

macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH



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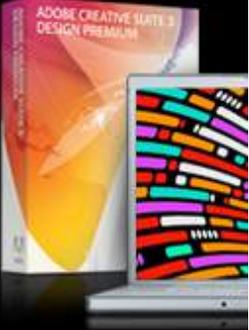


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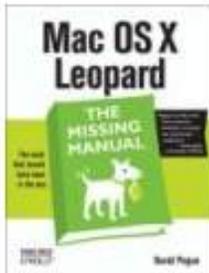
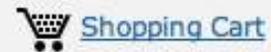
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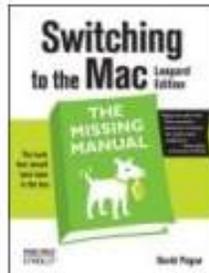
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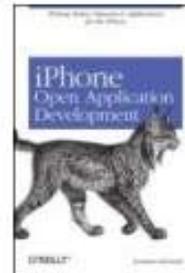
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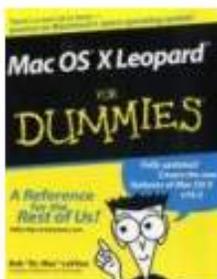
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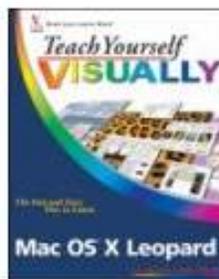
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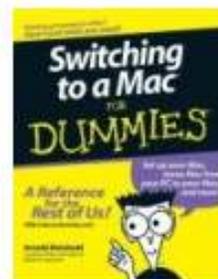
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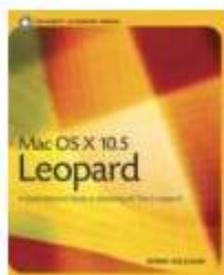
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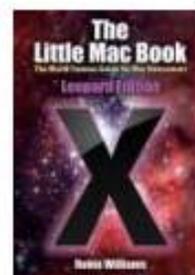
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Letter from the CEO

Terminological Inexactitude

By Robert Pritchett

A few months ago, I wrote "Global Warming, The Cult of Gaia and "Edidence" -

<http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/May2008/Greenware/Global%20Warming.htm>

It has more relevance now than it ever did, after listening to a Keynote speech by Nancy Turner at the Sustainable Living Fair dinner Sept. 19, 2008 -

http://peswiki.com/index.php/Events:Sustainable_Living_Fair in her efforts (knowingly or unknowingly) to continue the "Socialization of America"™. What is really interesting is that we had a virtual news blackout the previous Wednesday on the 221st celebration of the US Constitution - http://www.celebrationamerica.org/celebration_america_overview. As she was speaking, I had a real urge to stand up and state the reason she was having such a hard time with her efforts in her community was that this is still the land of the free and home of the brave and some of us still love our liberty. Sadly, I didn't then. I do now.

With the recent economic implosion and attempts to recover from natural disasters (Hurricane Ike, etc.) as we rapidly into the next Depression, we are being told by certain individuals that we are "more communist than China" - <http://www.lewrockwell.com/grigg/grigg-w43.html> as we see financial systems collapse (bank after bank, frozen assets, no credit) and politicos (US Congress) coming to the rescue to take them over – as any "good" communist country would do to nationalize institutions (Bailout Bills - <http://hotair.com/archives/2008/09/26/the-democratic-acorn-bailout/>) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5tZc8oH>. ("We are from the government and we are here to help you".) The US Federal Government is broke - <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0809/19/gb.01.html>.

Winston Churchill once called a lie a "terminological inexactitude". It would seem that not only the New World/International Economic Order - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_International_Economic_Order is falling like a house of cards but our own US Government is on the brink of collapse as it puts taxpayers in the unenviable position of trillion-dollar debts with no way or means to pay off those debts.

I think we need to be a lot more concerned about certain things (restoring Constitutional integrity - <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/whitehorseprophecy.htm>) and economic viability, instead of worrying about whether or not the world will get warmer because we live on it. After all, the communist countries and other enemies of freedom have been financing our debt load with petrodollars and a wild animal driven into a corner has no choice based on its mental attitude, but fight to escape. So expect blood in the streets and not-so-covert invasion of our US borders (for instance, the para-military "Mexican Mafia" - <http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/bestoftv/2008/09/23/gb.border.crisis.cnn?iref=videosearch>

infiltration through nationwide gang activities -

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94333325>) in the not too distant future. We are at war now and have been for a long time. It will get worse. Is that scary? This is not a Halloween scenario. It is more terrible than you can possibly imagine. It will take on Biblical Last Days proportions.

One of the current US presidential candidates has been endorsed by the Communist Party and Muslim states declaring he is one of their own. Care to guess which one? Will we let it happen? He is running on a ticket of "hope-o-crisis". Will we accept it? What will happen to the US if he is allowed to become president? I don't want the Hammer and sickle flying over US. By some accounts, that is already happening. Why make it worse?

So why is this thread in *macCompanion* magazine? We may not have Macs or any other technologies soon, if society continues its downward spiral into the dark pit of despair and oblivion. Technology will not rescue us from this morass. We will have to take back this country ourselves – with some divine intervention. It may require revolution.

Meanwhile expect more drum-beating from the likes of Adam Kokesh - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuBv6WhejGQ> and discussions by Ron Paul - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MW3r0uWtbVw>

Just for fun, you might want to watch a video being presented by Citizens United - <http://www.citizensunited.org/>

We have to live within our means and make darn sure our "Terminological Inexactitude" (lies) gullibility meters are turned up full blast.

Now help us live within our means and bail us out of debt at *macCompanion* magazine as we struggle to make ends meet by donating to the cause of Macdom. Click on the PayPal link on our website and give until it hurts. Otherwise, we will go under too.

Don't let "Terminological Inexactitude" take over your Mac-based life!

Let's not just survive, let's thrive!

Sincerely,

Robert Pritchett

A Bad Boss Can Send You to an Early Grave

By Dr. Travis Bradberry

It seems there's always a steady supply of sympathy available for anyone stuck working under a bad boss. Most everyone I know has been there at one time or another, working under a tyrant who somehow manages to survive in this world without people skills. If you haven't had a boss like this, you should consider buying a lottery ticket—and I mean soon. You are that lucky.

According to a recent study published in *Human Resource Executive* magazine, a third of US workers spend a minimum of twenty hours per month at work complaining about their boss. The Gallup Poll estimates US corporations lose 360 billion dollars annually due to lost productivity from employees who are dissatisfied with—you guessed it—their boss. And if there's but one hard truth the Gallup Polls have taught US Corporations in the last decade, it's that people may join companies, but they will leave bosses.

In the days of a strong dollar, bulging tech bubble and robust housing market, people working for a bad boss had options. Careers were mobile and talent was in short supply. It was a snap to pack up and leave. But nowadays, things are decidedly different. Jobs are scarce and the prudent worker stays put, even if he or she is working under the worst type of boss imaginable—the seagull manager.

The roots of seagull management can be traced back to the days when “micromanager” was the worst non-expetive you could utter behind your boss' back. Managers fear of this label grew so intense that they learned to keep their distance from employees, assuming a “good” boss is one who spends as little time as possible breathing down people's necks. And most do. They give people room to breath until the moment a problem flares up. Then—instead of getting the facts straight and working alongside their staff to realize a viable solution—seagull managers come swooping in at the last minute, they squawk orders at everybody, and deposit steaming piles of formulaic advice before abruptly taking off.

Seagull managers interact with their employees only when there's a fire to put out. Even then, they move in and out so hastily—and put so little thought into their approach—that they make bad situations worse by frustrating and alienating those who need them the most. Today, seagull managers are breeding like wildfire. As companies flatten in response to the struggling economy, they are gutting management layers and leaving behind managers with more autonomy, greater responsibility, and more people to manage. That means they have less time and less accountability for focusing on the primary purpose of their job—managing people.

As it turns out, seagull managers aren't just a US phenomenon. After reading a study that found employees have lower blood pressure on the days they worked for a supervisor they think is fair, researchers from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health decided to take a closer look at this phenomenon. They followed British civil servants for a period of fifteen years to see if the type of boss one works for has any impact upon long-term, physical health.

The researcher's findings cast a grave shadow upon anyone working for a seagull manager. The team from Helsinki found that seagull-type managerial behaviors lead to a much higher

incidence of employee coronary heart disease. Employees working for a seagull manager were 30% more likely to develop coronary heart disease than those who were not. What's more, the incidence of coronary heart disease—the #1 killer in Western societies—was measured after the researchers had removed the influence of typical risk factors, such as age, ethnicity, marital status, educational attainment, socio-economic position, cholesterol level, obesity, hypertension, smoking, alcohol consumption, and physical activity.

No one influences an employee's morale and productivity more than his or her supervisor. It's that simple. Yet, as common as this knowledge may seem, it clearly hasn't been enough to change the way that managers and organizations treat people. Few companies recognize the degree to which managers are the vessels of a company's culture, and even fewer work diligently to ensure that their vessels hold the knowledge and skills that motivate employees to perform, feel satisfied, and love their jobs. The very individuals with the authority to alter the course of company culture lack the facts that would impel them to do so.

With the stoic pragmatism that one might expect from a Finnish University professor, Dr. Mika Kivimäki, the director of the study, had this to say about the study's findings, "Most people care deeply about just treatment by authorities."

Indeed we do, Dr. Kivimäki. Indeed we do.

Dr. Travis Bradberry is the president of think tank and consultancy TalentSmart. His new book, "Squawk! How to Stop Making Noise and Start Getting Results," addresses the problem of seagull managers in the workplace and is published by HarperCollins.

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According to Hoyle...

Objective-C for C++ Programmers, Part II

October 2008
by Jonathan Hoyle

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Last month

<http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/September2008/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle37.htm>, we began our look at the Objective-C programming language from the perspective of a C++ programmer. In particular, we discussed class declarations and definitions as well as bracket syntax for method invocation. This month, we continue this investigation by looking at class construction and destruction.

Class Instantiation in C++

When constructing an object in C++, two things take place: first memory allocation, then object initialization (via a call to the class constructor method). Typically, these two things happen in the same call, so the C++ user does not have to think about it. For example, let us suppose we have a class named `Foo` which has a default constructor (that is, one which takes no parameters). We can create a new `Foo` object, called `foo` in this way:

```
Foo *foo = new Foo;
```

In this case `foo` is a pointer to a newly instantiated `Foo` object allocated from the heap. If we don't want to deal with pointers and are willing to allocated off the stack, we can simplify this:

```
Foo foo;
```

In either case, memory has been reserved and `foo`'s constructor, and any super class constructors, have been called and completed. `foo` is now ready to use.

For constructors taking parameters, the syntax is as you would expect:

```
Foo *foo1 = new Foo(parm1, parm2);  
Foo foo2(parm1, parm2);
```

If no constructors are declared at all, an implicit default constructor assumed.

C++ constructors will implicitly call its super class constructors in inheritance order, so that you needn't worry about it. Whether `Foo` is a subclass 10 generations deep, or no subclass at all, you needn't worry.

C++'s convenience of combining allocation with initialization is often underestimated, as it is a common practice in most other modern languages. It is not until you use a language lacking this convenience, such as Objective-C, do you come to fully appreciate it.

Note: Advanced C++ users are aware of times when you wish to decouple these steps. For example, suppose you have previously allocated memory (stack or heap, it doesn't matter) into which you wish to instantiate your object. Although this is relatively uncommon, C++ allows you to do this straightforwardly as well. For example, if you wish to allocate a `Foo` object in an area of memory pointed at by `ptr`, you use the in-place new syntax:

```
foo = new (ptr) Foo;
```

Class Instantiation in Objective-C

As suggested above, Objective-C treats memory allocation and class initialization separately. For the former case, it is the class `alloc` method, and it is heap based only (no stack based objects like in C++). The syntax is simple enough:

```
Foo *foo = [Foo alloc];
```

An additional nicety is that the Objective-C `alloc` method zeroes out the memory allocation for you. Now, since no initialization has been performed yet, the above line is *analogous* to the C++ lines:

```
Foo *foo = (Foo *) malloc(sizeof(Foo));  
memset(foo, 0, sizeof(Foo));
```

That is, you now have a pointer to an allocation of cleared memory, but you do not yet have a valid object. You now have to perform the next step of initialization. This is a class method that is usually (but not always) called `init`. Traditionally, the name of any initialization method begins with the word *"init"* (but is not required to be so). So typically the next line would look like this:

```
foo = [foo init];
```

Now you will notice that the `foo` object has been reassigned after initialization. The reason for this is that a different object may be returned after initialization, making the original pointer invalid. So although simply calling:

```
[foo init];
```

is syntactically valid, the `foo` you are left with may be a dangling pointer, and you can quickly become hosed using it. Objective-C users will typically chain their `alloc` and `init` calls to achieve the same effect of C++ construction. Thus in one line, you often see:

```
Foo *foo = [[Foo alloc] init];
```

Just as with C++, Objective-C initializers may take parameters, as in the following example:

```
Foo *foo = [[Foo alloc] initWithParm1:parm1  
andParm2:parm2];
```

Note also that Objective-C initializers must call their super class initialization methods explicitly, as there is no implicit initializer as there is in C++.

Error Handling with Object Instantiation

In C++, the philosophy is essentially this: object construction is assumed to succeed. A failure is an exceptional situation, and therefore is typically managed by exception handling. On modern machines, memory allocation should almost never fail, as the hard drive is used for virtual memory as need. In the extreme situation where it does, the `new` operator will throw a `bad_alloc` exception.

Likewise, C++ constructors do not return a value, so they are always assumed to succeed. If a C++ programmer wishes to indicate a failure to construct, he would throw an exception to this effect.

In Objective-C, both `alloc` and `init` can fail, and each one may return a `NULL` pointer in such an instance. This is very similar to the no throw syntax of C++:

```
foo = new (std::nothrow) Foo;
```

For this reason, newly allocated object pointers must be checked for `NULL`.

Destructing Objects

Analogous to C++ construction, both object clean up and deallocation all happen together during *destruction*. If the object was created on the stack, then the programmer does nothing...literally nothing...as destruction takes place as the object leaves its scope. For objects that were create on the heap with the new operator, an reciprocal call of delete is made, as such:

```
delete foo; // Cleanup and deallocate the object
```

And as expected, C++ inherited destructors are called in reverse order of its construction, all prior to deallocation. Since `foo` is no longer a pointer to valid data, it is common to see it assigned to `NULL` after its destruction. C++ destructors also quietly handle the case in which `foo` is already `NULL`, safely doing nothing.

As with C++, the Objective-C `dealloc` method is used for both cleanup and deallocation, as so:

```
[foo dealloc]; // Cleanup and deallocate the object
```

That these two steps are combined for destruction, but not for construction, is just one of those Objective-C peculiarities that you will eventually grow used to.

Arrays of Objects

C++ also has the very nice feature of allocating arrays of objects, as easily as it does single objects. Let us say for example, we wish to allocate say 10 `Foo` objects, not just one. Object construction and destruction look nearly identical to their originals:

```
foo = new Foo[10]; // Construct an array of 10 Foo's  
... // Do stuff with these Foo's  
delete [] foo; // Destruct these Foo's
```

The additional brackets (required for both construction and destruction).

Unfortunately, Objective-C has no such facility built into its allocation method. Instead, an `NSArray` object must be constructed, which is a bit more complicated. We will delve into that topic when we examine Objective-C container classes. For now, this is where we'll stop.

Coming Up Next Month: More Objective-C. See you in 30!

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

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

October 2008 Edition

By Harry {doc} Babad © 2008



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The software related tips were tested on a 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo iMac with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM; running under Macintosh OS X OS X 10.5.5

Disclaimer: When briefly reviewing share-freeware I will often use the developers' product, functions and features descriptions. All other comments are strictly my own and based on testing. Why need I rewrite the developer's narratives, if they are clearly written?

This month I continue sharing my almost stumbled upon or homegrown tip related finds with you. For a change I've emphasize, and augmented as necessary, tips found in Macworld and the MacFixIt Site. As the occasion warrants, some of the Tips I share come from Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips column <http://www.mac-hints-tips.com>. Where I use any one else's tips for this column, I acknowledge both their source and their contributors.

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

- Quickly reset a Finder view to defaults
- Users having problems unzipping archive files
- Administrator Password Lost
- Keep Track of Your Disks
- Send Clickable Links in Mail's Subject Field
- CD/DVD Disk Read Problems
- Applications Will Not Minimize
- Launch System Preferences with a Keyboard Shortcut

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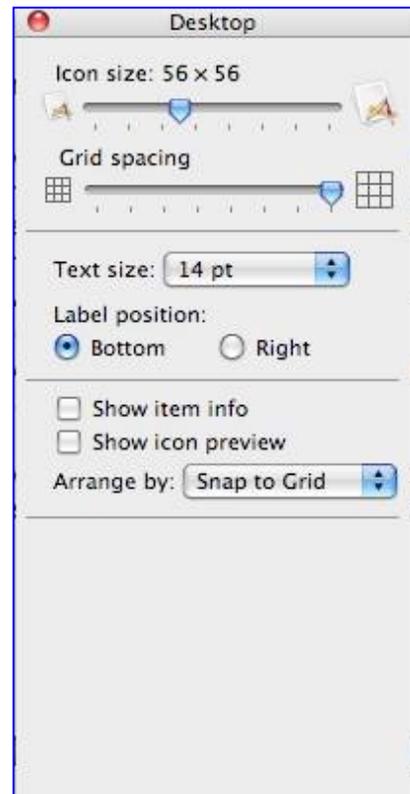
Quickly reset a Finder view to defaults

As you're probably well aware, the Finder's View Options dialog (View -> Show View Options, or Command-J) in OS X 10.5 is the key to customizing your folder views. Using this dialog, you can enable and disable a number of features for each folder on your system. The options available (and what they do) vary based on your

view—in column view mode, for instance, there aren't a lot of options you can set, and whatever changes you make are reflected in all column view windows. In list, icon, and Cover Flow view modes, however, you have a plethora of options, and those settings can vary by window.

So what do you do when you've gone and customized a folder with the view you think you'd like to use...and then decide that, really, you don't like that particular setup at all? You could, of course, go through and reverse each change you'd made, but that's time consuming. For all but column view windows (because every change you make to their view options is global), here's an easier solution...just hold down the Option key with the View Options window open. When you do, you'll see the button labeled Use as Defaults change to Restore to Defaults. (As best as I can recall, this only works in 10.5.)

Click the button, and marvel at the instantaneous return of your folder to your default settings for that view type. Sometimes the simple tricks really are the best!



Mac OS X Hints by Rob Griffiths, Macworld, September 2008

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Users having problems unzipping archive files

Some users are experiencing problems in which files they pack into zip archives via the Finder are not accessible. After selecting some files or folders and using the Finder's "Compress" feature (in the File menu or in the contextual menus) the process seems to work, but upon trying to unzip the archive errors appear. Per Apple Discussions poster [Stephen Pocock](#): "I compressed a folder. Put it on my external drive. Now, when I try to unarchive it, I get a message that says 'Error 1 - operation not permitted'. I tried using Stuffit Expander, but it quits." Users have not been able to rectify the problem by a seemingly obvious step to modify permissions on either the archive file or the enclosing folder. While it is unclear exactly why this problem is occurring, users have had success with using alternate third-party uncompressing utilities to handle the archives.

Fixes and Workarounds

Attempt command-line decompression — Open the terminal and type the following command followed by a space: **sudo unzip**

Then either type in the full file path to the archive, or drag the archive to the terminal window to automatically complete the file path. Then press enter and supply the administrator password when prompted. If successful the files should unarchive to the same folder as the .zip file.

Use A Third-Party Unarchiver

Users have found that the utility "Unarchiver now version 1.6.1" [<http://wakaba.c3.cx/s/apps/unarchiver.html>] seems to work well when the system archiving processes give these errors. However, while this may work for some users, other similar programs may be the solution for other users and it is recommended to try several (available by searching at <http://www.versiontracker.com>)



I've used, sez Doc, Zip 2..2.2 on the occasion that the latest version (13.0) of Stuffit Expander did not work. Alas, these days there aren't many choices out there.

Use another computer

Archive files are stored in the .zip format, which is common and easily readable on a variety of operating systems. If users have another Mac handy, or a PC running Windows XP, copying the file to this computer may enable proper decompression of the files. The methods for un-archiving the zip files depend on the computer, but in a Windows environment they should open in Windows Explorer itself as a compressed folder, or be manageable with applications such as WinRAR or WinZip. In a Linux/Unix environment there should be many third-party compression applications available as well, but in addition should also contain the "unzip" command as is described in Fix #1 above.

MacFixit Daily Newsletter, August 11 2008

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Administrator Password Lost

Problem: My son Bruce, who inherited my G4 Macintosh earlier in the summer, lost his administrator password along the way. Since the computer contains all sorts of goodies he was interested in, we don't want to wipe the disk, as Apple recommends. I recalled reading, either in email newsletters (Tidbits, Macworld or some paper publication) a means of installing a new administrator password without erasing the hard drive but had not saved the article for future reference. So I sent out a technical support request to my local Macintosh User Group.

Collective Reply from the many Mid-Columbia Macintosh Users Group Members Users:

Summary — You can reset the password if you boot the Mac to an Installer CD. Choose Reset Password from the Utilities or Installer menu (depends on which version of OS X you're booting from)

Here's the Apple Support Article link: <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1274>

Details — Resetting the original administrator account password

Follow these steps to reset a password when there is only one administrator account on the computer, or if the original administrator account (of several) needs a password reset. "Original" administrator account refers to the one that was created immediately after installing Mac OS X. If the original administrator password is known, the original administrator user may reset the passwords of other administrator accounts using the steps described below.

- Start up from a Mac OS X Install CD (one whose version is closest the version of Mac OS X installed). You should first disable Open Firmware password protection, if it is enabled. Hold the C key as the computer starts.
- Choose Reset Password from the Installer menu (or Utilities menu in Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger). Tip: If you don't see this menu or menu choice, you're probably not started from the CD yet.
- Select your Mac OS X hard disk volume.
- Set the user name of your *new original administrator account*.
- Enter a new password.
- Click Save.



