

macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH

2007 MacWorld Expo

Everything for the creative mind



Apple TV



Air Port Extreme



iPhone

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Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional

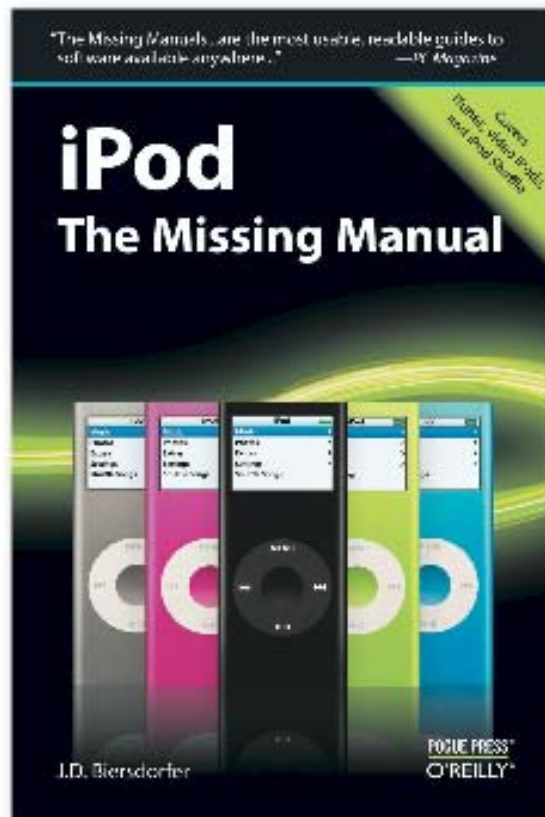
AlphaSmart Neo

Digital Photography Expert Techniques

GarageBand 101: Mastering GarageBand

Volume 5, Issue 2 February

Empower Your iPod.



With the new iPods, Apple has given us the world's smallest entertainment center. Sleek, powerful and somewhat addictive, these little gems can do far more than play music. To make the most of your iPod's capabilities, pick up a copy of the new *iPod: The Missing Manual*. This new edition thoroughly covers the redesigned iPod Nanos, the video iPod, the tiny Shuffle and the overhauled iTunes 7. Each page sports easy-to-follow color graphics, crystal-clear explanations, and guidance on the most powerful and useful things your iPod can do.

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macCompanion

February 2007

This issue we talk about MacWorld Expo 2007. We will review many of new or updated products - from Apple and third party vendors - announced at the show in the upcoming issues of macCompanion.

One of macCompanion's staff writers - Eddie Hargreaves - attended the show and gives his perspective of MacWorld Expo. We think you'll enjoy Rick Sutcliffe's regular monthly column, which focuses on the show, and a couple of our columns also focus on the keynote topics.

During Steve Jobs much anticipated keynote speech, he did reveal several items of interest: tv, the iPhone and a new company name - Apple, Inc.

What we didn't hear about at MacWorld Expo were things we've come to expect: new or updated hardware and software. We're sure Apple has a few surprises planned for the immediate future, like the new iPod shuffles (now in blue, green, orange and pink) announced 1/30/07.

New hardware - faster processors, larger hard drives, better screens, longer battery life - should be ready soon. And Leopard, updated Apple applications (iWork, iLife, etc) and major third party applications finally converted to Universal Binary will have an impact on Mac users.

Looks like 2007 is gonna be a good time to be a Mac user.

If you attended MacWorld Expo 2007 (or earlier ones for that matter) and would like to share your experiences, please send feedback to feedback at maccompanion dot com. And we'd like to hear if and when you plan to buy any of the new Apple products.

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Letter from the CEO

Pinpointing Pain Points and Perfection

By Robert Pritchett

Feel the customer's pain. Discover what his or her "pain points" are and then provide a solution that meets and even possibly exceeds his or her expectations. Under-promise and over-deliver.

Apple addresses sales this way by having "Product Professionals" listen first. Then we offer ways to either reduce or eliminate altogether, those awful painful pinpricks of a thousand cuts that can kill off or severely disable a business or personal computing experience. We deliver solutions that ease the pain and suffering. "Take two Macs and call me in the morning."

Go ahead, Google for "Pain Points" and see what comes up. "Everybody" talks about it in business, and I mean everybody!

An itch can get scratched, but if it is a poisonous bite, it can fester and become very painful and sometimes if it isn't treated, it can grow life threatening. Right now, think of the competition's OS...

From Buzzhack: <http://www.buzzwhack.com/>

Pain Points: Now the BuzzMakers are stealing from the acupuncturists. Business consultants use "pain points" as a term to describe the places where a business feels the "pain" due to poor operational structure, bad software or good, old-fashioned inefficiencies. **Nominated by Ken Bryson**

Of course, I take a liking to this term too:

Solistinging: The act of soliciting information from customers, while listening to their needs at the same time. **Nominated by Lisa McIntosh**

Well, the real scratch that itches is what came from MacWorld Expo and Apple in true form has delivered the right medication to sooth those pain points and make them just bad memories lost in the pages of time.

Perfection? We think Apple keeps getting closer to it, but you decide. Look in our pages this issue and see for yourself if your pain points have been addressed. If not, please let us know.

Oh, and don't forget, we sell through our website and advertisers, so please take time to visit and purchase, If you have not done so already. We are so listening to you!

By the way, we still have our "I Love My Mac" campaign running hot, so if you haven't signed up, please do so now... you have to participate to play the game.

<http://www.maccompanion.com/IloveyMacGiftaway.html>

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Columns

Section 1 contains *macCompanion*'s regular monthly columns. Writers from the US and Canada offer their insight into a variety of issues affecting Mac users. These columns cover trends in the Mac community, Mac software, hardware and books.

This month's issue includes:

- A Keynote for the History Books
- Mac Expo 2007
- Views from the Ivory Tower
- MacFanatic's Geek Speak
- The Northern Spy
- MacPhobias
- Macsimum News
- Last Minute Apple News
- Magazine Format Changes


A Keynote for the History Books

By Eddie Hargreaves

Most Macworld Expo keynotes are breathlessly anticipated. But that high level of expectation often leads to disappointment when it's over. And by the next year, its events are largely forgotten (remember the Virginia Tech supercomputer?). But Steve Jobs' 2007 keynote not only lived up to the media hype, it left attendees with their minds blown and garnered a standing ovation. And it will long be remembered for good or bad thanks to Jobs' famous reality distortion field, which was at its strongest ever.

The first shock of the morning was when Steve said "This is all we're gonna talk about the Mac today" after only four minutes. Whaaa?!

And after another eight minutes of iPod recap and the announcement of Paramount adding its movie stable to the iTunes Store, it was on to the product previously code-named iTV.

The  tv has been largely overlooked post-keynote and I think it's perfectly fair to do so. As much fun as it was to watch clips of *Zoolander*, *Heroes* and *30 Rock*, I can already watch those on my TV without paying Apple \$300 for the privilege.

And then, only 26 minutes into the keynote, when we would normally be watching endless iDVD themes being demoed, Steve said "This is a day I've been looking forward to for 2-1/2 years." Clearly there was not going to be "one more thing" at this keynote. This was going to be the one thing. And what a thing it was.

For the next hour-plus, nearly every crazy Apple rumor was delivered in a single device: Widescreen video iPod? Check. Apple cell phone? Check. New Apple PDA? Check. Touch-sensitive tablet screen? Check. Stripped-down version of OS X? Check. The name iPhone? Check. Kitchen sink? Uh, sure, check.

Yet even though the rumors of a phone had been so loud and varied, there were plenty of never-considered features that consistently amazed those in attendance:

proximity sensor, ambient light sensor, accelerometer, multi-touch, 160 ppi screen.

I typically try and resist Steve's reality distortion field and think of things he's not talking about, like 'how many movies can you fit on this?' or 'what will the monthly cost be?' But even my shields were completely shattered as Steve continued demoing snazzy software features: Coverflow, Visual Voicemail, Pinch-zoom, Google Maps with location pins flying in from off-screen... Boom! Boom! Boom!

Unfortunately, the distortion field cannot be extended to guests, as the CEO of Google and Yahoo discovered. I can hardly remember what they had to say as I felt like shouting "Get back to the iPhone!" The worst moment was when Cingular CEO Stan Sigman got 'thank you, goodbye' applause before he was finished getting through his "Inside the Actor's Studio" stack of notecards.

If you really don't think Steve's field exists, consider some things he said that have essentially gone unnoticed since: 'Announced the switch to Intel just a year ago and completed it in seven months' No, actually it was in June 2005 that he announced the switch to Intel and it took 14 months (still impressive numbers). 'All six Star Trek movies are available' There are 10 Star Trek movies (maybe he meant to say all six *good* Star Trek movies). 'Apple's first revolutionary product was the Macintosh in 1984' What about the Apple II?

Positioned as the next Apple product to go on the history mantle next to the Macintosh and the iPod, the iPhone has a lot to live up to. A few years down the road, this keynote will either be seen as a momentous occasion in the history of mobile devices or a hilarious hour of hyperbole. And I can say I was there.



MacWorld Expo 2007

By Mike Hubbartt

Mac users have waited, not patiently, for Steve Jobs to show new or updated Apple products for 2007. And at 10AM PST on 1/09/2007 we finally saw the future for Apple: **Apple TV**, the iPhone and a new company name – Apple, Inc.

The **Apple TV** streams video and audio from 1 to 5 computers to a television, providing up to 720P resolution, a 40 GB internal hard drive and USB/Ethernet/HDMI connections. **Apple TV** will ship in February and retail for \$299. The length of the coverage for this product was reasonable – I'm interested to see the sales numbers for this year.

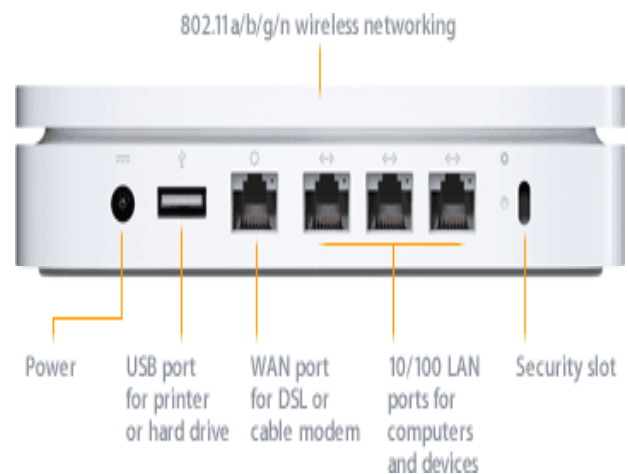


The iPhone received the majority of coverage during the keynote address. The iPhone is several things rolled into a single wafer thin package: a widescreen iPod, a mobile phone and an internet communications device. Impressive? It runs OS X, syncs with iTunes, syncs all media (music, videos, podcasts, TV, photos) and calendars. The iPhone a 3.5" screen running at 160 pixels per inch, a single button on the front, is 11/16" thick, has a 2MP camera, headphone jack, Sim card, speaker, mic, proximity sensor. Has WiFi Bluetooth, 5 hrs battery life/16 hrs to play music. Awaiting FCC approval, the 4GB iPhone will retail at \$499 and the 8GB iPhone will cost \$599 - with a 2 yr contract with Cingular in the US. The iPhone will be available at Apple and Cingular stores, but not before June. I appreciated bigwigs from Yahoo, Google and Cingular made appearances during the keynote, but the vast majority of Job's keynote was on the iPhone - a product not expected to ship until the middle of the year.



The last thing covered in the keynote was the new name for our favorite computer company: Apple, Inc. Yes, 'Computer' is no longer part of the company name, since Apple has grown beyond that part of the market. Good to know, yet I wonder if we can expect future MacWorld Expos to offer less and less coverage of new computer products.

One product not covered in the 2007 keynote also ships in February: the new Airport Extreme Base Station. It is ready for 802-11n wireless networking, has USB and WAN ports and 3 – 10/100 LAN ports, plus a security slot. It retails at \$179. Nice.



iLife '07 and iWork '07 were expected to be released – a rumor brought about by pages reserved on Amazon.com's website prior to MacWorld Expo. Neither were mentioned during the keynote nor released during the show. A red herring, or unexpected bugs?

To be honest, I was quite disappointed with MacWorld Expo 2007. I admit I've grown accustomed to new or updated hardware and software products receiving attention, and wish Apple had allocated resources to update existing computer products if they were unable to provide new goodies. A faster processor in some of the computers wouldn't be huge, but still nice to see. I expect Apple was quiet on the Leopard release status as they wait for Microsoft to release Vista. Maybe we'll see a major announcement from them after Microsoft's cards are on the table – could be interesting. Until then, let's hope 2007 is even better for Mac users than 2006.

See you next month.



Views from the Ivory Tower

By Ted Bade - February 2007

Macworld Expo is over and a lot of interesting items were presented. Frankly, I was a bit disappointed. I was really expecting Apple to announce at least something new in the Macintosh line up. But alas, there was nothing offered in that area. Correct me if I am wrong, but isn't this event called **Macworld Exposition**, not Apple Expo? IMHO, Steve Jobs should use this as the forum for new and innovative **computer** related things. The headliner of this event was a device that doesn't really know what it is....

As you probably already know, the big news was Apple's cell phone/music player/video player/Internet browsing/planner device. Lawyers will be arguing for the next umpteem months about what it can and cannot be called when you speak of it. Why, because, someone at Apple decided to call it the iPhone, but apparently someone at Cisco systems already used that name for something they have. I would have expected Apple to call their cell phone device the iPhone, but I would also have expected that someone at Apple

would have researched the name to see if it already wasn't being used.

I have to admit that a lot of interesting technology has been included with this device. It has a screen larger than an iPod. It should be a whole lot better for looking at pictures and video. It is smart enough to know if you are looking at it in portrait or landscape view, so it adjusts the image accordingly, it includes wireless access and well as cell phone access. Most importantly, it interfaces with a computer running MacOS X, so all your stuff can be synched, to a point. It has only a small amount of memory. You can read all about these cool and innovative features on Apple's and many other web sites.

<http://www.apple.com/iphone/>

What disappoints me most about this device is that it is **almost** a great iPod. There is a definite lack of capacity in this machine. It would be hard to justify buying it simply to replace an iPod. The iPhone comes in two sizes, 4 and 8 Gig. 4 Gigs wouldn't handle my iTunes audio collection, add another movie or some video to this and the 8Gig wouldn't either. Then what about my photos, my appointments, the cache for the web browser, space for the pictures it can take?

But it seems like Wall Street liked the idea, as Apple's stock went up over \$10 usd a share two days after the keynote. I am sure that a lot of people, excited about their iPods, will love this idea as well. It is not a cell phone style that would work for me. I've never had a problem carrying my PowerBook when I am on the road, so all my appointments, calendars, internet stuff and so forth are available, and I already have an iPod for listening to audio.

Is this device going to be the next big thing or a flop? I don't really know. It won't be available for a while yet, which gives the lawyers enough time to argue about it and other companies to figure out what Apple did wrong and make something better. Perhaps Apple will change their mind and release a really nice iPod instead. ;-).

In addition to the Apple branded phone device there were other things released at the Expo. From Apple we heard about the **Apple TV**. This device can wirelessly move or stream video content from your computer to your TV. It seems like a good idea for people who

typically download movies onto their computer. I still enjoy renting or buying a DVD because of all the extra content one gets. If the extra content isn't an issue and I don't really want to own the movie, renting it or using Pay-per-view from the local cable company is the best deal.

The other thing about the Apple TV that might be an issue for some people is that you need to connect it to an HDTV. I haven't looked at the percentage of computer users that own an HDTV and who don't already own a device that moves video from their computers to this device, versus the rest of the world. I wonder if there will be enough interest to make Apple's Apple TV a viable product?

The Apple TV is well engineered and should be easy to use. It can store content, although it comes with only a 40G drive. Apple claims this gives 50 hours of storage, but what they don't mention is that this is for standard definition video, not for HD. I don't know the ratio of how much more space HD video takes over standard definition video, but it is at least twice or more.

What were they thinking putting only a little more storage than an iPod in the Apple TV? Both of my Tivos have been upgraded to 200G of storage, giving them 135 or so hours of standard definition video. I don't think the iTV will record video from your cable or satellite company either. It would be a lot more useful a device if it could record video from a number of sources. As always, we will have to watch and see if Mr. Joe Consumer buys it or not. The reaction to the information at the Keynote presentation was pretty mild, unlike the cheering that occurred when Steve Jobs described the cell phone appliance. To read all about this new device visit:

<http://www.apple.com/appletv/>

Apple also advanced the ability of wireless connections by modifying the airport and other wireless devices to the latest "n" format. The cool thing is that older "g" formats can be upgraded with software to this new format. Apparently, Apple is planning to charge \$2 for the patch that lets you upgrade your machine to the "n" format. For more information on this new wireless format visit:

<http://www.apple.com/wireless/80211/>

As always this expo is a time for many other

companies to present their software as well. One piece of software that caught my attention is called Crossover Mac. This application will let an Intel based Macintosh computer run applications written for Windows without running Windows! It is a pretty cool solution for people who need to run a couple of Windows based applications but who want to spend most of their time using the MacOS. I could see it being a very nice solution for switchers who have a pile of Windows software. Rather than spending the money to upgrade every title to a Mac version, they can buy this application and use it to run those programs they haven't yet converted or those that have no MacOS version. There should be a complete review of this application in the next edition of MacCompanion. Be sure to check it out. For now you can visit their web site:

<http://www.codeweavers.com/products/cxmac/>

Roxio released a new version of their CD/DVD burning suite that includes a MacOS X version of Tivo-to-Go. I have been waiting for a MacOS version of this feature that allows Tivo owners to burn DVDs of shows recorded on their Tivos. It is great to see it finally happen. There are a lot of other new and powerful features in this new version of Toast, including the ability to work with HD DVD burners. Hopefully, we will have more information on this product in the near future a well. Visit the information at the Roxio site for more information. <http://www.roxio.com/enu/products/toast/titanium/overview.html>

Bring on the malicious software – Apple, choosing to use the lack of malicious software as a PR campaign for MacOS X, has essentially thrown down the gauntlet to those people who write this type of code. There have been one or two issues so far but nothing as far reaching as a typical Window's virus. But we might expect this to change in the not so distant future.

A group of people have decided to research and publicize any security hole they can find in the MacOS and Apple's other software items. They are calling this "a month of Apple bugs". I bet Microsoft is really happy people are putting so much attention on MacOS related malicious-ware and not on them! If you would like to read about hat is being released, visit:

<http://www.securemac.com/>, it is their cover story.

What always amazes me is that there is never any lack of people willing to research and create malicious computer code. It is like they have this need to prove that the human race is nothing but a race of losers, one part happily willing to destroy anything other parts create.

If these hackers really wanted to put US companies or economy into a tizzy, they could research and develop a cure for “uncurable” diseases, such as cancer or diabetes. A solution for just those two diseases would destroy millions of research jobs and dollars, billions in profit from drug sales, and change our culture considerably! Yet these people would rather make mischief on some grandmother’s or a kid’s computer. With the intelligence and potential to do great things and gain great fame, with their small minds they can’t think beyond annoying a few old people. Talk about losers. It really makes me sick.

Cheating the Investors - While I am being annoyed with people, I might as well include Apple and bring up this backdating of securities issue. This has little to do with the spirit of the company and a lot to do with the greed of people. Again it boils down to the fact that the human race is all too willing to take advantage of others, whenever they can. This isn’t the Macintosh way, this isn’t ethical, it is just downright bad.

It would be very sad to think that a company that has created so much innovation and wonderful technology could be seriously hurt because a handful of morons wanted to get more than they were really due. This is even sicker when you consider the people doing this already make quite a lot of money for what they did. To them I say, if wealth is your goal, go work for Microsoft. Then at least, your bad habits might be useful to the Macintosh community and your philosophy will be more in tune with the company.

Apple financial information - I might not completely agree with the direction that Apple has been taking with its new products, financially, they are doing well. Which is a good indication that the rest of the world likes their products and is buying them!

In January they posted their first quarter financial information. although they did not meet the predictions, they still had a great first quarter. They posted a record revenue of \$7.1 billion and record

net quarterly profit of \$1.0 billion. Apple shipped 1,606,000 Macs and 21,066,000 iPods during the quarter, representing 28 percent growth in Macs and 50 percent growth in iPods over the year-ago quarter.

Just for the record, 1.1 billion of these gross sales were from the Apple stores! I guess this means the stores were a good idea. Another interesting tidbit is that Apple believes that about 50% of their Macintosh sales were to people switching from Windows.

For the full story as posted by Apple visit: <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2007/01/17results.html>.

Help a switcher - I hope the people switching to MacOS X are having a great experience. I have offered my assistance and suggestions to a couple of friends I know that switched. It is amazing what a how much impact a few basic suggestions have. If you know of someone that has switched, ask them how it is going and don’t be afraid to offer some useful suggestions. MacOS X is easy, but if a person has been using Windows for some time, they have developed certain habits. It is all too easy to try to do something, using a tried and true Windows method, only to get frustrated because this method doesn’t work on MacOS X. There are a number of tricks and shortcuts that are easily translated from Windows to MacOS X. Pass those you know along, your friends will appreciate it.

Elegance can be an issue too. Window’s based machines require that you interface personally with the hardware to eject a removable disk. Which is to say that to eject a CD you need to push the eject button on your CD drive. Macs don’t have an eject button on the drive. This is the source of a major confusion for many switchers. I’ve related the concept of removing something from your desktop using the tools available on the desktop. It isn’t a hard concept and I’ve found most people get the concept really quickly. Of course, use your mouse, use your keyboard, drag the icon to the eject button, but don’t bend over and push a button on the machine!

Suggesting a useful book is also a great idea. I generally suggest the Switchers missing manual for MacOS X, both as a good read and a great reference. There are probably other books that are useful, but I like David Pogue’s writing and I feel this book is a

great intro to living in a MacOS X world.

Say goodbye to Macintosh Computers - A final note of sad news, we can all say goodbye to Apple Computer Corporation. Yup, Apple dropped the work Computer from its name. They are now Apple Corporation. I just hope they don't drop the computer from their line up! Yet, I wonder, is this a sign of things to come? Let us hope that the Macintosh and MacOS X are here for a long time yet to come.



Geek Speak: Random Mac Stuff You Need to Know

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

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Macworld 2007 and Objective-C 2.0

Well, everyone has had enough time in the last few weeks to fully absorb the information surrounding Macworld. So, now that you have a full stomach, let's talk a bit more about what all went on at Macworld this year.

iPhone

The iPhone is here to stay. Maybe not on store shelves right now, but Apple has unleashed this beast to the wild by letting all of us see Jobs' pride and joy. Yes, we have iPhone!

What does this all mean for Mac users? I have a few points I'd like to elaborate on. First, the iPhone is another step following the iPod, and a big one at that. To clarify, if people were upset and downright scared that the iPod was going to steal thunder from the Mac with the insane success it has endured the last few years, those people have even more reason to be scared now. The iPhone is a major undertaking and will have a huge impact in many markets. Whether or not it will revolutionize and change my world, I don't know. I do know that it will most likely gain in popularity over the next few years as features are

added and the price drops. Second point simply being that several Mac related products should benefit from technologies developed for the iPhone, so it should be an interesting ride.

For those that did watch the keynote, when Jobs demoed the device, we heard a cool ringtone. As luck would have it, someone on the net has taken the time to edit the keynote coverage to provide just the iPhone ringtone.

Developers Cry Out for iPhone

Apple has specifically locked developers out from the iPhone, at least for the immediate future. Jobs' even went on record saying that rogue software on the iPhone could bring down the Cingular network and that users wouldn't want to put just any old software on their phones. These just are not good enough reasons, I'm sorry Steve.

The iPod is a closed platform device and there have been several arguments made for/against this strategy over the last several years. Developers can't create software for the iPod, but that doesn't seem to be as big a deal as being locked out of the iPhone. The iPhone is running a smaller version of Leopard, due out sometime this spring. This means that developers could get extremely creative and deliver robust applications to satisfy many needs. However, Apple has so far remained firm in its decision to lock developers out from the iPhone. In time, we might see a SDK for the iPhone, allowing developers to create applications for the device, but I believe that will be several months out, if ever.

Apple TV

The Apple TV was officially released at Macworld this year, sporting some nice features and tech specs. I have read several articles by people who strongly state that they will wait for a second generation of the device that might support new features. However, I think that the version being offered right now is a good value. A lot of other people seem to agree as well since the Apple TV is now the top seller in Apple's Online Store, out ranking iPods. And it's not even shipping yet.

iLife, iWork, Leopard

I was under the impression that there would be the normal updates to both iLife and iWork this year, with a more in-depth preview of Leopard. However, none of these titles were even mentioned at the conference this year. There have been reports that all three titles were delayed to further integration between one another and the iPhone. That will be fine with me as long as it is indeed worth the wait.

Objective-C 2.0

If you haven't read up on the awesome features that are slated to be released in Leopard, you need to take the time and read, for pure enjoyment. However, if you are a serious Mac developer, you especially need to take the time to visit the Leopard area on ADC and learn more about XCode 3.0, the new Interface Builder, XRay, and Objective-C 2.0

Objective-C 2.0 has a few features such as fast enumeration and garbage-collecting that will be cool, but one feature that I really like so far is properties.

Properties will work like key-value coding should have worked from the start. I say this simply because I was new to Cocoa and this was one point that has got on my nerves in the last few months. Properties solves that.

Properties allow you to define what instance variables your object will contain, without having to write special (and repetitive) accessor methods for each one. While there are applications available that will generate this code for you, I don't see why we even need to have it in the first place, if it can be generated that easy. Someone at Apple had the same thought and came up with properties.

Of course the drawback here is going to be backwards compatibility and there will be plenty of cases when you need to write your own accessor methods for situations that a basic setter/getter won't do. But properties promise to clean up our code a lot in Leopard and looking forward. Hey, less code, less mistakes. Sounds like a plan to me.

Contact Info

You can always send me an email at

mbrewer@maccompanion.com or visit my website at <http://www.macfanatic.net> for more information about me and my ramblings. I also produce a weekly audio podcast taking an in-depth review of cool and new Mac applications, along with tips, tutorials, and developer interviews.

Did you attend MacWorld Expo – 2007 or earlier - and want to share your perspective of the show? Send us feedback at Feedback@maccompanion.com.

macCompanion Editors



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Rick Sutcliffe

By Rick Sutcliffe - February 2007

Slightly louder than the sound of one hand clapping but not quite the butterfly on the wing that generates the tornado, a slight trill of sound on the air snapped my attention from cleaning up my Ajax project a fragmentary moment before the chair behind me creaked tellingly.

“Hi, Nellie. What’s up?” No one else would breeze into my office unannounced.

“Mind if I have a couple of squares of that white chocolate your wife sent in your lunch? Without awaiting an answer, she reached over, helped herself, and chowed down. “Ah, good stuff, that.”

As she leaned back, the whisper of sound perambulated into proper mental register, and I glanced her way, taking in the expected buds, one dangling on her collar so as to free a single ear catch my *bon mots*.

“Playing your iPod kinda loud aren’t you?” I commented. I shouldn’t be able to hear it.

“Might be for an old geezer like you. Seems good to me.” She grinned and pulled a small box from her pocket.

“Holy moley, Nellie. That’s no iPod, it’s an iPhone.”

“A brilliant observation,” she commented laconically, adding, “No one says ‘holy moley’ any more, Professor, ‘ceptin’ the 1940s characters in your books.” She unplugged her remaining bud and handed it over for inspection.

“Where’d you got one of these, kiddo? They’re not supposed to be out in the wild for another six months yet.”

She returned a feral grin. “An iHacker has her iSources.”

“And enough iClout to get her iWay, iGather.”

“Not half funny enough to iLaugh,” she retorted.

I turned her prize and watched the screen flop, then iTriggered a few iButtons.”
“Well, it’s pretty enough,” I offered, “but does it match the Treo 700 you were carrying last week?”

“Are you kidding? This puppy’s way cooler.”

“Functionality?”

There was a long pause, and she flushed slightly before admitting, “Not quite there yet.”

“Not enough software?”

“What it has is stone cool, but me and my buds brainstormed this thing last night and came up with a dozen new ideas before two in the morning, not counting all the stuff that just plain ain’t there yet.”

Nellie’d told me about her friends. One married couple were former industry hotshots now living green under culverts in Munich and working on open source projects using public library terminals. Another was a renegade hacker who specialized in mailbombing spammers using their own zombie networks who operated from a nondescript backwoods shanty a couple of kilometres outside Spuzzum. A third was a innocuous department store furniture saleswoman by day whose night hobby was breaking into corporate systems and leaving behind messages recommending security services that retained her sub tabula as a consultant for a cut of the action. Throw

in the ten-year-old girl in Turkistan and her Bulgarian partner-cum-Baptist pastor that design high security money machines for the former second story man turned bank president who.... Well, you get the idea.

“You don’t look too happy about it,” I responded to her frown. Nellie was never one to hide her feelings.

“Hmmmph,” she snorted, steeling herself to critique her new toy. “You know the real bottom line on these gizmos?”

“You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.”

“She winced at my quoting Austin’s ‘Mr. Bennet’.

“It’s the coolest consumer toy ever, and iSteve’s projection of a one percent market share is low by three. Every other cell phone company exec oughta be shaking in her iBoots. Not only that, Apple Inc. will sell more computers than Apple Computer ever did. Seventy-eight percent increase in profits up to a billion smakerinos. AppleTV. Leopard coming to desktops in a month or two. Beatles music deal pending. Widescreen iPod you didn’t hear about from me. Watch the Super Bowl commercial. Near immune from viruses. Be in third place afore long.”

“But?” I encouraged in the teeth of her shotgun pellet words.

“I can live for a while with the puny memory levels, no removable storage, and sans a lot of the usual smartphone goodies, but he don’t give us an SDK and it’s a programmer’s iDoorstop,” she averred.

“That bad?”

“Ah,” she tossed her head and held out her hand for the toy. “Me and my friends’ll fix it. If Apple won’t publish a software developer’s kit so’s we can program this mother, we’ll bring one out ourselves. They ain’t gonna iSteve us with a closed box no one can program.”

I grinned. This from someone who boasted to me back in the 80s she could break into any computer in the world. I recalled believing her then and suddenly felt sorry for anyone trying to stop such elemental forces of nature.

“How long will it take you?” I mildly enquired.

“I dunno. Maybe a few months. Longer to get some useful software running on the platform.”

“A good book reader?”

“Among other things.” She was suddenly as coy as an iNdustry executive being quizzed over iSecrets. “We have a list.”

I was about to make a point when she waved me to silence, then shot me another grin. “You’re going to warn me I can’t fight the phone company any more than I can City Hall. She looked at my screen to see what I was typing. “You just write that the phone company is facing a Cingularity if they mess with us.”

I spotted a few scratches on the case. “You’ve had it apart.”

She shot me a withering look.

“Of course I pried it open. Wha’d you expect? Miss nice Nellie? I got consulting contracts with a battery company, remember? They specialize in replacements for non-replaceable cells.”

I snorted and changed the subject. Nellie had contracts with everybody, spies everywhere. “Impressions?”

“Nicely engineered. Runs Leopard. I’ve barely got a dozen things on my list of suggested improvements.”

“Think the Cisco lawsuit over the name will get anywhere?”

“Nah. Them Cisco kids are riding a nag. Better to send lawyer Pancho out for a few chips and chill over a Jolt and pizza. Apple could change the corporate name to iApple, and sell iNear, iAnything iT iWanted. Any judge worth her wig will know iSteve pretty much owns the iNameSpace. Cisco is iToast.”

“What of pundits’ predictions the iPhone foreshadows the next generation of iPods?”

“Undoubtedly. Tear out the phone guts and pop in a disk drive, and you’re away to a hundred gig concert.”

“She tossed off the newest double entendre without blinking, scarcely expecting it to move me. After all, no pun intended.

“Is it potentially the PIEA?”

“The ‘Personal Intelligence Enhancement Appliance’ you write about in your science fiction? Not yet, but once ordinary phreaks like me can write programs for this baby, it’ll get most of the way there.”

“Except for the terabyte memory it needs.”

“Give it a couple of years.” At that pronouncement, her eyes glazed over and she adopted a light silly grin for a few moments, no doubt inwardly contemplating the esoteric shape of some piece of code she’d recently written, a particularly juicy but now exterminated bug, or a perhaps a delicious upcoming hack. Nellie is not like ordinary people. But who is?

“What’s the book,” she enquired when she snapped from her trance.

It was lying open but upside-down on my desk, so she knew I’d been programming--a nasty habit I’d transmitted to her lo those many years ago.

“JavaScript and Ajax, by Tom Negrino and Dori Smith, sixth edition,” she read from the cover, not awaiting my reply. “Hey, the last five editions of their Javascript book never said anything about Ajax.” She pronounced the word without the studly cap in the middle.

“They gotta keep up with the times I suppose.”

She chuckled. “Told you the critics were writing off ECMAScript too soon, that the ol’ girl still had some life in her.”

I nodded at her use of the standards-based name. As I recalled things though, it was I who had tried to persuade her that Java’s pseudo-relative was still worth using, she who’d insisted it was too limited, a dead turkey. But no matter. Google and Yahoo had powerful arguments of their own by way of web products that worked more like desktop applications than browser-centric pages. Nothing succeeds like success, so JavaScript was back big time.

By this time she was leafing through the book. “Some nice material f in here for the beginner,” she observed.

“Yeah, I picked up a few pointers on dynamically including files in pages and scored a few reminders on form handling techniques. Not bad stuff, and their examples are clean, simple, and adaptable. Fact, I used an idea of theirs to add a push-down style option to my dynamic menus script with only another five code lines.”

“You always find errors,” she invited.

“Not many likely in a sixth edition,” I rejoindered, “though the authors do claim an attempted httpRequest to fetch a file from a machine other than the one the script resides on won’t work.”

“It doesn’t?” She seemed genuinely surprised.

I briefly savoured knowing one thing she didn't, however obscure. "Mozilla browsers like FireFox and Camino recognize this as a security issue and generate the exception, but Safari doesn't."

She snapped her fingers. "And you like that because you can test your Ajax pages locally without hitting the server on which you plan to deploy. I suppose you just pop a copy of the files you plan to read into your ~user/sites directory, start up file serving, and browse to that copy using your own IP number. Nice."

Her chain of reasoning was obviously correct, so why comment, even to wit that people rarely snap fingers these days. I also let pass the issue of whether the issue was properly the browser's to handle or should be done server-side, and commented instead on the magazine she had under her arm.

"New Mac Publication you got there?" It looked sleek and expensive, not a rag, but something from the industry's upper echelon, a joint where real money hangs out.

She dropped it on the table. The banner read "Mac|Life premiere issue", and I congratulated myself momentarily on my perspicacity.

"Yes and no", she equivocated. "Used to call themselves MacAddict, and they don't have the guts to fight Apple by using either MaciLife or AppleLife, so they're being coy with the vertical bar. Same gang as before, though."

High praise from Nellie indeed. She had every issue of MacAddict. Come to think of it, so did I.

"Got any last words for our readers, Nellie? Want to tell them what you see in their future?"

She got her faraway look once again, then in a dreamy tone, "I see... I see...a great expanse, a veritable Vista. But it's fading, fading, until...there's nothing but one large red fruit."

--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>

[TheNorthernSpy.com](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>

PopChar: <http://www.macility.com/products/popcharx/>

DragThing: <http://tla-systems.co.uk/>



MacPhobias

By Robert Pritchett

Not to be confused with <http://www.macphobia.org/> or <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Mac-o-phobia>

or <http://del.icio.us/phobia/mac>, but borrowed in large

part from Dennis Sellers article...

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

Were there any phobias experienced at MacWorld Expo? Were there any witnessed at CES? We have seen whole roomfuls of IT-people cringe in the corners as they watched Apple events out of the corners of their eyes, while the Mac-happy folks watch in wonder at past Stevenotes. Since I don't suffer from these phobias, I was totally unsympathetic and laughing my head off when I heard and saw these non-Mac folks quivering in fear, sure they would lose their geek-centric jobs if they even *looked* at the screens of MacWorld events. Incredible. Simply unbelievably incredible!

So the only thing we really have to fear is fear itself. Let's look at some made-up and real phobias. See if you recognize any of these. Perhaps you can add some?

Dennis Sellers (DS) had fun presenting a few of these in his *Video Sandbox* vodcast a while ago:

AdobeUbinaryphobia - the fear that software developers will follow Adobe's direction and develop for the Mactel-only instead of making all products "Ubinaried" (Universal Binary chip independent). (Robert Pritchett – RP)

Analanalysisphobia - a fear of reports of the Apple's demise. (DS)

Dayafterigotmymacthenewonecomesoutaphobia - the dreaded and paralyzing fear that, no matter how long you wait to buy your new Mac, there will be a newer version released just over the 14-day return mark. There's no treatment for this emotional disorder unless you pre-order on the day new hardware is announced and can deal with the fact that it will recur once your shipment arrives. (DS)

Dvorakphobia - the fear of baseless Mac-bashing columns. (DS)

Familysupportaphobia - the growing fear that as more people switch to Macs, you become their tech support (usually accompanied by fauxlemminginia.) Josh Morgan

FauxLemminginia - the fear of others learning that you use a Mac. (DS)

Lamegameophobia - the fear that new games ported from Windows to Macs will stink.

MacFanaticphobia - the real fear that the Mac Fanatics will flame you for "attacking" Apple Corporation missteps. (RP)

Macmalwarephobia - the fear that someday, sometime, someone somewhere, may actually create a real viral attack on Macs! (RP)

Macsectomitis - a fear of opening up your Mac. (DS)

Realitydistortionatonia - the inability to return to the real world after being exposed to Steve Jobs' Reality Distortion Field. (DS)

RTFMophobia - a fear of reading manuals (subcategory: Indexia, the fear of searching for an answer in a manual). (DS)

Steveleavegrievephrenia - a fear that Steve Jobs will leave the company.

Switchophobia - the fear that Mac "elitists" won't be "unique enough" as the Apple Tsunami takes over the computing industry and EVERYONE eventually uses Macs! (RP)

Terminal Terror - a fear of command lines and the Terminal Utility. (DS)

Vistaphobia - the fear that Microsoft's Vista might actually ship with real security this time... (RP)



Macsimum News

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Macsimum News

'Macworld Expo'

By Dennis Sellers - February 2007

Macworld Conference & Expo has come and gone. It was anticlimactic as far as Mac announcements went. Sure, the iPhone was finally and officially unveiled, while more details (and a ship date) for the Apple TV (formerly known as iTV) were given during Apple CEO Steve Jobs' MWSF keynote. But what of all those other rumored products that didn't appear? Here's what I foresee...

iWork '07 and iLife '07 will appear soon. VERY soon. So will new Apple displays with built-in iSights. Eight-core Mac Pros? Spring at the earliest. A tablet Mac and a 12-inch MacBook Pro? I'm dubious that

either will ever appear. (But if you want a tablet Mac, check out the upcoming ModBook, for details, go to <http://eshop.macsales.com/shop/ModBook>).

Updated iPods and revved Macs, as well as other goodies, will appear throughout the year. Then, of course, there's Mac OS X 10.5 ("Leopard"). Look for it no later than May—and with it a big PUSH by Apple.

