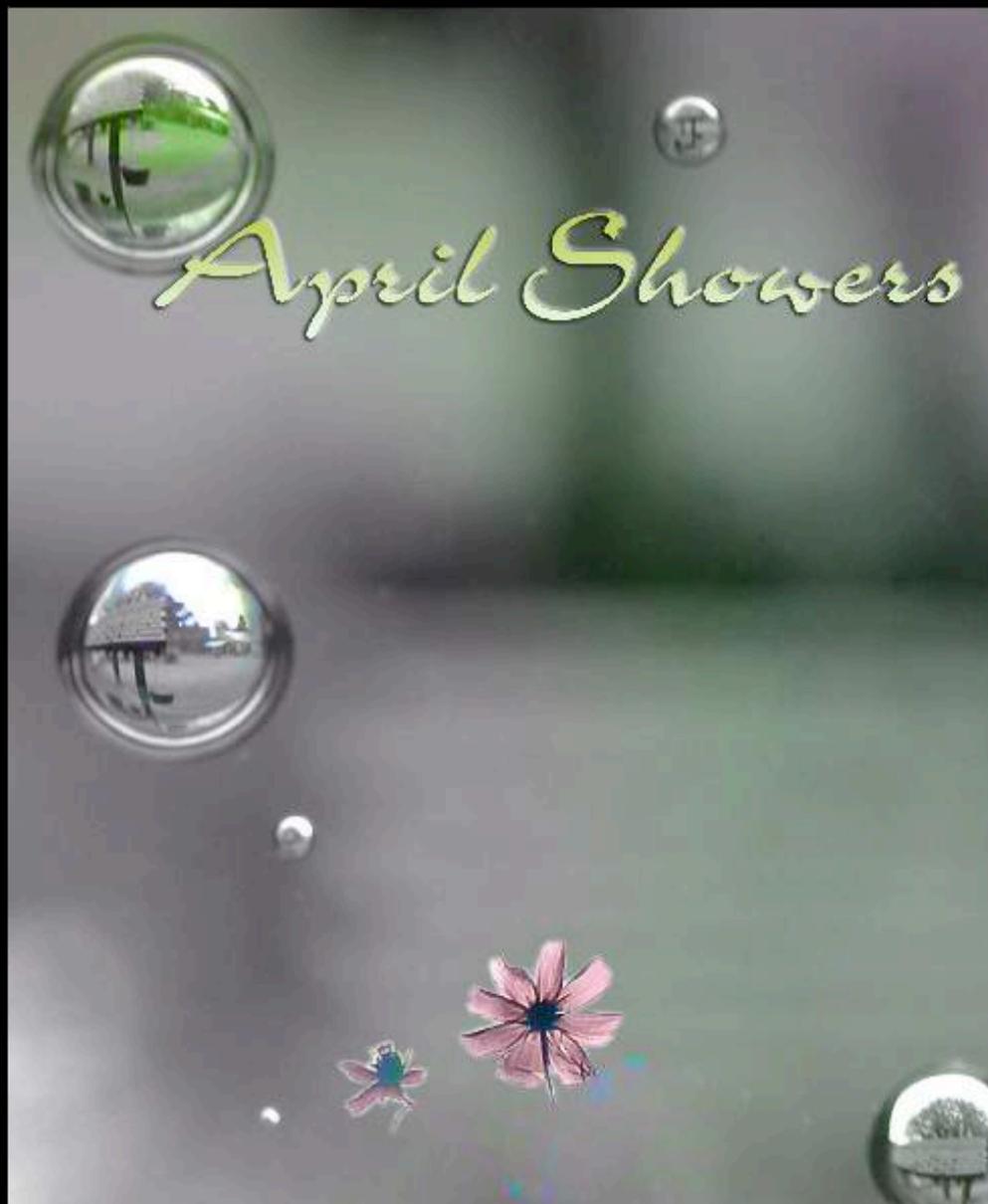


macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MACINTOSH

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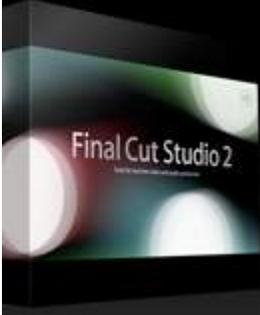
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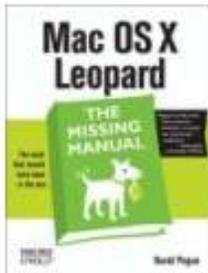
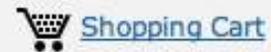
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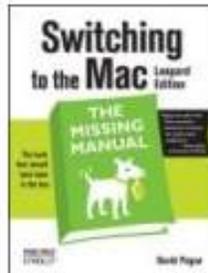
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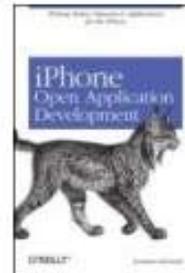
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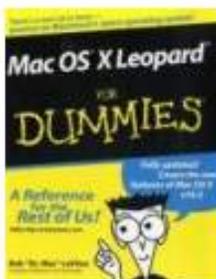
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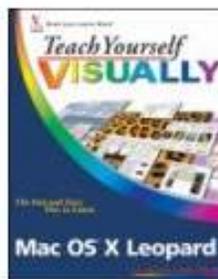
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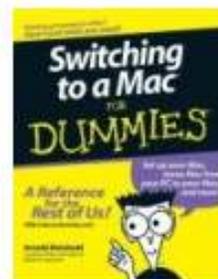
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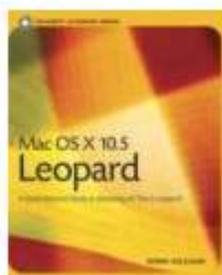
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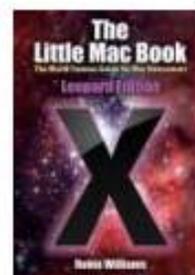
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Columns

Letter from the CEO

Bye-Bye Microsoft, Hello Apple!

By Robert Pritchett

Apple just reinstated MPN, LLC (publisher of *macCompanion* Magazine) as a Business Apple Affiliate Publisher, after a 3-month hiatus by Apple to shut down Online affiliates and reorganize. This may not sit well with former Apple Authorized Business Associates (AABA), after many went out on their own to create the Macintosh Apple Business Associates (MABA) group with the <http://www.mac2o.com> catalog store. And yes, we are a member.



Granted, we only get 1% of sales that go through our *macCompanion* website at <http://www.maccompanion.com> from Apple, but we did get our first cheque from Apple Corporation last year! It was welcomed with open arms. We hope to increase that traffic through our website as more folks from around the world discover the Mac through our publication.

More and more folks are migrating to the Mac, just as we predicted a few years ago, prior to MS Vista being released. And we would like to think that we had a part in making that happen. We still want it to happen.

On MS Missed-a Vista

Check out the following quotes...

MS Vista should have been XP SP3 -

<http://www.networkworld.com/community/node/25551?docid=4136>

“Vista's net effect is a negative from a consumer's point of view, because it:

- 1) adds annoyances, encumbrances, incompatibilities and stupid arbitrary renaming of existing features;
- 2) provides no useful new features worthy of notice; and
- 3) requires a further major expenditure in hardware, either in upgrades to memory and video components, or a whole new PC, to benefit from the only visible improvement, the Aero interface. And it runs S-L-O-W-E-R than XP. No wonder there's not much upgrading to Vista going on.”

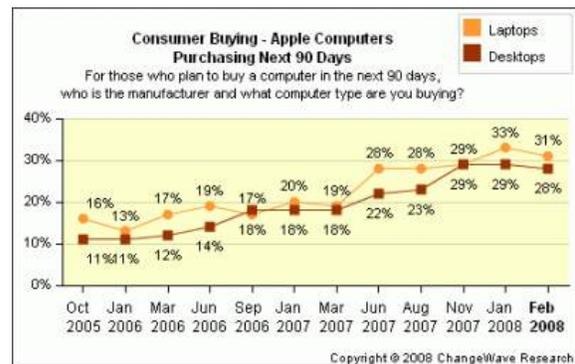
In 3 more months XP (as of March 2008) will no longer be provided by Microsoft –

<http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=9070119>

<http://support.microsoft.com/lifecycle/?LN=en-us&x=6&y=12>

“The problem is that what sounds like a promise to some (particularly enterprise customers) can sound like a threat to others -- particularly consumers. And they're not taking it well.”

“Ballmer is determined to bring down one of the largest financial empires single handedly! He could have just said – “We won't force people to buy Vista with new PCs everyone gets a choice”. He could have said – “OK vista capable was a mistake - we'll either fix Vista or refund the price of the OS”. He could have said – “We'll make SP1 fix the incredibly bad performance of Vista on even the newest processors with 2gigs of memory and fast hard drives”. He could have said – “Skip SP1, Vista is a dud - let's throw away all the code for Vista and move forward with Windows 7”. He could have actually listened to beta testers who mentioned how much Vista slows down equipment. He could actually listen in press conferences when people talk about the problems with Vista instead of ignoring them and just say MS sold a lot of licenses for Vista. He could have listened when there was a petition created with over 100,000 votes to extend service for XP. He could have listened when the public said, “We hate Vista so much we want to be able to use the license to install a better OS – XP”. He could have listened when all the hardware manufacturers said, “Vista isn't selling well, we need to offer XP”. But nope, he managed to IGNORE all of that and insisted he was right about Vista and everyone else in the world was wrong.”

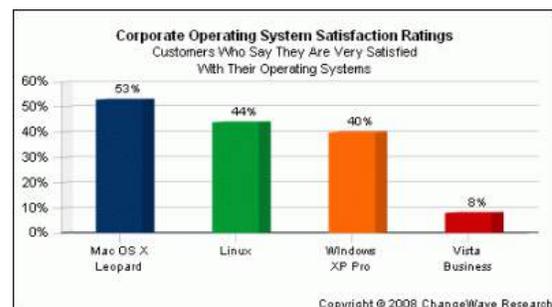


http://blogs.computerworld.com/it_isnt_just_consumers_businesses_hate_vista_and_love_leopard_too

Mac Getting Hacked

Also, there is the little issue of the MacHack™ that occurred at CanSecWest that was sponsored by (guess who?) – **Microsoft!** Just like last year, the rules had to be relaxed in order for a break-in to occur – on Day 2 no less – and by using a Safari vulnerability and Social Engineering that apparently was closed the following day with a Security Update by Apple –

<http://www.roughlydrafted.com/2008/03/28/cansecwest-and-swiss-federal-institute-of-tech-deliver-attacks-on-the-reality-of-mac-security/>



Obviously, the “winners” (Dino Dai Zovi and Charles Miller) wanted the \$10K and the MacBook Air badly.

Mark Gibbs over on *Network World* has been running a “Reviewing Your Top IT Hates” thread – <http://www.nwdocfinder.com/4152> with Windows Genuine Advantage, “Winrot”, Rebuilding and Installing Windows hitting the list. He follows up with feedback at <http://www.networkworld.com/columnists/2008/032008backspin.html> and *Network World* even has a subnet dedicated to Microsoft - <http://www.networkworld.com/subnets/microsoft/> as an independent voice for Microsoft “customers”. No, they do not have a dedicated Apple page.

They also posted an article by Jeremy Kirk, about who responds faster with Zero-Day vulnerability fixes, Microsoft or Apple –

<http://www.networkworld.com/news/2008/032708-black-hat-microsoft-vs-apple.html>

A graph by Daniel Eran Dilger shows a different story...

Patches Released			Major Releases		
Year	Microsoft	Apple	Microsoft	Apple (in study)	Apple (in reality)
2002	145	54	Win XP SP1	Mac OS X 10.2 Jaguar	10.2.0/1/2/3
2003	81	68	Win Server 2003	Mac OS X 10.3 Panther	10.2.4/5/6/7/8; 10.3.0/1/2
2004	89	133	Win XP SP2		10.3.3/4/5/6/7
2005	80	165	Win Server 2003 SP1, R2	Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger	10.3.8/9; 10.4.0/1/2/3
2006	165	175		OS X 1.0 iPhone	10.4.4/5/6/7/8
2007	118	220	Win Vista, Svr 2003 SP2	Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard	10.4.9/10/11; 10.5.0/1
Total	678	815	7	5	33 + 5 iPhone updates

The list does not include the latest Security Updates in 2008 from Apple – Nine of which can be found here as of March 2008 –

<http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1222>

and the other Apple Operating System updates can be found here –

<http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/>

Now let’s see, no real virulent malware exists to infect Macs on an Operating System that is essentially 7 years old. I’m constantly barraged by non-Mac users who act dumfounded with disbelief when they are told computers do exist that do not get Trojans, worms or viruses on them from causal or heavy use on the Internet.

And all this can be done by the person who uses and owns a Mac. No extra costs are involved or necessary by paying a technician or IT specialist to otherwise load, install, optimize, clean up goofiness or debug the machines as is “required” for non-Mac computer systems.

We know that Apple systems are not perfect, but they certainly lower the frustration level considerably, when using a computer to get real work done.

Donations to keep *macCompanion Magazine* Going

We have three choices – either give up publishing *macCompanion Magazine*, giving it to somebody else or by requesting donations.

You could possibly agree that our magazine covers a lot of territory and is not just another shovelware trade rag or Manufacturer and Software Developer Public Relations organ (see <http://prmac.com> for that), or a tool of Apple.

I've seen small newsletters in niche markets requesting hundreds, if not thousands of dollars each month for distribution of their publications – and they get those funds, month after month!

We try harder to give you real world experiences about use and abuse regarding books, hardware and software related to the Macintosh Experience™.

“Greenware” comes as an extra bonus, as we continue to explore how we as people on this Big Blue Marble™, handle our earthly stewardships.

Now with close to 2 million readers per month, we could ask for a \$1 USD per issue and we would be very, very happy! So after nearly 6 years in publishing *macCompanion Magazine* and covering expenses out of our own pockets, we are asking you to participate as well. If you would like to donate more than a \$1 per issue, please feel free to do so. We do not want to limit your generosity!

We have a commercial account with PayPal and can take any credit card they have posted -



<http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/bazaar/bazaarindex.html>



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Don't be bashful!

Now enjoy reading another month's worth of articles we've managed to pull together, as we explore what all of us can do with Macs.

Let's see how April showers help Apple continue to grow in the computer industry and be labeled as "Recession Proof".

Sincerely,

Robert L. Pritchett
Editor-in-Chief
macCompanion Magazine

According to Hoyle...

Basic Update 2008

April 2008

by Jonathan Hoyle

jhoyle@maccompanion.com

macCompanion

<http://www.jonhoyle.com>

Two years ago, we devoted three columns to the state of Basic development environments available on the Macintosh.

In Part I <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/May2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm> we looked at the history of the Basic wars on the Mac, including the stunning story of Apple's *MacBasic* product.

In Part II <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/June2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm> we reviewed a number of modern Basic development environments available today, both free and commercial, offering our recommendations.

In Part III <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/October2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm> we looked at a few Basic products which were not viable products at that time but showed strong potential for the future. At the end of that series, I professed my optimism for the future of Basic on the Mac.

In this month's article, we look at the current state of Basic development environments in 2008.

The Basics I will cover in this article are those which include the Macintosh as an intended target. Although it is possible to run some Linux-based Basics on the Mac under X11 (such as *Decimal Basic* <http://hp.vector.co.jp/authors/VA008683/english/index.htm>), or just about any Windows development environment with Parallels or Boot Camp, I do not describe them here. The reason is simply this: there are a number of acceptable options which run natively on Mac OS X, and thus there does not appear to be much reason to have to resort to emulation-based versions. I will make references to some Classic-only Basic compilers, but I do so only for informational purposes and do not recommend such applications.