Important: Do not select "System Administrator (root)". This is actually a reference to the root user. Do not confuse it with a normal administrator account.

After following these steps, you'll want to also follow the steps in Mac OS X 10.4: Keychain Access asks for keychain "login" after changing login password. [I never used the keychain on my G4 so this instruction was irrelevant — doc]

Harry (doc) Babad and Apple Support

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Keep Track of Your Disks

Problem: As a regular and long time user of Toast, I have accumulated quite a collection of backup media over the years. Once in a while I require some little piece for a project and I am then faced with the daunting task of finding the bit I need, amongst the ever-growing pile of CDs and DVDs.

Solution: One way to manage this is to take advantage of Toast's ability to keep the file and folder structure intact. If you copy any folder in a Toast window and paste it into a word processor, the entire contents of that folder and all the folders contained within will be listed in a nested fashion, as it is on the disk. From there it is simply a matter of a quick tidy up, perhaps delete any unwanted info and away you go -- a quick and easy way to keep track of your backups.

I, Doc, find it easier to index my disks using Disk Tracker, now version 2.4, my long time favorite cataloging tool. It is easy to pop each disk into the program to create a catalog. I add the disk's catalog to the disk I'm burning, as well as keeping a copy on my drive for easy access. I've found for reference purposes, I can combine all the related catalogs into a master Disk Tracker file, and do a search of the while collection to find what I need.



Ivan Radywonik
AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
From Paul Taylor's May/June 2008 Hints & Tips column

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Send Clickable Links in Mail's Subject Field

Today's hint would probably fall into the "did you know?" category—if we had such a category. Consider it a tidbit, a morsel of knowledge to file away for possible use in the future...or not. In any event, today's hint concerns Mail and its ability to make embedded URLs into clickable links.

You're probably well aware that embedding an *http://www....* address in the body of your e-mail will create a clickable link in the message as seen by its recipients. This definitely works with Mail as the receiving client, and I would assume with other e-mail clients as well. The link will look much like it does on any website, in color with an underline indicating its clickable state.

What you may not have known is that you can send clickable links as the subject of e-mail messages as well—at least if the recipient is using Mail in OS X 10.5 to read your message. Again, this may work in other e-mail clients, but I only have Mail set up here to test with.

There are a couple of caveats to this tip, though. First, the link will *not* show as clickable in the subject, even though it is. You won't see an underline, nor will the cursor change states when you mouse over it. Second, in order for the link to be clickable, there are two things you must do when composing the message. You must write the message in rich text mode (Message -> Make Rich Text, or via Mail's Composing preferences to set rich text mode as the default). The other requirement is that the body of the message must have some text in it—when I tested this with just a URL in the Subject field, it didn't show up as clickable on the receiving end. As soon as I added any text to the body, the URL in the Subject field became clickable.

Of course, it's probably a lot simpler to just send the URL in the body of the message, but I found it interesting that Mail's parser also parses the Subject field for URLs.

Mac OS X Hints by Rob Griffiths, Aug 7, 2008

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CD/DVD Disk Read Problems

A number of times recently I've had to attend to CD or DVD players that weren't reading discs. One of them was my own! In all cases the problem was that the player's lens needed cleaning.

Your CD/DVD player uses a laser beam that is focused on the disc by a lens. If this lens accumulates dust the beam will be diffused or incorrectly focused, and the player won't function correctly.



Your local music store, or an office supply store like *Staples* or *Office Depot*, will sell you a cleaning disc that incorporates a number of minute brushes (see image). Load this disc into your player and follow the instructions for cleaning. The process will take only a minute or so, though I usually repeat it just for luck.

Buy a cleaning disc before you forget, and be ready for the inevitable.

Steve Cooper
AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
From Paul Taylor's May/June 2008 Hints & Tips column

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Applications Will Not Minimize

We previously reported an issue in which applications will not minimize. There seems to be a similar problem affecting some users, in which applications that have been hidden will not unhide, and remain so until they are force-quit by the user. Apple Discussions poster [Aquanaut](#):

"I have had a regular problem since Tiger (and maybe earlier) where a hidden application cannot be brought back using 'show.' Everything looks okay but clicking the icon in the dock or using any other methods for App selection doesn't work...I've tried everything from deleting the dock preferences to running Disk Warrior, fixing permissions, etc. The only solution when it happens is to force quit the app."

We suspect that this problem is caused by some applications more than others, but users have not been able to pinpoint an exact culprit, and the problem does occur at seemingly random times for the affected applications. This problem has affected users for a long time, since Tiger for some, and for others since installing Leopard.

Potential Fixes and Workarounds

Restart the Dock — There are no known fixes to preventing this problem from occurring, though it is possible it may have to do with the Dock, which holds responsibility for much of how applications behave in OS X. Users can try restarting the Dock to see if that helps the situation with the problematic application. To do this, open the Terminal and type the following command: `killall Dock`

This command will close the Dock, and the application will be restarted automatically. It may also be necessary to reset the Dock's preferences by removing the preferences files from the `~/Library/Preferences/` folder. The files to remove are: "com.apple.Dock.plist", and "com.apple.Dock.db". By removing these files, the Dock's behavior and applications will be reset to the default, so it is recommended to create a list of the Dock's applications before removing these preference files.

Force-quit the affected applications — For some users, this problem happens with the Finder, and luckily with this application users can easily restart it without losing data. For other applications, however, force quitting may result in loss of work or settings, depending on the application. Still, to force-quit applications or relaunch the Finder, by pressing the `opt-cmd-esc` key sequence and selecting the problematic application from the list will allow the program to be restarted so it stays in the foreground.

Troubleshoot with a new account — Users might try creating a new account to see if the problem still persists there. If so, then it indicates something installed in the User's library folder is the culprit, and further investigation can target this folder. In addition, users may wish to just migrate to the new account if it is problem free, which may be easier than pinpointing specific problems. There are ways to change the new account to have the same name as the previous account, so if a new account fixes the problem users can alter it to have the same login and password as the previous one. This process is outlined in this MacWorld article *by Dan Frakes*. <http://www.macworld.com/article/132693/2008/03/changeshortusername.html>
An alternate to this process is to delete the previous problematic account (preserving user data) and recreate one with the same username and password, then test the new account and migrate data over to it if there are no problems.

MacFixit Daily Newsletter, Thursday, August 14 2008

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Launch System Preferences with a Keyboard Shortcut

You may need to open System Preferences from time to time to adjust network settings, change user account options, or some other task. If you don't keep System Preferences in your Dock, you can set a keyboard shortcut to make it launch.

To create the shortcut, open the Keyboard & Mouse System Preferences panel, click on the Keyboard Shortcuts tab, then click the plus (+) sign. In the dialog that appears, leave Applications set to All Applications, set the Menu Title to System Preferences... (that's an ellipsis—use the Option-; key combo—and not three sequential periods), and enter your desired shortcut in the Keyboard Shortcut box.

Since the standard keyboard shortcut for preferences in any application is Command-, (Command-comma), you might want to use Command-Option- (Command-Option-dash) or something similar. After you set the keyboard shortcut, you'll need to log out and log in again, or restart your Mac, for it to be available.

What's interesting to note is that you can set keyboard shortcuts in this manner to any menu command in the Apple menu. For instance, if you move your dock around somewhat regularly, you can assign keyboard shortcuts for the Position on Left/Right/Bottom menu items. Or assign a shortcut to Software Update, to make it easy to repeatedly check for new updates on a day when you're expecting one.

Mac OS X Hints, Macworld, by Kirk McElhearn, August 14 2008

That's all folks...

Harry {doc} Babad



The Northern Spy

Hot News, Cool Views

Technology News and Views Since 1983

By Rick Sutcliffe

October 2008

The heat of summer has passed

for most of us, but Apple has a few heat problems of their own not yet resolved. Seems iSteve's lads and lassies have been going for small and quiet lately--a welcome change from the aircraft engine fans some machines needed a few short years ago. However, quiet skates a thin red line next to hot, and system/environmental variability may result in crossing that line unbeknownst to designers who cheat on the three hundred percent engineers' safety factor.

Thus the Spy has reports of undue numbers of AirBooks expiring of heat stroke. These cannot be personally confirmed, as an AirBook is a tad too light for his taste or needs. However, personal experience (shared by numerous others complaining on the usual boards) indicates that Apple may have been a trifle ambitious when packing components into the TimeVault.

He bought his own TimeVault in the early spring of 2008, set it up to replace the dead Hawking G router, and configured TimeMachine to do its magic--though only as a tertiary backup, mind. One should never *trust* technology. Five months later, in mid September, his MacBookPro rang down the RCOD (Rolling Curtain of Death) while trying to mount the Vault's drive. Understand that though he'd seen the RCOD before on other Apple machines, this was a first for this unit in the months he's owned it.

Moreover, it happened on every connect attempt. Further investigation showed that the AirPort (wireless) was dead as well, though the wired router continued to function. Noting that the unit was very hot, he unplugged it to cool a while. Nada. Double-checking with alternate wiring, a direct connection, and another router eliminated all other possibilities for the fault.

Tentative probable cause: heat death from too many components packed into a small volume. Subsequent Internet investigation indicated that others have had this same problem, usually after using the wireless for a large data transfer such as a backup. Though that was not the case in this instance, it is instructive that the wireless did die with the drive. Apple needs to install either a spin-down in the firmware or a fan.

Anyway, back in the crate with manuals and disks went the shiny white box for a trip back to London Drugs Computer Department from whence it had come. The nice young man at the counter (they get younger every year) was at a loss to know what to do (store 30-day warranty expired, manufacturer one-year still in effect, boss gone home), and the duty manager he called appeared to have been working in cosmetics. However, true to good training, they decided to be customer centric and exchange the unit for a new one rather than send it to Apple on the Spy's behalf and leave him without for a few weeks. Well done, London Drugs, and a happy customer.

Not until the incident was over did the Spy realize why he felt a bit of a klutz throughout his time at the counter--he'd never before had occasion to return an Apple product. Oh, his university had done so once or twice, but there were technicians to handle the grotty details in those cases. Yes this was his first failure of a personally owned Apple branded product since 1978. Hmmm. Oh, the new unit also seems very warm. How long will it last?

John Demco,

father of the Canadian Internet for running the .cdn (later .ca) ccTLD off his desk at UBC for more than a decade, was honoured as an industry pioneer last month by having a learning centre in the UBC computing science building named after him. It was a fine affair, with lots of kind speeches, a plaque to unveil, and plenty of food for the students to stuff into their mouths and knapsacks.

Good on UBC. Good on gentleman John. The whole ccTLD operation was of course turned over to CIRA (the Canadian Internet Registration Authority) when the government created it as a non-profit Corporation around the turn of the millennium. CIRA had to pay UBC for the IP rights and database, and got John as a permanent ex officio board member in return. With the last payment now made, it was time to acknowledge a true visionary.

Concurrent with the unveiling, CIRA had its AGM in nearby Vancouver. Some one-hundred-forty members attended, passed a few motions, and got to question the board, president, and CIRA officials. Democracy in action. Would that all TLDs ran with at least this much opportunity for domain holders to have their say. Next CIRA event is the October ninth board meeting in Ottawa, by which time there could be as many as five new elected board members. Disclaimer on this story: The Spy serves on the CIRA board as an elected member.

The Case of the Errant Ad Agency

haunts Microsoft as we drift into the month for such activities. After producing three (but apparently only airing two) Jerry Seinfeld ads to scathing reviews, the company has changed tacks and tried to roll with Apple's punches by adopting and trying to redeem the wimpy "I'm a PC" label in a new ad series. It didn't take the real geeks long to discover that the hired ad agency hadn't read the party line before they went ahead and produced the work on a Mac. Whoops a daisy.

Under one of his other hats,

the Spy does a little web hosting to help pay the bills and keep him up to date. This is all very straightforward with the amazing cPanel hosting software. A few months ago, he decided to bite the bullet and put in an automated billing and support package that could communicate with box and customers, provision accounts, suspend non-payers, and so forth. After extensive research to locate the best such package, he purchased WHMCS (Web Hosting Manager Complete Solution) but at a slightly reduced rate from reseller LicensePal. At the time he did his own install and customization, but when it came time to upgrade this week to 3.7.1 from 3.6, he decided to pay LicensePal the \$10 they wanted to do the job for him. If only there were more than just the thirty hours in a day.

Might be the best ten loonies he's ever laid down (well, plus exchange). The job was done quickly, efficiently, and correctly. More, a support question about WHMCS (probably unrelated to the install) was answered immediately and politely for no additional charge. Jay, owner and techie for LicensePal, rates support and retail hero of the week. If you're a web host looking for billing automation, buy lotsa your stuff from him.

Yes, and the WHMCS 3.7.1 upgrade itself is well worth it. With nicer layouts for some information, new functionality, and more modules, WHMCS continues to blow the competition away. Now, if only they would write a module to communicate directly to CIRA, registrars (not just resellers) of .ca domains could integrate WHMCS into their online business models.

Book of the month

goes to *XSLT* by Doug Tidwell, and published (of course) by O'Reilly. This is an updated edition, now covering XSLT 2.0, but without removing information specific to XSLT 1.0

Understand that this is neither a textbook nor a beginners' book for "dummies", but a professional manual and reference (964 pages complete with examples). XML transformations are covered in exhaustive detail, top to bottom, but the reader is assumed to be familiar with XML and with the basic idea behind XSLT--that of writing XML sheets that provide the framework for the transformation of a syntactically correct XML document into...well, just about any other kind of structured document, such as, but certainly not limited to, an HTML page. Data in an XML document can be spat out as part of a site in a variety of formats on different pages, for instance.

It's pretty common these days for web hosts to compile Apache with XSLT turned on by default, so a large percentage of sites can benefit from these techniques.

As usual when reviewing an O'Reilly offering, the Spy highly recommends this manual to those who can make use of it. You don't exactly read a book like this, and not everyone wants to do things this way, but if you need to know how to use XSLT, this book had better be on your shelf.

--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>
CPanel: <http://cpanel.net/index.html>
WHMCS: <http://www.whmcs.com/>
LicensePal: <http://www.licensepal.com/>

Tutorial: Shrinking and Enhancing Multi-Page PDF Recipes



By Harry {doc} Babad

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Introduction

As some of you have by now realized I am both a fan of recipes and of adobe Acrobat Po, now in version 9. Indeed a combination or recipe hunting, mostly from blogs, and an occasional game of Shanghai are my favorite escape mechanisms when sleep evades me.

Unless an *individual* recipe comes from a web site that is recipe collecting cook-orientated perspective, the recipes I download in PDF format are full of chaff. Between Google and banner ads, side bars right and left full of stuff. Some of the material is good stuff. I enjoy reading about the blogger, and occasionally the comment feed back the recipes author has received. The rest of the material just gets in my way, adds to file size bloat, and takes a page full of useful information into 3–5 pages of stuff. Often the authors have either included no picture or have created a multi image lesson, neither of which meets my needs. After all, I've been cooking since I was sixteen, and so far have poisoned no one.

What I want from the downloaded PDF is a book quality rendering of the recipe. I can then annotate it with notes, adlibs, make ingredient changes I prefer, and as needed add images. For one-item recipes, I've found acrobat to be the perfect tool for the task.

What about web pages with multiple recipes? — That becomes more difficult since it required both the splitting up of the master PDF (the site page download). I must then accommodate the reality that the pieces (individual recipes) or formatted with even more chaff and combine lots of tag ends from the preceding recipe on that page. In that case, I work directly with the PDF, in my browser (Safari). I either drag-drop or cut and paste the parts of a web page I need into a MSW 2004 document. It some time s takes several repeated copy actions to capture the recipe, any desired adlibs, and the image I want. Obviously, the formatting I carryover from the html-web version is both strange and often unattractive.

So before doing much more, I use a recorded macro that serves to (1) change all lines to single spaces, (2) all paragraphs to normal (zero below and after spacing), (3) converts all the text to Lucida Grande 12 black text and (4) saves the result. I then do whatever formatting, in word required to make the recipe attractive, and easily readable. Finally after adding recipe source's URL and saving the result, I convert the file to a PDF.

But I digress — ex-academics do that.

In this tutorial I will share the repetitive, but rewarding, process of using Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro to convert a three-page recipe for Three Bean Salad [http://www.canada.com/cityguides/vancouver/features/tasteofbc/recipes/three_bean_salad.html] into a one page illustrated format. I do comparable cleanup when I capture technical information to support my technical textbook writing efforts. I know this takes time, but having clean copy feels good when I return to the reference materials.

Let's Do It

The Way Now it is — In order to take a noisy chaff filled three-page recipe and not only shrink it to one page, but add an image to it, I go through a lot of steps. In general the steps and Acrobat tools I use below in narrative, not procedure format.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Vancouver - Weather, Vancouver - Maps, Events, Entertainment and more





Three Bean Salad

Ingredients:
 1 (398 mL) can cut green beans, drained
 1 (398 mL) can kidney beans, drained
 1 (398 mL) can lima beans, drained
 1 (284 mL) can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
 1 small red onion, sliced thin
 1/3 cup (75 mL) white wine vinegar
 1/3 cup (75 mL) vegetable oil
 1/3 cup (75 mL) sugar
 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) salt
 1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dried basil
 1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dry mustard
 1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dried tarragon

Preparation:
 In large bowl, combine green, kidney and lima beans, chestnut: bowl, whisk together vinegar, oil, sugar, salt, basil, mustard and bean mixture and mix well. Cover and chill several hours or overnight.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Approximate nutritional analysis for each serving: 386 calories, 13.1 g protein, 12.6 g fat, 57.5 g carbohydrate. Excellent source of iron and magnesium. Very high in fibre

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http://www.canada.com/cityguides/vancouver/features/tasteofbc/recipes/three_bean_salad.html

The Goal

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Vancouver - Weather, Vancouver - Maps, Events, Entertainment and more 9/7/08 6:07 PM

Get More Access to all things Entertainment. 



Log in | Help | Register | Benefits of registration

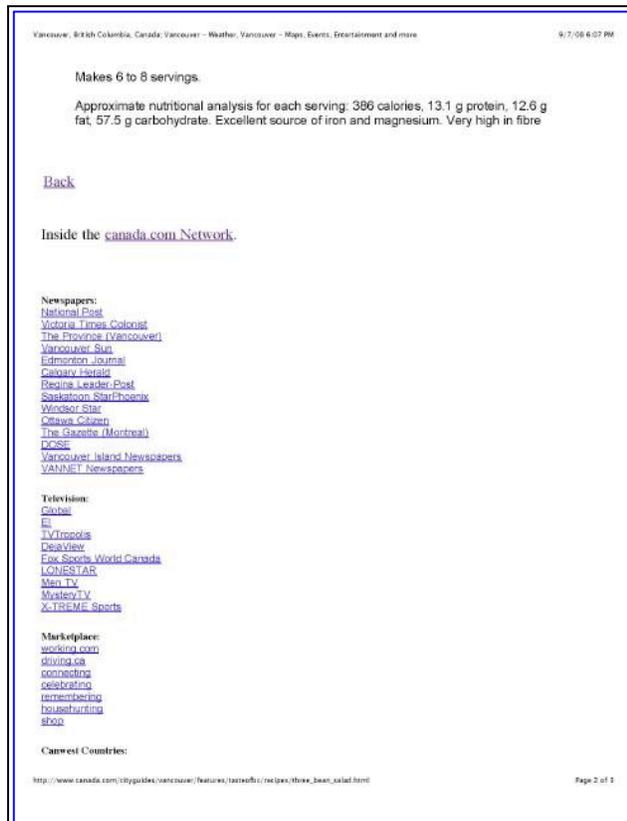
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 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) salt
 1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dried basil
 1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dry mustard
 1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dried tarragon

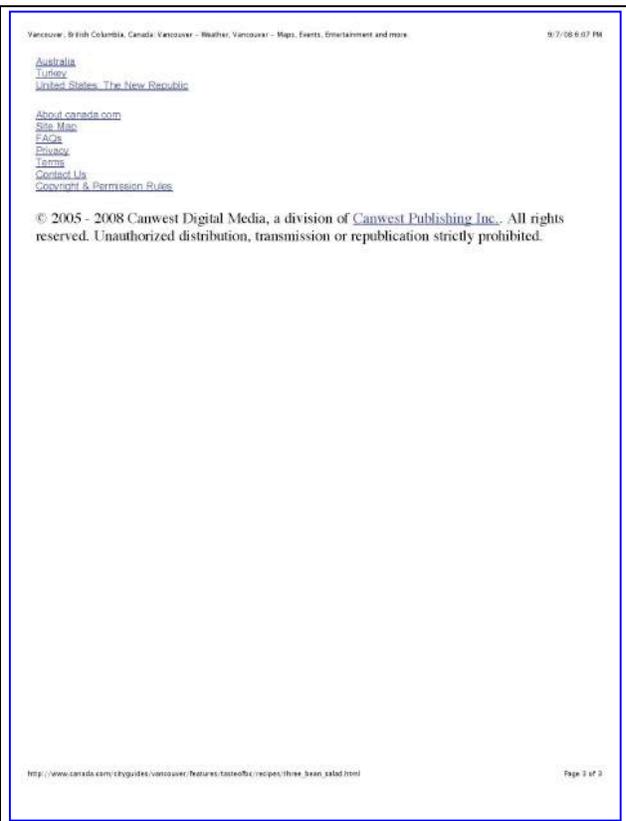
Preparation:
 In large bowl, combine green, kidney and lima beans, chestnuts and onion. In small bowl, whisk together vinegar, oil, sugar, salt, basil, mustard and tarragon; pour over bean mixture and mix well. Cover and chill several hours or overnight. Drain before serving.

http://www.canada.com/cityguides/vancouver/features/tasteofbc/recipes/three_bean_salad.html Page 1 of 1