So why didn't Jobs announce some of these goodies this week? Marketing savvy. He's spreading out a plethora of announcements, and gaining tons of publicity for the company. Just look at the press the iPhone received the day after the keynote. It was on the front page of most daily newspapers (including USA Today), not to mention garnering widespread TV coverage. Heck, Regis and Kelly were talking about the iPhone on their morning show the day after it was announced.

If Jobs had announced a Mac update or revved software, they'd have been lost during the iPhone (and, to a lesser degree) and Apple TV hoopla. Now the products can get their own day in the sun when they make their debut. Still, I have to admit that I was disappointed that there was no "one more thing" product. Oh well, there's always MWSF 2008.



Last Minute Apple News

by Mike Hubbartt

On 1/30/07, Apple began selling new iPod Shuffles - the four new ones are blue, green, orange and pink. No change in price nor capacity - they're still 1GB.

On 1/31/07 several Mac magazines released news that the new 802.11n Airport Express was shipping earlier than expected. On 2/01/07 Apple's website shows the product will ship in 2 - 3 weeks.

As of the morning of 2/01/07, there were no updates on the shipping date for the Apple TV, the iPhone, iLife '07 nor iWork '07. There are, of course, rumors of an early release date (possibly April) for the iPhone.



Magazine Format Changes

by Mike Hubbartt

You've probably noticed this issue of *macCompanion* has undergone a lot of changes in layout and organization. Although we're in our fifth year of publication, we want to improve the look-and-feel and quality of *macCompanion* and aren't finished yet.

Last month we started using sections, and this month we moved the *Mac Security 101* and *According to Hoyle* columns to the Goodies section. We also changed the Columns section to a two-column layout.

This month we used Adobe's InDesign to desktop publish the magazine, and next month we'll review this software. When Adobe releases an updated version of InDesign, we'll evaluate and review it as well.

We want your feedback. Let us know your opinion of the changes at feedback@maccompanion.com.

Oh, and just one more thing. The articles listed on each section page are hyperlinked - click on the title to move directly to the article.

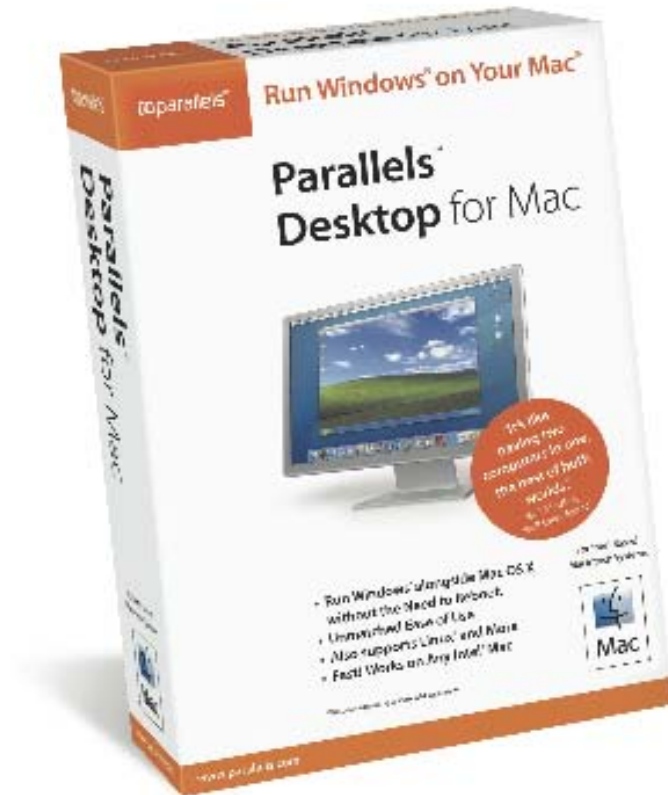
Interested in writing about a hardware or software product for the Mac? *macCompanion* welcomes new writers and invites you to join the ranks of our contributors. Previous journalism experience is helpful, although not a requirement. Interested parties should contact our Editor-in-Chief, Robert Pritchett.

Software

The section 2 software reviews in this issue of *macCompanion* are:

- **AccountEdge 2007** – move over QuickBooks, AccountEdge is making a move for market share, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- **Adobe Acrobat 8** – an in-depth review by Harry {doc} Babad and Robert Pritchett
- **Art Test** – BeLights text artification software, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- **Legion and Cult of Mithras** – an RPG game plus an add-on module, reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie
- **MacForensics Lab** – ANNOUNCED AT MACWORLD EXPO 2007, this powerful hard drive software is reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- **MacJournal 4.1/4.1.1** – an update to Mariner Software’s journal and blogging software reviewed by Mike Hubbartt
- **Visual Hub** – easily convert computer video files from one format to another, reviewed by Ted Bade
- **Mathematica 5.2** – Part 1 of a 3-part review on Wolfram Research’s outstanding math software, reviewed by Mike Hubbartt

The first solution
for running Windows on Intel-Macs...
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Parallels Desktop for Mac is also available
via direct download at www.parallels.com.
Buy either way for only \$79.99!

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Parallels – award-winning software at MacWorld Expo 2007
<http://www.parallels.com>

AccountEdge 2007 – Business Management and Automated Accounting

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



MYOB US
300 Roundhill Drive, Suite #2
Rockaway, NJ 07866
800-322-MYOB (6962)
1-973-586-0075
sales@getmyob.com

Released: November 28, 2006 Universal Binary
\$299 USD, Upgrade \$159 USD, Additional licenses, \$149 USD. Multi-user,
\$249 USD.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; Mac OS X 10.4 or later for
syncing with Address Book; 40 MB Hard drive space, 35 MB of space per
company file; Internet access; QuickTime 5.0 or later.

Features: http://www.myob-us.com/products/2006_accountedge/new_features.htm

Training Guides: http://www.myob-us.com/moreproducts/training_manuals.htm

Services: http://www.myob-us.com/business_services/

Support: <http://www.myob-us.com/service/>

Payroll: <http://www.myob-us.com/service/payroll/>

Compare to QuickBooks: http://www.myob-us.com/products/dare_compare_ae.htm

Strengths: Syncing. Internet business services. Conversion programs. Great documentation. Good training programs.

Weaknesses: Apparently US-centric. If you want to use the Internet services, it will cost you. Past history of sub-optimal customer support (see **Other**). Multi-user functionality may require tweaking.

Other: Annual fee-based support. Online validation? Still somewhat buggy?

Other Reviews: <http://www.macworld.com/2006/03/reviews/accounting/index.php>

What They Say

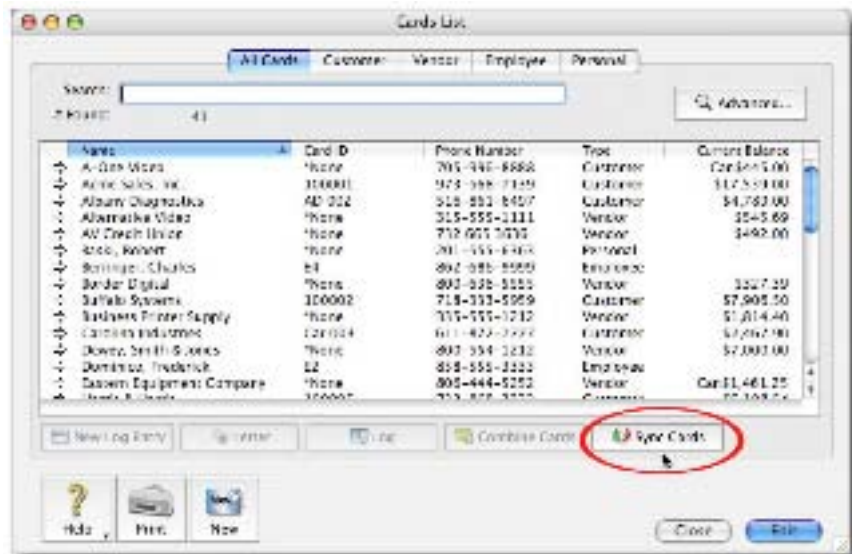
“MYOB AccountEdge is small business accounting and management software for Mac which automates, organizes, and processes all your business tasks and financial information – so you can focus on your business.



Create and track sales and purchases, handle all your banking, process payroll, inventory and jobs, track and bill time, actively manage your customers and access over 200 financial reports to start and maintain a well-organized, successful small business.

AccountEdge for Mac integrates fully with MYOB Business Services, allowing your small business to accept credit cards from your MYOB invoice, offer direct deposit to your employees, pay your vendors electronically, print certified payroll forms, or elect to eFile, and/or sign up for full-service payroll.

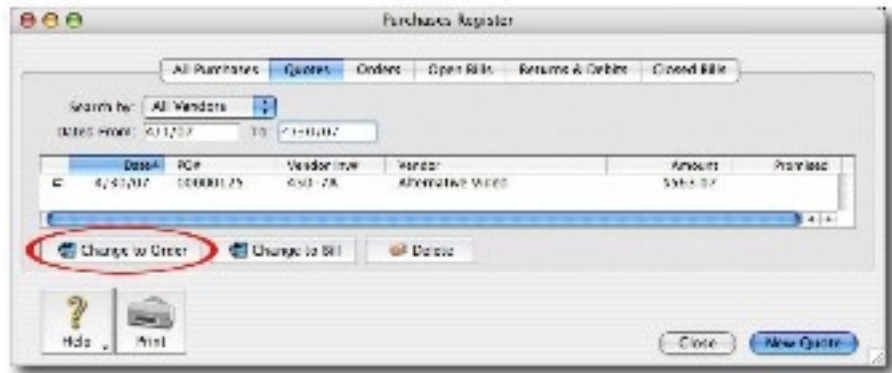
Is it time to share the work? For optimal efficiency over a Mac OS X network, choose AccountEdge Network Edition. The Network Edition has all the features and functionality of AccountEdge, and takes advantage of some key Mac OS X technologies which make it easy and efficient for multiple computers to connect to your company file across a network. AccountEdge Network Edition is OS X compatible only (minimum 10.2.8).”



Card Synching



Reconciliation Management



Purchase Registration

Read the Brochures

- ◆ Accounting 101 – about 14 pages, succinct and to-the-point. “You don’t need to be an accountant to do this.”
- ◆ Getting Started Guide – 38 pages of getting up-to-speed.
- ◆ Support and Services Guide – another 14-pager covering additional services to make you feel professional.
- ◆ Certified Consultant Directory – Need additional training or business setup? Perhaps there is an MYOB certified CPA near you.
- ◆ Order MYOB-friendly stationary – <http://www.myobchecksandforms.com>

Watch the Videos

Synchronizing - http://www.myob-us.com/products/movies/ae/ShowMe/card_sync_mac.htm

Creating a PO - http://www.myob-us.com/products/movies/ae/ShowMe/sales_to_purchase.htm

What I Say

I just came from an Insurance Management application firm that has an Accounting module intended for non-Mac environments. It has payroll, etc. AccountEdge 2007 touches all the bases and from my point of view, does a better job overall. Why? Probably because it uses a relational database intelligently. I was told MYOB uses Ctrieve.



Would you like to get going in business without a lot of hassle on the “finance” side of things?

MYOB made it easy. Almost too easy! Have you

been hobbling along using QuickBooks to run a business? Is *MyBooks* too much to handle? Why not migrate from QuickBooks to AccountEdge 2007? Do you want to “keep score” and have fun in business? Do you have a handle on your Known Financial Position? Have you listened to the *Bare Bones Biz* podcasts?

http://www.barebonesbiz.com/teleconference_series.html

<http://web.mac.com/jonnyg24/iWeb/Site/Podcast/04BE7D4B-0F41-49CC-B515-A4F2123F3656.html>

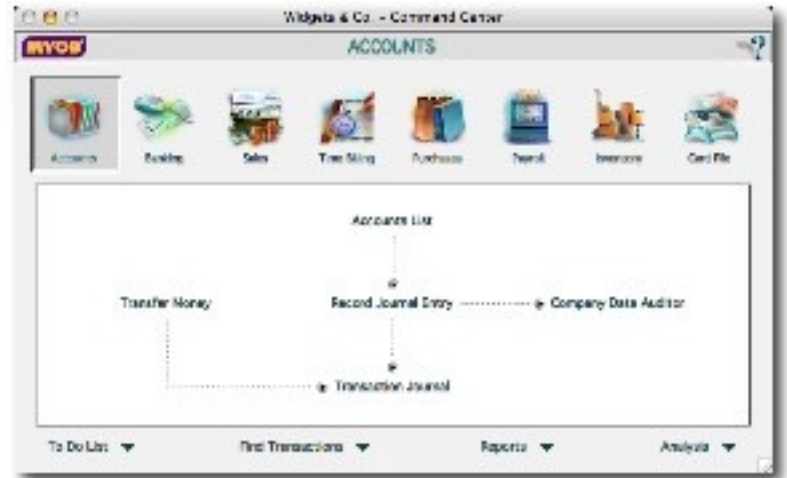
OfficeLink

And I probably can assume that if you are in business, you no doubt are running MS Office. MYOB has added a few OfficeLink templates for MS Word, such as credit applications, a couple of collection notices, “Special Offer” letters, Seven Avery mailing and shipping labels, a Rolodex Avery label, a #10 envelope template and a file folder label.

Accounting

Do you find budgeting to be a challenge? The Accounts Command Center is designed to make that less painful by putting balance sheets in one window and profit and loss accounts in another. Multi-year planning can occur and there is a transaction history that can span seven years.

There is the ability to switch between either cash-based or accrual-method reports. Accounts can be combined. There is also a *Bank Register* and a *Company Data Auditor*.



Sales and Purchases

This is how you “keep score” by using the sales process for entering quotes, orders and invoices. There is even a handy one-button “Create PO” button.



There is also the Purchases Command Center for processing quotes, orders and bills that can also manage 1099 forms.

If customers would like to go “paperless” there is a Batch Email function for delivering invoices and statements or if they still prefer, they can get a regular paper-based copy sent to them, via regular mail.



Forms

AccountEdge 2007 does fill in the fields on forms such as invoices and purchase orders and includes item price level, billing rate, credit terms, income account, shipping method, sales tax percentage, comments, early payment, volume discount or late penalty and the payment method.

Instead of ordering from the MYOB website for business stationary and you would rather use your own logos, etc., there is a *Creative Forms Developer* that can include such things as watermarks, background images logos and borders.

Contact Management

Remember that this app is also touted as a business management tool so it has a contact management module as part of the Card File Command Center. Card designations can contain more than the usual information you perhaps have seen in other contact manager apps. It can include five ship-to addresses with each having three phone numbers, Email address, Web address, and FAX number. And these lists are customizable and searchable.



Inventory

I can remember recently hearing someone from the former software firm I worked for, that offering backorder functionality was “too difficult to implement”. He wasn’t using AccountEdge 2007.

The Inventory modules can provide up to 30 different prices for items, follow build from scratch to finished product, and can even provide visual queues per item with digitized photos. And it automates the backorder process!



To make life even easier using the Inventory Command Center, there is an import inventory journal adjustment to handle counts, opening balances, quantities, transfers between locations and warehouses and auto building adjustments.

What They Say About Inventory

The Items Register creates a backward path showing exactly how current inventory quantities and values originate, and provides running balances for each. This information is invaluable to those businesses dependent on item sales. AccountEdge tracks cash and non-cash inventory movement, letting the user view the details of the transaction. It recaps and reconciles inventory value as of past dates, allows editing and modifying of inventory transfers and adjustments, and includes an Item History report and an Inventory Reconciliation Report.

Receive Inventory

When a shipment of inventory arrives, not all of the goods necessarily come in at once. AccountEdge is ready for this inevitability with the new Receive Inventory function. AccountEdge lets the user place an order, receive inventory against the order, track what inventory is still outstanding to be received and create a bill for the outstanding goods, all while maintaining a connection with the original purchase order.

AccountEdge also allows a negative item count so that items not yet received can still be sold. Items can also be received into inventory before the user knows the item costs.

To create purchase orders faster and more accurately, AccountEdge allows the option to use a standard cost for items rather than the last purchase price to ensure an order is being placed at the correct cost.

Inventory Locations

Whether inventory items are organized by bin, on shelves, or in different warehouses, AccountEdge can keep track of their location. There's no need to create different item codes for each warehouse, and no need to fret over maintaining enough stock; AccountEdge will tell the user how many of each item is in what location. Selling those items from different warehouses or locations is as simple as selecting the origin location on the invoice.

Auto-Build

AccountEdge makes it easy to take one or more inventory items and combine them to make a finished item with the Auto-Build feature.

With Auto-Build, you can have AccountEdge not only combine items to make a finished item, but you can be alerted when the inventory on any part of the whole begins to run low by setting a minimum level. When the inventory level hits the preset minimum, a pop-up warning alerts the user that whatever items have fallen to the minimum need to be replenished.

Payroll

Others work for you because they need to feed themselves and their families. You mess with their paychecks and revolutions take place.

Any accounting package or business management apps worth its salt has a payroll process and AccountEdge 2007 has improved on its legacy with two ways to pay for services; DIY (Do It Yourself) and Full Service Payroll. DIY can either run the entire payroll or do individual checks as well as W-2 and W-3 forms, accrue vacation and sick time, do Direct Deposit, use a Payroll Forms service and tax updates. Full Service Payroll is a part of the Business Services.



If an existing HR service is used, those files can be imported.

There is a payroll preview function either on-screen or in print form.

The Payroll module can set up automatic income, deductions, accruals, employer expense tracking, hourly, salary or commission and other information such as taxes, retirement funds, union fees and can even generate electronic timesheets.

Professional Time Billing

For those who bill by the minute, there is a Time Billing component that is flexible for hourly, non-hourly, chargeable and non-chargeable per activity, client, employee or activity rate with single or multiple time slips and can be tied to an “Include in Employee’s Pay” checkbox. Billable time can be by units of time or measurement. Invoicing can be set up on a time and material basis and activities can be either viewed in detail or as a diary. Jobs can be tracked using the *Job Transactions* report and there is an *Allocation Memo* function that can be tied to transactions.



There is also a *Recurring Transactions List* for handling scheduled bills, invoices, depreciation entries, etc.

Online Transactions

We had an Internet ACH account with a local bank for a while. The bank manager did not know about ACH and we learned together. It cost me quite a bit to get the dongle to use for access and it took over 2 months to get it up and running. It took much less time to take it down – and you can see my discussion of that experience in the “**Credit Checks and Stargates**” elsewhere in this issue of *macCompanion*.

Imagine my surprise when I learned that AccountEdge 2007 has ACH capability as one of the MYOB Business Services and is known as Merchant Account Services!

What is ACH? Think online Automated Clearing House transactions spearheaded via NACHA - <http://www.nacha.org/> for doing electronic payments. MYOB has bought into this service and jumped in with both feet.

Again, Back to What They Say

“Fully integrated with MYOB AccountEdge, MYOB Business Services save time and money, increase the accuracy of transactions, assist in following government regulations, strengthen vendor and employee relationships, and make it easier to keep control of daily business operations. They include MYOB Merchant Account Service, MYOB Direct Deposit, MYOB Vendor Payments, MYOB Payroll Forms Service, and MYOB Full Service Payroll.

MYOB Merchant Account Service

Fully integrated and powered by ACH, the cost-competitive MYOB Merchant Account Service makes it easy to process credit card sales directly from the Receive Money and Receive Payments windows, as well as from an MYOB Invoice. AccountEdge will authorize customer credit cards, track authorization history and record the transaction, with no need to re-enter data.

Customers can directly link to the Payments Gateway from any Internet access point. By entering their User ID and password, the user can check if a payment went through, as well as run reports to see which transactions were sent for a specific day, a handy tool to prevent double-billing an account.

The Payments Gateway also allows for remote credit card processing, a boon for those who work on-site or sell products at trade shows. Phone authorization is also supported with Merchant Accounts, so if a customer's card is declined or there are problems with a businesses' Internet connection, a phone call to the credit card company will provide an authorization number, which can then be manually entered into AccountEdge. Declined transactions can also be retried, deleted, or edited before recording.

MYOB Direct Deposit!

Employees appreciate the choice of having their paychecks deposited directly into their bank accounts, while employers will value the time and effort saved by processing direct deposit transactions directly from AccountEdge.

MYOB Direct Deposit is fully integrated with AccountEdge, and all direct deposit transactions are processed through the software and automatically tracked and allocated. After running payroll, a click of the “I Pay this Employee Electronically” button will call up a list of all electronically paid employees. Check off the employees you wish to pay, and an “Approved” window will confirm transactions.

MYOB Direct Deposit is competitively priced, and payroll no longer needs to be outsourced just to gain the benefit of direct deposit. Direct deposit also eliminates employees' hassle of waiting in line at the bank to deposit a paycheck, and also offers them immediate availability of their funds on the date of pay.

MYOB Vendor Payments

Sure to build better relationships with vendors, MYOB Vendor Payments provides electronic payments to vendors and direct commission payments to a small business owner's sales force, and are automatically included with MYOB Direct Deposit enrollment. The efficiency of paying vendors electronically can help a small business to negotiate better credit terms and discounts, not to mention save time and money spent on writing and mailing checks – just pay the vendor electronically, directly from an MYOB purchase order.”

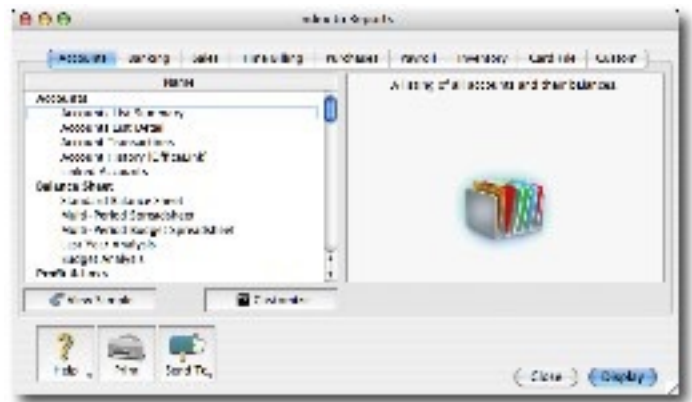
Is this service free? No. Is it worth it? Put an instant “professional” look to your business and your relationships with employees, banks and vendors and what a great way to check credit cards and for customers to do the same with the Payments Gateway. How much is that worth to you?

http://www.myob-us.com/business_services/

Payroll Forms Service - \$79 Single, \$149 Multi-company and \$1.49 per employee for W-2 E-filing. Credit Card Processing – Setup, \$99 USD, Monthly fee, \$14.95 USD, Transaction fee, .25 cents. Direct Deposit – Setup fee , \$79 USD, Application fee, \$50 USD, Transaction fee, .99 cents, Monthly Access fee \$14.95 USD, Rejected Item Rate, \$2.50. Vendor Payments – same as Direct Deposit.

Full Service Payroll - https://myob.surepayroll.com/quote/price_quote.asp

A large part of the Financial Headache is in creating reports so that business regulations at the city, county, state and federal levels are addressed. There are around 200 reports that can be created via the *Command Center* and *Index to Reports*. These can either go to MS Excel or Emailed as PDFs.



And how can we know our financial data is correct? MYOB has a tool called the *Company Data Auditor*. It can be used to troubleshoot problem areas and imbalances and there also is an *Audit Trail Tracker*. Transactions can be turned off and there are a number of other security features designed for your-eyes-only.



The Network version is designed for an Apple network using Bonjour, but the machines need to be using Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later. They recommend Mac OS X 10.4 or later so that the Address Book syncing can be utilized.

One service MYOB provides to help migrate to the Mac is that they provide a free copy of either AccountEdge or Premier Accounting for Windows, if an accountant uses that platform to generate end-of-period or end-of-year reporting activities. MYOB software is cross-platform compatible.

I personally think MYOB can safely say that they indeed today have the “Premium” small business management and accounting package for Mac-based businesses.

Let the app do the busy work, so you can go do what you like to do best – have fun making money and doing business!

Dig Deeper – Other Apps and Comments

<http://www.macintouch.com/readerreports/applications/topic4468.html>

<http://xbrl.org/>

<http://www.appgen.com/aptus/index.htm>

<http://www.cognito.co.nz/>

<http://cutedgesystems.com/software/Luca/>

Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional [AA8 Pro]

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad and Robert L. Pritchett

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



Adobe



\$ 449 List, \$150 Street USD, Upgrade from previous version: \$159, Educational Discount: \$150

Requirements: PowerPC G3, G4, G5, or Intel processors, Mac OS X v.10.4.3, 256MB of RAM (512MB recommended), 1,060MB of available hard-disk space, 1,024x768 screen resolution and a DVD-ROM drive, universal binary.

Audience: All users requiring a powerful and intuitive PDF creation and Manipulation tool accompanied by on-line collaboration features. A *Standard* version for the Macintosh may have been released by the time you read this.

Strengths: The new interface is more comfortable for Macintosh to work with and some of the enhanced features work well for users interested in using AA8 Pro as a review tool. All the items for which I'd previously used AA7 Pro worked correctly, and are smoother in AA8 Pro

Weaknesses: The preferences for this product still look like something an Wintel IT wienie dreamed up, and the combination with its complexity and a lack of any reasonable help files leave the user in a trial and error mode...mostly error. In addition some of the new interface features are counter productive and not intuitive.

Harry tested the software on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8. Robert uses a 1.8 GHz iMac G5 with 1 GB SDRAM. Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.



Experienced Users



New Users

Publisher's Product Description

Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional software enables business professionals to reliably create, combine, and control Adobe PDF documents for easy, more secure distribution, collaboration, and data collection. Combine files from multiple applications, collaborate on documents via e-mail or server, and collect information with electronic forms. Protect sensitive information with passwords and permissions.

Macintosh feature parity in Acrobat 8 now includes many workflow items that will improve the way that professional designers and business professionals, as well as general business users work with the product. Using the “five Cs” (Control, Create, Collect, Collaborate and Combine) as its guideline, Adobe said that features were not only added, but they also responded to the challenge to make the features more understandable and more broadly accessible. Thus, the update enable users of Adobe Reader software (version 7.0 or 8) to participate in document reviews, fill and save forms, and digitally sign documents.

Introduction

As a long awaited update to Acrobat Pro 8 [AA7 Pro] Robert and I jumped at the chance to test this product. We both have been heavy users of AA7 Pro, Robert focusing on the software to prepare macCompanion for web publication and downloads. I, as you know, focusing both on tuning recipes and exchanging complex technical information associated with nuclear waste management.

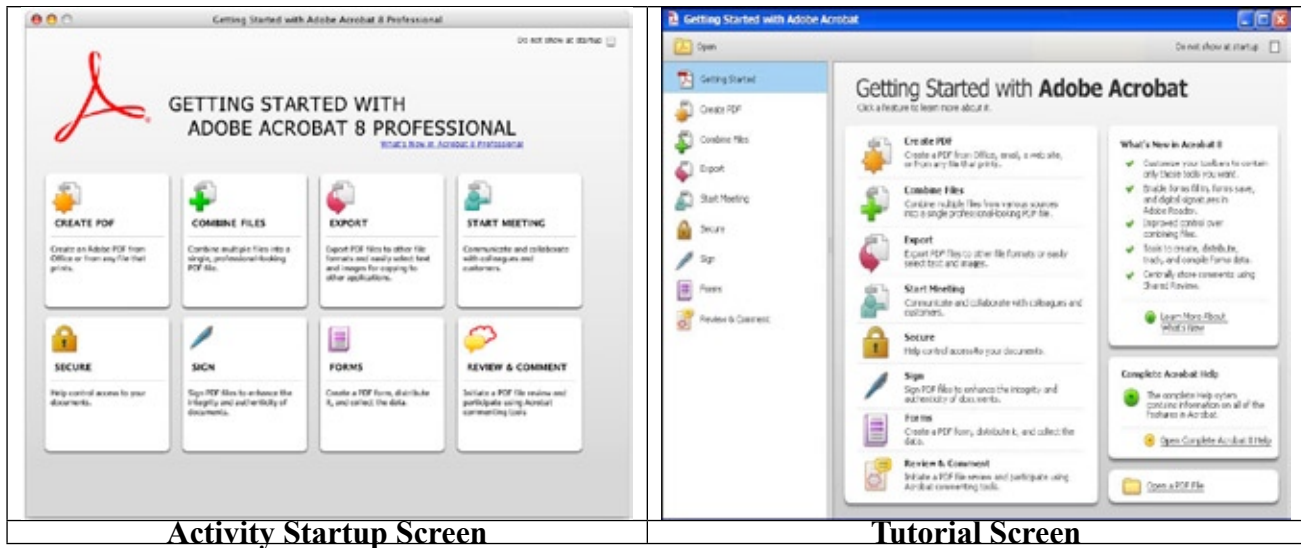
In preparation for the review we accepted the offer of an audio-video conference call where we were presented with the new features of Adobe Acrobat 8 Pro after we had been permitted to work with it for a little while. Prior to being briefed and tutored, we had both worked with the new product for several weeks. Since we weren't sure of how we'd like the new version we both kept AA7 Pro installed on our hard drives {more about the later.]

TIP: In addition to this review in which Robert Pritchett and I share our experiences with AA8 Pro, I have, in this issue of macCompanion, posted a review the *Visual Quickstart Guide for Acrobat 8* ... it's not a missing manual, but does a great job in expanding your horizons on this fine product. I found the guide useful despite having learned to use Acrobat and Acrobat Pro as version 5-7. Their interface, alas, was not conducive to exploration of the earlier version's features. Unlike Robert, I rarely do the PC-Windows thing and then only in MS Word.

Initial Experiences

Installing this application is simple. Open its .dmg, and drag it you're your applications folder. You then go through the registration/installation windows until you've both satisfied Adobe that you're legal, and to cycle through some tutorials if you want to. There is also an opportunity to tweak some preferences, but most of customizing AA8 Pro is done when you want to, as you work. [Harry notes that the new interface is slick...pure Mac – Harry had to initially stop for a minute to admire the new user interface before getting started with it.]

When you first start up Acrobat 8, you meet the new “Getting Started” window, as seen below. It's a minor nuisance to experienced users, but it's easy to get rid of, until its needed again. There is also a tutorial available that will serve to help newer users.



Activity Startup Screen

Tutorial Screen

“The biggest change can be seen when you dismiss this window and look at the screen. In the image below, the top of the image is a screen shot from Acrobat 7. The lower part is a screen shot from Acrobat 8. Notice the difference?”

“Yup, all of the icons and tools that seemed to fill up our screen real estate are now gone. Now, all you see are the menus. While this would normally have elicited bravos and cheers from many users far and wide, alas, these buttons have not gone away, they have just “moved.” [Gary Coyne’s words from AppleLinks, December 24, 2006. http://www.applelinks.com/index.php/more/review_adobe_acrobat_professional_8/]

More on where they’ve go later in this review. Back to our initial experiences.

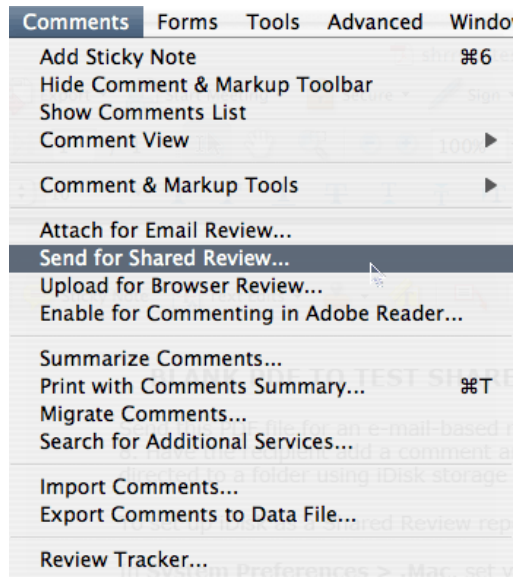
Robert Sez – “Don’t run both AA7 and AA8 on the same machine!”

My initial experiences with AA8 Pro were not positive. AA8 was acting like early beta software for me. The software was slow, and at times prone to crash. I assume, an assumption borne out during my further testing, was that this occurred because AA8 uses the same Preferences and files as AA7 Pro. This allows software function conflicts of sorts to occur and well as the observed noticeable loss of speed for doing things; AA8 Pro crawled when compared to AA7 Pro. I tried to get two issues of *macCompanion* out the door using AA8, but darned if the document links didn’t take forever to get processed within each issue — other actions gave me the dreaded “beachball of death”.

I then was forced to do some checking on whether the performance of AA8 Pro could be improved by de-installing AA7 Pro. [At the time, none of the blogs I checked mentioned this problem.] I detail that effort in the Post Script attached to this review.

What a little bit of scripting can do With AA8 Pro

When I reran the preparation of January issue from MS Office Word to PDF and AA8 Pro ran without a hitch. YEA-AHS! So, what would it have taken for the programmers at Adobe to run a script to look for AA7 and do a *compensating* upgrade, humm? I’ve been struggling with this “non-issue” for nearly 2 months? A clean install was all it took. I’m sure Adobe can’t lay the blame for this problem outside their door this time.



Harry Sez...

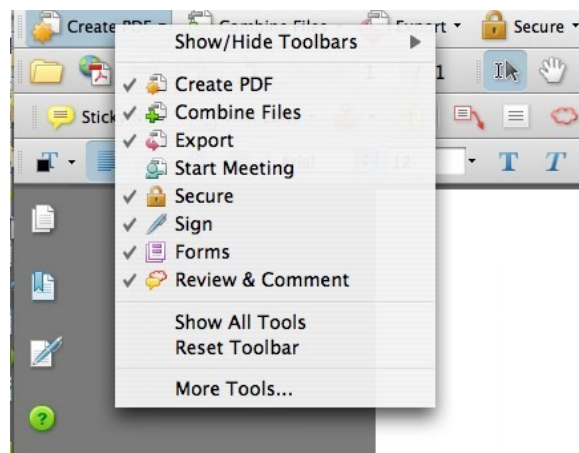
My initial experience was smoother, all the PDF manipulation he tried works and I was able to duplicate all of the items reported in the Internet Recipe Hunting and Recipe Reformatting Tips articles. In addition, I converted several technical paper to PDF from MS Word, as well as practiced commenting on papers downloaded from a technical conference website, papers I was the designated reviewer.

Indeed, the interface was so smooth, that I even starting working with forms, a new experience. Creating active forms including those that can be worked by Acrobat Reader turned out to be easy, as was modifying and accessing a scanned form so that it could be filled in using the *Form Menu tools* including that for *Run Form Fields Recognition* or the *Typewriter tool* feature. During this review, I actually received several forms (meeting registration, product evaluation and one associated with choices for future directions of a group I volunteer from. There were not complicated forms, and I easily converted the scanned PDF to a form I could fill in and electronically return. This is a task I rarely attempted to do in AA7 Pro, and which I'd previously failed.

I de-installed AA7 Pro using *AppZapper*, which seemed to improve performance of AA8 Pro, but had no other affect on the application. I just zapped the application paying no attention to the proposed list delete list, after all, if all went badly, a clean install was always possible. [It was not needed.]

Working With

There are a number of features of the new version that are both strange, useful and others at times bothersome.



Tool Bars Attached to Documents, Yuk — The AA8 Pro toolbars can no longer be docked anywhere but in the window. I preferred the permanently locked under the Menubar. The problem — we'll you open three or four PDFs on a 20" monitor at 100% zoom and see what you get. Isn't it great to see so many toolbars? The workaround, but why should you need one, you can clear this mess by *Show-Hide toolbar* --- F8 or re-access the toolbar via control clicking on a two button mouse. Dear Adobe, this is a Macintosh application, why bring the window interface woes to us?

Easier to Create Live Links for Navigation and Access to the Internet — Capture MS Word or Website Page Contents with active Live Links by using the provided plug-in You can also create Live links in *ordinary* PDF files, to ease reader navigation both with, between individual documents. This feature, for creating hyperlinks to parts of long documents, worked better for me than a comparable capability in MS Word. If word has the ability to hyper link content between documents> I've not found that feature {doc}.

Customizing Toolbars — Hurrah, we can finally customize my toolbars, and have them all in one place; no scattered floating pallets. Now why can't you do the level of customization that you get with Office 2004? Alas, when one clicks on the "master" checkbox for a toolbar, like the Page Navigation Toolbar, you don't automatically select all of the options for that toolbar. Initially you get only what Adobe has decided you the average user should get. To select more individual tools or all tools in a toolbar you check each tool Individually. That's right, do it manually.

Form Design Made Easier — One of the great new features in Acrobat 8 for forms designers is a command in Acrobat 8 Professional called *Run Form Field Recognition*. You simply open a PDF converted from just about any program and select *Forms>Run Form Field Recognition*. Acrobat then magically adds form fields to your PDF file. And it handles the field additions in an instant. *Run Form Field Recognition* does a super job on simple forms and it recognizes most text fields, and adds digital signature fields. However, as has been pointed out by a number of bloggers, the Run Form Field Recognition feature in Acrobat isn't perfect and often misses checkboxes and radio buttons and it really falls apart when trying to recognize fields on complex and graphically intense forms.

Combine and Optimize Documents — Combine documents, drawings, and rich media content into a single, polished Adobe PDF document It's easy to assemble documents, spreadsheets, presentations, e-mails, web pages, forms, CAD drawings, and diagrams into a single Adobe PDF document. Optimize individual and package file size and arrange the files in your preferred order. This holds true regardless of file type, page (paper) dimensions, or orientation. You can embed multimedia, 3D designs, audio, and video into your "super document" package for a richer user experience. The new AA8 62 Pro feature we fully appreciate is the ability to combine (as opposed to doing a merge) supported file formats into a PDF package. You can stitch together a group of documents into a single file and send it around, but each file can be saved independently - nice for portability.

During the packaging process, you can opt to remove headers, footers, and watermarks from the original files and add single unifying identifiers to each page. [We did notice that if you combined a set of documents into a single PDF, the originals disappeared. If this is a problem, the work around, not noted in the AA8 documentation is to *merge* the documents via the insert tool [Document > Insert Pages {Command-Shift-I}]

Smoother and More Fault Free Conversion of Web to PDF — When I converted a complicated web page (capturing two layers) to a PDF file, AA8 Pro was significantly faster than AA8 Pro and it showed fewer error messages in the status dialog box. With the new version, I did not have time to go downstairs and make a cup of coffee {doc}.

More Smoothly Create Adobe PDF Documents — Create Adobe PDF documents with one-button ease from Microsoft Office applications. Windows user, no not Macintosh users, can also create Adobe PDF documents from Outlook, Internet Explorer, Project, Visio, Access, Publisher, AutoCAD, and Lotus Notes.

This limitation is not due to any fault of the Adobe developers. Rather, in Office for Windows, there is a well documented API that allows developers to pass information to Word or PowerPoint to be rendered and produce the export into those file formats for our Windows version of their software. On the Mac, there is no API for Office for Mac; hence this it is limitation that is not easily or safely overcome to produce the comparable exports. Perhaps the new *xml*-based MS Office file format now under development by Microsoft will help on the Mac side, when the next version of Mac Office is released.”

Security Related — Many security aspects of AA8 Pro, according to Adobe, have been enhances to meet industry-specific requirements regarding information sharing. New tools allow users to permanently remove sensitive text, images, metadata, and other information in an Adobe PDF document. As an aside, nowhere in the documentation has Adobe told use what standards were complied with in this new version of Adobe Acrobat 8 Pro. We could not easily check the robustness of the security features for this review. [Robert]

Discomforts and Irritations

Dead Keys, Not the Macintosh Way — The *home* and *end* keys don't work, shame, shame. There are toolbar substitutes for navigation, but that more mousing around. Humbug!