Dead and Dying Basics

In the past two years, there have been a number of disappointments in the Mac Basic community. The first and foremost is the cancellation of the *ExtremeBasic* <http://web.archive.org/web/20070210121927/http://extremebasic.com/> project. Author Andrew Barry, who also originated *REALbasic*, has stated on his Blog that he no longer believes there is any value to continuing *ExtremeBasic* so has given it up. As for *wxBasic*, author David Cuny was kind enough to inform me that someone had succeeded in making a Mac OS X port <http://noforum.de/files/wxbasic-macosx/> in late 2005, but the project fizzled out shortly thereafter.

Many Mac Basic development environments appear to be alive but have gone unchanged for several years. These include: *Omikron Basic* <http://www.berkhan.de/> (June 2004), *CocoaBasic* <http://www.dsitri.de/wiki.php?page=CocoaBasic> (since 2003), *METAL Basic* <http://www.iit.edu/~sarimar/GDS/metal.html> (December 2001), and *True BASIC* <http://www.truebasic.com> (2002, but described in more detail below).

A few well-known commercial products have been dead for quite some time, yet still seem to captivate interest, especially on EBay. These include *Visual MacStandard Basic* <http://members.aol.com/macbasic/msb/>, *Microsoft QuickBASIC for the Macintosh* <http://macqb.parahosting.net/>, *SCBasic* <http://members.aol.com/johnrunehx/basic/scbasic.html> and Mainstay's VIP-BASIC <http://www.mstay.com/legacy.html>. There are a number of Mac-based Basics which have been discontinued but whose source code has been made available as open source for those interested in updating or modernizing them. For the true Basic diehard, this is a great opportunity to take a project which has most of the legwork already done, but allowing him to tweak to his tastes. Dead Basics are available for such resurrection include *TNT Basic* <http://www.tntbasic.com/>, *Object Basic* <http://web.archive.org/web/20001216031900/http://www.redplanetsw.com/download/index.html> and *Brandy Basic* <http://sourceforge.net/projects/brandy>.



The 600 lb Gorilla <http://www.realbasic.com/>: \$200 Standard Edition/\$500 Professional Edition (price is per platform)

REALbasic 2008 is without question the dominant Basic development environment available today on the Macintosh. There is no close second. *REALbasic* is considered by many to be the cross-platform equivalent to *Microsoft Visual Basic* <http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/vbasic/default.aspx>. All other products described in this column stand in *RB's* shadow (at least as of now). *REALbasic* had a detailed review in a previous According to Hoyle column <http://www.macompanion.com/archives/january2006/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>, so I shan't repeat it here. However, one change has taken place since that review which may help change the state of the Mac Basic world: its price. Given REAL Software's near monopoly, it has decided to raise *RB's* price structure. In the summer of 2006, the Professional Edition jumped from \$399 to \$500 (a 25% increase), and then recently REAL announced a price increase for the Standard Edition to double from \$100 to \$200. And remember that this price will be *per platform*. REAL's slogan used to read "*Cross-Platform That Really Works*"; it ought to soon be "*Cross-Platform That's Really Expensive*", as it will cost a minimum of \$400 to compile a *REALbasic* project for both Macintosh and Windows. If the project requires the capabilities of the Professional version (such as being a console application), that price jumps to \$1000 for Mac & Windows, and \$1500 if you wish to include Linux. For this reason, it is worth at least *considering* some of the alternatives which exist for the Mac Basic developer. You may find that one of these cheap or free alternatives is sufficient for your needs, and you can save on hundreds of dollars on your *REALbasic* subscription renewals.



FutureBASIC <http://www.futurebasic.com/>: **Now FREE!**

FutureBASIC is the longest running Mac development environment still available today, with its history going back to *ZBasic* from the mid-1980's. In the early 1990's, Zedcor changed its name to *FutureBASIC*, and soon after it became the dominant BASIC on the Macintosh (and had remained so until the rise of *REALbasic*). Today, *FutureBASIC* is run by Staz Software, and Staz has continued to offer a quality product through these past many years. Given its history, it is no wonder that *FB* is the only development environment (for any language) which can compile applications which can run on 68K Macs running System 6.0.5, all the way to modern Macs running Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard, and anything in between. With oodles of sample projects available to satiate almost any appetite, *FutureBASIC* has the experience and quality to be a winning choice.

People who know of *FutureBASIC* already know this. But what they may not know is this: As of 1/1/2008, this \$169 product is **now available as freeware!** This is great news for all who wish to develop quality GUI apps, particularly those which need to run on older hardware. And other exciting news is the introduction of *FBtoC* <http://www.4toc.com/fb4/>, a translator which converts *FutureBASIC* projects into C projects compilable in *gcc*. This is particularly useful for *FutureBASIC* users wishing to create their own Universal Binaries. I highly recommend anyone even causally interested in *FutureBASIC* to visit the web site and download it and give it a try. You won't regret it.



KBasic <http://www.kbasic.com/>: **24.95 Euro (~\$35US) (price is for all platforms)**

Here's a Basic development environment that is beginning to take the market by storm. Author Bernd Noetscher has done a wonderful job bringing KBasic to the Macintosh in a relatively short period of time. *KBasic's* great reputation is well-deserved, as it is becoming a premiere development platform. Using the Qt <http://trolltech.com/products/qt/homepage> cross-platform framework, *KBasic* is able to deliver versions for most operating systems without compromise. In fact, one can think of *KBasic* as essentially *QtBasic*. At this time, *KBasic* is the best cross-platform alternative to *REALbasic*. And if you have no need for cross-platform capabilities, and the Mac is the only platform you are interested in developing for, then Bernd Noetscher's other (soon-to-be released) product may be for you...

Objective-Basic

Objective-Basic <http://www.objective-basic.com/>: 69.95 Euro (~\$99US) Commercial development / FREE for GPL development

Objective-Basic is the new kid in town, a Mac-only development environment which combines the power and capabilities of objected oriented programming in Objective-C with the ease and friendliness of the Basic programming language. Expected to be released in the 2nd Quarter of 2008, *Objective-Basic* is the second brainchild of Bernd Noetscher, the ingenious author of *KBasic*. Essentially, *Objective-Basic* is Cocoa development using Basic instead of Objective-C. As with Objective-C programming, *Objective-Basic's* GUI editor is Apple's *Interface Builder*, and all the Cocoa framework objects are exposed as *Objective-Basic* objects. Another extremely powerful feature is its ability to mix C and Objective-C into *Objective-Basic* source code. This allows you the option of writing in Basic throughout most of your code, and switch to C or Objective-C only when you feel the need to. Part of the success Bernd is relying on is his leveraging *KBasic* for much of the foundation of *Objective-Basic*, but then concentrating on Mac-specific technologies where those are superior. The minimum system requirement is Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard. Look out *REALbasic*, this may be the competitor that succeeds you.



PureBasic <http://www.purebasic.com/>: \$99 (price is for all platforms)

With a reasonably good reputation in the Windows and Linux community, Fantasie Software has ported its *PureBasic* development environment to the Mac OS X platform. Unfortunately, the efforts appear half-hearted and the workmanship lacking. On its introductory web page, *PureBasic* is described to be fully supported only for Windows, Linux and Amiga (huh? Amiga???) , but not the Macintosh. Mac OS X is clearly a second class citizen, with its recent Mac release (version 4.10) coming more than two years after the previous one (version 3.94, its first Mac offering). Will Mac users have to wait until 2010 for the third release? After two years in waiting, one might expect the latest Mac OS X version to be up to date with current technology; unfortunately, this is not the case, as this release is still PowerPC only. Furthermore, the product's price tag rather high for what you get, relative to other offerings. As with *KBasic*, a license to *PureBasic* is a license for all platforms, but at almost triple the price. On the plus side though, the *PureBasic* compiler is very efficient. And on the off chance you absolutely need that Amiga compatibility, *PureBasic* is certainly the only game in town. But for most Mac users, however, I recommend a wait and see approach for this product. I'd like to see more Mac OS X emphasis before parting with my \$99, including (as a minimum) a universal binary and full Leopard support. In the meantime, I'll keep my eye on *PureBasic*...but my money in my pocket.



Chipmunk Basic <http://www.nicholson.com/rhn/basic/> : Free

What a great program this is! If you are interested in an old-school text-based Basic, *Chipmunk Basic* is the only one you'll ever need. My first experience with programming in Basic was back in the early 1980's with my *TI-99/4A* computer <http://www.99er.net/>, and with all the great advances made with the language over the past quarter century, I can still find text-based Basic development very satisfying to write. No, you're not going to create the next *Microsoft Excel* with it, but for a simple quick and dirty utility creator, *Chipmunk Basic* is hard to beat.

The most recent update (as of this writing) was December 2007 with release 3.6.4(b7) which is a Universal Binary, but there are versions that will run on earlier versions of Mac OS X, Classic, 68K and even pre-System 7. In case you have cross-platform needs, there are Windows and Linux versions of *Chipmunk Basic* as well. It's absolutely free and without question one of my favorites. Hats off to author Ron Nicholson [rhn at nicholsson dot com](http://www.nicholson.com/rhn) for this excellent product.



True BASIC <http://www.truebasic.com/> : \$19 Student/\$39 Bronze/\$195 Silver/\$495 Gold (price is per platform)

In writing this article, I originally planned to include *True BASIC* in the dead products section, but due to many misconceptions about its status, I decided to dedicate its own space to it. *True BASIC* was created in 1985 by John G. Kemeny and Thomas E. Kurtz, the creators of the Basic programming language itself in 1963. Macintosh support was available from the start, and it remained a strong product in the educational market. With time, other Basic products became more dominant, and as its market shrank, the business case for further Macintosh development became weaker. Dot releases of *True BASIC 5* trickle to a stop in the early 2000's, with the Mac version reaching its final version of 5.42 in 2002, a Classic-only release.

The web site today has gone rather stale, with its *What's New* section containing an upgrade offer good "from now until 12/31/2006". On the main TB page, a recent FAQ question includes "When Will an OS-X [sic] Version of True BASIC Be Available?" The vague response (which has remained unchanged for about 6 years) is that it "will be available in the future" but that "no release date has yet been scheduled". It should come as no surprise to you now that plans for such a release have been abandoned some time ago. Interestingly, there was a single development release of *True BASIC* for OS X with limited distribution, but it was disastrously buggy and ill-featured, pretty much killing off any further attempts to salvage a Mac version. Within the last couple of years, Kemeny & Kurtz sold off their interest in the product, and I have not received any response to my inquiries from the new owner. It is becoming increasingly obvious that no new version of *True BASIC* will ever see the light of day.

Conclusion

Over the past two years, the face of Basic development has changed a great deal. Although *REALbasic* remains the dominant development environment, it may not remain so for long. Competition on other fronts will make *REALbasic* have to work harder for its money, whilst its ever-increasing retail price makes it less attractive. I admit I am very disappointed at the demises of *ExtremeBasic* and the Mac port of *wxBasic*, as I expected each of these to become serious products today. Although I am sorry to see the long-time *FutureBASIC* leave the commercial Basic arena, I am very happy that Staz has decided to make it available as freeware. With both *Chipmunk Basic* and *FutureBASIC* now as free downloads, any Mac developer can jump into high quality Basic programming at no cost. *True BASIC* remains an embarrassment, as its undead corpse deceptively continues to masquerade as a living product. As for cross-platform Basics, *KBasic* continues to impress, whilst *PowerBasic* continues to disappoint. But without question, the big news for Basic developers on the Mac is the upcoming release of *Objective-Basic*.

Commercial developers are probably still best served sticking with *REALbasic* for now, although its escalating pricing structure is increasingly worrisome. Those needing cross-platform GUI development will likely find *KBasic* to be a very agreeable replacement, and certainly a better buy for the money. If you don't need to perform any GUI development, *Chipmunk Basic* is without question the best. Mac developers not interested in cross-platform capabilities should be exceedingly thrilled with the free availability of *FutureBASIC*. And everyone should be greatly anticipating the release of *Objective-Basic*. Once it is available, I will devote an entire column exclusively devoted to *Objective-Basic*, as I believe it has an excellent chance of being the next killer development environment.

Coming Up Next Month: Emulators for Retro-Computers. What does that mean? Find out in 30!

To see a list of previous According to Hoyle columns, visit:

<http://www.jonhoyle.com/maccompanion>

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

April 2008 Edition

By Harry {doc} Babad © 2008



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The software related tips were tested on a 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo iMac with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM; running under Macintosh OS X OS X 10.5.2

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?

This month I continue sharing my occasional tip related finds with you. As the occasion warrants, some of the Tips I share come from Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips column <http://www.mac-hints-tips.com/>, and are used with his permission. Where I use any one else's tips for this column, I acknowledge both their source and their contributors. Yes, I do write some of the tips I've discovered while Macin' around.

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

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

- **Leopard Finder Look Tip - Menu Bar Opacity**
- **The Unsanity Haxies Are {Mostly} Back**
- **How to Burn Data on a Single CD Multiple Times**
- **OnyX — A Disk Cleaner for Cache & Cookie Files**
- **A Word 2007 Document Format Converter**
- Changing Text Alignment in a Microsoft Word Table Cell

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Leopard Finder Look Tip - Menu Bar Opacity

An issue people many people including g I had with the new Finder look was the transparent men bar and menus. The menu opacity is now a lot less translucent than before. If you enter the "Desktop and Screen Saver" preference pane, you will see a button to click that says; "Translucent Menu Bar". Click this off to make the menu bar opaque.

Views from the Ivory Tower March 2008
Following up with Leopard 10.5.2
By Ted Bade macCompanion

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The Unsanity Haxies Are {Mostly} Back

As I've noted over the last quarter, I was wounded deeply when I found out that my favorite Unsanity Haxies.com [did not yet work on Leopard. Although promised early in 2008, the folks at Unsanity [<http://unsanity.com/>] wisely waited until Apple's Leopard OS defacto came out of beta with the OS X 5.2 update. Well the haxies I routinely use I use are back, and all work just as they did for Tiger I've provided a table that shares the item name, function and version number.

According to Wikipedia, a *Haxie* is a term, which was coined by developer Unsanity to describe their products. It is a blend of "hack" and "Mac OS X". Unsanity uses it to refer to "hacks" that are specifically designed for use with its Application Enhancer (APE) software. These are typically small interface and functionality tweaks to the system or existing applications by injecting code into programs as they load. Today, many people call such system enhancement products for Mac OS X "haxies", even though not all use APE.



Note: Although the new Unsanity releases are **beta** versions, Unsanity has said they're a being cautions, but expect the final versions to be extremely close in behavior to the present beta's. I've highlighted the haxies I use on my Leopard based system by **Menu Master** their titles — All perform as flawlessly and are invisible until I need them.

There are other items on this list that I've neither tested or use so *Caveat Lector!* These are posted on MacUpdate site but weren't acknowledged in the Unsanity site the last time I checked a few weeks ago.