Raw Recipe Page One



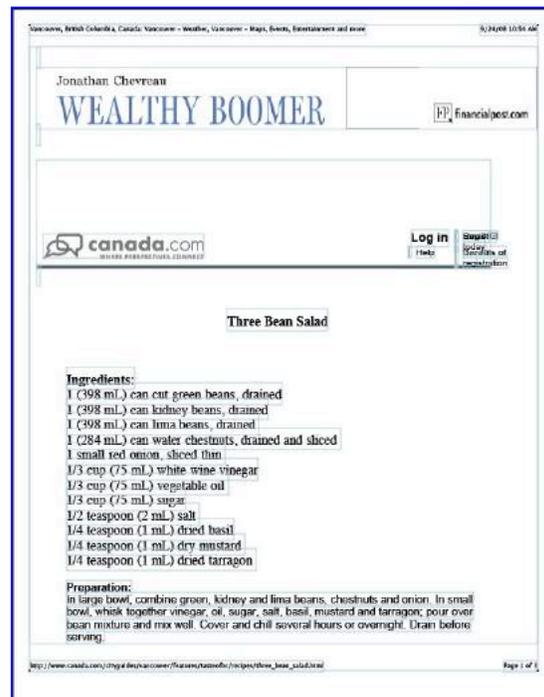
Raw Page Two



Raw Page Three

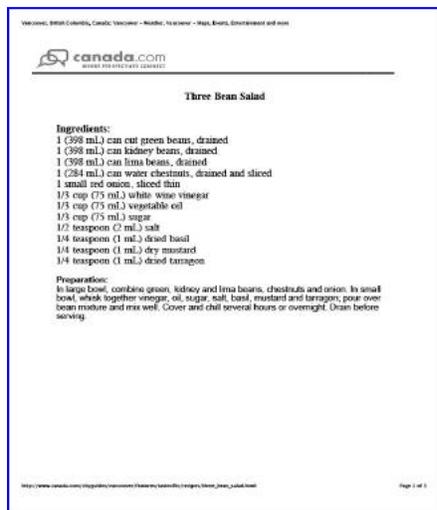
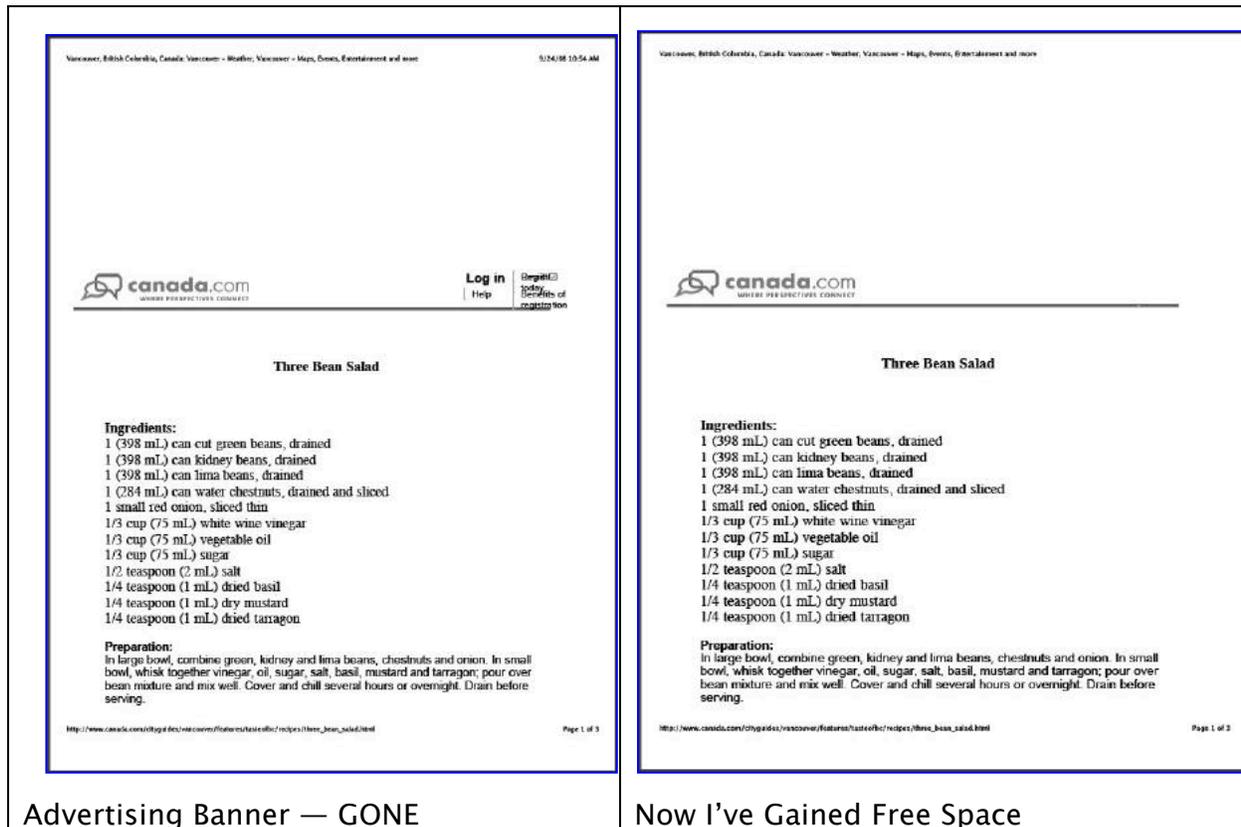
First Step

Remove Unneeded Frames — This takes multiple passes for each page using the Touchup Object Tool to remove frames. You must be careful to remove material with overlapping doubled frames since that will remove your text. Mistakes can be corrected by using the undo command [⌘-Z]. The touchup object tool is powerful and allows you to work with it directly by using your mouse to highlight undesired text or images. You can also be more selective by focusing what you select using either option key or a combination of the option key and the shift key. This is a trial and error process what differs somewhat depending on how the document you are reformatting and editing was prepared. *Note the advertising banner in the images changed when I revisited the site to capture images for this article.*



Step Two

Remove Unwanted Banners, Images and Text — As described above, this requires, for each page, extensive use of the Touchup Object Tool and other editing tools provided by Acrobat.



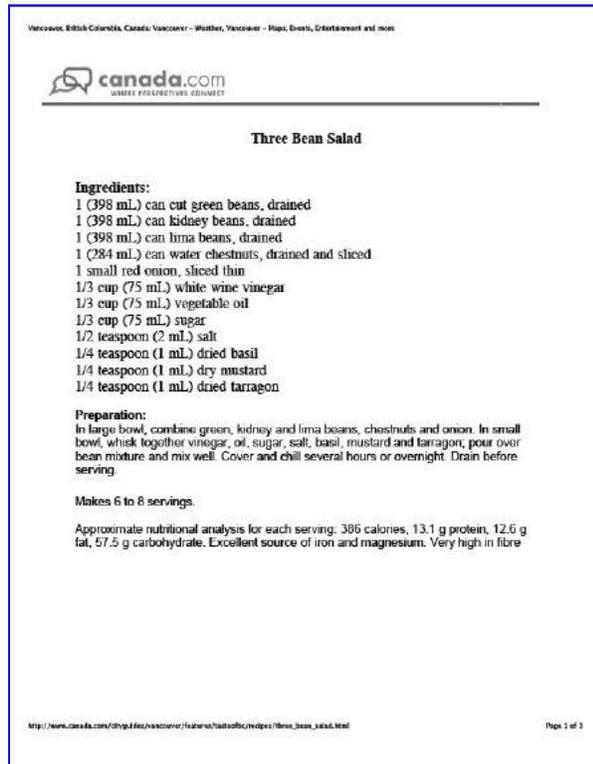
Move Remaining Page 1 Text and Images To the Desired Location — This requires a combination of the Acrobat Clipboard and variants of the Touchup Object Tool using some of the alternative keyboard modifications to control the tools behavior. As noted the tool is available directly from the tool bar. Its focus can be more narrowly and specifically focused when selecting text and images for you're for tuning your final document consolidation.

The steps are simple if at times tedious, especially if you have folder full of documents to reformat and consolidate.

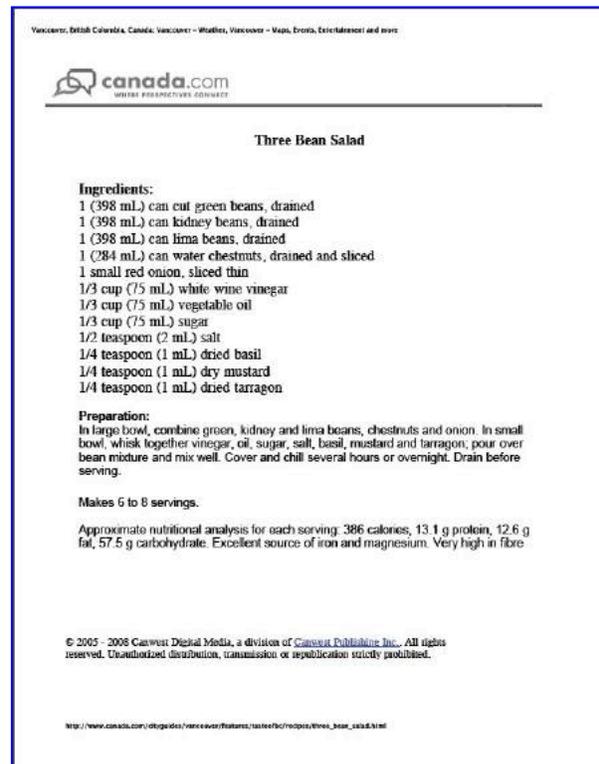
1. First reclaim any unused (cleared) space on page 1 of your document by shifting text/image to the top of the page using the Touchup Object Tool. Yep, you lots of blank space on the lower page portion to move materials from the pages that follow.

2. Having cleared out all the chaff on page 2, copy the desired text you've highlighted with the Touchup Object Tool, to the clipboard.

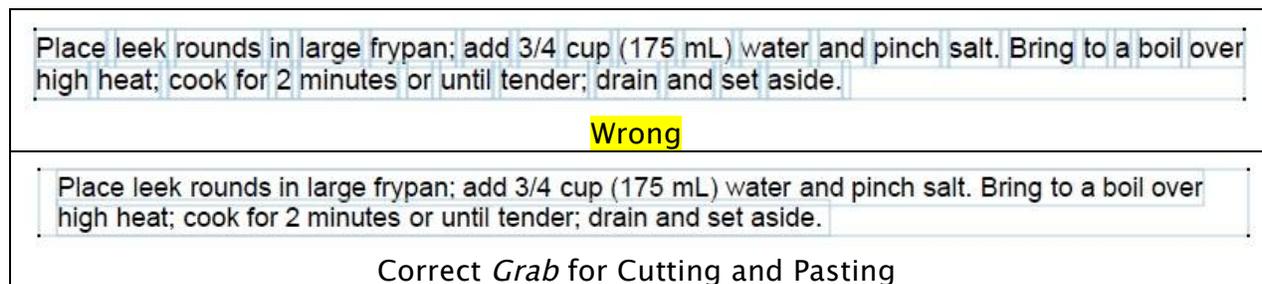
- Then paste the material into the emptied space on page 1. Note if what the Touchup Object Tool highlights is individual words, this paste will not work. Instead what you paste will be gibberish. Play with the text using various variations of the option or option shift keys until you selected whole lines of text, not lines of highlighted individual words. Repeat, as needed, with information from page three.



Ready for Page 2 Information



Imageless Recipe —Moved and Shrunk Copyright information



- Finally, using the delete pages tool [command-Option D or as found in the Document Menu] to rid your self of the extra pages. Save your document or add a picture if need, and you're done.

Note: If you done the clean-up in a manner that leaves too much white space on either the right or left side of a page, use Acrobat's trim feature to do just that. Tool [command-Option T or as found in the Document Menu].

Enjoy the recipe... It's a bit tedious, but I've never, well almost never, had the method fail me. Try in on your own to keep findings from the Internet.

Now wouldn't this have been easier if you had a manual?

_doc



Three Bean Salad

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http://www.canada.com/cityguides/vancouver/features/tasteofbc/recipes/three_bean_salad.html

Ivory Tower October 2008

By Ted Bade

We humans are truly amazing. I really mean that, but not totally in a good way. While many of us are out there trying to promote information freedom and to give everybody access to all information, there are almost as many out there working hard to figure out how to muddy, distort, or manipulate the information.

It is almost as if a group like ancient alchemists, thinking that if everyone has knowledge their mysterious abilities won't be needed anymore, are on a campaign to hide knowledge. We all know the history of how "scientists" of old used codes and other cryptic means to record their information, sharing the secrets of the code only with a few. This, of course, made them "valuable" to society. If you wanted to make use of something they knew, you had to go through them. We see a lot of this today in the computer science and medical fields. Doctors down speak of "laymen" and the IT people speak in exasperated tones of "users".

While "laymen" might not have a lot of medical knowledge, some of them are educated and many have advanced degrees, which makes one consider they can think for themselves. The same is true for some "users". I have learned over the years that using a personal computer and the field of "Computer Science" are not that closely related. A power PC user can probably run rings around a MS in computer science when it comes to the PC that person is familiar with.

Most of the people in these professions, rather than making the technology easier (at least the basic parts), work to keep the status quo. Yet for both, there are communities available that work to give control to the user. That is one of the major reasons that I like working with Macs, since the Mac community tends to work that way. The basics are easy, one doesn't need an IT team to install a program! But like any advanced technology, there are times when a person with specialized knowledge can be a real benefit. As a general rule, the people in the Mac community like to put the control in the hands of the user, but are always willing to help when something special occurs. Not always so when it comes to the Windows side.

The same is true about my physical health. I would go to a doctor for advise, because I expect he or she knows more about bodies in general than I do and can recommend valuable solutions. But before I allowed any actions to occur, I will do some research on what they suggest. I am happy to provide observations and input about how I feel, since I am truly the expert on that (LOL). However, my experience with many of them is that they just won't listen to me, and from what I have learned talking to other people, they really don't listen to anybody else either. This attitude is what I am talking about here in this article. An old science that is trying to hide behind the skirts of "secret knowledge". It is not that the knowledge they possess is so easy anyone can do it, it is the attitude that they are "precious" because they have this knowledge and the "power" given to them by this.

In the computer world, it is nowhere near as bad as in the medical world. Still, people with the training and the knack for working with machines often hold dearly to those secrets they earned, and won't take the time to try to understand what the "user" is trying to tell them. Granted, some of their experience came from spending countless hours working on a particular problem.

I will also admit there are some people (users) that are so intimidated by computers that they can seem to mess things up simply by turning the computer on. The “professional” response is to treat everyone like they are completely stupid (very similar to what the MDs do). Luckily, this isn’t everywhere and some IT people even try to educate, as some MDs do as well. But in my experience, this isn’t the norm.

Personally, I like working with Mac users best. Give them a little knowledge and they quickly get the basics. Then instead of basic questions your suddenly get asked tough power user questions! That is cool! Empower the user. You don’t loose your job, it just gets a lot more fun! I do have to admit that this rule does seem to work as well in the other operating systems I support. Some get what I show them, others don’t. Those that do I give more knowledge to, those that don’t, I keep a better watch on. But it is an individual case by case thing.

Don’t take me wrong, I don’t believe that people with knowledge aren’t important, they truly are. Not everyone is going to feel completely at ease with a computer and few people have the interest it takes to learn all the complexities of computers. This is even more so when we consider the medical world. I am very glad there are people who are interested in providing these services. My issue here is with the attitude of arrogance. Some people understand more then others. Some people want to take responsibility for their health and the health and well being of their computers. Other people want to be completely taken care of. Service professionals need to have the ability to intelligently work with both type of people.

Getting back to the Internet and information. There is a lot of good information out there. With the Internet, I can take the time to research a particular problem I am having with just about any aspect of my life, physical, mental, or with any item I use. I can learn more about it, and generally find a solution. This doesn’t mean I won’t use people experienced with a particular subject. It does mean that I will do as much research about a topic as I am interested in before paying for someone to help me. This way I have a better understanding of what is going to happen. Also, I tend to be “tricked” less often. If my car mechanic told me that he wants to put some special chemical in my car, I will try to find out what it is first. Just as if my doctor wants me to take a particular drug, I want to know the possible side effects and be given the opportunity to compare the risks to the benefits specifically to my life.

Alas, for the Internet is a vast repository of confusion. Take a look at my first paragraph. There are a lot of people out there willing to share their information and experience, truthfully. Sadly, there are a lot of people out there more interested in a fast buck or who just like to confuse people. So instead of a tremendously valuable resource, we have a resource that has to be evaluated every time it is used. How do you know if the information is real or just somebody blowing smoke? There is as much a chance the information you read will be provided by someone with real knowledge or experience as there is it being provided by someone with a cause (for or against), or even someone who knows absolutely nothing but likes to write! (Take my column, for instance ☺)

A good case in point are those Internet opinion sites. I always think it is a good idea to visit them and see what people say about the things I plan to purchase. You wouldn’t expect anyone to take the time to give false information here, right? Well, perhaps that isn’t exactly right. Some time ago, I was chatting with a friend who works at a bed store. He told me that some bed manufacturers had told employees to visit these type of sites and either give good reviews to their brand of beds or bad ones to the competition.

Whether this happened or not, it got me thinking. It would be easy to write a bunch of false bad information about the competition. You know, I had this or that problem, it arrived and wasn't what I expected, and so forth.

Then again, this negative information might have some truth. Which would ultimately benefit the reader. But more likely than not, it will simply be someone saying they just didn't like the product. Most opinion sites use a star rating system, so if a product gets enough low star ratings, its overall rating goes down. When people do a basic search for a product, this is what they see first. Obviously, a low star rating would immediately turn away a potential customer, even if 90% of the bad ratings were without base. Would you be willing to read through the reviews of a 2-Star item when there are a few four or five star ones to choose from?

Wikipedia is a great place to learn about stuff, but again, you have to be careful. For this article I took a look at some entries on controversial issues that I know (or believe I know) something about, as well as a few I am vaguely familiar with. I was surprised to find that, for the most part, the information was pretty balanced. I do have to admit that the entry on Homeopathy reeks of a big organization doing its best to paint it in a bad light. As a matter of fact, it is so glaringly biased against this branch of health care, that it is obvious that someone is trying to paint it in a negative light. I was surprised that the entry concerning global warming was fair and balanced. That is an issue that I truly expected would have a lot of negative and confusing information. IMHO the opponents of these two issues are the drug industry versus natural minded doctors for Homeopathy and the oil industry versus those people who would like to take care of our environment when considering global warming. (Perhaps the medical people are more comfortable with using the Internet and the oil people more comfortable with using our politicians ☺).

Another source of information we often turn to on (and off) the Internet for information comes in the form of formal product reviews. We tend to think that a person taking the time to test and author a review of a product, would give fair information. For the most part, I believe this to be true. I know I try my best to be fair and objective with the reviews I write. But believe me, some of products you read reviews on haven't been that well tested. A new product comes out, magazines or web sites want to provide information about it as quickly as possible, (information which attracts customers web site hits and therefore revenue). Think about this scenario. Here is a new game that will soon hit the market. Give me a review of it in two weeks and keep the review to 300 words! How deep do you think the reviewer got into the game before spending all his or her free time trying to come up with 300 fair and objective words! I have been there and done that!

There have been a few times I have reviewed a product, then later discovered something I didn't like about it. Most of the time, this information doesn't get to the review. Luckily, with a venue like MacCompanion.com, I have the ability to easily make addendum's to my articles. The question is, will I make the effort? The other issue is, how do I communicate this update to the readers? Once you read my words, I have no real way of interacting with you to point out my errors. I doubt you will return to see if I updated my thoughts ☺

There are people out there that just like to rag on things. There is no way they will say anything good about the topic. This was a real issue for many years concerning the Macintosh. Some person who didn't like the Mac, Apple, or the Mac OS for any reason would post an article saying how bad something new was, whether they had experienced it or not.

There was a lot of bad PR for many years. Sadly, this is still true and not just concerning Macs. Take any topic you can think of, do a search on the Internet, and you will find somebody telling you how bad it is.

Sure some of this is for “fun” and some because people want to “wake” up the sleeping masses. There is nothing like a good controversy to get people actually thinking about a topic. But then there are the people who just want to mess with things. Take malicious computer code for instance. I have complained many times about people who write malicious computer code, so I won't go into that here. But that is a great example.

So what is my problem? It is that we have this vast resource of information and the ability to share and interact with almost everyone else on this planet of ours and we still find people more interested in screwing things up than in advancing our society. Little has changed since the days of old, when the printing press made books affordable to the masses. Oh, we have matured a little. Instead of burning people at the stake, hanging, or removing people's heads, we smear their credentials, steal their identities, and lie more loudly and more frequently than those that tell the truth. While people are willing to give the truth away for free, businesses and politicians pay large sums to get people to lie and deceive. It is shameful.

“Dave, we have a problem” - It appears that a computer virus has made it onto the International Space Station. Oh great. In an article found on the 9to5Mac site (http://www.9to5mac.com/space_virus), they explain that the virus was carried to the space station by a laptop.

I would expect that in these days of Windows' viruses, NASA would have a program to clean up computers as well as their astronauts. But apparently this got missed. I guess as long as people continue to allow malicious code to be written, things like this are going to happen. I hope everyone up there at the ISS (International Space Station) is safe and remains so.

Apple takes #4 position in Laptops - I always like it when I hear that more people are buying Macs. Apparently, so many people have been buying Apple laptops that Apple now ranks #4 in laptop sales. Wow!

Take a look at this article found on the Information Week web site titled: “Apple Rises To Fourth In Home Notebook Market”. Good Job Apple.

Microsoft Fights Back - Well, the Apple commercials (the “I'm and Mac and I'm a PC” version), have finally produced a response from Microsoft. But I don't think they get it. For some reason, rather than finding interesting ways to “prove” just how wonderful Vista can be, they have decided to create a set of commercials that simply say that, hey, the PC guy isn't all that bad. It is an interesting response, we will have to see how the market responds to Microsoft's \$300 million campaign.

At first, comedian Seinfeld was going to take an active part in the commercial series. But apparently that didn't work out. Take a look at this blog site that shows the first Seinfeld - <http://blogs.zdnet.com/microsoft/?p=1569>. While it doesn't say a lot about Microsoft, it is a commercial about nothing, which follows the Seinfeld show criteria very closely!