Zoom the Toolbars Change their Appearance and Tool Locations — Every time I change document window size (zoom settings); to minimize the grey spaces on the sides of my screen or make thing easier to read, the customized toolbar items change their position. Humbug, in MS Word no matter how fancy the toolbar, the tools stay in place if you zoom to a large size. [I hate hunting for my favorite tools. The problem is based on the fact that the toolbars are attached to EACH document rather than to the menubar, so when you change magnification items more around {doc}.

Changing Names of Files or Moving Them in Mid-Edit — Don't! Habits die slowly, even good ones. At times because it works so well in MS word, I change the name of a PDF file I'm working with to something more suitable. Alternatively, I move the file into a folder where it belongs, again while it is still open and likely unsaved. *Bad move, doc!* Neither AA7 or AA8 will not allow you to save that file until you've either put it back where it belongs, changed the name back to its original (if you can remember it) or both. Even moving saved files at times breaks the *file path* chain. Is this Wintel thing? Your only option is to force quit the application, losing what ever you've changed and not saved {doc}.

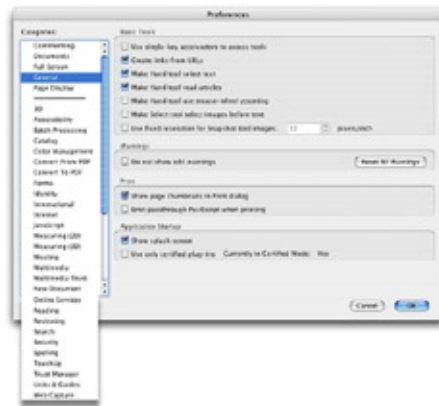
Default Facing Pages View Is (almost) Gone — “The removal of the default Facing Pages view falls into the Ghastly Improvement category. In earlier versions, when you switched to a Facing Pages view setting, you saw the pages correctly laid out; the first page is shown on the right with the pages facing each other in correct sequence. In the new version, the opening page defaults to being shown on the left and the subsequent pages face the wrong recto and verso. For us print-oriented folks, this new view (called Two-Up instead of Facing) is worthless -- we can't check spreads or page balance.” (Susan Glinert Stevens in a CreativePro.com Review).

“Then Susan who reviewed the PC version for CreativePro.com received an email message from Adobe. The message said that said that Facing Pages still exists, but you have to select Show Cover Page During Two-Up from the View/Page Display menu. “Too bad that I have to select this option for *every single document*. It cannot be the default. And why obscure a feature that print production people use all day long? Bah.” Susan's review is at <http://www.creativepro.com/printerfriendly/story/25008.html/>.

Wimpy Help Files — I've reviewed many shareware applications that have more robust help files than this product. Although the help files were 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 the products rich features on the Adobe website, it is not organized in a user-friendly fashion. That's why help files exist {doc}.

Alas for the beginner user, O'Reilly Press will not be releasing a Missing Manual for this product, but the *Peachpit Quick Start Guide*, reviewed in this issue is helpful. Despite interface differences and enhanced features, even the book *How to Do Everything with Adobe Acrobat 7.0* by Doug Sahlin [macCompanion June 2006] was helpful on the occasion I need more information about using a feature in *AA8 Pro*. This is an almost fatal flaw. The help terse, and at times confusing help files provided with AA8 Pro where particularly with respect to the functions of the items in the Preferences Panes.

No, folks, according to David Pogue of Pogue and O'Reilly Press, there will not be a "Missing Manual" book on AA8, so I'm going to have to get another source to learn from.

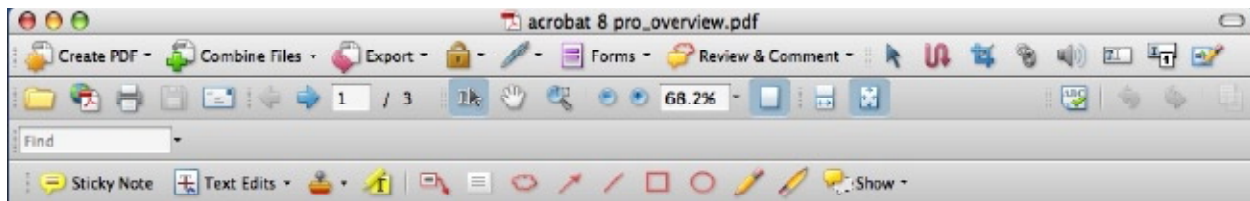


Alternatively, as noted on a recent blog: “At some point, they (*Adobe*) have to restructure the preferences. It’s getting just a little ridiculous. I mean seriously, when the *simplest* settings pane has 2 drop-down lists and 4 checkboxes, and there are *thirty-three separate panes*, you need a redesign.” *John C. Welch* November 26, 2006; <http://www.bynkii.com/archives/2006/11/> {doc}

Missing Features That We'd Relish - Sez Harry

Create New/Added Keyboard Shortcuts — Users need a way to create keyboard shortcuts for AA8. Apples preferences based tool [Keyboard & Mouse > Keyboard Shortcuts] doesn't work and I've not yet tried any of my other macro tools. My, needs are simple [e.g., Command-Shift E to export a pages from a file.]

Relocating Tools on the Toolbar — Hurrah, I can finally customize my toolbars, and have them all in one place; no scattered floating pallets. But I'd really rather have the flexibility I have in MS Office. I want to be able to actually move individual tools in the {collection of) toolbars, to group them my way – they way I use them. [Specifically, I want the Hand, Select, Touchup Text and Touchup Objects tools together. That's the grouping I use for editing PDF files.] Such a tool relocation feature is a normal part of MS Word; if Microsoft can do it surely Adobe can too. And if I want to enhance my toolbars, in a manner different from Adobe's default tools group setting, this must be done manually, adding one tool at a time to an individual toolbar [Tools > Customize Toolbars...].



Macro Tools for Repetitive Editing Actions — MS Word allows this as does Excel. Need we say more?

Conclusions

Every new version of Acrobat redefines the Adobe approach to the user interface, file format choices and editing capabilities. But all the changes are not always for the better. Yes, had I an available preview copy of this program for testing, as a user (not a reviewer) prior to making a purchase, I would likely upgrade my AA7 Pro, despite many of the disappointments Robert and I found and shared in this review.

For most users the fact that AA8 Pro does not integrate well with the Macintosh Version of Microsoft Office 2004 is troublesome, but there are enough workarounds so that is not a fatal flaw. As previously mentioned, it's an MS API problem.

More broadly, for composing long PDF packages in an office that requires security and wants to use the new digital forms, do document peer reviews, Acrobat 8 Pro is a solid and useful tool. Using AA8 Pro's Combine and Optimize documents features was also a pleasure, particularly the new ability to create "super document" packages. It is also the best tool I {doc} found for editing or enhancing PDF's created by others or downloaded from the Internet. However, it's an expensive overkill if you only seek to create short documents to PDF files.

Finally from a Macintosh users perspective, although "there are some very good to excellent feature updates in Acrobat 8, as noted by AppleLinks' Gerry Coyne. However, they are shrouded by an interface that gets in the way more than it welcomes you in." [http://www.applelinks.com/index.php/more/review_adobe_acrobat_professional_8/]

PS:

Robert Shares the Price We Pay Installing and Uninstalling AA7/8 Pro Files

To determine where the source of my initial problems were I did some uninstall, reinstall tests on AA7 and AA8 Pro, I first used Adobe Acrobat 7 Pro's uninstaller and found 163 items that were either removed or were supposed to be installed and weren't.

REMOVED: /Users/rpritchett/Library/Application Support/Adobe/Acrobat

REMOVED: /Applications/Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional/Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional.app

REMOVED: /Applications/Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional/Acrobat Distiller 7.0.app

REMOVED: /Applications/Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional/ReadMe.html

File not present: /Applications/Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional/ReadMeJ.html

File not present: /Applications/Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional/ReadMeCT.html

File not present: /Applications/Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional/ReadMeCS.html

Sample of Files Deleted

When I checked the contents of the AA8 package installed on my computer, I noticed that many of the files in AA8 were identical to AA7. After de-installing AA7, I checked the AA8 folder and saw the AA8 app itself was missing in action, again, a curious thing, but I ran the AA8 uninstaller anyway. It's a test, isn't it?

Ahah! By the length of this uninstall log, I could see that the files that *did* appear in MS Office 2004, the PDF tools, were somehow linked through AA7 instead of AA8. Like these were the cause of my problems. I could *reinstall* AA8 and see if I could get a better response from the new software on my machine.

The installer asked if I wanted to include the extras, such as the toolset in MS Office, the Adobe PDF Printer and the PDFViewer Safari plug-in. I didn't remember seeing this *Install Extras* window the first time, but it must have been there, right? And of course, all Microsoft apps had to be turned off for AA8 Pro to install correctly.

I reran the January issue converting it from MS Office Word to PDF and it ran without a hitch. YEA-AHS!

Art Text 1.0.3

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Odessa, Ukraine

info@belightsoft.com

<http://www.belightsoft.com/products/arttext/overview.php>

Released: December 29, 2006

\$30 USD for Pro or Free for the non-Pro version.

Download: <http://www.belightsoft.com/download/download.php>

Tour: <http://www.belightsoft.com/products/arttext/samples.php>

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later.

Strengths: Quick-and-easy “instant” artification of text.

Weaknesses: Some issues were resolved with the update. Otherwise, I found no weaknesses during my review.

Belight Software’s apps are always a delight and each app and release just keeps getting better!

Here we were thinking how we were going to update our website navigation buttons, etc. and so we began playing with 3D and foreground reflections. After spending a lot of time using Carrara Pro 5 (<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/May2006/Software/Carrara5Pro.htm>) that offered beautifully rendered landscapes and fantastic reflections and lighting options and even movement, it was just too much detail over substance (the old elephant gun shooting the gnat scenario), and then BeLight came to our rescue.

Over the years, there have been similar programs that tweak and manipulate text and there are even some attempts in MS Word to play with 3D, but BeLight made the process amazingly fun to use and to export. The Tour link shows how they implement Vector transformations and Bezier splines, fills, outlines, gradients, textures, shadow and glow effects and shading.

There are also around 300 pictograms that come with the program.

If you go to our website, you will see the text format we would “logically” pick, since we are Pro Mac.

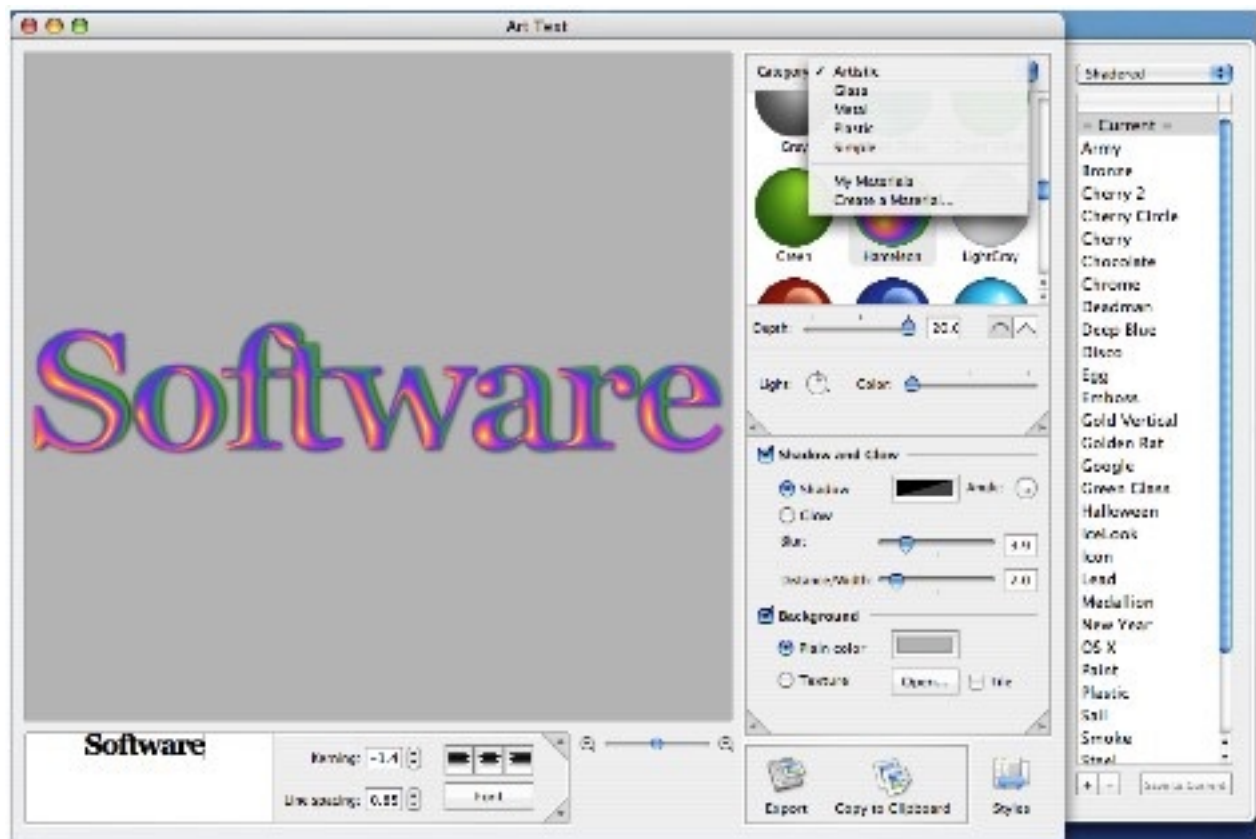




Instead of

we went for

Disco was more reminiscent of what we had before with our earlier fruity theme, but the Mac OS X typestyle gave us the more mature, professional look. We also used it for our new section banners with backgrounds. Below is the Artistic “Hameleon” style with a grey background.



If we really wanted to “roll our own”, that capability is available. We could actually add our own images and play with text decorations, if we so desired. But there are over 50 or so pre-designed styles to choose from! It’s almost like walking into a candy store. Those typestyles can be adjusted as well and/or shaded with the looks of glass, metal or plastic and use around 20 adjustable vector shapes or splines. The best part? They are all exportable to either files or the Clipboard in just about any graphic format supported by Mac OS X. Talk about instant gratification!

Installation was a breeze and I was productive within minutes.

So go get your art deco on and turn text into art with Art Text. BeLight. BeHappy! BeProductive!! And have a lot of fun doing so.

Disclosure: By the way, we are a BeLight Software affiliate. We like their apps so well, we put our money where our mouth is.

Legion Arena and Cult of Mithras

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie

Freeverse

Legion Arena: \$39.95 USD

Cult of Mithras: \$14.95 USD

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

For RPG (Role Playing Game) fans.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later, 1GHz or faster Intel or PPC processor, 1GB on the hard drive, 256MB RAM, 32MB video RAM.

Note: Cult of Mithras is an expansion of Legion Arena and requires that game to run.

Strengths: Good graphics, sound and theme music, even on a g4 iBook.

Weaknesses: Can get repetitive after 30+ battles.



I'll say this first. If you're not a fan of RGP games and violence, then don't bother getting this game. But if you like RPG games and Roman War history, then this is the game for you.

Legion Arena is an RPG based game that puts you in the role of the leader of an army. You have a choice between the Roman Empire and the Celtic army. There is a tutorial army that lets you get used to the controls. After you start a campaign you get a main screen, where you heal troops, purchase troops, promote your men and give them upgrades (better armor and weapons.)

You can purchase range soldiers ranging from light infantry to heavy cavalry. There is a wide range of forces you can use to conquer your enemies. When you go to the battlefield, you get to organize the army on the battlefield to fight the enemy forces. Different kinds of soldiers perform differently in different terrain, so you have to figure them out over time. Choose how your forces will fight and when they will charge, and don't forget to watch your back when your army attack the other force.

Something I found after a while was this game can get very repetitive. Others may disagree, but after 30 battles things can get boring. That may be because this isn't entirely my type of game. Anyway, the graphics are quite good even when they are played on a G4 iBook, and the sounds and theme songs are good too.

Freeverse released an expansion pack for *Legion Arena* called *Cult of Mithras*, but I wasn't too impressed with it. It only gives new troops for the Celtic and Roman campaigns. There were no new campaigns, but the armies you get look pretty cool. They are ghosts and ghouls and stuff like that.

Overall, this was a pretty good game and is ideal for the history buff and RPG game player you know. Nice job Freeverse!

MacForensicsLab 2.0 Computer Forensics from the Mac

By Robert Pritchett



29411 Kohoutek Way
Union City, California 94587
1 (510) 675-0681
Fax: 1 (510) 868 3407
<http://www.subrosasoft.com>



\$996 USD

Released: January 2006.

Free Trial: <http://www.macforensicslab.com/MacForensicsLab.zip>

Requirements: Recommended - Mac OS X 10.3 or later; 512 MB RAM; DVD-ROM drive, with the faster systems being better. For law enforcement and computer forensics professionals.



Forum: <http://www.macforensicslab.com/bulletinboard/>

Case Logs & How-To's: http://www.macforensicslab.com/mfl_reporting.html

Sample Report: <http://www.macforensicslab.com/samplereport/>

Forensics Acquisition: http://www.macforensicslab.com/mfl_acquire.html

Data Recovery: http://www.macforensicslab.com/mfl_salvage.html



Strengths: Finally, an "All-in-One" Computer Forensics solution that is Mac OS X-based.

Weaknesses: None found.

Other Reviews: <http://www.user-groups.net/news/MacForensicsLab.html>
<http://www.versiontracker.com/php/feedback/article.php?story=20060828014859723>

What they say

SubRosaSoft.com Inc., a software company focusing on system utility and data recovery software, is proud to announce at Macworld 2007, the availability of MacForensicsLab version 2.0. MacForensicsLab is a complete suite of forensics and analysis tools in one cohesive package. Designed as a Universal application supporting both PowerPC- and Intel-based Macintosh computers, MacForensicsLab version 2.0 supports forensic activities on a wide array of computing platforms and storage devices.

MacForensicsLab is the first all-in-one, easy-to-use forensics software suite for Mac OS X. The Mac has always been a powerful tool for creative professionals. Now with MacForensicsLab, the Mac has become a powerful tool for the forensic investigator.

“With unrivaled stability, security and ease of use, Mac OS X is the world’s most advanced operating system,” said Ron Okamoto, Apple’s vice president of Worldwide Developer Relations. “We’re thrilled that SubRosaSoft has announced a Universal version of Mac Forensics so forensics scientists can take advantage of Mac OS X and the power of our Intel-based Macs.”

Not only will MacForensicsLab gather and report evidence, now it can help the investigators find the specific type of evidence they’re looking for. MacForensicsLab 2.0 features a new tool for filtering pictures with skin tones. It can also filter possible Social Security and credit card numbers. This will enable investigators to pinpoint evidence with ease. MacForensicsLab is already the fastest software for acquiring and recovery of data. The new version further cuts down on time by allowing investigators to perform multiple tasks at once. For example, a user can acquire a disk, salvage a disk image for files, and catalog another disk all at once.

With MacForensicsLab, now forensic professionals have the power to explore any device without the risk of being vulnerable to dangers that would affect a PC.

With all these powerful features, MacForensicsLab makes the Mac the perfect platform for any forensic investigation. A native application for for Mac OS X, MacForensicsLab includes features that give a user excellent flexibility and control in data analysis, evidence retrieval, and facts reporting. MacForensicsLab is designed to support forensics activities on Macintosh, Windows, and Linux based computers and storage devices. This new version offers a large array of advanced features no other forensic software does.

Detailed documentation is automatically created while you are performing your forensic examination. Logs are kept of every action performed, every item found, and freeform notes taken during the case, to tie them all together with your thoughts on the process. These can then be exported in a standardized, customizable, easy-to-share, template-driven, HTML report either at the end of, or during the investigation.

Evidentiary integrity is maintained and protected with the utmost care. Duplicates are made at top speed (perfect for time sensitive acquisition tasks) with careful consideration for protecting the original media. Backups are made with integrated segmenting, granular hashing, and intelligent media fault management. Inline processing allows the creation of dual output images and associated hash files.

Keyword analysis and cataloging is performed in multiple languages and includes MD5, SHA1 and SHA256 checksum calculations. This allows the investigator to seek out items of interest across entire devices, within folders of files, directly inside specific files.

Data recovery allows forensics professionals to find and recover deleted files and those also embedded - then preview those files within MacForensicsLab. Even swap space and unallocated space can be explored for evidence.

- **Safety first** - MacForensicsLab takes the utmost care to ensure the integrity of your evidence. DiskArbitration can be disabled at the click of a button to ensure Mac OS X does not try to mount (and thus alter) the suspects hard drive. Bootable CDs are available for both Intel and PowerPC Macintosh Computers.
- **Detailed Logs** - Every action taken whilst using the software is recorded in highly detailed logs to provide the investigator with as much information as possible when reporting. Freeform notes can be created at any stage and in any context to tie actions to impressions during the process.

- **HTML Case Reports** - A combination of data from the case manager and log files (chronology, salvage, analyze, acquisition, catalog, bookmarks, notes) can be exported in standardized, easy-to-share HTML reports for viewing in any web browser.
- **Flexible Hashing** - Data Acquisition processes include MD5, SHA1 and SHA256 hashes. Hashes can be created for files and folders at the click of a button.
- **Recovers evidence after a disk or device has been formatted** - Got an initialized disk or other device that had files you want back? MacForensicsLab will recover your files, search for keywords, and allow analysis from the newly initialized drive.
- **Recovers evidence from corrupt media** - Corruption does not detain MacForensicsLab. It will process any intact data on the disk and recover keywords and whole or partial files wherever they are found.
- **Works with media from other operating systems** - MacForensicsLab is able to perform data acquisition and analysis on drives from MS Windows, Linux, and other operating systems.
- **Provides very quick and easy ways to bookmark evidence** - with “Browse”, MacForensicsLab allows the digital forensics investigator to sample files in native view whilst traversing an entire directory structure.
- **Dual bootable DVD** - MacForensicsLab can now be purchased as a dual bootable DVD that is ready for both the older PowerPC and the newer Intel based apple Macs.

What I say

It took a long time to bring together a toolkit for the Mac that is designed to work on drives from all computer systems. Now it's here. Previously there was a conglomeration of various tools that would work on some systems, but not others or were obviously platform-specific.

The DVD provides 2 disc images when loaded; PPC and Intel. The DVD comes in a box that has the serial number inside a velcroed front cover. The instructions for use is a 124-page *MacForensicsLab: The Complete Forensics Suite for Mac*, which is essentially a book on Computer Forensics and discusses disc arbitration, write blocking, clearing work drives, handling and managing cases devices and disc images drive partitions and media as well as how to handle faulty devices, cataloging, filtering and importing custom databases and that is before even getting into analyzing the data. But there is more, obviously, such as salvaging headers, file types and scanning, exploring the directory structure, building reports and garnering information from logs. There are also five appendices on menu shortcuts, a glossary, log file formats, where to get more information and the software license agreement.

From other reviews I've read, this app does more than any disk recovery program can do, but you need to be patient with some of the work it does in acquiring information from Linux, Mac or Windows-based systems.

There is a salvage function for recovering lost or deleted files from just about every computer-generated media known to man.

We provided the web-based links above, that SubRosaSoft so thoughtfully organized on the MacForensicsLab website.

Bookmarks can be established when browsing and categorizing evidence and these are captured in logs to keep the electronic papertrail viable. If you really want to get into Computer Forensics, you will need some hardware. I would recommend the Forensics kits that WiebeTech offers, while waiting for an all-in-one solution from SubRosaSoft.

There are 10 areas in the Lab; Case Management, Main, Logs, Acquire, Catalog, Analyze, Salvage, Browse, Notepad and Attaching and Detaching Disk Images.

Click the *Write Report* button so this window appears:



Yes, those are slider buttons for thumbnails and Log lines per page.

That is pretty much it. A lot of the tedium to establish a case just got a lot easier to wade through.

Dig Deeper

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

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

<http://computerforensics.99er.net/?POSTNUKESID=98f3c1e5f9e3d14e3ba3deff3db40db9>

<http://www.shadows.com/tags/forensics>

MacJournal 4.1/4.1.1

Reviewed by Mike Hubbartt

www.marinersoftware.com

\$34.95 USD (Download Edition),

\$39.95 USD (Boxed Edition)

\$13.00 USD Printed Manual

Released: 1/17/2007

System Requirements:

Mac OS 10.3.5 or later

Mac OS 10.4.X for audio feature support

Universal Binary.

DVD-ROM or CD-ROM



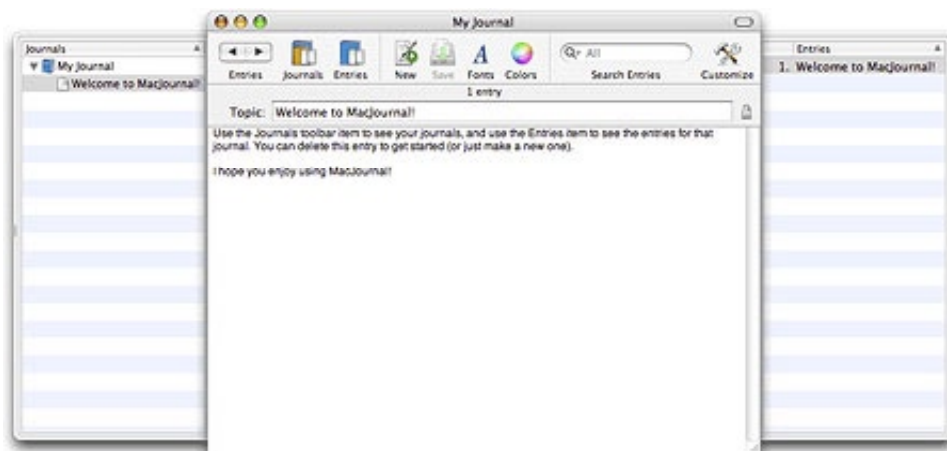
Strengths: intuitive, reasonable price, supports .mac syncing and a mature product.

Weaknesses: None

For years, aspiring writers have used journals to record thoughts and ideas for novels and short stories. Keeping a journal not only keeps those earlier experiences available for later review, it also forces the writer to do what they should: write. I've kept journals for many years, and read some of them when I need specific details or feelings when working on a story. So when I heard Mariner Software gave a sneak peek of MacJournal 4.1 at Mac Expo, I wanted to see if they improved it or just fixed a few bugs. Apparently they did both.

MacJournal, as the name implies, is product you can use to create a journal, and you can use it for blogging and creating podcasts. All three areas are improved in version 4.1. MacJournal supports .mac syncing, so you can access your journal on the road as well as at home. To do so, just select Entry -> Share -> .mac, and you're good to go. Syncing with .mac may be the reason some choose to upgrade to version 4.1, but there are other valid reasons to consider. For blogging improvements, you can now send multiple blog entries to a blog server in one session. For people using this product for creating podcasts, Mariner improved the audio recording capabilities.

Version 4.1 now spell checks content in the Topic field in version 4.1, adds a plug-in to better integrate MacJournal content with Blacktree's application launcher, and displays nested journal entries. And MacJournal will log into google when you want to post on blogger.com.



There are a number of bugs fixed in this version:

- Exporting allows greater control over the output, especially metadata. Now can specify plain text encoding.
- Fixed a potential crash communicating with the OS over data syncing.
- Fixed a bug exporting a single journal to individual HTML files.
- PDFs are now treated like non-image attachments when exporting to HTML.
- Deleted entries and journals will now end up with representations in the Trash.
- Fixed a crash using the “Open in New Tab” menu item.
- Improved appearance of selected text in Full Screen mode when using colors like white-on-black.
- Making an entry uneditable while there are unsaved changes will save the text first.
- Fixed an error that could show a QuickTime alert message when appending a recording to another.
- The Activity window can now be used to cancel blog sends and receives.
- The Quick Note window accepts Command-Return.
- “Lock after idle” preference only considers application activity, not system activities.
- “Send entry to other blog” menu item in the Share menus shows a list of active blog servers.
- Version update checking works on Intel machines.
- Improved Services to support the Opera and OmniWeb browser.
- Removed the unneeded “Blogger” protocol from the list when manually setting up a blog.
- An issue where Movable Type servers incorrectly report MetaWeblog as their server type.

Conclusion: I like this product. It was easy to install and use – I didn’t need to pour over the documentation to figure it out, and I like intuitive software. And while the documentation is not printed, Mariner does offer a hard copy for an additional charge.

And while it isn’t a new feature, I really like the full screen mode. It gets rid of the extra distracting stuff on the screen, letting me focus on writing. Mariner’s Montage also has a full screen mode, and it is a good reason to consider that product if you’re looking for a good scriptwriting program. Speaking of writing, one of *macCompanion*’s writers uses MacJournal to produce his monthly articles for the magazine. Just shows how far some people will go to avoid using MS Word...

Recommendation: This mature product is easy to use and good at keeping a journal or to record your views for your own blog. A good buy and recommended.

Followup:

Mariner released version 4.1.1 shortly after version 4.1, to address some bugs reported in 4.1. It’s good to see a company so responsive to problem solving.

VisualHub

Reviewed by Ted Bade

Company: Techspansion LLC

email: techspansion@mac.com

Company web site: <http://www.techspansion.com/>

Software URL: <http://www.techspansion.com/visualhub/>

Cost: \$23.32 USD - (Don't ask me, they tell me it's a palindrome.)

Download Site: <http://www.techspansion.com/visualhub/tryit.php>

ShareWare Trial Conditions: Limited to 2 minute conversions until unlocked.

System Requirements: Intel or PowerPC Macintosh (Universal Binary); Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later; Hard drive space equal to 0.2 - 3x an original file's size; A DVD burner to burn DVD content (none needed to create DVD content).

Universal code support: Yes

Equipment used for testing: G5/1.8 and Intel Dual core MacMini.

Experience needed: To run the program requires basic MacOS skills. Working with video requires a degree in rocket science.

Strengths: Easy to use interface, included PDF manual answers most questions at the basic to intermediate level. Offers a wide variety of formats to convert to. Generally every operation takes only three basic steps.

Weaknesses: None to mention.

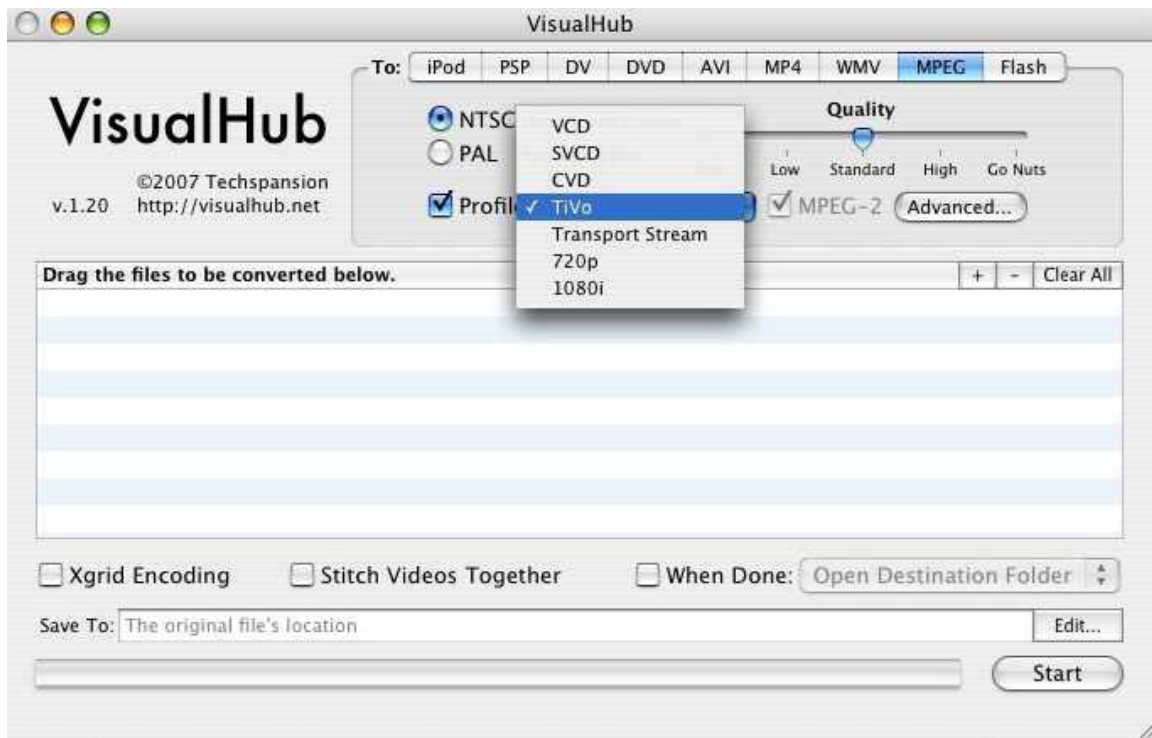


Visual Hub provides features to let you easily convert computer video files from one format to another. It is easy to use, although you should realize that working with video can be time consuming. If you have ever needed to convert a multimedia file from one format to another, for any reason, take a look at VisualHub.

VisualHub can convert video type files between any of the following formats: iPod, PSP, DV, DVD, AVI, MP4, WMV, MPEG, and Flash. It is as simple as drop the file on the VisualHub window, decide what format to convert it to, and press the start button. The VisualHub application takes care of performing the necessary digital magic to make it happen.

The reason why one would want to convert these files are numerous. Essentially, if you have a video file and want to use it in a particular device or with a particular application, you may need to convert it to a format that is compatible before you can use it. Whatever your format need VisualHub can help.

My introduction to VisualHub was as a really slick solution to convert MPEG-2 files that I got from my Tivo, into a format I could use on my iPod. Essentially I just needed to drop the video file onto VisualHub's window, click on start, then sit back and wait. (Note: VisualHub won't convert **.tivo** files to standard MPEG2, that is up to you to do).



VisualHub's default settings will satisfy most people. However, if you are one to tweak a video file, VisualHub does offer some options to modify the conversion. For instance, for the iPod format conversion, you can select to optimize for either the iPod or TV. You can also increase the "Quality" level of the conversion from the standard to a higher quality or a lower quality. There is also the somewhat scary "advanced options" button, that lets you get deep into the video magic process. This area is for experts and magicians only. The warning at the top of the advanced options window warns:

"Don't! You'll screw it all up!"



I won't go into the options present in these advanced windows, mostly because I don't really understand them. Personally, I wouldn't adjust anything in this window. However, if you are familiar with these things, just be aware that VisualHub gives you a lot of power over the conversion process. Each conversion type includes its set of preferences pertaining to that format.

If you are a Tivo user, you may or may not be aware of an ability to move videos from your computer to the Tivo to watch on your TV. These videos have to be correctly formatted before this will work. Of course, VisualHub offers this conversion. You can convert a video file to MPEG and click a button to format it for the Tivo. I tried this feature by taking a video clip I made with my digital camera, converting it to MPEG2, then uploading to the Tivo. Now we can watch the video clip on the TV! Cool beans.

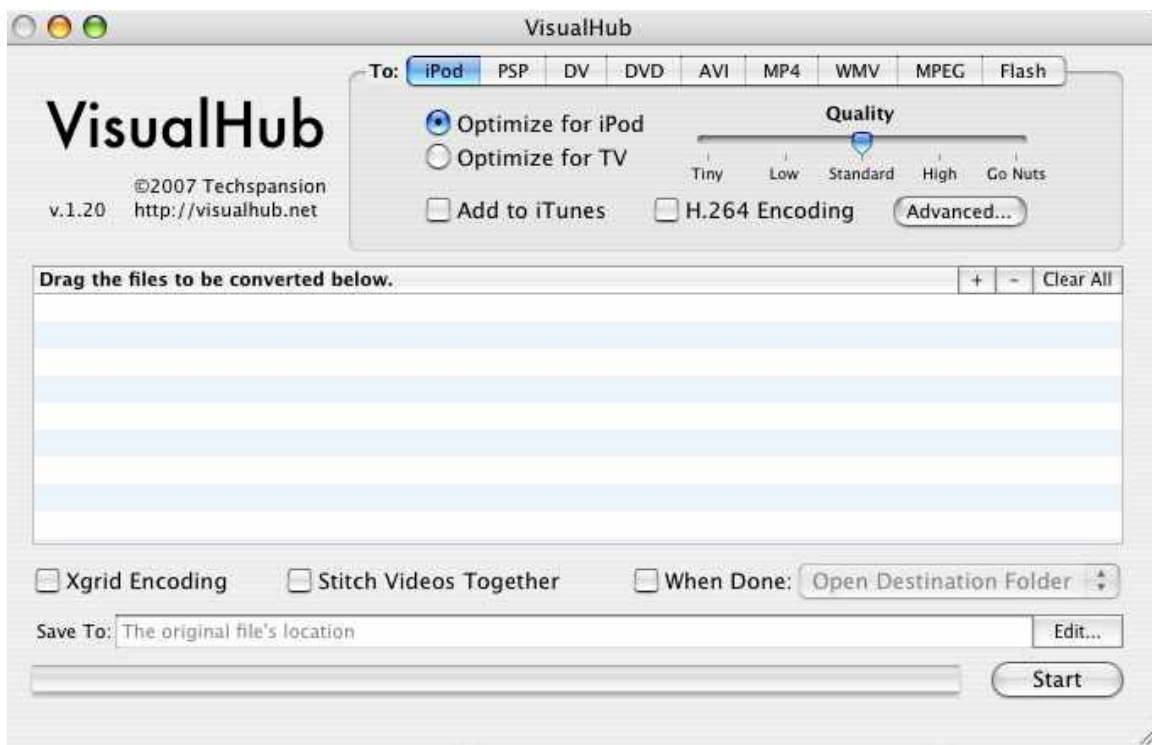
In order to make this work, you need to have the Tivo Desktop system preference pane installed on your Macintosh and the "Videos" tab, which is by default turned off, turned on. The VisualHub package includes a script called "TiVoGoBack Enabler" that will turn on the "Videos" tab in the Tivo Desktop preference pane.

I was impressed with how VisualHub handles a conversion to DVD format. It did the complete process from the conversion of the video file to actually burning a DVD. Then all I had to do was plop the DVD into a standard DVD player to watch it. There were two gotchas during this process. First of all, it is a good idea to name your DVD, otherwise you get a silly default name when you insert it into a computer's DVD drive. Secondly, is when to insert the blank DVD. Most Mac users are used to being asked by the application for something when it is needed. In the case of VisualHub, they expect that you insert the blank DVD when you start the conversion process. If you don't, VisualHub will sit and wait for a DVD. It won't alert you to this fact, but just sit and wait.

When you read their fine manual describing this process, you find that the DVD should be inserted at the start of the process. Ultimately, this makes sense. Completing the process takes a good long while. Insert the DVD when you start and go get a coffee or go watch a movie, depending upon the speed of your Macintosh.

Two aspects of working with video files one needs to consider is the power of their Macintosh and the time they intend to spend on these projects. Working with video takes a lot of processing power, the less processing power you have, the more time it takes. But even a more powerful computer will spend a goodly amount of time working video. I discovered that my aging G5/1.8GHz PowerMac can spend a lot of time crunching video files. I was very happy to find that my wife's Intel DualCore MacMini could significantly reduce the amount of time it takes to convert an MPEG file into DVD format. Having a more powerful chip can be a real advantage when working with video files.