Haxie Name	Function	Leopard Ready	Version
Application Enhancer Version [APE]	Application Enhancer (APE) is a system used in our and third-party products that helps them to enhance and redefine various applications behavior running on your system.	Beta	2.5b1
Chat Transcript Manager	<i>Chat Transcript Manager will index all of your iChat and Adium X chat transcripts and allow you to find what you need in a snap.</i>	Not Yet	1.1.1
FontCard	FontCard is a haxie that modifies the Font menu and the font panel in Carbon and Cocoa applications. It can add an icon that displays the format of a font next to the font menu item or font panel list, display the font name in the font face, group fonts into submenus, and add third party font collections to the font menu and font panel.	Beta	1.5.1b2
FruitMenu	FruitMenu is a haxie that gives you the ability to customize the Apple Menu and contextual menus. Using a visual editor you can edit the contents of the menus to suit your needs and taste. FruitMenu will also display the contents of the FruitMenu Items folder inside of your Library folder, launch applications and shell scripts from the Apple Menu and contextual menus, to allow easy file navigation and launching.	Beta	3.7b1
Labels X	Labels X enhances Apple's file labeling features in Mac OS X. This means that, not only can you apply various color tints to file or folder icons, and sort the files by label, but also you have an option of applying color tints to either an icon or its name or both. This gives you more freedom and options in organizing your files.	Beta	
Menu Master	Menu Master is a haxie that allows you to change or remove menu shortcut keys in any application with ease. It takes about 15 seconds to learn how to use Menu Master, and saves you lots of time later because you can use the shortcuts you defined and do not bother remembering which ones the developer of the software invented for you. Additionally, you can set shortcuts to any menu item that had no shortcuts, or remove shortcuts from menu items.	Beta	1.43.b2

Mighty Mouse	Mighty Mouse allows you to customize your cursors with style - and it does so on the fly, without modifying any system files! Moreover, it allows you to customize all kinds of cursors available in the system - Arrow, I-Beam, Alias, Copy, Move and the Wait cursor. You can animate any cursor and import pre-made ones available at our website. Edit the cursors with the simplicity of copy-paste and drag-and-drop, then hit Apply, and you got it!	Not Yet	1.3
ShapeShifter	ShapeShifter is a revolutionary new product that lets you change the overall appearance of your Mac using 'themes'. We're not talking about just desktop backgrounds and icons here; we're talking about everything - the look of windows, menus, apps, and buttons, absolutely everything.	Not Yet	2.5
Silk	Silk enables the Quartz text rendering and smoothing introduced in Mac OS X 10.1.5 in all Carbon applications. This means antialiased text in Netscape, Mozilla, and many others. Why wait for developers to update their Carbon applications when you can get the <i>silky smooth</i> text everywhere, right now?	Beta	2.1.4b1
Smart Crash Reports	Smart Crash Reports is an enhancement for the Apple's CrashReporter application. It allows 3rd party developers to register their products in manner so if the eligible application crashes, the crash log is sent to the developer as well as Apple. This greatly enhances the user experience of the OS, and allows developers to receive crashes and improve their software in a timely manner.	Beta	1.5b2
WindowShade X	WindowShade X provides an exciting and useful way of organizing your work on Mac OS X. With this handy tool, you can assign the many useful actions to the minimize button and a double-click on the window title.	Beta	4.2b1
Xounds	Xounds is a haxie that brings back Appearance Sounds to Mac OS X.	Not Yet	2.4

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macCompanion.com

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How to Burn Data on a Single CD Multiple Times

Many people have asked us how to “reuse” a regular blank CDR, so they can burn data to it multiple times. This is typically called session burning. You can purchase dedicated applications do this (such as Toast or Disco), but you can also use Disk Utility which is built into OS 10.4. It takes a little planning to make this work, but it can help you cut down on the number of CDs you have to burn (and buy).



This great tip comes from Apple: First create a new folder and give it a descriptive name. Now put the files you want to burn into that folder. Go to your Applications folder and open the Utilities folder. Double-click on the Disk Utility application. After it launches, in the menu bar at the top of the screen choose File > New > Disk Image from Folder. When the “Open” dialog box appears, find the folder you created earlier with the data you want to burn, and click “Image”. A “Save” dialog appears.

You can leave the name as is or choose a new name (ignore the other options in this dialog box). Click Save. In a few moments, a disk image of your folder’s contents will appear in the list on the left side of the Disk Utility dialog. Click on that icon, and then click the burn button at the top left of the Disk Utility application. When you click the Burn button, a dialog will appear asking to insert a disc. Do so, then click once the blue downward-facing triangle on the right side of this dialog to show more options. Click on the checkbox for “Leave disc append able”. Now click the “Burn” button.

Your data will now be written to that CD. To add more files later, just insert that same CD and use this same process all over again. Note that when you get to that final burn dialog, the button won’t say “Burn” this time, instead it will say “Append” because you’re adding these files to the same disc.

Don’t forget to remove the files you already burned to this disc from the folder you created above (and the DMG file it creates) before you make your next disc image.

Note that this is different than using a CDRW (compact disk re-writable). A CDRW can be erased and re-burned multiple times (however it’s not recommended to do this more than 10 times per disk). However, CDRWs don’t work in all drives, and are expensive. This tip is designed for cheaper {*more expensive – doc?*} and more durable CDR’s. ~ Ed

PS:

Toast Titanium allows you to burn sessions in advanced disk mode {Recorder > Recorder Settings > Advanced Mode > Write Sessions}. I find this simpler than using Apple’s software, but Toasty is not an inexpensive product to those of you who do not burn disks of data. [doc] Note that this setting does not work for Audio files and I’ve never needed it with data DVDs.

*Small Dog Electronics
Paul Taylor’s Hints & Tips January/February 2008
Used With Permission*

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OnyX — A Disk Cleaner for Cache & Cookie Files

Q: I recently found a program called Disk Cleaner (for PCs) and was wondering if there was something similar for Macs. ~ Gordon Werb

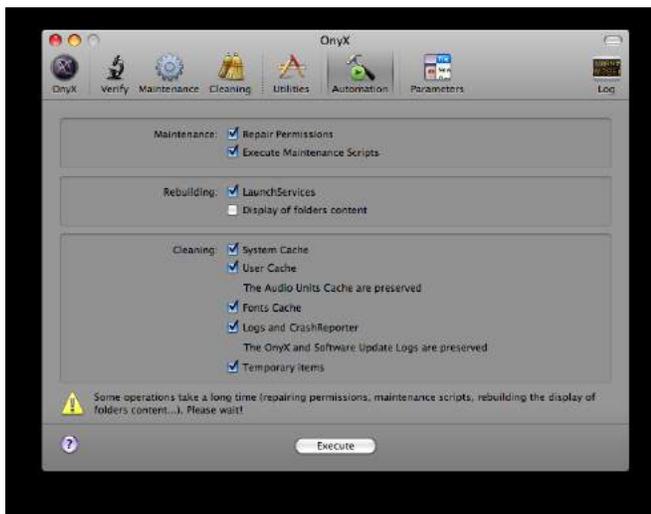
A: Disk Cleaner is a free, open source utility that deletes temporary, cache, and cookie files, as well as stray items in the Recycle Bin, from a Windows PC.



There are loads of similar utilities for the Mac, but my favorite is Titanium Software's OnyX (payment requested). It allows you to easily muck with parts of the operating system that are usually accessible only through Terminal. But unlike many tools of this sort, OnyX helps you stay out of trouble while you do so — it clearly explains what its features do and warns of potential problems.

For example, in the Cleaning tab, where it seems that you'll be spending the bulk of your time, you'll discover that you can delete a wide variety of cache files, as well as form values and cookies (see "Empty the Cache"). OnyX warns you that deleting these things may mean that you have to reenter user names and passwords when you revisit favorite sites (this could cause trouble if you've neglected to make a note of any passwords).

www.titanium.free.fr/pgs/english.html



PS.

OnyX 1.9.4b2 - OS X maintenance & optimization tool, Leopard only and [OnyX 1.8.5 for Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger](#). Versions for earlier systems are available as is an installer.

Christopher Breen – Mac 911 via
The Finder, Mid-Columbia MUG, Kennewick, WA
Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips January/February 2008
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A Word 2007 Document Format Converter

MS Word 2007 formatting breaks the ability for users to send files to earlier versioned Word users on the Macintosh or Windows (version 2004 on the Mac, and 2003 on Windows). Some third-party converters have become available to assist with this, but for most people, simply saving Word 2007 files with the 'Save As' command and selecting Word 2003 format re-creates a compatible file. Office 2008 for the Mac has restored the cross-platform capability with the .docx format, but older version users on either platform will remain at a disadvantage. [Wikipedia]



Microsoft Word 2007 for Windows uses a new file format that cannot be read, by the current versions of Word for Mac OS. Panergy's DocXConverter, now version 2.0.1 (Shareware \$20) converts Word 2007 documents to Rich Text Format (RTF), which can be read by many different software applications, including the current version of Microsoft Word for Mac. <www.panergy-software.com>

*Design Tools Monthly
Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips January/February 2008
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Changing Text Alignment in a Microsoft Word Table Cell

If you desire, you can independently specify the alignment of the text in every cell in a Word table. Originally, the cell alignment matches the alignment of the paragraphs from which the table was created. You can override this, however.

The easiest way to override cell alignment is to use the paragraph alignment buttons on the Formatting toolbar. Simply position the insertion point in the cell whose alignment you want to adjust, and then select one of the buttons — Align Left, Align Center, Align Right, or Justify.

If you prefer, you could also use the Paragraph dialog box to set the alignment. Again, make sure the insertion point is in the cell you want to affect, and then choose Paragraph from the Format menu or press Option/Command/M to display the Paragraph dialog box.

You can use the Alignment drop-down list (on the Indents and Spacing tab) to specify how the text in the cell should be aligned. When you make your choice and click OK, the text is adjusted as you directed.

Regardless of how you choose to align the text, only the text in the cell is affected; the rest of the text in the table stays aligned as it was.

*MacWordTips.com
Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips January/February 2008
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That's all folks...
Harry {doc} Babad

Raiders of the Lost Macintosh

By Dr. Eric Flescher

Here are some free or shareware opportunities to use with your Macintosh.

In Utilities

[CleanApp 2.3.1](#)

License: Free to try; \$10.00 to buy

File size: 3.72MB

Minimum requirements: Mac OS X 10.4

Category: [Optimizers & Diagnostics](#)

Mac OS X is lacking ability to uninstall applications and all their associated files easily. With this handy utility, simply drag and drop the app to the interface for a thorough uninstall.

http://www.download.com/CleanApp/3000-2263_4-10712351.html?tag=nl.e414

[Intaglio 2.9.5a](#)

License: Free to try; \$89 USD to buy

File size: 5.6MB

Minimum requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9

Category: [Illustration](#)

Modeled after traditional Mac drawing programs, Intaglio offers simple and adaptable design with easy-to-use toolbars and palettes. Several new features in this version add effects and presentation tools to improve your graphics projects.

[Download now](#)

In Games

['Nanny Mania' \(Mac\) 1.0](#)

License: Free to try; \$19.95 to buy

File size: 18.13MB

Minimum requirements: Mac OS X 10.4

Category: [Arcade](#)

Think being a nanny is easy? Think again. This fun game lets you experience the day-to-day life of a nanny cleaning up after a family. Race from room to room as you do loads of laundry and chase the toddler around the house to keep him out of trouble.

[Download now](#)

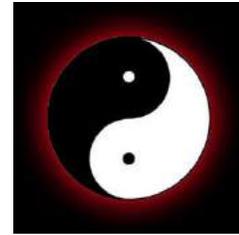
Dr. Eric Flescher, Olathe, KS(dreric1kansas@aol.com): DrEric1MacNews/Macsightings Blog : <http://dreric1macnewsmacsightings.blogspot.com/> : editor MacsU.N.I.T.E. (Macintosh Users Network for Integrating Technology into Education):(Subscribe send email to [:macsunitsubscribe@egroups.com](mailto:macsunitsubscribe@egroups.com))

Staff Writer at macCompanion Magazine (<http://www.macompanion.com/>); moderator macintoshvideo@yahoogroups.com- to subscribe macintoshvideo-subscribe@yahoogroups.com; editor TechU.N.I.T.E. (Subscribe send email to PC version TechU.N.I.T.E.: to subscribe send email to techunite-subscribe@egroups.com)

Rants, Raves and Revelations – April

Why Use and Trust Wikipedia — Caveat Lector... Let the reader beware!

By Harry {doc} Babad — Edited in Part by Julie M. Willingham ©
2008



Introduction

I recently coauthored and published a book, *Nuclear Energy and the Use of Nuclear Materials For High School and Middle School Teachers*, which was just published by EnergySolutions Foundation as a set of CDs, including teacher's tools in the form of a detailed PDF presentation. [Please see the end note for article limitations]

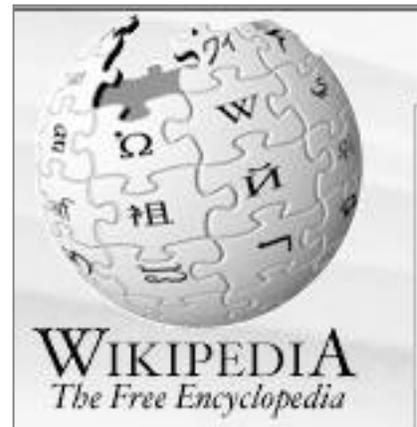
I mention this because the most broadly focused feedback we received from independent reviewers was related to our use of Wikipedia for some of the hundreds of references in the book. We were told by a few academics, mostly college teachers, that we should have used only primary references, despite their technical complexity, instead of Wikipedia and other more generalized references. The commenters claimed Wikipedia references were not trustworthy when compared to references cited in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* or published magazines.

Alas, such trustworthiness arguments also hold true whether reading a textbook full of primary references or documents that are digests of a particular subject. Science is grey and evolving, and topics such as nuclear safety or man-made CO₂ being the major cause of climate change evolve. Today's demonstrated truths rapidly become yesterday's fairy tales.

I wholeheartedly disagree with claims that Wikipedia is not trustworthy — *Caveat Lector!* This article tells you why, perhaps in more detail than you cared to read about. (More about *Caveat Lector* later in the column.)

As facts evolve, we must face the challenge that to remain informed we must keep challenging universal truths (e.g., “everyone knows...”) about science and technology. This circumstance is real, regardless of whether the source is Wikipedia, a science article in *The Economist* or *Scientific American*, a Blog espousing a point of view, a headline in a newspaper seeking sales, or a study in a medical journal by an author whose work is funded by a drug company. Remember, we live in a world of changing paradigms; therefore our knowledge must keep pace if we are not to lapse into judging the technical world on outmoded and inaccurate information.

Caveat Lector!



In this article, I focus only on information studies of things that can be objectively measured by anyone with the tools, or calculated and then actualized by physical experiment. [E.g., Einstein's theory of relativity, the heliocentric solar system, or the number of cancers caused by radiation – manmade or natural.] Beliefs and faith serve their purposes, but as a whole, at least in today's world, can neither be measured nor independently replicated.

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_method/

Just remember, as you read on, I'm not talking about books about religion, which are driven by faith and belief. I, also, hold my beliefs as sacred, but my science isn't.

But let's define some terms first.

BIAS: is a term used to describe a preference toward a particular perspective or ideology, which means all information and points of view have some form of bias
BELIEF: is the psychological state in which an individual holds a proposition or premise (argument) to be true without necessarily being able to adequately prove its main contention to other people who may or may not agree.
FAITH: can refer to a religion, or to another deeply held belief, such as freedom or democracy It allows one to commit oneself to actions or behavior, based on self-experience that warrants belief, but without any existence or need for existence of demonstrable or absolute proof.
PARADIGM: Since the late 1960's, the word "paradigm" has referred to thought pattern in any scientific discipline or other epistemological context. The Merriam-Webster Online dictionary defines it as "a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws, and generalizations and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated".

Therefore, bias, error, omission, and just plain mistakes are all a part of our information sphere —yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The major differences are that we now, in 2008, have a greater ability to more broadly and deeply check what we read and hear and to attempt to make sense of the information available.

More About Checking Technical Web Sites for Bias, Error, Omission, and Just Plain Dumb Mistakes. — You know, Googling the subject, not only of Wikipedia reliability, but also that of Blogs, and articles and pages. Many of these documents (pages) are written by Internet subject experts, other folks with a mission, and of course political and think-tank pundits. Some of the are articles I reviewed are by discipline jumping born-again experts, say an industrial engineer becoming an authority on genetic engineering. Alternatively, a nuclear engineer suddenly becoming an authority on cancer or nanotechnology.