The next wave of ads simply send the message that being a “pc” is okay. The ads show scientists, doctors and other famous people who have used a personal computer to discover and created wonderful things. Does this sound a little familiar? Remember the Apple masters program of a few years ago? (If you don’t, Apple showcased various artists, actors, and other famous people who used Macs in their work). They still have the program. You can find this type of information on the Apple web site, but they don’t use the materials for TV commercials. Leave it to Microsoft to come up with an ad campaign just like some other competitor used (i.e., they can’t even innovate advertising!!) If you want to see the ads for your self, visit this web site. I like the ads, they are nicely done.

The ad campaign is sending a sneaky message. It does say that being a PC person isn’t a bad thing. However, it also implies that the Apple commercials say that being a PC person isn’t a good thing. It is an interesting approach. Instead of saying how wonderful their product is (which might be pretty hard), they send the message that Apple thinks the average PC user is a dummy. This message could rally Windows PC users against the Mac.

The problem is, being a PC isn’t the bad thing. I don’t think Microsoft really gets that. The Apple commercials make a little fun of the befuddled PC guy, but his problems stem from Vista or viruses, the lack of driver support Vista was known for when it first came out, and many other problems related to Microsoft’s OS. And a few dealt with issues associated with PC manufacture. The Microsoft ads don’t deal with this issue. For all we know, some of the people who say I am an PC in the ad could be using a PC that is a Mac!

Well until next month, keep on using your Mac PC!

Books

Final Cut Express 4 - Editing Workshop

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Tom Wolsky

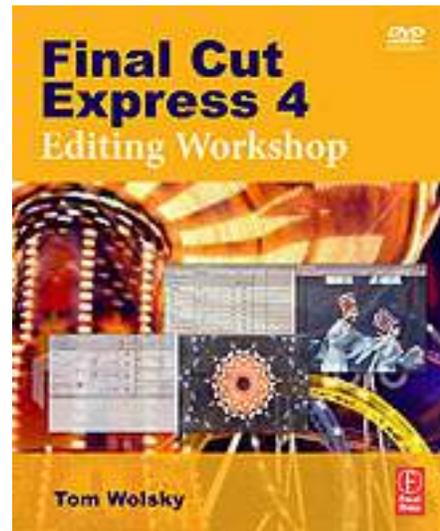
<http://www.focalpress.com/Book.aspx?id=3118&terms=Final+Cut+Express+4>

Released: May 9, 2008

Pages: 352

\$37 USD, with DVD

ISBN: 9780240810775



Strengths: The book is designed to be interactive with the DVD. For the semi-pro movie-maker.

Weaknesses: None found.

Introduction

Go beyond the mechanics of Final Cut Express 4--learn how to edit with it! More than a button-pushing manual--this workshop give you firsthand experience with the art and technique of editing. You develop a working knowledge with nineteen tutorials that cover each and every essential, including:

- * setting up your system and understanding the interface
- * ingesting and organizing your material including drive-based and disc-based camera data
- * slicing, dicing, and organizing clips
- * editing to build and trim a sequence of shots
- * adding transitions
- * using sound to refine your edit
- * titling with FCE and Photoshop
- * animating images to create engaging scenes
- * adding special effects filters
- * compositing to enhance your projects
- * outputting your material



The companion DVD contains project media, demo software, and free plug-ins for your use.

What I Learned

Final Cut Express 4 costs \$200. The book comes with a DVD and lots of hands-on training scenarios to figure out how to use Final Cut Express 4. Very brave, very smart. Very professional. The book, not the app. It is designed for the semi-professional.

But how much of this is scalable to Final Cut Pro or Studio? It's a good star. For most folks who are weaned on iMovie and want to do more, this is a good interim step and perhaps is "enough" for those who don't necessarily need to "go pro".

Read MacWorld's review of Final Cut Express 4 -
<http://www.macworld.com/article/131409/2008/01/finalcutexpress4.html>

The book recommends that if you are upgrading, don't upgrade LiveType, because the new version removes a lot from the previous versions. Soundtrack is also missing from this version.

Conclusion

If you didn't get iMovie '08 and obtained a copy of Final Cut Express 4, this will be a good companion book.

Final Cut Pro Workflows – The Independent Studio Handbook

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Authors: Jason Osder and Robbie Carman

<http://www.focalpress.com/Book.aspx?id=1828&terms=9780240810058>

Released: November 16, 2007

Pages: 256

\$30 USD

ISBN: 9780240810058

Strengths: Real scenarios, real projects. Real work getting done.

Weaknesses: None found.

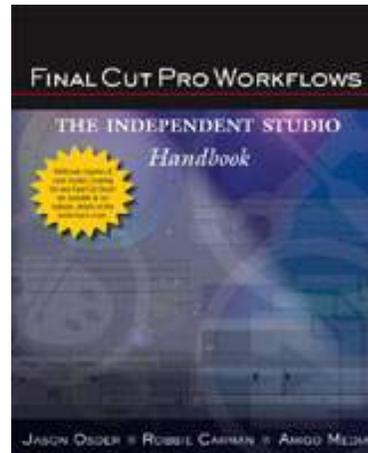
Introduction

Today's digital production tools empower the small team to produce multimedia projects that formerly required large teams. Orchestrating a production requires more than proficiency with the postproduction tools. This book offers a cookbook of production workflows that teams can follow to deliver an array of products to their clients. It describes appropriate postproduction workflows, team roles and responsibilities, and required equipment for some of the most common media productions.

- Real-world workflows and case studies provide blueprints that readers can follow to efficiently coordinate multimedia projects
- Clearly defines team member responsibilities and details their roles in efficient postproduction workflows
- Provides technical and administrative direction that smoothes the way to expanding a studio's postproduction repertoire

What I Learned

It is good to be able to sit at the feet to folks who are professionals and learn from their experiences. Especially when it comes to Final Cut Pro.



The book does tend to get a little heavy into job descriptions and responsibilities, and rightly so. One person can't pull off a large video project alone. There is just too much to do. It takes a community effort from a people with a lot of different backgrounds and experiences. And if you don't believe me, look as the credits roll by on the next successful blockbuster movie. This book does a great job showing how to successfully navigate through major movie projects.

Conclusion

Get serious with a serious book on the topic of project-managing Final Cut Pro.

The Focal Easy Guide to Final Cut Pro 6

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Rick Young

<http://www.focalpress.com/Book.aspx?id=1828&terms=9780240810058>

Released: November 16, 2007

Pages: 272

\$27 USD

ISBN: 9780240810096



Strengths: An easy picture-book How-To guide for video professionals. It addresses the "Core" of Final Cut Studio 2.

Weaknesses: None found.

MacWorld Review:

<http://www.macworld.com/article/58488/2007/06/finalcut-pro6.html>

Introduction

Software packages are complex. Software books don't need to be. Simplify your life with *The Focal Easy Guide to Final Cut Pro!* This concise, full-color book lives up to its name by paring down the software to its essentials. You learn the key features and essential workflow to get you up and running in no time.

With this book you can start cutting immediately, whatever you edit, whatever the format. This is an ideal introduction whether you are a professional moving over to Final Cut Pro from another package or system, a new user, or just someone who wants to get the best results from Final Cut Pro, fast!

- Save time, learn all you need to know to edit with FCP in hours
- Concise full-color coverage, suitable for all OSX versions of FCP

What I Learned

The book isn't thick, because the graphics are excellent and Rick Young apparently does believe that a picture is worth a thousand words. And these aren't cheesy black and whites either! He follows the mantra of "short, precise, concise". Nice.

"Final Cut Studio 2" is valued at \$1,300.00. If you want to jump in quickly with both feet and be productive, then you probably can sit through the tutorials that come with it for a while or curl up with a book that is very user-friendly.

What I learned most was about how things were and how things have become in the movie development industry. And Rick Young did it with a touch of professional humor.

Conclusion

If you want a snapshot of those areas that you need the most help on with Final Cut Pro, then this book will get you what you are looking for.

If you want a guide on Final Cut Studio 2, you will need to look elsewhere.

Hardware

Logitech® diNovo Edge™ Mac® Edition

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre



diNovo Edge®, Mac Edition
www.logitech.com

\$159 USD MSRP, \$164 CND, £85 GBP, 108€ Euro

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later; Bluetooth enabled Mac.



Strengths: Beautiful piece of hardware. Keys very responsive. Functional F-Keys. Bluetooth wireless. Built in track-pad. Very, very slim.

Best Feature: *The keyboard chirps when you hit the caps lock key!*

Dimensions (L x W x H): 16.14 x 8.27 x 0.43 inches.

Weaknesses: Doesn't have system command keys or a numeric keypad. Price.

Introduction



Logitech continues to expand and create new and enhanced keyboards. Macintosh products are usually left behind, however, with Apple specific hardware coming in few and far between. With the diNovo Edge, Logitech jumps ahead again and creates a keyboard any Mac enthusiast would be proud to own.

Getting Started

Installation went smoothly as planned, and documentation provides detailed step-by-step instructions. Though the instructions did not call for pre-charging the keyboard, holding enough of a charge from the factory to get you started, I've always been taught to fully charge batteries from the factory,

which is what I did in this case.

The documentation states that it takes 4 hours on the stand to fully charge, giving up to one month of normal use. A 10-minute charge will provide enough juice to power it approximately one day.

After turning on the keyboard and selecting the keyboard device from the Bluetooth preference pane in System Preferences, the keyboard popped right up. After selecting the keyboard and entering the pairing number, the keyboard immediately worked correctly as a standard keyboard.

Next, you need to install the Logitech Control Center software to get all the whistles and bells to function normally on the keyboard. I started to sweat a bit here.

Using the Drivers

I've had a Logitech Keyboard and Mouse S530 for Mac since I started with my first Mac mini years ago. I was using version 1.6 of the LCC, Logitech Control Center, drivers and software. I have to say honestly I hated it.

Every new update to the drivers I would still complain. I could not believe that a company with the resources of Logitech could put out such cruddy drivers. Everything from my mouse getting "lost", to the LCC Update utility permanently lodging itself in my dock. Any look back into history will give one a great read into the horrors of the LCC.

Thus, with great trepidation I installed version 2.6 into my fragile system. Luckily, I haven't had any problems since. I'm glad I don't need to spring for an extra USB utility like [SteerMouse](#) or [USB Overdrive](#).

Using the Keyboard

First things first. This thing is gorgeous. It complements and emulates the aluminum iMacs perfectly. On arrival, the keyboard is secured in it's box very Apple-like, with everything molded and in it's place. There is a thin, plastic film covering the externals of the keyboard and stand. Didn't really want to take it off, but when I did, it showed a glossy black Plexiglas surface that would rival any well cared for baby-grand. I suppose that is why they also included a large micro-fiber cloth similar to the iPod's.

To turn on the keyboard, there is a small sliding switch on the right side that will show a power flag on the front face.



your

fingertip at the 12 o'clock position on the nub, and move either direction to

The first thing you notice is the round touch pad in the lower right corner. This TouchDisc™ can be used as both a touch pad and a scroll wheel. Moving your finger up and down or across the disc moves the cursor on the computer screen. Moving your finger in a circular motion around the perimeter of the TouchDisc enables you to scroll horizontally and vertically through documents, images and files. There is a nub at the top of the circle, and one on the right. Place

scroll horizontally. Start at the 3 o'clock position to scroll vertically.

You can also tap the pad to mimic a mouse click, or use the buttons underneath the pad for both left and right mouse clicks.

Above the pad is a volume control sensor that is under the Plexiglas, so there is no break up of the smooth surface. A series of LEDs to the left of the volume slider glow and then fade, corresponding to your fingertip motion. Slide your fingertip up to increase volume or down to decrease volume.

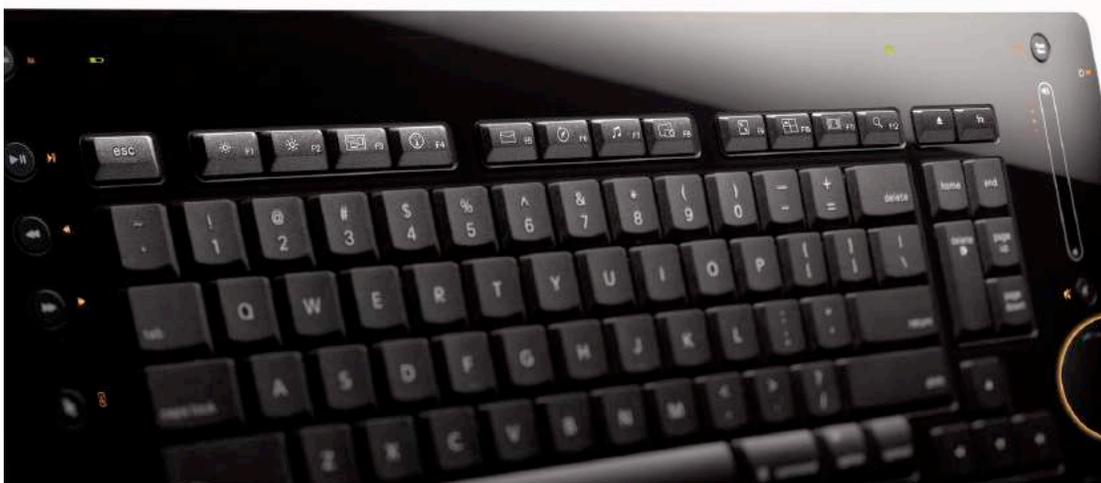
I found that it doesn't correspond to the actual setting of the volume. It will just increase and decrease in relation to where the volume is currently. A full swipe of the finger will increase the volume about half-way.

On the left side includes all the buttons that one would find on your Apple Remote, and function the same.

The Function keys all have separate functions besides the normal. As on a notebook, you need to press the Fn key and the Function key to have it work as a normal key would. The software let's you reverse this. Among the "standard" function keys, and being that this a Mac-centric keyboard, are hot-keys for your standard applications, (Mail, Safari, iTunes and iPhoto). A Brightness up and down key, Exposé, Dashboard, Quick Look, Spaces, Cover Flow and Spotlight. All these can be changed via the LCC panel. Rounding out the buttons, a mute, a power, and a Front Row button, that immediately brings up Front Row that you can control with the aforementioned buttons on the left side.

The keyboard is a tad bit smaller, and more akin of a notebook. However, the keys are full sized and a delight to work on. The tactical feedback is very smooth. Though the throw, or the key travel is more than that of a notebook, but again, very smooth with immediate response. You know without a doubt that you have pressed one of these keys.

The batteries are internal, but have lasted an incredibly long time. They tout that you should get a



months worth from one full charge. I have not charged it once, besides the initial charge, and the LCC still says I have approximately 58 days worth of charge left. This is with leaving the keyboard on at all times. I'm not sure how much I trust the LCC, however, as it says I still have

my S530 keyboard hooked up with half a charge left. I took the batteries out of that as soon as I got this one, so I haven't a clue where it's getting its information for that.

Conclusion

Overall, I love this keyboard, but it still has a few niggles that I haven't quite gotten the feel of yet, despite the month-or-so that I've had it. The delete key is a bit on the smallish side, when compared to the S530, so I have trouble hitting that on a regular basis without looking down.

One of the biggest keys that I miss is the Enter key.

Yes, it does have a Return key, but there is a difference. There are still quite a few programs that differentiate between the two. Lastly, I find myself constantly trying to type in numbers with the Numeric keypad. Just does not work without there being one.

Recommendation

If you are looking specifically at Apple's wireless keyboard, take a long, serious look at the diNovo Edge. It will have more of that traditional keyboard feel, with a fantastic look to it that will rival your computer.

It will cost you an extra \$75 or so, though. That is definitely something to take a look at. Why it's so expensive, I don't know. I do know that the build is perfect. The craftsmanship marks it as Logitech's best yet. If you spend most, if not all of your time on the keyboard, and not on your mouse, than that would be another reason for the Logitech. (Or, if you use the keyboard across the room.) For the quick uses of the TouchDisc, it's great. I find myself not using that feature as much as I thought I would, though.

So far, the drivers have been solid. The keyboard has worked perfect. Besides price, if you're looking for a keyboard replacement and want a Bluetooth wireless, this is the one.



Mobile Phone Telescope for the iPhone 3G

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

MOBILE.BRANDO.COM.HK

Mobile Brando

Unit A, 22F

Waylee Industrial Centre

30-38 Tsuen King Circuit

Tsuen Wan N.T.

Hong Kong

http://mobile.brando.com.hk/prod_detail.php?prod_id=03534

Released: August 2008

\$19 USD



Strengths: Permits telescopic lens function for the iPhone 3G.

Weaknesses: Plastic.

Other Reviews: <http://gadgets.boingboing.net/2008/08/18/iphone-3g-zoom-lens.html>

Introduction

"Overcome the short coming of camera cellphone that can only near-sighted, it also makes distant view for you at the moment.

The new design to run of rays can effectively avoid the contortion of image, and makes the super wide angle, the larger luminous flux, the higher visual acuteness, good for color reduction, which makes the high quality of photography.

Suitable for watching match, concert, travel, animal observes fans, newspaper-man shoots remotely, forestry manages, port dispatcher of the railway, traffic administrative department to collect evidence, public security organs to enforce the law and collect evidence, etc."



My Experience

They sent this airmail to me from Hong Kong. I'm sure if I tried to write something in Mandarin Chinese, I would probably do a lot worse than they did with their information printed on the box as seen above.

For \$20, this essentially is a throw-away item for a \$300 iPhone, but you know? It works.

The package came folded with a fake iPhone cover to show this is a clam-shell plastic case (be real careful putting it on and taking it off!). The material is NOT "crystal". It is most definitely "clear" plastic.

The lens is NOT 6 inches long. It is about 3 inches long.

The adjuster on my unit had to be disassembled, because the rubber ring didn't catch the lens ring properly. I figured it was broken. At first it would not move at all. The rubber ring is just too soft a rubber to really do the job properly. And the lens telescoping function really doesn't do much, except go from out of focus to pretty good focus up to infinity out of focus.

Have you ever opened up a crackerjack box and gotten one of those plastic toys you had to assemble? This was a similar experience. There are no instructions in the box. No peanuts or carneled popcorn either ;^) The pictures on the outside are of no help whatsoever.

So why did I request this unit? I wanted to be able to get better pictures at a distance and I thought this was pretty cool, even though I had seen disparaging remarks about it online. Look, pretty much anything would help to improve the camera experience of the iPhone. I got the iPhone and tend to use the camera more than anything else.

Now I need a cradle or stabilizer. You should see how funny this is with the scope on trying to take pictures freehand without holding the iPhone against something steady. Blurry with Zoom is like being on a roller coaster ride. You think "iPhone blur" is bad, try attempting a quick shot with the telephoto unit! Inhale, hold it, shoot. Maybe twice or three times just to be sure.



Looking through 2 windows (one slide back). Late morning shots.

Conclusion

This is a fun, functional device and I would have never believed I could put a telephoto lens on an iPhone, but here it is!

Software

4Media DVD Toolkit - 4-in-1 DVD & Video Converting, Burning, Backup and Creating

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



4Media Software Studio
ImTOO Software
Studio Haidian
Beijing, 100080
CN

sales@mp4converter.net
<http://www.mp4converter.net/>
<http://www.imtoo.com>

Released: June 6, 2007
\$196 USD

Free Download:

<http://www.mp4converter.net/downloads/m-mac-dvd-toolkit.dmg>

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later, 512MB RAM, 120 MB hard drive space, DVD drive.

Articles: <http://www.mp4converter.net/articles-more.html>

FAQs: <http://www.mp4converter.net/q&a.html>

Guides: <http://www.mp4converter.net/guide-more.html>

4MediaDVD Ripper 4.0.60, Video Converter 3.2.50, DVD Copy, DVD Creator 3.0.27.

Strengths: Does things one cannot do in Final Cut Pro, etc.

Weaknesses: Doesn't do some things one would expect.

Used on MacBook Pro 2.8 MHz with Mac OS X 10.5.5

Introduction

4Media Mac DVD Toolkit contains 4 powerful DVD/video tools including 4Media DVD Ripper for Mac, 4Media Video Converter for Mac, 4Media DVD Copy for Mac and 4Media DVD Creator for Mac. 4Media studio particularly combines these pretty-designed and popular-used tools as a pack to help Mac users like you to resolve DVD copy, DVD ripping, DVD creation and video conversion issues effectively.



Easily rip DVD to popular MPEG, AVI, WMV, MP4, MP3 video/audio formats for diverse digital players, create DVD from AVI, DivX, MPEG, WMV to play on portable and home DVD players, copy DVD-5 to DVD-5, DVD-9 to DVD-9, DVD-5 to DVD-9 and compress DVD-9 (dual-layer DVD) to one DVD-5 disc. With the included video converter, conversion from video file to AVI/MPEG video and MP3 audio for PSP, Apple TV are also available.

Functions

- **4Media DVD Ripper for Mac** Rip DVD to video formats like AVI, MPEG, WMV, DivX, RM, MOV, 3GP, 3GP2, MP4, MP4 AVC, etc., as well as rip DVD to audio formats including MP3, WMA, WAV, M4A (AAC), AC3, OGG, RA, AU, etc.;
- **4Media Video Converter for Mac** Convert video files to video formats including AVI, MPEG1/2/4, WMV, MOV, MP4, ASF, 3GP and audio formats like MP3, WMA, WAV, AC3, OGG;
- **4Media DVD Copy for Mac** Copy DVD-5 to DVD-5, DVD-9 to DVD-9, DVD-5 to DVD-9 with the entire movie in 1:1 ratio, compress DVD-9 (dual-layer DVD) to one DVD-5 disc, copy DVD to DVD Folder or ISO file and burn ISO file or DVD folder to DVD;
- **4Media DVD Creator for Mac** Convert AVI to DVD, DivX to DVD, MPEG to DVD, WMV to DVD and burn DVD folder to DVD, DVD ISO file to DVD.