It is also a good idea to know what format you really want before you start a conversion. If you tie up your machine for an hour or so converting a file, you won't be happy to discover that the format you selected wasn't really what you wanted! ;-)



Running VisualHub is so easy that a manual is really unnecessary. However, the package includes a PDF manual that answers a lot of questions. While it isn't really necessary, it is often a good idea to read the section concerning the type of conversion you are going to run before doing it, at least the first time. For one thing, you might learn something interesting about the format or the process before you start for another you will learn what input VisualHub expects from you.

If you read the manual or run the program, you will notice a few subtle remarks here and there that spice up working with the application. From the warning on the top of the advanced options window to the quotes that begin each chapter in the manual. It's all fun.

If you want to play with video files you will probably need the abilities offered by VisualHub many times. It will perform the necessary magic to change the files from one format to another, requiring minimum input from the user. It works and performs well. This program is definitely worth the shareware fee.

Mathematica 5.2

Part I – Calculation Engine

Reviewed by Mike Hubbartt

WOLFRAMRESEARCH
MAKERS OF MATHEMATICA*

www.wolfram.com

\$1,880 US and Canada (standard), \$895 USD (academic), \$139 USD (student)

US/Canada: 1-800-965-3726

International: +1-217-398-0700



System Requirements:

64 bit: Mac OS X 10.4 on G5 CPU

32 bit: Mac OS X 10.4/10.3/10.2 on G5/G4/Intel CPU

512 MB RAM

1.7 to 2.3 GB drive space

DVD-ROM or CD-ROM

Supported Operating Systems: Mac OS X, Windows, Linux, Sun Solaris, HP-UX, AIX and SGI IRIX.

Strengths: Complex calculation support (Algebra, Trigonometry, Calculus, Linear Algebra, Differential Equations), video processing, formula graphic rendering, Java support, tons of good online reference material, universal binary.

Weaknesses: Version 5.2 only offers 32-bit support for Intel processor Macs, expensive for non-students.

Basic math skills are needed when making change for product purchases at the store, dealing with ingredient measurements for food recipes, creating and following a monthly household budget, balancing a checkbook, and planning costs for a vacation. Yet many people dislike mathematics and drop any pretense at maintaining their current skills or learn more once they leave school.

What can you do to improve your math skills? Why not put your Mac to use? A number of companies have released a diverse variety of math products for the Mac, and the package that stands at the head of the math class is Wolfram Research's Mathematica.

Stephen Wolfram founded Wolfram Research in 1987 and released 1.0 version of Mathematica in June of 1988. Version 1.0 was well received by members of the scientific and technical communities and was one of the main applications released for the NeXT computer – Steve Job's *other* computer company. And Wolfram Research has continued their support of our platform, being among the first (February, 2006) to update their product to run natively on Intel-based Macs.

Wolfram Research refers to their product as a “technical computing system,” and with good reason. Mathematica features are useful in mathematics, science, engineering, desktop publishing and programming

fields. Now *that* is a powerful application! Since Wolfram's website states there are have several million Mathematica users, we at macCompanion figured there might be more than a few of our readers that are interested in a review of this powerful product, so let's begin.

Getting Started

When I received Mathematica 5.2 in the mail, I did something I've never done before: I opened the box, set the software aside and read the manuals. Gasp! A Technical Writer that actually *read* a product manual? Yep. And I'd recommend other people do that as well, even those upgrading from earlier versions of the product. And take time to bookmark www.wolfram.com, as there is a ton of good information on Mathematica.

After reading the documentation, I installed and launched the software and saw this:

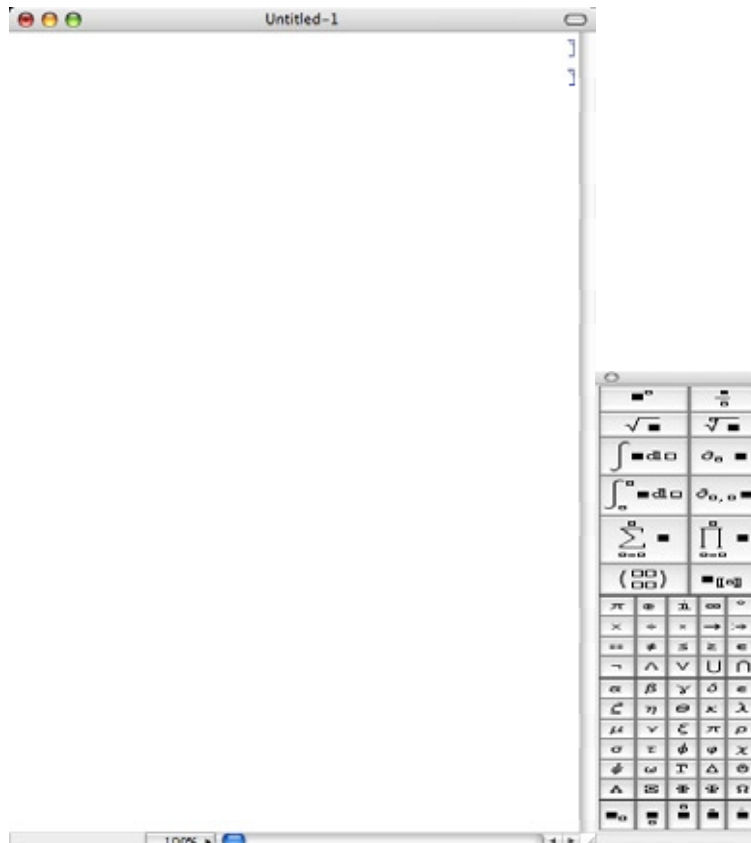


Figure 1 – Enter Information

This is where you work: information is entered in documents (also called notebooks - on the left) to enter a formula (with math symbols selected from the smaller window on the right). Let's use Mathematica to solve a few math problems.

Algebra

Let's do a few you might see in a college Algebra class, starting with a simple factoring problem. I want to factor $a^2 - b^2$ (a squared minus b squared).

I enter `Factor[a^2-b^2]` and press Shift-Enter and Mathematica generates the results (see Figure 2).



Figure 2 – Algebra Factor Example

Simple, and what you'd expect from a calculation engine.

Now to solve a trinomial, I enter `Factor[8x^2 + 22x + 15]` and press Shift-Enter and the results are in Figure 3.

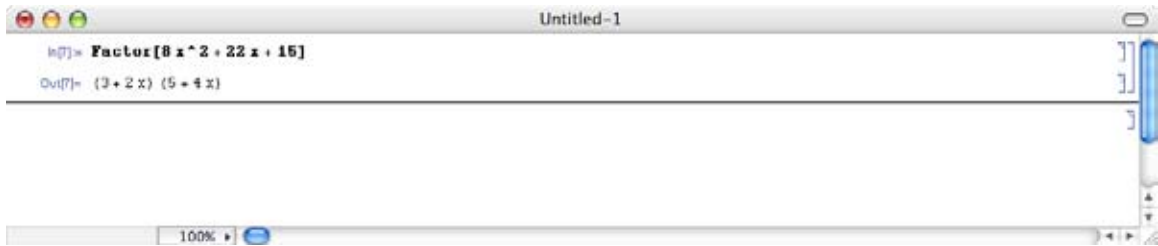


Figure 3 – Trinomial Example

Let's solve a linear equation. The solution for $(2n+3)(6n-1)-9 = 15n^2 - (3n-2)(n-2)$ is shown in Figure 4.

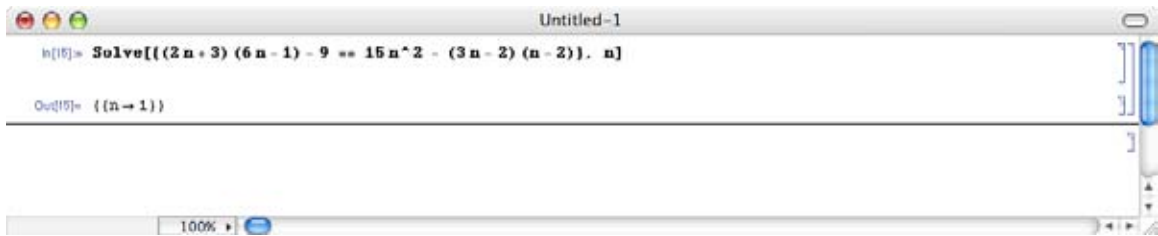


Figure 4 – Linear Equation Example

Now we'll plot a graph with Mathematica.

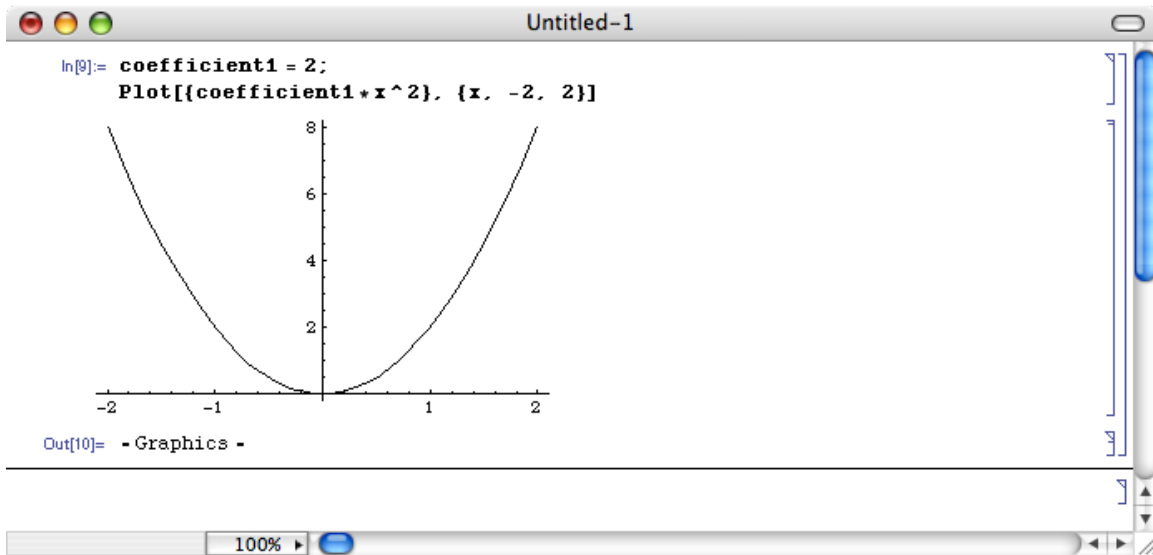


Figure 5 - Graphing

Kinda makes you miss the days of using graph paper in class, doesn't it? No? I didn't really think it would.

Let's do some Trig. I enter `Plot[{Sin[x]}, {x, -10, 10}]` and we get:

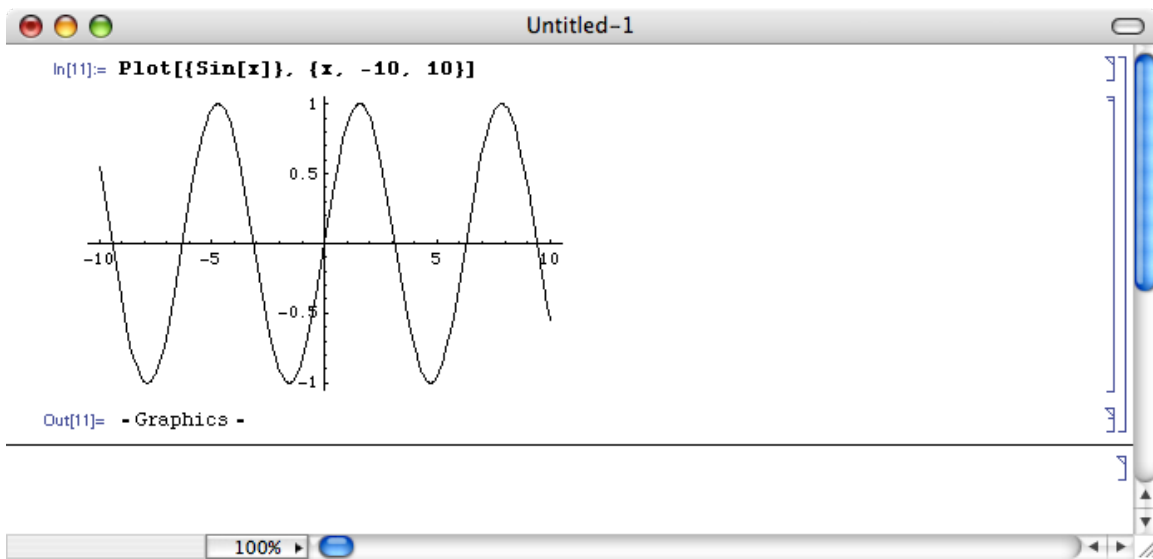


Figure 6 – Trigonometry – Plotting Sin

What I wouldn't have given for this program when taking Trig in High School...

As you see, the hardest part of using Mathematica is determining how to enter the values to solve. And that really is logical and intuitive, and numerous examples make it a breeze to become comfortable with the product.

So enough with the calculation engine aspect of Mathematica. So much for the simple stuff, next month we'll cover more complex graphing capabilities in Mathematica.

Hardware

The section 3 hardware reviews and articles in this issue of *macCompanion* are:

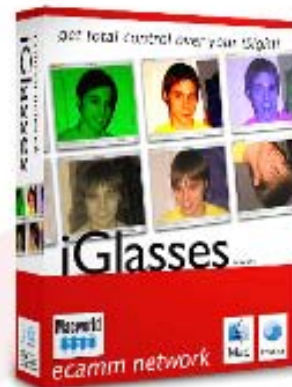
- **AlphaSmart Neo** – an inexpensive and lightweight laptop replacement for amateur and professional writers, reviewed by Mike Hubbart
- **Belkin PURE A/V** – an digital optical audio cable, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- **HOBO Temp Logger** – temperature monitoring hardware and software, reviewed by Mike Hubbart
- **iCable** – Monster fiber optic cables, reviewed by Richard Campbell
- **iCush** – a sound-enhanced chair addition for gamers, reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie
- **Lightsnake Microphone** – an XLR to USB cable, reviewed by Robert Pritchett

*use your USB webcam
with iChat AV...*



*record your iChat audio
and video chats...*

*adjust iSight settings
and apply effects...*



ecamm network
dream the connection
www.ecamm.com

ecamm network
<http://www.ecamm.com>

AlphaSmart Neo

Reviewed by Mike Hubbartt

www.alphasmart.com

\$249 USD

Software Requirements:

Version 2.6 - Mac OS 10.2.8 or higher

Strengths: Great battery life (700 hrs), light weight, full-sized keyboard, intuitive, good word processor included and very reasonable price.

Weaknesses: Smaller screen than I'd prefer, but it is adequate for the intended purpose.



Laptops. Not cheap, whether they run Mac OS X or less intuitive operating systems. Years ago I bought a Radio Shack laptop that had a tiny LED screen, just for writing. It was fairly light, but the screen was only large enough for 2 rows of text and it was difficult to transfer the contents to my other computers. I gave up on that laptop after a year, deciding to wait until I could afford one of the \$2000 to \$3000 laptops at the store. Over time equipment prices fell and now Mac OS laptops are available starting at \$1099, but that is still quite pricy for a lot of people.

My laptop issue was a result of events that unfolded in August of 2006. My wife and I took a short vacation to England and Wales and returned on August 10th, one day before we learned terrorists planned to explode bombs in a number of planes headed to the US from London Heathrow. We planned to visit Scotland in October to take pictures and gather material to start my career in travel writing, and decided against buying a laptop when learning of the new airline security restrictions.

For the Scotland trip, I brought a Palm LifeDrive – an Excellent PDA with 4GB storage – and the optional external keyboard. The LifeDrive screen is small, but rotates between portrait and landscape orientation so more screen is available. I liked the compact LifeDrive, but the small keys on the external keyboard made note entry a laborious process.

Upon returning from Scotland, I looked for a better solution and found AlphaSmart's website, where I saw the Neo. The AlphaSmart Neo is a compact laptop replacement, ideal for budget conscious schools or travelers. The Neo has a full size keyboard and includes the AlphaWord Plus built-in word processor. The small screen holds four to six lines of text – easy to read even in the early morning hours.

I contacted AlphaSmart and ordered a Neo and started using it the day it arrived. Talk about an intuitive product! To start, press the on/off button then press one of the eight file keys and start typing. Each file holds one document, and no need to worry about saving content – each document is saved as you type.

The default screen setting is set to 4 lines, which is great, but I prefer more on lines per screen, so I went to the applets and changed the settings. Other screen settings range from two to six lines, so I chose 6 lines and was pleased with the results.

The Alpha Word Plus word processor supports standard word processing features like find and find-and-replace,

has a thesaurus, and provides spell checking and word count. The Neo can print documents directly to printers with an IR port (mine doesn't) or you can wait to print after moving the content to a desktop computer (I did).

The AlphaSmart Manager software is easy to install, but should not be running when moving content to the computer. And, you can move content from the computer back to the Neo, keeping revisions on the computer synced with the content on the Neo.

I worked on several articles, including this review, then moved the content to my iMac. There are two ways to move content from the Neo to a computer: via the supplied USB cable or by beaming the content via IR. On the iMac, I launched Word and opened the review document already created for this review, then pressed the send key on the Neo and that was it. Easy.

Conclusion:

I like the Neo. It is easy to use, the keyboard has a great tactile feel, and the screen is easy to read in the day or night. The great battery life (700 hrs) plus the lightweight makes it a natural for travelers or students, and the \$249 price tag is reasonable for most budgets.

The Neo comes with a well written printed manual, USB cable, quick start letter and software CD. A built-in calculator is included, and add-on applets and hardware are available from AlphaSmart.

The only one negative remark I have regarding the Neo is the screen size. The Neo is fine for composing initial drafts, however I prefer to see the entire page when editing a letter or article, somewhat difficult when only viewing two to six lines of content at once. But, considering the screen size of a Palm Pilot, I can live with the Neo screen.

Recommendation:

If you're looking for a low cost laptop solution, look no farther. The Neo is easy to use and is worth the money for people needing to write while away from their desktop computers.

Next Month: We review the AlphaSmart Dana.

PURE|AV Digital Optical Audio Cable with Mini-Toslink Adapter

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



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

http://catalog.belkin.com/PureAV.process?Section_Id=202442

\$30 USD, £13 GBP.

Requirements: Digital Optical Audio Port and a high-end Audio Receiver.

Comes With: Six-foot optical cable, Mini-Toslink adapter.

Strengths: Lifetime Warranty. Real optical fiber core.

Weaknesses: None Found.

Other Reviews: <http://creativemac.digitalmedianet.com/articles/viewarticle.jsp?id=47126>

<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/November2006/Columns/OpticalOutputPort.htm>

Reviewed on an iMac G5 and Airport Extreme.

What They Say

PureAV Silver Series Digital Optical Audio Cables provide an ideal solution for connecting DVD Players, CD Players, AV Receivers, and Digital Satellite Receivers for Dolby® Digital and DTS surround sound. The multi-core fiber construction reduces digital distortion for a marked improvement over the sound quality of single-core cables.

The Purest Sound

- Drastically reduces jitter/signal distortion for exceptional sonic accuracy using premium-quality, multi-core optical fiber
- Offers maximum durability and lowest possible loss for a more detailed, natural sound with high-performance cladding
- Creates stronger signals and better high frequencies for the cleanest audio possible using precision-polished, optical terminations
- Protects against wire damage for consistently high-quality audio with integrated strain relief and abrasion-resistant, flexible PVC jacket
- Provides comfort and ease of install with non-slip rubber grip and integrated color-coding

What I Say

Would you like to be an audiophile and use that optical port on your Mac? See our extensive discussion of that port in our November 2006 issue of *macCompanion* (the link is located above.)

The Belkin PURE|AV Digital Optical Audio Cable with Mini-Toslink Adapter comes with an optical fiber and not a plastic fiber, yet is extremely flexible, which I found rather amazing. The cable itself feels like silicon rubber, but it is PVC. The jacks are thoughtfully capped with attached clear dust caps and the Mini-Toslink also comes with a dust cap, but it is not with a lanyard, like the other jacks are. There is only one Mini-Toslink adapter, so going between two Apple products requires another Mini-Toslink adapter.

When plugged into the iMac, the internal speakers obviously go off and the light in the optical cable goes red, so I know the Optical Audio port on the iMac works. I wanted to tap between the iMac and the Airport Extreme, but Apple uses the Mini-Toslink ports, and the package only had one. Why would I want to add an Airport Extreme via the Optical Port to an iMac instead of to an audio receiver? Dumb idea, I guess.



I was under the impression that fiber signals would be bidirectional so the devices would be communicating both ways. They operate at the same wavelength according to the specs, so come to think of it, trying to make such an attempt is a bit lame-brained.

For both the iMac and the Airport Extreme, the reason why only one Mini-Toslink is in the kit is because the cables are designed to be used with devices that are “audio receivers” for high-tech audio – one way. So fiber is being treated as if it were copper. Think of the adapter-enhanced Optical cable as a USB A-B cable and you will catch the drift. Sorry, I’m not used to that at all. When I ran fiber cables, they were not cables with unlike connectors at opposite ends or needed adapters to be converted from one kind of plug to another. Attenuators maybe, but not adapters.

We discovered a long time ago that fiber can be operated at different wavelengths over the same piece of fiber using multi-mode (as is true in this case) or single-mode (for super-long distances). The limitations are only in the minds of the fiber electronics engineers and the electronics that tap into fiber. In this case, the electronics in the Macs are simplified to the point that apparently only one-way communications are possible for audio output. So there you have it. The port is “Optical Out” and not Optical In/Out. Now the dunce cap can come off.

Why doesn’t Apple have their own Mini-Toslink cables? I suppose that if there was a large enough market...

Anyhow, the Pure|AV division of Belkin has a winner here with this cable. Give it a try.

HOBO Temperature Logger Kit – U10

Reviewed by Mike Hubbartt

www.onsetcomp.com

\$79 USD

System Requirements:

Mac OS 10.3.9 and 10.4.X

PowerPC or Intel processor

256 MB RAM

1024 x 768 resolution

Sun JRE 1.4.2 or 1.5.0

Safari 1.0, Firefox 1.0, Netscape 7.2, Opera 7.54u2,

IE 6, Flash



Additional sensors: \$55 ea (1-9), \$51 ea (10-99) and \$47 ea (101+).



Strengths: Universal binary, small sensors, view data as graph & Excel, reasonable price.

Weaknesses: Not wireless, so the unit must be taken to the computer and connected via USB to download the temperature data.

Several years ago we were concerned with escalating home heating and cooling bills, I bought a standalone remote temperature monitor to monitor the temperature differences between upstairs and downstairs in our home. When I recently came across the HOBO Temp Logger, I wanted to use it to get accurate temperature records for different areas of our home, including our newly finished basement.

I installed the HOBOWare Lite software on my G5 1.8 GHz iMac, then connected the temperature sensor to the USB cable I'd attached to our iMac. Temperature sampling intervals can be set from once a second to every 12 hours, and this logger can track internal battery life as well as temperature. I used the HOBOWare Lite software to set up the sensor to monitor the temperature and internal battery every hour, pressed the button on the sensor, then carried the sensor to the basement bedroom window.

After 1 week I retrieved the sensor from the basement and viewed the log graphic (see Figure 1 –Week One Log) using the HOBOWare Lite software. The initial temperature upstairs was 80° F, and the basement temperature was much cooler (around 60° F) the entire time the logger operated. Not surprising, as we turned down the airflow to that area to save on heating expenses since we're not spending much time in basement. I then exported the log information to a CSV file and imported it into Excel, getting numeric information (vs. a graph). The temperature by the basement window was between 58.131° (1:33AM) and 60.172° (7:33AM) – more accurate than I need for my purposes.

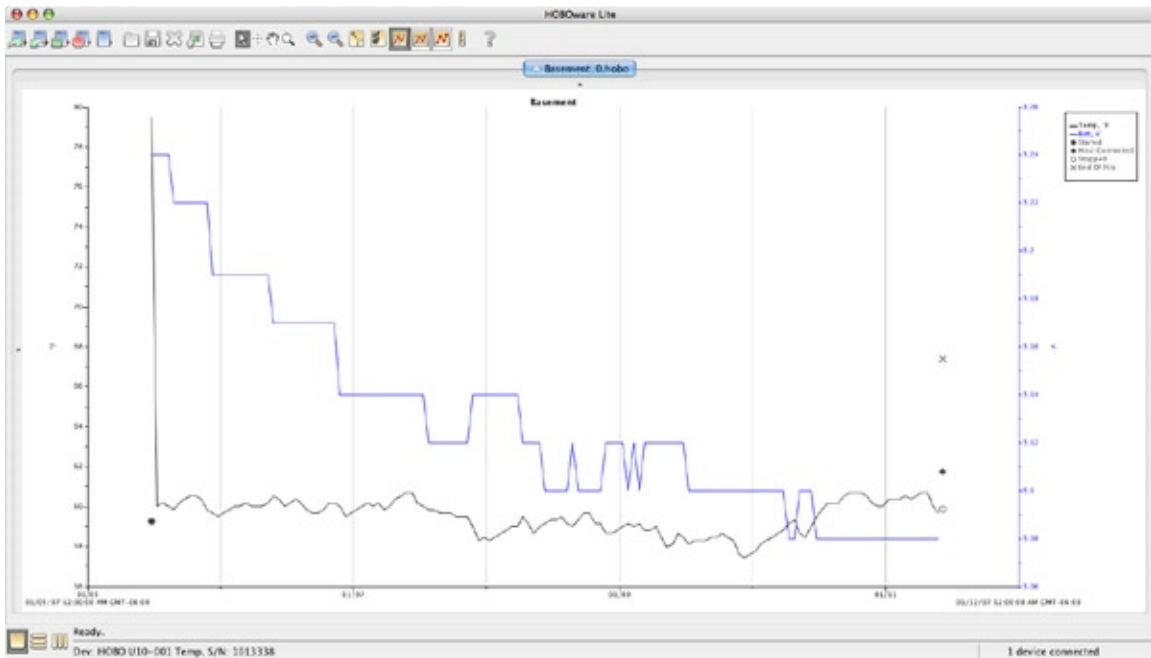


Figure 1 – Week One Log

I reset the logger and returned it to the basement, although this time I wanted to monitor the temperature in different areas of the basement. For the next four days I moved the sensor to the bedroom dresser, the bathroom, the kitchen and the home theater area. On the fifth day I put the sensor out in the garage, which is insulated but not heated. The black line on the log graphic (see Figure 2 – Week Two Log) shows the temperatures.

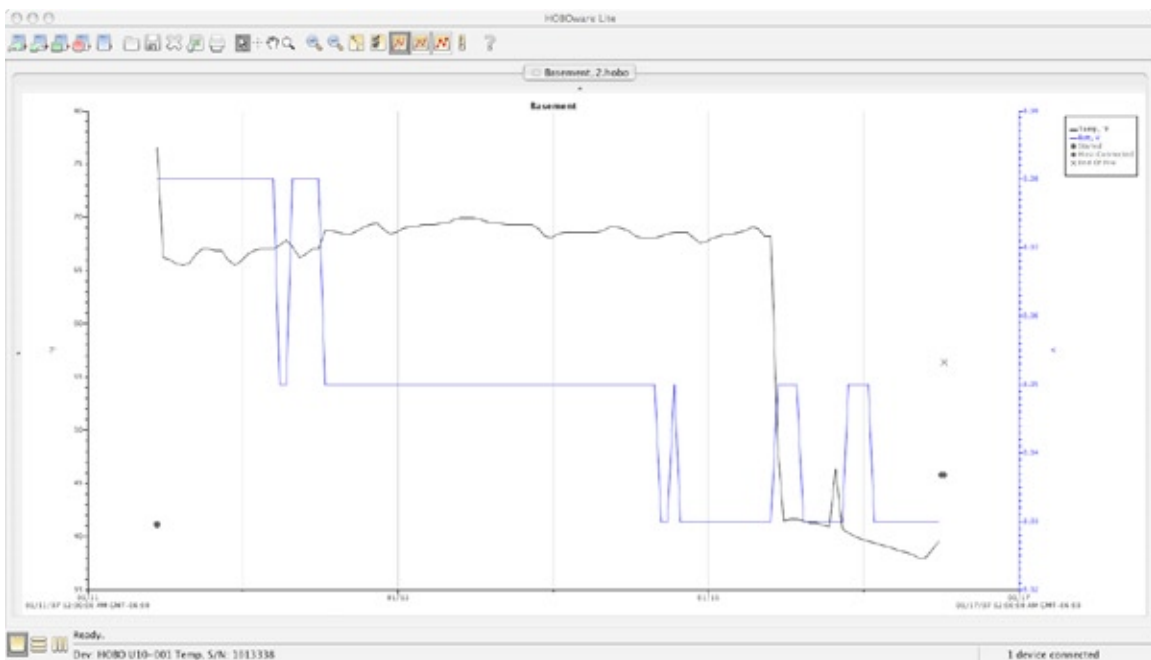


Figure 2 – Week Two Log

The temperatures (in black – blue indicates battery levels) for different areas of the basement are consistent, but they do plunge when I moved the sensor to the garage. The outside air temperature was -1° to -5° F the night and morning I tested the sensor and yet our unheated garage never dipped below 36° F. That pleased me since we had considered heating the garage, but we really don't need to spend the money to protect our cars if the garage stays in the mid-30s when the outside air is -5° F.

Conclusion: I like this product, although I'd prefer a wireless solution. It was easy to setup and use, but you need to take the sensor to the Mac to get the data. The HOBO is reasonably priced and useful for home or business owners that want to know how well their heating and air conditioning systems really work. Businesses that need to track temperature data will appreciate the ability to export data for import into Excel.

Recommendation: Useful, inexpensive and a good buy.

You need a
QUICKY!

Introducing the Quicky
Wireless USB Transceiver
exclusively from QuickerTek!

- Be iTV Ready
- Just Plug N Play -
No Tools Required
- 15 x's More Power than
Apple's AirPort cards
- Works with Mac OS X 10.3-10.4
- Works with International
AirPort cards
- Compatible with 802.11 b/g
access points
- Works with all Macs

QUICKERTEK
WIRELESS PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS FOR MAC
www.quickertek.com • 316.691.1585

iCable™ - Fiber optic cable by Monster®

Reviewed by Richard Campbell



<http://www.monstercable.com>

Monster iCable® Fiber Optic Kit

<http://www.monstercable.com/productDisplay.asp?pin=2809>

\$29.95 USD, \$35 CAD, £15 GBP, €23 Euro



Monster® iCable® Fiber Optic for Apple® Products

<http://www.monstercable.com/productDisplay.asp?pin=2177>

\$44.95 USD, \$53 CAD, £23 GBP, €35 Euro

Requirements: Other than needing a computer with optical output, Monster® cautions to “Use with AirPort Express™. Requires Mac OS® X v10.3 or later, and iTunes® 4.6 or later to be installed on your Mac®; also requires stereo system or AV receiver with optical digital audio input.”

Strengths: Great optical audio cables for all your needs.

Weaknesses: Personally feel they are too expensive.

iCable™ is a product line by THE audio cable company ‘Monster®’ designed for all your Apple® connections. I will be reviewing two of their fiber optic cables.

FYI: Fiber optic cables, or just optical cables are also known as TOSLINK™ cables because it was the Toshiba Corporation that created these types of optical connections, ie TOSHIBA LINK. The generic name is EIAJ optical - boy that rolls off the tongue - which denotes the type of end connectors used in these optical cables.

The visual difference between the two iCables™ I am reviewing, is one is black and one is white. I believe the black one came out first when only the Power Mac® G5 had an optical port, hence no mini-optical adaptor came with the black cable. The white one seems to be the recent model; it came with a mini-optical adaptor and is advertised for use with the AirPort Express™, which uses the mini-optical port. This means it will also work with the present iMacs® and MacBooks®. The black one is a little thicker than the white one, but I could not find on Monster’s™ web site any differentiation between them using technical specifications. The mini-adaptor that came with the white iCable™ fit the black just fine.

Note: The mini-adaptor only adapts the shape of the standard connector; no changes or alterations to the optical transmission of the audio occurs. Optical cables are digital audio - either it works or it doesn’t.

The setup I used was my iMac® with the mini-optical out connection and my Pioneer® 1015TX with its optical inputs. To minimize any other audio problems, I used my Sony® Professional headphones for all tests. The music was ripped to iTunes in AIFF format, and was a mix of classical and pop.

Right to the point - there is a significant, enjoyable difference between using optical connections over the standard wired ones. I first listened to a high-end wired RCA to mini plug connection between my Pioneer® and my iMac®, and then I did it with the white fiber optic cable. The quality of the music was noticeably

improved when listening to the music over the optical connection from the computer as opposed to the copper wire connection. I expected this, but I had never actually done an A/B comparison before. I was noticeably impressed.

Now the sticky question, “Are Monster® optical cables better than cheaper alternatives?” I will admit I do not possess sensitive scientific instruments to test transmission changes and variances in optical cables - I only have my ears.

Truthfully, my ears could not tell the difference, and neither could my wife who is a classically trained musician. I never expected there to be a difference. Optical cables are transmitting digital audio, the SPDIF standard to be precise, and either it works or it doesn't.

I did an A/B/C comparison between the black cable, the white cable and a much less expensive optical cable I bought at a local store. They all used the same mini-optical adaptor that came with the white cable. I listened to various pop songs and dynamically charged classical music. I listened loud and soft, but no difference was discernible. This does not mean there is no measurable difference between Monster® optical cables and others brands, just that my ears couldn't detect it.

I will be honest - the look and feel of the Monster® cables was nicer, not more flexible, but nicer than the no-name brand and having a white cable connecting to a white computer might be worth it for the color purists out there, but your choice is your own. One item worth mentioning, there are these little plastic end caps that protect the exposed optical ends of the cables when not in use; the no-name brand had them actually attached to the optical wire itself, which meant you wouldn't ever lose them. I thought that was a nice touch.

I also did one other listening test. I wanted to see if connecting the head phones directly to the iMac® would be better or worse. It wasn't as dramatic as the copper vs. optical test, but basically the analog/digital converters in the iMac® are not quite as good as the ones in a good amplifier. This is not surprising, but does confirm that the best way to get sound out of your Mac® is to use the optical connections.

To summarize my opinion - hands down, optical cable is the best way to get high quality audio out of your Apple® product. There is nothing wrong with the iCable™ Fiber Optic Cables by Monster®. Good, solid, feels nice, looks nice and does the job they are made for perfectly, I just don't know if they are worth the extra money. The no-name cable in contrast was only \$10 US.

This was my first review for MacCompanion, so I hope you found it helpful. If you have any questions in regards to this review please feel free to contact me.

help@iRich.ca

iCush

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie



Released: 2006

\$100USD

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

For gamers ready to relax.

Strengths: Great sound quality.

Weaknesses: Lots of cables that can easily tangle.



I was very impressed with the iCush the very first time I used it. Great sound quality and soothing massage that can go anywhere was quite pleasing.

The iCush is really three things: an immersive gaming chair, a surround sound system for T.V, DVD and MP3 players, and a massage chair. The iCush is a wonderful product that retails about \$100 USD. It comes with two adjustable speakers built into the top, which provide excellent sound quality when plugged into almost any audio device. You connect the devices through multiple red and white RCA ports for the game consoles and other players and a regular headphone jack for the other devices. Eight massage motors are built into the cushions and are controlled by a remote, which is attached to the bottom. You are able to choose one of three modes, speeds and strengths to suit you. And if you don't want all of them on at the same time, you can turn off some of the motors.

Now, unfortunately, the iCush comes with a lot of cables and it can get very tangled up and messy. Personally, I think they should have built a little hub for all of the wires either in the remote or on a separate device attached to the chair. The motors can get very noisy and annoying. Definitely one thing they can work on is quieter motors. The last downside would be that the motors can dig into your back occasionally and makes it uncomfortable. Some more padding on the chair would be helpful.

I may have led you to believe that this is a full sized chair. It isn't. This is something you put on a chair. It has a strap on the back and ties on the bottom to attach to a chair. If you wish you can lay it flat and use it that way. I have really enjoyed this product and I would definitely suggest it to anyone who enjoys a good massage after a hard day of work. Good job Homedics.

LightSnake – XLR to USB Cable

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

444 East Courtland Street
Mundelein, IL 60060
847-949-0444

<http://www.usmusiccorp.com>

<http://www.soundtech.com/lightsnake/xlr10.asp>

Forums: <http://www.soundtech.com/discuss/default.asp>

Released: October 31, 2006.

\$70 USD, \$82 CND, £49 GBP, € 72.52 Euro

Specs:

- Resolution: 16 bit 48/44.1Khz
- THD + N (-3dBr): -76.1 dB
- SNR: 83.1 dB
- Dynamic Range: 81.6 dB
- Input impedance: 1M Ohms
- Frequency Response 48KHz: 20 - 19.2K Hz
- Signal Input Range: 0 - 2.88 Vpp
- Signal Boost Gain: +20 dB



Requirements: ¼” Microphone; Any Mac or PC with USB port; GarageBand or other.

Comes With: 10 foot (3.05 Meter) ¼” Mic to USB Cable; mini USB Driver CD for non-Mac systems; SONY DVD.

Strengths: Hooks a standard XLR3 microphone up to a USB port on a computer. Cross-platform. Plug&Play.

Weaknesses: None found for the Mac. Unknown for the PC-side of things. What I found was that most issues have been PC-related and not to the cable itself. Care to guess why?

Reviewed with GarageBand and iMac G5 and Radio Shack Super Omnidirectional Dynamic Microphone.

Other Reviews: http://www.applelinks.com/index.php/more/soundtech_lightsnake_soundcard_in_a_cable/



What They Say

See the Light. Now that you have a “Soundcard in a cable”, digital music recording has never been easier. Just plug in your microphone and start recording in CD quality. You can start your own music production straight out of the package. Package includes Sony demo software and cable is Garage Band ready. You no longer need any additional interfaces the SoundTech LightSnake brings new meaning to “plug and play”.

This LightSnake cable is a XLR microphone to USB cable which is ideal for vocal recording or Podcasting. The LightSnake microphone cable is basically a “sound card on a cable” and with this cable you can record audio directly onto your computer. Connect the XLR connect of the LightSnake cable to your microphone and then connect the USB end to one of your computers USB ports.

This is a true USB plug-n-play connection. No additional drivers are needed for the following operating systems – Win 98 SE/Win ME/Win 2000/Win XP and Mac OS9/OS X. An ASIO driver is forthcoming for recording software that implements this technology.

An embedded 16 Bit Analog to Digital Converter with audio signal boost ensures extremely low audio loss and 48/44.1 KHz Sampling Rate provides you with high audio quality while recording. The HSDL (Host Side Data Loss) Noise Reduction function prevents any unwanted noise when converting the audio signal to digital format and saving to your computer.

The SoundTech LightSnake line was born out of the desire to create a simple solution to provide the ability to enjoy digital recording to everyone. An intelligent cable with embedded analog to digital converter and signal booster was created.

The LightSnake USB’s unique design enables anyone to plug their microphone directly into a PC eliminating the hassle, clutter and learning curve associated with high-quality digital recording. This was accomplished by virtually placing a sound card onto the cable.

The LightSnake features SoundTech’s patented “Live when Lit” technology cable ends that glow when connected properly and flash indicating when sound is being transmitted. The simplicity of these cables and their price point make the digital recording arena accessible to every one.

The cables are packaged with a DVD that contains 30 day trial versions of all of Sony Media Software titles, including Sound Forge, Acid, Vegas, etc. This addition makes the cable a complete solution right out of the box. Mac users are not left out as GarageBand recording software is on every new Macintosh sold.

