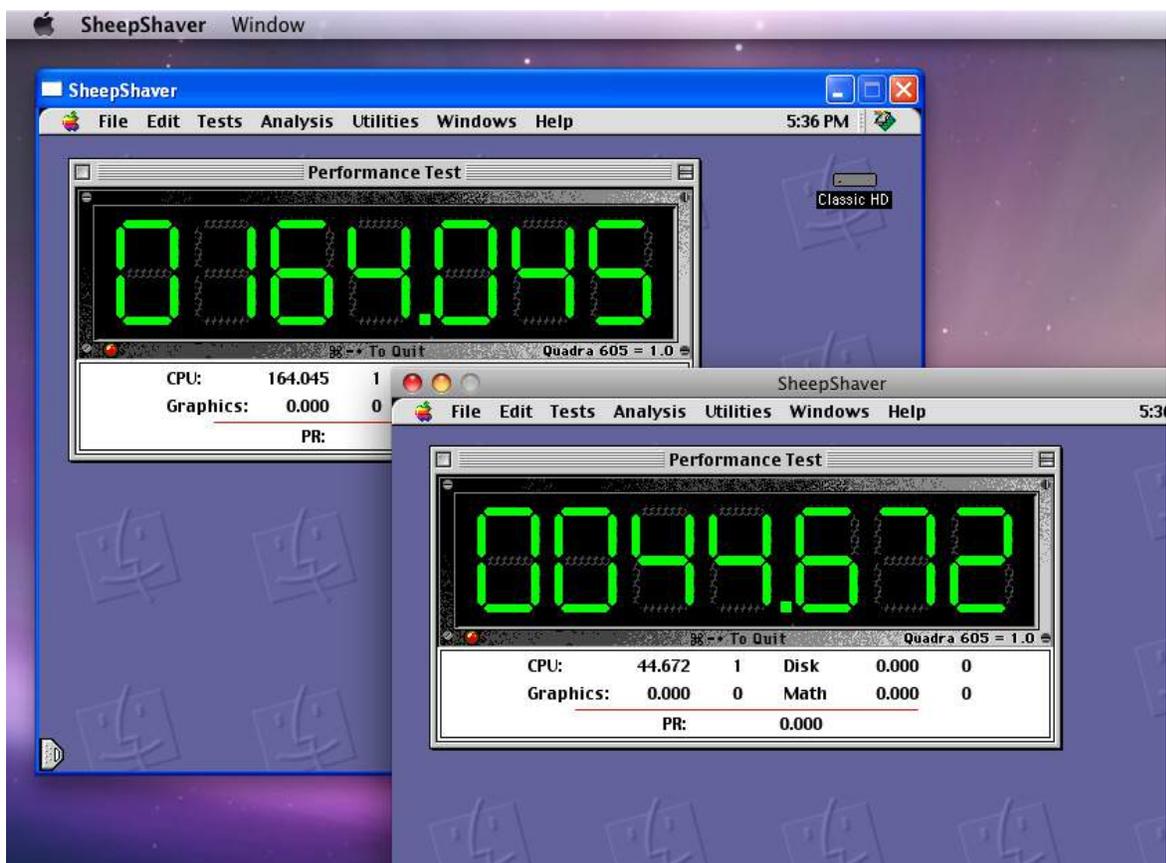
It is worth mentioning that since *Mac-on-Mac* is an open source project, any Mac programming with sufficient time and interest may wish to jump in and pick up this project where it was left off. Non-Mac programmers with extra money and desire, may choose to bribe developers to work on this project as well.

Classic Emulators for Intel

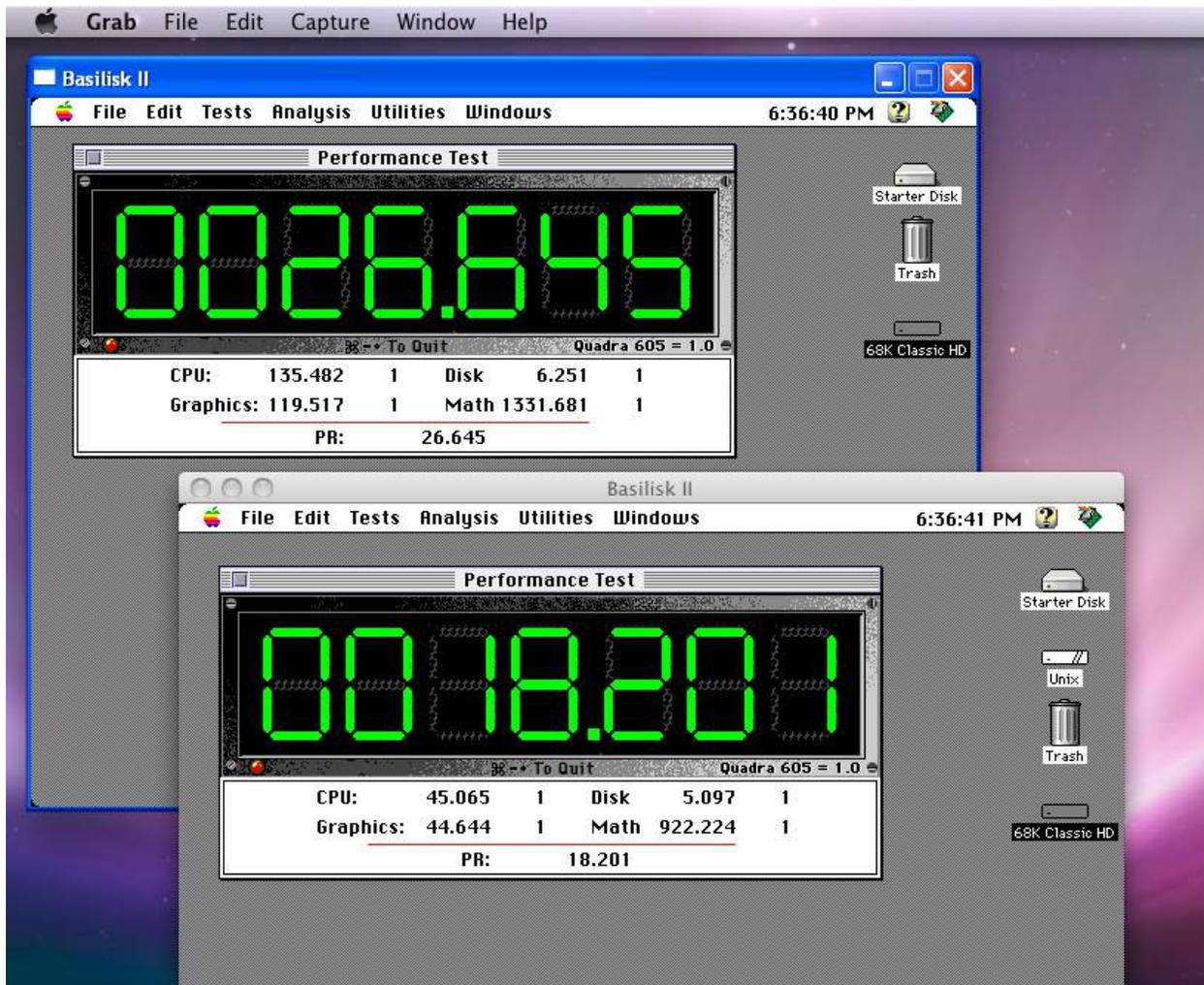
Although Apple's Intel transition may have killed off the *Mac-on-Mac* emulator, it opened the door to a large number of Intel-based emulators already available for Windows users.

With virtualization software such as *Parallels* and *VMWare*, these Windows applications may now be able to run on your Intel Mac desktop. Unfortunately, emulators have the habit of exploiting even the smallest incompatibilities of virtualization software. Knowing this, I began investigating Classic emulators currently available on Windows XP, and tested to see how they ran on a Mac Pro running *Parallels Desktop 3*.

Knowing that *SheepShaver* and *Basilisk* were available for Windows as well as the Mac, I began with these. I expected only a small differential in performance between the Mac and Windows versions to account for differences between compilers. Imagine my surprise when the Windows version of *SheepShaver* outperformed the Mac version in CPU scoring by nearly quadruple!



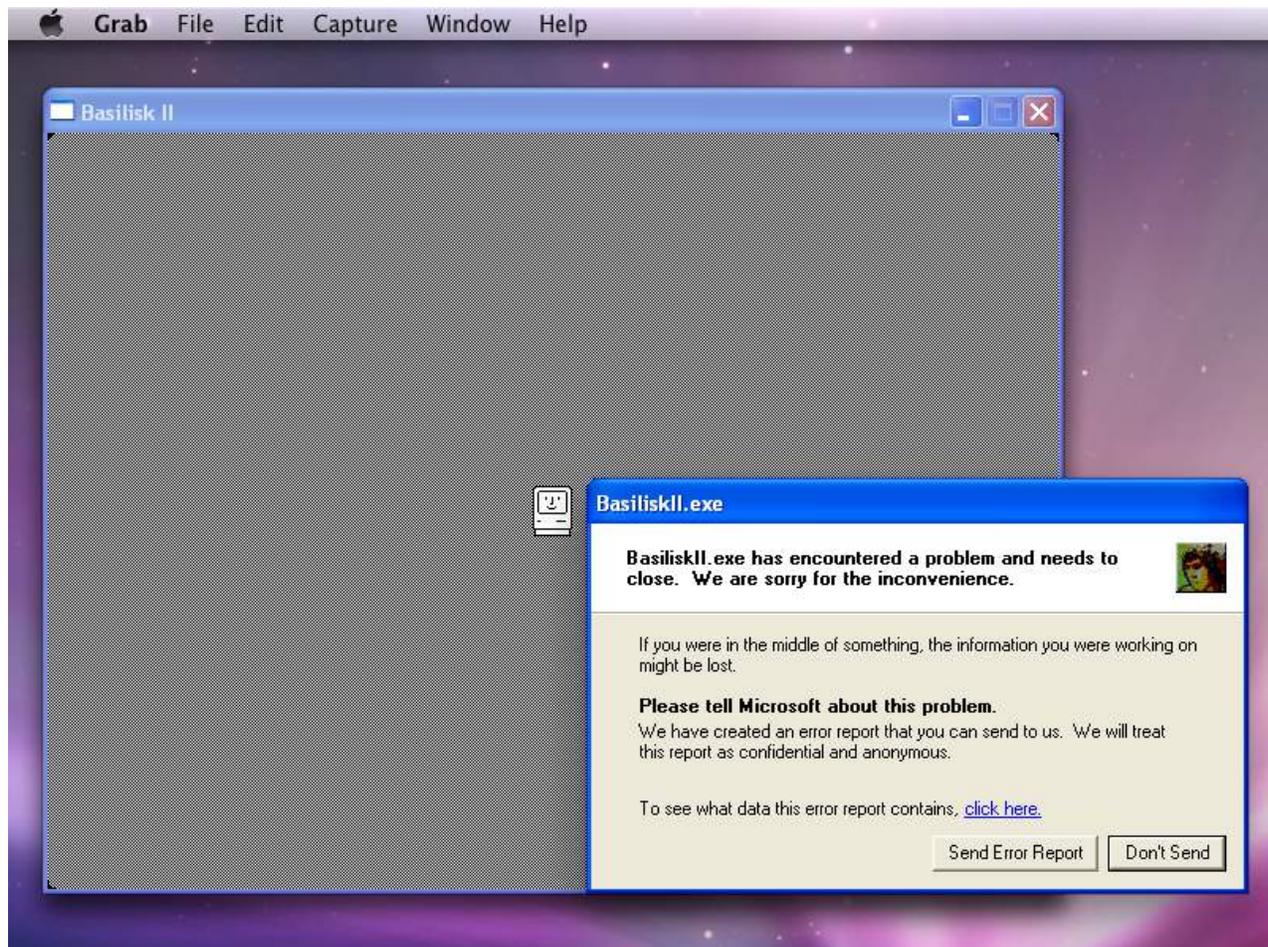
Turning on the **Enable JIT Compiler** checkbox setting (on by default in Windows, off by default in Mac OS X), the Windows version of *SheepShaver* scored an outstanding CPU-PPC score of 164, eclipsing the Mac version's score of 45. With JIT turned off, Windows did even better relatively, beating the Mac score by ~27 to ~6. The same was true of most other tests, including Math, Graphics and 68K tests. The only test which the Mac version scored better (albeit narrowly) than the Windows version was the Math-PPC / JIT On test. Disk tests, unsurprisingly, scored the same across both versions. *Basilisk* had similar results.



On almost all tests, the Windows version outperformed the Mac version quite handily, on both *SheepShaver* and *Basilisk*. Interestingly, when the JIT is turned on, *Basilisk* is just as fast in 68K emulation as *SheepShaver* is with G4 emulation. Below are the figures comparing the Mac & PC, with 1.0 = Quadra 605, best score in red.

	SheepShaver		Basilisk	
	Mac OS X	Windows	Mac OS X	Windows
CPU-PPC (JIT)	45	165		
Math-PPC (JIT)	2850	2210		
CPU-68K (JIT)	6	24	45	165
Math-68K (JIT)	154	625	875	1500
Graphics (JIT)	24	56	44	?
CPU-PPC (No JIT)	6	27		
Math-PPC (No JIT)	1100	1675		
CPU-68K (No JIT)	0.6	2.4	13	59
Math-68K (No JIT)	15	52	190	700
Graphics (No JIT)	3.1	4.3	9.5	30

In exchange for the better performance though, these Windows versions have some compatibility issues. Occasionally, the Graphics test would freeze on the Windows version of *SheepShaver* when the JIT is turned on. *Basilisk* for Windows had even more problems, crashing quite frequently when booting under Mac OS 8.1, although having fewer problems in System 7.5.5. *Basilisk*'s Disk tests on Windows frequently returned negative numbers as well.



PearPC

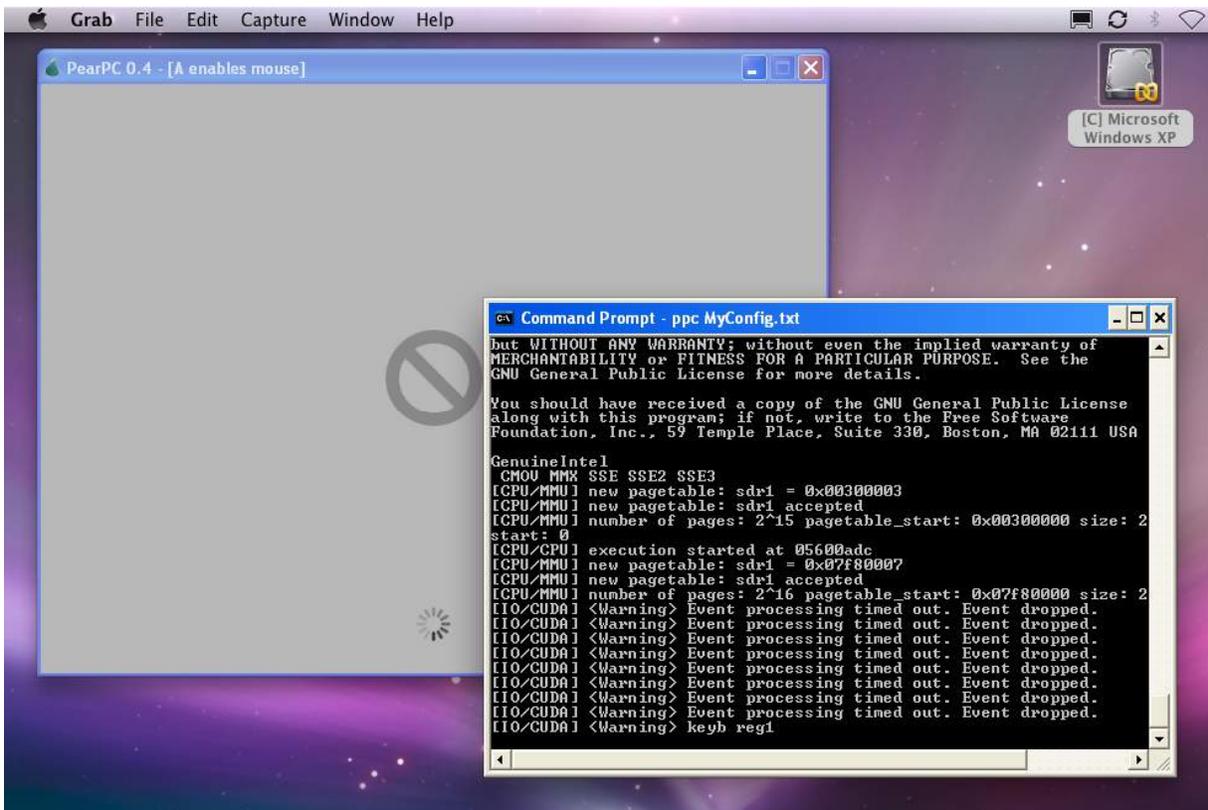
As is the case on the Macintosh, we find that Mac emulators available for Windows are predominantly 68K-based. One of the few exceptions is *PearPC*, which emulates a "sort of G4, including *Altivec*". Like with many other emulators, it is open source (GPL) and thus free to download. However, unlike many other emulators, no ROM file is needed! Moreover, it is written to run non-Mac operating systems as well, including *Mandrake Linux PPC*, *AIX* and *NetBSD for PPC*. You can visit *PearPC*'s web site for more detailed information at:

<http://pearpc.sourceforge.net/>

Unfortunately, Apple's announced transition to Intel appears to have taken the wind out of this emulator's sail, as the last update to *PearPC* was in December 2005. This is unfortunate, as *PearPC*'s current state makes it incompatible for our purposes. First of all, it does not run any version of Mac OS prior to 10.1, and the web site says only 10.3 Panther.

Those wishing to install Tiger or Leopard need to search the newsgroups for hints from those who have tinkered with it, as there have been no updates on the web site for two years. *PearPC*'s inability to run Mac OS 9 or earlier appears to be related to its missing ROMs. Classic Mac OS relied heavily upon these ROMs, and only operating systems that can be programmed around them are supported. Even the *Classic Environment* in Mac OS X freezes when attempting to use it.

The lack of updates for *PearPC* has created problems for even the operating systems it is designed to work with. While trying to install Panther on *PearPC* in Parallels on a Mac Pro, installation fails:



Although I was unsuccessful in running this emulator on my Mac, I have read the problem reports of those who have succeeded in installing *PearPC* on their Windows boxes. The chief complaint is that it is horribly slow, running at (according to some estimates) 1/500th the speed of the host system. Ouch.

With *PearPC* being open sourced, there is always the possibility of someone taking a branch to update it to run Classic. Even better would be for that someone to port it to the Mac so that it Parallels is not needed. However, there has been no sign of such activity yet.

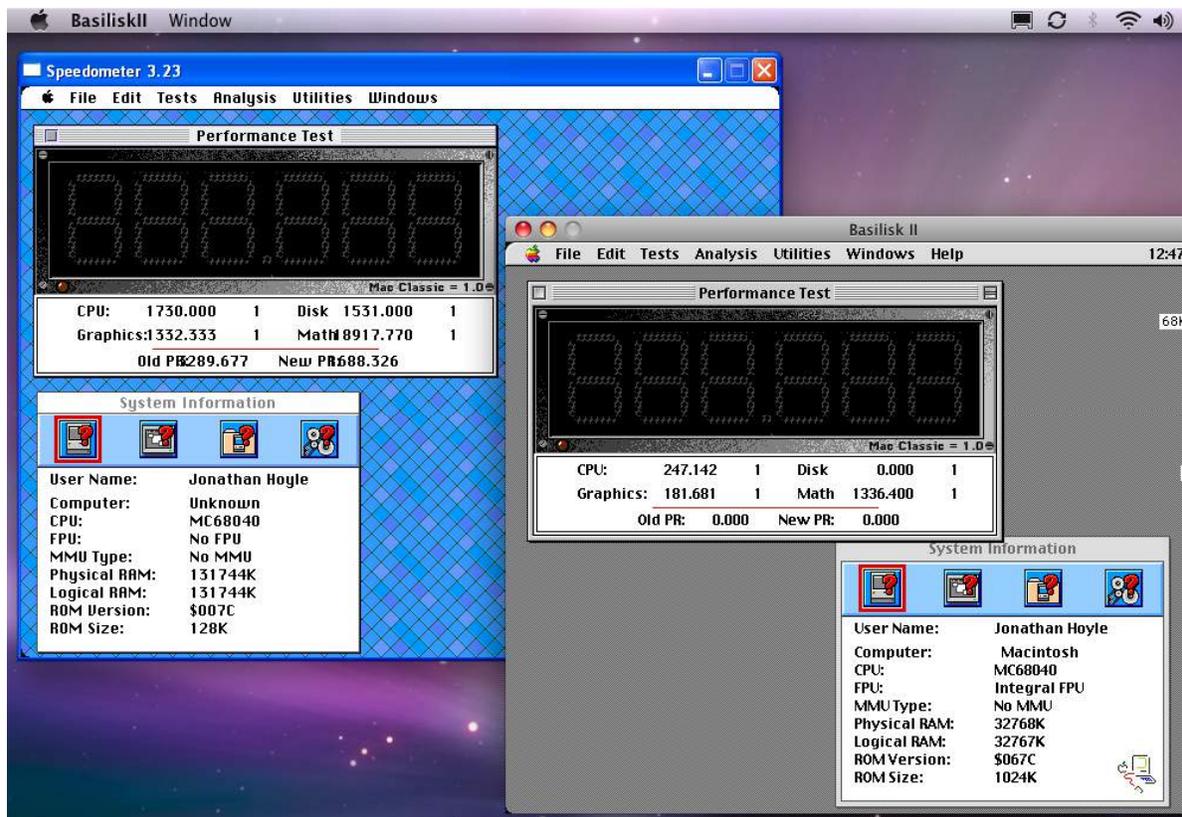
Executor

Executor by Ardi is one of the oldest Mac emulators still available, going back over 15 years. Until very recently, *Executor* was a commercial software product, but as of this past summer, Ardi Founder Clifford Matthews has now made it freely available. After downloading the program, you merely need to enter the serial number *99991004* and the authentication key *n9rk57f369byp*, as provided by Matthews. For more details about *Executor*, visit its web site at:

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

Given its age, it should come as no surprise to you that *Executor* is a 68K emulator. One of the features that sets it apart from the others is its emulation philosophy. Rather than create an abstraction of the Mac hardware, *Executor* reverse engineers the Mac operating system so that its applications run within the OS emulation. For this reason, neither ROMs nor System Software are required to use *Executor* (the only Mac emulator I am aware of for which this is true). I was able to download *Executor* and launch it immediately.