Features

- **Rip DVD video and audio at will** Using 4Media DVD Ripper for Mac, you can select audio track and subtitle, adjust target subtitle's position when ripping DVD to video, and edit ID3 tag music info when ripping DVD to MP3 or WMA.
- **Convert video to fit various devices with ease** There are several optimized profiles for PSP, PS3, iPod, iPod touch, Apple TV, Zune, BlackBerry mobile phone, etc. with different quality in 4Media Video Converter for Mac which can be used directly without any further settings.
- **Copy customized DVD** 4Media DVD Copy for Mac allows you to select subtitles or audio tracks for creating customized DVD copy, remove DVD menus optionally and copy DVD with main movie separately.
- **Create DVD disc with menu** 4Media DVD Creator for Mac provides many pretty menu templates to assist you to create DVD with menu, and allows you to edit menu via selecting background music and picture as well as specifying menu topic.

- **Numerous formats supported** Rip DVD to almost all video and audio formats such as DVD to AVI, MPEG, DivX, MP3, WMA; Create AVI to DVD, DivX, MPEG to DVD; Convert video to AVI, ASF, WMV, MP3, WMA video/audio formats; Copy DVD-5 to DVD-5, DVD-9 to DVD-9, DVD-5 to DVD-9, and DVD-9 to DVD-5.
- **Support preview and snapshot** DVD ripper, DVD creator and video converter support file preview and you can take a snapshot of the preview file at will.
- **Trim function supported** You can trim the source DVD or video file to rip or convert the exact segment you want using 4Media DVD Ripper for Mac and 4Media Video Converter for Mac.
- **Multi-language tool** This toolkit provides English, Japanese, German, etc. for people with different mother tongues.
- **Super high speed** Conversion speed is no limit and will be improved with better performance of your Mac.

DVD Copy Guide

<http://www.mp4converter.net/guides/dvd-copy-mac.html>



DVD Creator Guide

<http://www.mp4converter.net/guides/dvd-creator-mac.html>



DVD Ripper Guide

<http://www.mp4converter.net/guides/dvd-ripper-mac.html>



DVD Video Converter Guide

<http://www.mp4converter.net/guides/video-converter-mac.html>



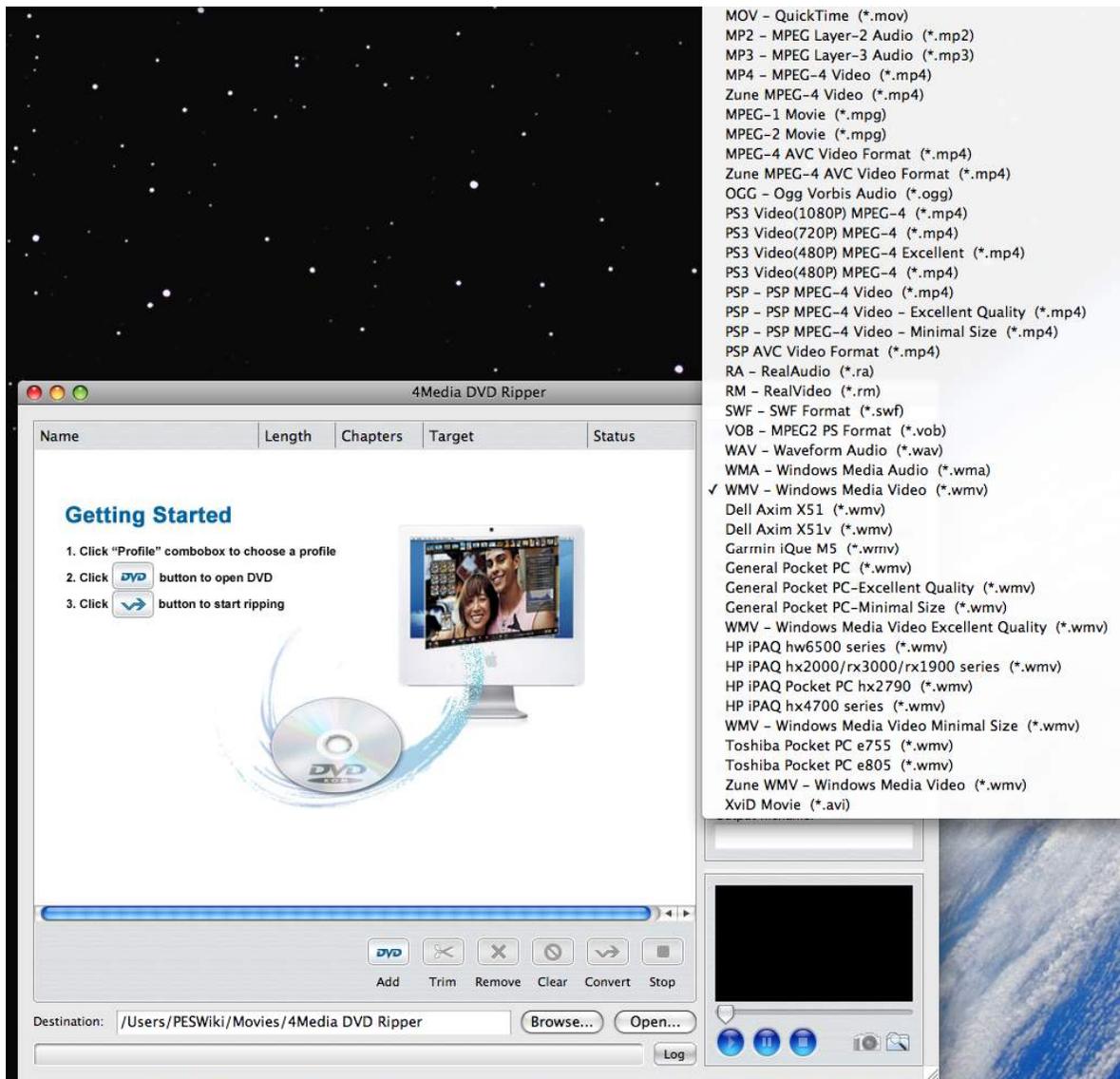
My Experiences

I discovered I could not convert some DVDs to .wmv format without some help, so I asked 4Media Software Studio if they could help me. This is their solution – the Mac DVD Toolkit.

(English apparently is not the native language of those who developed this software.)

You can click on the Guide links above to see how to use each of these 4 tools.

The FAQ section is a "work in progress" on the website.

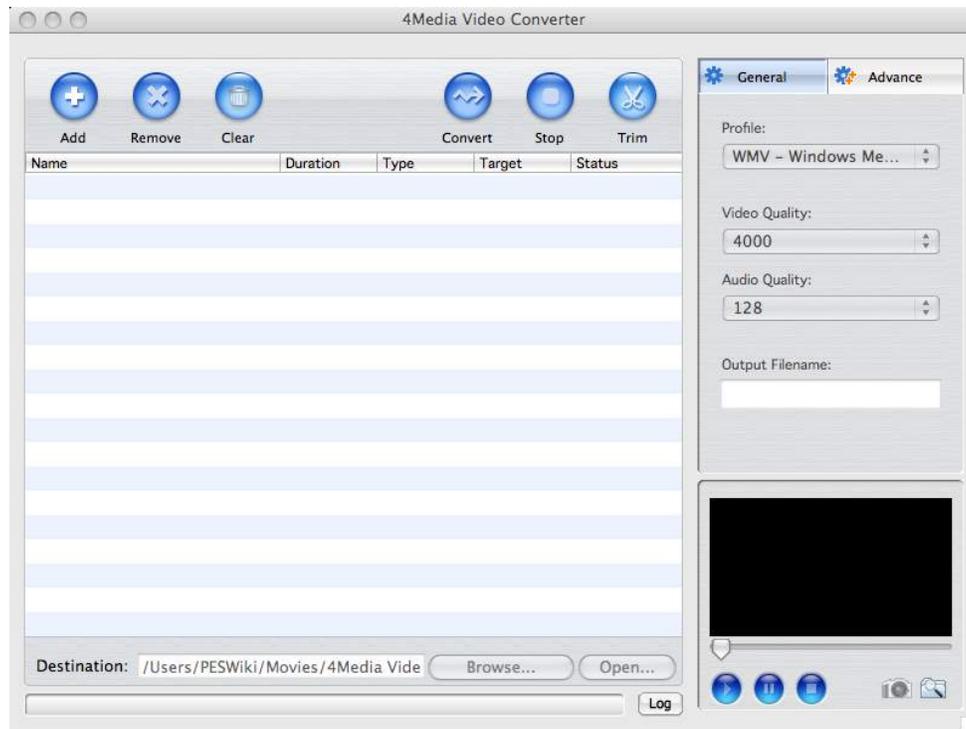


One thing I do know and that is that the original DVD needs to be "open" to being copied. If not, we are SOL. It doesn't help to try and bring over a DVD that is "incomplete". It is essentially not worth the effort.

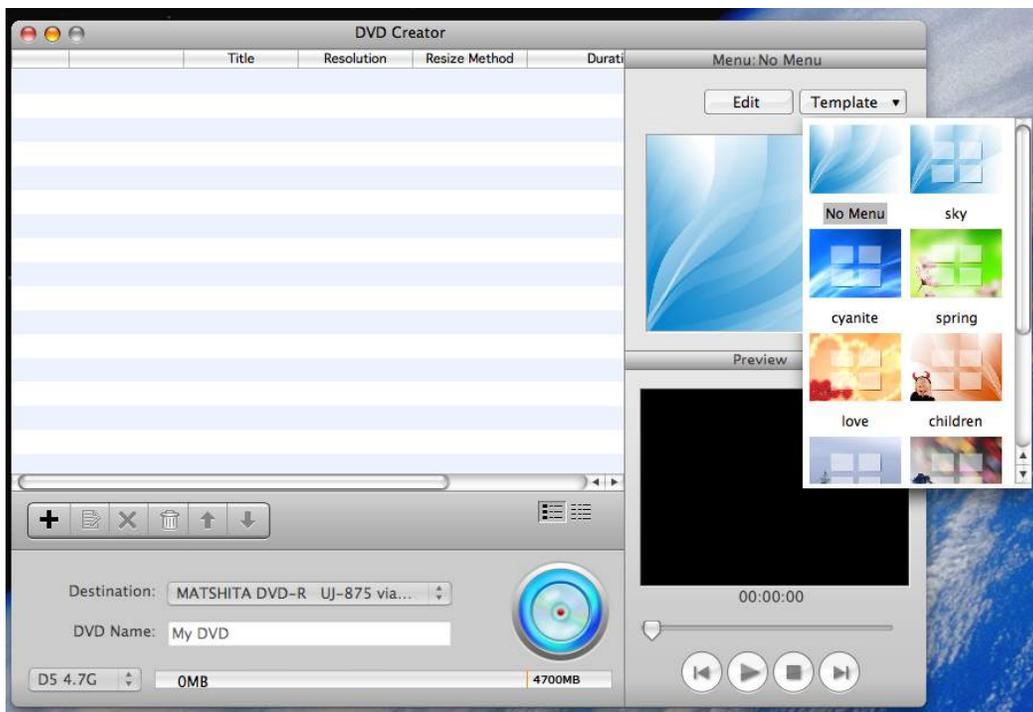
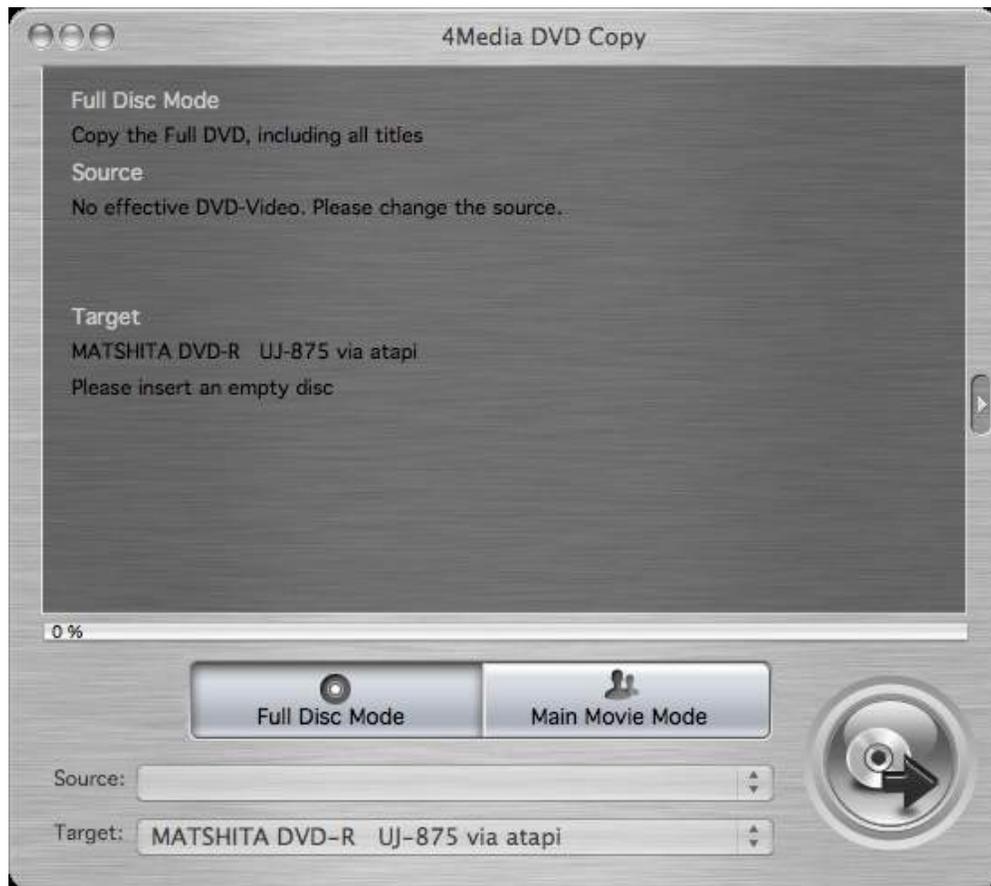
My task was to convert DVDs to .wmv format for uploading to a sales site online. I received the DVD set from the originator. The DVDs played okay as-is, but refused to give up all their files for a complete .wmv folder and only some of the data came across. I essentially failed in the task, due to unknown DVD development.

The owner had the exact same experience using a PC with the ImTOO versions of the software developed by this same company for the PC, so I didn't feel too bad about the experience, knowing full well it wasn't the Mac that let me down. I would have expected the software to say something like; "Hey crazy one, you can't get there from here", but it just merrily pumped right along with rendering.

I do have to give 4Media credit though; Video Converter did start right up front with saying that some of the files I was attempting to bring over were "bad". So how can they play correctly on the DVD and be "bad" in not being able to transfer? I suspect a security thing of some kind, even though the originator said no such thing was used to produce the DVDs from the 4-day live seminars. I think he just didn't know. I saw the equipment the "professional team" used to generate the DVDs. The audio was not very good or consistent and yes, they did use PCs to handle audio and on-screen presentations (usually the video and animation didn't work as expected either in front of the audience). I'm guessing the originator didn't know what apps were used to create the DVDs in the first place, otherwise I would not have been called in to try and do this task after the fact.



The app DVD Copy has no version number and I have Roxio Toast, so this app did me no good. Nor did I need DVD Creator for the same reason. I really needed DVD Converter and Video Converter and they work just fine.



I do have to wonder why the functions are not embedded in Mac OS X. I wish they were.

Conclusion

This toolkit was obviously "made for the Mac". It plays well with Mac OS X 10.5.5. It covers all the bases.

I would recommend that a good DVD be used to do the conversions, preferably something without hidden security features. This toolkit does not magically take a bad disc and make good files from it. It will make a valiant effort though.

Acrobat Pro 9 – An eclectic forward seeking review

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2008



Adobe Systems

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatpro/>

For a demo of this product: No Macintosh Demo Available

Cost: \$ 449 USD (List (Street)), \$ CND, £ UK, €
Upgrades start at \$1590 [USD] and the academic version is available for \$150.

Note: Acrobat 9 Standard and Acrobat 9 Pro Extended are still Windows-only products.

System Requirements: Mac OS X 4.11 or later, PowerPC® G4 or G5 or Intel® processor, 256MB of RAM (512MB recommended), and 1.42 GB available Hard Drive Space and a DVD-ROM drive.

Users: All Users - Beginner – Intermediate or Advanced

Strengths: A powerful tool for creating editing PDFs and working with tem collaboratively.

Weaknesses: Lack of a manual and poor help files and more complex than necessary set of preferences mar this otherwise powerful program.

Previous Reviews: Adobe Acrobat 8 Pro, Review by Harry {doc} Babad and Robert L. Pritchett, Feb 2007.

<http://www.maccpanion.com/macc/archives/February2007/Software/Adobe%20Acrobat%208%20Professional.htm>

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

Sidebar: The software was tested on a Reviews were carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X Leopard version 10.5.5



Introduction

I use Acrobat Pro [AAP] everyday, as a tool to read PDFs sent to me or downloaded from the Internet. I know this can be done with the free Adobe Reader 8.

However, my major daily use for this product is in the customization, editing, annotating, and otherwise modifying of downloaded PDF files, especially recipes and article. I also specifically use Acrobat for removing the chaff from downloaded web site pages, when they do not offer a focused print function. This allows mw to remove advertisements, unneeded headers and all the sidebar information what is not relevant to the information I want to use for reference purposes. I also actively create forms for my various professional and volunteer efforts.

<p>Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Vancouver - Weather, Vancouver - Maps, Events, Entertainment and more</p>   <h3>Three Bean Salad</h3> <p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 (398 mL) can cut green beans, drained1 (398 mL) can kidney beans, drained1 (398 mL) can lima beans, drained1 (284 mL) can water chestnuts, drained and sliced1 small red onion, sliced thin1/3 cup (75 mL) white wine vinegar1/3 cup (75 mL) vegetable oil1/3 cup (75 mL) sugar1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) salt1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dried basil1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dry mustard1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dried tarragon <p>Preparation:</p> <p>In large bowl, combine green, kidney and lima beans, chestnut: bowl, whisk together vinegar, oil, sugar, salt, basil, mustard and bean mixture and mix well. Cover and chill several hours or overnight.</p> <p>Makes 6 to 8 servings.</p> <p>Approximate nutritional analysis for each serving: 386 calories, 13.1 g protein, 12.6 g fat, 57.5 g carbohydrate. Excellent source of iron and magnesium. Very high in fibre</p> <p>© 2005 - 2008 Canwest Digital Media, a division of Canwest Publishing Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.</p> <p>http://www.canada.com/cbypguides/vancouver/features/tasteofbc/recipes/three_bean_salad.html</p>	<p>Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Vancouver - Weather, Vancouver - Maps, Events, Entertainment and more 9/7/08 6:07 PM</p>   <h3>Three Bean Salad</h3> <p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 (398 mL) can cut green beans, drained1 (398 mL) can kidney beans, drained1 (398 mL) can lima beans, drained1 (284 mL) can water chestnuts, drained and sliced1 small red onion, sliced thin1/3 cup (75 mL) white wine vinegar1/3 cup (75 mL) vegetable oil1/3 cup (75 mL) sugar1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) salt1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dried basil1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dry mustard1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) dried tarragon <p>Preparation:</p> <p>In large bowl, combine green, kidney and lima beans, chestnuts and onion. In small bowl, whisk together vinegar, oil, sugar, salt, basil, mustard and tarragon; pour over bean mixture and mix well. Cover and chill several hours or overnight. Drain before serving.</p> <p>http://www.canada.com/cbypguides/vancouver/features/tasteofbc/recipes/three_bean_salad.html Page 1 of 1</p>
<p>The Goal</p>	<p>Original Page 1</p>

<p>Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Vancouver - Weather, Vancouver - Maps, Events, Entertainment and more. 9/7/08 6:07 PM</p> <p>Makes 6 to 8 servings.</p> <p>Approximate nutritional analysis for each serving: 386 calories, 13.1 g protein, 12.6 g fat, 57.5 g carbohydrate. Excellent source of iron and magnesium. Very high in fibre</p> <p>Back</p> <p>Inside the canada.com Network.</p> <p>Newspapers: National Post Victoria Times Colonist The Province (Vancouver) Vancouver Sun Edmonton Journal Calgary Herald Regina Leader Post Saskatoon StarPhoenix Windsor Star Ottawa Citizen The Gazette (Montreal) CBC Vancouver Island Newspapers VANNET Newspapers</p> <p>Television: CBC 5 TV Tropics DeaView Fox Sports World Canada KOHUSATV Men TV Mystery TV X-TREME Sports</p> <p>Marketplace: wedding.com living.ca connecting celebrating renewalcenter househunting shop</p> <p>Canwest Countries:</p> <p><small>http://www.canada.com/c/tygusite/vancouver/features/tasteoffs/recipes/three_bean_salad.html Page 2 of 3</small></p>	<p>Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Vancouver - Weather, Vancouver - Maps, Events, Entertainment and more. 9/7/08 6:07 PM</p> <p>Australia Turkey United States, The New Republic</p> <p>About canada.com Site Map FAQs Privacy Terms Contact Us Copyright & Permission Rules</p> <p>© 2005 - 2008 Canwest Digital Media, a division of Canwest Publishing Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.</p> <p><small>http://www.canada.com/c/tygusite/vancouver/features/tasteoffs/recipes/three_bean_salad.html Page 1 of 3</small></p>
Original Page 2	Original Page 3

Publishers Description and Features Summary

AAP allows the user to communicate and collaborate more effectively and securely. With it you can unify a wide range of content in a single organized PDF Portfolio. It allows you to collaborate through electronic document reviews and create and manage dynamic forms. It also helps protect sensitive information.

Although Acrobat Pro has been updated (8 to 9) and made more stable and responsive, there are no significant changes in features in this product upgrade. However this and version 8 are head and shoulders superior to AAP 7.

For those wanting more basic review details, first, I suggest you read Macworld's review of Acrobat Pro 9 by Parrish S Burke, July 23, 2008 at <http://www.macworld.com/article/134585/2008/07/acrobat9.html?lsrc=mwweek>. I also recommend Mike Hubbartt's review of the PC version AAP 9 extended edition, which has many of the features of Macintosh AAP version. Mikes review can be found at <http://www.softwareeditorial.com/BusinessProductivity/adobeacrobatproex.html>.