What I Say

What is XLR? Oh, it’s that standard 3-pin XLR3 mic plug - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XLR_connector

The LightSnake XLR to USB is true plug&say stuff. No extra equipment needed. No extra software either, if you already have GarageBand installed. This is “live when lit” with green LED lights at either end of the cable and they really do flash when recording.

What gives it the snake moniker? The cable is a thick, shielded cable within a clear plastic flex-hose.

Oh, and this isn’t limited to just mics. If you have a keyboard or other device that uses the XLR jack, you are in business.

Listen to this *MusiciansCast* podcast interview:

http://www.musicianscast.com/Player.aspx?filetoplay=files/McastEpisode_216.mp3

I used a RadioShack (not a Shure) Super Omnidirectional Dynamic Microphone, removed the cable and replaced it with this unit and it worked great. At first in GarageBand, I got a lot of feedback, but that is because I didn't have the app set up correctly. Once I corrected the mic input, it worked like a dream. No, it is not a mic with "phantom" power.

This is way cool technology at work!

I found the cable for about half the MSRP on Amazon.com. Go get one if you want to do live sound music on your Mac!

Books

The section 4 book reviews in this issue of *macCompanion* contains:

- **Adobe Acrobat 8 Visual Quick Guide** – Peachpit’s useful guide for Acrobat 8 users, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad
- **Airport & Mac Wireless Networking for Dummies** – for networking novices with a need to get that wireless network running, reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher
- **CSS Cookbook, 2nd Edition** – an excellent O’Reilly book with useful CSS code samples, reviewed by Mike Hubbart
- **Digital Photography Expert Techniques** – Ken Milburn’s excellent how-to guide on improving digital pictures with Photoshop, reviewed by Mike Hubbart
- **Essential Computer Security** – a guide to internet and wireless security from Syngress, reviewed by Julie Willingham
- **Keynote 2 for Mac OS X** – a Peachpit visual quickstart guide that covers Keynote 2, reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher
- **Mac Tiger Server Little Black Book** – learn how to setup a Mac server with this handy reference, reviewed by Robert Pritchett
- **The Photoshop Channels Book** – an Peachpit guide that covers Photoshop graphics work, reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Visual Quickstart Guide Adobe Acrobat 8 for Windows and Macintosh

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



Peachpit

Essential books for the creative community

Author: John Deubert

Released: December 14, 2006, First Edition

Pages: 276

\$24.99 USD

ISBN-10: 0-321-47079-6

ISBN-13: 978-0-321-47079-9

<http://safari.peachpit.com/0321470796>

Audience — All but advanced expert users of Adobe Acrobat 8 Pro

Strengths — Adobe should have provided this book, at a discount to purchasers of AA8 Pro. It's no Missing Manual, but it's not meant to be. It really helped me explore features in Acrobat Pro I'd not previously tried. It is ideal for a new or intermediate user — crisp, clearly focused, and well organized.

Weakness — There's no apparent sequel to this book that might contain the typical scope of a David Pogue Missing Manual, however the author provides several suggestions for books more advanced users can learn from.

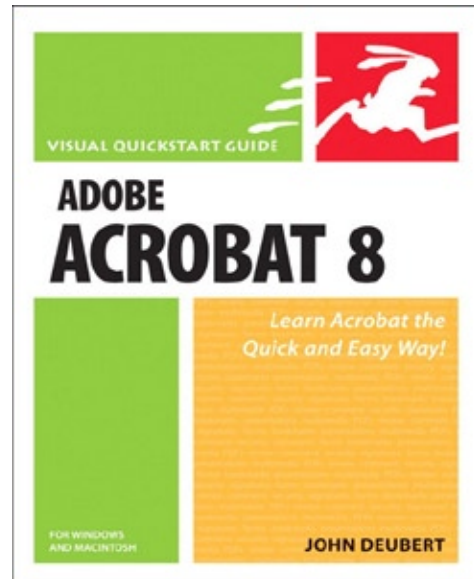
Where appropriate the instructions in the book were tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.7

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Publisher's Overview — *Adobe Acrobat 8 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual QuickStart Guide* uses a combination of task-based instruction and strong visuals to teach beginning and intermediate users how to be more productive with Adobe Acrobat. Author John Deubert takes readers step by step through all of the Adobe Acrobat 8 essentials, both basic--creating and viewing electronic documents, streamlining document reviews, using Acrobat's commenting and reviewing tools--and advanced--using digital signatures, creating interactive forms, and protecting sensitive documents. Both beginning users who want a thorough introduction to the topic, and more advanced users looking for a convenient reference will find what they need here in straightforward language, clear steps, and practical tips. By the end of the book, users will be able to smoothly integrate Adobe Acrobat 8 into their workflow.

Review Introduction

As I noted in the review of Acrobat 8 Pro that Robert Pritchett and I wrote for this Issue of Mac, I found the provided *Help Manual* wimpy from the perspective of an inexperienced user. Even though there is lots of



information about problem solving or learning Acrobat 8 Pro's rich features on the Adobe website, it is not organized in a user-friendly fashion. That's why good books exist, and Visual Quickstart Guide is one good book.

When first exploring Acrobat 8 Pro, prior to reading this book, I frequently turned to Doug Sahlin's book *How to Do Everything with Adobe Acrobat 7.0* [macCompanion June 2006.] That older book was helpful on the occasions I need more information about learning an existing feature in Acrobat 8 Pro such as form creation and group editing. However, it obviously could not deal with the new features Adobe provided. Alas, the Acrobat 8 Pro help files are terse, and at times confusing and had I been more prescient I would have finished review the Visual Quickstart Guide first.

The Book Itself:

The *Acrobat 8 Visual Start Guide* is an in-depth introduction to Acrobat 8. This book can be a beginner's and intermediate users guide to most everything one can do with Acrobat 8. It ranges from launching the application to conducting company-wide document reviews. The book introduces you to creating Acrobat forms, describes how to import a wide variety of images and other files into PDF, and steps you through the intricacies of digital signatures. It's the getting started manual that Adobe forgot. And if the main text and examples are not enough to improve your ability as an Acrobat user, the information rich tips will further allow you to enhance your user experience.

People differ in their philosophies regarding toolbars. Some people like to have a toolbar button for every command of which the application is capable. On the other hand, I prefer to have toolbar buttons for only those commands that I use a lot and that are inconvenient to invoke with the keyboard.

The nice thing about Acrobat 8 is that it allows you to set things up just the way you like.

For reader convenience, I've tabulated the chapter titles along with my annotations of their usefulness to me. Your favorites will be different, but this is a helpful book and well represents Peachpit's Visual Quickstart Series. I focus my comments on things that I as a fairly experienced, but not expert user have learned. This in no way diminishes its value to new or less experienced Acrobat 8 Pro users, virtually everything a new user needs to be comfortable with Adobe's powerful application is found in Author John Deubert's book. I am chasing more advanced Acrobat 8 Pro guides, which John lists in the back of the book. Keep checking macCompanion; there's more to come on the subject of leaning Acrobat 8 Pro.

An Annotated Table of Contents – What I Liked and Learned	
Chapter Name & Review Comments	
1.	Starting with Acrobat — A must read for everyone, even if you only skim the chapter. The summary description of the various toolbars, discussed in more detail later in the book will open your eyes to Acrobat 8 Pro's rich features.
2.	Viewing a document — A well-written chapter, that does an excellent job at introducing you to the various ways to view a document while working with it. I had not previously paid attention to the Marquee Zoom, Loupe tool. I was also delighted to learn (Page 31) I could search for text in multiple PDF files on my hard drive [⌘-Shift-F.] I had a bit of problem with the Reading and Full Screen modes, which I discuss later in the review.
3.	Saving & printing files — A must chapter for most readers, especially the parts about minimizing file size and exporting PDF files to either vector or bitmap formats, as well as printer controls and their uses.

An Annotated Table of Contents – What I Liked and Learned
Chapter Name & Review Comments

4.	<p>Making PDF files — The new <i>create a PDF package</i>, something new in Acrobat 8 Pro, is well explained as are the other ways to create PDF from a variety of documents or to export information from a PDF to another format.</p> <p>Now if there were only a way to batch convert a stack of MSW documents to PDF files in one step. At least as a Macintosh user, I've yet to find a way. Why is this important? I often drag or copy text and images I want in PDF format, from a web page to an open MSW document. Right now I had to copy one document at a time using Adobe's PDFMaker. There is no way that I could add a MSW document to a package. Graphics Files, PDF files (including those obtained with a scanner), all are imported.</p>
5.	<p>Adding comments to a document — Good material worth reading if you want to add content to an existing document with-out having to go back to your source documents in MSW or an Adobe application. New to me, perhaps because I'd not needed the function was the discussion on sorting, searching importing or exporting comments.</p>
6.	<p>Reading commented documents — Although I seldom receive documents with extensive comments in PDF formats, I found the chapter interesting and the information accessible.</p>
7.	<p>Reviewing PDF Documents — A must chapter for those doing collaborative review and editing. I pretended to be another reviewer, using my grandson's networked Macintosh and found the techniques described were easy to understand and carry out.</p>
8.	<p>Manipulating pages — The chapter deals with topics covering the complete set of options found in Acrobat 8 Pro's <i>Document</i> menu. The benefit to me, the tips about using shortcuts to more rapidly manipulate pages in a PDF document are now a part of the ways I display and tune such documents.</p>
9.	<p>Adding & changing text & graphics - Need I say more... It's there use the features. From the information provided in this Visual Quickstart Guide, you be up to speed in just a few minutes — well perhaps a quarter of an hour.</p>
10.	<p>Adding simple navigation features — I had not previously done much with adding bookmarks within and between PDF files. I had, almost by trial and error enabled web and email links. Although not yet comfortable with these techniques, the information provided by the author has made this something with which I am more comfortable.</p>
11.	<p>Creating an Acrobat presentation — It's all yours folks, I didn't even skim this materials since I have absolutely no interest in the topic.</p>
12.	<p>Organizing documents — Should I ever need to create complex documents in PDF format, this material will prove useful. The chapter deals with Acrobat 8 Pro's organizer features clearly and in enough detail to make the effort worth the time.</p>
13.	<p>Creating forms with Acrobat Pro — Hurray, Yeah. Despite having attempted to use this feature in Adobe Acrobat 7 and gained partial understanding while reviewing Acrobat 8 Pro, I really need this book to help make form creation and use a standard part of my Acrobat use arsenal. For me this was almost worth reading the book, but that would neglect all else that is useful in this quickstart guide.</p>
14.	<p>Password protection — I only skimmed this material since I don't use this feature.</p>
15.	<p>Digital signatures — Frankly, I ignored this section. I've escaped corporate America when I retired so have no need for this feature.</p>
16.	<p>Converting paper to PDF — Since I actively scan documents and OSR them using ReadIris 11 [http://www.irislink.com/], I found this material interesting and easy to assimilate. But just to share my biases, I hardly ever store text-containing documents as image files. I want to be able to get at and use the text the image contains and that requires using OCR software and doing painful corrections.</p> <p>At this time I've not done enough experimentation on the most accurate way to convert scanned documents to editable text. For those of you who don't own OCR software, using Acrobat will be your only alternative. This chapter explains how. But before limiting yourself to Acrobat 8 Pro's OCR capabilities, check out the software that came with your scanner, most vendors include OCR tools.</p>

Kudos:

Tips — Overall, I had more fun with the tips than with the materials in the first half-dozen chapters. Of course, I've been using Acrobat since version 5. My favorite part of the tips discussion were the tips that discussed creating PDF files or using many of the other Acrobat features including printing, and cover default values listed in the application's preferences. "The default values are sensible and should generally be left alone." [*We discussed the problems with the complex and at time inexplicable preferences in our Acrobat 8 Pro review in this macCompanion issues.*]

Book Tone — Although not quite as seriously tongue in cheek as the books I read by Scott Kelby, John Deubert provides a readable and light touch to an otherwise complex topic. For example, on page 121: "I tend to find it most convenient to use the Options button in the pages navigation pane. You may prefer the other methods, and you have my permission to use them." Enjoy finding them as you work your way through the book.

Minor Discomforts

Keyboard Shortcuts – On rare occasions the author only provides a Windows system shortcut, something that might cause a beginner user a problem. More advanced users of the Macintosh will automatically convert any shortcut that uses a control key combination to one that used the Command key [⌘].

Lost in Some Views — I was until I leaned to escape, trapped in reading mode and Full Screen Mode, since I no longer had access to the toolbars in reading mode and to both the menu bar and the tool bars in Full Screen Mode. Pressing F8 on the Macintosh allows you to get your toolbars back, while ⌘-L gets you out of full Screen mode, as does pressing the escape key. I would have preferred to learn how to *escape* when the view modes were initially discussed in Chapter 2. [Have I missed something?]

Conclusion

Despite using Acrobat Pro for many years, I had limited my exploration to doing things that were absolutely necessary to complete the tasks at hand. John Deubert's book has not only expanded my horizon by exposing me to the rich features in Acrobat 8, but also renewed my will to explore and use more of those features. The *Visual Quickstart Guide Adobe Acrobat 8 for Windows and Macintosh* showed me what was possible, and how to achieve command of those possibilities. Although it's a score I'd never thought to give a book, this one is well worth a five star rating.

Author BIOS

Deubert was a schoolteacher for nine years, then left in 1984 to join a tiny, unknown startup company named Adobe Systems. As a customer support engineer (before the company had proper customers), John wrote the *PostScript Language Tutorial*, the front half of Adobe's standard "Blue Book." He also put together Adobe's first classes in PostScript, teaching small groups from Adobe OEMs as they signed up for their first PostScript printers. John Deubert is a longtime Acrobat enthusiast, worked with JavaScript in Acrobat since 1999. John has taught classes on PostScript and Acrobat throughout the world since 1985.

John left Adobe Systems in 1985 to start a software company in San Diego, California. Acumen Training, a training consultancy specializing in engineering courses in PostScript and PDF. During this time, he has continued working for Adobe as a consultant, doing programming, course development, and teaching. He is the author of *Creating Adobe Acrobat Forms* and *Extending Acrobat Forms with JavaScript*, both from Adobe Press.

His website contains many useful articles about both Adobe Acrobat and Post Script.

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

Airport & Mac Wireless Network for Dummies

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Authors: Michael E. Cohen

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

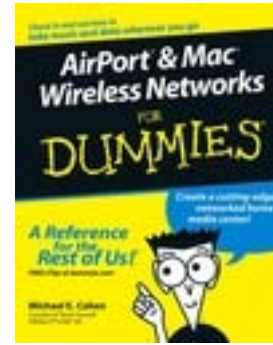
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ISBN-13: 978-0-7645-8971-3



Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Book outlines what is needed to communicate and network with your Macintosh and Airport.

Weaknesses: Black and white screenshots but in many ways this does not detract from the well done information.

Human communication progressed over the many hundreds of years, but particularly through increased use of various forms of technology. Technology led to computers, which in turn led to the utilization of additional telecommunication devices. When the internet surfaced, a variety of information were presented more through the internet based network. Computers and modems were useful, even running as slow as 300 to 2400 baud, at home, business and other locations. Users could communicate with others and find information, and a more social network developed for all who communicated.

Recently, a variety of computer integrated pursuits provided a better way to find and use graphics, log into and create websites, and share data. This led to a great need for expansion of the access with others in the public, at home and business. The Airport was created to meet this void with the Macintosh computer users. The book *Airport & Mac Wireless Network for Dummies*, meets a certain void for those who want to learn more about the MacIntosh, networking and use of the Airport wireless system.

The author of this book is a co-author of several MacIntosh books, multimedia producer, and a writer. This book has five parts (Wireless Basics, Knitting a Network, It's almost fun and games, taking care of business and the Part of Tens) which encompasses 15 chapters. Along the way, users learn how to pick a wireless card, choose a base station, build a home network, stream music, work at the office and on the road, troubleshoot security measures, and learn interesting facts about wireless technology and web resources. The book starts out with the basics which is good for novice and possibly intermediate and advanced users.

Throughout these chapters are tips, warnings, ideas to remember and helpful technical information. The screen shots and figures are black and white. As with most Dummies books, this one is not fancy but is well done and does the job to help learn the topic described by the title. The author provides comprehensive information related to all main topics and does so with breadth and depth.

There are some aspects of this book that I really like. It is simple to read - even for novice network users - but goes deeper to provide for intermediate MacIntosh network users. The chapters cover information about past Mac computers to the G5 and include laptops. There is a nice section on equipping older macs with Airport Cards - even covering the G4 cube. What also nice is there is informational listing of Mac- compatible PC cards and their vendors and drivers. There is also good information on options for USB wireless network adapters. There is of course information about ethernet and much more.

My wife has a Airport card in her AIO (by all standards today an ancient) computer, but it can connect to an Airport station so we set it up and it worked great. But now, how do I get my newer iMac connecting to the Airport? I had an airport card from a used Powerbook put into my iMac and can play off my wife's base station now we had high speed wireless access.

The author has done his research and done it well. This book covers a lot great information, much that takes one through step-by-step learning about the Airport itself. Because of this I can't fault the non-color screenshots because the information is fine without this technical stuff. The price is good and I certainly have learned more about networking and the airport. Now if I can only find a card for my G3 laptop. If there is one for my laptop, this book will find it. In that way, this book will answer many of your networking and communication needs for a variety of computers and wireless devices. This dummies book will make you smarter about your wireless and networking needs. So you will be ahead of the communication game.

Don't ignore a book just because the title includes 'for Dummies.' Try it and see as I did.



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<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-300351.html/>

CSS Cookbook, Second Edition

Reviewed by Mike Hubbartt

O'REILLY®

Author: Christopher Schmitt

Publisher: O'Reilly www.oreilly.com

Released: October 2006

Pages: 538

\$44.99 USD (PDF is \$22.49), \$58.99 CND, £31.99 GBP

ISBN-10: 0-596-52741-1

ISBN-13: 978-0-576-52741-9

Beginning/Intermediate

Strengths: Loaded with great examples, excellent getting started section, and well written.

Weaknesses: Would have enjoyed seeing Camino and other Mac-specific browsers covered.



Some authors believe reference books are the best way to explain a subject. And that's fine when I'm already comfortable with the subject and want something to fill in the gaps. For new subjects or areas I want help to fully grasp, I prefer a book that includes good examples. I've worked with CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) in the past and while I understand the topic, I was pleased to find Christopher Schmitt's CSS Cookbook.

Introduction

CSS gives web designers better control of web page presentation. CSS is not new; it was introduced in 1996 and gained support as more browsers started to support it. O'Reilly's first edition of this book - also authored by Schmitt - was released in August of 2004, although it was ½ the size of the second edition.

And why should you be interested in CSS? Not because it's new and neat, but because of the control, or better put, more control over web content. And why should you want to read Schmitt's book? Because he includes specific examples, not just CSS design theory. After all, don't you want to experiment as you learn CSS?

Let's take a look at the book.

Book Index

Chapter 1 – General

Chapter 2 – Web Typography

Chapter 3 – Images

Chapter 4 – Page Elements

Chapter 5 – Lists
Chapter 6 – Links and Navigation
Chapter 7 – Forms
Chapter 8 – Tables
Chapter 9 – Page Layouts
Chapter 10 – Print
Chapter 11 – Hacks, Workarounds, and Troubleshooting
Chapter 12 – Designing with CSS
Appendix A – Resources
Appendix B – CSS 2.1 Properties and Proprietary Extensions
Appendix C – CSS 2.1 Selectors, Pseudo-Classes, and Pseudo-Elements
Appendix D – Styling of Form Elements

Chapter 1 is the intro chapter, which covers the basics of CSS. CSS new comers will definitely want to start here. The materials are easy to follow and logically laid-out. Chapter 2 gets a bit more into web page layout, covering font size, positioning, formatting and styles – this chapter will appeal to people that have done desktop publishing.

Chapter 3 focuses on images. Learn how to add borders, use images as a background, overlaying text on images, and round image corners. I also liked the information on making images scaleable. Good information and clear examples. Chapter 4 addresses page elements, which set the presentation of your website. The items Schmitt covers in this chapter are: scrollbars, centering elements on pages, and adding borders and lightboxes. Like chapter 2, chapter 4 definitely appeals to people with desktop publishing background.

Chapter 5 covers lists: formatting and creating image markers for list items. Good information, although I'd prefer more than included in this fairly short chapter. Go to chapter 6 for information on links and navigation. I liked the explanation how to remove underlines from links, although I've never seen the need to change link colors (other than manually changing the font color). Changing the cursor is something I've not done before, but see how switching to a different cursor could work on some websites I've designed. The best examples I found in this chapter was the procedures to creating text navigation menus – both horizontal and vertical menus, Very useful, especially the collapsible menus sample.

Chapter 7 handles browser form rendering. This area covers styles for input forms (form that you'd use to order something, or fill out for an online survey), and an example you'll want to try is the one that demonstrates how to create a Mac-style search field. Neat. I also liked the information on working with buttons with CSS, but my favorite parts of this chapter cover web design without tables – especially how to have a two column layout without tables (we hope you noticed that macCompanion went to a two column layout for the Columns section of the magazine starting this issue).

Chapter 8, a very good one, takes on tables. I've known some web developers that disdain tables, although you can do tables with CSS. Schmitt covers cell spacing, padding, borders, text styles, and alternate row colors. And you will want to experiment with the design sample demonstrating a decent web calendar.

Chapter 9 helps understand how to handle layouts. This is where to go to see how to stop using tables and nested tables to construct web pages. Whether you need one or multiple columns, this chapter covers the procedures to use CSS to create them. This chapter is gold and a must-read for web developers. Printing is a sore subject for many web developers. Chapter 10 tells how to create printer-friendly pages, which is important for sites that do not provide PDF downloads of their content. Valuable information and don't skip it unless you feel you don't need help wit this subject.

My overall favorite chapter in this book was Chapter 11 Hacks, Workarounds, and Troubleshooting. This chapter is the place to go when dealing with web applications that must support a mix of Netscape and IE browsers, including IE for Macs. It covers coding, diagnosing bugs versus browser issues, and how to test for problems. Very nice. Chapter 12 concludes with CSS design techniques aimed at common web development issues. Good information and thankfully not at the beginning of the book like I've seen in other web development texts.

Conclusion: I like this book and it stays on my reference bookshelf. The introduction material in the first few chapters will help CSS newcomers, and the wide array of problems with solutions make this book worthwhile for the bookcase or briefcase. While all of the content is good, my personal favorite chapters were Chapters 6 – 11 (yes, I really mean that). Schmitt doesn't provide every code example you'll need, but the numerous examples should help you create your own custom CSS code.

Recommendation: If you haven't used CSS on your web site, you should. This book is an excellent guide for newcomers and experienced developers. Worth the money and a book sure to stay on your bookshelf, at least until O'Reilly releases the third edition.

The O'Reilly logo, featuring the word "O'REILLY" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is significantly larger than the other letters. The apostrophe in "O'REILLY" is red, while the rest of the text is black. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the word.

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Digital Photography Expert Techniques

Reviewed by Mike Hubbartt

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Author: Ken Milburn

Publisher: O'Reilly www.oreilly.com

Released: October 2006

Pages: 404

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ISBN-10: 0-596-52690-3

ISBN-13: 978-0-596-52690-0

Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Great topic coverage, well-balanced and logically organized and bursting with great tips and procedures for intermediate and advanced digital photographers.

Weaknesses: Not an intro book for newcomers, unless they are already Photoshop-savvy.



Digital photography is firmly entrenched in modern society, and people making the move from film to digital often find few salespeople with adequate subject matter expertise. To learn, a few will read the manual the vendor includes with the camera, some ask friends or relatives for help, others turn to the internet, while yet others find solace reading a good book on the subject. Of those methods, I personally prefer a good book, and since I've been taking digital photos for a few years and using PhotoShop I opted to look at Ken Milburn's Digital Photography Expert Tips book.

Ken Milburn is a Photographer, author of twenty-seven books and a Photoshop Guru. While this book isn't aimed at novices, the first couple of chapters provide lists of must-buy items for digital photographers. Ken provides tips on taking photographs, as well as file and directory naming conventions that make it easier to keep track of your photos - important for novices with few or experts with many digital photographs. I also liked his camera settings recommendations at the start of the book. Let's look at the book, chapter by chapter.

Book Index

Chapter 1 – A Plan for Nondestructive Workflow

Chapter 2 – Be Prepared

Chapter 3 – Bridging the Gap

Chapter 4 – Streamlining Camera Raw

Chapter 5 – Nondestructive Layering

Chapter 6 – Nondestructive Overall Adjustments
Chapter 7 – Making Targeted Adjustments
Chapter 8 – Repairing the Details
Chapter 9 – Collage and Montage
Chapter 10 – Creating the Wow Factor
Chapter 11 – Special Purpose Processing
Chapter 12 – Presenting Your Work to the World
Appendix A – Workflow Alternatives

The first chapter of the book focuses on getting you ready to take pictures. It covers things you need to own, how to get the pictures from the camera to the computer, making backups of your digital photos and initial editing. Very good material and well worth the time, even for experienced photographers. Milburn demonstrates how good organization from the start is worthwhile and I heartily agree.

Chapter 2 is ‘Be Prepared’ and anyone planning on taking pictures away from their home should cover this material well before traveling. The author provides lists of accessories to take on a photo shoot and gives good advise how to take shoots. The tips for light metering and how to hold a steady camera won’t be new to film photographers, but will help the novice. One tip I really liked in this chapter dealt with monitor calibration. How many times have you taken a picture and liked what you saw on the computer monitor, but the colors or shading of the printed pictures don’t match the screen? The author mentions your monitor should be calibrated and lists several products on the market.

The third chapter covers image management with the tool you use to view pictures on the computer: the Bridge. Although I did like the information on adding metadata to digital pictures, this was my least favorite chapter in the book. Chapter 4 is the first chapter you actually go into the process of modifying a digital picture. The only downside to the material in this chapter is the audience – many digital cameras don’t take RAW pictures. Check your camera before spending your time in this chapter, and move on to chapter 5 if you can’t use this information yet. Or better yet, buy a better camera.

Chapter 5 is where this book really takes off. It provides a system for nondestructive editing of digital images. The information on the types of layers and purpose for each layer is useful, even though I’ll rarely use everything that Photoshop can do to my photos. But this concise list helps me choose what layers best fit my purposes. Milburn builds on this information in successive chapters and you need read and understand it to gain the most from material presented later in the book.

Chapter 6 covers working on adjustment layers. The author says that adjusting basic levels and curves adjustment layers is the best place to start, and he covers the steps to set shadow, highlight and overall brightness. He also demonstrates (with before and after photos) how that adjusting the curves layer can let you touch up contrast in specific areas of your pictures. Nice! I also liked the demonstrations how you can use both the color balance and curves layers to adjust image color.

The seventh chapter is excellent. It explains and demonstrates how to make targeted adjustments to images. Making a mask, lifting a selection to a new layer and creating neat effects like adding colored light can be useful when doing landscape photography. I especially liked how Milburn explained how to change the background sky in a photograph – some I need to do on a few pictures I took in England last year. Overall, this chapter fleshes out the materials presented in chapter 6.

Chapter 8 is my favorite chapter in the book, as it gives great tips to make huge improvements to images. It covers tools and techniques to repair image details, and the author does some nice before and after

demonstrations. I particularly liked how he showed removing pimples and bags under the eyes of a model. Now if I could just figure how to knock off 15 Lbs of my weight from my pictures, I'd be happier... The best thing I liked about this chapter was the process to remove water pipes in the foreground of the picture of a cabin in the woods. During our trip to Scotland, we went to Stirling Castle and enjoyed it, but they are doing considerable renovations, so most of my photos have scaffolds, which really distracts from the ambience of the place. I'm using the techniques Milburn mentions here to remove those modern constructs from this very old castle. Some additional specific types of repairs Milburn covers include: restoring photos, glamour tips, killing eyeglass glare, architectural tips and adding water drops to an image. Fantastic information and a must-read chapter.

The ninth chapter is titled 'Collage and Montage,' which is the focus. To be honest, neither have much appeal to me, but I read the material as the earlier chapters were so well done and I learned a lot about making both items. Chapter 10 is pay dirt – it explains how to make your pictures stand out. Subjects covered include applying filter effects, blurring, liquefying and warping, using lighting and colorization and film effects. My only caveat – make sure you read the earlier chapters before you start here, unless you already feel you really know Photoshop.

If you've ever wanted to take panoramas, go to chapter 11. Great tips on how to take pictures to merge together as a panorama, and nice screen shots showing what to expect. Another nice bit of news concerns making your photos look more like a painting. I've used Alien Skin's Exposure (<http://www.alienskin.com/>) and found it to be good, but pricy at \$199.

Chapter 12 addresses how to print and distribute your digital images to the world. Although I have decent printers I still lay out the \$.19 per 3x5 print at the local store. I did like the tips on creating a portfolio and a limited edition book – after all, this is the digital age. Milburn also gives the procedure to optimize your photos for the web, including adding copyright and watermark information to your images.

Conclusion:

After reading this book, I have a better appreciation how Photoshop can correct problems I encounter in the field. This book is packed with valuable tips and procedures and before and after pictures to enhance your digital photography experience. This is the third O'Reilly book I've read where I felt it necessary to take copious notes for future reference. If you don't have enough reasons already, add "attend MacWorld Expo 2008 to catch a Ken Milburn session."

Digital Photography Expert Techniques is loaded with useful tips and equipment lists, general and specific procedures to improve digital pictures, and is organized for easy reference. My favorite chapters in this book were Chapters 6 – 8 and 10, although I suggest Photoshop novices start at the beginning to get the most out of this book.

Recommendation:

If you own a digital camera, buy it. It will encourage you to explore Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, and is well worth the time and money you'll invest.

Essential Computer Security: Everyone's Guide to E-Mail, Internet, and Wireless Security

Reviewed by Julie M. Willingham



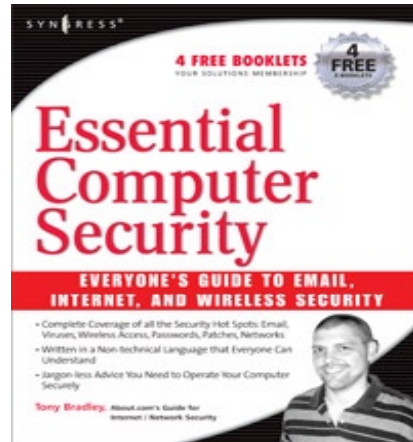
Author: Tony Bradley, CISSP-ISSAP
Released: October, 2006
Pages: 302
\$29.95 USD, \$38.95 CAN
ISBN: 1-597-49114-4

Link: <http://www.syngress.com/catalog/?pid=4130>

New to intermediate Windows computer users at home or in a small office environment

Strengths: Easy to read and understand; thorough yet not intimidating regarding the subjects it covers.

Weaknesses: Definitely aimed at Windows users, though its most basic principles are relevant to all. However, I think a new Mac user would be underserved and overwhelmed by this book. Only Linux is mentioned as an alternative to Windows.



Introduction

Based on its title and subtitle, I thought this would be a good book for me, a science-trained, casual computer user. (Certainly I qualify as an “everyone”.) But I use a Mac, and I was not pleased to read the fourth line of the table of contents, “Chapter 1 Basic Windows Security”. A few pages later I found “Chapter 12 Microsoft Alternatives”, only to find it subtitled “Inside the Linux Desktop”. Nonetheless, I started reading.

The Book Itself

Here is the table of contents that I found both discouraging and promising:

Part I Bare Essentials

Chapter 1 Basic Windows Security

Chapter 2 Passwords

Chapter 3 Viruses, Worms, and Other Malware

Chapter 4 Patching

Part II More Essential Security

Chapter 5 Perimeter Security

Chapter 6 E-mail Security

Chapter 7 WebSurfing Privacy and Safety

Chapter 8 Wireless Network Security

Chapter 9 Spyware and Adware

Part III Testing and Maintenance

Chapter 10 Keeping Things Secure

Chapter 11 When Disaster Strikes

Chapter 12 Microsoft Alternatives: Inside the Linux Desktop

Part IV Security Resources

Appendix A Essential Network Communications

Appendix B Case Study: SOHO (Five Computers, Printer, Servers, etc.)

Appendix C Glossary of Technology and Terminology

Index

Chapter 1 “Basic Windows Security” briefly addressed malware, weak passwords, physical security, and “network neighbors”, subjects that do apply to Mac users, as well as many things that do not apply to us.

I avidly read chapters 2, 6, and 7. There were simple but thorough discussions on choosing passwords, firewalls/routers/ports, spambots and spybots, and Internet safety. After reading this book, I changed some of my passwords to make them more secure. Even though I don’t have wireless, I read and understood Chapter 8 on wireless security. As a Mac user, I only skimmed the rest of the book.

I tested most of the websites mentioned in each chapter, and found that they linked properly. I was also able to view the 4 free “e-booklets”, each a chapter from a different Syngress book, after registering my book.

My biggest problem with this book is that the author states in his introduction “The goal of this book is to teach you enough about computer and network security for you to understand the potential threats and protect your computer from them ... the fundamental concepts of computer security ... apply to any platform.”

While I agree with this statement itself, I found that the author did not fully implement it. All the illustrations and examples were Windows-based, all the software mentioned was for Windows, and almost all of the “additional web resources” did not apply to Macs. A new user of Windows XP would find this book very useful for electronically protecting a new home or office computer.

Conclusion

A new Mac user could learn the concepts in this book at their most basic level, but might be overwhelmed trying to apply them because there are no Mac-centric illustrations or examples in the book; neither are equivalent software packages mentioned, potentially leaving a new Mac user with a feeling of “So what can I do?” The book thoroughly covers everything in its subtitle, but nowhere does the author mention that “everyone” does not include Mac users, so I must downgrade it.

Keynote 2 for Mac OS X: Visual Quickstart Guide

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Tom Negrino

<http://www.peachpit.com>

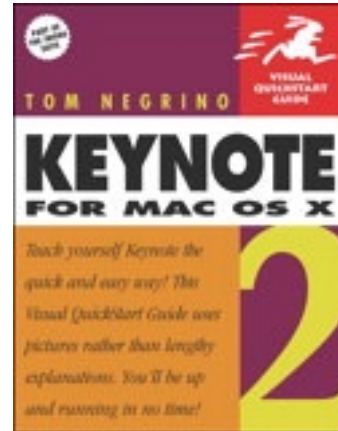
Released: August 3, 2005

Pages: 320

\$22 USD, \$30 CND, 16 UK

ISBN-10: 0-321-24661-6

ISBN-13: 978-0-321-24661-5



Requirements: iWork 05 running on Mac OSX 10.3.6 or later

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Price is right. Thorough understanding and use of Keynote 2 for novice to advanced. Sections for learning and using presentations with PDF Quicktime, Flash and more are well done. Good information about use of themes and additional resources that one can find and get.

Weaknesses: While visual is said to be the key, the B & W and lack of additional highlighting etc. make for a drab set of instructions.

Keynote takes on the Big Boy Powerpoint. I have used Powerpoint as most people have, at one time or another. A recent article in The Wall Street Journal in effect said that using Powerpoint for many is a way to “bore people to death with words, words, words during a lecture/presentation.” There are still some parts of Powerpoint I find difficult and less manageable than I would like. Maybe Steve Jobs also thought about this and had in mind to spice up presentations with Macintosh machines could utilize. Enter Keynote.

Well I have tried both and after awhile I stopped using Keynote because I did not see enough to make me want to use it more. So when Keynote 2 came out, I decided to take another look back, not to bash Powerpoint but to see whether Keynote 2 can make a better presentation.

This series does not have long winding passages of instruction, which is good. The author, a writer of dozens of books and is a frequent presenter at industry trade shows and conferences, has included in this book informational that may convey ideas and have you considering Keynote 2 instead of Powerpoint for your next presentation.

The Visual Quickstart Guide series does what it says throughout all its books. The series gives you a “visual guide” to starting and using an application through the use of illustrations, screenshots, tables of information, which are sprinkled throughout the book. But all illustrations are Black and White, and I believe a visual guide should have more than B&W pictures.

While fairly effective in conveying information related to step-by-step instructions, the pages are bland and structured all in the same fashion. There are little tip sections, but I don't get a better visual presence and go beyond visualization. Other guiding pointers that I like to see in other tutorial type books (lines, more pointers, different types of screen shots, arrow pointers) take instruction to a more visual heightened sense of understanding, and they are missing in this book. That is not to knock the author and how he presents Keynote 2, because the writing is done well, but I need more information to understand how to use Keynote 2 beyond Powerpoint.

While Powerpoint files can be interchanged (exported and imported), I wanted to know if it does better job and if so how. One nice idea that I thought about (but the author does not mention) is that if you get further versions of iWorks (which cost less than Office) you don't have to update to another costly copy of Powerpoint.

A nice addition to the instructions is that in many of the instructions utilize either pull down menus or the pressing of the various keys that duplicate essentially the same efforts. It is all a matter of style or preference according to your preferences. The tips are helpful.

The 14 chapters provide step-by-step instruction. Initially the first chapter includes use of Keynote, getting started with presentations, viewing the slide like screens of your presentations and working with text. Then the information becomes more graphic, literally.

The possible most helpful sections are for intermediate and advanced users. Chapter 11 covers using multimedia files - images, PDF files, QuickTime, Flash, audio and video format files – in presentations. It would have been nice for the author to include additional examples how to use the new application, but perhaps this is best left to the theme section.

The author highlights how to use themes, make your own and much more. There is a great resource section for getting free or commercial themes. Since there are a host of themes to use, this might be a way to use Keynote versus Powerpoint, at least starting up and developing.

I have not found many Keynote books on the market. This book does not have color and perhaps is a little lackluster but it does provide well done instruction and resources. The book might not have all the pizzazz, but that does not mean your presentation have to be drab. This book is fine and priced right and can assist with making your presentations better. Given the better intuitive feel of Keynote, I feel I might try to see if I can integrate more multimedia capabilities into presentations in the future. I could not really say that about Powerpoint so in this way the book has accomplished, in part, what I was looking for. In that way it may help you improve your presentation either in Keynote or exporting later to Powerpoint format. So if you don't use Keynote now, try it and use this book to help make your presentation stand out from the crowd.

Mac Tiger Server Little Black Book:

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

O'REILLY®

Author: Charles S Edge Jr.

<http://www.three18.com/>

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/1933097140/>

Released: February 21, 2006

Pages: 504

\$35 USD, \$49 CND, £24 GBP, € 35 Euro

ISBN-10: 1933097140

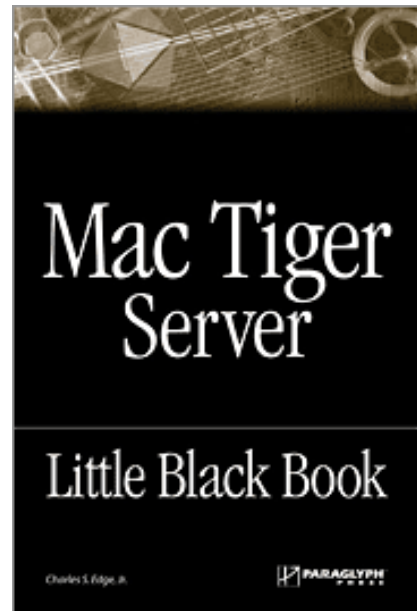
ISBN-13: 9781933097145

Requirements: A dedicated Apple machine and the Tiger Server software from Apple.