It is also very fast. *Executor* comes with prepackaged with Speedometer 3.23 (it has an incompatibility with version 4), so I ran this version of Speedometer on both *Executor* and *Basilisk* to see how they compare. *Executor* proved to be 7 times faster in both CPU and Graphics, and a whopping 14 times faster in Math computations:



Even with all of the performance checkboxes turned on, *Executor* still outperforms the Mac version of *Basilisk* (although it is slower than the Windows version of *Basilisk*).

Unfortunately, *Executor* is extremely old, and showing its signs of age. It emulates only System 7.0 and that incompletely. By default, it is configured to emulate System 6.0.7. This is far, far earlier a version of the System Software than would be reasonably expected for a Classic replacement. Even *Mini vMac*'s emulation of a Mac Plus can fully support System 7.5.5. *Executor* was last updated in 2002, and Ardi has announced that no further development will be forthcoming. Despite its speed and not requiring ROMs or System Software, it's hard to imagine *Executor* fulfilling modern needs.

SoftMac

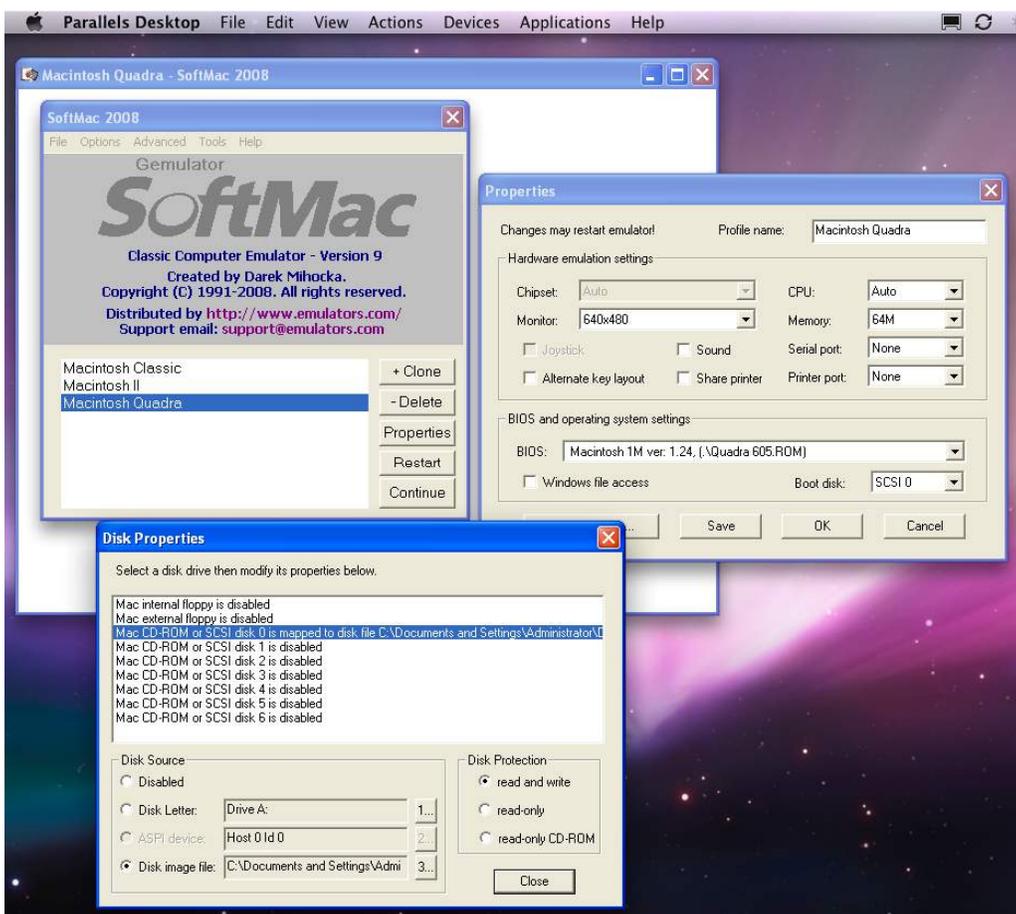
SoftMac, and its cousin *Fusion PC*, are a pair of emulators available from Emulators, Inc., a company which has been selling emulators for some years now, including Macintosh, 8-bit Atari and Atari ST. *SoftMac* is a 68K emulator designed to operate with Mac II, Classic or Quadra ROMs. Version 8.2 was released at the end of 2002, with rumors of a PowerPC version in development. Unfortunately, no such version was ever released, and Emulators, Inc. announced that the project was being discontinued.

Fast forward six years, and Emulators, Inc. had suddenly revived the initiative and released a beta version of *SoftMac* version 9. For more information, visit:

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

The preference dialogs are fairly straightforward on *SoftMac*, allowing for flexible configuration. ROMs may be accessed either by file (similar to *Basilisk* and *Mini vMac*) or through a special card that is designed to accept physical Macintosh ROMs. It's hard to imagine why anyone would prefer this latter route, but *SoftMac* provides it anyway.

Unfortunately, *SoftMac* never gets past the startup screen on the Mac Pro, suggesting that there is a compatibility problem against the current Mac Pros running Parallels.



Although this problem dramatically shortens my ability to review this product, it is worth remembering that it is still in beta, and *SoftMac* may yet be made to run on Intel-based Macs. Furthermore, the renewed interest in *SoftMac* may inspire Emulators, Inc. to complete their PowerPC version, finally giving *SheepShaver* a little competition.

Conclusion

Each of the emulators we have investigated this month are inferior to *SheepShaver* and *Basilisk*. Since most Classic applications still in existence today are PowerPC-based, it is *SheepShaver* which is the most feasible option for Classic emulation. Power Mac users on Leopard will find *SheepShaver's* performance quite acceptable. Intel-based Mac users will want to turn on the **JIT compiler** to significantly gain on performance. Those who are running Parallels Desktop may find even better performance from the Windows version of *SheepShaver*. Likewise, *Basilisk* remains the clear choice if your application is Fat. However, many of the projects we discussed this month are open source, so that interested parties may choose to complete them to run under Leopard. Those that aren't, such as *SoftMac*, may improve as development continues. In any case, story is not yet over.

Coming Up: The final chapter on Classic solutions for Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard. See you in 30!

To see a list of all the According to Hoyle columns, visit:
<http://www.jonhoyle.com/maccompanion>

MacIntosh Users Network for Integrating Technology into Education

iHear and trying out Noise Canceling headphones

by Dr. Eric Flescher

I like my Koss (non canceling) headphones. But I was interested in some more fidelity and obtaining some audio canceling power to use on jets (to cut the noise). Also I wanted to musically enhance my music while playing my collection on my iMac and iTunes.

I have seen the commercials and the ads about the Bose Quiet Comfort 3 ones. I figured because they never say the price and do installments, well its pricey and out of my budget for headphones. I was right they are over \$300. Hey I would like to use the money for an iPhone someday. But I was still looking for canceling power and quality at a budget price.

I have lost some of my hearing (high end) and wear hearing aids when teaching, social stuff etc. My hearing is not that far enough gone (well, talk to my wife though). I wanted to hear more fidelity, use the phones when traveling on jets and possibly cutting down some of the noise, playing my music in more sound ambient environment.

I am pretty good at goggling and found some links. I found some instantly at CNET.

http://reviews.cnet.com/4370-7877_7-229-104.html

They had pricey ones from \$100 to the Bose.

I found this page had Logitech Noise Canceling Headphones -

http://reviews.cnet.com/headphones/logitech-noise-canceling-headphones/4505-7877_7-31797806.html?tag=txt

But how could the price vary so much (\$39.97 to \$183.95)? But this would not do as I read;

“The bad: The Logitech Noise Canceling Headphones can be uncomfortable after an hour or so of use; the noise-canceling feature noticeably processes music, though not necessarily in a bad way (depending on your taste).”

I wanted something comfortable around or on the ear. Next please!

Consumer search had some interesting stuff. There were pricey ones and this one caught my eye.

Best value, full-size headphones.

“The Grado SR60 score points in reviews where it counts – sound quality, including bass reproduction. The Grado SR60 headphones have a huge following among music lovers, who say they're great companions to an iPod.”

But they “leak” sound. I won’t use them as I don’t (gasp) have an iPod. I listen to other things and look at then went I work out at the gym at the JCC. But they leak noise so, no. Next.

On the PC mag link, I found some interesting facts and information written by Tim Gideon, the Lead Audio and Video Analyst for PC Magazine -
http://www.pcmag.com/author_bio/0,1908,a=3895,00.asp

I liked the very personable style of his writing and information that I wanted to “hear”. Unlike my musically inclined children (my son is Junior Percussion major at Julliard in NYC and my daughter works for music record and sound industry in NYC too) I never have played an instrument (hey I can play Batman on the piano and cool jerk).

I do like listening to my music (I love Moody Blues finding new music and working with GarageBand, etc. for my videos.

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2704,2120964,00.asp>

I wanted to know how canceling helps not just plugging the ears (earbuds) which has and does got concern. He noted;

“Noise cancellation ... is achieved actively, using circuitry that monitors surrounding ambient sound and produces an inverse wave, to cancel it out.”

Well he uses the Bose which is out of my price range. But what else did he list? I was getting closer when I read that he liked the more affordable (cheaper).

Recommended were the JVC HA-NC80-J/-C alternative and the Sony MDR-NC22

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2113467,00.asp>

But these use earbuds and there are other inconveniences. These two models however are less impressive in the cancellation department (still good) but have more bass than you'd expect for \$100. Not bad, but I don’t want earbuds. But I was closer possibly then I thought. I was interested if there was a Sony version that I saw at Radio Shack.

I was a little surprised there was this Sony model at Radio Shack –

http://www.winbuyer.com/cat-418/keyword-Sony%20mdr-nc6/init-1/D-10122007/C-Type1_1/pid-22714717/?c=8100418&gclid=CNGu4N7AwpACFQqiQQod81mXPQ

I’ve bought material from Radio Shack to buy stuff to make my robots, thermistors for chemical and electrical experiments and more for years. You could pay less at Overstock but I wanted to try them now. The other local chains may have them but they had them at my local Radio Shack for about \$50 (most have this price). It was rated from 3/5 to 5/5, so I thought I would try them.

First I tried them in the store (I recommend doing this). They were not earbuds, but a thick pad fitted on to my ears (not around). While I was really looking for an around-the-ear, like my Koss, this sounded very good and felt very comfortable.

At home, I inserted the A battery into the little compartment on one side of the headgear part. I turned on my iMac and loaded my iTunes. I was pleased with the fidelity and could hear more of the sounds. Some of the TV downstairs was blocked out to a greater extent. Maybe I felt more immersed. The bass part was great and I felt more surrounded by my music.

I decided to write about my experience for you all. Let me know what you think about your headphones and whether you use head-canceling phones (this model or others).

eflescher@maccompanion.com

<http://drreric1macnewsmacsightings.blogspot.com/>

Ivory Tower - January 2008

Welcome to 2008!

By Ted Bade

As I write this column for the January issue of *macCompanion* magazine, I am nearing the end of December. Visions of new Macs and electronic toys are dancing in my head. My New Year's Resolutions this year are to buy a new Mac, spend more time helping my friends with their computers, and finally get my Level 61 Hunter up to level 70 in World of Warcraft. (I spend too much time working several other toons I have through their lower levels.)

Last month I was all wound up about Apple's new Mac OS X, called Leopard. After having worked with it for a month now I can say that, beyond those things that I complained about, it works well. I still don't like how the new "eye-candy" stuff gets in the way of Tiger's near prrrfect functionality, but I am adapting. Check out Doc Babad's article elsewhere in this edition. He answers a number of my complaints with shareware solutions.

I have heard a solid rumor that Apple will be releasing a relatively huge patch to Leopard. I hope that this patch will at least fix the major problems I have with Leopard and would be ecstatic if it fixes all of them. I don't expect we will see the patch until after MacWorld.

Speaking of MacWorld Expo in SF, there are many rumors flying around about what Apple will bring to that show. I haven't heard anything that I feel is even remotely solid. Actually, most of what I have heard are things I think people wish Apple would do, or think they should or need to do. For myself, I like waiting for the Keynote speech. There is something of that old Christmas anticipation as Mr. Jobs unwraps the things Apple will offer! Knowing ahead of time is like peeking at your presents. It ruins the surprise and you still have to wait for them.

In the world of malicious software, there has been some noise about Apple. Apparently one ZDNet blogger is suggesting that Mac OS X is more vulnerable than Vista. You can check out his thoughts by visiting: [Mac versus Windows vulnerability stats for 2007 - http://blogs.zdnet.com/security/?p=758](http://blogs.zdnet.com/security/?p=758). It is a numerical look at things. I don't know if his analysis or his sources are correct, but I can sense this is going to stir the pot a little! More than likely this is an attempt to get people to stop believing Apple commercials!

I am not the only one that feels that this might be a faulty analysis. The Electronista web site posted a note saying that the critical vulnerabilities are mostly in areas not typically used by Mac users while those of Vista are in very commonly used areas. Take a look at their analysis by visiting their site here - <http://www.electronista.com/articles/07/12/18/windows.security.in.2007/&startNumber=40>

If your PC friends are annoying you by pointing out this article, consider some research by visiting the following links which give a more Mac related opinion of the problem. Mac/Slash - <http://macslash.org/article.pl?sid=06/10/04/1131251>

A really nice rebuttal on the MacDaily News site - http://www.macdailynews.com/index.php/weblog/comments/apple_macs_are_far_more_secure_than_windows_pcs/ and more to follow. It seems to me that most of this is just so much noise to stir the pot.

To put it bluntly, I have never reformatted my Macintosh because it had too much spyware or viruses and was too bogged down by other malicious stuff. I don't think I have a friend that runs Windows that hasn't had this happen at least once, sometimes more than once. In the practical arena, it only makes sense to stick with the Mac. Once all the viruses are actually there, then I will get concerned. Until then, stop whining!

I guess all those "I'm a Mac" commercials are really getting to PC makers! LOL. What a bunch of losers.

Not much else to talk about this month. Hope you have a great beginning to 2008. Keep on using your Mac!



gene steinberg's
MacNightOwl

MacNightOwl

The Real Losers in the Think Secret Settlement

By Gene Steinberg

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I don't know about you, but I've always had mixed feelings about Mac rumor sites. Yes, they often make for an entertaining read. Sometimes they even get the facts correct, or mostly correct, and clue us in on a genuine new Apple product or service.

Now up until a few years ago, Apple accepted the existence of such sites grudgingly. When they got too close to the facts, or published the wrong screenshot (at least to Apple), they'd get a cease and desist letter. The sites would generally take down the offending content, so as not to have to hire high-priced intellectual property attorneys to defend themselves.

Behind the scenes, you might expect that Steve Jobs wasn't as sanguine about such things as he appeared in public, where he even joked about it from time to time. But you had to feel the sound of his teeth grinding.

When Apple filed lawsuits against Apple Insider, O'Grady's PowerPage and Think Secret, you had to feel they had just gone way too far. Sure, Apple has the right to protect their trade secrets, and certainly take appropriate measures to clamp down on their employees and contractors of they break their nondisclosure agreements. Indeed, if a site got such information via questionable means, maybe they'd have a case.

Instead, Apple attacked these bloggers on the pretext that they weren't actually journalists and thus weren't covered by the various shield laws that allowed them to protect their sources.

In the end, Apple lost its case against Apple Insider and Jason O'Grady had a huge weight lifted from his shoulders as well. But the Think Secret matter persisted, until the other day when an unexpected settlement was announced.

According to Nick Ciarelli, the Harvard undergrad who runs the site:

Apple and Think Secret have settled their lawsuit, reaching an agreement that results in a positive solution for both sides. As part of the confidential settlement, no sources were revealed and Think Secret will no longer be published. Nick Ciarelli, Think Secret's publisher, said "I'm pleased to have reached this amicable settlement, and will now be able to move forward with my college studies and broader journalistic pursuits."

Of course, beneath this simple paragraph, there are a wealth of implications. Ciarelli started Think Secret when he was a mere lad of 13, and grew it to the point where it attracted Apple's close attention. That's a very big deal, even if that attention caused ripples that eventually rose to the level of a lawsuit.

In the wake of the lawsuit, Think Secret toned down its act, and new articles were few and far between. To some degree, they seemed to be echoing Apple Insider in terms of predictive content. Did Ciarelli lose interest, or was he just holding tight, expecting a settlement that would settle the matter once and for all?

Another question: Did money change hands? Did Apple pay Ciarelli to close shop and get back to schoolwork? Certainly, the details of the settlement are confidential, so we'll probably never know. I expect, though, that Ciarelli probably didn't want to begin his career with a lawsuit from Apple Inc. on his record, and that could certainly have dissuaded potential employers from offering him jobs until this albatross was lifted.

Or would Ciarelli's notoriety, his fifteen minutes of fame, open him up to unexpected career opportunities? I don't pretend to know, but I am troubled by how it all went down.

I can see where Ciarelli may have been sorely tempted to put this episode behind him as painlessly as possible. After all, getting a college education is monstrously expensive, and getting that education at Harvard is a six-figure expense. Sure, maybe Ciarelli's parents are well off. Maybe they set aside a smaller sum for his education early on, and it grew over time. Maybe he has a rich relative, or, like many other students of modest means, he found a way to earn some money, from his site and other pursuits, and collected scholarships, grants and took out college loans to cover the rest of his huge bill.

If Apple said they'd take care of that bill, rather than leave him saddled with huge college loans to pay off over the next 20 years, that would be a tempting incentive to take the money and run.

On the other hand, freedom of the press played second fiddle here. I can perhaps forgive Ciarelli for cutting his losses, and maybe he lost interest anyway in maintaining the site with the press of his studies and other matters taking up more and more of his spare time. But Apple has set a dangerous precedent here, because it means they can use their huge cash reserves their legal power to buy off and shut down bloggers they don't like. That is the most troubling issue of all.

Once again, I don't know the fine details of this settlement. Maybe it's all very benign and simply closed a door that nobody wanted opened in the first place, no harm done. But the next time a site runs afoul of Apple's alleged trade secrets, would Apple use this tactic as a weapon against the next innocent would-be infringer?

If that's the case, then I am truly saddened by this development. I wish Nick Ciarelli well in his pursuits, and he will, over time, no doubt survive and conquer the journalistic world in some other fashion.

I just hope that Apple doesn't get some nasty ideas, though, of what they might do next to halt press coverage that they don't like.

Comments on this article can be found here - <http://macnigtowl.com/2007/12/24/the-real-losers-in-the-think-secret-settlement/>

doc_Babad's Macintosh Tips - A Macintosh Tip or Three...

January 2008 Edition

By Harry {doc} Babad and Ted Bade © 2007



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The software related tips were tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM; running under Macintosh OS X OS X 10.4.11 (doc) or (TED) G5 Tower.

This month we continue sharing my occasional tip related finds with you. Some, come from Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips column <http://www.mac-hints-tips.com> and are used with his permission. Where I (doc) use any one else's tips for this column, I acknowledge both their source and their contributors.

Ted, when installing Leopard ran across some useful methods, which he shares in this column. The problems were identified in Ted's Ivory Tower Review in the December macC issue.

Oh, I almost forgot! Unless otherwise noted, all the tips and tidbits we share, where appropriate, work on our respective computers. If I don't own the software but if the tip sounds interesting, I'll so note at the end of that specific write-up.

Tips I've provided this month, as always in a random order, include:

- Search Tricks on Google and/or Yahoo
- Key Chain Problems in Leopard
- Disappearing Dashboard Keyboard Shortcut
- Secure Empty Trash Can Issues – A Cause for Concern
- Leopards Strange Treatment of Icons
- Change Microsoft Office's Registration Information
- The New Leopard Dock — Much Glitz and Flash with Lots of Loss of Functionality
- Online Purchases — Keep Your Receipts
- The Safari 3 URL New Tab Blues
- Acrobat 8 Converts Text to Interactive Form Fields

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Search Tricks on Google and/or Yahoo

In both search engines, typing in a stock symbol shows the company name, latest price and a price chart, at the top of the Results page.

- Typing in a U.S. street address in Google gets you a link to a map of the location. Yahoo goes one step better – it actually shows the map on the Results page.
- Entering a U.S. landline phone number in Google or Yahoo gives you the name and address of the person to whom it belongs.
- Current weather conditions for U.S. cities can be displayed in Yahoo by typing the city name followed by the word “weather”. In Google, type the word “weather” first, followed by the city name.
- In Yahoo, type in the name of a sports team and the word “scores,” for the current score of a game in which the team is involved.
- In Google, type in certain fact-based questions, like “population of Boston” and you get the answer, not just a link to the answer.
- Type simple math problems, like 5 x 8.1999, into the search boxes of either engine, the sites act like calculators, spitting back the results.
- Both sites will also perform conversions of weights and measures, and currency conversions, right in the Search Box, In Google, you just type in questions like “37 centimeters in inches”. In Yahoo, you begin such questions with the word “convert”, as in “convert 7,000 yen to dollars”.
- Both sites will let you type in certain kinds of numbers, like package-tracking numbers, to get immediate information. A vehicle identification number will get you the links to basic information about the car and an offer to buy more detailed reports on the vehicle.



Google has a guide at <http://www.google.com/help/features.html>. Yahoo has a similar guide at tools - <http://www.search.yahoo.com/shortcuts>.

Walter Mossberg Wall Street Journal via LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY
Paul Taylor September Mac Hints-& Tips

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Key Chain Problems in Leopard

The Keychain lost the file containing all my passwords. The first time I went to a web site that needed a keychain item, I was told that my keychain file couldn't be found. Since I did an archive and install, I hoped it was in the "old system folder". But alas, it wasn't. Luckily I had made thorough backups and had a library folder backed up hours before the upgrade, so I moved the missing file over. A simple fix, but what went wrong with the previous system folder routine?

Since thing worked fine in the last major upgrade one would expect them to work this time. Does this mean none of the beta testers used the keychain utility?