One aspect, call it doc's head check. for evaluating the credulity of a source of material is an author's willingness to provided referenced full disclosure of opposing viewpoints. I found for most of the Wikipedia articles I checked, where appropriate, differences of opinion or a weakness in basis was noted. After all it's what Wikipedia rules {author guidelines} require.

As For Blogs — There are strong believers out there that who know that *Blogs are worse than porn*. Check it out — for now I'll provide only a single link – you can Google further.

See <http://singaporeangle.blogspot.com/2005/09/its-official-now-blogs-are-worse-than.html>

Perhaps this to will become a subject of a future article.

The State of Wikipedia Acceptability

Did you know that Wikipedia publishes a Teachers' Guide? — Unlike most other sources of information I use, it provides detailed answers to questions about the limits of Wikipedia accuracy and reliability.

See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About/>

Part of the information is related to the rules under which the site operates; the rest focuses on the feedback and corrections practices used by the site's developers.

http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Schools/Teachers'_Guide The sections relevant to this article are listed below.

- 1.1 Is Wikipedia accurate and reliable?
- 1.2 What keeps someone from contributing false or misleading information?
- 1.3 Can students cite Wikipedia in assignments?
- 1.4 Is it a safe environment for young people?
- 1.5 What is open-source media?
- 1.6 Why do people contribute to open-source projects?
- 1.7 Why have we not heard of this {*about Wikipedia*} before?

Also check out:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About#Strengths.2C_weaknesses.2C_and_article_quality_in_Wikipedia/.

I'm not going to rehash the contents of the referenced articles providing Wikipedia's operating philosophy and rules, which some of you won't believe simply because it's from Wikipedia How about: But name an alternative, broad source of high quality information that prominently acknowledges both disagreements and errors. Some of the media does this in fine print on page 10 of a magazine or newspaper; but never on TV and rarely on commercial radio.

The teachers' guide notes, as do other Wikipedia links I've provided: "Wikipedia cannot be perfect. There is almost certainly inaccurate information in it, somewhere, which has not yet been discovered to be wrong. *Therefore, if you are using Wikipedia for important research or a school project, you should always verify the information somewhere else* — just like you should with all sources."

Without belaboring the point further, I'd like to quote from Bill Kerr, with whose analysis I agree. Bill is an Australian blogger who frequently and intelligently deals with Internet censorship in public schools and other related topics.

Bill Kerr's Concerns (and mine.)

"I am worried about how academics {and teachers in general} are treating Wikipedia and I think that it comes from a point of naivety. Wikipedia should never be the sole source for information. It will never have the depth of original sources. It will also always contain bias because society is inherently biased, although its {Wikipedia} efforts towards neutrality are commendable. These are just realizations we must acknowledge and support.

"But what it does have is a huge repository of information that is the most accessible for most people. Most of the information is more accurate than found in a typical encyclopedia and yet, we value encyclopedias as an initial point of information gathering. It is also more updated, more inclusive and more in-depth. Plus, it's searchable and in the hands of everyone with digital access (a much larger population than those with encyclopedias in their homes). It also exists in hundreds of languages and is available to populations who can't even imagine what a library looks like.

Yes, it is open. This means that people can contribute what they do know and that others who know something about that area will try to improve it. Over time, articles with a lot of attention begin to be inclusive and approximating neutral. The more people who contribute, the stronger and more valuable the resource. Boycotting Wikipedia doesn't make it go away, but it doesn't make it any better either."

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

<http://users.tpg.com.au/billkerr/index.htm>

Why Include Wikipedia References in Documents and Books?

When writing our Nuclear Energy textbook, the authors were faced with the problem of what kinds of references to provide. We had available a rather lengthy and detailed set of files covering all of the topics in the book including a range of technical author viewpoints in great detail and the references they themselves contained. The 600 or so primary or secondary references ranged in detail from:

- Peer-reviewed technical publications and full paper conference proceedings, most of which were available on the Internet.
- Technical position and overview papers by both US and international nuclear and anti-nuclear advocates and citizen action groups lobbyists.
- Technical papers written for teachers and students by US federal and international agencies.
- Other commentary by individuals and groups that provided a referenced basis for their arguments.
- Wikipedia articles containing reference to materials we've individually reviewed and in which we checked the contained references for accuracy.

Some of the cited reference material was published on the Internet, either as downloadable PDF files or in a Wikipedia article. Our objectives in choosing references were threefold.

- First, could our target audience understand the information provided by the referenced authors? This was a judgment call based on working with our teenage grandchildren, children, and a few teacher friends.
- Reader accessibility of the word was our secondary criterion after assuring accuracy of the references. This was determined by whether the material was readily available at no cost to teachers and students, preferably through the Internet.
- Finally clarity, did the reference contain a clearly stated and documented discussion of either a technical topic or a point of view that was rationally constructed and based on referenced documented evidence? We did not necessarily agree with the perspectives and view of dissenting authors, but strongly believed our readers deserved, indeed were obligated, to be aware of them.

As a result, after careful evaluation of their contents at the time of writing [May-December 2007] we chose to include Wikipedia references as well as material written by technical experts that appeared in printed material which was republished on the web. We recognize that the Internet is ever changing, unlike a printed book, but we've noted, for the most part, that open source publications such as Wikipedia get better not worse in time, especially when we checked the articles before selecting them.

Mea Culpa — We were, alas, remiss in not explicitly dating the individual Wikipedia references at the time we read and used them, but the publication date of the books serves as a guideline to that information. However, all references were checked for accuracy and basis three weeks before publication — burning a CD is a fast process.

Why Use Wikipedia?

We know that all material on the Internet can contain both errors in facts or by the author selectively omitting information to serve his/her belief set. A study in the magazine (scientific journal) *Nature* in December 2005 found “Wikipedia comes close to Britannica in terms of the accuracy of its science entries. (Nature is a peer-reviewed journal.) That investigation studied ”42 {scientific} entries from the websites of Wikipedia and the Encyclopedia Britannica on subjects that represented a broad range of scientific disciplines. The articles were analyzed by a team of independent subject matter experts. They found when the error categories were expanded to include "factual errors, omissions, or misleading statements" 162 errors were found in

Wikipedia and 123 in the Britannica. That is roughly four per article for the upstart amateurs and three for the publication that has been around since 1768. (*Nature* **438**, 900-901; 2005.)

Since then all the Wikipedia errors have been corrected. The heavily peer reviewed Britannica claims it was slandered.

LET THE READER BEWARE — Caveat Lector

Therefore, as with everything scientific and technical you read, whether textbooks, an Internet article, or an entry in an encyclopedia, check out both the facts and the author's affiliation. Google it, then draw your own conclusions based on the evidence. On the Internet, checking facts and looking for biases is easier than you think. Read the articles, check who sponsors the site, and that organization's mission statement. You may not like what you find relative to possible sponsor bias. I often don't – but relative to science and technology, even as an old man set in his ways, I live with it. The best I can do is sort out half-truths and distortions from substantiated fact. It's a little bit like the so called "fact" sheets politicians post on their websites about their opponents, which show little resemblance to things like the facts documented in the Congressional Record.

Alternatives to Wikipedia

You can search each subject one search topic item at a time in Google. Remember the way you ask the question will filter your results. Then start reading ...all thousand or hundred thousand hits. Fortunately the most relevant hits are in the first 100 references (links) Google retrieves. [DEVON Technologies DEVONagent, a shareware program, does even better at eliminating some of the chaff — <http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/devonagent/index.html/>.] There are also semi-static encyclopedias on the web. Amazingly they too often lift material, from open information sources, such as Wikipedia without acknowledging that fact.

**Therefore, for our book and for the other articles I write, I base, and will continue to base, my reference list on the accuracy and availability of the materials using the criteria defined above. (My professional experience as a technical subject matter expert with specific credentials to support them speak for themselves, even in a court of law.)

For the Nuclear Energy textbook, whether the articles were pro- or anti-nuclear energy was not an issue. Indeed that was our responsibility; to check both the individual references (Google) and for review articles such as those in Wikipedia, their contained references for clarity, relevance and factual defensibility.

Most of what we found from antinuclear groups when *googling* for suitable background material for the book was irrelevant, inaccurate, or heavily emotionally biased. I've chosen not to cite or list the inaccuracies, but then I'm also not into ghost stories and other fantasies. Two examples:

1. TMI accident killed no one and albeit expensive to deal with, particularly in the panic environment fostered by the local and national press, did not significantly increase the cancer mortalities in the nearby Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, region. If zero is a number you prefer, stop flying, don't visit Denver, and stop eating because food is naturally radioactive as is the world.

2. Chernobyl (USSR) was a reactor that had no containment vessel. You know the dome around the reactor in a nuclear power station. The Chernobyl Disaster was caused by human error and compounded by faulty technical design – no containment vessel. TMI had a containment vessel, which limited release. America has never used uncontained nuclear reactors nor have any of the nuclear dependent nations such as France, Japan, Korea or India. Modern nuclear reactors are being built to even stronger containment standards to thwart terrorist threats such as those of 9/11.

Those omitted references we too often found had one thing in common. They contained no references to the literature at large. At most they represented the *circular* arguments based documentation by members of an organization with a cause quoting each other's papers.

What has this to do with Wikipedia? — Well, such filled “belief” articles were not cited in Wikipedia sources we used, but those anti-nuclear articles whose logic and basis were defended by factual references, were cited. So these were not used in our book.

Back to the Nuclear Energy Textbook and Wikipedia — Therefore such authors did not provide teacher and student Internet readers with information to make up their own minds by reading opinions outside of their paradigm-locked club. Therefore we include references to Greenpeace, the Union of Concerned Scientists, The Sierra Club, and other groups who document their opinions with hard (albeit a bit selected) peer reviewed facts. Again we proclaim, *Caveat Lector!*

In Closing

I will continue to judiciously use Wikipedia as a reference source in my technical work when I'm writing for a non-technical audience. I shall be giving that information equal time with more conventional published sources. Let's face our collective realities, no not our TRUTHS; the later is only in the eye of the beholder.

Reality, in everyday usage, means "the state of things as they actually exist." The term reality, in its widest sense, includes everything that is, whether or not it is observable or comprehensible. *Isn't philosophy awesome?*

However, the only ways our concepts of reality have a demonstrable basis would be on the preponderance of available evidence. This requires an ability to reproduce observations of any part of the world around us. And of course, the more we know and study and test what we read or hear or see, the more our vision of reality changes.

In the sense I've defined above, the *reality* of information found in our sources of information, which can be physically or statistically checked, the closer the information comes to being valid at any given time. That also holds true to papers by student using Wikipedia as a reference. Students need to provide more references than a Wikipedia article, because by itself citing Wikipedia references is not enough to show an examination of the subject matter.

I have provided, for you're consideration, a list of potentially faulty realities, be they from Wikipedia or your grocery checkout counter's favorite tabloid.

- Information provided in a 30 second TV spot by a politician up for election.
- Alleged facts during TV debates about the environment – folks claiming solar energy is clean energy without taking full life cycle pollution costs of making the solar cells and solar arrays into account.
- The actual number of folks who've gotten cancer from radiation released in the Chernobyl reactor disaster or the TMI accident.
- Information supporting your buying a stock from someone who gains by making it appear as a good deal.
- Medical information on sites owned and operated by those trying to sell you cures.
- Facts about people and issues by those who have a vested interest in their TRUTH such as many TV and Internet talk shows that take information out of context or just plain lie to get their message across.
- Most advertising that claims superior performance about a product in **LARGE** print and provides you actual details in tiny print.

My bottom line: the more subjective the topic, the more room there is for bias or error or omission. At issue, it is and always will be hard to prove the reality of subjective information, despite the number of people who treat that information as TRUTH.

Therefore, do your homework. Remember, according to doc_Babad, grey is more beautiful than black or white. The more important the decision, the bigger the challenge of the homework assignment, but pick a topic and start checking... it will brighten up your mind.

LET THE READER BEWARE — Caveat Lector

PS

The last time I've checked, no one has yet written me up in Wikipedia, nor have I written any articles for them.

PPS Check Out

Teachers and Wikipedia — <http://www.google.com/search?ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&q=Teachers%20and%20Wikipedia>

Trusting Wikipedia — <http://www.google.com/search?num=30&hl=en&newwindow=1&safe=off&q=Trusting+Wikipedia&btnG=Search>

Wikipedia Errors — <http://www.google.com/search?ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&q=Wikipedia%20Errors>

END NOTE:

This article reflects my personal opinions. It neither reflects those of my co-author, Dr. Raul A. Deju, nor that of the books publisher, Energy Solutions Foundation.

Harry, aka doc_Babad

**Nuclear Energy
and the Use of Nuclear Materials**

For High School and Middle School Teachers

by

Raul A. Deju, Ph.D.

and

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The Northern Spy

Thin is the New Thick

By Rick Sutcliffe

Technology News and Views Since 1983

April 2008

The MacVillage Conference

is less well known than some, but that didn't deter iSteve from making it the scene of one of the most important technology announcements of the decade, one the Spy confidently predicts will have major reverberations far beyond the technology industry, indeed that will change the very fabric of western society.

Following the usual bumpfh over some minor iPod, iPhone and AppleTV speed bumps, cosmetic changes, and miscellaneous upgrades, a wee marketing spin from the usual cast of flunkies and flacks, iCEO took the centre stage once more.

"There's just one more thing", he began, to a chorus of winks, knowing chuckles and fingers pounding on keyboards. From an audience point of view, iSteve was unfolding the world as he should.

"You've all seen one of these", he began, holding up an ultra-thin laptop. "Our MacBook Air was revolutionary for its time, the best computer produced to date. Now, it's so last month." He cued the wings and a platform bunny dressed to the nines in a smart business suit with a low neckline strode briskly to the podium, relieved him of the slim white package, carried it toward stage left. She turned to the audience as she passed a large trash can, dropped it in, grinned hugely, and flounced her exit.

"Out with the old," Jobs commented ironically, turning this attention back to the audience. "And now for the new. Today Apple announces a revolution in thin." He reached toward his head, fumbled around a bit, gave a sharp pull, then laid something across the screen of an overhead projector. That raised a few eyebrows besides my own. Didn't think I'd seen one of those old classroom standbys for a while. After all, there's nothing so out-of-it as old technology.

He switched on the projector and the wall screen lit up, showing a narrow black line mid screen. "You want thin? Try the thickness of a human hair, friends. Yes, you understand me correctly. An Apple lab-inspired revolution in microization has enabled us to pack all the components of a microprocessor and a gigabyte of memory into a single filament we call an iStrand. There it is folks." He waved nonchalantly at the projector. "That's no ordinary hair. rather, it's a fully functional single processor Macintosh computer with a gigabyte of memory.

I suppose he was expecting the puzzled looks and desultory applause that followed. Like others in the audience, I didn't know what to make of this. But iSteve wasn't done, of course. "And that's not all, not by any means. By tying together multiple strands with an electronic substrate at one end, our engineers have produced the most powerful computer ever--thousands of parallel processors linked into an ultra-fast, flexible, proprietary bus we've termed 'eHNet'." He chuckled over his little joke. "That's no Canadian product, folks, and we'll tell you what the "H" stands for a little later on in this presentation.

As assembled units, a typical one of these iStrand technology devices is massively parallel, and so powerful it'll take an act of Congress to allow its export outside the nation's capital. Never mind eight-way processing. We're talking not thousands, but tens of thousands of CPUs in a typical eHNet-enabled computer.