Mr. Burke concludes that the update includes version 8 contains only narrowly focused update features moderate enhancements. I would also recommend, naturally, that you read our review of Acrobat 8 Pro in the February 2007 macC to see what AAP 8 offers that AAP 9 enhances.

To keep thing honest and to keep my editor calm, I've added table of what I consider the new, and enhanced and otherwise most useful features to the end of this review. That *sic* nominally fulfills the requirements macC places on review authors'.

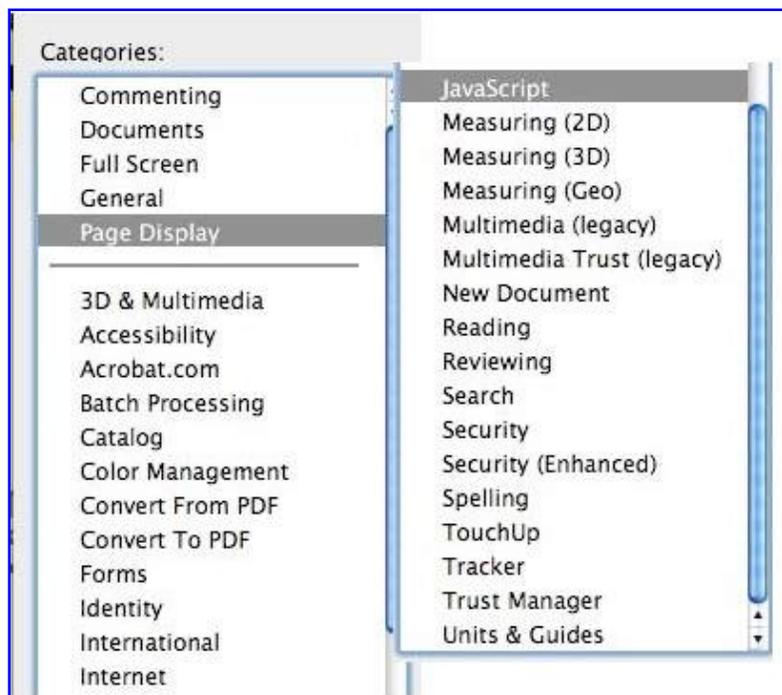
So what is this review going to be about?

I can now get on to the meat of my review... or should I say where's the rest of the missing beef in this product? I'm going to share the features for next desired major upgrade I would most welcome. This is, as you will see, selfishly based on how I most use this otherwise powerful product.

A Manual – A Manual, My Kingdom for a Manual

I've reviewed many shareware applications, alas, that have more robust help files than this product. Although the Acrobat help files continue at times to be useful to me, an experienced user, a newbie would have trouble learning and using this application from them. Even though there is lots of information about problem solving or learning about this products rich features on the Adobe website, it is not organized in a user-friendly fashion. *That's why help files or better yet a manual exist.*

Alas for the beginner user, O'Reilly Press will not be releasing a Missing Manual for this product. Neither will, when I last checked, will Peachpit Press. The terse help, and at times confusing help files provided with AA9 Pro were inadequate based on the products cost. This is particularly true with respect to the functions of its tools and for the focus of most of the items in the Preferences Panes.



I have a copy of some-what pricy *Adobe Acrobat 9 Classroom in a Book* from Adobe Press, which I hope to shortly review. I would also like to get a copy and review both (1) Donna Baker's *Adobe Acrobat 9 How-Tos: 125 Essential Techniques* (Adobe Press) and Doug Sahlin's "How to Do Everything: Adobe Acrobat 9" (McGraw-Hill Osborne Media).

Font Characteristics

Text Box and Sticky Note Tools — I would welcome being able to change font characteristics when either pasting materials into a text box or the sticky note tools. The only way I've been able to do so is by typing and formatting my text in

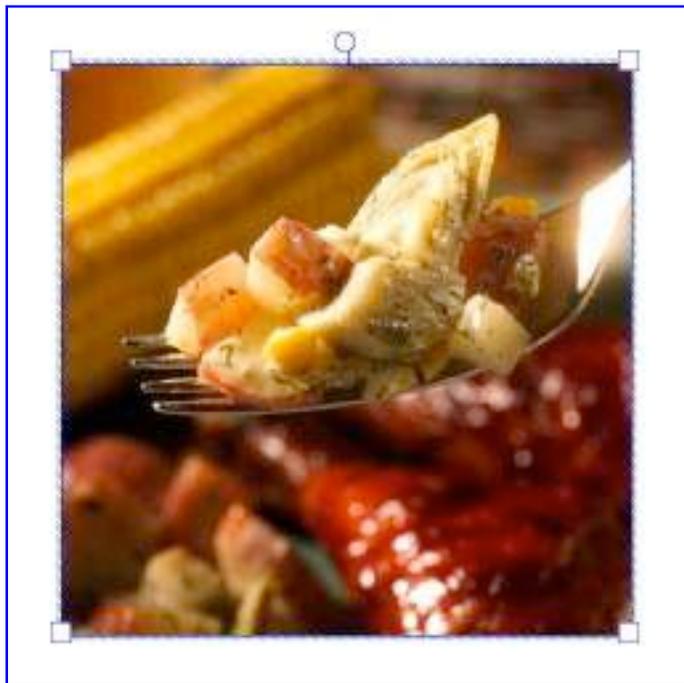
either MS Word or Text Edit and [pasting it into those tools' fields. What you say do you want. I want to be able to fluidly change font size, font style and the font itself without having to go outside of the Acrobat application. These tools fall into the category that I call external text import tools. The callout tool also falls into this category.

I am aware that there are default setting, adjustable in the program's preferences or occasionally menus for such tasks. However whenever I go to the preferences I get lost in a game of treasure or scavenger hunting, and am again on a snipe hunt.

Text Touchup Tool — I have the same font adjustment needs for this tool that works to change the text in a PDF.

Better Pasted Image Control

Image Size and Angle — I usually acquire images, in jpeg format, I use for *directly* modifying and customizing PDF files either from: (1) goggle images, (2) the web page of a document that loses those images when custom printing or from graphics collections I own or find on the WWW. I then use the hand tool to paste the images into my PDF, having used the editing tools to make space for the image if it is not initially available. Three outcomes are possible, at time unpredictably, when I try to use an image copied to Apple's clipboard. All with the symptoms, I provide my at times indirect work arounds



- The image pastes correctly and its size can be tuned by using the corner Bezier points (e.g., handles) on the pasted image. — All is well!
- The pasted image is too small, despite being large enough (ca. 50-300 dpi) in the source image. When attempting to enlarge it the image quality degrades and become pixilated. — I paste the original image into MS Word, change its size and then copy/paste it into my PDF.
- The paste image is too large overflowing the page side margins and hiding the Bezier points to it cannot be shrunk. — I usually attempt to use the rotation loop to angle the picture so several of the Bezier points are showing. Then I grab a handle, shrink the image and then attempt to get it square. *There is no keyboard combination to assure the picture is straight.* A bit of resizing and I'm done.

overflowing the page side margins and hiding the Bezier points to it cannot be shrunk. — I usually attempt to use the rotation loop to angle the picture so several of the Bezier points are showing. Then I grab a handle, shrink the image and then attempt to get it square. *There is no keyboard combination to assure the picture is straight.* A bit of resizing and I'm done.

If that fails, I can also paste the larger than needed image into a MS Word document as described in the preceding bullet.

I would welcome some simpler way to capture an image, have Acrobat limit its size to page width with all the Bezier points visible.

Dual Co-Existing Clipboards, an Enigma Leading to a Quandary Ending in a Vortex of Uncertainty — The dilemma of the two clipboards and their limitation has still yet to be explained in any help file I've read. . The usual clipboard, the one on Apple provides as part of the operating system works predominantly with moving information from your hard drive to a PDF. The internal Acrobat clipboard board is only useful for working within a PDF file for editing or reformatting purposes; both of course use the command-C/Command V combinations for cutting and pasting. Duh!

Indeed when searching the Acrobat help files the only topic I could find, for variations on the theme of clipboards was "Sharing Clipboards with other computers.

Ease Extracting Information From Multiple Page PDF Creating a One Page Final Document

In order to take a noisy chaff filled three-page recipe and not only shrink it to one page, but add an image to it, I go through a lot, 5-10 steps per page, of steps. [See the Recipe 4-pane before and after figure at the beginning of this article.] Now wouldn't this have been easier if you had either had a manual or some means of more generally removing frames and moving text? I can do this easily in MS Word but it is tedious in Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro. Please see the tutorial I've written in this issue for details.

Okay, All Right...The End

That's All, Enough Now — "If wishes were horses, beggars could ride. Perhaps some of these enhancements will become possible in Acrobat X Pro. I hope so since I neither script nor use Apple's Automator.

Conclusions and Recommendation

I have a *love-hate* relationship with Acrobat Pro 9 for the reasons itemized above and in my earlier review of version 8. However, I whole-heartedly agree with Pariah Burke "Everyone just getting into PDF creation or using Acrobat 7 or earlier should think *very* seriously about picking up Acrobat 9. Unless a new feature fills a specific need, users of Acrobat 8 can afford to skip this version."

Left to my own devices (e.g., budget constraints) even at the academic discount, I'm not sure I would have purchased the update. But having used the AAP 9

product, I would have missed out on the added stability, cleaned up and more logical menus and tool bars, and overall performance.

I've also reviewed and occasionally use a few more narrowly focused shareware alternatives to Acrobat Pro. These include:

- SmileOnMyMac's \$95 PDFPenPro (Now v.4.0) <http://www.smileonmymac.com/PDFpen/index.html>
- Michele Balistreri's \$25 PDFKey Pro (Now at v.3.7.4) <http://pdfkey.com/>

Although both are great products, even in combination they do not provide all the features I use daily in Acrobat Pro 9.

I wholeheartedly recommend investing in a copy of this fine software, one of the four most used applications on my hard drive. It is worth **4.0 macC's**

PS:

When planning this review I co-opted Mr. Kim Auclair who is both a heavy user of the PC version of Acrobat pro but is buying a Macintosh PowerBook for home and business use. I have asked to write an article for us that compare ease of use and other issues between the Macintosh and the PC version. Alas he is off on assignment in Korea and we'll have to wait for a future macC issue for him to share his views.

Appendix – Acrobat Pro o Features

Feature	Purpose
Create and reliably share and collaborate on PDF documents	Easily convert any document that prints to PDF to preserve formatting and ensure document integrity. This also includes the ability to do collaborative reviews with colleagues using either Acrobat or Reader.
Easily convert files to PDF	Convert documents to PDF with one-button ease from Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Internet Explorer, Project, Visio, Access, and Publisher.
Combine files from multiple applications to unify a wide range of content in a PDF Portfolio	A new feature enhances (broadens) AAP's ability to combine documents, drawings, e-mail, and spreadsheets in a single compressed PDF Portfolio. This can be done with either PDFs or native files in their original format. You can now use the professionally designed templates to add polish and navigational features to your PDF Portfolio.
Easily create forms and collect data	Use the new Form Wizard to convert Microsoft Word and Excel documents or scanned paper to fillable PDF forms. You now can more easily distribute forms, combine collected forms in a single document or view for easy filtering and analysis, and then export collected data to a spreadsheet or database.
Scan to PDF Format with OCR	Scan paper documents to PDF and automatically recognize text with optical character recognition (OCR) technology to create compact, searchable PDF documents.
Capture web pages as PDF	Enhanced ability to convert complete web pages. PDF versions of web pages are easy to print, archive, mark up, and share.
Convert and share 2D CAD	Less interesting to me was the added ability to convert DWG files to Adobe PDF files without using AutoCAD or AutoCAD LT.
Insert video in PDF files	A new feature to insert FLV or H.264 video in PDF files for direct playback in Acrobat and Adobe Reader. (Might be fun but the files get rather large.)
Work with Acrobat.com	A new feature allows you to use Acrobat.com services with Acrobat to store and share large documents, collect form data, and review documents with virtually anyone, anywhere. (This can also be done with a <i>mobileme</i> account from Apple.)

ArtRage 2.5.20 — An Non-Artistic Non-Visual Users Review

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2008



Ambient Design Ltd., Auckland, New Zealand
Boxed Software Distributed in US by Smith Micro
<http://www.ambientdesign.com/artrage.html>

For a free starter of this product:
<http://www.ambientdesign.com/artragedown.html>

Cost: \$25 USD as a download and \$49 US as a physical Product, €25.84 (with a backup CD disk)

Language Localizations: English, French German,

Requirements:

G4 or better, Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; Universal binary), and 256 megabytes of RAM; 18.2 MB Hard Drive Space; A drawing tablet is close to being a requirement for this program, as is access to a quality color printer. A PC/Windows Version is also available

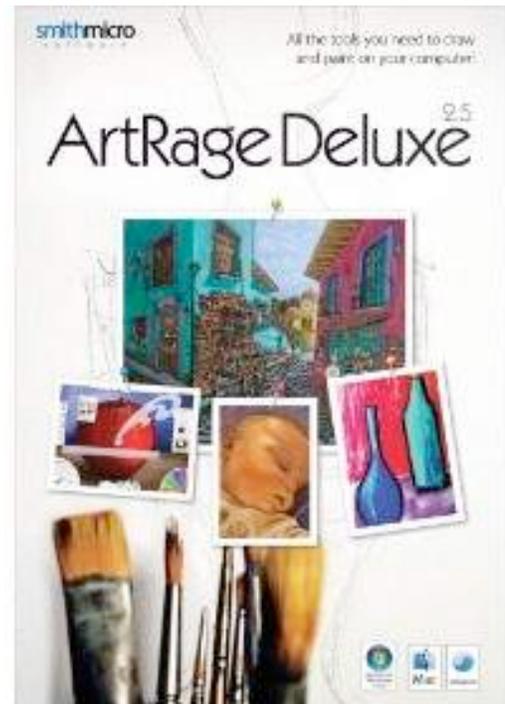
Users: Untalented Novice, Beginner or Intermediate Artists

Strengths: A Great Manual, Easy Interface, realistic painting effects, straightforward ability to sketch – better with a drawing tablet.

Weaknesses: I had no ability to truly test the software's support to creativity, but all the tools/pallets/functions worked perfectly; only my artistic skill were lacking.

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

Sidebar: The software was tested on a Reviews were carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X Leopard



version 10.5.5. In addition I was provided access to a Wacom Bamboo drawing tablet and used HP LaserJet 3500 to print with.

Introduction

I have over the several months that I've had to contemplate ArtRage, a graphics program, had time to ask myself *why* did I volunteer to review this product. I've known for years, since third grade, that I could ace art appreciation and the history of art, but had no artistic talent. Over the years first in primary and secondary school and later during my technical college education, have known that I am totally untalented in all of the arts other than making jewelry, whether it be painting, drawing, or even engineering drawing. Heck, even being creative with Apples original MacPaint was a challenge. That coupled with a slower than expected recovery from a high-radiation neck cancer treatment suggested that I was suffering from a *loch in kopf* (hole in my head.)

I have done reasonably well working in simple vector graphics programs doing simple labels, layouts and org charts — program ranging from MacDraw and the simple graphic elements in MS Word but failed miserably when trying use a non-vector technique on the following products:

SOFTWARE	INTERNET LINK
Adobe Illustrator (1.0)	Classic Version, Now as the CS3 Version http://www.adobe.com/
Canvas {7.0}	http://store.acdsee.com/store/acd/en_US/DisplayProductDetailsPage/productID.78702300
CorelDraw (8.0)	Classic Version, which included <i>Painter</i> type features and palettes galore. Now for PC's only.
Full Paint (1.0)	Classic Version – I did no better than with Mac Paint
Kid Pix Deluxe 3X 1.1	Classic and OS X version – This was the easiest to use by my limited ability for graphic self-expression — Think kiddy tools. http://www.mackiev.com/kid_pix.html
PrintShop (7.0); Macintosh OSX version is Version 2.	I use all but the paint related features with ease. It's now a Software MacKiev product http://www.mackiev.com/

Why then? — I guess because the developers' descriptions were compelling, there appeared to be a very complete manual written for newbies and hope springs eternal. After all at 72 years young, who would have thought that I'd be reviewing things Macintosh, writing nuclear energy and radiation related textbooks, or articles about folk music. So why not try to teach this old dog a few new tricks. Read on... this is the strangest review I've ever written.

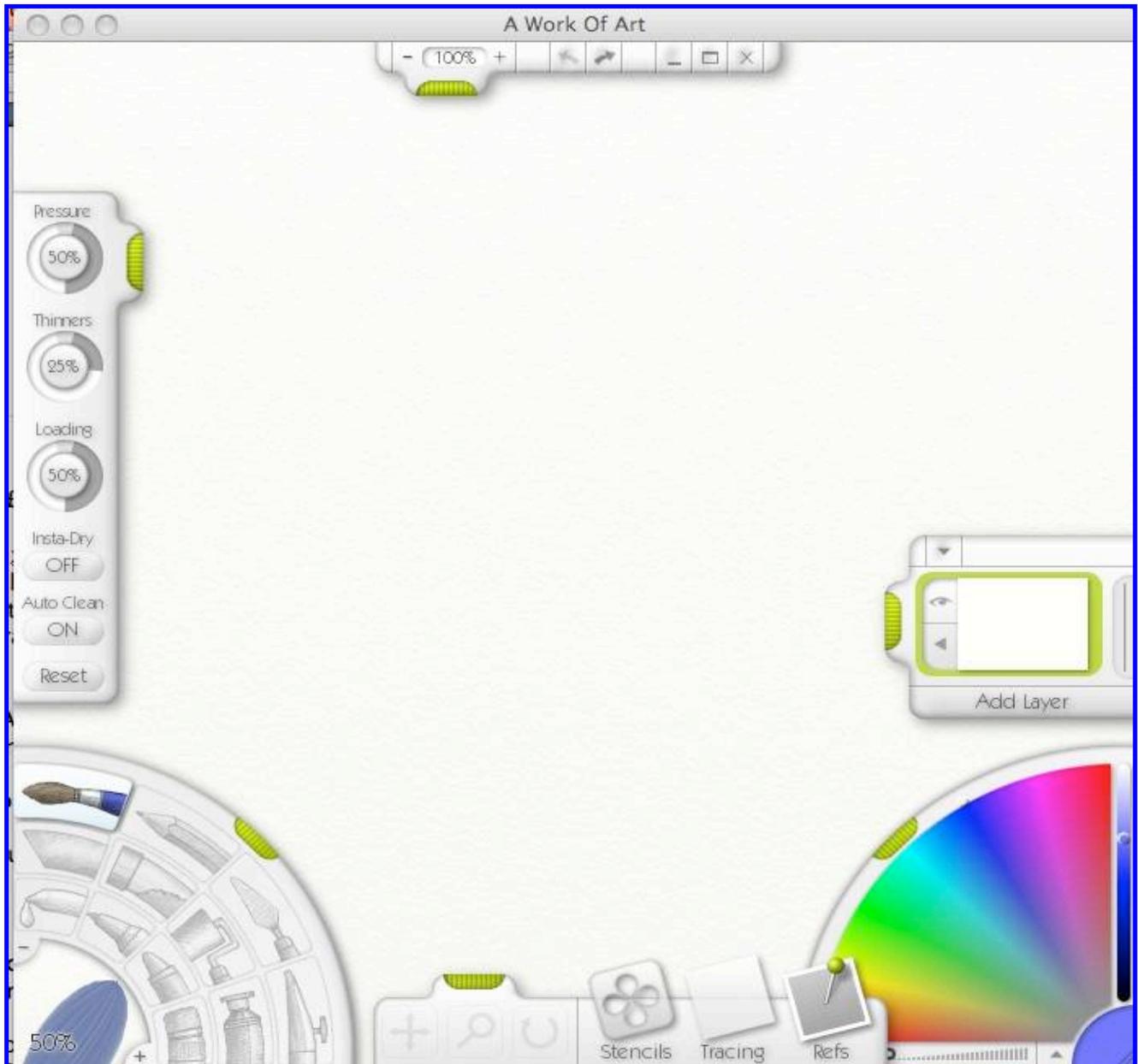
Publishers Description

"ArtRage is *claimed* to be a fun and easy to use painting tool for Mac OSX that lets you play with realistic paints on your computer. You can create your own paintings from nothing, load in photos and recreate them with oil paints, pencils, felt pens, or any of the other tools ArtRage has to offer.

“The user can experiment with metallic paint for gold leafing, sprinkle shiny glitter, fill in large areas with the paint roller, and generally paint, smudge, and smear your way to your very own masterpiece. This new version of ArtRage comes in two versions.

The Full Edition gives you all the new features, including four new tools, layers, metal paints, and much more. The Free Edition contains all of the features of ArtRage 1, with half of the working features in ArtRage 2. It also adds the speed and technology improvements in ArtRage 2 and a few of the new features for good measure.”

Figure: ArtRage A Bare Canvas



Getting Started

Installation proceeded in the normal fashion and the software quickly opened in its main and only significant window.

I immediately noticed unlike the heavily loaded palettes interface of most other paint and draw products, the ArtRage interface was clean and streamlined. Access to its tool picker, tool settings, color picker, and the tool box panel are on the edges and corners of the main window. On the right screen hand edge of the interface window is the Layers panel, which you can, as a newbie, either ignore or retract to a mere tab. This is so for all the interface features, maximizing your work area by using the green grip bar.

A simple menu bar completes the interface. I was disappointed that placing the cursor over a tool did not bring up a text box describing its function, something I hope the developer fixed.