Ted Bade, *macCompanion* December 2007

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Disappearing Dashboard Keyboard Shortcut

The Dashboard keyboard shortcut was gone when I first tried it, and wouldn't stay after I changed it with the preference controls. After about the third or fourth time, I returned the preference to the normal F12 default where it finally took. I might have to take the heat on this one. Perhaps the preference file for this pane was corrupt when the upgrade brought it over. I have no idea on the cause of this problem.

Ted Bade, *macCompanion* December 2007

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Secure Empty Trash Can Issues – A Cause for Concern

The *secure empty trash can feature* has a problem. If you use it, it will grind through most of the files in the trash can, but when it gets to the last 4 to 6 items, it freezes and nothing more happens, although the deleting window stays open on the screen. (Clicking the “cancel button has no effect)

The only way I have found to get it to stop is to relaunch the Finder. Now this isn't a big issue, since I don't often have any documents I need to destroy in this fashion. But it is really annoying when one accidentally makes the wrong selection then learns the only way out is to relaunch the Finder. I tried this several time to be sure it wasn't just a fluke. This is a big one.

Apple of the best security fame has managed to break something I am sure is a real benefit to anyone who works with sensitive information. Could you imagine how frustrating it would be if one needed to do a secure empty trash several times a day only to discovered that you have to relaunch the Finder every time? And what happens to those last few files? Are they destroyed? Are they simply trashed like regular emptying? Are they lost somewhere on the computer where prying eyes might discover them if they care to search?

There's always the shareware product ShredIt X 5.8 by Mireth Technology, <http://www.mireth.com/pub/sxme.html/> but why require the use of a third party product for such an important function. [We've not tested this product but it is Leopard Ready.]



Ted Bade, *macCompanion* December 2007

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Leopards Strange Treatment of Icons

Another minor tweak in Leopard OS that some people haven't embraced (to put it kindly) is the look of folders in the Finder. Folders in general have lost their 3-D appearance, and, perhaps more controversially, special folders—those inside your user folder, as well as the Applications and Utilities folders—no longer sport colorful, custom icons for easy identification; instead, you get subtle, “embossed” labels. Ugly sez doc.



One simple solution, if you've still got a copy of Tiger sitting around, is to copy the icons from Tiger's special folders and paste them onto the corresponding folders in Leopard. For more options and less hassle, the new version of Panic's \$13 CandyBar 3.1 (will let you replace all system and special icons with a click; it will even support Leopard's new 512-by-512-pixel icon files. [[http://www.panic.com/candybar/.](http://www.panic.com/candybar/)]

Doc sez, alas, neither FolderBrander [<http://www.yellowmug.com/folderbrander/>] nor iconCompo [<http://trollin.loos.li/>] are Leopard ready limiting your alternatives for customizing your icons for quick and easy identification.

Adapted from Leopard's first tweaks *By* Dan Frakes
MacWorld, Mac Gems, November 07, 2007

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Change Microsoft Office's Registration Information

Question: I just recently noticed that I made a typo when I registered my copy of Microsoft Office 2004. When I select Word: About Word (or the equivalent in any other Office application), my name appears misspelled after "This product is licensed to." Is it possible to fix this? - Meng Thao

Answer: Launch Office's Remove Office utility (/ Applications/Microsoft Office 2004/Additional Tools/Remove Office). In the *Welcome To Remove Office* window that appears, you'll see a Continue button in the lower right corner. Hold down the option key, and the button name changes to Remove Licensing Information Only. Click on that button to acknowledge that this is what you really want to do, and Remove Office will delete the files containing the registration information. When you next launch an Office application, the Office Setup Assistant will appear and prompt you for your name and product key.

From the Mid-Columbia Macintosh Users Group [McMUG] Finder November 2007.
Origin: Christopher Breen's 911 Column

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The New Leopard Dock — Much Glitz and Flash with Lots of Loss of Functionality

In the new Dock 's features, the feature that lets you click to either fan out or show a grid of items within the folder is more problems than the eye candy is worth. First of all the fan display works only for a few items, when you have a folder full of stuff, you always get the grid. However, if there are more items than the grid can show, you get a final icon that says something like "and 20 more items". You can't see them without opening the entire folder onto the Finder.

Previously, you would see a list of items in the folder and could move up and down the ENTIRE hierarchical (nested) list. If there were more than would fit on your display, the list could be scrolled down and then back up again as needed. If you knew the item you wanted to access had a name that began with "U", you could type a "u" and the cursor would jump to the first item with that letter. This was a great way to jump to the "Utilities" folder inside the "Application" folder. Typing a letter and jumping to an item trick seems to work on occasion in 10.5, but not always. But it won't jump to the first item that is represented by "and 20 more items". Talk about taking steps backwards. Here is a glorious example of how eye candy gets in the way of functionality.



The previous version of the dock, if the item you selected from the docked folder list was a folder, and you moused over it, a submenu would open, showing its contents. Not so with Leopard. When you want something inside the folder, you select the folder, which opens in the Finder, and then you have to select the item you want to access, then go back to the Finder to close the window you really didn't want opened anyway. Here is the one new "feature" that gets me screaming

Ted says *I hope somebody writes a utility called "Tiger dock folders" or "eye candy killer"!*

Doc Sez, check out free DockRestore at <http://spacesoftware.ifastnet.com/software/dock-restore/>. With DockRestore restore your old good Tiger dock! Then switch back to the 3D Leopard version anywhere anytime!!



DockRestore

Quay

TigerDock

I've not tried this product since I'm sticking with Tiger for a while. Alternatively try the shareware application Quay 1.0.1, which also brings back the Tiger dock.

<http://www.brockerhoff.net/quay/>. Another choice is the free TigerDock 1.0 at <http://riotgames.se/riotgames-se/tigerdock.html/>.

Ted Bade, *macCompanion* December 2007

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Online Purchases — Keep Your Receipts

The next time you buy something online, don't bother to jot down the confirmation on an easy-to-lose sticky note. In OSX 10.4, pretend you are going to print and press Command/P when the site displays the receipt. In the Print dialog box that appears, click on "PDF" and select "Save PDF to Web Receipts Folder" from the drop down menu. OS X creates a PDF of your receipt and saves it in your user folder/Documents/Web Receipts. ~ Joe Kissell. [Note: I had no such folder on my hard drive, but created my own storage location for receipts.]

Alternatively, sez Doc, create a "Orders and More" folder on your desktop and keep both the receipt and tracking information in that folder. After delivery, you can toss those items you will not need for tax deduction, especially if you itemize expenses. If you own acrobat, not reader, you can annotate the receipts so you so you have more information should you be audited by the IRS.

Paul Taylor September Mac Hints-& Tips

LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY

As Modified by Harry {doc} Babad

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The Safari 3 URL New Tab Blues

Sometimes, when I am playing on the Internet, I find something that intrigues me, like a link to another site. What I have done in the past is to copy the link, open a new tab in Safari, paste the URL into it, and then go back to what I was doing. Sometimes I then might go back to the first page to copy the name of a particular item I was interested in or some other piece of information. With the new version of Safari, when you copy the next piece of information into the clipboard, the URL placed in the new Safari tab disappears. I guess if I just went to the URL I pasted rather than waiting, this wouldn't be an issue. But, why is it an issue at all?

Ted Bade, *macCompanion* December 2007

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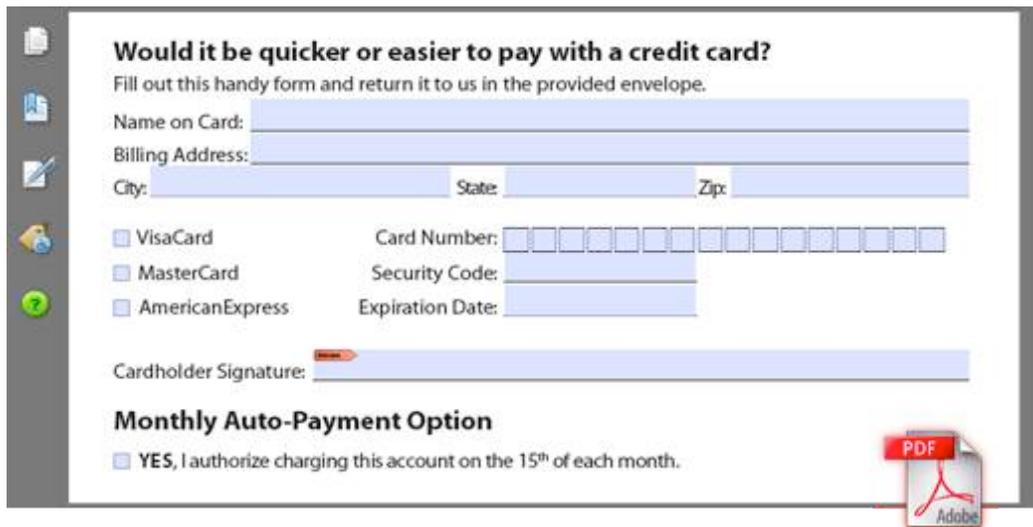
Acrobat 8 Converts Text to Interactive Form Fields

Even in scans, Acrobat 8 Professional has a feature that attempts to identify text in your PDF that could be a form field. For example, when it sees "Name: _____", it will add an interactive form field on top of the underline and name it "Name".

To use the feature, choose Forms > Run Form Field Recognition. Acrobat will find and convert the fields, and display a Recognition Report that lists all the fields it has detected. Each item in the report is hot linked to the actual field so you can easily find it and use the Form editing tools to add actions to it.

If your form design uses fields that are more complicated than a phrase followed by an underline (for example, boxes instead of underlines), you'll need to create a separate layer in your original document that has simpler form fields in the same locations.

(This works in Illustrator and InDesign because they can export a layered PDF file, but not QuarkXPress because it can't yet export a layered PDF.) You can hide that layer in Acrobat and it will still see and convert them to form fields.



The image shows a screenshot of a credit card payment form. The title is "Would it be quicker or easier to pay with a credit card?". Below the title is the instruction "Fill out this handy form and return it to us in the provided envelope." The form contains several input fields: "Name on Card:", "Billing Address:", "City:", "State:", "Zip:", "Card Number:" (a grid of 16 boxes), "Security Code:" (a grid of 3 boxes), "Expiration Date:", and "Cardholder Signature:". There are also three radio button options for card types: "VisaCard", "MasterCard", and "AmericanExpress". At the bottom, there is a section titled "Monthly Auto-Payment Option" with a radio button for "YES, I authorize charging this account on the 15th of each month." A small PDF icon with the Adobe logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the form area.

In other applications, you can just create two versions of the document, let Acrobat generate the form fields on the simpler one, then replace the page with a PDF of the complex one. The fields will still work.

To convert a printed form to an interactive form, you can scan it at 1200 dpi, grayscale mode, then in Acrobat, choose Document > OCR Text Recognition > Recognize Text Using OCR. Or, you can scan from within Acrobat by choosing File > Create PDF > From Scanner... By default, Acrobat will run OCR on the scan. After that, choose Forms > Run Form Field Recognition.

Design Tools Monthly
Paul Taylor September Mac Hints-& Tips

That's all folks... Harry {doc} Babad & Ted Bade



The Northern Spy

Prognostications 2008

By Rick Sutcliffe

Technology News and Views Since 1983

January 2008

Last month the Spy gave an overview of the big picture, speculating on what marketshare might look like in an economy heading into a recession. This month, he offers his annual walkabout of industry forecasts from here, there, and everywhere that strikes his fancy, and in no particular order of importance or otherwise.

Something old, something new

One of seventeen known 700+-year old copies of the Magna Carta sold at auction recently for \$21.3M. Not chump change, and nice money if you can get it. Hmm. The Spy has a copy of Apple's Red Book in pretty good condition. Makes you wonder, though. Supposing the Lord gives this old earth another 7-century run. Does anyone suppose there will be anything from this era that will be worth a comparable amount? Do you suppose that the thousandth generation of digital reading devices will still decipher CDs? What then today's format wars? Nah, on second thought, the Spy declines to forecast that far ahead.

The year of Blu-Ray?

Sony's slightly more robust format for HD disks continues to gain momentum, with more outlets opting to sell only Blu-Ray, and dropping HDDV. This format battle will be won and lost in 2008, resulting in HD data storage for computers also becoming a new standard, but only for a year or two, until TNBT.

More Leaps for the Leopard

Judging by developer seeds, system 10.5.2 should be released sometime this month (January; these things are written well ahead of time.) Not that there wasn't a lot to complement Apple on the initial cut of the new OS, but only the most intrepid of early adopters install any software ending in a "0", or a "1" and this goes double for operating systems. After all *if (!succeed) try (try())*.

Among things likely to be fixed -- er...enhanced -- is "Stacks", which will undoubtedly gain a list view. Apple officials rarely comment on much of anything, but they do occasionally show signs of listening. Now, that transparent menu bar....

The Spy does have a much earlier version of 10.5 installed, but not for daily production use, and he's unlikely to switch any time soon. Patience, patience. Still, one can never cease to be amazed at how much better iSteve's outfit does this kind of work than Billg's little old company. For most technicians he's talked to, preinstalled Vista is a major annoyance, the sooner deleted and upgraded to XT the better. Getting the industry past hurdles of that magnitude is proving difficult; most people buying a new machine are better off with a Mac. Vista has become the best argument for that.

The year of the eBook?

Well, maybe. As indicated here last month, the Spy doesn't think Amazon's Kindle quite "gets it". The retail model is too restrictive, the price too high, and the design lacks panache. Apple could do it better, but is it a priority? Maybe, but perhaps only as a side effect of a more general-purpose device that slots into the price/performance/size gap between an iPhone and a MacBook. Per an argument below, probably not till at least later in the year.

MS to embrace standards?

We could have recycled this headline from any time in the last twenty years. After all, the company has done an elaborate dance around the idea for decades, loudly claiming in public to be doing so, while trashing them with proprietary and non-compliant software in practise. Strongest case in point is Internet Explorer, which fails to correctly render a large number of standard-compliant pages. True, things have improved from the baddest old days, but it is still necessary to write many, if not most, web pages to detect whether the rendering engine is IE, and if so, to behave differently. The PR bumpfh with the upcoming IE8 is that it will be standards compliant. The Spy advises you to consider believing it only after you test it.

What's coming from iSteve?

The Spy has previously speculated on new products to fill the niche above the iPod and iPhone, including tablets, eBook readers, and the like. Forecasting one of these is a no-brainer, as is predicting new tower machines (sooner rather than later) and bumps in the other lines.

The Spy will go out on a limb and forecast that the first step downward in size will be a new 12 inch ultra-thin, ultra-portable metallic MacBook, in gun-metal grey (and possibly a black option), accompanied (sooner or later) by a tablet version. Both a Newtonesque device and the GiPhone are possible candidates for using Intel's "Menlow" Mobile Internet Device (MID) platform, but these smaller Macs may have to await a better price on solid-state memory for their mass storage. Perhaps the appearance later in the year of the first 16G (and 32G?) memory sticks on drugstore electronics counters will be a harbinger.

Experience of the last few years makes one other prediction a lead pipe cinch, however. Whatever Apple introduces, it will immediately be greeted with a plethora of lawsuits, all claiming patent rights on aspects of the new technology. Apple will dutifully bribe -- er...settle with -- the claimants to make them go away and stop bothering them in court, and everybody will get lots of consumer lolly. But will 2008 be the year the antiquated patent system gets a rev? Not on your life.

Too many lawyers have a vested interest in maintaining the cottage industry of suing true innovators on behalf of wanabees. Ah, well. Perhaps it's the American way.

While we're on the subject of legal bullying,

the Spy notes with considerable interest that long-time rumourmonger Nick Ciarelli has been forced to "settle" with Apple's own legal heavyweights by shutting down his Think Secret site. Three years back, he speculated too accurately on details of the Mac Mini before Apple's official announcement, then refused to reveal its sources. Apple, hot to fire whatever employee or suspend whichever developer who had squealed, demanded the source of the information. Ciarelli refused, citing a journalistic privilege Apple does not recognize.

It is understandable iSteve would be upset--many a good company has lost sales by having its announcements scooped. But the Spy's sympathy is with Ciarelli, and it's too bad the legal pressure finally caved him in. The Spy feels obliged to note that his own predictions are never based on inside leaks and are sometimes spectacularly wrong. But, generally available information, a good look at past performance and market realities combined with logical extrapolation has often allowed him to make predictions with great accuracy. Anyone who writes about technology has to be concerned that the next time this happens (s)he might end up on the blunt end of Apple's legal stick.

So this one gets Apple the raspberry of the month for unnecessary bullying. Cupertino should chill out and put its lawyers on a shorter leash, but probably won't, so the Spy fearlessly predicts the company will sue yet another prognosticator in 2008. Perhaps the next one will hold out longer.

2008's greatest political scandal

No, no, silly. The Spy doesn't know what it will be yet. But it doesn't take a seer to forecast there'll be one. After all, with the U.S. Presidential race heating up, and a minority parliament in Canada, the ground is fertile, the manure spreader media are primed and redolent, and all that remains is for the seed to droop. Will it have anything to do with technology? Well, as more politicians discover that besides mom and apple pie they've also invented the Internet, computers, and software, a political scandal involving technology becomes more likely. Let's make that a forecast for the coming year.

Deathwatch 2008

Leading candidate in this category may be Palm, whose earnings and market share have plummeted in the face of competition from Apple and RIM, and also from warranty and shipping problems. Shares have plummeted (again) and the sharks circle. A great pity, and not the least because the Spy owns a Treo 600. Palm was one of the good ones, but doesn't seem to have the nimbleness and innovative spirit to catch up to Apple. If you want to know, the Spy believes Palm "jumped the shark" when it brought out phones based on W*nd*ws, thus deprecating its own excellent OS.

AppleTV appears also to be dying on the vine. Expect either a major re-launch, or a dead product (more likely the latter).

Of course on the software front, major software packages' earlier versions become end-of-life on a regular basis. MySQL version 4.x is already considered legacy, as is Apache version 1.x. Of more importance, PHP versions under 5.0 cease to be supported as of December 31. Wearing his hat as a web host, the Spy has repeatedly warned customers that they would have to update all PHP software that isn't forward compatible. The time has come.

He would have bit the biscuit and changed over before now, except that one of his own sites runs its bulletin board on phpBB, and its venerable version 2.xx is not compatible with PHP5. However, the phpBB group has finally done a gold release of their version 3, so in the next few weeks a lot of dominoes must fall. If you have a web site, expect changes soon. To prepare, ensure any PHP scripts installed on your site are 5+ compatible, because most hosts will probably remove 4- soon.

BuyWatch 2008

Apple now has some \$15B in cash, prompting many to wonder what they're going to do with all that money. Buying other's technology has never been iSteve's way, and there aren't any major candidates out there that would make sense as a purchase. So, what if he declared a dividend on Apple's shares? Wonder what that would do to the share values?

Version diversion

DragThing is now up to 5.9.2 and of course available from The Northern Spy's download area.

Apple released Security Update 2007-09 on December 17. All users of either Tiger or Leopard should of course upgrade before "vulnerabilities" turn into catastrophes.

There are many more of course, and for full information on the latest versions, everyone should use the excellent Version Tracker site. The Spy is remiss in not mentioning it more often.

And, the Spy's last word for 2007?

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

--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>

VersionTracker: <http://www.versiontracker.com/macosx/>



Mac Security 101

10 Predictions Follow Up, How'd I do?

By Kale Feelhaver

<http://www.applemacpunk.com>

applemacpunk@cox.net

Last year, I made a series of 10 predictions for Mac security in 2007 (see *macCompanion*, January 2007 issue). I'd like to follow up on these to see how I did.

Here is my original list of predictions:

1. The first "real" Mac OS X virus will be released into the wild (many users will have a bad day due to this one).
2. All the major PC anti-virus software vendors will release Mac versions of their software (if they haven't already).
3. The number of cross-platform worms will increase dramatically (this means worms that will affect Mac OS X and Windows equally).
4. The first exploit that will specifically target Mac OS X through Windows (BootCamp, Parallels, etc.) will be released into the wild.
5. Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard will include more robust firewall/security settings, showing an increasing awareness of Security by Apple.
6. Apple will add a Security division headed by a CSO. This will also result in a Security page/site on Apple.com.
7. More and more security firms will begin using Mac OS X on desktop/laptop systems.
8. The first Darwin-based network appliance will debut in the IT industry.
9. Apple will partner with a software vendor to produce a proprietary technology powered by Mac OS X (i.e.: Apple/Blackberry Server).
10. Every major Linux-based security tool will be ported to run natively on Mac OS X.

So how did I do? Well, let's go through the list one by one:

1. **True**, sort of. This did happen, but it was not nearly as bad as people thought. A handful of people and organizations reported issues, but no widespread damage.
2. **True**. Sophos, Symantec, McAfee, Computer Associates, and several others are now offering enterprise versions of their anti-virus software for Mac OS X.
3. **False**. There were a few, but the increase was not dramatic.
4. **False**. To date this still has not happened.
5. **True**. This was right on the money.
6. **False**. This did not happen, and I am very surprised that it didn't.

7. **True.** I have seen this trend in the field. More and more security firms are going to Mac OS X. In addition, more and more IT professionals are making the plunge on their home systems. *Mac OS X has transitioned from being a graphic designer's OS of choice, to being an IT geek's OS of choice.*
8. **False.** As of yet, I have not seen it, but I have heard there are some in the works.
9. **True.** I think the iPhone covered this.
10. **True.** I am using Jack, NMap, Nessus, and Metasploit, all running native on my Mac.

That gives me a score of 5 True, 4 False, and 1 semi-True. Not bad for a bunch of predictions, but not great either. I was going to make another list of predictions for 2008, but considering my track record... maybe I should wait. In any case, be proud to be a Mac user, and enjoy 2008. MWSF goodies are right around the corner, and these are great days for Mac OS X. Happy New Year, be cheerful, and stay Mac. ☺



Under the Magnifying Glass

Our Storytelling-Storycrafting Apparatus

By Steven H. Fyffe

sfyffe@maccompanion.com

Jared's Imagination

Joseph said, "Come on, Fred". Jared was playing with the nativity figurines and had given the shepherd a rather unique, albeit un-Biblical sounding name. Joseph then spoke to his beloved, "Come on Mary. Get the baby and come on". Mary replied, "I'm coming, but I can't stand up. I'm coming as fast as I can". Mary was slowly making her way across the table on her knees. You see kneeling was a rather permanent condition for the nativity scene statuette of the Christ Child's mother. Hearing his mom chuckling behind him, Jared became a little embarrassed and his imaginative story came to an abrupt end.