"Moreover, with systems built from iStrand and eHNet technology, Apple continues the evolution of attachment-free computing. These new machines have no peripherals, no ports, no wires, nothing to plug in anywhere, even if for some strange reason you wanted to. For connectivity, I'm pleased to present, as an integral part of the eHNet bus, an all new Apple wireless protocol, a development of Bluetooth that will allow data transfer to a Time Capsule or other NAS devices at speeds far surpassing SATA. We believe this new wireless technology deserves to become a new standard in modern connectivity, and to that end Apple is today announcing we will license 'Bluebeard' to all comers free of royalties. After all, what's good for the industry is good for Apple. We plan to grow our share of the market pie, so if the size of the pie increases, we win doubly."

He grinned through a standing ovation, then when relative quiet returned to the Muscovy auditorium, continued his rollout by accepting a headband from a second suit bunny, donning it, then waiting for hushed silence to descend upon his expectant audience while she carefully laid the iStrand iSteve had plucked on a table, then carted away the overhead.

"What about I/O? I'm glad you asked. Multiple cameras and projectors are embedded in our iHeadband enabling you to compute different, the new Apple way." He made a scratching motion over his left ear, and a shimmer appeared in the air above the table. A slight adjustment to his video projectors splashed a holographic keyboard and track pad image on the wall just under the familiar Macintosh desktop images.

"You can't see the actual primary screen and keyboard from where you are because they're holographic, and optimized for the iHeadband operator. That's why we're displaying for you a synched secondary screen through another Bluebeard channel, with, for today's demonstration, camera images of keyboard and trackpad displayed on screen. As the user moves her head, the holographic projections shift as well, always keeping the same relative position. This is of course is not reflected in the wall projection. As you might expect from a quality Apple product, focus and positioning have been optimized and are not user customizable. I'm sure you'll all appreciate that we want to ensure the Apple experience is absolutely standardized for everyone at all times.

Since the screen is always projected in a comfortable position, you may feel free to peruse a book or a website in bed without disturbing anyone--if you read, that is. For those who want to do actual books, the five hundred thousand most popular novels and a selection of electrical engineering and programming textbooks will be available in a special section of our iTunes store starting tomorrow at nine o'clock.

The iHeadband's tracking lasers can tell where your fingers intercept the projected keys." He threw the trackpad into a two-fingered salute and opened Pages, created a new document, then made typing motions in the air. Text appeared on the screen, complete with such misspellings as would require any high school keyboarding instructor to issue a failing grade. Ah well, it apparently wasn't one of his core skills.

While the audience stood and cheered again, he opened, modified and saved a large file. I noticed a couple of drive icons in the desktop upper right corner and was just starting to wonder where he had them stashed in a hair-thin package, when he answered that question too. Great minds, and all.

"Not only is there no removable permanent storage, there is no mechanical storage device or provision to attach one at all, nor even an option at extra cost. The flash memory on each CPU strand is rewritable ROM. We organize this through eHNet as part main memory providing instant on to your previous state, and part logical drive, though the user has unlimited options to stripe or partition this to suit her needs. Total amount depends on the number of processor strands installed, but the demonstration model I'm using has a few terabytes in total, ninety percent of which is striped drive.

If you must have external storage, use a networked device. In fact, we are also announcing for delivery starting in thirty days a new hard drive technology spinning at 12K to handle these devices' high speed data transfers, a technology that is of course wirelessly ready for connecting to your new computer. You can of course join the Internet using our existing products, because all airport technology has had Bluebeard reception built in for the last two years. There was no need to tell you until now. Ladies and gentlemen, Apple is pleased to offer a complete and powerful computer system with no moving parts whatsoever.

He had to wait for quiet again. "Some of you may be wondering about the power supply to run these new ultracomputers. I'm pleased to say an iStrand draws tens of, not milliwatts, but nanowatts. Keep an iStrand at body temperature or above, to about fifty Celsius, or move it around from time to time and it'll self-generate power and to spare for all your system needs. He beamed through yet another ovation, then added, "Apple gives new meaning to the old saying that they'll have to pry your Mac from your cold dead hands. It won't stop working unless you do."

"Speaking of which, it should be said that iStrand/eHNet enabled computers are also the greenest electronic devices available on today's marketplace from any vendor. These computers use all natural products, no chemicals are employed in their manufacture, and they will begin to biodegrade in any damp location approximately eighteen months after losing power. I repeat. There are no batteries, magnetic media, power cords or any other detritus to clutter the landfills of the nation. Others sell PCs but these babies *are* PC personified."

After yet another wave of applause subsided into its collective seats, he resumed on a related theme. "Meanwhile, while the system is powered up, even if sleeping, iStrands and the eHNet substrate are impervious to water, solvents, cleaning fluids, stock market crashes, and most chemicals. They are thin and flexible, but can take a colour coating. And so, I am pleased to announce that Apple will manufacture and sell compatible dye cartridges in aerosol packaging for this purpose at a nominal cost of ninety-nine dollars each, so you may customize your new system to your heart's content.

"This brings me to the final feature of the devices we have already begun to manufacture from iStrand/eHNet technology." He made a coy gesture to the audience. "As some of you might have

guessed, what we've had in mind from the beginning is a wearable device. We could have woven the iStrands into a shirt or a sweater. Even a pair of socks would have a sufficient number of iStrands to qualify as a supercomputer by the most stringent definition. Indeed by introducing dye at an earlier stage of manufacture, we could, have made a statement that would have been the envy of Ralph Lauren, Stawch, Stanford, or any Parisian fashion house.

"Apple seriously considered but rejected all these options for our first fashion introduction, deciding instead to license iStrand technology to select leading designers in four countries starting in ninety days. We've chosen the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Liechtenstein, the first three because they're close to home, and the fourth because it's less taxing to set up there." He chuckled at his own joke, which was more than the audience were doing. "Yes, well, back to business. For our own initial wearable product, we felt our core audience would appreciate something both more utilitarian and more cerebral.

You could scoop the silence with a spoon now. iSteve waited for the tension to grow on us, beckoned his two suit babes from the wings, tossed one the iHeadband, and, after a slight pause, threw the other his hair. A list of Apple Store orderable configurations for the new systems flashed onto the screen. For several long moments, no one reacted to the bald pate he'd concealed under the realistic looking rug. Then the woman on his left held up his hairpiece and musically intoned, "Ladies and gentlemen, Apple presents iStrand CPUs, eHairNet integration, and the new Apple HairBook."

Long after the thunder of the seventh or eighth ovation (I'd lost track) had given way to the stampede of reporters to file their stories on iSteve's revolutionary new supercomputers, I remained in the now empty auditorium struggling with what the Spy does best--not meeting deadlines with hot news flashes, but interpreting it all for the reader in a thoughtful, insightful...er...fashion. After some time processing the events, he finally decided to change the title of this little April piece to: **The Emperor's New Computer**

--The Northern Spy

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

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

URLs

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

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

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

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

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

nameman: <http://nameman.net>

opundo: <http://opundo.com>

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

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

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

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

Books

Art of RAW Conversion: How to Produce Art-Quality Photos with Adobe Photoshop CS2 and Leading RAW Converters

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Authors: Uwe Steinmueller & Jurgen Gulbens
No Starch Press, Inc.

555 De Naro Street, Suite 250,
San Francisco, CA 94107

<http://nostarch.com/>

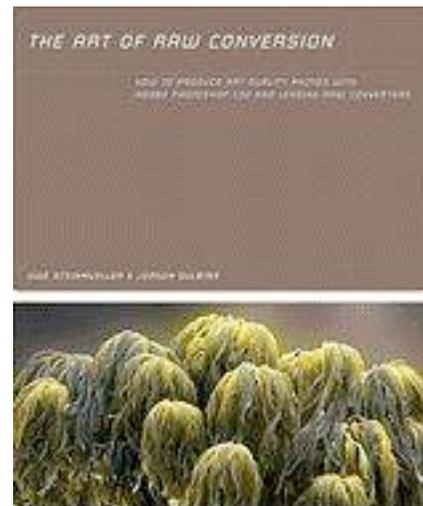
Released: June 2006

Pages: 240

\$40 USD

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ISBN-13: 978-1-59327-067-4



Strengths: Very complete set of readings and tutorials on the use of RAW format for digital photography. Breadth and depth of content is excellent. Exception information about commercial, free PC and Mac RAW format converter programs plus in-depth tutorials to learn how to use these applications. Well written and easy to understand. The colorful screen shots are well done and help illustrate points the tutorials are focusing upon. Picking and choosing which one you want to use is outlined in this book.

Weaknesses: No CD. Since you might not use all the different software packages, you might not want to read some of the chapters. But they are handy to browse for gaining a better idea what the different conversions do and don't do and their advantages and disadvantages, especially should you decide to upgrade. Some of the RAW converters, which range in different prices, are free with software, some are shareware (try and buy later) or are commercially available.

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Introduction

The RAW format is being used by more and more photographers. With RAW format, the user has more control with their photos and ultimately creating better final photos. However conversion from RAW needs to take place before the final photo is created for making your pictures better. Many advanced users have used this format for a long time but now intermediate and even novice users are using this format or learning how to use these formats. While you can search far and wide for books on the topic, one of the best places for starting is right here at *Art of The Raw Conversion*, for several reasons.

A book that will assist you with using RAW, needs to include both methods, procedures, tutorials and step-by-step instructions. Both authors, whom are active pioneers with the use of RAW digital processing and the use of digital cameras and workflow process have created a great book. Mr. Gulbins founded an online magazine and has focused on the using of RAW format, digital work and printing, Mr. Gulbins has written more than 25 books on a variety of computer and digital photographic topics. It is evident within this book, that they are able to communicate and convey a wide array of resources, tutorials and information concerning RAW format.

This 240- page book is packed with much helpful information within its 14 Chapters. The multitude of text makes for good reading but you have to watch carefully for certain ideas that are really important (as they are not in bold). The colorful screen shots are well done and help illustrate points the tutorials are focusing upon. Screenshots of the software tools and what these do in the process also help, but there are no extra guide pointers in the shots to highlight what the main intent of showing the photo is (you have to hunt around a little).

Each page has 2 or 3 sectioned columns which make for easy browsing, reading and understanding. The tutorials are well written and provide an exceptional understanding regarding the use of RAW. Mac and Windows platforms are represented as both authors work on them so that the user with either platform won't get lost in the shuffle

What is exceptional about this book is that the authors have crafted a book, that is not only intuitively written but that highlights the commercial, free and camera bound software that can be used for conversion of RAW format for use by your editors. The pros and cons of each pieces of software are highlighted and his gives the user ideas of which converter might be better for their uses. Some of these converters work for Mac OS, PC or even both platforms and this is also highlighted. This information widens the appeal of the book. But it is the language by the author that makes it a real good read as well.

The authors' tone is personable and clear. They "speak to you" and have great insight into the "little things" that are important, many that you might never know or think about. They don't just say "what to do" but they actively explain the "whys and how's" of the procedures by using short tutorial like paragraphs. You are immersed in the process and don't just glimpse of the process. The information is covered not in breadth but depth as well about RAW.

Chapter 1, introduced RAW so the first time user can start from the beginning. Chapter 2, focus is on basic color management which gives an insight into beginning your work and knowing about light. Chapter 3, "Basic raw workflow" begins in earnest to convey the procedures that are needed. The rest of the chapters explain how to utilize Adobe camera raw, Pixmantec raw

shooter (RS), Apple 's Aperture program. Other RAW converters are covered as well. Also more about Adobe lighthouse, Perfecting images, and Batch processing, metadata, color conversion techniques and black & white techniques are also included which really rounds out much to discover. The Appendix A is a nice glossary while Appendix B section has information about the different converters.

Conclusion

I can't think of a better book to begin your "RAW journey". I wish I had found this book a little sooner. My questions about RAW would have been answered much earlier. This is a great book from start to finish. The content is authoritative, very each easy to read and understand. It is a great one for novice RAW photographers to begin with but also intermediates. Advanced users might also learn a new trick or two. I recommend this book highly. I will use it to work with RAW photographs to see how I can make my photos better with RAW. So give it a try and see what RAW can do for you.

How to Do Everything with Online Video

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Authors: Andrew Shalat

website: www.osborn.com

McGraw- Hill: Osborne

<http://www.mhprofessional.com/product.php?cat=112&isbn=0071496432>

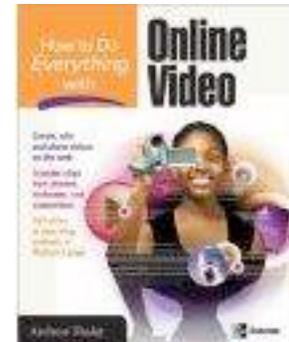
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Strengths: Nice index and the glossary is well done. Online downloads and more can be gleaned and used from the book's website area. Inside the front cover shows 25 online video operations to perform in the book. Screenshots are readable and of ample size for understanding the visuals and tutorials.

Weaknesses: Black and white screenshots, photos etc are of ample size. There are a few in-depth notes pertaining to different sections but I would have liked to have seen more. If you need more in-depth information to the editor of your choice etc. , you might want to explore about book after using this one.

Novice/Intermediate

Introduction

Starting, producing and posted online video is all the rage since the online Youtube made the process easier. While this online application has made the process easier, many still have questions about various parts of the process. The book "How to Do Everything with Online Video" answers many of these questions and more.

The author has written for Macworld, other magazines and has a weekly Podcast and radio show. he has brought his experience and background for the writing of an easy to read but in-depth guide to online video. The white on black screenshots are integrated within the instruction. All of them are large enough to read and decipher what you need to know.

The introduction starts off the book and there are 12 solidly written chapters within the 256 pages. This chapters demonstrated how to create professionally quality looking videos, editing and preparing then for posted and sharing the videos. Shooting and editing tips, found in Chapter 1 and 2 get your started with hardware, software and assist with tips, techniques and working with video in several ways. You also learn how to embed and upload videos.

What I found new was learning about launching and using Vodcasts (Chapter 3 at pages 112-121) these can be listed in iTunes and can be downloaded to a video enabled iPod(/MP3 player which in essence combines online/ off-line video creation. “Googling” your tags with Google and discover markets, are found in Chapter 4 (pages 128- 132). This is well done and includes nice illustrations.

Nice techniques and tips also follow. In Chapter 6 and 7, “Tell a Story” is well done and includes best ways to tell a story, storyboarding and more. In Chapter 8 learning how to be a director of films and techniques are here and includes a “short but sweet” synopsis for using videos with the “rules of thirds” (which is normally reserved for use of photography).

Chapter 9 and 10 focuses on movie and power editing and the communication through websites, Blogs, Podcasts are covered. Tutorials and information for popular PC (including Adobe Premier Pro) as well as Mac editing software are also provided. These are covered in a very nice, concise and well done introductory fashion. It is up to you whether you may want to find another book related to the software editor (in this book) of your choice, to utilize and find a more in-depth series of tutorials (if you need more assistance).

What is nice is that this author has also included chapters which include ample information about Final Cut Express HD. I was impressed that the author included information about the new iMovie 08 which does a great introduction.

Finally, Chapter 12 includes some nice rules to remember, web resources, listing of sharing sites as well as more software options. There is no glossary related to terms but the index is well done.

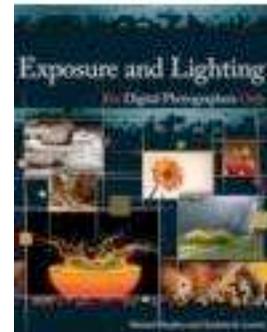
Conclusion

This is a good book for starting your online video learning especially for novice video makers or even intermediates (especially those Mac users who want to learn about Final Cut, iMovie 8). Very solidly written and informative there is much in this book to begin your video adventures.

The author does a nice job of highlighting different PC and Mac editors and even includes the latest iMovie 08. If you don't want to use the Adobe editor you might have to search for another one. The author also breaks up the tutorials into little numbered sections instead of long winded sets of information. These are integrated with illustrations and screenshots which makes for easy reading and browsing. The price is right, the book covers a range of topics and information. Get started with your Online endeavors. It might not help you with everything you need to know about online videos, but it is a great way to get started and progress for the foreseeable future.