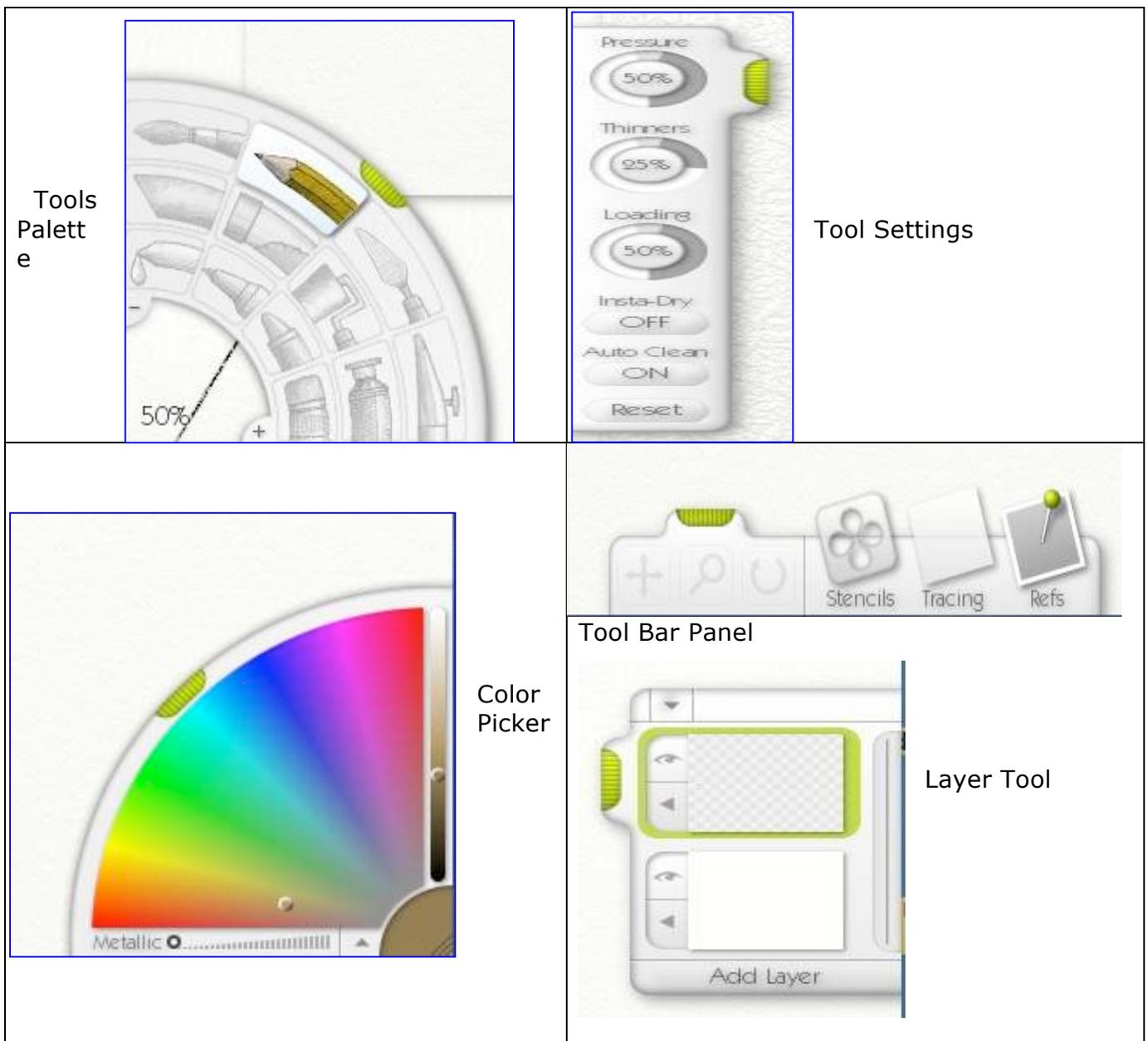


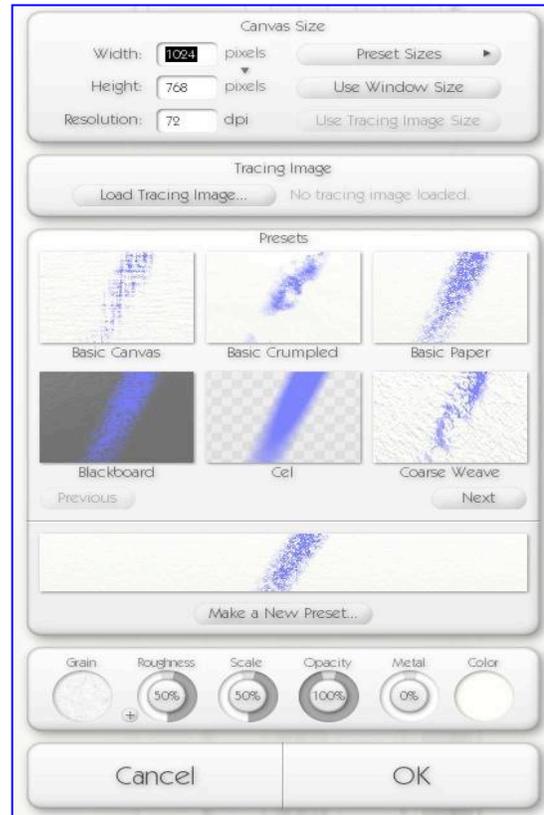
Figure: Sample Tools and Pallets

Using the Software

I started, as suggested by the 80 page manual, which I first read, by creating new painting. Using the software's file menu. The new painting dialog box is illustrated. I tried each of the tools, all of which behaved as described in the manual.

Figure: New Painting Dialog Box

I did this with relative ease on various canvases, with the mouse, without much fine line or direction control. So I tried the same moves with the drawing tablet, with which I'd practiced for a month. Trauma, shaky hands, arthritic fingers — and a greater loss of control! I guess a mouse or a trackball is more suited to my motor coordination. Okay, sez Doc lets try a children's picture. You know a sun and clouds in the sky and grass, a tree or three and a figure on the ground. Alas, my sense of visualization never transferred from my mind to my hand... total disaster.



So How About Doing a Multiple-Tool Expressionist Painting — I played, the tools worked, but what I produced had the form needed for abstract expressionist style art, but nothing a preschool child could not achieve. A Hans Hofmann, Paul Klee, Jackson Pollock or Paul Mondrian, I was not. When at the Museum of Modern Art (New York City) or browsing art books, I love the abstract and modern art movements, having usually felt that representational art could be better done with a camera.

When working with a real image, in tracing form, I could not even emulate the lines and shapes of a tracing. This is a process for which ArtRage provided all the tools. In summary, my painting ability was the pig's ear that even an exceptionally accessible set of tools could not turn into a silk purse. Then I remembered how totally bad my paint by number trials had been — Yuck.

Annotated Feature Set Details— So why did I end up liking this product, despite my disability, likely genetically induced, to use it? Foremost, the program is very easy to use with a mouse, but despite my klutzy attempt, could really come into its own with a pressure-sensitive graphics tablet. Other reviewers have found it so. [See the references.]

Tools — ArtRage is a painting program so it doesn't include any drawing tools such as lines, rectangles, circles or text. The tools it does have are: Oil Paint; Paint

Tube; Paint Roller; Palette Knife; Airbrush; Glitter; Pencils; Felt Pens; Crayons; Chalks; Eraser; and Color Sampler. These adjustable tools do exactly what they are supposed to do if you were working on a canvas or sheet of drawing paper. Need different brush strokes and widths, need to vary paint thickness, add smears and blurs, create and use stencils... they're all there and much more. Want to vary you media's characteristics, metalize your painting,

Palettes — ArtRage provides six palettes, which are pinned around the border of the canvas. These are: Tool settings; Tool picker; Layer and Canvas control (which also displays a thumbnail of the layer you're working on); Color picker; Color palette (where you can store favorite colors); and the Menu bar, which on OS X doesn't actually contain the menu, just manual zoom, undo and window controls.

Tracing — Two of the biggest stumbling blocks anyone, me-doc-me, trying to draw or paint encounters are, getting the picture right, and choosing the colors to use. The tracing feature of ArtRage easily overcomes both those hurdles.

Other Features — Art Rage gives you the option to use an image's colors when painting from a photograph or other digital image. ArtRage also lets you adjust the opacity of the tracing image and scale its size.

Work can be exported in all popular formats, including JPEG, TIFF, PNG, TGA and PSD (Photoshop), and it is easy to import image in the same formats.

The manual, who instructions I duplicated to test the software, provides detailed but focused information on all aspects of ArtRage. Whether you chose to read it is your business — but I could not have gotten along without it.

Oh, if you wanted to know, which the manual doesn't tell you, the resources for the product (e.g., Tracking Images, Stencils, Presets and Pickers) are stored in your Users > Library > Application Support > Art Rage 2 > Resources Folder.

Conclusions and Recommendation

ArtRage is a great painting application for a bargain price. It has a nice clean interface that is easy to learn, if you know just a bit about painting and natural drawing or even just about using a paint program.

Painting programs that support natural media - which can simulate painting with water colors and oils or drawing with chalk charcoal and crayons are usually costly and have a steep learning curve. The designers and programmers have me the basic goal of creating a product is to give people instant and easy to use access to realistic painting. You don't, as noted by Chris Howard (See the end notes), "need to learn how it works. You don't even need to create a new document when you open it. It gives you a sheet of paper and lets you get right down to painting."

The net result is that you can concentrate on your creativity, rather than wrestle with menus' or complex tool pallets that for newbies or intermediate users is overkill. By all means try the free version, and but the complete version. Keep its

icon in your dock so that it will be ready to meet your primal artistic needs be they as a water colorist or a charcoal artist.

Have a look at the free version (which has half the tools disabled, but no other restrictions) if you must, but for \$25 for the full version, just go buy it.

No I'm **not** hooked personally on this product – I do not paint, not even according to my wife, paint walls. However, for anyone with a modicum or visualizations skill a steady hand on a mouse to “pen” will get rapidly hooked on the product – It's more addicting, and creative, than either playing shanghai or backgammon my current vices. Just a bit of either imagination of a set of starter images, the software will be your cats meow. It well worth 4t least .5 macC's.

References — Reviews By Folks Who Are Not Artistically Impaired

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Art Rage 2.0 – Outrageously Good by Chirs Howard, Apple Matters March 17, 2006;
http://www.applematters.com/article/artrage_outrageously_good/

ArtRage 2.5 Review, Children's Software Review May 8, /2008
[http://ctr.childrenssoftware.com/ctr.childrenssoftware.com/tango3.acgi\\$/login/directfind1 taf?_sourcecheck=amazon&reviewnumber=12098](http://ctr.childrenssoftware.com/ctr.childrenssoftware.com/tango3.acgi$/login/directfind1 taf?_sourcecheck=amazon&reviewnumber=12098)

Software Review: *ArtRage Deluxe 2.5* by T. Michael Testi, June 17, 2008
<http://blogcritics.org/archives/2008/06/17/0605322.php>

Seeker

Reviewed by Ted Bade



Software Bisque

912 Twelfth Street Golden, CO 80401 USA

Production Facility: 900 Washington Avenue Golden, CO 80401 USA

Software Bisque Observatory: 9356 Blue Mountain Drive Golden, CO 80403 USA

Sales: (800) 843-7599

International: (303) 278-4478

Fax: (303) 278-0045

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

\$99 USD (currently they have a special buy both the Sky X and Seeker for \$149)

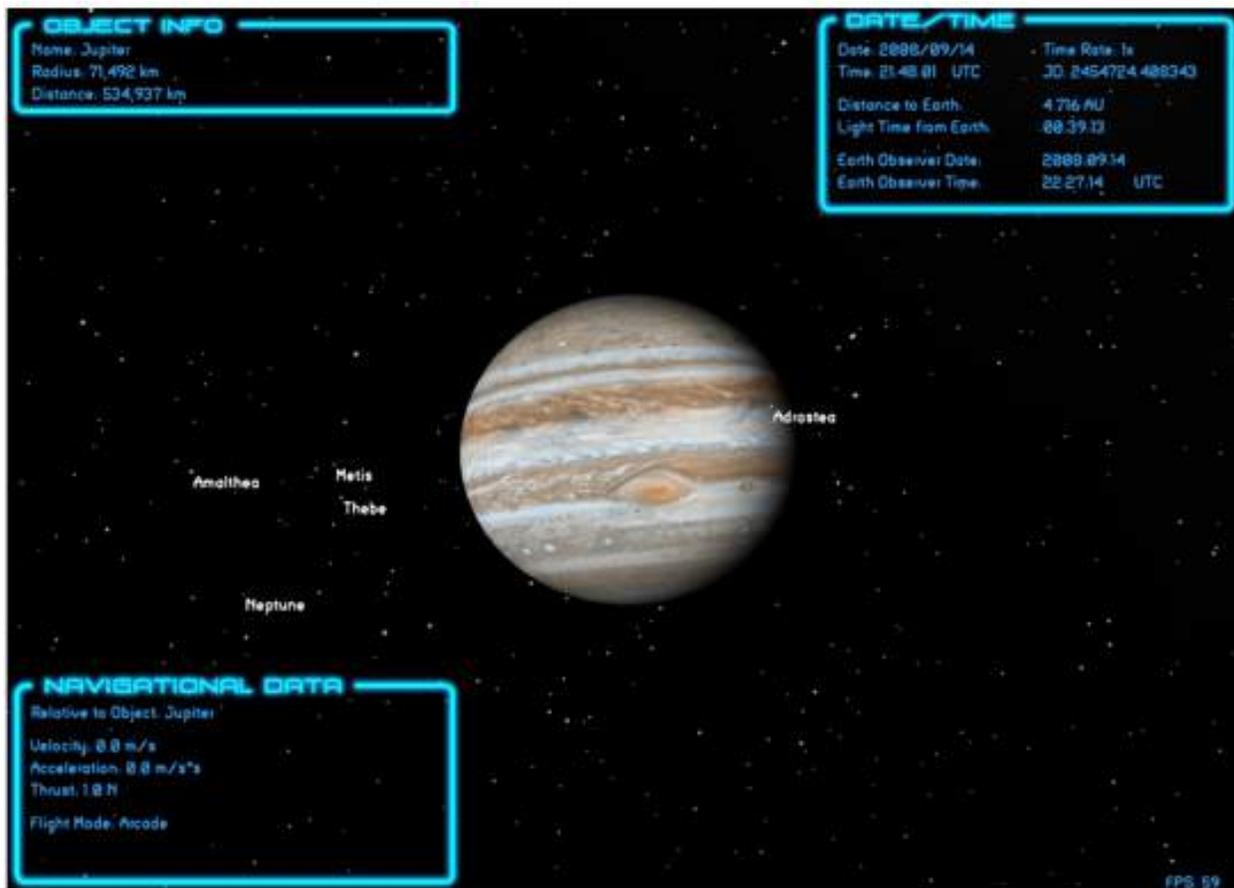
Requirements: 1.25 GHz G4 PowerPC or faster processor or a 2 GHz Intel Core Duo or faster processor; 512 MB of internal RAM; OpenGL 2.0 and later; Macintosh OS X version 10.4.8 or later; NVIDIA GeForce FX 5200 series or better graphics card-or-ATI Radeon 9600 or better graphics card; 128 MB (minimum) video RAM; 2.5 GB free disc space; DVD drive; Mouse or other pointing device; Keyboard.

Strengths: Easy to use, great graphics and flight simulations, includes some professional quality demos.

Weaknesses: Navigation can be confusing, no internet space to share tours created by owners.

For information on Seeker - <http://www.bisque.com/help/Seeker/SeekerInfo.htm>

Seeker is a solar system exploration program from Software Bisque. It can be used to simulate a flight (at very fast speeds) to almost any object in our solar system. You can enjoy a visual visit to the International space station, the moon, Mars or any other planet, and just about any other major object you can think of in our solar system. If you ever wondered what it would be like to be able to fly across the solar system, this program is for you!



Seeker's interface is a lot like Their Sky X for students we reviewed last month. Except in this case, rather than viewing the night sky from the earth, this program excels in letting you travel to and view various solar system objects. Controls are geared to "flying" your space shuttle. There is a large viewport window showing the view from your virtual ship. A side bar offers easy access to controls, which can also be accessed from the regular application menus.

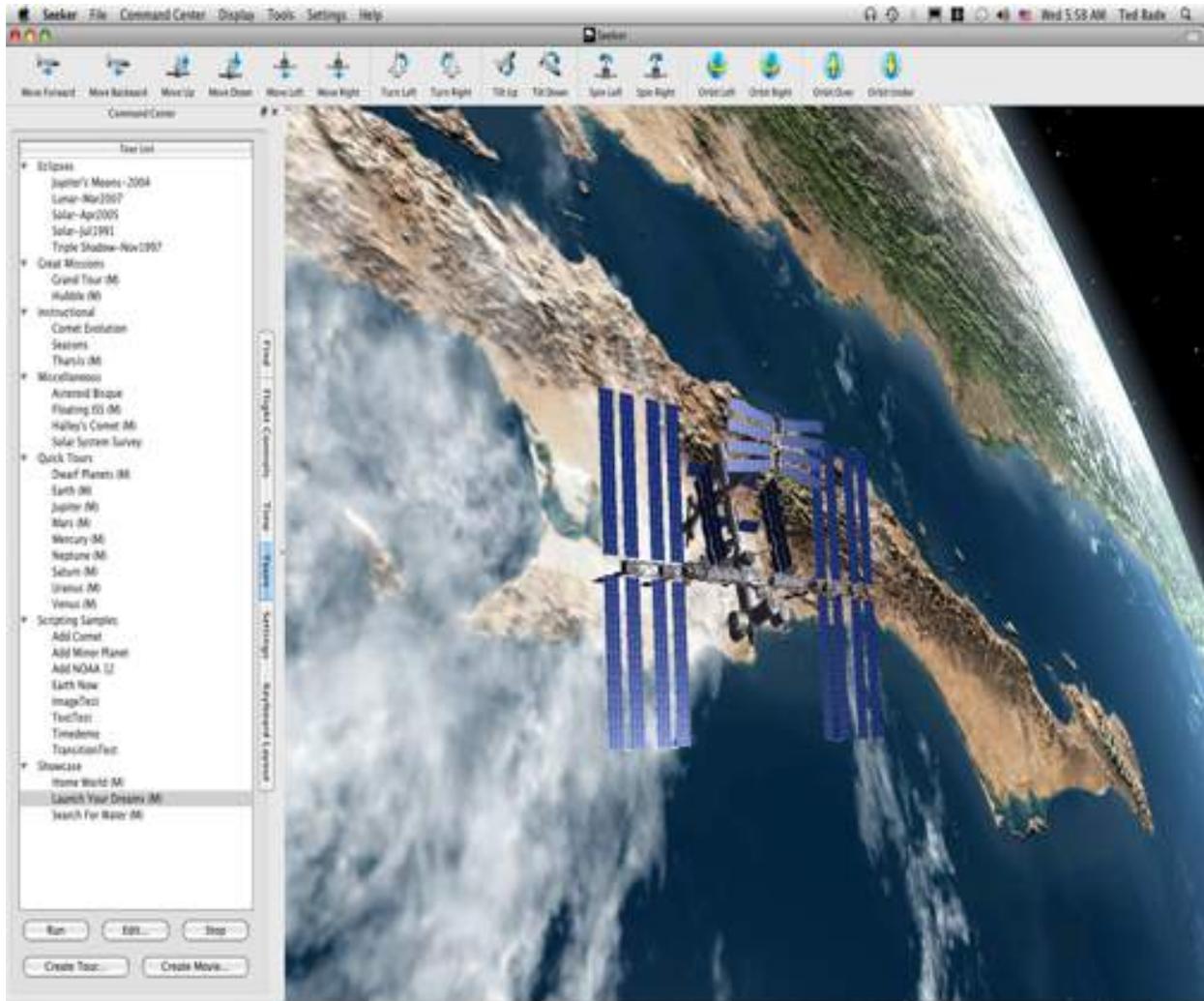
The best way to see how Seeker works is to sit back and enjoy several of the many very nicely done presentations that come with this application. You'll notice an "(M)" after some of the presentations, these are multimedia presentations that include sound in the form of voice and or music. All of the included presentations were very well done and enjoyable. The music and the voice description are what one would expect when visiting a professional planetarium.

Seeker would be valuable enough with just these presentations. However, the user can also to create his or her own a virtual flight around the solar system in real time. (Luckily, the speeds at which you virtually travel are a lot faster then currently possible, so you won't have to wait 6 months to get to Mars!)

There are two ways to navigate. You can search for an object by name, then a fly or jump to that object. In the fly to, you seem to travel to the object. This is a lot of fun. Jump to is quicker, but just puts the object in front of you, plopping the object at a distance good for viewing. Once near an object, you can use the program's controls to fly around to any position near the object. Sorry, there are no features for actually landing on the surface of any object, this program allows only space flight views.

Obviously, most of the imagery of this program is computer simulated, although it is derived from actual data gained from telescopes and spacecraft. The imagery is very realistic, I couldn't imagine it looking any more real. The quality of the graphics makes for some truly breath-taking scenes! Imagine, finding a position orbiting the moon where you can see the Earth behind it? Or perhaps the view of our sun while orbiting Pluto. All this and more are easily achieved in this program. Use your imagination.

In addition to being able to take a trip yourself, the program also has the ability to record a trip. Giving the user ability to make a movie of your flight or even a tour that works within Seeker.