After Jared ate several animal cracker cookies, his mom told him, "You better eat all of your dinner tonight". His reply, "I'm not sure I can ... I have all these animals running around in my stomach".

I began to pen this column on the day one sports writer wrote, "Browns Stadium was transformed into a super-sized snow globe". (1) The blizzard conditions in Northeast Ohio on that Sunday certainly presented challenges for sports enthusiasts and players alike. To add insult-to-injury, the Bills even had to stay over night in snow covered Cleveland, after their loss to our team. Their charter flight was canceled and had to "shuffle off to Buffalo" on a bus the next day.

Although the weather outside was frightful, the fire in Jared's heart was delightful. His excitement soared so high on that Sunday morning he could hardly contain himself. When he peered out the frosted window he yelled, "Look, mom, we got 81 inches of snow!" He immediately called his grandma to tell her he wanted us to take him out to play in the snow.

Right after he got out of kindergarten the next day, I went to his house to pick him up. Jared asked me how much snow was at grandma's house. I told him we must have 92 inches ... exaggeration comes naturally, you see. We rushed back to our house, so Jared could make snow angels and throw snowballs at Papa and Grandma, before having hot chocolate in front of our fireplace.



The Lord has blessed my grandson with quite a creative imagination, as you can see. He is always a source of joy for his grandma and me. My greatest desire is to see Jared grow to be a man after God's own heart. My prayer is that we and his parents can nurture and encourage him to develop every skill, every creative instinct, every imaginative fiber the Lord has bestowed upon him. He is on a great adventure in pursuit of the ministry God has providentially laid out before him. Indeed, we will encourage Jared to sharpen his investigation and communication skills, in order to tell the story of how the Lord has used him. I trust that someday a young one will crawl up in Jared's lap and say, "Papa, tell me your story again".

Storytelling and Storycrafting

Don't you just love a good story! The art of storytelling has been valued for thousands of years, not only for entertainment, but also as a teaching tool. On the National Storytelling Network, one author writes, "Create connections between generations through the art of oral storytelling in order to pass on the wisdom, values, humor and sense of community embodied in stories of all cultures and all times". (2)

In his essay, *Effective Storytelling A manual for beginners*, Barry McWilliams wrote, "Effective storytelling is a fine and beautiful art. A well-developed and presented story can cut across age barriers and will hold the interest and reach its listeners. Stories will be remembered long after other orations". (3)

In Caitlin Fralick's essay, *How We Begin: Reading, Writing and Selfhood in Two Novels by E.L. Konigsburg*, she wrote, "The storytelling motif permeates these books. Particular language furthers the author's idea of just what a story is: something that binds a community of like minds; a path toward inclusion in the face of difference; the completion of a puzzle in order to better situate oneself in the world". (4)

As you may have noticed in my first four columns, I have attempted to write in a storytelling motif, introducing you to my grandson and myself with snippets from our life story. Granted, *macCompanion*'s focus is Macintosh computers, gadgets, software and other such geeky stuff. However, even nerds and a nerd-wannabe, like myself, have a story to tell.

In my storytelling motif, I have also introduced you to inductive learning as we explore the power of the Macintosh. I have turned to the mystery stories of the great detective Sherlock Holmes. He has been our mentor in the joy of inductive discovery. Notice in the quote above, McWilliams states, "Stories will be remembered long after other orations". (3)

Orations, lectures, and sermons are all deductive in nature and have great value. There are many “Tips” articles and “How to” books which are purely deductive in nature which will certainly give any true nerd a shiver or two. Indeed, I devour them myself. I was in the front of the line to lay my hands on David Pogue’s *Mac OS X Leopard: The Missing Manual* (5) as soon as it hit the shelves. Based upon his past works, I highly recommend it to your consideration.

Oh, but when you combine a good story and the joy of self discovery, and then season your soup with the desire to tell your own story ... WOW! ... your creative juices and memory neurons are really stimulated then.

Going hand in hand with storytelling is storycrafting. “in the art of storytelling and storycrafting, a very important way to learn is to simply listen - to many different stories told by many different tellers in many different ways”. (6)

Liisa Karlsson, in *Storycrafting with children A key to listening and to sharing*, wrote, “Human being is *homo narrans*, born as a teller. The storycrafting method is based on the idea that everybody has thoughts, information, and tales which no-one else has. Every person’s thoughts are valuable, worth listening to, interesting, and relevant to storycrafting. ... Storycrafting is a reciprocal method for sharing and listening to the thoughts of other people”. (7)

Segue

Now, what does all this have to do with Macintosh hardware and software?

When discussing oral storytelling, McWilliams went on to comment, “I have observed that our audiences have lost some of the skills to follow a narrated story and see things in their minds. Storytelling has become more difficult. Attention spans are shorter and more demanding, more sophisticated, yet less able to independently imagine or visualize. People seem to need more visual stimulation”. (3) I

If that is the state of our culture, we need a little kickstart for our storytelling and storycrafting. Steve Jobs once described computers as “the equivalent of bicycles for our minds”. (8)

Steve Jobs, the driving force of both Apple and Pixar, certainly knows what storytelling and storycrafting is all about. The person who nominated Steve Jobs for an honorary degree at The University of Kings College in Nova Scotia wrote, “Journalists must first be storytellers. Since our ancestors’ earliest days, we’ve told stories about our dreams, our heroes and villains, our struggles, our lives and deaths. If we are to live together and understand our commonalities, we must have stories...”

“Jobs’ true legacy is that Apple technology empowers writers, photographers, artists, songwriters and filmmakers so they can create works of enduring beauty and tell our true stories. At both Apple and Pixar, Jobs ... enjoys working with innovative minds who challenge and seek perfection, and artists recognizing the virtues of storytelling. ... This visionary has given each of us an opportunity to change our lives. And in doing so, Jobs has given us the opportunity to change the world”. (9)

Storytelling-Storycrafting Apparatus

In this visual communication age, our storytelling and storycrafting are greatly enhanced by the digital magic of Apple computers and software. No artisan uses a single tool in his craft. What we need is an orchestra of tools both to tell our story and to record and share the stories of others. The on-board dictionary in OS X suggests the appropriate term: “**Apparatus** refers to a collection of distinct instruments, tools, or other devices that are used in connection or combination with one another for a certain purpose”. For example, the Lord gave us a “breathing apparatus” which orchestrates the passage of oxygen from the atmosphere into our blood stream. Likewise, the finely integrated digital apparatus of our Macs and Apple software pumps a breath of fresh air into our life stories.

It all begins with Keynote 4

With what does our storytelling-storycrafting apparatus begin. **Keynote 4** (10) is at heart a storytelling tool. I have often recommended Keynote to my friends. However, they often respond by saying they do not do presentations. Keynote is so much more than just a “presentation” program used by a teacher or business person.

Let’s ask ourselves what we need to visually tell our story. A good place to begin is to set the mood for our story. Keynote themes does this for us and even allows revisions along the journey.



Next, written words, not just for titles, communicate the details of our story. Text entry and placement are easy on our visual story board. If you do choose to orally tell your story before an audience ... yes, that might be called a presentation, but don't be scared off yet ... you can include not only text for the audience to read, but also notes which will serve as reminder as you speak. You can even export your story as a self-presenting Quick Time movie with either the speech synthesis of OS X reading your notes or recording them yourself.

What else do we need? How about photos? Smart Builds in Keynote 4, allows you to add several photos on each slide.

Multiple audio clips may be added to each slide, also. For example, as I tell of my father's roots in the hills of Kentucky in the 1920s, I can add sound bites from the era. You can also include a musical score behind your story.

Since we are using visual communication to tell our story, video clips are a natural. Keynote is unique in allowing multiple video layers on the same slide. You can even have one movie play on top of another movie. Imagine showing a movie of your train ride through Colorado or your bus ride through the Irish countryside, while in a corner of the screen you narrate the adventure with a video clip. Your story is so much more engaging with Picture-in-Picture narration. Now, you can accomplish with an application costing less the \$100, visual techniques often seen on television.

Our Storytelling-Storycrafting Apparatus on Steroids

However, Keynote alone does not make up our storytelling-storycrafting apparatus. The digital resources for our story and the mechanism for digitally sharing our life story are orchestrated by several other integrated applications.

The new and enhanced features in **Leopard** (11) such as **Spaces**, **Spotlight**, **Quick Look**, **Preview**, and **Quick Time** make the organization of our digital resources a breeze.

Likewise, **iLife '08** (12) works in conjunction with Keynote. In **iPhoto**, we can create Events and albums of the photos which we plan to use in the Keynote tale of our life adventures. **iMovie** will facilitate moving your Keynote story to the web after exporting it to a Quick Time movie. iMovie can also be used to publish the Quick Time movie to **iTunes** for streaming to your HDTV over **Apple TV** (13). **iWeb** allows us to include our Keynote story on our own personal web page.

Apple's **.Mac** (14) allows us to put our stories in Web Galleries to share with family and friends. Unlike similar services, .Mac is fully integrated with iLife.

There are several other applications which give you a truly elegant storytelling-storycrafting apparatus with Keynote. For example, I have used Apple's **Final Cut Express** which includes **LiveType** (15), **Adobe Photoshop Elements 4** (16), **The Printshop** (17), **Comic Life Deluxe** (18), **Amadeus Pro** (19), **Snapz Pro X** (20), **Photo-to-Movie** (21), and **Photo Presenter** (22) to empower my Keynote stories.

Apple hardware and software all work together as an integrated mechanism ... talk about a bicycle for our minds ... our own storytelling-storycrafting apparatus.

To be continued

I have not abandoned my quest to discover Leopard which I started last month in *Under the Magnifying Glass* (23) and will share more with you in coming columns. However, I hope you enjoyed our trip together down this rabbit trail. After all, when you think about it, storytelling and storycrafting is at the center of why we so enjoy our Macs, is it not?

I'm sure you have family and friends who would love to hear your story. Likewise, I want to leave my grandson, Jared, with the rich story of his roots. Besides, I want him to be able to tell his grandchildren the story of his silly old Papa.

Please come back next month and sit a spell. You all take care now.

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Books

Illustrated Guide to Astronomical Wonders, First Edition

Reviewed by Ted Bade

O'REILLY®

Authors: Robert Bruce Thompson, Barbara Fritchman Thompson

Publisher: O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596526856/index.html>

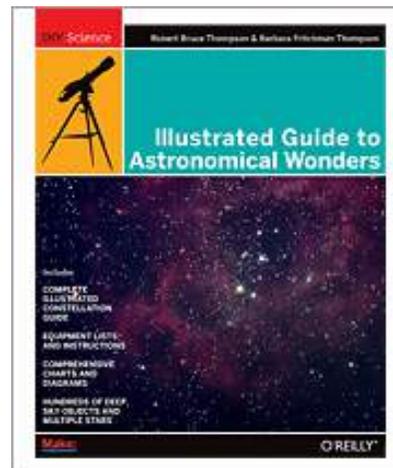
Released: October 2007

Pages: 519

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ISBN-13: 9780596526856



Audience: Beginner/Intermediate (with Astronomy)

Strengths: Easy to read, great charts and tables, Lots of useful information, makes creating an observation plan easy.



Weaknesses: Chapter organized alphabetically rather than by season.

Introduction

From the viewpoint of a person who is a relative novice to astronomy as a hobby, the *Illustrated Guide to Astronomical Wonders*, is just terrific! This book provides a wealth of information that anyone observing the night sky will find very useful. I found the information in this book a real benefit to my hobby and expect I will be making use of it for many years to come.

Other than a lot of physics in college, my formal education in Astronomy consists of a basic course taken at a local Community College. To compensate for this lack of knowledge, I have read a lot of books related to Astronomy. Only a couple of these books have stood out from the rest as valuable to me. The *Illustrated Guide to Astronomical Wonders* is one of these special books.

The authors of this book suggest that the observer should have a plan when observing. They suggest staying with one or perhaps a couple constellations and working with them in a night, rather than hopping all over the place. So their book presents the information about Deep Sky Objects (DSOs) in a constellation to constellation basis, although I have used observation lists, I have never tried their constellation method. With this book as a guide, I realize this will be an easy method to follow. My best observing sessions have been when I had a solid plan and the worse when I had no real plan and simply worked at random

This book essentially has two parts. The first part is an easy to read discussion of Astronomy as a hobby. It discusses observing techniques, and some basic information about Astronomy and observing Deep Sky Objects. This includes a brief yet informative discussion of various types of DSOs, and suggestions about observing sessions. There is also a nice chapter discussing the equipment needed for observations. Although the information in this section is brief, it is thorough. I wouldn't recommend it as a reference for making a purchase decision, but it does contain enough information to be a useful introduction and provides references to more detailed books on the subject.

You will find information on the various naming conventions and ways of classifying objects that Astronomers are so fond of. There is a little discussion on participating in several different formal observing programs (although not something I can participate in using my computerized telescope!). All useful information geared toward the beginner.

The second part of this book is the magical part. The authors provide 50 chapters, each on a different constellation. Each chapter describes a variety of DSOs and interesting multiple stars contained therein. The chapters are organized alphabetically using the name of the constellation.

Each chapter starts with an overview box which describes the constellation, when it is best suited for viewing, as well as listing the DSOs in this constellation and whether they are viewable with either binoculars or with typical urban sky pollution. The text of the chapter concerns the constellation, in general offering a little history as well as descriptions of the featured objects. There is also an overview table listing featured DSOs and multiple stars providing tabular information about them such as magnitude, size, location and so forth. This is followed by a drawn chart showing the relative locations of major stars and other objects in the constellation. Reading this first section gives one a great overview of what can be expected while exploring the constellation.

Moving deeper into the chapter, one finds a section describing each of the featured objects. There is a text description of the objects and some information about observing them. There is also two very valuable diagrams. One is an actual image (photo) of the object, the other is a zoomed in subsection of the constellation's chart, showing the relative location of the object. These two diagrams are very valuable to me as a beginner. Being able to see what the object looks like is very useful. Often, when looking for an object I have never seen before, I have absolutely no idea what to expect. While the image in the book will be a lot brighter than what I will see with my telescope, it gives me a great idea of what to expect. These aren't high end artistic images, but simple black and white images. I think these are a lot better for the beginning observer. With your amateur telescope, you are not going to see images like those printed from the Hubble. With a really good telescope, you might see more detail, but it's always going to be shades of grey. These images are more realistic and thus more valuable.

I must admit, I am a geek astronomer. I bought a computer-controlled telescope and use the computer to get me to most objects I view. However, the computer controls aren't perfect, since I didn't splurge on the GPS model. Finding the object is a function of how well the telescope has been aligned. Often the computer will get me to the area of the object and it is up to me to fine tune the position until I am actually see the object.

The chart provided in this book gives a nice close up view which corresponds to a lower powered eyepiece. With the eyepiece in the scope it becomes easier to shift the view this way and that until the object is located or at least the telescope is pointed in the right direction.

All this information makes for an extremely useful reference for any beginner. The objects the book considers are good for most locations (even urban skies) and don't require a large telescope to see, some are even viewable using binoculars.

There are a lot of objects features in this book. I am a novice enough not to know if any very important objects were left out of their lists, but I don't expect there are. Perhaps, after a few years of applying this book to my hobby, I might say, they should have included this or that object, for now I am very satisfied.

My only complaint about the book is that the constellations are arranged in the book alphabetically. This method might be good for a lot of material. However, I feel that for an Astronomy reference, the constellations should be organized by the season in which they are best viewed. As I write this review it is mid-December, I find myself with an evening free to observe and the skies are clear. Since I am new to astronomy, all those stars in the sky are so many bright lights. I don't know one constellation from another. If the constellations were organized by season, I could open the book to the winter season and select a couple of areas to investigate. Luckily, there is a chart organizing the constellations by date, starting with January and going to December. To make using this book easier, I might get four hi-liters and color code the beginning of each chapter by season!

Conclusion

The *Illustrated Guide to Astronomical Wonders* is a wonderful reference book. It is hard to stress enough how useful this book is to me as a novice observer. It is clearly written, easy to read, and offers both charts and diagrams to make an observation session as easy as possible. I highly recommend this book for any novice to astronomy. Even a somewhat experienced observer would probably find a lot of useful information in this book.

Camera Raw with Adobe CS2 (2nd edition)

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Bruce Fraser * (see note below)

Released: 2006

Pages: 314

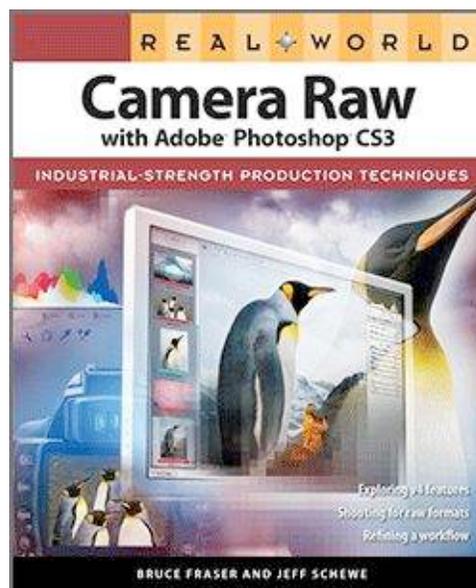
\$40 USD, \$56 CND, £56 GBP

ISBN: 0-321-33409-4

Publisher: Peachpit Press

<http://realworldcameraraw.com/>

(* note) Mr. Fraser passed away and Mr. Schewe continued with the current version below. This review is for a previous CS2 version. The CS3 version (see note below) is now available and has been improved.



Real World Camera Raw with Adobe Photoshop CS3

Authors: Bruce Fraser and Jeff Schewe

<http://www.peachpit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=03215186>

Released: November 7, 2007

Pages: 384 pages

\$45 USD

ISBN-10: 0-321-51867-5

ISBN-13: 978-0-321-51867-5

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced



Strengths: Stylizing the material in the book as a learning lab is a good idea. Color photos and screenshots. Uses Macintosh screens. Text works with shooting with RAW format, using Adobe DVG, automating image management task. Book applies to Windows and Apple users. Covers Photoshop, Bridge etc. and no other RAW converters. Editing images (Chapter 5) is nicely done.

Weaknesses: Text not screenshots and visuals are the main stay here. Wish there was more information in column and tables versus paragraphs. Several of the screenshots, especially the text within, are too small and difficult to read. if you are using other software other than Photoshop and Bridge this book may not be for you.

Introduction

Using RAW images gives a photographer more latitude to manipulate the images to make the photographs better. This book focuses principally upon the use of Adobe's standards browser called Adobe Bridge. The focus of this book is the demonstration, teaching and unlocking the full potential of your digital camera's raw camera raw file format. The main intent is for the

creation of the best-quality images for your photographs. And this book *Camera Raw with Adobe CS2*, takes us through the process of learning.

The author, an international authority on digital imaging and color image reproduction, is the author of other Photoshop books and contributor to online newsletters and websites. The book covers nine chapters and a preface. There is a nice index which is helpful.

The preface is devoted to communicating the process of using your camera and the RAW digital formatted photos within tools that are used in a photographic laboratory. The author nicely points out (p.xv) that your control of your resulting photos begins, not with Photoshop, but with optimizing the exposure and color balance first to produce the best photos you can. Insightful words like this point out the necessary rules needed to do the process right.

Real camera raw, Chapter 1, tells you about the nature of RAW images so you understand what this format as a rank beginner. Advantages for the Digital camera raw (Chapter 2) are nicely explained in this chapter. Chapter 3, How camera raw works, with Photoshop, the software Bridge, and Camera Raw plug-ins (small applications that allow Photoshop etc do other duties. This chapter communicates the pros and cons for the using of Adobe's new universal raw format DNG. Camera Raw plug-ins are highlighted even further in Chapter 4 (Camera raw controls) while Chapter 5, Hands-on camera raw, explores how to efficiently work with the features and edit what you capture. You learn all about the new browser in Chapter 6, Adobe Bridge.

Workflow is the catch all phrase for working with your applications in all ways by interdicting you to principals for guiding yourself through your work with RAW in Chapter 7, It's all about the workflow.

Chapter 8, Mastering metadata, helps the understanding of a new type of inner data called XMP (Extensible Metadata Platform) used to create, store and share files and information for your formatted photos. Chapter 9, Exploiting automation, has a wealth of information concerning converting images and more.

You have to forage through a lot of information and text. Some of the teaching process that espoused by the author is lost in the translation of the readings. Reading through the chapters is fine, but some of the "pearls of wisdom" don't stand out enough. Sometimes the author "does not get to the point" easily enough and the information gets a little "muddled".

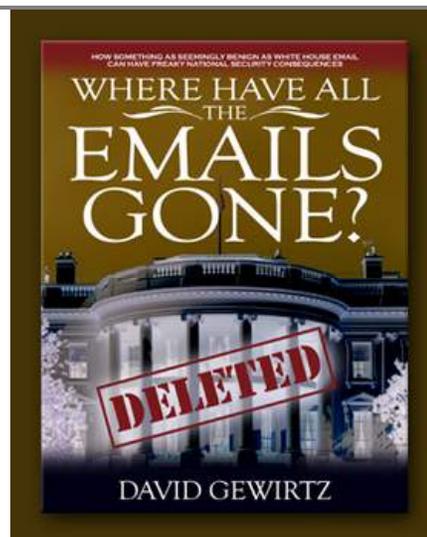
Conclusion

If you work with Photoshop (does not mention Photoshop Elements), then this might be a good book to wade through You can learn much of this book but you will have to "find it". It does not jump out at you. If you need a more visual text, along with more guidance this is not the book for you.

Where Have All the [Whitehouse] Emails Gone?
Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: David Gewirtz
<http://mediakit.zatz.com/>
<http://www.emailsgone.com>
Released: November 2 2007
Pages: 236
\$20 USD
ISBN-10: 0945266200
ISBN-13: 978-0945266204



Strengths: Discusses “White House” Email systems. Offers 6 recommendations.

Weaknesses: Misses the “Scary Thriller” Whodunit conclusion. Contains swearing. Doesn’t answer the question.