Exposure and Lighting for Digital Photographers only

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Authors: Michael Meadhra and Charlotte K. Lowrie
Wiley

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470038691.html>

Released: November 2006

Pages: 368

ISBN-10: 0470038691

ISBN-13: 978-0470038697



Strengths: Brilliant photographs highlight the tutorials and techniques. Nicely written and easy to understand. Good helpful Q&A tips (questions and answers) at end of each chapter. Easy to read and understand.

Weaknesses: I would prefer to see the chapter numbers at the top of the page as are the titles for section/ parts.

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Introduction

When most people used film cameras, it was essential to use the basics to attain good photographs. Since automation has arrived, this has become less a factor if you want just take photographs. But to produce better photos, one needs to use the elements of the camera in ways that will produce better results. Working with the lighting, exposure and more are part of the process to upgrade your skills. A great book that helps you improve your skills in a variety of ways is *Exposure and Lighting for Digital Photographers only*.

The focus of the book starts with the authors and have written a book that has breadth and depth to the main topic. Michael Meadhra is commercial artist focusing on creative light effects. Charlotte K. Lowrie is a professional photographer, publisher of camera and photography books and former manager for MSN Photos. They have melded their efforts into producing a very readable and authoritative book dealing with two essential variables for photography: exposure and lighting.

Wiley stuff in some books

The book is divided into four parts and 15 chapters. A multitude of nice photographs help illustrate points outlined by the authors. The authors also employ a series of highlighted notes which are highlighted throughout the chapters. These are entitled: Pro Tip (learning about photography); Note (terms, vocabulary and related insights); X-ref (points to other areas of the book to find further information). Q & A (questions and answers), at the end of each chapter, target specific techniques that can be utilized. Finding information within the chapters is aided by numbers (in green) on the outside of the left page, in the very nice index and the glossary. The “normal eye” naturally looks at the top of the pages, first, and then works their way down. With the chapter in the middle takes extra time and is a little bit of distraction. I would prefer to see these numbers at the top as are the titles for section/ parts of the book which are outside top of the right hand page (would have liked to see the number of the section there too). A little idea for the next version of the book perhaps?

Part 1, "Painting With Light" addresses nature of light. Learning about color of light and humans perceptions helps the understanding of the science of light. White balance is also covered.

"What's Your Exposure", Part 2, main focus is the other part of the title, exposure. The intricacies of balancing exposure are noted along with how to obtain the best photo. Measuring light with your camera and other exposure devices are explained. The authors explain about the Zone System and how to use it integrate with digital photography. I really like the photo examples in this chapter. The note (p.50) entitled “The Digital Image Sensor is like a Sponge” is well done

Part 3, "Put A Little Light On The Subject" keys on tool and utility use. Light systems and controlling the light intensity influence the tutorials here.

Part 4, "Lighting and Exposure for Specific Subjects", has information about the different types of lighting and how to deal with them. Portraits, natural-light and also less known lighting terms (loop, butterfly, rembrant) are nicely introduced and explained.

Conclusions

There is a lot to “chew on” in this book. Novices new to digital photography, may also find this book useful, but they will have to learn about their camera first. This is a guide and tutorial for exposure and lighting and does not explain how to use your camera. Not only do you gain an understanding about light and exposure's intricacies, but the authors nicely communicate and assist you along the way. This book is best for the intermediate photographer but the advanced user may also enjoy it by learning some new tricks. Since I am in these categories, this book will be used in my photography library now and in the future.

How to Do Everything with Online Video

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Authors: Andrew Shalat

website: www.osborn.com

McGraw- Hill: Osborne

<http://www.mhprofessional.com/product.php?cat=112&isbn=0071496432>

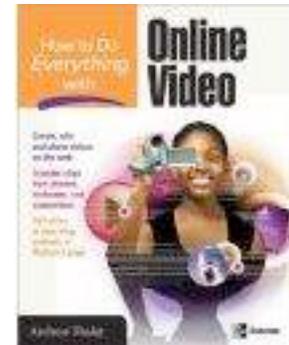
Released: November 19, 2007

Pages: 270

\$ 25 USD \$15 CND

ISBN 10: 0071496432

ISBN13: 978-0-07-149643-8



Strengths: Nice index and the glossary is well done. Online downloads and more can be gleaned and used from the book's website area. Inside the front cover shows 25 online video operations to perform in the book. Screenshots are readable and of ample size for understanding the visuals and tutorials.

Weaknesses: Black and white screenshots, photos etc are of ample size. There are a few in-depth notes pertaining to different sections but I would have liked to have seen more. If you need more in-depth information to the editor of your choice etc. , you might want to explore about book after using this one.

Novice/Intermediate

Introduction

Starting, producing and posted online video is all the rage since the online Youtube made the process easier. While this online application has made the process easier, many still have questions about various parts of the process. The book "How to Do Everything with Online Video" answers many of these questions and more.

The author has written for Macworld, other magazines and has a weekly Podcast and radio show. he has brought his experience and background for the writing of an easy to read but in-depth guide to online video. The white on black screenshots are integrated within the instruction. All of them are large enough to read and decipher what you need to know.

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Conclusion

This is a good book for starting your online video learning especially for novice video makers or even intermediates (especially those Mac users who want to learn about Final Cut, iMovie 8). Very solidly written and informative there is much in this book to begin your video adventures.

The author does a nice job of highlighting different PC and Mac editors and even includes the latest iMovie 08. If you don't want to use the Adobe editor you might have to search for another one. The author also breaks up the tutorials into little numbered sections instead of long-winded sets of information. These are integrated with illustrations and screenshots which makes for easy reading and browsing. The price is right, the book covers a range of topics and information. Get started with your Online endeavors. It might not help you with everything you need to know about online videos, but it is a great way to get started and progress for the foreseeable future.

The Little Mac Book, Leopard Edition
Reviewed by Harry doc} Babad © 2008

Author: Robin Williams
Publisher: Peachpit Press
<http://www.peachpit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0321509412>

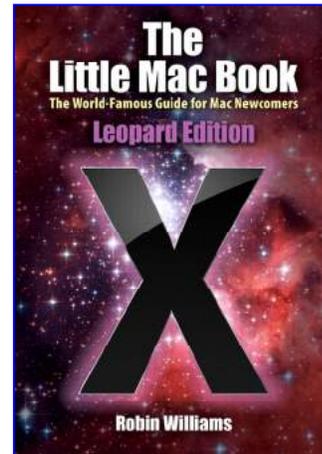
Released: December 2007, © 2008, a First Edition.

Pages: 224, Size 7 x 10 inches

\$ 19.99 (List), \$13.50 (Street) USD, \$ CND, £ UK
The Book is also available as a Safari “Books online” edition

ISBN-10: 0-321-50941-2
ISBN-13: 978-0-321-50941-3

Audience: Beginner and PC Switchers



Strengths: Attractive eye catching designs, simple easy to learn information and powerful and focused tutorials and great images. What more does a newbie need?

Weaknesses: None that mattered.

Introduction

Now why should I, who has reviewed server other Leopard books in the last several months take the time to check out this beginner book by Robin Williams: Let me count a few of the reasons:

- First and foremost it's a book by Robin Williams about I subject I know or want to learn about
- Second, it's a beginner book and all the other books we've the macC staff) have reviewed have boon beginning/intermediate users level
- Third, Robin a professional graphics designer, as well as author writes/illustrates the clearest and visually user-friendly books I've read.

Hey I'm not a book design expert, but of the over six-dozen books I've reviewed, Robin's stand out visually, making the *book-larnin'* easier.

This book will be of greatest value to the beginning Macintosh users, especially those generally new to computers or folks who have two-fingered their way on a PC Platform. The clarity of the book's well illustrated contents and layouts, to the easy to read body text and sidebar tips and comments draw you eyes to each printed page adding positive energy and comfort to the material Ms. Williams is teaching newbie uses and PC switchers.

Overall the color illustration, screen shots mostly, are easy to read and the essential focus of a figure is clearly highlighted. This is one of the few, otherwise excellent book, that I did not need my trusty magnifying lass to decipher the images.

These are things you'll notice about *The Little Mac Book* long before you start reading and leaning its contents. As a result of the setting, you will find it easier to get into the details of the Macintosh OS X 10.5 operating system and the Macintosh itself.

Publisher's Description

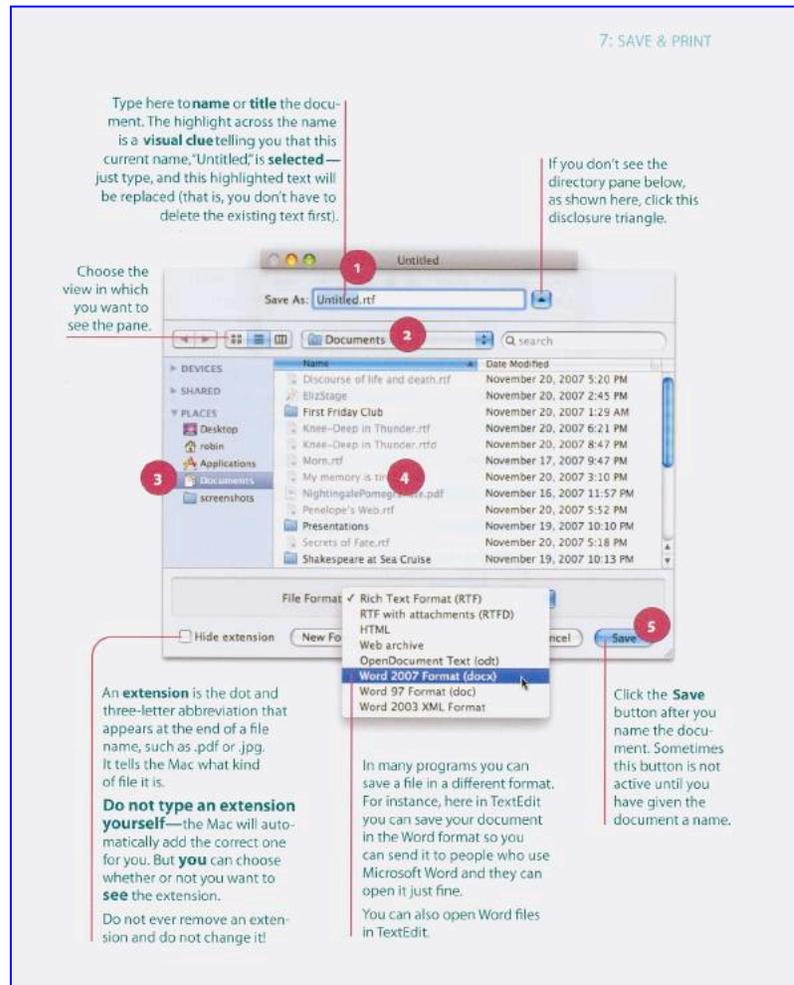
"In this book—now in full color for the first time—Robin returns to one of her favorite things: teaching new computer users how to use and enjoy the Macintosh!

Robin notes in the book introduction, "Here is the "little" book again now with just the very basic information to get you started using your new Macintosh. Of course being little means there's less information! This book should get you started. When you feel you need to know more, check out *Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Peach Pit Learning Series* for general Mac stuff and *Cool Mac Apps*, third edition for detailed directions on how to use all the really fun stuff like iPhoto, iTunes, iMovie ... garage Band and more." I've reviewed the more advanced follow up book ([4.5 macC's](#)) in the January 2008 issue of *macCompanion*.

In this book...

Starting with the first chapter, *A Map of Your Mac*, Robin book walks readers through Macintosh basics – you know clicking, mousing around, using the dock and application menus. There's more. Finder Windows and shortcuts, dialog boxes, as well as printing and email and Internet use are all covered. Sections on applications, including saving and printing your creations as well as the use of save, save as, quit and trash is a part of Robin's *full meal deal*. All of these are part of the tools provided Macintosh's GUI.

In addition Ms. Williams provides an overview (introduction) to some of the new features in Leopard, such as Time Machine, the new backup system; Spaces, for customizing different window configurations based on user needs; Spotlight, which now allows the user to search across an entire network (not just the user's computer); and more.



“ Sit down at your Mac and let Robin introduce you to its basic features. Follow Robin’s step-by-step directions, and you’ll soon feel comfortable, confident, and able to do just about anything you want to do on your Mac. From using the mouse to surfing the web, from menu commands to keyboard shortcuts, you’ll acquire exciting new computer skills—and you’ll have fun in the process.” Here are some the chapter organizational features that make it all come together:

- *Exercises* — Each chapter contains perhaps a baker’s half dozen exercises to all you to hone your skills. All are straightforward and to the point, and if you’ve read the material, should be simple to do.
- *Also Try This* — After you learn some initial material, introductory techniques, Ms. Williams proved addition exercises to hone your skills whether it is for mousing around or using email and the address book. Trying these items (supplementary exercises) should enhance you skill so that the action become both useful and natural.
- Tips — Although not labeled as such, the right hand side, blue print, on many pages contain easy to understand tips and at time shortcuts.
- *Graphics and Book Readability* — I said that already, so let’s move on...
- *Great Cross Referencing and Index* — Although not hyperlinked, it’s a paper book after all, these are as good as it gets.
- *Accent Mark and Special Characters* — Appendix Listing – No more blind searching for □ for example. However, the shareware program PopChar <http://www.ergonis.com/products/popcharx/> is faster — no page turning.
- *Remember* — Each chapter ends in a half-page *remember* list, in which Robin boils down the meat of the chapter into a few focused points. It’s the old tell what your going to tell them; tell them; and tell them what you’ve told them teaching paradigm — something Robin in which Robin excels.

Minor Nits and a **Kudo** or Three

Errors — Alas I could find no errors in this excellent book, so for a change I’m not really living up to my obligations to the book reviewers’ code.

A Thing I Relearned — Have been a Macintosh since the Lisa (ups I mean SE-30) I was delighted to learn a few things I’d never used or even noted. One, yes it seems dumb, all the up-down symbols in dialog boxes are really menu or added dialog box windows access tools. Duh! Just a sample folks, sharing more would reveal more senior moments.

Exercise 4: Use a web address shortcut.

- 1 In Safari, type Command L. This will highlight the Location box where you enter an address.
- 2 Type **apple**
- 3 Hit Return.
- 4 Try it with other names of companies who surely have their own web sites, such as Sears, NFL, Disney, etc. (And remember, you don’t have to type capital letters until after the end of the domain. But *after* the domain slash, it is absolutely critical that you type a capital letter or lowercase letter exactly as shown.)

[Introduction to Trouble Shooting](http://www.amazon.com/Little-Mac-Book-Leopard/dp/0321509412/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1196210688&sr=1-1) — “The last chapter of *The Little MacBook* quickly runs through possible scenarios as to why your machine would be unhappy. But reading *The Little Mac Book* is like taking preventive medicine. Williams” Quoted from Amazon.com — http://www.amazon.com/Little-Mac-Book-Leopard/dp/0321509412/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1196210688&sr=1-1

[No Information About Creating Other Users](#) — Robin sends you to her *Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard: Peachpit Learning Series* book, I would have preferred an introduction in this book. This is especially true when the PC users in your family see how easy it is to use Leopard.

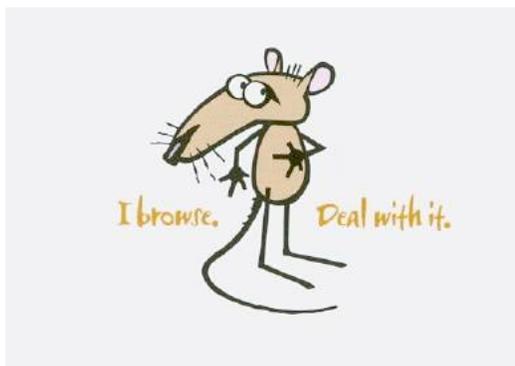
[Email Addressing Nit](#) — Robin, you left out Bcc, which is of course used to copy people you don't want other recipients to know about.