Audience: Anyone who dreams of working with Apple's Server software. Intermediate to Advanced.

Strengths: Not too small, not too big, just right as a reference book.

Weaknesses: No online page for the book referring to updates, etc.



What They Say

This unique black book will guide networking professionals and those wanting to set up a server through all the aspects of the new Mac Tiger Server including understanding the Apple network, managing network access, and network protocols such as TCP/IP AppleTalk, and the OSI model.

The book is divided into two sections: the “In Depth” section covers all the concepts being introduced, followed by the “Immediate Solutions” sections that provide hands-on real-world techniques to solve problems. It covers Web-based administration, open directory and managed preferences, protocols for routing, switching and Web services. The book is jam-packed with hundreds of “how-to” tips to ensure that servers are set up correctly and they operate as efficiently as possible. Numerous time-saving techniques are also provided to help web server administrators save time and reduce aggravation.

What I Say

If you are serious about wanting to work in an Apple server environment, than you will need a dedicated Apple box that can be used to house Apple's Tiger Server \$500 USD software <http://www.apple.com/server/macosx/> – and perhaps, this book.

What I liked about *Mac Tiger Server Little Black Book* is that Charles Edge was kind enough to share experiences in each chapter on “for instances” he knows personally in the way-to-brief “from the Trenches” sections. But then again, it is the *Little Black Book*.

Face it, we live in a heterogeneous environment when it comes to computer networks and server farms. This book does a great job showing us how we can “playing nice” in those kinds of environments with Apple hardware and software.

This is the book that really shows how Apple can thrive in the Enterprise.

I think I would have liked a few more web-based links in the last chapter of the book rather than the usual Apple-based ones for finding professionals and training.

For other reference materials, you might go here: <http://safari5.bvdep.com/032136984X>

The Photoshop Channels Book

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Peachpit

Essential books for the creative community

Authors: Scott Kelby

Released: February 14, 2006

Pages: 288

\$ 40 USD, \$ 54 CND, E 29 UK

ISBN-10: 0-321-26906-3

ISBN-13: 978-0-321-26906-5

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

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: Well laid out pages, good step-by-step instructions and screenshots. Use of additional targeted specifics (little arrows, inlaid yellow areas etc.) helps the user focus attention on details. Full color throughout. The author does a solid authorative job of showing step-by-step readable instructions with visuals to highlight the learning.

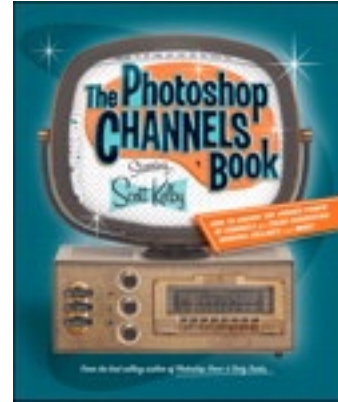
Weaknesses: No CD with the book. High priced but worth the instruction.

Using channels when while working with graphics can be a mysterious affair. While there are advantages to using channel to create graphics the process is not well understood. It seems to be a secret in discovering solutions using channels. Some books just gloss over channels and don't involve the full process. Well, if you in this situation and desire to learn about channels, this book my be exactly what you looking for.

The author is a well know Photoshop book author, and the Editor-in-Chief of *Photoshop User* magazine. What is nice is that there are step-by-step helpful instructions, written in a readable manner, and they help you learn about channels while developing projects to help understand how to create finished innovative graphics in ways you might not have considered before.

The eight chapters span 275 pages. Each chapter starts with an introduction which is a light hearted approach to the information in that section. The instruction starts off with the channel basics in Chapter 1. This introduction is direct, concise and allows you to learn the rudimentary beginning about using channels. You learn about keyboard shortcuts, looking at color channels, and what you can start doing with the channels palette. Creating you own first chanel helps you learn about the palette. Channel shortcuts are listed (Page 21) for both Windows and Macintosh users. There are series of Q&A (P. 22). The rest of the chapters cover masking, layer masking, using color to black and white, using channels for better coloring options, sharpening with channels channel web optimization, and special effects using channels is covered in an .

The pages are well laid out, bright looking, the pictures large and the material is easy to read. The instructions are sectioned off into numbered texts, each with a paragraph or so of text accompanied with illustrations on



each page. PC and Mac instructions are defined throughout along with the color screen shots, photographs, dialog screen shot boxes. Step-by-step instructions take you through the tasks. Arrows, yellow highlights and small red circles show the areas within the visuals that are focus of the targeted particular specifics. This demonstrates the extra attention of the author to help make the instructional process more direct and helpful.

I started understanding and using graphics with channels a few years ago while constructing my websites and related graphics. Initially, one has to take more time when learning how to use channel to use graphics but I found fun and useful. In the long run, learning about channels can make you a more flexible graphic artist. This book is great for beginners or those who want to improve their graphic skills. Lots of tips and tricks, efficiency ideas and ways to develop special effects that can only be created through the use of channels. I am a little surprise that the book did not have a CD for the price. But if you are looking for some great methods to start learning how to use channels , this is a great book to start and progress through your use of graphics.

Shareware

The section 5 shareware reviews in this issue of *macCompanion* are:

- **DiskWarrior 4** – Alsoft’s hard drive utility, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad
- **Pig Latin Translator** – does just as it says, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad
- **Tweak Freak 2.1** – a tool to let the user change the Mac OS interface, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad
- **Ultimate Eudora Plug-in** – enhance control over the Eudora interface, reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad
- **Harry’s Shareware to Share** – an article about shareware worthy of mention and investigation, by Harry {doc} Babad
- **Ted’s Shareware Favorites** – an article about shareware recommendations, by Ted Bade

From Assistant Editor Harry {doc} Babad:

macCompanion Help Wanted

Shareware and freeware reviewers for macCompanion

Motivation - There’s so much out there to share

Rewards - Seeing your name in print

- Sharing new toys with soon to be friends

Contact - Robert/cc Harry

Expected salary - The product is yours all yours.

macCompanion is looking for a few good people that want to write informative reviews of shareware products. Writing experience is useful, but not an absolute requirement.

DiskWarrior 4.0

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



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

Support: Tech.Support@Alsoft.com or 281/353-1510 (Voice)

Shareware Price \$100 USD

Upgrade from Version 3.x \$50 USD Period

Requirements. DiskWarrior requires a G3 Mac or better (such as a G4, G5 or any Intel processor) with built-in FireWire and a minimum 256 MB RAM (512 MB recommended) to start up and run from the DiskWarrior CD regardless of what operating system is installed on the disk to be rebuilt.

Strengths: I concur with Alsoft that in my years of working with the product, DiskWarrior [DW] remains the safest, most technologically advanced, most powerful utility to eliminate directory damage available for any computer.

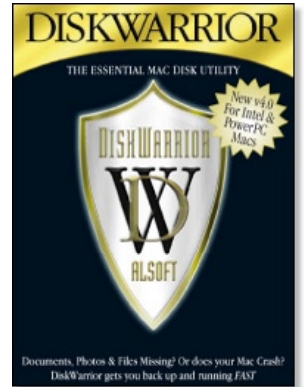
Weaknesses: I remain frustrated by the long boot times to start DW from its CD and the awkwardness of restarting the compute, via mouse button eject disk mode, just to regain access to my newly repaired drive.

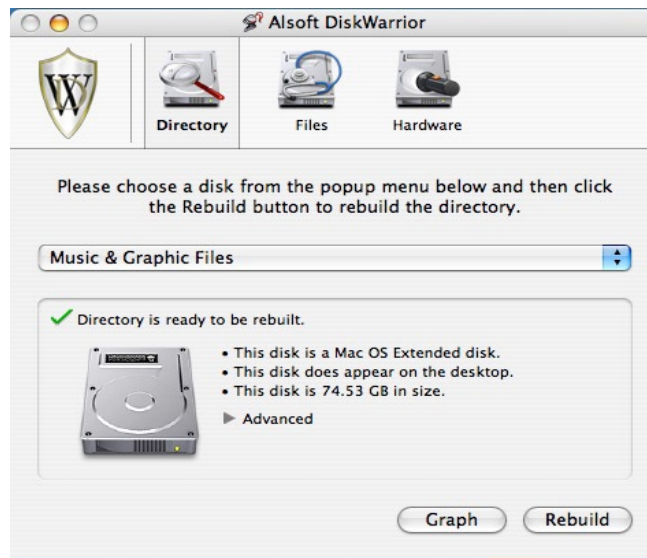
The only non-Apple disk repair software I'd now use on my hard drive.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8.

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

Software Limitation (Alsoft FAQ): If you plan to rebuild the directory on your startup disk, start from another disk capable of starting up in Mac OS X 10.3.9 through 10.4, such as the DiskWarrior CD. DiskWarrior cannot be run while started up from the Apple Mac OS X install CD. Any Mac OS Standard (HFS) or Mac OS Extended (HFS Plus) disk including RAID volumes, journaled disks, case-sensitive disks, FileVaults and iPods. To install it, you must be started from Mac OS 10.3.9 or later





Software Overview

DiskWarrior enables you to find missing documents and files; can rebuild hard disk drive directories and salvage files and folders; allows you to compare your disk before and after a recovery is done; and verifies your repaired directory to make sure it's free of errors. According to Alsoft, DiskWarrior repairs disks no other utility program can repair. DiskWarrior finds your missing documents and files by using a proprietary method of rebuilding directories.

Introduction

I've been a fan of Disk Warriors since version 1.02 was released years ago. That and two Symantec utilities (Norton Anti-Virus and the now abandoned Norton Utilities) were what I used to keep my Mac' hard drive on the straight and narrow. Alas, now I have only DiskWarrior, Apples Disk Utility and NAV (Norton AntiVirus), since I don't trust TechTool Pro despite Apples *endorsement* of the product. For some reason, although it's illogical, I don't often use Disk Utility for anything but erasing disks and reestablishing privileges. Check out the out the list of articles on Mac OS X maintenance and repair at the end of this article for another set of viewpoints on the topic.

Although I've never experienced the sheer panic of the events the publisher describes (see the box below). Knock on wood, so far I've avoided such problems by using a strong, almost fanatical dose of preventive maintenance. I use DiskWarrior as my primary hard disk health safety tool. [I also restore permissions with Apple's Disk Utility, both before and after I install new software.] DW's file and folder function now can repair privileges, as can SuperDuper {backups} but it adds an extra step to your backup process when doing so with DW.

The Blues: Everything just disappeared after your Mac went haywire. All your work documents. The music you most enjoy. The movie of your kid's first steps. It's your life and it's gone.

Less threatening but just as angst causing, perhaps you've tried to open a document and all that happens is a color wheel that spins and spins and spins! Or when your Mac starts up, all you get is a blinking question mark. Or you were in the middle of editing a movie and now your external hard disk isn't on the desktop. Or your MP3s won't play...Or every time you look through your photos, your Mac crashes.

Working With

Installing this application is simple. Open its .dmg, and drag it to your applications > Utilities folder. [There are technical reasons, explained in the excellent 53-page manual, for this location.] You do the routine serial number thing, but only after you entered your administrator's password. This is a powerful program so Alsoft added additional protection on its inadvertent use by less knowledgeable users in a multi-user environment

Directory Damage 101— DiskWarrior can find your missing documents and files by rebuilding your damaged directories. Unsure what a directory is or does?

“The directory is the portion of your disk set aside to record the names and locations of your files and folders. When your directory is either incorrectly updated or not updated at all, your directory is damaged.

“An errant program can damage your directory by inadvertently writing its own data to the portion of the disk that is reserved for the directories. If your Mac crashes or loses power, updated directory information that the Mac OS caches in memory for faster access never gets written to your disk, resulting in directory damage. The presence of directory damage may be very minor and go unnoticed. Or it could make some or all of your files inaccessible!” Checkout <http://www.alfsoft.com/DiskWarrior/details4.html> for more information



Cartoon by T. McCracken

I've used the new software both from the external disk and from a version installed on my Macintosh. With the exception of boot time for the external disk, the software is significantly faster than previous versions, even on my long in the tooth, dual 1000 MHz G4 Macintosh. I had some problems with the installation on my hard disk that I'll discuss in the discomforts section of the review.

Developer's Safety Claims — Based on my own experience and what I've read, DiskWarrior is incredibly safe to use. Inherent to its safety is that it verifies your repaired directory to ensure it is error free. It then uses a fail-safe method of replacing the damaged directory to ensure that interruptions such as power outages won't harm your data. I've used DiskWarrior on my hard disk for preventive maintenance, since version 1.0.2, about once every three to four weeks. So far so good, all's well, as the bard noted, that ends well.

Why, so often, you ask? With all of the shareware and other things I constantly add to hard disk, work with, file and often toss after burning the files to a CD, my directory gets a serious workout. Especially since I remove many of the files after creating the archive copy. For any other use, I suggest reading the manual to get a better idea of what you can expect from the product. Actually, I printed a copy of the manual and put it aside for future use, in case of emergencies – like boot being able to boot my computer or access my primary startup disk.

Checking Up On DiskWarrior — I no longer check difference between the before and after version of my hard disk's repaired directory since I demonstrated the software worked, even with version 1.0.2. I'm usually a bit paranoid when it comes to backup and security on my Macintosh, but based on my experiences and the experiences of others, this seem like a waste of time. You can even compare your disk in its damaged state to its

repaired state. For me, unless, as others have noted, there is a specific problem with a set of disappeared files, the ca. 80 GB of information I've collected is a bit much to check on even with the excellent guidance in the DiskWarrior report.

Note, so far I'm using the product for maintenance, not data repair and recovery. But I have it handy should the need arise.

Doing its Thing — After one click, the software finds everything that's missing or broken. □ You have the option to check the before and after state of you files. Note there is a caveat — DiskWarrior finds all *salvageable* files and folders when it builds a new error-free, optimized directory for you to use. It then provided a report of the problems it found, if any. Using information in the report, DiskWarrior's preview feature does let you see both (1) the detailed problem items and (2) how your disk will appear after it is repaired, but before any changes are made.

What to Look for in the DiskWarrior Report – This is especially important when recovering missing files or repairing suspected damage to a gimpy disk. “After the rebuild has been completed, DiskWarrior will show you a DiskWarrior Report. When DiskWarrior first displays the DiskWarrior Report, it defaults to showing you a summary of the results of the comparison, all the problems found and repaired, and DiskWarrior's recommendation to you. However, if you wish to see more detail regarding the problems found and repaired, you can select the Details button for this information. This will also list all the files and folders that were affected by directory damage in red. You should pay particular attention to these files and folders while inspecting the Preview disk.” For more details on what to do with the information in the report, read the manual.

DiskWarrior has successfully built a new optimized directory for the disk named " Harry's Tiger." The new directory is ready to replace the original directory.

All file and folder data was easily located.

Comparison of the original and replacement directories indicates that there will be changes to the number, the contents and/or the attributes of the files and folders. It is recommended that you preview the replacement directory and examine the items listed below. All files and folders were compared and a total of 13,983,320 comparison tests were performed.

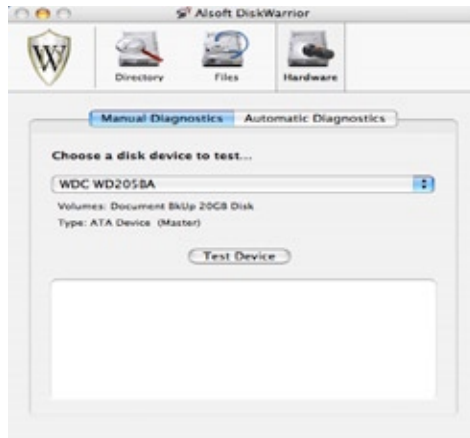
- Errors, if any, in the directory structure such as tree depth, header node, map nodes, node size, node counts, node links, indexes and more have been repaired.
- 22 files had a directory entry with an incorrect text encoding value that was repaired.
- 6 folders had a directory entry with an incorrect text encoding value that was repaired.

Disk Information:

Files: 518,318
Folders: 107,510
Free Space: 47.47 GB
Format: Mac OS Extended (Journaled)
Block Size: 4 K
Disk Sectors: 268,171,472
Media: WDC WD2500JB-00EVA0

Time: 12/26/06 12:34:17 PM
DiskWarrior Version: 4.0

The Top-level Report on my Recent Directory Repair



Other Package Features

DW Recovers More Data From Drives With Hardware Malfunctions — This is a feature I used but never actually needed. The developer notes, “If you wish to enable DiskWarrior’s automatic hardware monitoring feature, you will need to install the DiskWarrior application on your Mac OS computer.” Details on using this feature are well documented in the Manual.

Fixing Files and Folders — DiskWarrior now includes an additional suite of file and folder tests, to find problems before they cause you trouble, allow the software to better function for preventive maintenance. In addition, DiskWarrior can now even identify corrupted Preference (.plist) files, a boon when software, including the Finder, gets quirky. As noted in the manual:

“Sometimes the internal structure of special files can become corrupt. Under MacOS X, preference files, as well as many other data files, share a special format. If this format becomes corrupt other parts of the OS will be unable to read these files or will read incorrect data, causing bad system behavior. DiskWarrior will check the internal structure of these types of files for flaws. If any are found they will be displayed in the report and you can remove those files including OS limits on folder depth, number of files in a single folder, and length of file path. DiskWarrior checks for these things and reports them so you can fix them. DiskWarrior checks these links and repairs them if possible. The report will tell you what files were repaired and identify any that could not.”



A Shortcut for Using an Installed Version of DiskWarrior — By simply dragging a disk in the Finder onto the DiskWarrior application (or its alias), DW will begin rebuilding the disk’s directory immediately. You can also drag a group of disks onto the DiskWarrior application and DiskWarrior will rebuild them all sequentially. This works great on my Zip 750 disk, which I’ve not yet burned to CD. It also works on the external drive (partitions) I use for data backup. [I don’t check these since I backup my directory-repaired startup disk.]

Discomforts

Installed Application Startup, an Initial Problem — When I first launched DiskWarrior 4.0, which I'd installed on my hard drive, the application reaches the splash screen and DiskWarrior logo but never progressed past the Starting Services message. I found the prominently posted answer in the Alsoft site.

“If you are experiencing this issue, it is likely that a third-party application is interfering with the DiskWarrior application. One possibility is that you have Application Enhancer installed on your computer to enable haxies such as FruitMenu, WindowShade, FontCard or ShapeShifter. If so, you will need to add DiskWarrior to the Master Exclude List” in the Application Enhancer Preference Pane.” For more details check <http://www.alsoft.com/DiskWarrior/support.html>

Fixing Files and Folders, No Report to Save — There absolutely no way to capture a report on what DiskWarrior had found, repaired nor not when working with the is new function. I had a dozen files that could not be repaired and wanted to check them out but shorting of writing them down, you know pen and paper, I had no way to keep that list.

Give Me Back My Hard Drive, Please — In a fashion comparable to Version 3.0x, DiskWarrior 4 has the same problem with rebooting after quitting the application on the CD. When one quits the application from the master disk, it will only reboot to itself. Perpetual reboot, unless the disk is ejected on startup by pressing the mouse button (on an Apple USB wired mouse). [When I first met this in Version 3.x, I actually had to shut down my computer and remove the CD with a paperclip; at least until I found out the depress mouse button thing in the Macintosh Bible. Doing so on a wireless mouse or many 3rd party USB mice will not work — since those mice are recognized only in a later stage of the OS boot-up process. This is not Alsoft's fault, its caused by a combination of Apple's licensing limitations and the way the OS is wired.

Long, Longer, Longest CD Boot Time — Folks, although not mentioned above. Once booted, DiskWarrior version 4 appears to be about a third faster in analyzing your volumes and crating a replacement directory... but alas the long boot time for the CD is still exasperating. Indeed I thought there was something wring with the DiskWarrior disk because after waiting the tradition minute or two, nothing happened. I was wrong.

[An except from a support file provided by Jason of Alsoft Technical Support] “If you're unable to start up your computer from our DiskWarrior CD, please try the following. “Make sure you are waiting between five and ten minutes to start up from the DiskWarrior CD. If you have only allowed “a couple of minutes” for the DiskWarrior CD to load, please try starting up from the DiskWarrior CD again.” – The solution works, but is neither described in the manual or in the ReadMe file.

A Final Nit, With the Manual – The manual needs an illustration and a bit more discussion about the “more details feature” when checking the report created by the software during the direct analysis process. After all, the detailed report is the best basis for targeting both a comparison (before and after) and for doing focused file recovery.

Conclusion

DiskWarrior has been such an important part of my computing life that I did not wait to get the developer's approval to review the product and to send the NFS copy of the software. Instead I logged on to the Alsoft website, and bought an upgrade, all within a few minutes of getting the emailed availability announcement. [I'd actually rescued the message from my SPAM folder!]

Pig Latin Translator 1.0 Widget

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



<http://www.jonbrown.org/widgets/pig.php>



Developer: Jon Brown

Shareware Price

Free

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.6 or later.

Released: October 12, 2006 Download Size: 364 KB

Audience: All pig Latin users, old or young



Strengths: isThay isway away interestingway andway unfay
oductpray ogrampray utbay Iway ishway itway ouldway
inputway oremay ikelay away exttay editorway.

[*Translation: see the conclusion*]

Weaknesses: I could not get the widget to work, so all testing
was done on the WidgiApp.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR
SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8.

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

Disclaimer: When briefly reviewing share-freeware I will often use the developer's 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?

Publisher's Summary

Pig Latin Translator is a Dashboard widget that allows you to enter any text and have it translated into pig Latin. Simply enter the text into the speech bubble and click the pig to translate, you can then save your pig Latin masterpiece or you can go back and try again. Also check out the built sample in text alternatives to translate for children and adults, this widget is fun for all ages.

Introduction

Sometimes it's the time for all good reviewers to return to the absurd. Enjoy. Another item I need to mention, I did not test the widget, since I could not get it to work. Instead I used Amnesty Singles to convert it to an application [See macCompanion January 2007, 3.5 macCs], a WidgiApp!

...and if you don't know what pig Latin is, here an excerpt for the Wikipedia write up.

Pig Latin is a [language game](#) primarily used in [English](#). Pig Latin is usually used by children for amusement or to converse in (perceived) privacy from adults or other children. Conversely, adults sometimes use it to discuss sensitive topics they don't want very young children to overhear.

The usual rules for changing standard English into Pig Latin are:

1. For words that begin with [consonant](#) sounds, move the initial consonant or [consonant cluster](#) to the end of the word and add "ay." Examples:
 - a. button *utton-bay*
 - b. star *ar-stay*
 - c. three *ee-thray*
 - d. question *estion-quay*
 - e. wikipedia *ikipedia-way*
2. For words that begin with [vowel](#) sounds (including [silent consonants](#)), simply add the syllable "ay" to the end of the word.
 - a. eagle *eagle-ay*
 - b. america *america-ay*
3. The most common variation in Pig Latin is to replace the "ay" in the second rule with other suffixes such as "way", "yay", or "hay"; thus, "eagle" *eagle-ay*, *eagle-way*, *eagle-yay*, or *eagle-hay*, depending on the rules. The "ay" formulation is probably the original, with the variations arising due to [sandhi](#). Another variation is to take only the first letter and put it at the end, and add -ay, so "they" becomes "heyday", rather than "eythay" These variations may also be geographical.

Working With

Installing this application is simple. When the widget download is complete, click on it — Macintosh OS X and places it in /Library/Widgets/ in your home folder. Then select Dashboard, in your dock and, in principle, start using it.

The widget allows you to type information in the speech bubble and get it translated into Pig Latin. Simply start typing your text and then click on the pig (nose) to translate your text.

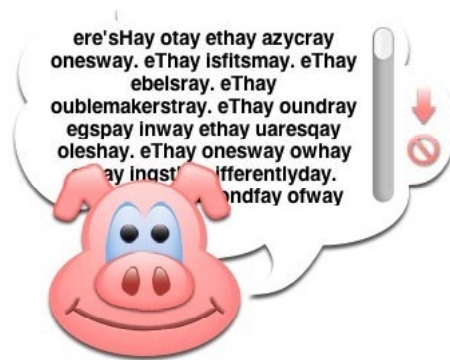


Hint: You must first click in the speech bubble to get its attention (in the application), then start typing. Once done you can save your translation to a text file or you can go on and try some other phrases. Key to success with the software is recognizing the symbols in the translation window. The downward pointing arrow lets you save the translation to text while the Circle Slash symbol takes you back to a clean speech bubble. A few peculiarities of the program, heck its free, but without them it would be easier to use.



Input of text does not follow a typical text-editing interface. First there is no cursor insertion point. Second the arrow keys that normally would allow you to move the cursor don't, of course there's no cursor. I found it easier to start fresh rather than try to correct a typo. You can, somewhat oddly, correct types by using the backspace and delete keys on your keyboard, but that is counter intuitive.

In addition, when first started up, at least in WidgiApp form, pasting text from MS Word or even TextEdit was slow; so slow that I thought I hadn't keyed the paste correctly. However after doing a couple more translations, everything was up to expected speed. As Alice said... *Curiouser and curiouser.*



Conclusion

Note: This is a interesting and fun product program but I wish it would input more like a text editor. If the widget had worked on my computer, other do it would have gotten a bit higher score. If it has a few more text-editor like features it would have been a wonderful and briefly entertaining program, at least until duty called.

Tweak Freak 2.1

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: Jeff Ulicny at Big, Fat, Stinking Software

<http://home.comcast.net/~jeff.ulicny/software/utis.html>

Support: jeff.ulicny@comcast.net

Shareware Price: Donationware

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.4 or later.

Released: 20 January 2006 **Download Size:** 885 KB

Audience: User comfortable with, not those who actively seek to change their operating systems interface.

Strengths: Are you left unfulfilled by the meager set of preferences Apple has left you with? If so, you just might be a candidate Tweak Freak.

Weaknesses: Nothing of note.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8.

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

Disclaimer: When briefly reviewing share-freeware I will often use the developer's 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?

Introduction

I have always been comfortable tweaking the interface of whatever Macintosh operating system I was working with. Whether I was adding alternative or new menu shortcuts, or restoring tools that apple had left out when updating to a new OS version, I wanted to play.

For OS X, my tune-ups have focused on haxies such as those created by Unsanity [<http://www.unsanity.com/>] such as *FontCard*, *Fruit Menu*, *WindowShade*, *Labels X*, *Mighty Mouse* and *Menu Master*. Other favorites include Marc Moni's *Smart Scroll*, Yellow Lemon Software's *FolderGlance*, and Steve Disbrow's *Screen Shots*, all of which installed in the Macintosh OS X Systems Preferences pane.

These products are not one-to-one alternatives to Tweak Freak's functions. They are just tools I've used for interface customization and finder enhancement. Check these products out at the download site; they are great.

All of these products have features that overlap those of Tweak Freak, it's a case of too much riches. The choice for these tools boils down to which interface you find easiest to use.

In addition I have installed, as stand alone tools, David Lloyd's *iCan*, Christian Gruenberg's *XMenu* and *Easy Find* [Devon Technologies], Maintain's *Cocktail* and Jake Pietrykowski's *FontNuke* all of which enhance my OS's capabilities. They do the things that Apple left out of the OS or provide added {needed} functions without going to the terminal application.



You the reader are likely well aware that almost all of the functions provided by Tweak Freak are either accessible within the Apple software installed on your computer or in third party applications, which I've found stable. Never the less, having all the functions integrated into one small footprint product, which allows me to perform both cleaning and customization functions, seems to make sense. No wonder that when I read about the product, it caught my attention.

Publisher's Summary

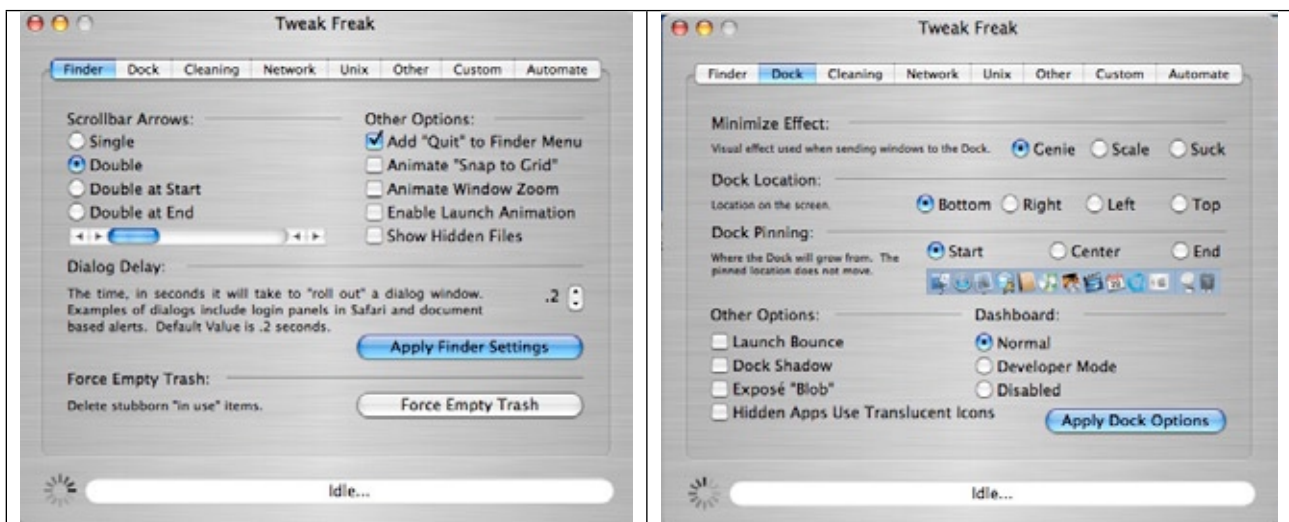
Tweak Freak is a Mac OS operating system enhancement tool that gives you more options than Apple to tune the system to your needs. Some of its capabilities are listed below.

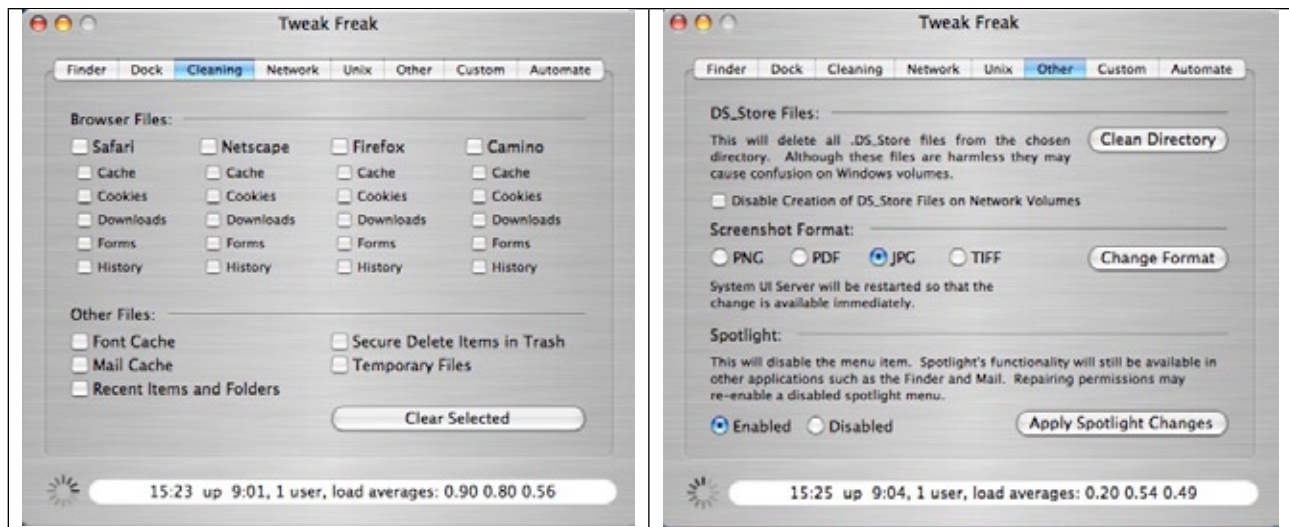
Finder / Window Options	Dock Options	Other Stuff
Configure Scrollbar Arrows*	Change Dashboard* Mode	Change Screenshot Format*
Add "Quit Finder" to Finder Menus*	between Active, Inactive or Developer.	Get Uptime Report
Enable / Disable the "Snap to Grid" animation	Change the Minimize Effect*	Clean DS_Store files*
Enable / Disable window "Zooms"	Set placement of the Dock*	Disable Spotlight Menu*
Enable / Disable Launch Animations	Set pinning of the Dock	Configure Safari*
Show hidden Files in the Finder*	Enable / Disable Translucent Icons for Hidden Applications	Unix Tweaks
Change the Dialog Sheet Animation Delay	Enable / Disable the Launch Bounce	Run Daily, Weekly, and Monthly Scripts
Backup / Restore Finder Preferences	Enable / Disable the Dock Shadow	Repair Permissions*
Force Empty Trash*	Enable / Disable the Exposé "Blob"	Empty caches from all major browsers*
	Backup / Restore Dock Preferences	Empty the System's Font Cache*
		Optimize Network Buffers for Dialup or Broadband

Items Marked with a [*] are those that I'd already had tools

Working With

Installing this application is simple. Open its .dmg, and drag it you're your applications folder. Below, I've provided four screenshots of its main screens to give you a taste of its interface.





An Important Observation — The software recognized my existing settings, some of which were applied by the stand-alone applications previously disused. The few tests I ran went smoothly, and no conflicts or crashes occurred when I initially changed and reestablished my favorite finder configuration.

Of course cleaning browser files and emptying cache files is permanent. I used Tweak Freak's cleaning feature to zap all of my Internet browsers' caches and other storage hogs in one click. This worked well; I wonder how much hard disk space I regained? The negative side of this act, I'm going to have to reuse passwords on several favorite sites that remember them, since my cookies are all gone.

Only Allume Systems Internet Cleanup has such one-shot capabilities, but I've never been comfortable with that application and had de-installed it, after a few almost disastrous experiments. I also have used other shareware apps in this category, and the browsers themselves to clean chase files and the like as well, some of which have been reviewed for macCompanion.

Discomforts

Force Eject/Unmount Volume — I have an occasional problem when backing up my drive to an external partitioned 250 GB volume. At times, after using SuperDuper for the backup process, despite having all applications, except the finder, closed, the updated partition will not eject. To eject the partition, I must restart my computer. Now a tool to force dismount/eject a partition or volume, obviously not the startup volume, would be great. [Note, after writing this I discovered *Semulov* 1.0, a Unmount Volume Tool on MacUpdate, so next month I talk about it.

Network Cache Buffer Optimization Limitation — “By default, Mac OSX does not take full advantage of broadband connection”. This will optimize the network buffers for either type connection. Unfortunately, changes are lost upon restart.” Shucks! Jeff Ulicny further notes in his FAQ, “[Q: Can you make the Network Buffer setting stay after restart?](#) A: No. I've designed Tweak Freak to make as few permanent system changes as possible. Why? Damage control. I don't want to be responsible for permanently screwing up your system.” This tweak seems to give my downloads a speed burst, perhaps someone can write a script make this happened and pass it on to me.

Conclusion

I liked using Tweak Freak to clear my font and other cache files. It was easy to use; and with its free price tag, it's affordable, too. In addition to clearing your font cache, it also handles other system maintenance tasks,

like clearing your [log files](#), repairing permissions, removing Web browser cookie files, and more. I'm not sure whether I will de-install the other applications I own that perform some of the same functions provided by Tweak Freak, but it definitely a consideration. [The single function alternatives take up disk space; but until I am convinced there nothing lurking out there in crash-land, I stick with keeping the other applications.

Ultimate Eudora Plugin 2.2

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Developer: Stanton McCandlish

<http://www.well.com/~mech/Software/>

Support: mech@well.com

Shareware Price: Donorware

Requirements: Mac OS 8, 9, X (any version), Partial Intel Mac compatibility. Eudora Pro or Lite, versions 4, 5 or 6 and perhaps 3.

Released: 20 May, 2006

Download Size: 106 KB

Audience: All Eudora users

Strengths: Takes a few minutes to install, but I love the power it gives me in controlling Eudora, especially be able to change the from field to my macC email address.

Weaknesses: Nothing serious so far.

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 GB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.4.8. I am using Eudora 6.2.14 in paid mode. It is the last Qualcomm update.

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Disclaimer: When briefly reviewing share-freeware I will often use the developer's 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?

Introduction:

I know that very few of you out there are Eudora users; perhaps that will change when the open-source version of Eudora gets released. [See <http://wiki.mozilla.org/Penelope>]

The **Penelope** project's intention is to join the Eudora® user experience with the Mozilla platform. We intend to produce a version of [Eudora](#) that is open source and based on [Mozilla](#) and [Thunderbird](#). It's *not* our intention to compete with Thunderbird; rather, we want to complement it.

We are committed to both preserving the Eudora user experience and to maintaining maximum compatibility, for both developers and users, with Thunderbird. It is our goal to build a single development community around Thunderbird and Eudora, so that both mailers advance faster than they previously have.

The product's major, to me benefit, aside from enhancing my control over the Eudora interface was I could get rid of several other plugins (as listed in the product's readme file). These are items I'd previously installed—Over the years; I already had been tweaking Eudora. Thus it appears I should be able to avoid a few of the occasional conflicts that have been plaguing me and many other Eudora users for years.



Publisher's Summary Plus:

For the Mac version of Eudora ONLY, this plug-in replaces virtually all third-party plug-ins that I'm aware of except rap text. It gives you ten additional panes under Settings (Preferences), with many, many options from should've-been-obvious to really, really geeky. The plug-in totally replaces all of the various conflicting third-party plug-ins that used to try to provide such features. See the included ReadMe file for install instructions.

This is a Mac OS 8, 9 and X Eudora plug-in that enables many hidden features of Eudora Pro (and Eudora Lite, to a lesser extent), from version 3 onward, though many of them will only do anything useful in version 4, 5, 6 and (presumably) onward. It replaces up to 14 other (often conflicting) plug-ins listed in the product's readme file. All of the new features are accessible from Eudora's preferences pane. The plug-in adds 10 new panels to Eudora giving you addition control over its features and capabilities.

Installing and Using the Software:

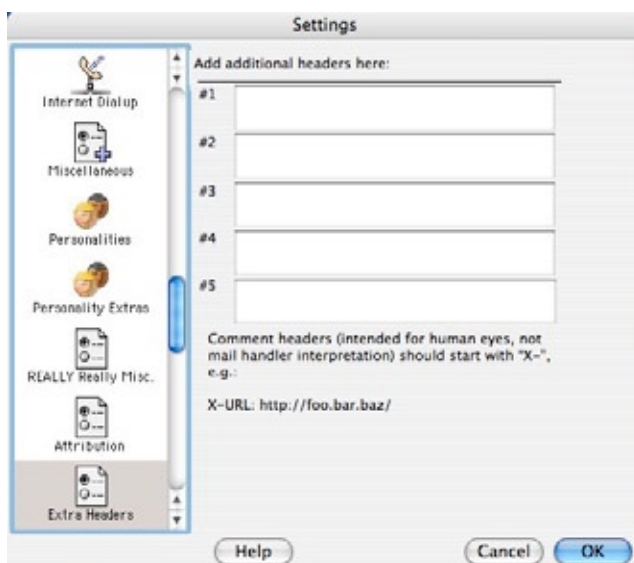
Installing this application is simple. Open its readme file and follow instructions. The go and take you pick of the preferences you want to tweak to make Eudora interface truly yours. And continue to use your email client. I didn't even have to reboot the computer. I'm not now sure whether I had to quit Eudora before installing the new plug-in and deleting the old.