Introduction

“The White House claimed 5,000,000 emails may be missing. After unprecedented research, email expert David Gewirtz discovered the problem is about so much more than missing emails. Unchecked, some *really, really bad things could happen*...Learn about technical and security concerns that blast through political rhetoric and even party affiliation.”

About the book...

“Freaky National Security Consequences” is what I was wanting to read about and David Gewirtz does a great job painting some possible scenarios, but Tom Clancy really doesn’t have a thing to worry about because David attempts to look at the technology behind the obfuscation and supposed incompetence behind the scenes over the last few decades since Email was released as a public tool of communication.

Sorry David, but I expected more than a puff piece promoting the ZATZ Strategic Analysis Service and repeated print mantras on the book as not being a Hatchet Job of the Current Administration™ or nearly every chapter ending with “Tips from the ZATZ Magazines” and subscribe to any of 5 online magazines.

Heck, if this is how books are made today, I could do that with *macCompanion* magazine.

I expected this book to go deeper and explain perhaps the IT organization inside the White House and even perhaps name names and finger who the incompetent Email administrators and system upgrade technicians were that “dumped” Emails off machines. But then again, the US Government does seem to use “low bid” to get the job done, no matter how dumb the solution may be. I speak from personal experience working under the jurisdiction of the Dept of Energy when we were running the largest OS/2 site in the US and servers and systems were replaced with Microsoft technologies.

And then again, perhaps the underlying strategy continues to be “job security” for someone. I found “in the interest of National Security” tagging was mostly done to cover up costly, stupid mistakes and to protect ca-rears (pun intended).

David does mention every once in a while about the National Security Council, but I think if anyone really wanted an Email from 5 or 10 years ago, all one needs to really do is ask the NSA and get it from their super computers. That was not one of the 6 recommendations by David. Nor was switching platforms and moving to Macs, which is what I personally would have done for enterprise-level instead of moving from IBM’s business-grade secure and backed-up Lotus system to the wimpy not-ready-for-real-business Microsoft Outlook Email system, which is what was done in the White House.

Somebody has a lot of “splainin’ to do”, but sadly, David was not able to find them and get to the bottom of this issue. Granted, he was able to find a person known as “Deep Mail”, but I think David spent way too much time chasing the rabbit in the Alice in Wonderland and Karl Rove’s missing Blackberries, SMARTech and GWB43.com

I suspect that if David had been able to publish the missing pieces and tied up the loose threads in this book, that perhaps he would be found in a ditch somewhere.

A Disservice

Frankly, I found the book to have too much white space in it, both literally and figuratively. Perhaps there was some Intelligence Service editing that occurred. David double-spaced, large-typed the book and bloated it from pamphlet size to book size. And yes, it does look like a first attempt at hard-copy print by screen-scraping online info. And yes, this is his first book.

I also think he did a disservice to this case by constantly and repeatedly ad-nauseum referring to his own online magazines covering Domino, WebSphere, Outlook and his other magazine publications.

Each chapter repeatedly ends with “Go to emailgone.com” for the resource list.

The Web is the Book

Okay, I have promoted and lauded books that had lots of links in them tied to a dedicated website that was value-added to the printed version. I think David balanced the beam too far to the site. In this case, the printed version is nothing more than as a tool to push us to the website, because the site is where the missing images, graphics, and original documentation not printed in the book are located as an archive, so when the next Administration takes office, the documents will still be available to the public. I would have published those in an Addendum in the book.

Instead, David publishes 4 Appendices with “Letters from Deep Mail” a promo piece for InBoxer with an interview with Roger Matus as a solution for Email archiving and retrieval (and for the Windows environment there are quite a few other “solutions” as well), lessons learned for companies so they don’t make the same mistakes as the White House and another interview, this time with Marie Patterson with her solution from ASX-One for records management and compliance.

Conclusion

David wrote;

“One final thought. Many books offer "companion sites" that are accessible only to purchasers of the book they accompany. I decided to make our companion online resources available to everyone. This subject is so important that I felt I should put the supporting research out for public review rather than hide it away just for those who bought the book. Even so, it *will* make much more sense if you do read the book.”

Yes, that may be true. My suggestion is that you read the book in front of your computer to get the gist. This is a snapshot in time and may well be totally irrelevant in about 5 more years, but then again, if any of the worst-case scenarios kick in, then David will be lauded for common-sense sleuthing and he can say; “ I told you so”.

I hope that David’s formal recommendations are accepted, which boil down to one IT team being responsible for Email administration and chasing down “lost” communications devices and amending the Hatch Act to include secured communications with Email included, political or not. By the way, where is the Secret Service in all of this anyway?

And perhaps David Gewirtz can do some investigative journalism and get his long list of unanswered questions truthfully answered. How fitting that he printed the laundry list of those questions in “Chapter 13”.

Recommendation

I didn't care for the cussing, the repeated self-promotion, the book format (bloated white space) and lack of resolutions to serious problems. David's Windows-based centricity shows, because that is his meat and potatoes. Hey, if Macs are good enough for the Marines and Army, why are they not good enough solutions for the White House?

The last I checked, the NSA answered to the President of the US and if anybody should be handling the ebb and flow of information from the White House, they should be handling it with their experts instead of the Email admin being handled through off-site 3rd-party services. That is just an accident waiting to happen. Oh wait...

FileMaker Pro 9: The Missing Manual

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

O'REILLY®

Authors: Geoff Coffey and Susan Prosser

O'Reilly Media

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596514136/index.html>

Released: August, 2007

Pages: 799

\$35 USD, \$42 CND

ISBN: 0-596-51413-1

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Book covers the breadth and depth with the learning how to start and utilize FileMaker Pro for many of your database needs. Ample sized screenshots, good index and titling on the bottom of the pages and on top helps understand what sections you are currently in. Good for novice to advanced users. New features of this version are highlighted for casual, intermediate and advanced users.

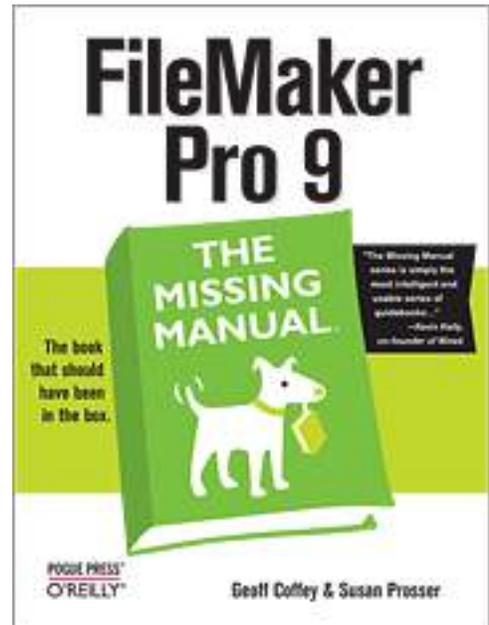
Weaknesses: Would have liked to have seen more pointers in screenshots to highlight what is being talked about. Color would have been nice but the black and white screenshots and illustrations etc. are easy to read.

Introduction

The software

I have loved working with databases for years. The Clarisworks and Appleworks databases were fun and easy to use compared to PC based databases. I liked creating the databases, filling in the fields and then sorting, filing and arranging records for home, school and personal needs. I even used such a database to track, file and sort data for my Computer Simulation dissertation.

But for few years, my work with databases lagged due to other work, the internet and more. FileMaker Pro versions were being used since the 1980's. FileMaker Pro is a database application (a program for storing any collections of information and is compatible with both Mac OS X and Windows computers and used worldwide. It is known for being easy to use and powerful as well. But FMP is different then Appleworks.



FMP is a relational databases, which are collections of files that can share data (invoice numbers, business data, etc.) which can link important information together, such as inventory, or shipping and handling data or sort and file customer or student data. In my (former) school district (on Macintosh), the expert FMP person who worked there gushed about its ability to keep track of all sorts of records for special education students and finding and sorting data. This made me think about working with an application “like the big Boys”. I wanted a database application that was fun, fairly easy to use, one that could be used more readily by both PC and Mac. I found FileMaker Pro was one that I thought could meet the need and has been used for many years both on PCs and Macintosh.

I tried FileMaker Pro 6 but found it cumbersome compared to Appleworks. But later versions of FMP added graphic interfaces and the ability to create and integrate tables, files scripts, additional fields of data and were supposedly more friendly. I needed to look further at the new version of the and then found version, FileMaker Pro 9. So I decided to try a trial version (available at the site).

There were several important new features and add-ons. Now different areas of information could be integrated within a PDF file so that several were in one file. In addition, a programmable type language called SQL (scriptable query language), which was a prominent feature with many other non FMP databases, was added. I heard the learning curve was on the difficult side. While I have programmed BASIC and other language, I wondered if I could make sense of some this language, uses and abilities.

The Missing Manual series of books

This series is authored by David Pogue, the New York Times Technology columnist. He continues to be the author at the helm of this series of books. The Missing Manual series say on the front cover of the books that this book and the series “should have been in the box”. This series of books are self help guidebooks for learning how to use software and hardware. These guides are meant to assist with taking more out of the guesswork and the learning with more than the meager original documentation or manuals. I like some of the series of these themed books that I have read.

The Book

The two authors, developers of FMP for many year, Geoff Coffey (IT director and manager for FileMaker Pro systems) and Susan Prosser (a journalist turned FileMaker Pro enthusiast) produces the guide. There are also seven other people credited with developing this book as well.

They have written this 799-pages guide, which has an introduction and six parts divided into nineteen chapters. Another part is Appendix: A (good section on how to get help) and B (error code information). Black on white text and screenshots are peppered inside the chapters.

Color would have been nice but the (Apple OSX) screenshots are very readable with crisp easy to read text. Extra information (entitled either Up to Speed, Power Users Guide, Gem in the Rough, Don't Panic, and FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) are helpful and were integrated into different parts of the chapters.

It is helpful that the chapter titles are on the bottom of the left hand side of the pages while above in dark blue are specific titles for the areas within the chapters that are targeted for that section. I would have liked that the chapter headings were listed on the bottom left hand pages, to know within what section I was in, but possibly that is quibbling. Every little bit helps in finding the information you want and the nice index helps as well. I was most interested in the new developments that this FMP9 version has brought to learning and using databases.

In the introduction (page 4), I found explicit facts about new or updated features. Nine are listed for common users of FMP (ex. more options on new file and quickstart, enhanced web viewing options, multiple levels undo and redo, and others. For database developers there were nine features, three regarding the developer tools and four for new features on sharing databases

Part 1 starts off with Introduction to FMP creating a record of a database, adding, more records and learning how to organize and edit the records. There is nice information on (page 39) how multiple windows can be used with the same database and switch back and forth (which can save time). Novice users will like the information concerning the understanding and learning how to organize and edit records (Chapter 2) . Chapter 3 includes Building a new database and while it is good, shouldn't this one have come earlier, next to Chapter 2. Possibly when you get going, this book is meant to be a guide to "skip" around and not to be read in a sequential fashion. But I think in some case and depending on what kind of database you are working, it is good to hop around in this guide.

There is a good advice good job of explaining about database requests for multiple types of data. Sorting records, especially on multiple fields, is very useful when you have many records. To a great extend, the authors explain the needs and how to accomplish with one or more fields, to find the records desired. Most importantly, details concerning sorting are well done and included.

In Part 2, you learn about the layout basics, creating databases and advanced layout reports. It seems easy enough but where and how you place your data for viewing, entering and utilizing your database is very important. Here you learn how to start from the ground up and make your database a winner without having to change or redo it over again.

Part 3 poses interesting information about the use of multiple tables and the understanding of introductory "relational databases" as well as advanced techniques. I really liked how this information was explained and how databases can and should be modeled. While many of the advanced techniques are "out of my league" for now, intermediate and advanced users will enjoy the readings.

Part 4 is all about calculations as mathematical manipulation is part of using databases to find and orchestrate what you would like to find and understand. I have dabbled and used spreadsheet functions and operations for programming and this chapter gave me a better understanding how calculations within databases could be used.

Part 5 featured scripting. These chapters begin with learning about scripts for the first time, creating and running a new script and leading up to more advanced techniques.

The focus on Part 6 is security and sharing your databases, developing utilities”. One chapter (17) that peaked my interest was this one concerning “exporting and importing files”, Since I have FileMaker Pro 6 files, I was glad to know that my current work could be upgraded and imported to take advantage of the extra flexibility and power of FileMaker Pro 9. Unless you are hard core user and intend to work with Oracle and Microsoft SQL , you would want skip this section on SQL. But for those who want that information it is here and informative.

Conclusions

The Missing Manual series is a collection of good and useful books. They serve a need by acting as guides for learning and more easily accessing information about your application that is not usually supplied by manuals that come with software. The authors in the series and in this manual, do a great job and go “above and beyond”. For novice to advanced users, this book’s details and the authors’ added guidance and instruction will give your a better understanding how to create and use your databases, but doing them right and advancing your skills along the way.

This book for FileMaker Pro 9: The Missing Manual is no exception. It offers breadth and depth and worthwhile background and clues for learning and developing your databases. The price of the book is right, the instruction and detail are well done. Why wait? Take the step towards learning how to make your databases like a pro and with FileMaker Pro 9: The Missing Manual.

This really can be quite helpful if you actually go through them, because they do drive home important aspects not only of the application, but the theory behind it. For example, one of the questions in the first chapter on working with photos is “What is the rule of thirds and how can it improve your pictures”.

Obviously the authors are not only trying to teach you the material, but by being certified as an Apple Training product, it is designed so you can teach others what you have learned. Therefore, it will most likely instruct you on questions that others may ask you about the material.

The lessons cover four general areas: still images, movies, music, and publishing.

- Working with Photos you will learn how to import, organize, search, keyword, edit and archive your pictures. Slideshows, cards, picture books, calendars and web gallery’s are also covered.
- Creating Simple Movies you start working with video, though it will combine still photos, music, special effects, graphics and titles. This is perhaps one of the most important sections of the book, as it covers the new iMovie. Love it or hate it, it is in the iLife suite, and can actually be quite powerful. As intuitive and easy it is to use, instruction is needed now more than ever to gain full use of the program.
- Composing and Arranging Music actually teaches you to build an original score for the movie you just made. Believe me, it’s far easier than it looks! You’ll also record an original podcast and create music for it.
- Going Public. Finally you put it all together. Using all the applications and media that you have created earlier, you’ll build a web site with dynamic content, publish a blog, have web albums and a podcast. In the end you use iDVD to build a DVD menu for your movie.

Conclusion

If you want or need to learn all aspects of iLife ’08, then I can recommend without reservation this book. The included DVD has all the material you need to proceed through all the lessons. Also, the media included on the DVD is not professionally produced. It’s pretty much exactly what you would expect coming out of your camera or camcorder. This will challenge you to use the tools available to try and make the most of what you currently have.

A learn at your own pace, step by step approach to real–world practical training. Apart from being in a classroom, possibly the best training you can get from a book!

The LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT Idea Book

Reviewed by Michael Potter



Contributors: Martijn Boogaarts, Jonathan A. Daudelin, Brian L. Davis, Jim Kelly, David Levy, Lou Morris, Fay Rhodes, Rick Rhodes, Matthias Paul Scholz, Christopher R. Smith, Rob Torok.

Forward by: Chris Anderson

Publisher: No Starch Press

www.nostarch.com

Released: September 2007

Pages: 368

\$30 USD, \$36 CND

ISBN: 1-59327-150-6

ISBN-13: 978-1-59327-150-3

Audience: Intermediate

Strengths: Excellent background information, clear concise illustrations, not overly laden with technical jargon, handy reference charts and worksheets, lay-flat binding.

Weaknesses: would like a few more pages devoted to programming and design.

Introduction

When the first LEGO MINDSTORMS set was released back in 1998, it revitalized the LEGO building community, sparking a whole new way of thinking about what these familiar, nubby-headed blocks could do. But then, in 2006, LEGO took the concept further, introducing LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT, a set that incorporated many of the changes suggested by MINDSTORMS hobbyists, updated programming methods, a Bluetooth interface, as well as a new style of LEGO bricks. These new bricks no longer sported the long-familiar buttons on top, but, instead, used a whole-brick connection method that allowed for much stronger robots that held together better when in operation.

Born from The NXT STEP blog, *The LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT Idea Book* is written in a technical, but easy to understand language to help enhance your experiences with LEGO's next generation robotics kit.

LEGO lovers never grow up, but our tastes do become more sophisticated, so we seek out projects of a scale much larger than sets based on the latest Harry Potter movie.



The LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT robotics sets provide a way for LEGO lovers to bring their creations to this next level.

In this book...

If you typically like to jump right into your projects, you may be tempted to flip ahead to Part II of *The LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT Idea Book* and start building robots – and that would be fine – but you'd miss the ton of great information found in the first part of the book.

Divided into eight chapters, Part I, *Beyond the Basics*, gives a great introduction to the MINDSTORMS concepts, delves into programming and design methods, covers problems you're likely to run into when building your own robots and, of course, provides solutions to those problems.

Being new to the MINDSTORMS system, but not to LEGO bricks, I really appreciated the history of the sets and clear explanations for what is contained in each of the different versions of the MINDSTORMS NXT kits as well as information on third-party sellers of add-ons not officially sanctioned by LEGO.

For those new to NXT-G, the programming language used to give “brains” to your artificial life forms, Chapters 2 – 4 are fantastic walk throughs of basic programming concepts such as branching and sequences, block structures and loops and switches. Not intended to be exhaustive tutorials, the hints and tips provided serve as an adjunct to the online help built into the software downloaded from LEGO for use with the NXT brick.

Chapters 5 and 6 delve into the hardware you'll be using to construct MINDSTORMS robots. All good information for new builders to understand, these chapters cover each of the sensors provided, detail their intended use, discuss blocks types that can be used to program them, as well as potential drawbacks to the sensors – such as the inability to use the sound sensor for a true voice recognition system. Design is also given due consideration as each part's native function, software-enhanced function and known physical limitations are charted for easy reference. Offering guidance to novice builders, the authors cover creating a design concept, prototyping your robot, testing your robot, and the inevitable repairs and design changes needed when something goes wrong. And it will. Worksheets are provided at the back of Chapter 6 that will come in handy as you embark on your own projects.

Bluetooth is new to the MINDSTORMS NXT system and Chapter 7 is dedicated to making connections from your Mac or PC to the NXT computer module. With a slight nod to the Mac's inherent Bluetooth connectivity prowess, I had to chortle when I noticed the Mac connection instructions covered barely one page (with half the page taken up by a single screenshot) compared to the two pages of instructions and screenshots required for Windows. Once again, the Mac's ease of use prevails!

One of the benefits of Bluetooth enabled robots is inter-NXT communication. Though perhaps a bit advanced for novice users (mostly because multiple kits are needed to accomplish this), the latter half of Chapter 7 covers the important things to note when attempting these types of connections, including the use of a “master” brick to act as gatekeeper for sending messages to, and between, multiple “slave” bricks.

Because the idea of communications among bricks happening via “mailboxes” can be complicated, the inclusion of this information is important to help those new to the system grasp the concept more readily.

Chapter 8, NXT to NXT Remote Control – allowing one robot to control another – is an interesting one because it takes an idea that early fans of the MINDSTORMS NXT system had, and explains how they tackled the issue, the programming behind it, troubleshooting, and potential improvements. For the most part, this chapter takes everything we learned in the first seven chapters and puts it to practical use. And, again, the authors use their own experiences to encourage us to embark on our own.

Part II, The Robots, includes instruction for building eight MINDSTORMS NXT robots. Some of my favorites include the ScanBot, a Slot Machine, a 3D PhotoBot and RaSPY, the Rock, Paper, Scissors robot.

Each robot has its own chapter that's broken down into construction of the bot and programming its actions. For the more complex bots, the building process is further broken down into subassemblies. Giving us more than step by step illustrations, the more challenging robotic projects detail some of the issues encountered as the robots were built, such as the reels of the slot machine needing to be square rather than round and the requirement that the lever withstand multiple pulls without coming apart. Even getting Marty the performing robot to hold its pen (I suppose I should say “his” pen) proved difficult. Challenges were also presented in the form of coding the bots to behave as expected, and those are covered as well. Detailing their difficulties getting the robots to work properly is an invaluable learning tool for someone like me who often learns best through trial and error.

One of the things I like most about the construction half of the book is that the writers not only give you the steps to construct your robot and program it, but they go out of their way to delve a bit into the logic behind what they've done. This makes the programming of your robots a much more educational process and serves to spark your own creative juices to expand the given projects or come up with some of your own. In addition, the writers also present many of their own ideas for plussing the robotic creations.

Conclusion

If you've recently purchased the LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT kit or are simply exploring the idea of getting one, I think you'll want to add this book to your shelves. The first half of the book, combined with the appendices, more than stoked my fires for getting the set myself. And, with the information given comparing the two sets to choose from (educational vs. retail) as well as LEGO's own Resource Kit, I feel I'm well prepared to do so. The robots found in Part II, provide a good, and logically progressive, introduction to building with the MINDSTORMS NXT set and, after going through their projects, I'd feel more than comfortable enough to use them as building blocks for “plussed” bots or to strike out on my own.

Recommendation

So much of what you read in this book is about sharing ideas and, indeed, that was the genesis of the book itself: LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT enthusiasts sharing ideas and realizing they had something bigger on their hands. The infectious enthusiasm for the LEGO robotics kits comes through in the authors' writing and will very quickly get you itching to build your own robots to share.

Mac OS X Leopard Phrasebook – Essential Codes and Commands – Developer Library Series

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Brian Tiemann

Addison-Wesley Professional

<http://www.awprofessional.com>

<http://www.informit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0672329549>

\$620 USD, \$14CND, £14 GBP, €14,67 Euro

Published: November 26, 2007

Pages: 320

ISBN-10: 0672329549

ISBN-13: 978-0672329548

Strengths: Presents Command Line phrases for the non-GUI side of Mac OS X.

Weaknesses: None found.