Conclusion and Recommendation

If you need a perfect give for a Macintosh newbie or PC switcher, this is the book to buy, hopefully the first of many. Some sour grapes reviewers, on Amazon and elsewhere, faulted the book for being aimed at beginners — too bad they can't read. If I needed to recommend a single book for newcomers to the Macintosh and Leopard OS, this would be it. However If I were aiming at PC user as potential switcher, it would be second. The first would be the, only slightly outdated, *The Naked Truth* by Scott Kelby (New Riders Press, 2002.)

More to the point, I agree with other reviewers that in *Leopard*, with a style both chatty and informative, Williams has crafted a guide blissfully free of heavy-handed techno-garble. Instead, she provides a tour simple enough for the newest Mac owner and complete enough to teach experienced users a thing or two.

And then there's Robin's Mices...



Photoshop Elements 5 for Dummies

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Authors: Barbara Obermeier and Ted Padova
Wiley

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470098104.html>

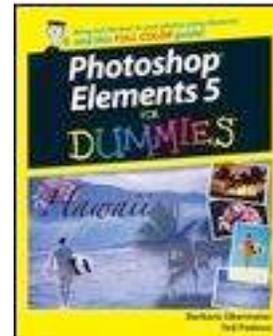
Released: January 30, 2007

Pages: 400

\$ 25 USD \$ 30 CND

ISBN-10: 0470098104

ISBN-13: 978-0470098103



Strengths: Easy to read. The layout of the chapters, content and the pages are made not only for easy reading and learning but searching and finding the information you want. You can read this book in a sequential way or can skip around.

Weaknesses: Information about RAW is very solid but was hard to find in the index. While the information is very well done, if your main intent is using RAW, you might want to use this book with another one later is needed.

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Information

For those who can't afford Adobe Photoshop, Photoshop Elements 5 is an affordable and easier way to go. Having most of its Big Brother's tools, many photographic users may still need a little guidance in learning how to get the most out of this graphic oriented program. Photoshop Elements 5 for Dummies to the rescue.

Barbara Obermeier operates a graphic design studio and teaches visual communication courses. Ted Padova is internationally recognized digital imaging authority. Both are well suited to team up to provide the tutorials within this book that can help you in many ways.

The book is divided into 6 parts that span 18 chapters along with the amply laid out index. Of course, the review would not be the same without pointing out the other helpful informational icons "peppered" throughout the book. These are part of many of the Dummies books that include additional helpful information to find and learn about. Five icons that are placed throughout the pages. These notes (titled either Tip; Technical stuff; Warning!; Remember; on the Web) serve to include precise additional information that assists along the way instructions, ideas and explicit helpful information.

The colorful screenshots are integrated within the instruction. Application laden screenshots demonstrate how the tools can be utilized to complete carefully designed tasks. The screenshots are of ample size/too small and very readable. I like that bold text that are used for the titles of the the step by step (to make them stand out). Numbered instructions also help “break up” the instructions for very easy reading.

The topics are noted in the introduction. The information and topics are easy to find as the real nice index highlights where to find what you are looking for. Also nice is that on the left margins-top there are the titles for the part/sections. Huge numbers inset in light blue or light yellow make viewing the pages extremely easy. They jump right out at you as you flip the pages so that you can search for topics and open the pages in a very easy and fast fashion. It’s little things like this that show that the authors have crafted a book that has the needs of the user in mind.

The chapters are written with a well blended workflow structure that ties into each main section. Novice to advanced users will appreciate the way that you can start, develop and expand upon the use of Photoshop Elements 5.

Part 1 “Getting Started” uses version for windows 5 and mac v4 of photoshop elements. Here you learn how to get started, learning to edit and working with file resolutions, color modes and different file formats. There are several nice example along the way. I particularly liked the (P.52) cookie cutter type activity and immediately saw different ways I could use this for other purposes.

With Part 2 “Getting Organized” obtaining your images, viewing and finding them and managing them are the focus. However RAW format is using it has been increasingly popular and will become more important for many especially, intermediate and advanced. I did not find RAW format in the index. However I discovered information about this format (p.72) and then more in the same chapter (p.86-92). Great informative tutorial and along with visuals helps you discover more about RAW format and making your photos better using this format. In this way, Photoshop Elements 5 can help you get started with using RAW and if needed use this book as a springboard to finding additional information.

Part 3 “Selecting and correcting photos” modifying selections, working with layers and correcting contrast and color are well done. I really like the eraser extraction tool information and it is well outlined. The cookie cutter tool, examples and information made me think of several ways I could employ the methods immediately.

Part 4 “Exploring your inner artist” details how to use panoramas , styles, filters, effects and working with type basically expands the different ways to use your drawings and graphics. Photos and merging is an area here which well done.

Part 5 “Printing , creating and sharing” has tutorials on printing, using various printers, exporting your prints. The little section here on “Sizing files for output” is something I wished I had learned sooner.

Part 6 “The Part of Tens” are solid ten tips for composing better photos help to “sum up all the parts” learned throughout the chapters. These solid examples are well done and most informative for novice to advanced.

I had some of my personal questions answered while going through the book. So in this way there are nice tutorials. The author has the intuitive insight to cover basics and beyond for intermediate and a advanced who are trying to go further with their ideas. Finding some of the great ideas, gave me some instant ideas to integrate with some content, photos etc with the tools I needed to initiate and complete the new creative graphic tasks.

Conclusions

What is nice about this book and the way the authors have designed it, is that this book goes to the heart of learning, learning to use a good graphics tool with help along the way. The tutorials are simple no-nonsense with direct ideas, great examples and solid tutorials. Plus you can start from the beginning and work your way through each chapter or go as you please and skip around. Either way you will learn new methods , techniques and take Photoshop Elements 5 to a higher level.

Real World Mac Maintenance and Backups

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Joe Kissel
Peachpit Press
1249 8th Street, Berkeley, CA 94710
<http://www.peachpit.com>

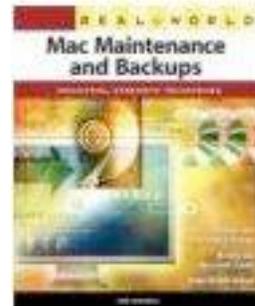
Released: 2007

Pages: 240

\$30 USD \$39 CND

ISBN-10: 0321492188

ISBN-13: 978-0321492180



Strengths: Basic and sturdy information to cover the breadth and depth of computer maintenance and backing up your system. The listing of the shareware and the other applications and tools that can be used is probably one of the reasons for buying this book. Price is right for the shareware listing and all the helpful and in-depth information that will help you now and in the future. Book is not fancy. It just does the job in explaining in an in-depth fashion what you need to do how and when.

Weaknesses: Black and white. The Chapters 9-12, (deciding on a backup strategy, hardware and software and setting up) should have been located earlier. There are few if any screenshots. The instructions for this book does not outline how to backup system wide networks and does not provide troubleshooting or repair information for Macintosh and related systems. This really is not a weakness but the book as the title implies, is for really only backing up your system and maintenance which is okay. (Need more or information about these topical areas of importance, use this book as a resource guide and find more information for what you need).

Novice/Intermediate

Introduction

The book exclaims that there are industrial strength techniques enclosed within this book for Macintosh maintenance and backing up your system. And for the most part, this is true.

The author has been involved with software industry, is frequent editor for Macworld and writes Take Control Ebooks. He provides a lot of information packed into this 228 pages. I would expect for this book to cover the basics but would it tell more about anything beyond maintenance and really open up my eyes compared to what I have been doing for years with my Macintosh? Is there anything for computer users beyond the novice- beginners I also wondered.

The author outlines some of the expectations for the book (p.3). The instructions for this book are meant to be a guide, does not outline how to backup system wide networks and does not provide troubleshooting or repair information for Macintosh and related systems. What the title

infers is what you get. If you need the help of backup system wide networks and troubleshooting then this book is not for you or you can use this book with other helpful information that you may find.

The importance of the maintenance and backups cannot be stressed enough. The author explains the information in a no nonsense and real down to earth manner than doesn't intimidate the reader but explains in a real easy to understand fashion what needs to be done and how. The 12 chapters details the steps and strategies for your maintenance of your Macintosh system.

This book is mostly text with few visuals and seems to have written with just a word processor. There are few (black and white only). screenshots that are integrated within the instructions to give a more visual understanding of what needs to be done. The book is not "pretty to look at" but the information is solid and easy to understand. The important thing is the content and the author provides much to think about and how to do what is needed to be done to make sure your "stuff" is safe now and in the future. And that is the name of the game and this book can help novices and even intermediate users who need to make sure "they have all their bases" covered.

In the back of the book, there is a nice chart of what you need to do on a periodic basis both daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. I really think this page belongs in the beginning of the book. Ideally I would have liked to have seen that the tasks be coded the chapters but since these are, for the most part the titles for most of the chapters and is involved with the Introduction and Quick Start part of the book (p. 1-10), I won't quibble.

The chapters cover what you need to initiate your well performing backups and maintenance endeavors with nice tips and techniques. Performing daily, weekly, monthly and yearly tasks cover what you need to know. Chapter 6 covers things you might not need to do. Dealing with new versions of OSX (buying, upgrading and more are covered. Monitoring your Mac's Health is well done. However the listing of the shareware and the other applications and tools that can use is probably one of the reasons for buying this book.

The Chapters 9-12, (deciding on a backup strategy, hardware and software and setting up) should probably have been placed earlier in the book. In any case, if you read this book you might want to look at these chapters first. Finally there is a short glossary which is useful for the understanding of terms and the index is well done. The Appendix A, B and C cover trouble shooting resources, backup resources and a primer of the software application Retrospect.

Conclusion

During the time, I was reviewing this book, the latest version of Mac OSX Leopard came out and with that the application called Time Machine. For that reason, this book does not have any information about that application for backing up your information, photos and more. Not withstanding this book is still most useful, solid and extensively written for the topic at hand. Like I said, the book is not fancy but it is written clearly so that you understand the importance of backing up and maintaining your system and the steps to follow through. It succeeds even if it is not a "pretty book" to look at. And in this case, that is not all that bad!

The Unofficial Lego Mindstorms NXT Inventors Guide

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: David J. Perdue

<http://www.davidjperdue.com>

<http://www.nxtguidedavidjperdue.com>

No Starch Press

<http://nostarch.com/>

Released: September 2007

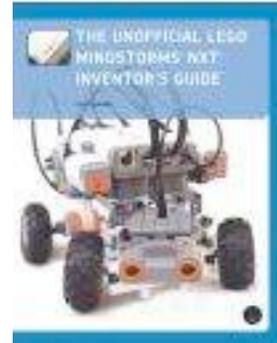
Pages: 368

\$30 USD \$39 CND

ISBN-10: 1593271549

ISBN-13: 978-1593271541

\$30 USD \$39 CND



Strengths: Very nice schematics, parts listings and visuals to highlight or the parts for the machines. Easily readable. Good for novice robot builders but also advanced users will find it helpful as well.

Weaknesses: The book has black/white text.

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Introduction

I have been working with robot kits for many years. I started with the Fischertechnik robot turtle which I built and was able to use with the logo interface with my Apple IIE. Later on I heard about Lego Mindstorms and bought a set to use. It was tough going and after much delay because of the programming and the light issues with the brick, I was able to get Legos finally working. Since then, I have worked with several kits and working with PC and Macintosh interfacing. But I was still looking for more a more helpful guides to build more interesting robots. I think I found one in The Unofficial Lego Mindstorms NXT Inventors Guide.

This author David J. Perdue knows his stuff and Lego Mindstorms. He has been creating MINDSTORMS since 2001 and just won the NXT Camera Bot Building Challenge competition and is the author of Competitive MINDSTORMS (Apress, 2004). He has received three Special Mention awards for his creations on the official online MINDSTORMS and is a full time student, pursuing a degree in Management information Systems in Texas. So I opened the book to see what else I could find out and how I could use the book for my LegoMindstorms in the future.

In the beginning, it was difficult to use Mindstorms. For me the kit did not work at all. Working with Macintosh was not an option. There were minimal additional information for working with the robots beyond the parts, software and initial schematics. I had to use a PC. This version works with PC (needs Windows XP or higher and will or already have shipped Vista version) or Macintosh OSX (version 103.9 and higher). It was not until later that I learned from a Legos salesman that the light in the room could be an issue. Its little things like this that kept me and possible others, from doing more with robotics.

I was hoping that the book started with novice programmers and robot creators. This books has “novice” beginning information so this book can be used with those who are new to Lego Mindstorms or are upgrading to the NXT version. It is good to know that this advanced robotic author, is “down to earth” with his writing and when “speaking” the language of robots. I have not upgraded to the NXT version yet and so wanted to see whether it is would be worth upgrading myself but if so how and what ways could the robots be used with this new version.

The black and white screenshots are integrated within the instruction. The visuals are large enough to read and decipher what you need to know. The lack of color does not really hurt. I really liked the screenshots and illustrations listings of the parts for assembly. However it would have been nice if they were in color (the parts are a multitude or colors. Tables do however include numbers, piece names and the place color however. When you need more information about the parts, they are all there listed and illustrated/ photographed.

Throughout the book, there are helpful ideas in the way of bold notes that are “peppered” throughout the tutorials. In addition, there are pointers that go along with the “balloons ” which have text inside of them about related to the robot parts. Circles and arrows highlight the illustrated areas in the screenshots that the author is clearly targeting for his instructions. This makes the understanding of the parts even more explicit.

The introduction introduces Lego Mindstorms, NXT, building, programming and starting and working with robotic projects. Here is an outline of the chapters and what is in store for you.

Part I in entitled “Introduction to LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT”. In the Chapter 1, LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT starts off with building robots, the programming of robots, activating robots and what can you do with robots and NXT. Chapter 2 is includes solid but easy to understand information about starting with the NXT robotic set.

Part II illustrates the building with 4 chapters. There is electronic pieces, understanding the LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT pieces, the need and building sturdy structures, and working with and building with gears

Programming section is in Part III, Chapter 7 introduction has a nice introduction to the NXT-G system. Later, 3 chapters involve advanced NXT-G programming a. There is also more in the form of unofficial programming languages for the NXT.

Part IV involves 6 robot projects and that is where your in-depth robotic education really begins. You are taught the author’s Mindstorms method, and working with 6 nice in-depth but easy to understand projects.

Appendices are good resources. Appendix A has LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT piece library. The Appendix B NXT-G has nice quick reference guide section that includes information for advanced programming to perform more intricate tasks. The author details a lot of the complexity, not only with words but also visually illustrates how to and in what ways to complete the array of blocks, sensors and programming information. While it is not easy to learn, this section takes you “once step at a time”. Appendix C informs with other internet resources.

Conclusions

I recommend this book highly for its in-depth tutorials, the visual schematics and the quality of the reading that makes the information well understood. No one said building robots was easy but with this book, you will learn and go further than you thought you could achieve. What I like about this book and the way the author has crafted this book is that he actually invited you to build robots in a none intimidating way. The in-depth information, the visual assemblies and tables, and the easy to read information along with the tutorials will allow you not only start but develop your skills in robot building. You will learn to be creative but at the same learning the logic of the machines and how to build robotics. I know there are many books that teach Lego Mindstorms out there but I am glad I chose this one first.