Not all the features provided by Stanton McCandlish either make sense to me, or appear immediately useful. I've listed those that provided me instant gratification at the top of the features list.

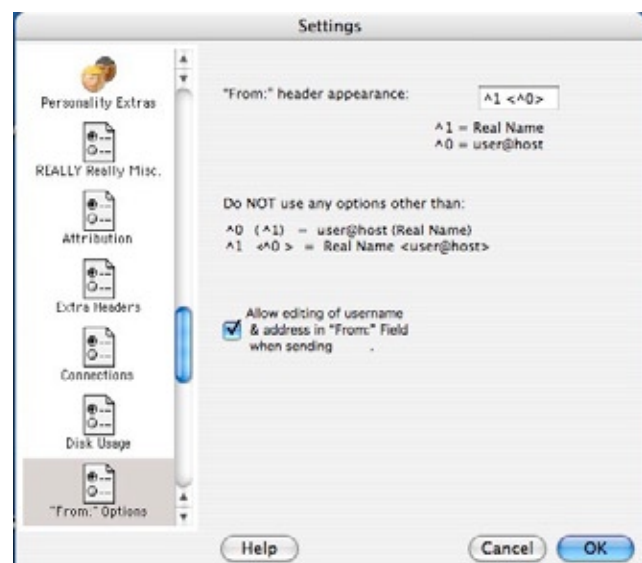
Features

Some of its Most Useful Features Sez {doc}:

- Edit the "From" field when composing a message – *Yeah!*
- Edit the reply subject prefix ("Re: " default) — *Isn't Reply: nicer?*
- Add your own custom headers to a message or to your stationary — I'm still playing with this since I'm not sure it will be useful. After all I do use shadow Clipboard for such things.
- Change address format from "user@site (Firstname Lastname)" to "Firstname Lastname" which is more standard. — *Hmm, something to try after the 20th when all my macC articles are submitted.*



Extra Headers — Eudora Preferences



From Options — Eudora Preferences

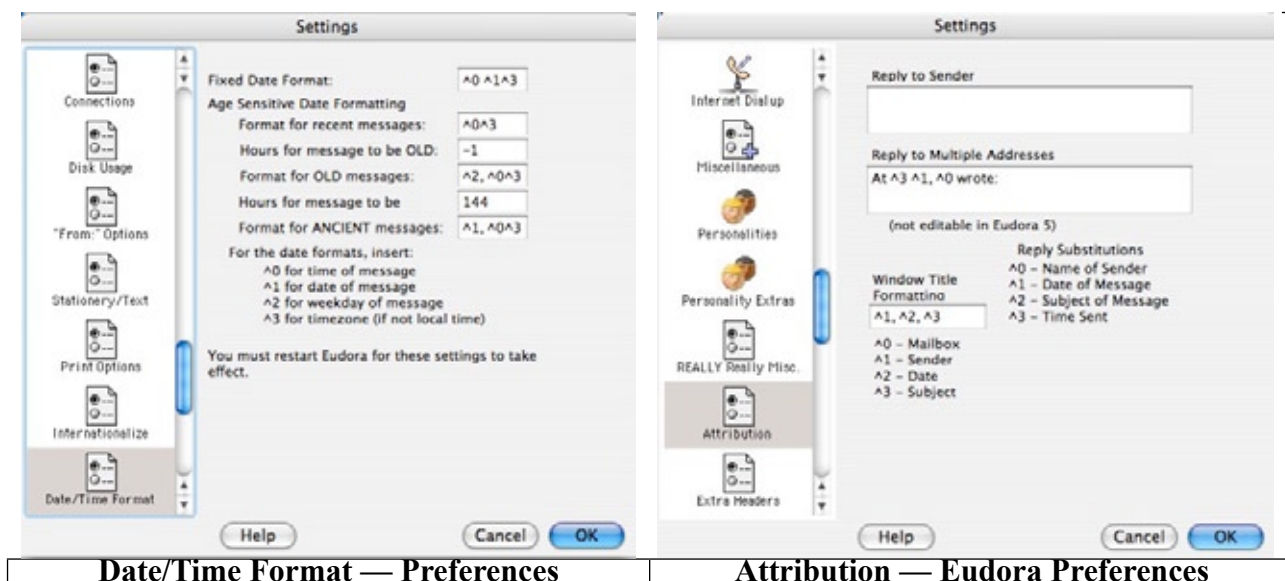
Other Features:

- Change format of date & time display in mailbox windows
- Change text file creator code for saved files (e.g. to BBEdit) — *So far I've no need for this feature.*
- Adjust disk usage — With lots of disk space and memory, the older message compression feature is something I don't need.
- Edit lots of default strings such as the quoting character (">" default) — *Help, why would I want to do that?"*
- Force Eudora to use RFC-standard forwarding markers — *Okay, but why?*
- Change attribution strings — *Why?*
- Allows internationalization of a few things, and more.

Minor Discomforts

A Need to Still Wrap — I still have to use Selznick Scientific's *SmartWrap Plugin* for Eudora to analyze the text of my hard-to-read email messages and re-wrap them perfectly by removing all unnecessary line breaks, quote characters, and excess formatting with just one click. [<http://www.selznick.com/products/smartwrap/mac/index.htm>].

Limitations in Using Some of the Preferences — I could not completely understand what was needed in several of the preferences (e.g., Attributions, From) so I made only limited use of them. The good news is that I can now change my email address in the From: Box when sending macCompanion related email. The bad news that were things about changing formats that would probably make sense if I had either the time or desire to study them [I've provided two examples that illustrate my confusion A few examples in the readme file would have been nice, but it's a free world, so one shouldn't make unreasonable demands.

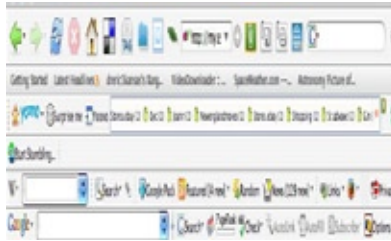


None of these discomforts (e.g., software limitations) are very serious and you folks smarter than I am will likely have no trouble using the features I've neglected. With all due respect to Stanton McCandlish, I did follow his advice.

The features themselves are either a) self-explanatory, or b) so geeky that if you don't know what they mean already you shouldn't mess with them. Please be aware that some of these features are "dangerous". If you don't understand them, don't change them, or you may not be able to send or receive mail properly!

Conclusions

For those who still are comfortable with Eudora despite its long stretches of neglect, and lack of features found in newer email clients, this is a must addition. Other than my lack of time, patience and alas understanding, all the features I needed to enhance my Eudora experience worked, flawlessly.



ConceptDraw MINDMAP 4.5 [MacUpdate rating: 2.0 Stars] — Brainstorming, mind mapping and visual thinking. ConceptDraw MINDMAP is your personal assistant when discussing ideas, making decisions and planning projects. It enables you to present information in a simple, visual way by building trees of ideas or Mind Maps. Use ConceptDraw MINDMAP to organize brainstorming sessions, take notes, plan your work and make presentations.

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EazyDraw 2.1.3 [MacUpdate rating: 4.0 Stars] — A vector-based drawing application for desktop publishing (DTP) with Apple’s Mac OS X operating system. It is an Illustration or drawing software application that offers vector-based graphics editing for creating simple, non-photographic drawings, technical diagrams, and illustrations such as logos, icons, buttons, and stylized art. Support for Classic Mac drawing formats including full import of ClarisDraw, MacDraw Pro, and MacDraw II files.

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FinanceToGo 1.0.2 [MacUpdate rating: Not Yet Rated] — This is an affordable and easy-to-use personal finance manager based on the principles of double entry accounting. If you are an individual or small business owner, FinanceToGo is an ideal tool to create budgets and track what you spend your money on with automatically generated graphs and charts.

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iDraw 1.3.2 [MacUpdate rating: 4.5 Stars] — This is a powerful, yet easy to use, illustration and animation program for Mac OS X. It has many of the features of high-end design programs, such as smooth anti-aliased rendered paths, different fill types including semi-transparent colors and gradients, object transformations such as tapers and arcs, text shape manipulation, and much more. Best of all, it’s only a fraction of the price of commercial drawing packages with comparable features.

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My Favorite Shareware Applications

By Ted Bade, Edited by Harry doc_Babad

Harry, our Shareware Editory asked me “What shareware programs are the most important to you?” It didn’t take me long to choose several items, my FAVs, that I use almost daily, or that I would not be without. So here is my list with a short description and the reason why I like them.

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GraphicConverter X [<http://www.lemkesoft.com/> - Shareware \$30, now version 5.9.4]

GraphicConverter is a very powerful and robust graphics application that any Mac user who works with images should not be without. Over the years, this program have grown and improved in many ways from its start as a program that converts between various graphic formats. Today it rivals Adobe’s Photoshop Elements in power and abilities. It will open just about any graphic file and many video formats as well. Once the image is opened you can easily convert the image to just about any format you can imagine. But that’s not all this program does.



It also offers a wide variety of image enhancement features to let you tweak your image. Things like brightness, contrast, levels, colors, and so forth. There are also a variety of filters and image effects that you can modify your image with. The list is large and varied, I must admit, there are a number of them I have never used and have no idea what they do! If there is a particular feature you want, check out GraphicConverter before passing it by. It is now PCC/Intel comparable and there is an excellent manual and help files available from its developer as well as a low cost workshop to quickly turn you into an expert user.

If that isn’t enough, Graphics Converter also can put on a very nice slideshow of a folder of images offering several options for working your way through a folder of images. When the slide show is running there are

some options for working with the images. It is a great way to sort through a camera download before bringing it into iPhoto.

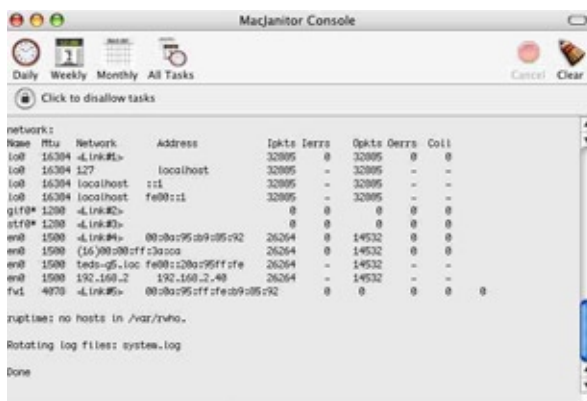
I will typically download a set of images from my camera, and go through the image using GraphicConverter, tossing yucky images and manipulating those that I like, then take the completed folder and drop it into iPhoto for organization and storage. While there might be a few features of Photoshop Elements I like better, but I like using GraphicConverter better. It boots in half the time Elements does on my computer, and has a better feeling interface, IMHO. It's a great all around useful program for dealing with images. I wouldn't be without it!

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MacJanitor [http://personalpages.tds.net/~brian_hill/macjanitor.html/] - Freeware, Now version 1.3]. When Apple decided to create MacOS X and to embrace a UNIX core it added a lot of power and maturity to MacOS. Along with this power there comes some responsibility (my apologies to Spiderman: the Movie.) that rests on the Mac user. A responsibility that many Mac users don't even realize they have. A UNIX system needs regular maintenance, consisting of daily, weekly, and monthly routines. What? You didn't know there were daily, weekly, and monthly maintenance chores involved with running a Macintosh? You are not alone. UNIX is robust and powerful, and stays this way because of the maintenance that is done.

Many of the people I work with, helping them to make the best of their Macs, do not know that it is a good idea to run these maintenance tasks. The good news is that UNIX will automatically run them when required. The bad news is, that the time spot for running these maintenance items is in the wee hours of the morning, when most home based Macs are shutdown. So the tasks are never run.



So, to run these important routines, you need a program like MacJanitor. To run these utilities, click on the MacJanitor mop bucket icon, log in to give permission, and select to run either Daily, Weekly, monthly, or even all the tasks at once. Your Unix core will thank you! If you are a geeky type, you might want to look at the output MacJanitor provides. (But it is up to you to figure out the meaning of this UNIX speak!)

MacJanitor is a must have for all Mac owners who don't want to keep their Macs up all night and who don't have the know how to force UNIX to reschedule these important tasks. And don't forget to repair permissions at least monthly as well. The product is only available I n a PCC version.



Flip4Mac provides access to almost all Windows Media files. The only thing their codec doesn't do is support Microsoft's Digital Right Management protocol, but then, Microsoft's Zune doesn't either, so don't feel bad!

What is cool about this product is that it uses Apple's QuickTime player as the host for playing Windows Media files. Which means that once you install this product, playing any Window Media file means just double clicking on it if it is a file or clicking on a web link to get the file to play inside of Safari. When you do, familiar QuickTime controls pop up to give you access to this file, along with all the abilities QuickTime offers.

The other terrific aspect of this product is that Telestream, Inc continues to update the codec when Microsoft does, so Mac users aren't left behind when Microsoft makes a change or improvement.

The basis program is free and any Mac user that doesn't have this program installed is really missing out. If you are into working with video, there are also pay for levels that provide more and more capabilities for working with and saving Windows Media files. Check out their web site for exact details on this.

Flip4Mac is a must have application for anyone who has Windows friends, like to surf the Internet, or who enjoys watching all those corny videos people like to make.

Goodies

The section 6 extra goodies in this issue of *macCompanion* are:

- **January Updates of Interest** – Some software updates, plus a shameless Astronomy plug, by Mike Hubbartt
- **Internet Recipe Hunting and Reformatting Tips Pt III** – the third of three articles about food and the Internet, by Harry {doc} Babad
- **Freeware of the Month** – the title says it, by Tim Verpoorten
- **Doc Babad's Macintosh Tips** – a bunch of useful tips from our Shareware Editor, Harry {doc} Babad
- **GarageBand 101: Mastering GarageBand** – a tutorial how to use GarageBand, by Daphne Kalphon
- **Credit Checks and Stargates** – an article about scams and cons, by Robert Pritchett
- **Rants, Raves and Revelations - Credit Card Protection-Sound Advise** – credit card protection tips, by Harry {doc} Babad
- **Mac Security 101** – Firewall Alternatives, by Kale Feelhaver
- **According to Hoyle** – the ANSI C/C++ Libraries, continuing the excellent coding tutorial by Jonathan Hoyle

January Updates of Interest

By Mike Hubbartt

Some software updates released in January you should look for are:

1. Microsoft Office 2004 for Mac 11.3.3 Update (released January 9, 2007)

<http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=6074618>

This update includes all of the improvements released in all previous Office 2004 updates, plus several improvements to enhance security and stability, including fixes for vulnerabilities that an attacker can use to overwrite the contents of your computer's memory with malicious code.

Applies to: Office 2004 Standard Edition, Office 2004 Student and Teacher Edition, Office 2004 Professional Edition, Microsoft Word 2004 for Mac, Microsoft Excel 2004 for Mac, Microsoft PowerPoint 2004 for Mac, Microsoft Entourage 2004 for Mac

Update System Requirements

Operating system: Mac OS X 10.2.8 or a later version of Mac OS; if you want to use Spotlight, Sync Services, or smart cards, you must be running Mac OS X 10.4.3 or a later version.

FYI - Office 2008 for Mac is coming

<http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=6074609>

A new version of Office for Mac is on the way. Scheduled to be available in the second half of 2007, Office 2008 for Mac will work on PC- and Intel-based Macs, and will share technology with Office for Windows while still delivering new, Mac-only features.

2. iValet 1.0.3 (Released January 10, 2007)

<http://www.ziggy-soft.com/News.html>

iValet is an inexpensive yet useful calendar, calculator, clip collector and notebook. This update is free to registered users and the Shareware price for new users is \$19.

- Added a special menu to the Notebook, allowing users to drag or copy a text in the Notebook and then format this text in many ways:
 - Convert To Uppercase/Lowercase/Initial Caps.
 - Prefix Each Line (insert some text at the beginning of each line), De-prefix Each Line.
 - Hard Wrap Text (Inserting line breaks to hard wrap text at specified length; you might want to process long paragraphs of text, for example, to send as an email message).
 - Remove Empty Lines (cleaning a text that contains unwanted blank lines).
 - Search And Replace.
 - Sort Lines.
- Now users can set an option in the preferences pane to avoid that iValet ask for a confirmation before it quits.

I've used and liked iValet since I reviewed it. My favorite new feature is the preference setting to kill the confirmation before shutting down or restarting OS X.

3. Starry Night 6.0.4 (released January, 2007)

<http://www.starrynight.com>

The newest version – 6.0.4 – is available at no charge to registered owners of version 6.0.x. Starry Night version 6.x owners may download and install the newest update to Starry Night: version 6.0.4. The 6.0.4 update, ranging from 10 MB to 46 MB, includes:

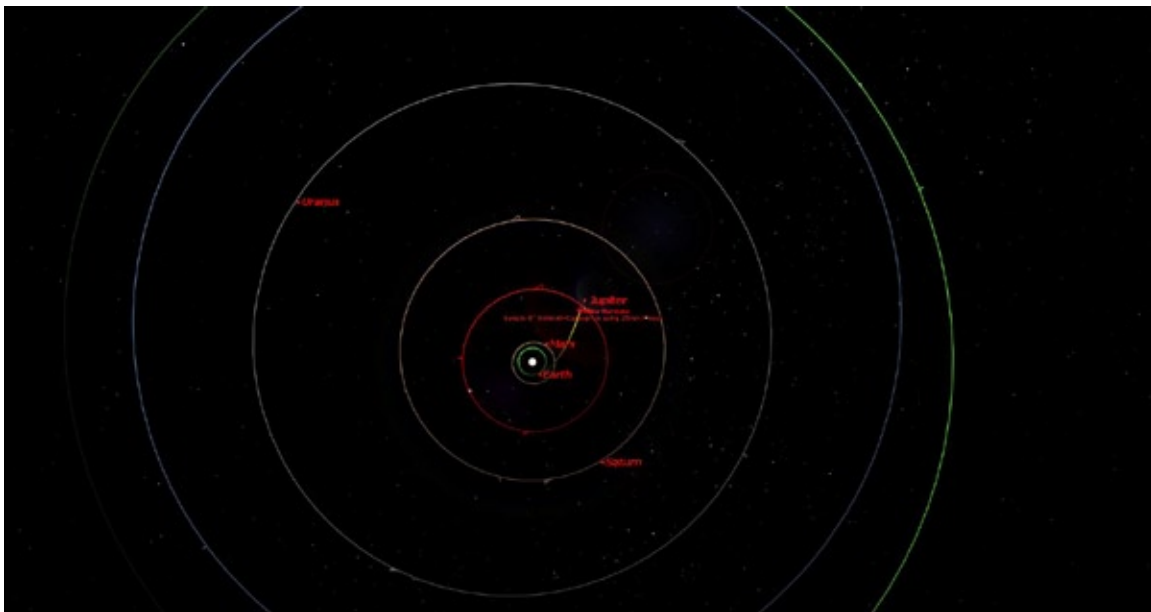
- Added new 3D model of ISS with solar panels deployed.
- Fixed change to Animated Horizon allowing it to work again on most systems.
- Fixed bug where horizon would switch back to animated if changed to flat or custom before photorealistic.
- Additional fix for unnecessary visual updates to calendar panel.

Astronomy Plug

And if you have the least interest in Astronomy or space exploration, January 20th should be a familiar date. It is the date when the New Horizons Pluto-Kuiper mission probe reaches the orbit of Jupiter. New Horizons left here last year and will take some (hopefully) interesting pictures over the next month. It has a few years to go before becoming the first probe sent specifically to Pluto – stay tuned to macCompanion for mission updates. Yes, we like Astronomy and we hope you do as well.

For more information (plus a few cool QT videos) about New Horizons, check out:

http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/newhorizons/main/index.html



This screenshot was taken in Starry Night Pro version 6.0.4, and it shows the location of the New Horizons probe in mid January of 2007. Dr. Eric Flescher reviewed Starry Night Pro 6 in the January issue of macCompanion.

4. Windows Vista (Released 1/30/2007)

The best reason (according to an article from a PCWorld columnist, posted on Microsoft's website on 1/30/07) to upgrade to Vista: "If you've ever had Mac envy, this is the Windows you want--it's the most Mac-like interface yet." Go figure...

What follows is not line-by-line or page-by-page instruction (e.g., an operating procedure). It's about cleaning up a complex, multi-page recipe you've downloaded as a PDF, by removing extraneous material. Then I illustrate how to complete the customization by shifting content from the remaining pages to the white space now in the PDF to further reduce its size. I provide only stepwise notes in a sequence that you can use to guide your efforts. (Not even I can get away with a 25-30-page macC article—our editor is very firm on that.)



Introduction To The Tools Of The Trade

I use Adobe Acrobat Professional as my primary tool when modifying PDFs, but all of the changes I describe can be done using Acrobat Standard. (I own the professional version for its other features, which are unrelated to recipe manipulation.) I also sometimes use software for cropping images or changing their resolution, such as Photoshop Elements, or Graphic Converter. There are also shareware tools that allow PDF file modification — Check them out at the MacUpdate Site.

Okay, Here's What We're Going To Do

If you were doing this for real, rather than as a tutorial, you would download each of the eight links as separate PDF files, making sure their names are distinct. (Save them to your desktop by printing them to PDF.) Fortunately, only two things matter when working with a complex PDF file collection: (1) the methods you'll learn to use, and (2) an image, in your mind, of how you want the final recipe to look.

The examples that follow in this Part III tutorial use only the first three downloaded links from Darlene's recipe.

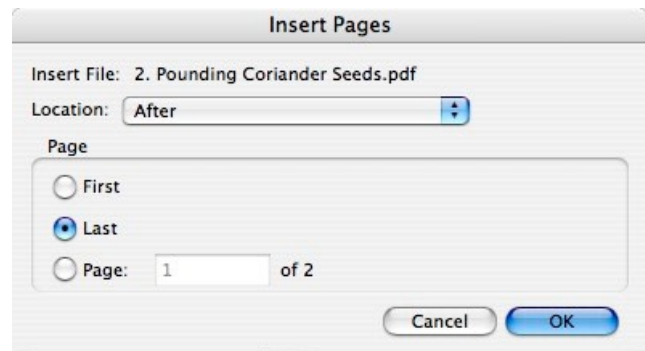
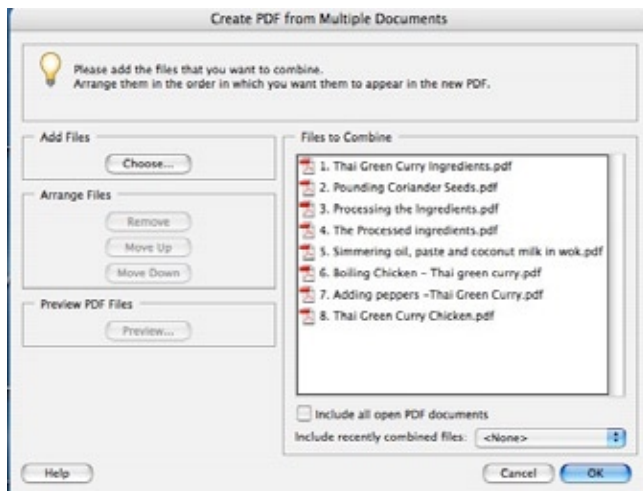
To collect only the minimum needed recipe information, use the *print this page* feature provided on the About.com website. But even when using *print this page*, lengthy hot linked recipes still have too much extraneous materials for my taste. This website feature removes sidebar material and, at times, images. (Okay, as you read in Part I, it's easy to add an image back into a PDF.)

List of Preparation Topics (Hotlinks)

Thai Green Curry Ingredients
Pounding Coriander Seeds
Processing the Ingredients
Processed Ingredients for Thai Green Curry Chicken recipe
Simmering Oil, Paste, and Coconut milk in Wok
Boiling Chicken - Thai Green Curry
Adding Peppers -Thai Green Curry
Thai Green Curry Chicken

You can also download each PDF recipe part, edit each individually, and combine the results when you're done. It does not make a difference which order you work on the recipes pieces. But I prefer to work with a combined PDF because it is easier for me to be consistent in the changes and deletions I make.

Combining PDF Files — When combining PDFs, I use Acrobat’s create PDF from multiple files feature [File > Create PDF > From multiple files]. This is less time consuming than importing the sections one at a time.



The Hard Way - One Page at a Time

Now all we have to do is edit the pages using *Advanced Editing Tools* in Acrobat. For the purposes of this article, I’m going to use screen shots of recipe topics 1-3. These are the first three hotlinks in the Thai Green Chicken Curry recipe. Page 1 is the most complex. It contains introductory material, as well as the ingredients list. It also contains credits for both the recipe author and the site. Pages 2 and 3 each contain only an image and a short description for a simple preparation instruction. The rest of the content of these pages is replicated information from Page 1.

An Overview Of What We’re Going To Do

Using Acrobat’s *Advanced Editing Tools*, you will simplify the PDF page you’ve downloaded. You will also use cut-and-paste operations, and mouse around to select the sections of the PDF you want to modify or delete.

Acrobat Tools Used — You will primarily use the *Touchup Objects* [TTT] tool. To change text wording, the tool of choice is the *Correct Textual Mistakes* [TxT] tool. To add an *external* image to a PDF, the *Hand Tool* is essential because the TTT does not work. [See Part I for details.]

The Cleanup Sequence:

Darlene’s recipe Steps 1-3, when combined, actually filled parts of 6 PDF pages at the font size I selected in my browser.

Semantics Can be a Drag — I’ll be using the word “PDF pages,” as opposed to the actual number of hotlinks (preparation steps). When viewing the website steps in the recipe, its pages scroll off the screen, but when printed my be longer than a single PDF page.

When I’m dealing with the tasks that follow, I use the word *pages* to refer to the actual material I downloaded, (e.g., printed to PDF.) Be aware that even though I start this tutorial with 6 pages of raw material, my final recipe will only be two pages long.

Step I, Dump the Unneeded Pages — First find pages that have nothing useful on them. Of the initial 6 pages, I deleted pages 4 and 6, whose only useful information was the copyright statement: “©2006 About, Inc., a part of The New York Times Company. All rights reserved.”

Since I wanted to put the copyright information at the end of my final document, I kept it on Page 2 of 6. So, now I'm down to only 4 pages.

Step 2, Delete Unneeded Material From The Remaining Pages — These pages contain both the Thai Green Curry Chicken links list from the original web page(s) and links to other Thai recipes that Darlene has posted. They also contain some added navigation links to other parts of About.com. This is material I don't want in my final recipe.

In addition, I wanted to keep the copyright information for later use. page 2 contained no unique site or author header material. Note, I could have pasted the copyright material on my multi-clipboard tool so it wouldn't get lost and tossed page 2, but I didn't.

I kept that statement on page 2 until I could move it to the last page of the final recipe. This was one of my last steps because I was not sure how the last page of the final recipe would be formatted, or how much space it would contain.

The screenshot shows a web page with the following elements:

- Navigation path: You are here: [About](#) > [Food & Drink](#) > [Thai Food](#) > [Classic Thai Recipes](#) > [Thai Green Curry](#)
- Logo: About Thai Food
- Section Header: Easy Thai Green Curry Chicken Recipe
- Text: From [Darlene Schmidt](#), Your Guide to [Thai Food](#). FREE Newsletter. [Sign Up Now!](#)
- Right sidebar links:
 - Make More of my Easy Step-by-Step Thai Recipes!
 - [More Easy Step by Step Thai Recipes](#)
 - Check out More of My Classic Thai Food Recipes!
 - [Classic Thai Food Recipes](#)
 - Try Making a Delicious, Exotic, and Naturally Low-fat Thai Dessert
 - [Thai Dessert Recipes](#)
- Footer: [Be a Guide](#) | [Advertising Info](#) | [News & Events](#) | [Work at About](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Ethics Policy](#) | [Patent Info](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

A Header Full of "Junk" I Don't Need

Unneeded Links to Other Recipes

When I first tried to delete the step lists (list of links) on pages 2, 3, and 4, I ran into a problem that TTT selected more text than I wanted to delete.

Oops! What I achieved was a frame-like (box) boundary around an artificial grouping that was an artifact of the web page structure that was replicated in my PDF. Okay, there's a simple fix — Drag the frame (selection box) "Out" of the way. Since none of the individual words in the box were highlighted, dragging the frame away did not move text.

Step 1: Prepare Lemongrass

Cut lower half of 1 stalk lemongrass into thin slices. Place lemongrass slices in a food processor (or blender).

1. [Thai Green Curry Ingredients](#)
2. [Pounding Coriander Seeds](#)
3. [Processing the Ingredients](#)
4. [Processed ingredients for Thai green curry chicken recipe](#)
5. [Simmering oil, paste and coconut milk in wok](#)
6. [Boiling Chicken - Thai green curry](#)
7. [Adding peppers - Thai Green Curry](#)
8. [Thai Green Curry Chicken](#)

Previous | [Next >>](#)

Selecting the Link List for Deletion – Trial One. I grabbed more text than I wanted but could not highlight the individual words to delete.

1. [Thai Green Curry Ingredients](#)
2. [Pounding Coriander Seeds](#)
3. [Processing the Ingredients](#)
4. [Processed ingredients for Thai green curry chicken recipe](#)
5. [Simmering oil, paste and coconut milk in wok](#)
6. [Boiling Chicken - Thai green curry](#)
7. [Adding peppers - Thai Green Curry](#)
8. [Thai Green Curry Chicken](#)

Success — After Dragging the Frame Out of My Way I Was Able to Just Grab and Highlight the Links List.

This time the TTT highlighted all the words in the author’s list of links. Backspace and zap! It’s gone.

Then I selected, using the TTT, the rest of the unneeded links to other Thai recipes (e.g., desserts, curries, and more) on page 2. Zap! They’re gone—all I have left on the page is a few words for preparing the lemongrass, a part of the preparation instructions that I want to save. I also kept a copy of copyright information for later use.

Sometimes using the TTT is like using a saber rather than a foil; you just “hit” too much of the target area. One elegant way to focus the TTT tool is to pretend you are using it to draw a line, though only a line of the unwanted text. [Similar to doing a strikeout].

Sometimes even that more focused method does not work.

There is however a workaround that even more narrowly focuses the TTT. By holding down the option key when “selecting” text to tweak, you select less material. But, once in a while, even that does not work completely. There are two orphan underlines left where I’d deleted the text. So you option-TTT again and grab these underscores, at times working in a zoomed image.

As you move to pages 3 and 4, you’ll notice that they, in part, contain general header material that is a duplicate of that part of page 1. Get rid of this material also.



Image Of Some Unneeded Header and Other Material On Pages 2 And 3

Without the unneeded material, what is left are images of the grinding of the coriander and processing the ingredients. There are also a few words for a caption for each image. In addition, there are several lines of preparation instructions one needs to keep, as well as the phrases that might make good sub-headers or lead captions for each recipe section.

It took three to four additional TTT grabs to remove the unwanted text on each page, leaving me with lots of white space I can use later to shrink the recipe to two pages. (We still have 4 pages now.)

Note: Look carefully at that text or image you’ve selected. You don’t want to accidentally delete materials you need. Remember, Acrobat allows you to undo many mistakes. If you capture more material that you want to delete, try the grab again.

Cleaning Up Page 1 — You recall that each link Darlene provided contained all sorts of header material associated with About.com and the specific recipe. On page 1, I’d like to save some of this stuff because it better reflects the web page on which I found the recipe, but I want to make it pretty.

I had two tasks that I want to accomplish on page 1. First, I want to thin out the path information to this page.

Second, I want to move the retained material into the newly created white space so I can copy the preparation methods (a few lines) from page 2 to page 1. This allows me to toss page 2, leaving behind a three-page recipe segment.

Easy Thai Green Curry Chicken

http://thaifood.about.com/od/thairecipes/ss/greencurry_8.htm

From [Darlene Schmidt](#),
Your Guide to [Thai Food](#).



Preparing the Lemongrass

Thai Green Curry Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp. oil for frying
- 1 stalk lemongrass
- 2 Tbsp. coriander seeds
- 2 Tbsp. fish sauce
- 1 tsp. shrimp paste
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1-3 green chillies (depending on desired spiciness)
- 1 onion



What You See Is What You Get, After Cleanup

TTT Actions Taken, A Sequence —

- Move the About.com logo out of the way
- Delete the path information at the top of the page
- Move the Words “Thai Food” to the upper left hand corner.
- Move the Recipe Title under Thai Food. [Save]
- Delete the words Your Guide to Thai Food and FREE Newsletter. Sign Up Now!
- Move Darlene Schmidt’s name next to *Thai Food*
- Grab the remainder of the recipe information and move it up on the page
- Delete Darlene’s name and previous/next from under the picture
- Copy Step 1 preparation information from page 2 and paste it into page 1. Drag the preparation material to where it belongs under the ingredients.

Now Pages 2 and 3 — I then needed to consolidate the pictures and short preparation steps in the now remaining pages 2 and 3.

TTT Actions Taken:

Select all the material in the center of the page and drag it to the top of the page. [Save.] Paste the contents of page 3 into page 2. I had to tweak the spacing a bit to make things fit after pasting. For that I used the *Correct Textual Mistakes* [TxT] tool.

Last Thoughts On Fixing Complex PDFs

After all is done, albeit a slower process than working in MS Word, my PDF copy looked as good as the one I created in Part II using MS Word.

On the other hand, when working with a simple one- or two-page PDF, I can tweak a recipe faster in Acrobat than in Word. For merely adding a picture to a recipe that does not have one, Acrobat is easier to use. And using the *Touch up Text* tool, it's easy to break up a long line of text into two sections, leaving more space to paste a picture.

In conclusion, you collect recipes online and don't want them laden with the extra stuff that comes along with capturing whole, unedited pages, use these tools and shape them to your liking. Both Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat work well for this purpose, both offering their own share of tools.

Use what works best for you. I have and therefore use other for tuning recopies I may never cook, but often want to share with my friends or vicariously savor.

Freeware of the Month

Tim Verpoorten

February is the month of love and the I Love My Mac Give-Away. So let's take a look at the Mac freeware that I love from this last month.

I looked long and hard at editors of all types that were free on the MacReviewCast, here's a few of the ones that I think you should download and try.

xPad: <http://www.getxpad.com>

xPad is the TextEdit and Stickies replacement for Apple's OS X. With a simple, easy-to-use interface and powerful multi-document features, xPad might become your daily text editor of choice.

With xPad you can create as many documents as you like, all of which are managed in one window. Attached to that window is a drawer containing a list of all the documents you've created. Any document can be selected and loaded instantly—allowing you to easily create and manage hundreds of documents without cluttering your desktop.

Staying organized with xPad is easy. With the category editor you can create and color-code categories, then quickly assign documents in the drawer. Documents can be sorted by name, date or category. Now you can efficiently manage limitless documents with color coding that provides a constant reminder of your organizational scheme.

You can quickly rename documents, delete one or all, and export a single, multiple, or all your documents in both Rich and Plain Text formats using both drag and drop or conventional panels. You can also instantly export to your iPod, allowing you to read your documents when you are away from your computer. xPad automatically saves your work, so you never have to worry about manually saving what you're working on or accidentally closing something without saving.

If you don't like xPad, the other suggestion is the freeware editor from BBedit called TextWrangler.

TextWrangler2: <http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler>

BBedit just released a new version of TextWrangler. Version 2.2. We all know that TextWrangler was on my top ten list of freeware for 2006 and with this new updated version, it just keeps getting better. Here are a few of the new features.

Support is now in place for "Check spelling as you type". There's a preference in the Spelling prefs to set the default, and it can be turned on and off for a given text view by using the corresponding command on the Text menu. The action menu in the documents drawer contains a "Save All" command (dynamic variant of save) which saves all the modified documents in this window only.

There has been significant rework to the tool bar. The "Apply Text Factory" commands on the Text menu will now apply the selected text factory to the selected range of text in the front document

There are tons of other improvements. Check them out for yourself. You can't go wrong keeping one of these two editors, if not both of them in your applications folder.

While we're on a roll here this month, let's keep talking about editors and make this a theme article, shall we?

Writer: <http://supertart.com/qisoftware/Writer.html>

Here's one that takes a familiar idea and runs with it.

Writer is a word processor that's designed to get your first draft banged out and run with it. This is a very simple word processor that is much more like a typewriter than a nice Cocoa-ized text editor. It's very similar to Block Writer if you ever used that app. If you do your best writing when you're back to basics, then Writer is an app for you.

Next while we're talking about writing, what about writing to your blog?

Bleezer: <http://larryborsato.com/bleezer/>

Bleezer is a powerful blogging client.

And it's free. Here are a few of the features it brings to the table.

- Blog from anywhere. Work on Windows, OS X, and Linux.
- Work with any blogging service. As many as you want, even Blogger.
- WYSIWYG editing. Edit your posts as they will actually appear.
- Image upload. Images will automatically be uploaded to your server.
- Category support. Support for multiple categories.
- Add tags for any tag service. Technorati, del.icio.us, or anything else.
- Create custom markup. Define your own key combinations for custom HTML markup.
- Spell check. Ensure everything is speeled spelled ok.
- Advertise.
- Ping Technorati, weblogs.com, ping-o-matic, Pingoat, or any other service.
- Work online or offline. Compose posts offline and post them when you want to.

It's time to change themes and look at some of the utilities I found for the Mac this last month. As before, they're all free and they're apps that typify great Mac software, functional, beautifully designed and simple.

ImageWell: <http://www.xtralean.com>

ImageWell is a small, but powerful, image editing application that lets you quickly resize, crop, watermark, edit your images and then upload them to the web, save to your computer or email them to a friend. ImageWell also lets you annotate your images with text, shapes, arrows and lines, quickly and easily. And it doesn't stop there - add a drop shadow, a shaped border, flip or rotate your image, take screen grabs, plus so much more. Version 3 brings many new enhancements and an even more streamlined user interface. Some of the new features include layering and transparency controls for images and draw objects, SFTP support, flip image feature, graphical watermarks, and so much more. V3 is also available in 12 different language localizations. Overall you get a ton of editing, importing and exporting features. If you don't need an expensive, over bearing image editing app, then imagewell freeware is just what the Doctor ordered.

OnyX: <http://www.titanium.free.fr>

OnyX is a multifunction utility (maintenance, optimization, and personalization).

It allows you to run misc tasks of system maintenance, to configure certain hidden parameters of the Finder, Dock, Safari, Dashboard, Expos, Disk Utility... to delete cache, to remove a certain number of files and folders that may become cumbersome, to see the detailed info of your configuration, to preview the different logs and CrashReporter reports, to check the Preferences files and more. OnyX is an Universal Binary application and works with all Macintosh PowerPC and Intel computers running Mac OS X version 10.4.x (Tiger). To run correctly, OnyX must be run from an admin account. If you find that using a maintenance utility such as Applejack is a little too involved for your skills, then OnyX is the perfect answer.

BackityMac: <http://www.whimsplucky.com>

Have you ever wanted an easy way to backup all the important files in your home folder? Are you tired of sifting through the Library directory to find the folders you need to backup? Let's say you just want to backup your Apple Mail database file, not all you have to do is click the "Apple Mail" checkbox and click "Backup".

Supported important files include:

- Apple Mail Files
- MS Entourage Files
- iCal Calendars
- Address Book database
- Safari, Firefox, Camino bookmarks
- iPhoto and iTunes Libraries
- iWeb website files
- Home Documents folder
- Full home folder backup.