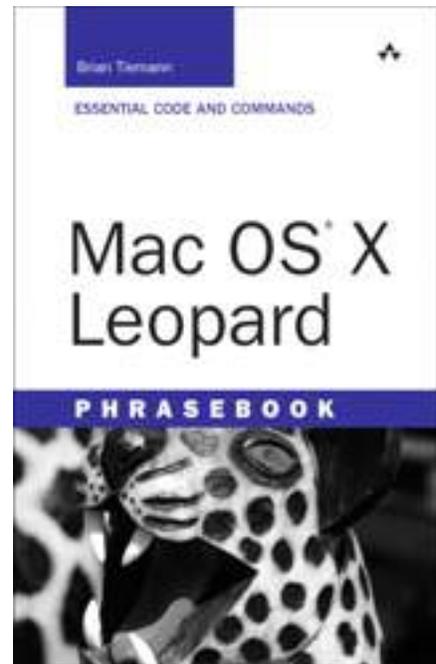
Introduction

“Mac OS X Leopard Phrasebook gives you the complete command phrases you need to take full advantage of the Leopard’s hidden and undocumented power underneath the graphical user interface: time-saving solutions for effectively working with files, folders, the Finder, Spotlight, text files, servers, disks, CDs/DVDs, permissions, printing, applications, Exposé, networking, security, etc.”

About the book...

Impress your geeky Linux friends with command line interface (CLI) phrases that puts you squarely in their camp. This will quiet the “Linux will rule!” Linux fanatics and stop them cold because you can do what they can do.

Do everything in the CLI that you can do under the GUI side of Mac OS X using the keyboard instead of the mouse.



Do you think I'm kidding? Try editing a text file in Nano (enhancement of Pico and replacement for vi). Stop paying for upgrades to Stufit and do compressed Zip and archiving or learn to ping for network connectivity and transfer files securely using SCP instead of SFTP. No, it is not that hard to do.

Conclusion

Get geeky with this book. With codes and commands.

Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Visual QuickStart Guide

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2007

Author: Maria Langer

Peachpit Press:

<http://www.peachpit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0321496000>

Released: October 25, 2007

Pages: 696; **Product Dimensions:** 8.8 x 6.9 x 1.3 inches

List \$24.99, Street \$16.49 USD, \$26.99 CND, £17.90 UK, €20.90

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0321496000

ISBN-13: 978-0321496003

Audience: Beginner/Intermediate

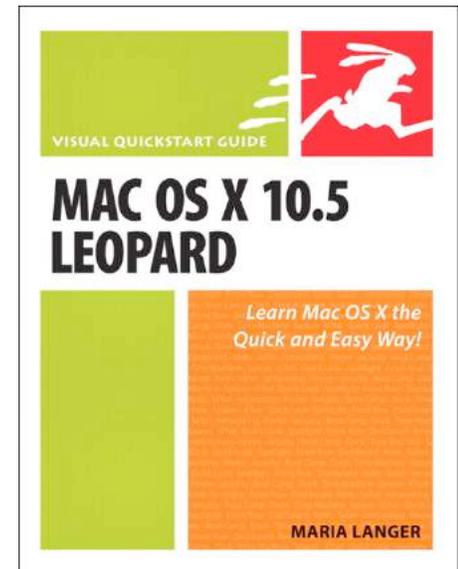
Strengths: Provides a well-organized, relatively in-depth look at Apple's new Leopard OS. The coverage of material in the book is both broad and focused making this either a useful book for beginners or for intermediate Macintosh users.

Weaknesses: Some of the grey-scale images are hard to read. The book seem to be more hurried and pedantic, perhaps stogy is the right word, than is Ms. Langer's usual style making a bit harder to read. Her other books have a lighter touch to the narratives.

Publisher's Book Background

Apple's next version of its OS, code-named Leopard, will keep Mac users in the forefront of making the most from their computers. Respected, best-selling author Maria Langer takes readers through Mac OS X's groundbreaking capabilities, including new applications such as Time Machine and Spaces and revamped applications such as Mail, Dashboard, Spotlight, and iCal. With plenty of screenshots to clearly illustrate techniques, this reasonably priced guide is a great reference to the essentials of Mac OS X Leopard.

- Easy visual approach uses pictures to guide you through Mac OS X and show you what to do.
- Concise steps and explanations let you get up and running in no time.
- Companion Web site offers tips, links, updates, and more at www.marialanger.com/category/book-support/macosquickstart/.



Introduction

Although I have not yet adopted Leopard, when all the critical or well-favored software I use becomes Leopard ready, I surely will. As a result, call it a training exercise; I've been reviewing some of the books published about this new OS. Langer takes readers through Mac OS X's groundbreaking, Vista outpacing, capabilities, including new applications such as Time Machine and Spaces and revamped and enriched applications such as Mail, Dashboard, Spotlight, and iCal.



In this review, I discuss Ms. Langer's book from the perspective of three kinds of users who should be its audience. I group together folks who are either new to the Macintosh, but have experience on a Windows PC, and those folks who have had little previous experience on any computer. These I classify as beginners. Then, I provide chapter-reading suggestions for folks who are already familiar with the earlier versions of Macintosh OS X. I designate these as intermediate users.

Advanced users of the Macintosh are such an eclectic group, that I refuse to try to classify them. Some of Ms. Langer's material will likely be useful to them, but they have access to a broader selection of reference materials than the usual user, so I don't specifically recommend the book to them, after all they were likely among the Leopard beta testers.

In this book...

At 696 pages, this is probably the most detailed book I'm likely to read about Leopard. Although with the exceptions noted at the end of this review, I read or skimmed the book from cover to cover. My overall impressions of each chapter of the book are noted at the end of the review, as part of annotations to its table of contents at the end of this review.

There, I add my thoughts about the rich materials Ms. Langer presents as summary annotations to the Table of Contents. Instead of cover to cover descriptions, often provided in book reviews, I focus on your, the readers, knowledge base as you start to work with *Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Visual QuickStart Guide*.

In addition to the main narratives, and succinct examples, Ms. Langer provides tips that serve either to cross reference, or clarify added features of the materials she discusses. No these are not the kind of *further out* tips provided by Scott Kelby, but are useful nevertheless.

New Macintosh Users and Belt and Suspenders Folks Careful Folks — Folks new to the Macintosh or just to OS X should read the introduction and Chapters 1 through 20, and chapter 27. But take your time – chew the material in small bites, there's a lot there to scan; and you can get comfortably using your Macintosh by focusing on Chapters 1-6, 10-12, 17, and parts of 18 and 19. The basis for my selection of these chapters is that you're likely to want to write stuff, browse the internet, send and receive mail from your friends and coworkers, and file the stuff you created where



you can find it again.

You will initially want to skip Advanced Finder Techniques (Chapter 7), Customizing the Finder (Chapter 8), and Fonts (Chapter 16). There are also well written chapters that may apply to your computer's configuration. Those could include Networking (Chapter 20), Multiple Users (Chapter 21), as well as the excellent chapter on Mac OS X Utilities (Chapter 24) that I found new users seldom needed.

Intermediate Level Macintosh and PC User Switchers — I suggest readers familiar with Tiger or Panther and the in general with the Macintosh, check out the early chapters (Introduction and Chapter 1) of the book to familiarize themselves with the OS's new features and setup. Some PC user might be able to limit their reading to the chapters I recommend for intermediate level users. Then skip around the other chapters to review the OS's features that are most useful to you. My choices, as an intermediate level computer user, whose operating systems knowledge skills have evolved from Classic, and Jaguar through Tiger, would be Advanced Finder Techniques (Chapter 7), Front Row (Chapter 13), Mac OS X Applications (Chapter 14), Security Features (Chapter 22), Systems Preferences Chapter (23), and Automation Tools (Chapter 25).

In addition because Leopard has introduced some significant new features, I suggest:

- Skimming Chapter 4 – Window Views (CoverFlow)
- Searching for Files (Chapter 5 to read and learn the new features of a more powerful Spotlight)
- Desktop Management (Chapter 9) Stacks and Spaces
- Dashboard (Chapter 15) especially if you were a Windows XP user
- Printing and Faxing (Chapter 17) for XP users because its so much easier on a Macintosh

In these recommendations, I assume the some of you are sufficiently familiar with nuances and system graphic user interface conventions on a windows PC, therefore using a Macintosh becomes merely learning to feel comfortable with the alternate interface and operating system conventions. If not, do not pass go, but read the materials I recommend to less experienced users.

Note: If you, a PC user, want to use some of your favorite windows applications on your Intel Macintosh, read Boot Camp (Chapter 26) Apples PC emulation software, but don't forget to check out the emulation alternatives such as Parallels Desktop (<http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/21252/parallels-desktop>)

Note: But leave the book near your computer, as you get comfortable with Leopard, you want to again refer to it to broad you knowledge and skills in the new OS.

Disappointments and Discomforts — None of these items are showstoppers but they were sufficiently in my face for me to take note of them as I read the book.

Difficult to Read Images — Although there are plenty of screenshots to illustrate techniques, I found some, to many for my taste, of them hard to read even with the extra-bright setting of my reading lamp using a magnifying glass. This shortfall, common to the VQSG series, provides a half of a vertical page for use with grey scale images. Printing the book 2/3-page size landscape-mode would add more space for busy images without doing too much damage to book length.



Figure 5 Choosing Show All from a Spotlight's menu of found items displays the items in a search results window.

What's New in Leopard – Too little attention is given to the features, not Apple's claim to 300 such items, which are new in Leopard, as compared to Tiger. It would be easier for intermediate users had Ms. Langer used an icon top labels those features that are truly new.

New and Enhanced Spotlight Features — I, as have others, have previously avoided this search tool because of its limitations even compared to some of the find file features in Classic. However in Leopard, has enhanced spotlights usefulness, without requiring a third party tool such as HoudahSpot <http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/21333/houdahspot> and EasyFind <http://www.macupdate.com/info.php/id/11076/easyfind/>. Alas this point, doing Boolean searches and greater ability to search for phrases, was not brought to clearly into the light in Chapter 5.

Completeness of Some Discussion Topics—At times Ms. Langer seem to cut off a discussion before providing the reader even a basic definition of a term or function definition for a given subject.

What follows is my random pick of a dozen or so lapses from taken my notes. Such lapses include, for example, why use spotlight privacy, not telling users that the backup drive for Time Machine needs to be at least 1.5X the size of the source drive. Furthermore, why smooth fonts, share that Leopard now includes a thesaurus, and why doesn't the text locate the typography panel. Ms. Langer could have, as have other Peachpit authors, provided cross references or recommendations to other Peachpit books that could provide greater insight to some of the Leopard features. [E.g., Ben Waldie's book on Automator.]

General: Computer Security — As a tip or better yet in an appendix, I would have liked Ms. Langer to deal with other computer risks. For example, the perils of virus's and their bedfellows, avoiding or deleting spam, checking for and eliminating possible spyware, or the warning symptoms of phishing. Why, although the Macintosh has been relatively free of the more hazardous of these attacks, the combination of an Intel platform and its increasing popularity will make it more attractive to future malware and attacks.

Conclusion

Whether you're new to the OS, or an experienced Macintosh OS X user ready to hone your skill in this newly released OS, pick up a Peachpit book today to get the most out of the powerful features in Leopard. This reasonably priced guide is a very good overall introduction and subsequent reference to the essentials of this Apple's latest major release of Mac OS X, designated Leopard. Although I found some of the graphics very difficult to use, even with a magnifying glass, the text was so well and clearly written. That and my familiarity with the previous Mac OS X systems became less of a problem than it might have been.

Overall, I found my self rapidly skimming the materials I was familiar with or could project about a given Leopard feature. I only studied materials that were either new, or were OS functions I ignored in Tiger. A new user can focus on areas they wish to learn, most of which are that the front of the book. More advanced users of Leopard can pick and chose the subjects they need to lean about. Therefore, this longish detailed, but well written book will became a reference source for future learning.

Recommendation

Although they're a large number of fine books on Leopard that have been published, Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Visual QuickStart Guide would be a useful book to add to your collection. It is a more detailed and more core operating system, rather than multimedia applications oriented book than the Robin Williams' *Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Peachpit Learning Series* I reviewed last month. It is well worth the investment and will serve a useful reference guide well after you've begun to master Leopard, at least until Apple frees its next cat.

Table of Contents — Doc's Annotation

Introduction:	A nice, must read overview for all who have not been following MacWorld or Mac Life's treatment of Leopard. After all, the chapters that follow expand about the new and old OS X features making learning more an easy task.
New Features in Mac OS X	
Chapter 1: Setting Up Mac OS X 10.5	An adequate but simple introduction, better treated in Joe Kissell's <i>Take Control of Upgrading to Leopard</i> . My concern is that the update to and setting up Leopard is a bit more complex that Ms. Langer implies. This is the only chapter where Ms. Langer shortchanges and reader running earlier versions of OS X.
Chapter 2: Finder Basics	Simple, sweet and to the point, a fine introduction to the Apple Finder application.
Chapter 3: File Management	Except for the materials on pathnames, the chapter provides more than enough information to get one understanding how the Macintosh file/folder system is organized. This then allows a user to get started working with its navigational features like moving items around or deleting them. Except when writing tips, I find pathnames of little use, but you may.
Chapter 4: Window Views	The descriptions of the views are well written. I continue to be amazed that authors of OS related books seem to emphasizes icon view when most heavy users know that there is greater flexibility in viewing windows containing dozens of items, in list or column view. In addition, MS Langer does her best to add joy to the new CoverFlow view, which is mostly wasted iCandy.

Table of Contents — Doc's Annotation

Chapter 5: Searching for Files	An excellent overall description of the tools Apple provides for searching for information on your hard drive and connected servers. I might even give Spotlight another try when I upgrade to Leopard.
Chapter 6: Storage Media	A fine introduction to this material which includes burning CD/DVDs, using disk utility and Apple's new backup software, Time Machine
Chapter 7: Advanced Finder Techniques	A chapter to learn more about the Finder's abilities including file compression and aliases.
Chapter 8: Customizing the Finder	Making the finder you're own, something useful, but limited by Apple implementation, therefore search out hacks if you want to increase customization. Never the less well-done and clearly explained material.
Chapter 9: Desktop Management	Stacks, Exposé and Spaces; more Apple iCandy some of you may learn to love. My first act, using third party software, when working with Leopard will be to revert back to Tiger's dock and turning off any shortcuts that access the other two features. Despite that the material is well presented for folks who prefer to manage their desktop access and file systems with these tools.
Chapter 10: Application Basics	This chapter is a must read; despite the fact you may think you know it all. Sometimes it makes sense to reread material you know. An alternate description like Ms Langer's can provide you with tools you've forgotten about.
Chapter 11: Using Text Edit	Text Edit is becoming a more powerful tool and well-integrated writing tool and will serve those who neither need MS Word or Apple's Page '08. The narrative is logical, well illustrated making learning this OS included text processor software an easy task.
Chapter 12: Information Management	Although the title is misleading, the chapter focuses on both personal information management, your address book and calendar as well as the ability to synchronize that information between your computer and other devices such as an iPod. Although not mentioned, you also need to manage the other information you collect ranging from email, correspondence and articles on your hobbies and interests. Relative to learning the operating system, such information is not a key element in this book, nor should it be.
Chapter 13: Front Row	Front Row, iTunes and DVD player serve to serve up your media collection. Since I don't use my computer for this purpose, I was free to enjoy Ms. Langer's lucid narratives.
Chapter 14: Mac OS X Applications	Apple's operating systems have long come with applications that add utility to your computer. Examples include playing chess, doing calculations, looking up words, including the previously mentioned address book and calendar. This is where you learn more about them.
Chapter 15: Dashboard	Dashboard, my least favorite apple application serves to give you quick and easy access to mini applications called widgets. Widgets can work alone (stock market, weather, currency converter or Wiktionary) or provide instant access to your other applications such as iTunes, Address Book, and iCal, giving you access to the more commonly used features. The few widgets I use, I've concerted to WidgiApps, which sit in a folder in my dock without needing to overlay my desktop with an ugly dashboard.

Chapter 16:
Fonts

The Leopard uses a variety of tools to utilize, access and control the font you use to both view and print your documents. Apple install fonts needed by the operating system and those useful in the various text oriented application you may use. In addition some applications like MS Office also install font the developer believes will make their software tools more attractive. Finally there are fonts, for or for sale, that allow you to create desktop publishing design oriented and output these more unique and hopefully attractive documents. All of these live in various folders that are part of the operating system. In this chapter, you can learn the where's and what's of font use, but how to organize these fonts into more useful sets tuned to you third party applications. The chapter is an excellent introduction to Leopard's font capability.

Chapter 17:
Printing and Faxing

According to folks more knowledgeable than I, it is easier to print and fax on a Macintosh than on a PC. Never the less, reading this chapter will simply your leaning how to do both. The chapter covers both solo users with home printers to folks who can access network printers. Yep, if you use it, read it. Then do it.

Chapter 18:
Connecting to the Internet
Chapter 19:
Internet Applications

You know the routine; you email, browse the internet, access remote servers such as .Mac and perhaps chat. Although the browser information is Macintosh centric, mail and Safari, there much they're to use to understand and generalize about relative third party products such as Firefox and MS Entourage. This is an excellent introduction to this class of products

Chapter 20:
Networking

Alas, I am not knowledgeable about this subject so almost skipped it. However since I share a printer with my grandson's Macintosh, set up by his Apple certified father, I gave it a quick skim. Alas this did not sink in, since I had no foreseeable need for the information.

Chapter 21:
Multiple Users

I am the only user of my computer, so only skimmed the chapter. The information seems clearly written and well organized.

Chapter 22:
Security Features

Once again, a fast read. My security system (hardware firewall) has been set up to meet the more stringent requirements of a major corporation. I've never book comfortable with the all or nothing features of Apples Firewall not with Key chain's interface, so keep my passwords and sensitive information in a well-encrypted folder.

I do worry about other security related items maintain current antivirus software, use a powerful spam blocker, practicing safe browsing (don't download anything from a stranger's site) and never accept an unknown or money oriented email offer without independently checking.

Chapter 23:
Systems Preferences

Alas, these subjects were out of the scope of the book. A wonderful chapter on these underutilized tools for both personalization and access.

Chapter 24:
Mac OS X Utilities

Lesser know utilities which hide in the Applications folder of your Hard drive [e.g., Your Drive > Applications > Utilities] that can serve more knowledgeable users for trouble shooting and accessing the OS's more advanced features such as the Terminal.

Chapter 25:
Automation Tools

Prior to apples more recent operating systems, if you wanted to automate a series of keyboard and/or menu options you needed a third party macro tool. Apple has provided two such tools in Tiger and Leopard, called Automator and Apple Script. If a have need for such functionality this chapter will get you started.

Chapter 26:
Boot Camp

Want to run PC applications on your Intel Macintosh; Apple's Boot Camp application is one way to go. According to MS. Langer, it's not as hard as its name implies.

Chapter 27:
Getting Help

Why berate the obvious, don't wait until you get confused or have a problem to read this chapter. It focuses on troubleshooting using the Mac Help System. Ms. Langer's chapter merely introduces this subject, which has been more seriously discussed in other books.

Appendix A:
Menus and Keyboard Equivalentents

A useful addition for those prefer not to always mouse around. Alas there are more shortcuts, then I want to memorize so I stay real selective.

Index

Well done, I was able to find all the items I searched for. (Bad grammar but true.)

Mac OS X Leopard On Demand

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Steve Johnson

Que

<http://www.informit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0789736543>

Released: November 15, 2007

Pages: 576

\$40 USD, £29 GBP

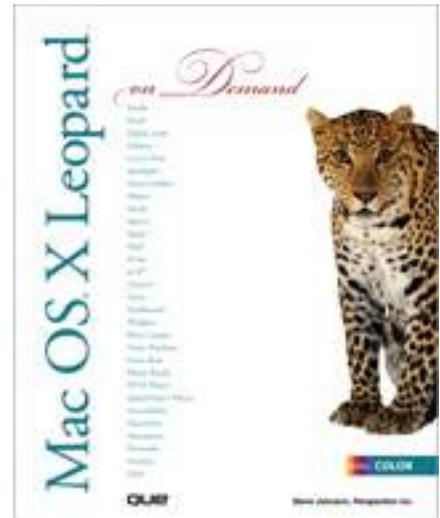
ISBN-10: 0789736543

ISBN-13: 978-0-7897-3654-3

Requirement: Mac OS X Leopard

Strengths: Full Color, color-coded section-by-section, step-by-step. Online workshop link.

Weaknesses: None found.



Introduction

For those who would rather be shown how than told how, see how to;

- Master the Mac OS X Leopard user interface, file management, and applications
- Manage and share your schedule with iCal
- Use Microsoft Windows along with Leopard using Boot Camp
- Manage and play digital music with iTunes and iPod
- Chat online instantly with iChat
- Explorer the Internet with Safari and send e-mail with Mail
- Customize and fine-tune Mac OS X Leopard
- Set up multiple users and maintain security
- Find and use keyboard shortcuts to save time
- Get a Front Row seat to play DVDs and other media
- Keep your files up to date and backed up with Time Machine
- Find everything you need with Spotlight

On the Web

This book uses real world examples to give you a context in which to perform a task. This book also includes workshops to help you put together individual tasks into projects. The Mac OS X Leopard example files that you need for project tasks are available at www.perspection.com.

About this book...

This is a reference guide, albeit one of the best formatted and well laid out ones I've seen in quite a while. Emphasis is on show and not tell.

The other book I reviewed in this issue of *macCompanion* was for the Command Line Interface (Leopard Phrasebook). This is the exact opposite and glorifies the eye candy associated with Mac OS X Leopard in all its glory. There are 21 chapters and one Appendix. Some are short and some are not so short depending on how much it takes to show, but the book adequately covers each topic and is a joy to "read".

This is the picturebook mode for learning Leopard.

If this is any indication of the quality of training offered by Perspection, I'm hooked. Down the left side of each page is a colorized bulleted step-by-step column with pictures, graphics and screenshots to the right presenting what to see when using Leopard.

The last chapter is on Automating work with Automator. The Table of contents even has a "New!" by each sub chapter that differs enough from Tiger to warrant the addition. I like that.

Conclusion

Get this book if you use the side of your brain that requires visual stimulation to "get it", because after "reading" this book, you will.