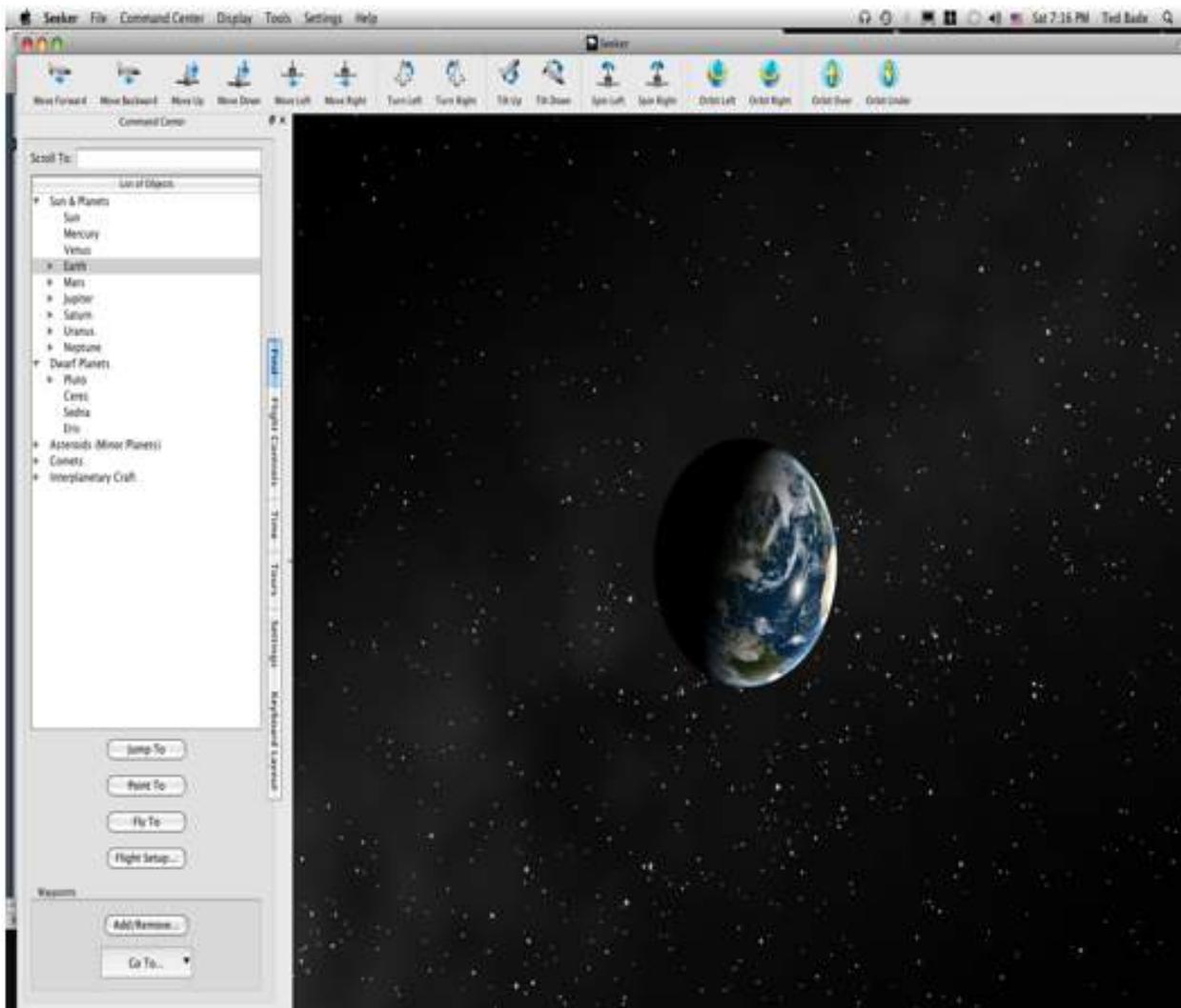
Working with tours isn't terribly hard, although it does involve a little script-like programming. There is a window that opens that helps build the script and later lets you edit it. I could see a lot of use for this feature in the classroom where students can present information about objects in the solar system. Additionally, it could be used by a teacher to present information in a fun way. The video and the graphics effects are really great. You really feel like you are there visually! The one thing I would have liked to do with Seeker would be to watch the presentations on a large projection screen! Creating a movie is as easy as creating a tour, then clicking on create movie and the program makes a movie. Simple.

Using the example in the manual, I was quickly able to make a trip to Jupiter. This is very basic. The program includes a number of commands that give the user the ability to add a lot of pizzazz to their script. I didn't take a lot of time to try this out myself. But based on the really cool multimedia tours that are included, it is obvious the tours can be quite complex and entertaining!

I should also mention that Seeker can shift time as well as location. This is useful if you would like to see some event that has happened in the past or something that won't happen for many years. If you know the date of some important event in space, you can shift to that time.



Seeker contains several audio clips that one can play as you use the program. The music is all pretty nice and what I call "Planetarium Music". (I might add that I am a big fan of this type of music!) You can select a sound clip to play anytime you run the program or choose to have no music. Seeker also allows you to play your own music. I am not really sure what type of "your own music" Seeker can play. It won't play any MP3 music in my library. The sample music provided in the program are wave files. A reference in the scripting information indicates that one can play a CD from a script. But there is no reference as to what type of music is required.



While flying your ship is easy, I found navigation to be a bit of a challenge. The solar system is a big place, and dealing with three dimensions can be a challenge (four if you consider time as well). To make navigations as easy as possible, directions are all based on your ship. Which is to say your view of space. One you get the hang of it, it becomes a lot easier.

I ran into no problems as all running this program on my MacPro. This program really benefits from a large screen and good audio, which makes the rumble of the engines come to life!

I was hoping that the Software Bisque site might have a place to post tours that people create. It would make for a great sharing community. (Anyone remember the old HyperCard and Hyperstudio stacks? That was a great community that truly shared!) But alas, I couldn't find a place to download other people's tours, sigh.

Overall Seeker is a lot of fun, while being very educational. It gives the Astronomy dreamer the ability to see what it would like to fly to all parts of our solar system. The views are terrific. Not only can one experience the flight themselves, but they can also save the flight, and allow others to enjoy it as well. This is a fun product and would be a great addition to any young astronomer's directory of programs.

Sonicfire Pro 5 Scoring Edition – Control Your Music

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



SmartSound
8550 Balboa Blvd.
Suite 180
Northridge, CA 91325
Toll free: (800) 454-1900
Local: (818) 920-9122
<http://www.smartsound.com/Sonicfire/>
Released: June 2008



Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.0 or later, G4 or later, DVD drive, 256 MB RAM, 50 MB hard disk space, Windows Media Player 11 or later.

MS XP SP1 or later, Intel 1 GHz Pentium or later, hardware same as above, plus Windows Media Player 11 or later.

Upgrades: Free to Sonicfire Pro 4 and 4.5 users to the Scoring Edition. Otherwise, \$100 USD per license.

Music DVDs: \$50 USD each. *Sonicfire Pro 5 Express Track* comes free with purchase of first DVD.

Comes With: Product Catalog, QuickStart Guide.

Tutorials: <http://www.smartsound.com/Sonicfire/tutorials/index.html>

FAQs: <http://www.smartsound.com/support/answers/index.php>

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

Strengths: Choose a beat from a score and move it in a Timeline without changing rhythm or tempo of the music.

Weaknesses: When the package was received the website had not been updated to reflect the latest release. (Probably still to close to version 5 beta.)

Previous Reviews: *macCompanion* July 2003 (Music Maestro).

<http://toolfarm.com/reviews/Sonicfirepro42.html>

<http://www.videomaker.com/article/12691/>

Installed on MacBook Pro 2.8 GHz with Mac OS X 10.5.5.

Introduction

"SmartSound has a solution that can benefit all filmmakers, regardless of your situation. Our patented music technology in the Sonicfire Pro software provides you with a flexible music scoring solution that allows your score to adapt to changes made to your film during the creative process. Think of it as a music partner that is with you every step of the way, delivering music on demand while you edit and re-edit each scene until it's just right. Not only is Sonicfire Pro on hand at all times, but with SmartSound's huge library of professional compositions, you'll get more variety than you could achieve with a single composer. With SmartSound music, you have the flexibility to personally customize all SmartSound tracks through our patented software to perfectly fit your creative vision and film. Additionally SmartSound offers special low package pricing for film festivals making the best use of your precious budget. And upgrading your license once distribution is locked is a snap with our streamlined and simplified license for all rights.

Key Benefits: New timing controls and Sensory Searching™

- Allow you to precisely time your music selections to each scene as if a composer scored the piece to your scene. Simply drag a beat of music to a key point in your film and Sonicfire Pro 5 will move that beat to that point and keep the rhythm and arrangement of the remainder of the track intact. Our new Spotting & Timing feature allows you to set key points throughout your film and then match all the music in SmartSound's vast library that come closest to fitting those points.
- Amazing Creative Control at Your Fingertips: With the new Mood Mapping feature in Sonicfire Pro 5, you have the ability to control the mix of your score to match the changing mood of your production. Whether you're reducing a busy track to a background music mix, ducking the music for dialog, taking out instruments that don't sound right at certain points of the production or building a dramatic effect over time with the same track, Mood Mapping breaks the mold of production music libraries and gives you full control.
- Multiple Versions of Music at Any Length: Whether you need music at a standard length (such as 15, 30, 60 or 90 seconds) or at a precise, unusual length, SmartSound will give you a track that meets your time requirements. And at each length, you will be presented with around 7-10 different arrangements of the track. This gives you enormous flexibility in finding a music score that matches your production.
- Mood Mapping Gives You Enhanced Creative Control: Sonicfire Pro 5's new Mood Mapping feature lets you adjust the mix of instrument layers to match the changing moods of your production. Whether you need to duck for dialogue or punch up the strings for an intense moment, Mood Mapping gives you immediate control over the mix of your score.
- Create and Change Your Music Score Quickly and Easily: SmartSound's technology presents you with multiple variations of any track from our library at any length needed. Instead of having to spend hours working with music to fit your scenes, SmartSound lets you create your score in minutes. And because it is so fast and easy, you can edit your films without having to worry about the time you would otherwise spend rescoring a scene.

- **Maintain Financial Control While Meeting Quality Expectations:** As important as music is for television productions, financial considerations are often a major factor when dealing with the music score. SmartSound's solutions make financial sense because once you purchase a track from our library, you never have to worry about paying annual or needledrop fees, like most other production music library solutions. SmartSound increases the value of your production without increasing the costs.
- **Royalty-Free Licensing:** Never worry about having to pay additional license fees again. You can use the SmartSound music you purchase as many times as you like – for one low cost...no nasty renewal fees or needledrop fees.
- **Music for Every Need:** Using SmartSound's technology gives you access to SmartSound's vast music library. It features thousands of tracks in any style imaginable – and you can preview and purchase tracks for immediate use."

What is in version 5?

<http://www.smartsound.com/Sonicfire/scoring.html>

Everything from version 4.5, and Sonicfire Pro 5 Express Track.

Also, **Timing Controls** in the Enhanced **Mood Mapping** mode for moving a beat to match the event.

Sensory Searching with a "more like this" function. We are talking about styles, intensities and moods based on what is in the music library. I can also search on faster, slower, composer, album, etc.

Spotting feature for setting music markers and for marking key events, so emphasis can be added where you want it.

Change Tempo for fast or slow. The program gives a beginning, middle and end, so we don't have to. Larry Jordan calls it a "magical mix master" for matching audio to video lengths. Or imagine tapping a tempo. Now you can find music based on tapping your foot, at least up to 5 taps.

Hit files (45 of them) included with the Scoring Edition. There are also separate instrument layers.

Multitrack Timeline with video – to synchronize music with the video sequence.

Compatible Formats

SmartSound is compatible with any application software or system that imports industry standard media file formats.

Audio Formats	Video Formats	
Audio Interchange File Format - AIFF MPEG layer 3 - MP3	Macintosh AVI	Windows AVI

SmartSound Audio File - SDS	MOV	MOV
SmartSound Audio Package - SSUP	MPEG - 1	MPEG -1
WAVE form audio format - WAV	MPEG - 4	WMV

What I Experienced

Why would I want this app? Because I want the ability to control my music when I do a video project. I want to use music that I don't have to pay royalties on. I want to be creative, without having to be steeped in music theory or having a Masters in Music to get work done. And yes, the tweaked files can be exported to Final Cut Pro.

On Install, I added 2 more updates after installing the DVD, mostly instruments. I received a number of SmartSound Music DVDs as well. Can I use the discs I received back in 2003? Well, sorta-kinda – "The old discs will continue to work great, but not in multi-layer format. But be assured that we have lots of multi-layer content in development, and have already released 10 discs in this format. We will make sure that we continue to release additional Multi-Layer discs in a variety of styles just as quickly as we can."

I highly recommend watching the tutorials online by Larry Jordan. His punchline is "the power is extraordinary!", and he is right. SmartSound takes the work out of adding and editing music to a video presentation and makes the process, oh so Mac-like. It's incredible!

And yes we can watch video and run the music track with it. We can also do sound editing in Sonicfire Pro 5 from within Final Cut Pro.

Music Library Compatibility Chart

The following table shows the compatibility of the Audio CDs and SmartSound-enabled applications.

<http://www.smartsound.com/support/music.html>

The DVD SmartSound Music multilayer discs take up around 3 GB of space. It is recommended to load these on the hard drive for access by the library. These cover such areas as Atmospheric Beds, Cinematic, Compilations, Corporate, Documentary, Rock/HipHop/R&B, TV/Promotion/Trailers, Weddings & Events and Word/Travel. According to the catalog, there are 45 Multi-Layer DVDs available, with more released each month.

The advantage to using these, is that they are royalty-free and so avoid the issues that creators have faced in the past from the "music industry"™. This alone makes this app valuable. It avoids the legal system issues with those who would shut down a school project or corporation, because they "illegally" used music that the music industry could not otherwise profit from. The "music industry"™ has done this so many times, they have the process probably patented by now. You don't have to put up with the hassles.

Use SmartSound™ and these video projects are no longer a litigation target. Every piece is licensed and shows who composed it and published it. Many are either ASCAP, BMI or SOCAN. Many are live studio recordings.

New releases can be previewed online from within the program. Currently, there are 810 multi-layer tracks and 1,441 single-layer tracks. These are located on 79 multi-layer DVDs valued from \$50 to \$200 or \$20 per track. Going online and doing a list showed me a total of 2,430 items available.

If you have older music libraries from SmartSound, they can be used, but are limited. Discs that aren't Multi-Layer will not have the Mood Mapping capability. Think of them either as being multi-track or stereo. Otherwise the metadata is processed the same. The discs I have from 2003 are Cutting Edge, Sports and Blockbuster. They loaded just fine.

And compared to other royalty-free or Pay-per-Use music libraries, music is available for any time of length at no extra cost, with any music arrangement or mix with seamless looping that can be exported with no ending to Macs or PCs and the instrument mix can be easily changed with Smart Recall to either .wav or .aif files.

Loaded with Other Apps

You may have already used this app without really noticing it if you used Avid/Pinnacle, Adobe Premiere Elements, Roxio Easy Media, Core/Ulead VideoStudio or MediaStudio Pro, CyberLink PowerDirector or Serif MoviePlus.

Competitors

You may know some of these or used them. I still get Digital Juicer's weekly items in Email and in regular mail, but there is also Adobe Soundbooth and Sony Cinescore.

Support

By the way, support is included in the price either by phone or by Email.

Conclusion

This really is "way cool tech"™. The app has come a long, long way since 2003 and compared to the competition, this holds the bar high as a standard for the music integration industry.

What of MS Office 2008 for Mac? An Update

By Robert Pritchett



Released: August 12, 2008

\$400 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.9 or later, 512MB RAM, 1.5 GB Hard drive space, DVD Drive, Microsoft Office 12.1.



MS 12.1.2 Update: <http://tinyurl.com/5jcfpq>

Applies to: Office 2008, Office 2008 Home and Student Edition, Office 2008 Special Media Edition, Word 2008, Excel 2008, PowerPoint 2008, Entourage 2008.

160MB Download



"This update contains several improvements to enhance stability and performance. In addition, this update includes fixes for vulnerabilities that an attacker can use to overwrite the contents of your computer's memory with malicious code. For more information about this update, please visit the Microsoft Web site."

Strengths: Works with MS Exchange Server. Uses AppleScript. iPhoto integration.

Weaknesses: No VBA compatibility. Considered by many to be a Trojan application. Load up to three computers per license, but can only use one computer at a time.

Why *macCompanion* magazine didn't review MS Office 2008 for Mac.

Released back in January 2008, MS Office for Mac by MS knew our reputation for being truthful and knew we would not give them a good review. Others didn't either. Why didn't MS make a "real" version (they made 3) that was Universal Binary and worked natively in Mac OS X? It isn't like they don't have enough programmers. (Snarky Remark™)

Bottom line: If you have MS Office 2004, stay with it. If you bought MS Office 2008, see if you can get a refund. See if you can get MS Office 2004 for Mac instead.

In all fairness, they did finally release an update to address issues in August 2008 - http://www.applelinks.com/index.php/more/microsoft_office_2008_for_mac_1212_update_released/

Other Reviews:

<http://www.anandtech.com/mac/showdoc.aspx?i=3215>

http://reviews.cnet.com/office-suites/microsoft-office-for-mac/4505-3524_7-32659647.html

<http://www.macintouch.com/reviews/office2008/>

A Positive Review – (But "Dr. Mac" gets paid for support) –

<http://www.macobserver.com/review/2008/04/08.2.shtml>

Another positive review - <http://www.mac-guild.org/reviews/review409.html>

Scathing Amazon Feedback -

<http://www.amazon.com/Microsoft-Office-2008-for-Mac/dp/B000WR2F2M>

By **Sean Rogers** (Australia)

As most of the other reviewers have written, this product is not worth buying. I got a free copy as I went to the product launch, and was soon incensed that Microsoft could sell this with a straight face.

Let's look at the listed "product features" one by one:

1. Streamlined user interface runs natively on both Intel- and PowerPC-based Macs

- Streamlined is an interesting word to use. I never had the displeasure of using Office for Mac 2004 on my Intel Mac, but from all reports it ran terribly. I shudder to think that this edition is supposedly running better. The Office applications are without a doubt the slowest applications running on my Mac, and this includes Parallels which allows me to run Windows in a virtual machine. The idea that this is "streamlined" is laughable.

2. Open XML file formats, the Office Art graphics engine, and other features that result in compatibility and file fidelity - This is probably the main reason new-comers would buy Office, for compatibility with Office for Windows users. However, the compatibility is full of problems. Do not spend any time working on layout for your Word documents if you're then sending them to a Windows user; the layout will be completely ruined and you'll have to do it all again. I also have Office for Windows running through Parallels, and I usually end up using that if I hope to share my documents. Office for Mac just doesn't do it properly. Keep in mind that Apple's Pages can read docx (some say better than Word for Mac does), although it can't write back to docx.

3. Professional design is within your power with hundreds of new customizable templates and suite-wide themes, SmartArt graphics, and the new Publishing Layout View in Word 2008 - This is all well and good but if you wanted great templates and layout capabilities, you would buy iWork for a quarter of the price... which is certainly my recommendation. Did I mention the layout capabilities don't work reliably anyway?

4. My Day keeps you connected to all of the day's action. Command your calendar, tackle your tasks, and simplify your day - If you own a Mac you have iCal. Why would this be a selling point to anyone?

5. Includes: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Entourage, Microsoft Server Exchange Support
- And therein lies perhaps the main reason Office for Mac will still be purchased even though it is greatly inferior to competing products: Microsoft Server Exchange Support. Apparently much of the world runs on this these days. Let's be thankful that Google and Salesforce are teaming up to take it down once and for all...

So in summary, the real reasons to buy this product are as follows:

1. You are forced to require Microsoft Server Exchange Support.

Err... I put a number 1 because I thought there would be more but there actually isn't.

Compatibility with Windows users is important, but Office for Mac just doesn't deliver here.

Personally I would buy iWork - did I mention it is a quarter of the price for an equivalent product? Microsoft Office for Mac is a typical half-hearted, over-priced attempt from Microsoft, but no one can deny that their propaganda will make it a best-seller.

By **John S. Malcolmson**

Such high hopes for this upgrade, but 2008 is for the most part a change of window dressing. We bought this to be compatible with the occasional client who uses office, also for the email/scheduling system.

PROS:

Syncs with iCal

Love the My Day app that let's you see a snapshot of schedule and tasks and flagged emails pop into this list.

Has had an immediate productivity boost.

Improved GUI, less cheesy.

Improved junk mail filtering.

CONS:

Fonts Loading: 20-50 seconds load time for each application in the suite. Then if you're using PowerPoint or Word clicking on the font list invokes a delay of up to 3 seconds. If you have a few fonts open and you're working on a document in PowerPoint doc it's a deal-breaker -- even turning off WYSIWYG font menu bears the same results unless you're rocking a Penryn. We're using Apple's Keynote now.

Microsoft tells you, you can "install it on up to three computers". What they don't tell you is it can only be running on one -- it sniffs the network to find other computers and will make you quit. This is very annoying if you have a tower and a laptop.

PowerPoint Crashes

CONCLUSION

Overall I feel a bit duped by Microsoft -- new bells and whistles but feels like little effort has been put into overhauling the engine of this beast. If I were to do it again, I would buy iLife, but admit that I still use and prefer their email app. Entourage (mainly because of My Day)

By **Photoguy**

Using this program makes my iMac (core 2 duo, with default 1 gig memory) run REALLY

slowly, usually making the program almost unusable. [Contrast this to iWork (a small fraction of the price, by the way) which opens much more quickly and runs super smoothly.] Office has also crashed on me a few times (I'm running Mac OS X Tiger 10.4.11. Maybe it's more stable on Leopard?).

I also don't understand why people get this because they need Office compatibility. I opened a document from Word 2003, and in Pages it looked like the original, but in Word 2008 the margins were different and words showed up on different lines.

The program looks nice with its blue glass, but to tell you the truth, iWork looks more elegant and has its good looks without sacrificing intuitive use. I mean, in iWork you can have the text formatting toolbar always show, but in Office you always have to choose between one kind of toolbar set or another (in a side-window). For people used to using Office 2003 on Windows (like me), you'll actually feel less at home in Office 2008 than in other programs (like iWork or even the simple OpenOffice.org).

I have Office 2008 and iWork, and while I can highly recommend iWork, I keep the Office icons out of the Dock. I even find myself opening Word documents in Pages more often than in Word because its just more reliable and it loads the documents just fine. Save yourself the time and money, and don't get this program.

By **A. Anderson "Technophobe"** (Danbury, CT)

If you do any programming or statistical analysis with Office, stay away from this rip-off!!! VBA and the Analysis Toolpak are gone -- and of course, you won't find this out until AFTER you've wasted your money!!!!

Update: Accidentally added arrows from Word 2008 to an existing Word 2004 document; now it can't be opened on any PC, and it won't print either. Excel 2008 will not save any documents on the grounds that I don't have enough hard drive space; in fact, I have over 600 GB of space available. ABSOLUTE GARBAGE!!

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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".

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

The *macCompanion* Staff