This is not some proprietary system, all backups are placed in a read-only disk image which ensures you can access it on any Mac. But what is backup without restore.

Choose an image created by this program, and the backed up contents will automatically be detected for you, then decided what you want to restore, and click "Restore". The contents will be placed back into their original directory automatically replacing it's contents. This is the perfect solution for those who want to be able to clone their home directory and replace it on another Mac untouched. Take a look at this app if you only want to back up the important files and folders fast and easily.

iSteg: <http://www.hanynet.com>

iSteg is an encryption tool that allows the user to hide a file inside a jpeg picture. This encryption technology is called steganography. iSteg is a front-end for the open-source tool outguess 2.0.

iSteg can be used to both encode and decode a hidden file. iSteg is a Universal binary application, so it can be used natively on both PowerPC and Intel based Macs. It's a simple utility that just works.

Permanent Eraser: <http://www.edenwaith.com>

While we're talking about security and privacy, take a look at Permanent Eraser. When you normally delete your files in Mac OS X, the operating system is only forgetting where those particular files are placed, while the data still physically remains on the drive. Beginning with Mac OS 10.3, Apple enhanced its security by introducing the Secure Empty Trash feature, which follows the U.S. DoD pattern of overwriting data seven times. Permanent Eraser provides an even stronger level of security by implementing the Gutmann Method. This utility overwrites your data thirty-five times, scrambles the original file name, and truncates the file size to nothing before Permanent Eraser finally unlinks it from the system. Once your data has been erased, it can no longer be read through traditional means. Permanent Eraser is free of charge, and the source code is also provided for educational purposes.

That's it for this month. Thank you for reading the column and keep in mind you can find more great Mac freeware each week on the MacReviewCast podcast.

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Producer: MacReviewCast.com Co-Producer: TheMacRoundtable.com

GarageBand 101: Mastering GarageBand

Reviewed by Daphne Kalfon



\$39.50 USD, \$46.50; £20.00; €30.46

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

Platform: Mac & PC

Runtime: 180 minutes

File Size: 360 MB

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9, G3, G4, G5 or Intel processor

Strengths: The voiceover is at a comfortable slow speed, easy to follow, and the videos can be watched in whichever order one wishes.

Weaknesses: Some audio terms and concepts are not explained fully enough when they are introduced into some of the lessons; a few voice “typos”.



This is a very attractive, elegant tutorial in all. On the left-hand side of the tutorial window is a detailed table of contents – this column can be hidden if one wishes. In that case, the videos will just play one after the other in chronological order. Otherwise, if you want to be in control of which videos you view, you can leave the menu window open for that purpose.

The rest of the window is dedicated to what is being shown. As each video launches, its title appears along with the duration of the video. What I really like is how the GarageBand arrange window or whatever other window the trainer is talking about, appears front and center, and as the trainer talks, you can see the movements of his mouse pointer as he shows you what he is doing. This makes it extremely easy to follow and understand for when you try these things yourself later.

As well, below the main window, there is the movie play indicator, which you can click and drag on to fast forward or rewind through anything you want to see again.

I went through the tutorial myself, and I should say that I immediately thought of what a good companion this tutorial is to the book I reviewed some months ago called “Keep it Simple with GarageBand – Easy Music Projects for Beginners” by Keith Gemmell. What you learn during the tutorials, you can then apply in the tutorials laid out in the book.

The concepts covered

Connecting GarageBand – this chapter covers things like connecting a keyboard, configuring audio devices and managing your GarageBand projects.

Getting into GarageBand – the main arrange window, playback, regions, tracks, the track mixer, and how to import a MIDI or audio file.

Working with Tracks – track management, the track info pane and editing a generator preset.

Using Apple Loops – the loop browser, audio vs. MIDI loops, managing and organizing your loops, creating a loop, importing Apple Loops, and 3rd party Apple loops.

Software Instruments – playing software synths, how to use the onscreen and musical keyboard options to enter notes, custom instrument settings.

Recording MIDI – the buffer, the metronome, timing and quantize, cycle recording.

Working with MIDI – editing, transposing, velocity, notation view, custom SFX instruments.

Recording Audio – setting up, the instrument tuner, recording guitar, bass and vocals, clipping, multiple track recording, enhancing tuning and timing, and following tempo and pitch.

Working with Regions – cut, copy, paste, transposing, joining, renaming, and unlocking the playhead.

Creating a Mix – setting levels, volume and pan, using control points.

Using Effects – gate, compressor, EQ, echo, revert, AU effects, autowah, auto filter, bass reduction, bit crusher, speech enhancer, track echo, treble reduction, tremolo, the voice transformer, custom effects presets, locking tracks.

Finishing – the master fader, adjusting overall sounds, transposing parts, Rewire and GarageBand, sending a song to iTunes, exporting a song to disk.

As I mentioned in the “weaknesses” section above, some of the audio terms and concepts introduced over the course of the videos are not fully explained, or explained enough to make sense to the new user, or even to a not-so-new user. It might have been helpful in that case to have at least a glossary of terms included with the video for easy reference.

Even after having used GarageBand for quite some time now, I definitely learned a thing or two as I watched these videos. I highly recommend this training package to anyone who is a new user to GarageBand as well as to those who would like to deepen their knowledge of GarageBand further, or as a valuable companion to any book about GarageBand.

Conclusion

<http://www.macprovideo.com/browse/GarageBand> provides a lot of information about the tutorial including a detailed description of each concept covered. As well, five sample videos taken from the tutorial are provided on the website so that you can have a good idea of what the tutorial looks like and its overall teaching style. In all there are 96 videos in the tutorial.

The trainer, Paul Garay, has his own website, which provides further info on home recording and lots more: <http://www.insidehomerecording.com/>

Credit Checks and Stargates

By Robert Pritchett

“An honest man cannot be cheated.” “Americans love so much to be fooled.” “Average Joes are natural marks.”

Read “The Big Con: The Story of the Confidence Man” by David Mauer and Luc Sante:

<http://www.amazon.com/Big-Con-Story-Confidence-Man/dp/0385495382>

The wire. The rag. The payoff. The conmen and conwomen seek out the successful entrepreneur and successful risk taker. And thus “The Sting” was inspired.

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

Way back in July 2006, I wrote *Scam Artistry – Where’s the Pony and the Bogus-Meter?* that discussed situations I ran into online;

<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/July2006/Columns/ScamArtistry.htm>

Well, here is the sequel;

Like the Stargate in SG1, I left two bank accounts open for doing Internet ACH and wire transfers, hoping that prospective investors would indeed be knocking on my virtual door, lavishing me with gifts of investment monies. They came, but like those interstellar travelers, who thumped up against the closed stargate iris and perished, these individuals and outfits – let’s call them “grifters” - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Grifters ([film](#)) have run up against banking institutions, that since 9/11/2001, have established safeguards to minimize or totally stop fraud.

Soliciting Solicitors

Since July, I continued to solicit investment funds to grow my business, but it seems there is way too much chaff and very few legitimate kernels of wheat. In my experience, I have found no wheat so far via the Internet, in spite of calls to me by “investors” to the contrary. Those with whom I have had the “pleasure” of dealing with, offered me deals and received the link to my “Scam Artistry” article with a warning. Each one wanted to deal with me anyway. Each one had me sign and exchange papers and documents in prospective partnerships. Phone calls followed. And each experience has ended in funds being sent through diverse methods to me, with the final outcome **being that each and every single one has turned out to be sophisticated counterfeits**, only stopped at the desk of a bank fraud department. For me, this story has gotten old, fast.

And that is why I had to close some of my business bank accounts I had set up for the purpose of collecting funds. Indeed, as far as I’m concerned, my Stargate is closed for business.

Checking Cheques

Some banks don’t have a service to check cheques before they get deposited, so they process those and then verify that the money vehicles are bogus after-the-fact. By then it is too late and I end up with a bad experience and have to pay fees to unprocess those (now proven) fraudulent deposits.

With wire transfers, the other party can pull the funds back, so if they are not pulled from the account quickly,

they get removed by the sender and I am left “holding the bag”. Either way, I loose. I wisely leave those funds alone, expecting the bank to clear them later. Each time, the funds were returned to the “senders”, because apparently they turned out to come from accounts that did not belong to them. I notify the senders of the failed transaction and stop doing business with them and pass along the activity information to the proper authorities to deal with.

Personally, I would like to see each bank branch have a cheque scanner that can run money orders, certified cheques and regular business cheques through a fraud machine that can verify the routing number and account number (magnetic ink checker), the ultraviolet light to check the paper, and the watermark checking function, because these paper counterfeiters have gotten very adept at passing off what appears to be legitimate paper. I want to see those verified *before* they get deposited, and not afterwards.

Perhaps I have been too trusting and have been an “easy mark”. Now I understand why businessmen can become callous and bankers can become impersonal. They have seen too much of this kind of thing cross their desks in the past. Now I have too.

Business Opportunities?

The latest rash of so-called “business opportunities” revolve around someone in the states (let’s say for argument, me), becoming a financial processing agent for oh, let say, either an artist with a family and pets in Great Britain who needs someone in the states to manage their transactions (and it seems there are more than one), or perhaps either a ceramics and textile outfit in Hong Kong, China or a fabric distributor located in Beirut, Lebanon, or other variations along those themes. The latest is in becoming either a shipper of items or in charge of the financial section for such shipping activities. These opportunities present themselves via job postings online. And there are a lot of them!

The usual drift is that if I agree to establish an account, they will provide a salary plus benefits, plus 10% or so for handling funds that will pass through from my account to theirs – except in many instances, it turns out that their out-of-the-states “account” is either through *Moneygram* or *Western Union* to some unknown name in some city outside the US. Oh, you heard this story somewhere before? Yeah, I wrote about it way back in July, 2006.

Assuming money orders, etc. successfully are processed by a bank, funds can then be pulled from the bank account and sent through either *Moneygram* or *Western Union*. The downside is that these funds cannot be reclaimed, once they have been picked up at the other end.

The problem I’ve been having is that so far, I have never gotten past first base in this game and I’m the one getting stung. I have been the prospective easy mark. Well, no more.

In God We Trust

My mother sent me this story recently...

“You always hear the usual stories of pennies on the sidewalk being good luck, gifts from angels, etc. This is the first time I’ve ever heard this twist on the story. Gives you something to think about. Several years ago, a friend of mine and her husband were invited to spend the weekend at the husband’s employer’s home. My friend, Arlene, was nervous about the weekend. The boss was very wealthy, with a fine home on the waterway, and cars costing more than her house. The first day and evening went well, and Arlene was delighted to have this rare glimpse into how the very wealthy live. The husband’s employer was quite generous as a host, and took them to the finest restaurants. Arlene knew she would never have the opportunity to indulge in this kind of extravagance again, so was enjoying herself immensely.

As the three of them were about to enter an exclusive restaurant that evening, the boss was walking slightly ahead of Arlene and her husband. He stopped suddenly, looking down on the pavement for a long, silent moment. Arlene wondered if she was supposed to pass him. There was nothing on the ground except a single darkened penny that someone had dropped, and a few cigarette butts. Still silent, the man reached down and picked up the penny. He held it up and smiled, then put it in his pocket as if he had found a great treasure.

How absurd! What need did this man have for a single penny? Why would he even take the time to stop and pick it up? Throughout dinner, the entire scene nagged at her. Finally, she could stand it no longer. She casually mentioned that her daughter once had a coin collection, and asked if the penny he had found had been of some value. A smile crept across the man's face as he reached into his pocket for the penny and held it out for her to see. She had seen many pennies before!

What was the point of this? "Look at it." He said. "Read what it says." She read the words "United States of America." "No, not that; read further." "One cent?" "No, keep reading." "In God we Trust?" "Yes!" "And?" "And if I trust in God, the name of God is holy, even on a coin. Whenever I find a coin I see that inscription. It is written on every single United States coin, but we never seem to notice it!

God drops a message right in front of me telling me to trust Him? Who am I to pass it by? When I see a coin, I pray, I stop to see if my trust IS in God at that moment. I pick the coin up as a response to God; that I do trust in Him. For a short time, at least, I cherish it as if it were gold. I think it is God's way of starting a conversation with me. Lucky for me, God is patient and pennies are plentiful!

When I was out shopping today, I found a penny on the sidewalk. I stopped and picked it up, and realized that I had been worrying and fretting in my mind about things I cannot change. I read the words, "In God We Trust" and had to laugh. Yes, God, I get the message. It seems that I have been finding an inordinate number of pennies in the last few months, but then, pennies are plentiful! And, God is patient..."

Everyone Else Needs A Background Check First

So, "In God We Trust", but everybody else requires a background check first. I take everyone at face value, until they reveal their true colors. If they prove to be shady characters, I stop doing business with them. Unfortunately, because some banking institutions do not have a cheque processing system that can check cheques before they get deposited, they will close suspected accounts. I was told that even though *I* am not at fault, their security safeguards are not flexible enough to give me a second chance, even though I am a recipient and not a giver.

I've learned my lesson. Wisdom comes from making mistakes and experience comes from knowing you made the mistake before. The wisest ones learn from other's mistakes and don't repeat them.

Honesty is Still the Best Policy

The best policy is honesty. And the old saying that "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is", still holds water.

Benjamin Franklin said this about possible shady situations; "When in doubt, don't".

If you are looking for gainful employment, my suggestion is, don't bother looking at the financial officer or accountant opportunities online that offer a percentage of pass-through funds. My experience shows that they are bogus. Look elsewhere.

A corporate attorney sent the following out to the employees in his company...



CHECKS & CREDIT CARDS

- The next time you order checks have only your initials (instead of first name) and last name put on them. If someone takes your checkbook, they will not know if you sign your checks with just your initials or your first name, but your bank will know how you sign your checks.
- Do not sign the back of your credit cards. Instead, put "PHOTO ID REQUIRED."
- When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, DO NOT put the complete account number on the "For" line. Instead, just put the last four numbers.

[Actually, I write CC payment, they've got the top part of my statement with my check.] The credit card company knows the rest of the number, and anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to it.

- *Mail outgoing items in an official protected mailbox thereby eliminating personal information from easy theft. [It's easier to steal your outgoing mail than your wallet.]*
- Put your work phone # on your checks instead of your home phone. If you have a P.O. Box, use that instead of your home address. If you do not have a P.O. Box, use your work address. Never have your SS# printed on your checks. (DUH!) You can add it if it is necessary. But if you have it printed, anyone can get it.
- *Take delivery of new checks at your bank if possible, eliminating them from the mailbox in front of your home.*

IDENTIFICATION CARD	
Name _____	_____
Address _____	_____
City, State _____	_____
Phone _____	_____
Social Security # _____	_____
In case of emergency please notify	
Name _____	Phone _____

KEEP IT TO YOURSELF!

YOUR WALLET & MINE

- Keeping Track — Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine or scanner. Xerox or scan both sides of each license, credit card, each medical card, you social security card, etc. You will know what you had in your wallet and all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel. Keep the photocopy in a safe place.

I no longer carry my Social Security Card in my wallet. I've also removed the SSN number from my Medicare card and a few other cards that use it as an ID; if someone needs it they'll ask. I've also written companies requesting an ID number that is NOT my Social Security number. One complied.

- *Make sure that your SS number is not on your drivers license. Most states will re-issue a new drivers license w/o the SSN. With a little bit of luck you'll get a better looking picture too.*
- The originator of the advice in this article also now carries a photocopy of his passport when traveling either in the US or abroad. *[I don't get this one, unless its extra emergency ID, but posted it anyway.]*

The Attorney Author's Experience – The tale unfolds

We've all heard horror stories about fraud that's committed on us in stealing a name, address, Social Security number, and credit cards.

Unfortunately I, an attorney, have firsthand knowledge because my wallet was stolen last month. Within a week, the thief(s) ordered an expensive monthly cell phone package, applied for a VISA credit card, had a credit line approved to buy a Gateway computer, received a PIN number from the *Department of Motor Vehicles* to change my driving record information online, and more. But here's some critical information to limit the damage in case this happens to you or someone you know:



An Instant Action List

- We have been told we should cancel our credit cards immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them. *[I keep them in a database, encrypted of course, on my computer – it's NOT a portable.]*
- File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where your credit cards, etc., were stolen. This proves to credit providers you were diligent, and this is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one.) But here's what is perhaps most important of all: (I never even thought to do this.)
- Call the three national credit-reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and Social Security number.

- *Notify banks, creditors, and utilities. Close accounts that have been used by thieves. Choose new passwords and PINs for all your accounts and don't use your mother's maiden name as a password. Notify merchants that issued credit or accepted bad checks in your name; use your police report or FTC affidavit as backup.*
- Order your credit report each year. Get credit reports from all three credit bureaus, and study them closely. [<http://www.annualcreditreport.com/> 887-322-8228] Some victims say that it took years to clear their credit files and that new credit was sometimes granted in their names without their permission even after fraud alerts were placed on their accounts. [*One report a year from each credit agency is now by federal law yours for free; stagger them across the year. Previously you had to claim a loss of identifying material such as a credit card.*]

I had never heard of needing to file a credit agency report that until advised to do so by a bank that called to tell me an application for credit was made over the Internet in my name. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen, and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

By the time I was advised to do this, almost two weeks after the theft, all the damage had been done. There are records of all the credit checks initiated by the thieves' purchases, none of which I knew about before placing the alert. Since then, no additional damage has been done, and the thieves threw my wallet away. This weekend (someone turned it in). It seems to have stopped them, the thieves, dead in their tracks.

Now, here are the numbers you always need to contact about your wallet, etc., has been stolen

-
- 1) Equifax: 1-800-525-6285
 - 2) Experian (formerly TRW): 1-888-397-3742
 - 3) Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289; and
 - 4) Social Security Administration (fraud line): 1-800-269-0271
 - 5) *Fill out the Federal Trade Commission's universal fraud affidavit.*

Tell the credit agencies that you want to flag your file with a fraud alert. Put a security freeze on your credit report so no one can access it without notifying you first - tedious, awkward but protective – or are you In the business of giving you money away no questions asked.



Information About You and Me is Out There for the Taking:

Getting information about us now relatively easy and the absence of Federal action continues to make all of use more vulnerable to Identity theft even when out wallets aren't lost or stolen. A brief Internet search turned of

these information sources. All available on the cheap. Data aggregators get wealthy by selling information about you and me with few protections and less corporate liability for things gone wrong than you face if you have a car accident. As we've noted in macCompanion, many of these sites have porous data security as evinced by the number of times thousands of records have been stolen from them.

Find Publicly Available Personal Information

– A small sampling of resources

Search Systems — <http://www.searchsystems.net/>

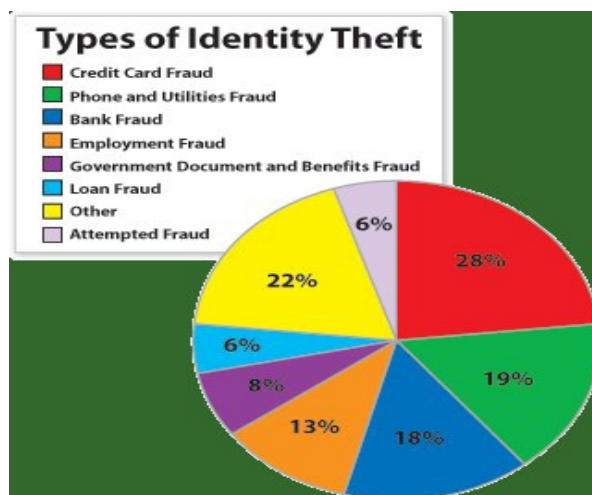
Public Record Finder Plus — http://www.usa-people-search.com/?from=2378746&aegis_tid=37144917&aegis_cid=397408441

<http://find.intelius.com/search-name.php?ReportType=1&&PHPSESSID=77039a867d9b934040dafb7ac4f41694>

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

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

http://www.virtualchase.com/people/public_records.html



A Short List of Further Reading

This is neither comprehensive nor complete — is just articles I've found personally useful. These articles cover a wide range of protective advice; probably the most unnerving is the article on theft of Medical records. Why... Medical identity theft—in which fraudsters impersonate unsuspecting individuals to get costly care they couldn't otherwise afford—is growing. There's little or no protection or required recourse, unlike protection against the more usual types of credit related identity thefts, the consumer protection laws are lacking.

Protect your privacy [Working Mac] *By Daniel Tynan.*

<http://www.macworld.com/2006/04/secrets/mayworkingmac/index.php?pf=1>

Secrets of the digital detectives, Sep 21st 2006, From The Economist print edition.

http://www.economist.com/PrinterFriendly.cfm?story_id=7904281

Top Ten Signs You're about to get ripped off by Fred Showker;

<http://www1.iwvisp.com/croton/Top%20Ten%20Signs.htm>

Stop ID Theft by Simpson Garfinkel, Technology Review; <http://www.technologyreview.com/Biztech/13390/>

Identity theft: What you can do, Consumer Reports, June 2006.

[http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/personal-finance/identity-theft-what-you-can-do_305/overview/index.htm?resultPageIndex=1&resultIndex=1&searchTerm=Identity Theft](http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/personal-finance/identity-theft-what-you-can-do_305/overview/index.htm?resultPageIndex=1&resultIndex=1&searchTerm=Identity%20Theft)

Preventing Identity Theft — An AARP Seminar

http://www.aarp.org/learntech/personal_finance/identity_theft_intro.html

Diagnosis: {Medical} Identity Theft, Business Week Online, January 8, 2007

http://www.businessweek.com/print/magazine/content/07_02/b4016041.htm?chan=gl

Consumer Report Fact Sheet – How To Prevent Identity Theft, Consumer Reports, August 2005,

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/cu-press-room/pressroom/eng0509pit.htm>

For other information, check out the nonprofit Identity Theft Resource Center at www.idtheftcenter.org and the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse at www.privacyrights.org.



<http://www.applemacpunk.com>

applemacpunk@cox.net

Mac Security 101










Firewall Alternatives: 5 Firewall Utilities for Mac OS X

As we hear more and more about Mac Security, and potential threats targeted at Mac OS X, one topic seems to repeat itself: every Mac user needs to be running a personal firewall and an anti-virus package. In previous issues, I have talked at length about these two things, and low cost ways to equip your Mac with them. Since Mac OS X includes a built-in interface to configure its firewall, most users never look any deeper. This option is cost effective (free) and user-friendly. However, Apple's firewall interface is limited in many aspects, and may not give power users the control they desire. Like a hardware firewall (see Mac Security 101, October 2006), software firewalls can be configured to allow certain ports, destinations, and even applications to access the Internet, while still limiting unauthorized use. Creating rules like these are difficult with OS X's built-in firewall, but are very intuitive with several third party packages.

The purpose of this article is to list my 5 favorites and show the interfaces for each one. I encourage all Mac users to try them out and see if you like the added control that these utilities give you. Here they are in order from most to least expensive.

I: DoorStop X <http://www.opendoor.com/doorstop/> \$79.00

The most fully featured of the 5, but also the most expensive.

Date and Time	Action	Service	Port	Risk	Mod	IP Address	Host name
11/3/05 5:26:45 PM	Deny	 Windows Sharing	139		TCP	10.0.0.2	10.0.0.2
11/3/05 5:12:24 PM	Deny	 Personal Web Sharing	80		TCP	10.0.0.2	10.0.0.2
11/3/05 5:12:23 PM	Deny	 Dumar Trojan Horse	10000		TCP	10.0.0.4	10.0.0.4
11/3/05 4:52:22 PM	Deny	 Personal File Sharing	548		TCP	10.0.0.1	10.0.0.1
11/3/05 4:52:22 PM	Deny	 Personal File Sharing	548		TCP	10.0.0.1	10.0.0.1

II: NetBarrier X <http://www.intego.com/netbarrier/> \$69.95

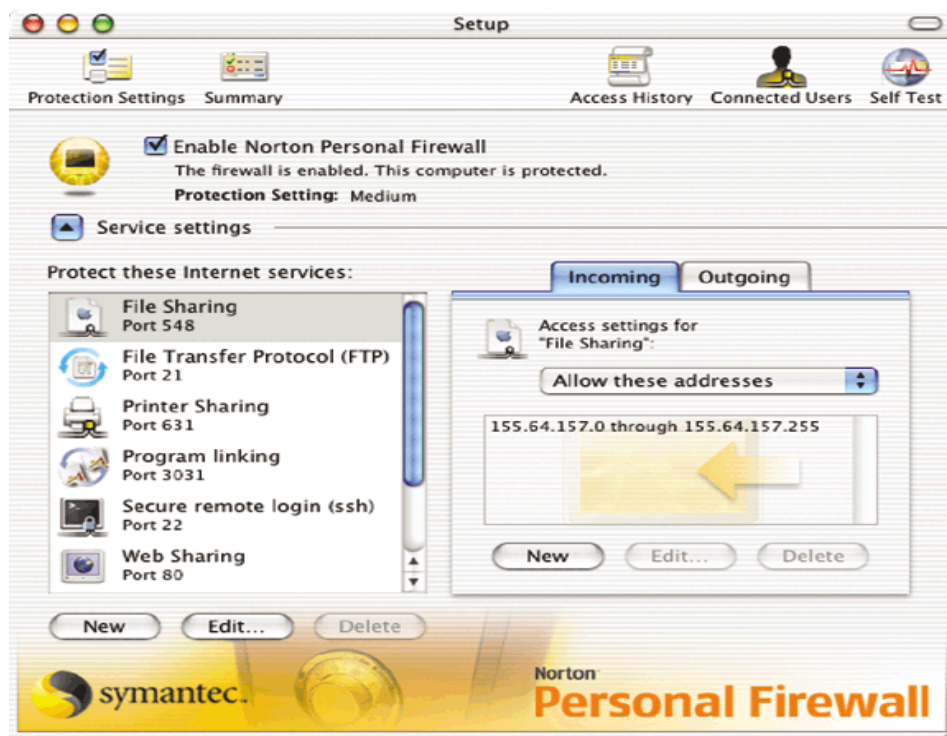
Very feature rich and probably the best interface of the bunch, a great piece of software from a great developer.



III: Norton Personal Firewall

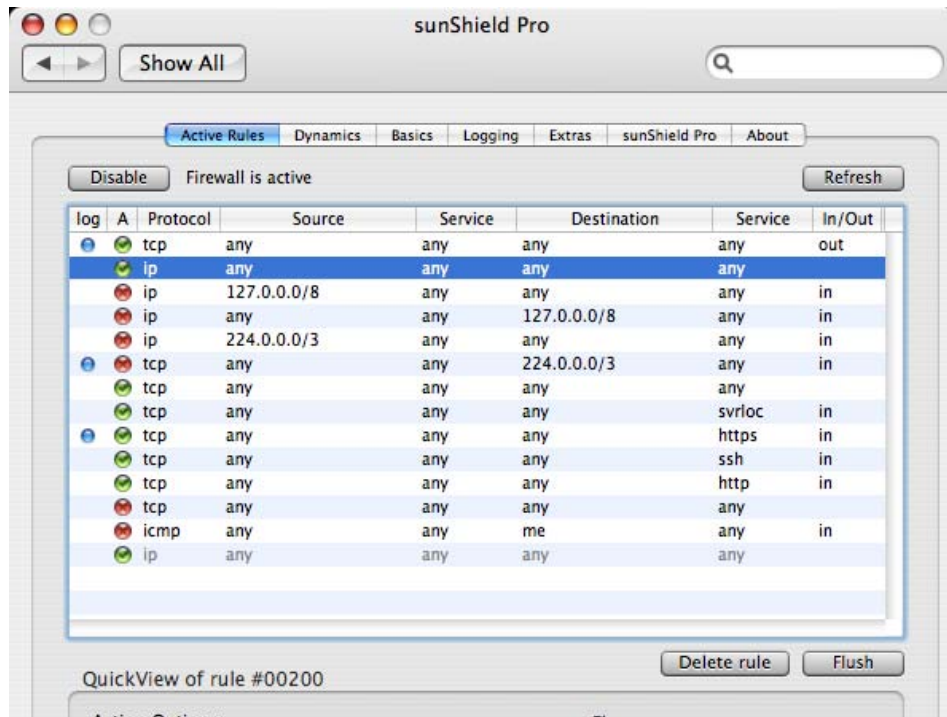
http://www.symantec.com/home_homeoffice/products/overview.jsp?pcid=ma&pvid=npf30mac \$49.95

My least favorite of the group, but still a great way to take control of your Mac.



IV. sunShield Pro <http://www.sunprotectingfactory.com/joomla/content/view/2/9/lang.en/>
~\$39 US

A great combination of features and price.



V. WaterRoof <http://www.hanynet.com/waterroof/> FREE

The least intuitive interface, but you can't beat the price.



According to Hoyle...

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

by Jonathan Hoyle

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macCompanion

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We continue into the new year with our investigation of cross-platform strategies from a Macintosh perspective. The following are the topics we have covered so far:

- **Intro:** http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/september2005/Columns/According_to_Hoyle_1.htm
- **Qt:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/october2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **wxWidgets:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/november2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **CPLAT:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/december2005/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **REALbasic:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/january2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Runtime Revolution:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/february2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **AMPC:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/march2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Java compilers:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/april2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Basic compilers (Part I):** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/may2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Basic compilers (Part II):** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/june2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Converting Legacy Frameworks:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/july2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Basic compilers (Part III):** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/october2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **C++ Application Programming with REALbasic:** <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/november2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Multi-Compiler strategies with C/C++ (Part I):**
<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/december2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>
- **Multi-Compiler strategies with C/C++ (Part II):**
<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/january2007/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>

This month we conclude our three part look into Multi-Compiler Strategies with C/C++ with an examination of the ANSI C and ANSI C++ Standard Libraries. These libraries provide the developer with a large number of cross-platform tools that are essential to the developer working with more than one operating system. When there exists a choice between cross-platform and Mac-only functions, it behooves the developer to understand the differences between them.

The ANSI C Library

The ANSI C Library is composed of collections of functions grouped together under different header files by category. Most C developers are already quite familiar with them, and these include:

```
#include <stddef.h>: size_t, wchar_t, NULL, etc. // standard types
#include <stdio.h>: printf(), scanf(), fopen(), etc. // I/O & file functions
#include <stdlib.h>: malloc(), free(), atoi(), etc. // allocation related functions
#include <string.h>: memcpy(), strcpy(), strcat(), etc. // string & memory functions
#include <math.h>: sin(), log(), floor(), ceil(), etc. // mathematical functions
#include <stdbool.h>: bool, true, false, etc. // boolean types
#include <stdint.h>: int16_t, int32_t, int64_t, etc. // integral types
// etc.
```

From a cross-platform perspective, it is usually better to use these Standard Library types and functions than operating system-specific equivalents when possible. Sometimes these OS equivalents are identical in nature and require merely a name change. An example of this would be Apple's definition of integral types found in `<OSTypes.h>`, which include `SInt16` and `UInt32` instead of `int16_t` and `uint32_t`, respectively. Others are completely different implementations, such as the ANSI Standard `bool` versions Apple's `boolean`. In this case, you must convert return values back and forth between Apple API calls and Standard C Library calls.

Standard C Library functions are usually preferred for the same reasons: `malloc()` and `free()` are preferred over `NewPtr()` and `DisposePtr()`. Likewise, `memcpy()` and `memmove()` are preferred over `BlockMove()` and `BlockMoveData()`. However, sometimes you may require the Apple equivalents for performance or functionality not available from the ANSI functions. For example, the Standard `fopen()` would be insufficient if you require your file to have a resource fork. Therefore, always be mindful of the requirements of your project prior to making these decisions.

The ANSI C Library within C++

The Standard C Library functions and types as defined by ANSI in 1990 are available as part of the Standard C++ Library for free. Although newer items added to the Standard in 1999 are not officially a part of the C++ Library, many C++ development environments have included them as a courtesy.

The associate C header files of the form `#include <xxxx.h>` are deprecated in C++ and replaced by those of the form `#include <cxxxx>`. Furthermore, C Library items in C++ are inside the `std` namespace and are not available globally. Thus, C Library items require either a `std::` prefix or a declaration of `using namespace std;` For example, the C snippet:

```
#include <string.h>

memcpy(destinationArray, sourceArray, numItems * sizeof(long));
```

...in canonical C++ would be written as:

```
#include <cstring>

std::memcpy(destinationArray, sourceArray, numItems * std::sizeof(long));
```

As most developers are fairly familiar with the Standard C Library, the remainder of this article will focus on Standard C++ Library.

cout & Other <iostream> Classes

One of the first objects one learns about in C++ is `cout`, which is an instantiation of the `ostream` object. The C++ `iostream` classes are functional replacements for the clunky `<stdio.h>` functions from C. Rather than the cumbersome C snippet:

```
float radius;
double pi = 3.14159;
printf("Enter the radius of a circle:\n");
scanf("%f", &radius);
if (radius <= 0.0)
    fprintf(stderr, "Improper value returned for radius: %2.3f", radius);
```

```

else
    printf("Circumference=%2.3f, Volume=%2.3f\n", (float) (2.0*pi*radius), (float)
(pi*radius*radius));

```

...the C++ equivalent code is more obvious:

```

float radius;
double pi = 3.14159;
cout << "Enter the radius of a circle:" << endl;
cin >> radius;
cout.precision(5);
if (radius <= 0.0)
    cerr << "Improper value returned for radius: " << radius << endl;
else
    cout << "Circumference=" << 2.0*pi*radius << ", Volume=" << pi*radius*radius << endl;

```

The C++ code requires no translation of the unusual embedded text tokens and reads more like English. Other formatting capabilities are also available, including setting output into various formats (octal, hexadecimal, scientific notation, etc.) and wide character usage.

ANSI string Class & Other Useful Objects

The Standard C++ Library comes with a number of very useful cross-platform objects. For the interests of space and time, I will give only a bird's eye view of them for now, and we will go into detail in future articles.

Virtually all frameworks offer a basic string class type. Such classes are certainly helpful to the user of the framework and will typically offer behavior which takes advantage of the given framework. Unfortunately, such classes are of very little use once you need them to be cross-platform. The one string class which is available to all C++ programmers is the ANSI Library class **string**. It has basic constructors accepting standard **char ***'s as well as other **strings**, and you may wish to create your own utility functions to convert to and from this type, particularly if you are dealing with other string types, such as MFC's **CString**, PowerPlant's **LString** or Mac OS X's **CFString**. There is also a wide character equivalent class **wstring** for those dealing with Unicode.

In addition to the **string** class, there are a number of other extremely useful cross-platform ANSI classes provided by C++ which you will wish to use when working between multiple frameworks. One is **auto_ptr**, which is a templated smart pointer class. To use it, one merely allocates an object with the traditional **new** keyword and assign it to an **auto_ptr**. The **auto_ptr** class' destructor will delete the memory associated with it, so that you need not be concerned with chasing pointers. **auto_ptr**'s can even pass ownership around when you wish them to.

auto_ptr's point only to one object at a time. When handling arrays of data, the ANSI Standard Library has a number of objects to choose from. For numerical data arrays, the **valarray** templated type is perhaps the best, as it allows the array of data to be operated upon as if it were a single value. For example, if **val1** and **val2** are two **valarray**'s then **val3 = val1 * val2** would be an array of the products of the entries of **val1** and **val2** for each index. All manner of arithmetic can be performed on **valarray**, including standard math functions: **val2 = sin(val1)** creates a **valarray** which is a collection of the results of applying the **sin()** function upon each element of **val1**. "Slices" of **valarray**'s can also be extracted. **valarray**'s are highly optimized for mathematical calculations and are best suited for numerical types.

Another powerful mathematical part of the ANSI Standard is the **complex** data type. Unfortunately (as briefly mentioned in last month's column), the **complex** data type in the ANSI C++ Standard conflicts with the one

defined in the ANSI C99 Standard. In C, **complex** is a suffix modifier to floating point data types, declared as such: **double complex z**; In C++ on the other hand, **complex<>** is a templated type and is declared like so: **complex<double> z**; Either version is will likely fit your needs and it is merely a matter of preference which to use.

STL Containers

One of the most powerful features of C++ Library was the inclusion of the *Standard Template Library*, or *STL*. *STL* was designed by Alexander Stepanov in an attempt to create “*uncompromisingly generic algorithms*”. It was implemented in other languages, such as Ada, prior to being ported to C++, which happened in 1994. Initially, *STL* evolved independently from the C++ Standard Library, which is why it is very different from the rest of C++. For example, while most of the Library follows standard object oriented practices of inheritance to absorb common functionality, *STL* objects are very loosely connected and share very little in the way of an inheritance hierarchy. Despite this major difference in design philosophy, the ANSI committee voted to accept most of *STL* into the Standard Library.

STL consists of these components: Containers, Iterators, Algorithms & Functions, and Adapters. Containers are different data structures used to hold objects, such as **vector** (a one dimensional array), **list** (a doubly-linked list), **queue** (a FIFO model), **stack** (a LIFO model), **deque** (a double-ended queue), and others. **iterator**'s are generalizations of pointers, including input iterators, output iterators, forward iterators, bidirectional iterators, and more. (Not all iterators are available to all containers.) Algorithms involve optimized sorting, searching, swapping, etc. The important point here is that algorithms are container-independent.

STL is designed for performance, not for object design. This is why there is no common base class amongst the containers and why each container has its own iterator type. No special range checking is done, as target performance is the priority.

With few exceptions, *STL* has virtually all the container classes that one would need for an advanced project. The only notable piece missing is a sparse array class. In a cross-platform project, you would do very well in using *STL* objects as the universal underlying model, translating into framework specific containers only when necessary.

Coming Up: With this 16th installment, we will stop here in our cross-platform series and move onto more Macintosh-specific areas of interest. I hope you have enjoyed reading this series as much as I have in writing it. With Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard just around the corner, there are a number of exciting new topics that we will be delving into in the coming months. Please feel free to send your feedback and suggest and topics for the future. See you in 30!

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<http://www.amazon.com/gp/homepage.html/002-5842389-7443202>

Apple Store for Individuals

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

Apple Store for Businesses in the USA

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

ecamm networks

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

(Right after the *Hardware* Heading.)

Lionshead Studios Limited and Feral Interactive - Black & White 2 & The Movies

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

DigitalMediaTraining

<http://www.digitaltraining.com/ispecial/maccom>

macCompanion Gearshop

<http://www.spreadshirt.com/shop.php?sid=49782&op=designs>

(Right after the *Letter from the CEO*.)

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com>

(Right after the *Book* Heading.)

QuickerTek

<http://www.quickertek.com>

(Found in the *Hardware* Section.)

Parallels

<http://www.parallels.com>

(Right after the *Software* Heading.)

Advertising Information

Contact Wayne Lefevre, our Ad and Marketing Director, for working through the process of advertising with us.

wlefevre@maccompanion.com

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

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

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

Statistical Analysis

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

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”.

Advertising with *macCompanion*

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

Site Ad Rate

We offer website ads for a fixed-budget price of only \$100 per month on our site. Following the KISS principle,

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

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

Affiliations

We do affiliations, and work with those who have made arrangements with online affiliate systems, or we deal directly with you if you have created code, and have a contract we can sign. Check out the Bazaar on our website at <http://www.maccompanion.com/bazaar/bazaarindex.html>

Sponsorships

We also accept sponsorships. Please let us know if you would like to sponsor *macCompanion*!

If you are as excited about our *macCompanion* readership as we are, please download the contractual terms and conditions documentation that are online in PDF format, or we can send them to you as an attachment. We'd enjoy having an ongoing working relationship with you too.

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