Mac OS X Leopard: Pocket Guide

Reviewed by Ted Bade

O'REILLY®

Author: Chuck Toporek

Publisher: O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596529819/index.html>

Released: November 2007

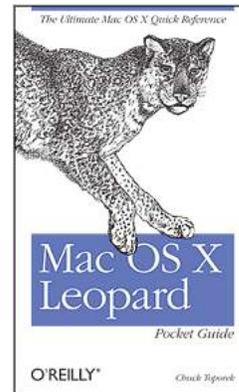
Pages: 211

\$15 USD, \$18 CND

ISBN-10: 0-596-52981-3

ISBN-13: 9780596529819

Audience: Beginner



Strengths: Concise and to the point, easy to read, great style.

Weaknesses: A little weak in one or two areas of information. Nothing major here.

Introduction

The Mac OS X Leopard Pocket Guide is a handy small format book that is packed with information about Apple's Leopard operating system (Mac OS X 10.5). It is well written and organized in a fashion that makes it easy to find information. Most importantly, the amount of information given doesn't overload the Mac OS X novice. The small size of the book means one can literally place it in a pocket, but I think most users will keep it on the desk near their Mac!

The author, Chuck Toporek is an editor for Addison-Wesley and has written three Macintosh books, including "Mac OS X in a Nutshell". He is an experienced writer and has a style that is easy to read and follow.

This book isn't meant to be a thorough discussion of all the ins and outs of Leopard. It is a basic reference book, more geared to users newer to Mac OS X as well as those new to Leopard. It gives enough information on each topic so a beginner can understand how to do something or how some feature works. The information is broken into six major chapters. We will take a brief look at each of the chapters below;

Chapter one - This chapter covers Leopard's features that are new to Mac OS X. It doesn't go into a lot of detail on how to use the features, it is simply a glance at what they are and their benefits to the user. The chapter covers features like Time Machine, Spaces, and the various improvements to the Finder.

Chapter two is subtitled the Mac OS X survival guide. This chapter is designed as a guide to the basics of running Mac OS X for people new to it, especially people who have switched from Windows or some other OS. It describes such things as the user account, the home folder, and controlling the system. It also offers a good introduction to security on the Mac. In this chapter you will find several handy tables of keyboard commands associated with using the Finder. There is one table called the “Ten Essential Keyboard Shortcuts”, a terrific table that every beginner should memorize. (I expect all people experienced with a Mac already know them all!)

Chapter three is called Mac OS X basics. It introduces and explains a variety of important features of the Mac OS X interface. Some features included in this chapter are the Finder, the Dock, Dashboard, and Spotlight. The text describes each item, what it does, and how to use it. When necessary it describes the use and meaning of various icons and menus, and how to locate various controls. This chapter goes into enough detail to get a beginner started comfortably without downing them in detail. This is the longest chapter in the book and does provide a lot of useful information.

Chapter four is about System Preferences. This chapter takes a look at the lay out of the Preference control panel and looks briefly at each of the standard preference controls found there. In this case, I thought a little more detail would have been helpful. IMHO a number of problems users have are because of how the Preferences were accidentally changed!

Chapter five discusses Applications and Utilities. There is a lot of potential to overwhelm the reader here, but thankfully, this book only provides a brief description of the standard Mac applications and utilities. While I found the information very accurate, I was surprised to not see any information about repairing disk permissions in the section on Disk Utility application.

For a new user, this chapter can be a real benefit. It answers that recurring questions of: “What do all those programs do? It also serves to alert the new user to the various applications and utilities that are standard in a new Macintosh.

Chapter six is on configuring a Macintosh. This chapter gives a brief introduction on how to configure various aspects of the System including Airport/wireless networks, fonts and managing fonts, files and folders, .Mac, Mail, Safari, and much more. Again, the information is brief, but enough to get a beginner started.

Conclusion

The Pocket Guide acts as a great yet brief introduction to various aspects of Mac OS X. It provides enough to get a new person started. There are always more detailed books and references for people if they desire. It is something I think all beginners should read.

Overall I really liked the Pocket Guide. It is concise and to the point. I feel this is a terrific book for beginners and Switchers. I liked it enough to recommend it to a few people where I work who have recently switched to Mac OS. They have found the book to be useful. If you care to browse the books contents, visit the URL listed above.

Recommendation

I highly recommend this book for all beginners and people new to Mac OS X. It is accurate, easy to read, and provides enough detail to remove the mystery from deal with Mac OS X as a new experience. It does this without drowning the reader in detail, which is very important to help build a stable foundation of understanding. It's an excellent book and worth the cost.

Windows Vista - The Missing Manual

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

O'REILLY®

Author: David Pogue

O'Reilly - Pogue Press

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596528270/index.html>

Released: December 27, 2006

Pages: 848

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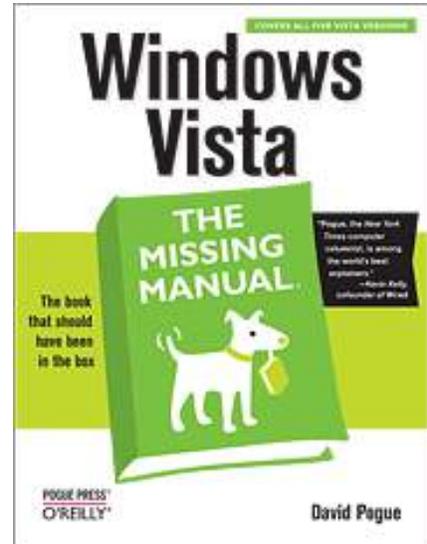
Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Nicely sized screenshots are easy to read. Nice table in introduction highlighting what different versions of Vista does and does not include. Needed information about security starts out in the front of the book. Book covers much that you need or want to know. Can be used as a resource in the future as you work with your computer and Vista. Book is fairly easy to understand. Instead of a CD there is website area you can look at to find updates, errors and additional information. Tip and note sections throughout the text help target additional important information.

Weaknesses: Huge book/ manual will take time to go through. Black and white throughout. Colorizing the book would have made the book nicer to look through instead of a “chore”. Some tutorial sequences but mostly notes and highlights of what to find in Vista. The Introduction section titled “What’s New in Windows Vista” should also have had direct page targeted numbers to instantly tell where in the book these valuable pieces of information can be found. Instead readers have to thumb through the massive text to find the information. This would make searching immediate concerns easier. I am surprised that there were not as many short hand arrow instructional sequences for faster understanding, as there are in many other Missing Manual books.

Introduction

The operating system which graces most of the world’s computers is Microsoft Windows. My preference is the Mac OS. However I thought it would be interesting to do a review of Windows latest operating system Vista. With information about Apple’s latest OS (Leopard) and armed with a recent article that named Vista as #10 in its listing of the “10 terrible tech products of all time,” I was ready to get started. What better way to find out further information about this new “version” of Windows, by delving into a book, Windows Vista: The Missing Manual.



This book is written by David Pogue, the New York Times Technology columnist, continues to be the author at the helm of the series of books called “The Missing Manual”. Four major contributors helped write various parts of this book. The words on the front cover of the book say it is “the book that should have been in the box”. For the most part, you can call this the main theme of this series of books. The series books are self help guidebooks for learning how to use software and hardware that come with more than the meager original documentation or manuals. I like some of the series of these themed books. But in many ways this particular one is little different.

I already understood that this Windows OS is not just one version. Windows Vista has, more or less depending on how you look at it, eight different versions. So difference manuals would not be feasible. These “versions from hell” (pages 6-7), are explained in the words but an even nicer Table of information explains the differences more easily. To many Vista novice users and those who will use the Intel Macs, this is definitely a welcome insight and a good place to start. But does this book also include information about difficulties with incompatibility with hardware, information about clearing security dialogue box warnings and more?

Illustrations and additional visual aids are in black and white. This is a drawback but screenshots are of ample size and very readable. Throughout the book, there are helpful ideas in the way of tips, help boxes, notes, and specialties called “gem in rough”. A full 27 chapters work through 7 sections in this book.

There are including 2 appendices, cover what you want or should know.

The introduction highlights new program features, new explorer Window features. These include "service hardening" which does not allow access to the consequential system files by outsiders/unauthorized users. Other new security elements are the Windows Defender program which is designed to prevent installed spyware, a “phishing” filter within Internet Explorer, drive encryption, parental controls and more. I would have preferred that the section area (pages 2-3) in “What’s New in Windows Vista” (which is the heart of why you should buy Vista) should also have included direct page numbering, targeting instantly and telling you where in the book that this information is. That’s where I wanted to start. Instead I had to go “fishing”, thumbing through the book and searching the index and other areas of the chapter outline.

The same was true for the area “New Versions Windows features. However I welcomed the “Version Hell” page that “pulled no sucker punches” showing a nice table immediately highlighting what each Vista version had and did not have. This is a great way to know about Vista when you are starting out.

Part 1, “the Vista desktop”, covers the start menu, desktop and welcome center as well as the Taskbar. Organizing files, changing the way you want Vista to look and getting help.

Focusing on software, the Part 2 covers quite an abundance of information. Programs, documents, freebie software (including video and more and the control panel). Gadgets are also included here. Apple's widgets are like Vista gadgets and information on these little application have a place here. There is the start menu info, menu tips, how and what ways to look for files, customizing search, dealing with folders, selecting icons and dealing with short -cuts.

There is also nice information about compressing files and folders. “Aero or not” is a section that shows how to change the look and feel of icons and more while getting “up to snuff” with those “cool looking icons” stylized by Apple’s OS X (own admission of authors here.) Included are screen saver info, wallpaper, monitor settings.

Burning CD/DVDs (2 ways to format) step by step burning monitor settings helps with archiving. “When programs die” (crash / freeze) is insightful. File format drop down menu called "Up to Speed" is a nice note in this area. Export and import/ drag and drop are included.

There is even an FAQ when formatting is lost which is good to know. Speech recognition text and speech gem is rough. The cool Sidebars are a series of small innovative programs called gadgets (weather, puzzle, slide show) which sounds much like and act liked Apple’s newer Widget. Freebee software (Internet Explorer, accessories, games and more finish this part along with the control panel (why it landed here I am not sure as it is a big change and should have been included sooner).

Part 3 is all about Vista and the Internet. Hooking up to the Internet covers the regular information. The security issues then are highlighted which take up about half of the information in this whole section. IE7 (I stopped using IE and switched to Firefox in 2003) but it is good to know they have tabbed browsers and these are included here. There is a nice section on RSS feeds, tips for better surfing, newsgroup information and mail.

Part 4 includes pictures, movies and the Media Center to covers much of Vista’s multimedia functions that has taken “a back seat” to Apple’s multimedia suite of software iLife. Here is added help for burning CD/DVDs (2 ways to format) step by step burning monitor settings and even remote assistance with novice to expert advice which well done. There is even a comparisons of media applications, Apple’s iTunes and Microsoft's Zune.

Part 5 focus is upon hardware and peripherals. Printing, hardware information, driver setup and device manager along with laptop, table PC, working with Windows mobile devices and synching (the linking) with mobile devices and off-line files round out the final parts.

I was interested in knowing if there was information related on Macintosh. I checked in the index and found several instances on four pages related to networking, Mac services, remote desktop and sharing files and folders.

Part 6 is the PC health covers troubleshooting and PC troulbers. Troubleshooting, maintenance and problem solving are covered and is most helpful. But starting on page 614, there is lightly worded “Windows Update” page that really says more then the title. Vista finds patches and better “drivers” that are most helpful for providing more security and installs them. But what I found most interesting (page 617) is where the book states, “Microsoft hates when people choose anything but the first option because it leaves you potentially open to security holes”. While Microsoft handles the approach in a “my way or the highway manner”, the book nicely states otherwise and explains fresh options.

Part 7 includes the Vista Network. Particularly helpful is information about the architecture (separate users). A clear understanding of using workgroup and domain networks can and does really help out about these areas.

In Part 8, the Appendices are covered. Here is installing Vista while Appendix B includes fun with the mysterious registry which many avoid). Appendix C, “Where’d it go” covers a brief listing n of what's missing in Vista from past Windows operating systems.

Appendix D displays the master keyboard shortcut lists and is really valuable for future working with the various parts of Vista.

Conclusions

While reviewing this book, I wanted to heed my own personal warning to review without indicting the Operating System itself. It was difficult not to compare Vista with the Mac OS Tiger and the new Leopard. This review gave me an insight into the past Windows XP and whether it was worth it, considering the many years it took to be created. Windows had to be revamped to keep up with the current state of browsing, operating systems and most of all security issues. And that includes some comparison to the Macintosh operating system.

Vista is blotted, like this book, but it has to be “thick” to cover all the parts of the operation system. Like Vista, the book does the job for many who want to go beyond Windows XP. The operating system has done what it can to catch up with some of the innovations already on Apple OS X. And it has done its best to add some different “goodies” that the public is looking for and wants. The book covers the operating system in a very comprehensive fashion.

In many ways this book is like Vista itself- it’s not flashy, eyepoppingly intuitive. The book for the most part is easy to understand but I was surprised that there were not more tutorial sections. There are some cosmetic touches to the book with chapter numbering and titles on the bottom. Blue titles on the top of the pages display the main topic on each page which make searching and finding in the text helpful.

This Missing Manual book is possibly good resource for beginning your time with Vista and working with it in the future. It certainly opened my eyes towards understanding what is in Vista. This Missing Manual book is not “colorful” in terms of “opening my eyes” to new technological wonders. The book covers much that you need or might need to know about the different Vista versions. It’s a necessity to know which one you want for your needs and why.

While it may be valuable resource for knowing about all the new features, upgrades and revamped parts of the operating system, some tutorials you may need to actually use parts of the operating system, may be lacking. More tutorial type sequenced instructions with actually using Vista instead of displaying the information about the operating system would have been good. These notes, tips and how the information displayed in the text still give me the view and understanding of how Vista is “a piecemeal approach and not the” sum of the whole”. The way the book is written makes me feel this way too.

While I continue to use Windows XP at my school, I am aware many PC users are still using XP and not upgrading, for a variety of reasons. When and how the next major upgrade takes place for Vista, no one knows. Until that time, you can either go back to Windows XP and use that until then or work with Vista. If Vista is the operating system you want, then this book is a good resource. But you still might have to hunt around to find out how to use some parts of the operating system and its parts due to limited tutorials. If you need more information on how to use various parts of Vista, another book may better.

Hardware

Fujitsu S510M ScanSnap Scanner – An updated versatile and fast Macintosh sheet feed scanner for document digitization

Reviewed by Harry {doc Babad © 2007



<http://www.fujitsu.com/us/services/computing/peripherals/scanners/workgroup/s510m.html>

\$495 USD. This scanner this scanner is available in the US as well as Canada, Europe and Asia.

Requirements: Mac OS X Tiger; Universal binary. RAM 512 MB Recommended, Disk Space needs: are about 1.4 GB for initial installation of the ScanSnap Monitor application, 400 MB for ABBYY FineReader OCR software for ScanSnap and about 1 GB for Adobe 8 Pro.



Some external reviewers on Amazon.com claim the software works on Leopard, but that information is not posted on the Fujitsu Web Site. I've not tested this claim.

Stephanie L. at [Voocom.com](http://www.voocom.com) has provided a link an update to make the scanner Leopard ready. http://www.fujitsu.com/us/services/computing/peripherals/scanners/support/scansnap_mac.html/. In addition, she responded to my concerns about ReadIris for Fujitsu availability. All of this during the Holiday season — what great service!

A PC version of the scanner is also available. Fujitsu ScanSnap™ S510M Color Scanner

Users Manual: The vendor provides you a 185-page, 14 MB Illustrated Manual, to help you get started and serve if you need more information about both the strengths and limitations of the scanner, to trouble shoot, or to progress some of the scanner's less routine features.

Product Specifications: Check the Fujitsu website for the detailed specification of the ScanSnap 510M. Alas, the specifications are silent on Leopard readiness.

Warranty: The ScanSnap S500M scanner is covered by a one-year Limited Warranty.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.11.

Along with the provided ABBYY FineReader OCR 3.0 for ScanSnap that outputs searchable PDF files I tested the OCR feature with ReadIris 11.6.4 and ReadIris for Fujitsu 10.5 in both RTF and PDF output modes.

Strengths: In one step, with a touch of the button, the ScanSnap S510M scanner digitizes both sides of a document in a single pass, in color, and at an amazing speed of up to 18 pages per minute, 36 pages in duplex mode. This fast easy to install and use scanner comes with Acrobat 8 Pro and ABBYY FineReader for ScanSnap.

Weaknesses: None worth mentioning.

Previous Reviews: Harry (doc) Babad in the *macCompanion*, May 2007
<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/May2007/Hardware/FujitsuS500M.htm>

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Note the feedback at the end of this review.

Introduction

As mentioned in my earlier review I am both an information junkie and an inveterate recipe collector. I presently have 60 cubic feet of paper documents related to nuclear waste management, loosely indexed in a FileMaker Pro Database, that need to be either in part, tossed, or scanned to free up bookcase and file draw space.

As you may remember, I already have an HP ScanJet 8250 with an added sheet feeder. Alas that scanner is relatively slow and the sheet feed is very prone to jamming. Before I had a chance to use Fujitsu's product, I thought that the HP scanner was as good as it could get or I could afford. In my wildest dreams, I would not have believed I'd ever consider scanning my document collection to searchable PDF or RTF files.

When using the scanner, in the months that followed my May 2007 review, the ScanSnap S500M scanner, if discovered several previously unnoted problems. Pages clipped from magazines, often jammed the scanner. I could easily overcome the problem but it took extra time. It appears most magazines are printed on flimsy paper, which the original scanner could not always deal with. In addition, some of the items I need to scan were printed on European A4 stock (8.3 x 11.7") that was lighter in weight than the 20# stock I was used to. Therefore when I got the opportunity to check out the new S510M scanner, I took it.

A Critical Initial Pre-Review Concern: When reading the web-posted specification for the software that accompanied the S510M, I was concerted that Fujitsu has replaced ReadIris software, which I'm used to using, along with the ABBYY product.

Okay, I decided to test both versions of the ReadIris of software on the new scanner. This would allow me to determine whether the ABBYY product was as an effective OCR tool as the ReadIris products.

In Search for a Paperless Office, a Caveat to Information Junkies

In the accompanying article in The May 2007 issue, I discussed how one could initially organize and ultimately make electronic, a large collections of references. In my column entitled *Too Many References — Too Little Space — No way to Search for Them*, I focused on technical papers and science articles, what I said also works for recipes or other paper media you want to digitize. Getting your paper documents into electronic form is relatively easy; just use the ScanSnap. No it's not an almost instantaneous effort, like farming out the job to an *expensive* service. However, at 18-36 pages a minutes it's fast enough. After all you going to do this a dozen or so document art a time; not spend days over a hot scanner.

The most difficult aspect of converting paper, consolidating existing electronic collections, is reaccessing your electronic documents. Yeah, like you'll need to find a specific needed document again. For example, during the four-month period in which I worked on a textbook about nuclear energy, I collected over 450 references, mostly downloaded from the Internet. In addition, from various archive sources, I also had to scan an addition 50 or so documents, not available from the web, to support my writing efforts. Not all the electronic documents I collected were in Spotlight readable form, being graphic formatted PDFs, so there was some OCR work required.

What one needs to go all-electronic are three tools and one scarce asset — First and most importantly, a flexible and reliably fast scanner. Second, the software accompanying the scanner must be easy to use and bug free. The scanner vendor must provide you with software that enables trouble free conversion of the scanned page, initially an image, to the format(s) you need.

Fujitsu has provided those tools. The third tool, unrelated to the scanning task, but essential to you future use of the scanned products is a reliable document catalog. I use a database sent up in FileMaker Pro to catalog my collection but an Excel spreadsheet can serve the same purpose. Otherwise you're just gathering plies (MB to GB of hard to re-access stuff). You know the story; it's on my 250 GB hard disk somewhere. Oh, lest I forget — the scarce asset; the will to create and maintain a cataloging systems that works for you.

Getting Started

The ScanSnap has an odd shape; it looks more like an ink-jet printer than a flatbed scanner. Its footprint is about the size of an 8.5-by-11-inch piece of paper, so it doesn't take up much space on a desk.



You load the paper into the paper chute, up to 50 pages (at 20# weight) you want to scan into the top of the scanner, and once it's scanned, it comes out in its front tray. Both the feed guide and the scanned pages tray fold up, and better yet closing the feed guide turns off the scanner conserving electricity.

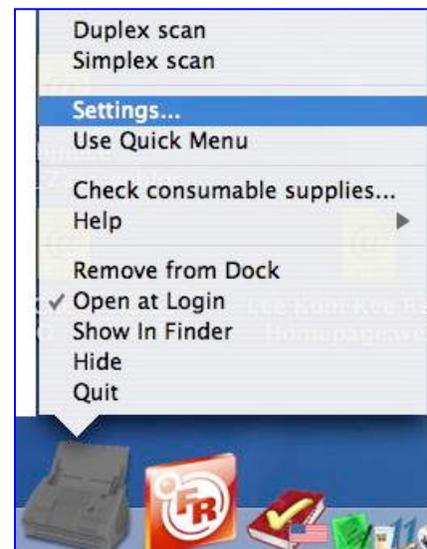
The ScanSnap S510M scanner easily installs via its USB 2.0 interface and its small footprint requires less space than a letter size piece of paper. Install the driver software, plug the scanner to a power source and then connect the scanner to a USB port. Follow this with installing Acrobat, if not already installed on your drive, and then the OCR software.

The scanner is PDF and Not TWAIN Compatible, although both ReadIris for Fujitsu, Abby's FineReader for ScanSnap are compatible with scanning in that mode. That means you must to use the software that comes with it, and only that software. Standard versions of OCR products, which rely on TWAIN drivers, do not work with the Fujitsu S510M scanner.

Perhaps my strangest finding during this testing was the ReadIris version 11.6.2, that I obtained for test purposes from the I.R.I.S Corporation folks, often 75% of trials) worked with the Fujitsu scanner. Alas, I haven't the time to either ask why or to find out the details of my successes.

Using the controls/preferences provided by the ScanSnap Manager software to make a few scanner operation related decisions. I did this rather than limit myself to using the Quick Menu mode. All of the settings, can be like system preferences, be both customized and as needed reversed.

- You have two modes form using the scanner. The easiest is the new multifunction Quick Menu feature. It gives you the choice of scanning to one of three modes. Scan to (a network) Folder, Scan to eMail (Apple Mail or MS Entourage Only) and Scan to Printer. In addition you can scan to the ABBYY software, iPhoto. In all cases the scan output is directed to your default application or device. Since there is no way to set the scan quality, I must assume the scan was done in the default 150 (color) 300 dpi (color) mode. However that scan mode gave me an acceptable product but not great a great one based on using he software to output to my HP Color LaserJet 3500.
- The second mode, allows you to shift between various end applications, scan quality, color vs. b/w, and other settings, which more readily accommodated your needs if they are more specific. I spent most of my test time in this mode, since that was what I used with the previous version of the software on the Fujitsu S500M scanner. Notice, I'd added DEVONthink Pro and Photoshop Elements 4.0 to my scan destination list.

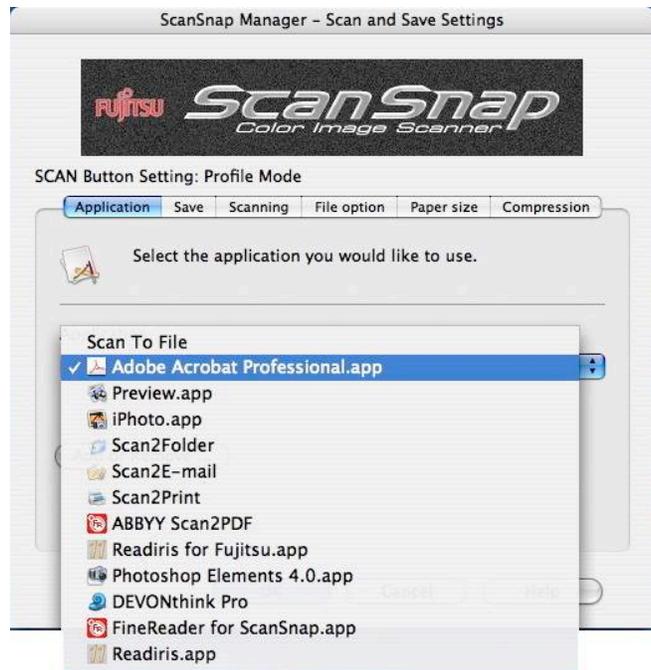


Under the user selected conditions you can set the scanning resolution from 300/600 dpi color or up to 600/1200 dpi for b/w input. I use the better, but not best or excellent mode in my testing.

Note that Fujitsu does not recommend scanning photographs except one at a time using a carrier sheet. I've batch scanned some photos in *best* mode, with no mishap, although that is not recommended by the manufacturer.

As paraphrased from a 2005 MacWorld review by Jennifer Berger of the ScanSnap S500M model — In fact, the ScanSnap's easy-to-use software belies its flexibility. Six tabs sit at the top of its standard setting window (not in quick Menu mode.) Each pane, a preferences type arrangement, has just a few of options to allow you to meet your scanning output needs. It's the kind of software Mac users expect. See:

<http://www.macworld.com/article/48348/2005/12/fujitsuscansnap.html/>



Using the Hardware and Accompanying Software - Test Subjects and Results

Features — I scanned several types of documents, listed below, including testing the promised *Auto paper size detection* by scanning mixed sized batches of documents containing paper ranging in size from 4 x 6 index cards, 4 x 5 and 8 x 10 photos, to letter and legal sized documents.

The Auto de-skew feature automatically straightened and aligned my text and images into their correct orientation for OCR processing.

Some of the tested pages were printed on one side, so *Auto blank page removal* could save on disk space needs (smaller PDFs) and time by eliminating the need to edit scanned documents using the ScanSnap S510M's ability to recognize and delete blank pages.

Other Scanner Features Include:

Auto color detection — The ScanSnap S510M distinguishes color documents from black & white and converts them into PDF files.

Auto paper size detection — The ScanSnap S510M recognizes the size of each page being scanned such as A4, B5, A5, B6, A6, Business Card, Legal and Letter.

Carrier Sheet — The ScanSnap S510M provides a Carrier Sheet to permit digitizing delicate documents as well as *oversized* paper as large as A3.

Use a carrier sheet to deal with either fragile or outsized images. Out sized images are scanned by folding them and using the scanner software to make them whole as a double paged spread. I did not test this feature.

Create Searchable PDF Files — Powered by the included ABBYY FineReader software, the ScanSnap S510M can automatically convert scanned data into searchable PDF files that support Mac OS Spotlight and Adobe Acrobat searches.

Summary Test Results

I have attached the detailed test result to the end of this review. My tests included four types of input, primarily in manual settings mode. I've added including summary results to these items for reader convenience. These are:

1. The Reviewer's Fujitsu Guide — The stapled 10 page letter sized Fujitsu ScanSnap Reviewers guide which contained a variety of multiple font size formatted pages and several tables. The ABBYY Fine Reader 3.0 for Fujitsu scan to PDF gave somewhat better results than scanning the document to ReadIris for Fujitsu in RTF output.

2. A Technical Report — A complexly formatted, but equation free, technical report (plastic spiral bound) was captured both as is with the binding removed and with the gutter removed. Without removing the gutter, the ABBYY Fine Reader 3.0 for Fujitsu scan to PDF gave significantly better results than scanning the document to ReadIris for Fujitsu in RTF output. However, if I removed the gutter with a paper cutter, the differences were minimal. Note that the users manual does not recommend scanning punched paper, but I had no trouble doing so.



3. A Recipe Magazine Article — This was a long complex article cut out of Gourmet Magazine. The article contained a half dozen recipes, their photographs and cuisine related comments. Should you want to capture all of the contents of an article, the ABBYY program proved excellent results. However, if you want to cherry pick from an articles contents, I found scanning the ReadIris for Fujitsu to RTF gave me more opportunity to create custom formatting for a article. In either case check the quantities associated with the ingredients, after all OCR can add up to 1% errors to your captured scan.



4. Mixed Size Feeds — My previously described mixed size batch of odds and ends. A 7 page stack of left or right edge and top aligned recipes all larger than 4 x 5" in size feed well and provided a well resolved PDF file that I could breakdown into component recipes.

However this mode of scanning could not deal with the smaller sized items; they just did not feed. A second test in which, after checking the manual, I aligned centers of my larger documents that went even more smoothly, the scanner software having to do less work to view the images.

I did not try to align the leading edge and centerline of all my documents, as recommended by the manual because doing so with the 4 x 5 sized items was too much hassle. Instead I scanned them separately, which worked well.

Scanner Jams — These were less frequent than on the Model S500M scanner. Both previously stapled documents and some magazine pages caused occasional problems. If magazine pages were cleanly cut, they did not jam the newer scanner. I also found that the dimples from removed staples could be handled by either by feeding the document upside down (removed staple holes at the bottom) or riffle the stapled ends several times. The scanner jams quickly when scanning slightly crumpled paper, something I could occasionally not cure, even with a steam iron.

Discomforts (See feedback from manufacturer at the end of this review.)

Lack of ReadIris for Fujitsu OCR Alternative — During my tests I found a number of cases where being able output to RTF would be an advantage. Admittedly, I can scan a document to PDF in graphic format and use Read Iris 11.6.2 to convert it to a RTF document for detailed editing in MS word. But, it would have been nice had Fujitsu allowed users to acquire the scanner specific ReadIris software to meet such needs.

Provided ABBYY OCR Software Limitations — Unlike the ReadIris software, a user has not control over any of the setting associated with the ABBYY FineReader Software. To get RTF output, to must be extracted from the searchable PDF file; fortunately this is an easy task with Adobe Acrobat Pro.

Leopard or Not for Leopard — An obvious question I'd not had time to chase.

Conclusion

Once again I share that there is so much to like about the Fujitsu ScanSnap. Its specifications are comparable to the previously reviewed model S500M with several significant exceptions. First the developers have added Quick Menu Mode that allows most folks simple access to many of a scanner's output functions. Second, the scanner seems more jam proof than the S500M I'd previously tested.

Whether you want to scan bills or warranties and gadget instructions as graphic PDF for your records, or documents as searchable PDF or RTF files for future use in your writings, the Fujitsu S510M a great scanner! It is both versatile and flexible. Occasional jams can be cleared in less than a minute and you scan continued where you left off.

Finally, although I did not test the feature, using the provided carrier sheet, allow you to work with either fragile or oversize materials, a feature missing from the earlier model. Anyone who has mounds of paper and not enough space for it all should consider it.

Fujitsu's second software iteration for the Mac continues to be a great success; it's software worthy of a Macintosh.

Paraphrased from a reviewer on Amazon.com; 'This attractive, easy to use machine, gives home scanners a completely new definition. It makes all other less expensive scanners expensive, in terms of the time you save, and as an added plus the great software you get with it.'

Recommendation

The Fujitsu ScanSnap fills the home and small-office scanning niche perfectly, creating a way to more easily achieve a true paperless office. Alas, the ScanSnap comes at a rather high price of \$495, about \$50 -\$80 less if you shop around. Its excellent scans, ease of use intuitive Mac software, and small footprint will be money well spent. I have saved so much time, even at minimum wage, by using the scanner to electronically organize and store my documents that within a few weeks (part time use) the machine paid for itself. Buy it you'll like it.

Feedback

Hi Harry,

...The review covers ScanSnap with accuracy for the most part. There are a few items to call out below...

- The ScanSnap S510M sells in the US, but it also sells in Canada, Europe and Asia.
- The review mentions that ABBYY replaces IRIS but that isn't exactly accurate. IRIS was never "in the box". It was, and continues to be, a rebate software with the S510M. ABBYY was added to the box to provide S510M "searchable PDF creation".
- Leopard compatibility is not in the box with the S510M but it can be downloaded for free from the following link:
http://www.fujitsu.com/us/services/computing/peripherals/scanners/support/scansnap_mac.html

Please let me know if you have any other questions. Thanks and Happy Holidays!!!

Best,

Stephanie L.

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

Test Subjects and Results

Test Focus	Test Output Application	Results
Readers Guide	Acrobat 8 Pro (Graphic Output) Read Iris 11.5 for Fujitsu to both RTF or PDF ReadIris 11.6.2 to either PDF or RTF ABBYY Fine Reader 3.0 for Fujitsu to Searchable PDF	Much to my delight, the ABBYY (to PDF) software was more accurate than ReadIris for Fujitsu in RTF mode. For PDF output mode, ReadIris was a poor last place. ReadIris 11.6.2 sometimes did not accept the scanner output, but when it did it produced documents superior to version 11.5.
Technical Report	ReadIris 4.5 for Fujitsu to Searchable RTF ABBYY Fine Reader 3.0 for Fujitsu to PDF	The ReadIris software confused the binding holes for text so messed up the document formatting and added four extra pages. ABBYY Fine Reader software gave a near perfect copy.
A Recipe Magazine Article	See the body of the review for the test results.	
Mixed Size Feeds	See the body of the review for the test results.	

All tests were run in better Mode (12/24 ppm), auto size and duplex recognition and auto color detection enabled. I found this setting to work well with the S500M model, so didn't mess with a good thing.

Software

Default Folder X 4.0

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre



<http://www.stclairsw.com/DefaultFolderX/index.html>

\$34.95 USD, \$36 CND, £20 GBP, 28€ Euro

\$14.95 Upgrade to version 4

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 and 10.5 and later;
Universal binary



Strengths: Very powerful folder navigation.

Weaknesses: A bit confusing about what exactly it can do. Some may consider it pricey.

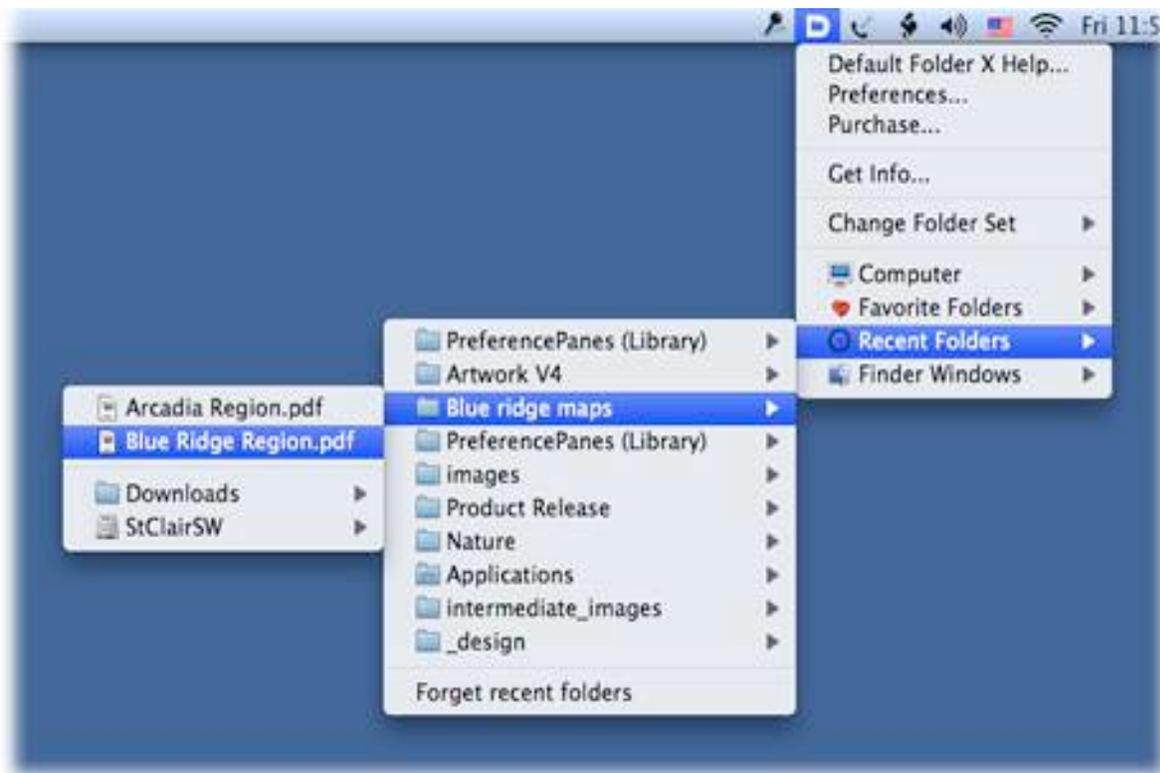
For a demo of this product: <http://www.stclairsoft.com/cgi-bin/dl.cgi?DX>

Introduction

Default Folder X 4.0 is the latest version of a highly regarded staple in your utility toolbox. Or it should be. From the web site, St. Clair Software developers promote Default Folder X as Save your files effortlessly and open your folders instantly—Default Folder X makes Mac OS X's Open and Save dialogs work as quickly as you do. Custom keyboard shortcuts put your favorite and recent folders at your fingertips. Pop-up menus let you navigate your folders and open Finder windows. Open, save, and get back to work: Default Folder X is workflow for the rest of us. (Hereafter referred to as DFX 4 for my sanity!)

Getting Started and using the utility

Installing was a breeze. That's when I hit a brick wall. Normally, when reviewing an application, it's pretty simple. If it does what it's supposed to, then it deserves a good rating. For the life of me, I had a very difficult time with this particular utility. I just couldn't get my head around what all it does, and how to express that on paper. Well, it makes your folders...default! \$35 is a pretty expensive utility just to make a save dialog go back to the same place everytime, but DFX 4 does so much more, yet really that's it's main function. You can set a different folder for each application you use. Brilliant.



After installation, you get the D icon in both the dock and the menu bar, and a preference pane in System Preferences. Luckily, there is an option to turn off the dock icon and keep the menu bar icon. From the icon, you can receive help, apply preferences, and have access to the Directory assistant, or your folders. With the directory assistant you can access the contents of your recent, favorite, and open folders right from Default Folder X's toolbar. Its hierarchical pop-up menus expand as you mouse over them, letting you navigate your folders to get to your files. To work faster, you can assign a keyboard shortcut for all of your favorite folders. If an Open and Save dialog isn't open, then you can use Default Folder X's menu bar, Dock icon, or keyboard shortcuts. These folders are:

- Computer. Basically what you would see in your sidebar.
- Favorite Folders. Here, through the preferences utility, you can assign favorites and a hotkey.
- Instant access to your Movies folder, for example, can be a boon and much simpler than opening a new Finder window, then finding the folder you always looking for.

- Recent Folders. Using a dialog in the preferences, you can specify the number of recent folders to display, sorting by date or by name. For security reasons, you can also select Forget Recent Folders.
- Finder Windows. Instantly select one of your open Finder windows. A real help when you have a lot of windows piled on each other and can't see your Finder window.

Though the menu bar feature alone is really helpful, the meat to this utility is the Open and Save dialogs. This is where it receives its consistent high ratings and awards, year after year. In fact, DFX is one of Mac's oldest utilities, from Default D back in 1988, and continues to dominate and become ever more popular.

In the Open and Save dialog, the rest of the screen dims in true Leopard fashion, and you are presented with a number of options. First off, however, is using the preferences, you can create multiple favorite sets. This can be used for creating different default folders specific to projects or tasks.

The Open dialog presents a sidebar akin to the menu bar options. A Utility Menu, Computer, Favorites, Recent and Finder Window Menus. Some great additions to this version are below the dialog box. When in the Open window, it will show preview and information about the currently selected item. By default, the window shows a preview, but clicking on the buttons along the top reveals additional views that display the creation and modification dates of the file or folder, its size, label, Spotlight comments, and file system permissions.



The Rebound system automatically takes you back to the same folder and file that you used previously with that software, and is different depending on the software you are using. For Pages, you can have it open Documents folder, whereas in QuickTime you can have it automatically open in Movies. This can be a real timesaver when working on large projects.

When saving, the window below the save dialog displays Spotlight Comments, Labels and a Remember keywords. Not only will it remember the last keywords used, if you check the box, but if you don't you can still bring up a menu with the last few keyword phrases that you've used.

The ability to change permissions, labels and Spotlight comments are a very nice feature, especially to those that use Leopards enhanced Spotlight capabilities for quicker searches and smart folders.



Another excellent feature is the ability to simply select the Finder window, if it is open, while you are in the save dialog. If you already have a Finder window open, even the desktop, simply move your mouse from the save dialog over to the Finder. As long as you can see it, your cursor will display the path, and by clicking on it will insert that path into the dialog box. Cool.

Conclusion

There are a few neat new features in this version of DFX 4 that will make it worth upgrading if you have Leopard. The previous version, 3.0.6 is still available through the web site for Panther and above.

For Leopard users, though, the newer version is faster and more efficient. It has the look and feel of Leopard, along with previews and labels. It's one of those utilities that once you have it, really get into it and see what it does.

You'll wonder how you ever did without it.

WireTap Studio 1.0.4 – Record, Edit, Play - Podcasting Nirvana

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Ambrosia Software

Download:

<http://www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/wiretap/>

Tutorials:

<http://www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/wiretap/videos.html>

Released: October 11, 2007 Updated December 20, 2007 to 1.0.4

\$69 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later. QuickTime 7 or later.

Strengths: Non-destructive editing. LivePreview feature.

Weaknesses: None found.

Forums: <http://www.ambrosiasw.com/forums/>

Other Reviews:

<http://www.ambrosiasw.com/news/newswire.php?article=117215>

Reviewed with Mac OS X 10.5.1.

Introduction

Can it really be this easy to record audio?



“Using WireTap Studio, you can record the discrete audio output of any application, as well as all system audio, or record audio input from any microphone, line-in, or audio input hardware. If you can hear it, WireTap Studio can record it.

Once you have recorded your audio, you can easily organize your recordings in the convenient Recording Library, and edit them with WireTap Studio's integrated lossless audio editor.

WireTap Studio also boasts full Audio Unit effects support, for adding professional quality effects to your audio.”

Observations

WireTap Studio is the replacement for WireTap Pro. The latest release includes support for formats found in Leopard such as AMR, 3GP and 3GPP2 and a few bug fixes that have been resolved after feedback from such sites as TUAW - <http://www.tuaw.com/2007/12/20/tuaw-review-wiretap-studio-shows-polish-and-promise/>. You probably didn't even know those were in Leopard. The WireTap Studio Release Notes can be found under the Help tab.

All the excellent video-based tutorials were recorded with Snapz Pro X. The path to this nifty app can be found in the Help menu that links here - <http://www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/snapzprox/>.

The 1-page PDF for using Audio in WireTap Studio is found in the Snapz Pro X folder.

The 1-page Video Capture with Snapz Pro X PDF is found in the WireTap Pro folder.

There are a variety of tutorials that provide an overview of the Controller, how recording and media formatting is accomplished, use of LivePreview and Effects captured before recording. The Editor section covers cropping, format changes, effects, deletion, silence and using two tracks in real time. The Library section has 2 videos as an overview and doing exports. The Recording Sessions has 1 video on time-shifting.

Many on our staff have either reviewed or have posted reviews in their choice of media – specifically Gene Stenberg's *Tech Night Owl Live* with his interview of Andrew Welch and the review over on Tim Verpoorten's *Mac ReviewCast* podcast by Allison Sheridan. Both are linked above under “Other Reviews”.

You did see that it got one of the MacWorld Eddy Awards for 2007, right?

There are about three competitors vying for your dollars in this audio-editing space and WireTap Studio just upped the anti a bit.

Conclusion

Support professional products at shareware prices by giving Ambrosia a little green, especially if you do any kind of audio recording and want an easy way to do it. Your work will act and feel like a professional job without the professional costs associated with producing quality product.



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

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

Besides our website and consulting efforts, we also create *macCompanion* as a freely available PDF-based monthly. It averages about 100 pages per month. July 2006 was the 4th-year anniversary of this labor of love. The *macCompanion* staff is an all-volunteer team of writers and reviewers from many parts of the globe, and they also have a great wealth of knowledge and experience in their backgrounds. That base of talent also continues to keep growing as the Macintosh Professional Network expands.

Statistical Analysis

We are very excited about our site statistics! The multilingual-capable [macCompanion](#) website is close to 2 million page views a month and readership continues to increase rapidly through our "whisper campaign". (Just don't put too much attention to web statistics and you will be okay though - <http://www.goldmark.org/netrants/webstats/>.)

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

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

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Talk with Dennis Sellers about advertising rates. Negotiable. Following the KISS principle, we accept banner ads in only one size at this time - 468x60 pixels (per the [Interactive Advertising Bureau](#) standards for a Full Banner Ad Interactive Marketing Unit.) The ad will be rotated through with other ads, and there is no limit to how many you want to include.

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

The *macCompanion* Staff