BeUtilityFree™ Digital SourceBook 2nd Edition v 3.5 - Your Guide to Sustainable UtilityFree™ Living

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



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Released: February 18, 2008

Pages: 183

\$10 Electronic version (PDF), \$27.50 for hard copy.

<http://beutilityfree.com/sbmainpage.html>

First 20 pages free as a PDF download.

Updates: http://beutilityfree.com/new_products/new_products.html



Strengths: Provides easy-to-read information on alternative energy systems and solutions.

Weaknesses: None found, except an occasional grammar mistake.

Introduction

This SourceBook focuses on how we can save ourselves money in the long-run by installing alternative energy systems now.

John D'Angelo wrote;

“ I continue to marvel at the uniqueness of renewable energy products. I find that they are the only products I know of that, once paid for, give you your money back (tax free), are extremely reliable, always pay for themselves, and work for you without pay, day after day - year after year.”

What I Learned

I really was looking for a book, but this turns out to be a SourceBook, which in Alternative Energy vernacular means it is a pseudo book, mostly of the catalog genre. What sets this one apart from others, is that John and his team have devised a way of graphically showing how Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency relate to one another. Another focus is on getting off the Grid (Power & Energy Utilities) and providing power for the home. Other SourceBooks tend to approach the process as a business expense, instead of as a sustainable home activity.

The first 20 or so pages can be downloaded for free as a PDF file. Those pages pretty much discuss energy efficiency and cost savings that can be obtained by planning a home to become “Utility Free”, using methodologies related to building techniques, materials and onsite energy production, use of efficient energy appliances and using renewable energy systems (solar, wind).

The 184-page “Book” is divided up into three sections. The first is on energy efficiencies gained through use of proper home planning, building materials, water systems, appliances and lighting. The second section is on hot water devices, solar electric components, wind generators, hydrogen energy systems, hydroelectric systems, renewable energy fuels and commercial installations. The third section is the Appendix, with worksheets, tax credits, maps and tables and the Index.

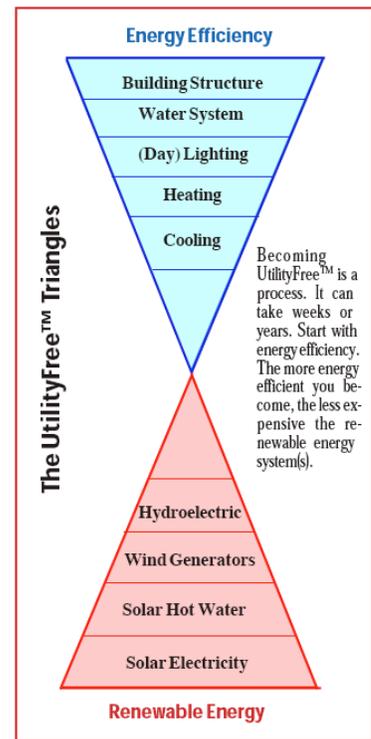
The PDF version of the BeUtilityFree™ Digital SourceBook is passworded and does work with the Mac OS X Preview program as well as Adobe Acrobat. Just don't lose the password assigned to you when you order the book, okay?

Conclusion

Whether starting a new home or retrofitting an existing home with Alternative Energy Solutions going off or on grid, this is an excellent resource to use to work through the process. What also set this book apart from other SourceBooks is that there are prices posted on the pages, so we can figure out what the real costs are up front.

BeUtilityFree does have a membership program for just under either \$50 (Basic) or \$100 (Gold, which offers a 10% discount on complete solar systems – and includes the book) that provides a 5% discount on listed prices. Depending on the size of the systems you purchase, the investment in the book and the membership will pay back sooner than the alternative energy systems will.

Be assured, you will get back more than you pay for by going with an Alternative Energy system for your home or business.



As John D'Angelo wrote; they “always pay for themselves, and work for you without pay, day after day - year after year”.

There are other “SourceBooks” available for less cost, i.e.

http://www.aeesolar.com/catPDFs/high/AEE_Solar_catalog-high.pdf

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

but they do not currently offer discount programs or memberships or offer full-color system plans/blueprints as part of the complete systems purchased, as BeUtilityFree does.

“Fossil” Fuel and Abiotic Oil

by Robert Pritchett

Question: Who came up with the theory/concept/idea that petroleum-based products came from the dead remains of dinosaurs (dino-juice)?

Answer: Mikhail Lomonosov in 1757 - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Lomonosov wrote;

“Believing that nature is subject to regular and continuous **evolution**, he demonstrated the **organic** origin of **soil**, **peat**, **coal**, **petroleum** and **amber**.”

“Fossil” Fuel

Somehow that description over time, got misconstrued as “Fossil” fuel –

<http://www.lenntech.com/greenhouse-effect/fossil-fuels.htm>
http://www.bbg.org/gar2/pgn/2003su_fossilfuels.html

If we are talking about coal, this makes sense, but if we are discussing natural gas and liquid hydrocarbons, it does not.

(Just a quick thought – if diamonds are derived from highly compressed coal, does that mean that those who use diamonds, are carrying around very expensive dinosaur remains? Think about it.)

The “common knowledge” is that **Fossil Fuels** are hydrocarbons formed from the remains of dead plants and animals - http://peswiki.com/index.php/Fossil_fuel, and also includes hydrocarbon-containing natural resources that are **not** derived from animal or plant sources *known as mineral fuels*.

“Hydrocarbons in crude oil are mostly **alkanes**, **cycloalkanes** and various **aromatic hydrocarbons** while the other organic compounds contain **nitrogen**, **oxygen** and **sulfur**, and trace amounts of metals such as iron, nickel, copper and vanadium.”
(Wikipedia.com)

The fact is that organics *can* be converted into fuel, so we do have a renewable energy resource in biofuels. Along with that, we also know that there is a lot more to the regeneration story than even Mikhailo Lomonosov could have imagined centuries ago, about what is going on miles below the earth’s surface.

“Petra (rock) Oil” was first coined as “petroleum” by Georg Baur back in 1556 - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petroleum> “as a naturally occurring, flammable liquid found in rock formations in the **Earth** consisting of a complex mixture of **hydrocarbons** of various molecular weights, plus other **organic compounds**”.

Back in 1998, Thomas Gold wrote a book; “The Deep Hot Biosphere”, where he hypothesizes that thermophiles - <http://www.thesecondlayer.com/marine/thermophiles.html> that live on the sea floor eat hydrocarbons from undersea vents and poses that this is why oil formations can be found under coal deposits, because thermophiles - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thermophile> live in oil deposits as well.

Giora Proskurowski, geochemist at Woods Hole (Mass.) Oceanographic Institution, wrote that “the hydrothermal fluids located near the Mid-Atlantic Ridge are rich in dissolved hydrogen but contain a much lower than normal concentration of dissolved carbon dioxide. This suggests that what are called Fischer-Tropsch inorganic chemical reactions - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fischer-Tropsch_process, which convert carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and hydrogen into hydrocarbons, generated the substances” - <http://www.sciencenews.org/articles/20080202/fob1.asp>

Hubbert’s Peak

There is the theory that we are running out of hydrocarbons known as “Hubbert’s Peak” - http://peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Peak_Oil The theory is named after American geophysicist Dr. [M. King Hubbert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._King_Hubbert) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M. King Hubbert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._King_Hubbert) who created a method of modeling the production curve given an assumed ultimate recovery volume - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubbert_peak_theory

Sepp Hasslberger, a founding member of the **New Energy Congress** at PESWiki – <http://www.peswiki.com>, counter-argues that “Peak Oil” is a sham and a scam foisted deception on us by the petroleum companies in an effort to increase profits - http://blog.hasslberger.com/2008/02/the_peak_oil_deception_squeezi.html because there is no shortage of liquid hydrocarbons.

Lestor R. Pastor, another founding member of the **New Energy Congress** has dedicated a page to Lindsay Williams on the “*Energy Non-Crisis*”- http://peswiki.com/index.php/Site:LRP:The_Energy_Non-Crisis regarding the issue as being political control, as the world currency switches from the U.S. dollar to oil.

Hydrocarbons Are Out of This World

From Space.com, we read;

“Saturn's smoggy moon Titan has hundreds of times more natural gas and other liquid hydrocarbons than all the known oil and natural gas reserves on Earth, scientists said today”.

"Titan is just covered in carbon-bearing material — it's a giant factory of organic chemicals," said Ralph Lorenz, a Cassini radar team member from the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. "This vast carbon inventory is an important window into the geology and climate history of Titan."

If there are abundant hydrocarbons on Titan, both gaseous and liquid, that kind of tends to blow holes in the theory of oil as a fossil fuel, doesn't it? - <http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/080213-titan-oil.html>

Abiotic Oil

Abiotic oil is based on the theory that petroleum is continually-created, magma-formed oil. “Abiogenic petroleum origin” was originally hypothesized by the Russian chemist [Dmitri Mendeleev](#) in the late 1800’s (and is why the former Soviet Bloc has oil fields that go way down deep into the earth’s crust - <http://educate-yourself.org/cn/davemcgowanstalinandabioticcoil05mar05.shtml>) and by the French chemist [Marcellin Berthelot](#), who synthesized organic compounds, also back in the late 1800s - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abiogenic_petroleum_origin

There is a substantial evidence to support the theory know as “Abiotic Oil”- http://peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Abiotic_Oil despite well-funded petroleum industry-based detractors (pun intended) - <http://www.theoil drum.com/story/2005/11/4/15537/8056>, <http://dailyduck.blogspot.com/2006/03/debunking-abiotic-theory-of-petroleum.html> <http://questionsquestions.net/docs04/peakoil1.html>

Alternative Fuels

Using Abiotic Oil as a starting point and realizing that if the earth can do it, we can create “synthetic” oils too, there are companies that are making non-fossil fuels today. After all, Germany managed to do it back during World War II - http://peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Non-Fossil_Oil http://peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Fuel_Efficiency_Alternative_Fuels

One company of particular interest is *Green Power, Inc.*, using Thermal Depolymerization to accelerate the geologic process by converting organic waste products through distillation into what they call “nanodiesel” – http://peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Green_Power_Inc%27s_NanoDiesel:Catalytic_Pressureless_Depolymerization_%28Oiling

They prefer palletized dry product instead of wet waste, because the pellets have a higher BTU rating and energy is not lost during the distillation process in removing the moisture from the organics in order to heat them above 700 degrees to accelerate the conversion of organics into hydrocarbon-based fuel. The process does not have the issues associated with converting used vegetable oils or rendered animal fats into biofuel (shelf life is usually only 6 months for those processes).

So when do we start changing theories into facts? Scientists and engineers have been working through technologies based on scientific theory for centuries and rewording them as “laws”, such as the Law of Thermodynamics, the Law of Physics, etc.

Now we can stop calling petroleum, “Fossil” Fuel, can’t we? Mikhailo Lomonosov wrote back in 1757 that;

"Rock oil originates as tiny bodies of animals buried in the sediments which, under the influence of increased temperature and pressure acting during an unimaginably long period of time, transform into rock oil."

He got it partly right. We can accomplish the same thing in a matter of hours today with various organics, instead of waiting for “Rock Oil” (petroleum) to form over millions of years.

Question: Should we be pursuing and developing non-fossil fuels and other renewable alternative fuels?

Answer: Absolutely! After all, we do have a big blue and green world to maintain.

Kicking The Gasoline & Petro-Diesel Habit - A Business Manager's Blueprint For Action

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



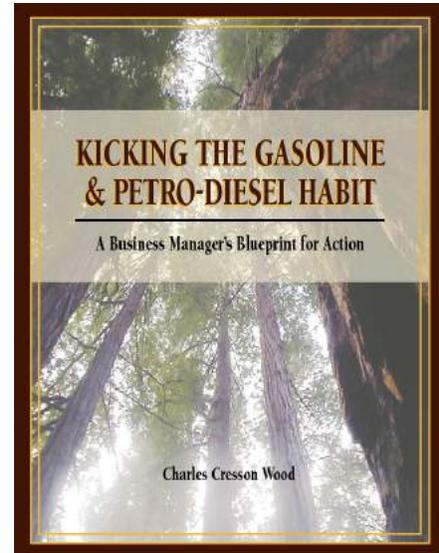
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Pages: 776

eBook Released: March 2008

Online Order only - \$1,999 Electronic copy, \$2,499 both hard and electronic copies. 5.4 MB download.

ISBN: 9780979991400



Strengths: Provides business managers templates for transitioning transportation to non-petroleum-based alternatives. Excellent pro/con lists and service resources.

Weaknesses: A compilation of publicly available resources for nearly \$2,000 USD? Highly dependent on the current global-warming craze™ and Peak Oil scare tactics. Much of the material is based on supposition and second-guessing, instead of being based on scientific facts and proven knowledge. The password-encrypted PDF version needs to be formatted for Table of Contents links to pages, and for Reference hyperlinks. A whole chapter dedicated to disavowing any responsibility for content? And you want to know why the government organizations are so screwed up? Case in point.

Introduction

All the information contained in this report originates from publicly available sources.

- 30 specific reasons why organizations must now transition away from petroleum
- 36 internal political impediments to moving ahead with this transition
- 17 specific methods to conserve petroleum fuels
- 32 new technologies that boost the efficiency of vehicles still using petroleum fuels
- 12 practical and now-available alternative transportation fuels
- The report also offers a wealth of practical management advice including:
- 34 action steps to guide a successful transition away from oil
- 30 suggested criteria for making business-related transition decisions
- 95 criteria with which to evaluate alternative transportation fuels
- 50 different management strategies for engineering a successful transition

The report also includes a wealth of Internet links:

- 1400+ references that help readers quickly obtain more information
- 500+ vendors that can assist with this transition

What I Found

The premise of this book is to coerce business managers into eliminating dino-juice dependence (gasoline and petro-diesel) in transportation from their businesses and enterprises as soon as possible.

Charles Cresson Wood does a great job with cost/benefit analysis regarding various possible scenarios in running away from petroleum dependence for early adopters or for those who arrive late for the game. After all, his expertise is in technology risk management and so his approach is from that discipline.

Chapter 2 discusses Peak Oil and Global Warming™ as intended cattle-prods, however off the mark they might be. He correctly assesses that easy oil from the ground is slowing down, but incorrectly follows the Global Warming environmental religionist mantra that mankind is responsible for the increased warming effects, instead of the naturally occurring 11-year Sun cycles and sunspot activities for our weather.

Be that as it may, he then offers a litany of well-thought-out reasons to transition away from gasoline and petroleum-based diesel in Chapter 3, while in Chapter 4 he lists all the excuses one can come up with (I'm sure he must have heard them all) for not looking at economical solutions to increased costs for doing business.

In Chapter 5, the rubber meets the road regarding ways to conserve fuel using various modes of transportation. Each subsection also lists pros and cons, things to look for and suppliers for services.

Chapter 6 discusses various ways and means for increasing vehicle efficiency with only one reference to Hypermiling – which is essentially rethinking how to drive with getting the most mileage out of existing vehicles and technologies.

In Chapter 7, Charles Wood looks at various alternative energy vehicle substitutions and conversions following the same format in the book with pros, cons and vehicle suppliers. Many of the vehicles are still “in the future”.

Chapter 8 looks at various strategies that could be considered blueprints in moving businesses away from dino-juices to alternative transportation and fuels, some of which follow the “do more with less” thinking. One thing that stands out for me is “Utilizing the new calculus of Net energy” or “The way to calculate net energy is to create a ratio of the usable energy returned divided by the energy invested to get it” known as EROEI.

Chapter 9 gets into the Step-by-Step action plans focusing on scare tactics based on Peak Oil and Global Warming. In my mind, I feel this is just simply wrong headed, but hey, “Global Warming” gets attention, no matter how off-based it may be.

I personally feel that things should be done for the right reasons, such as economical soundness and intelligent use of existing resources, rather than peer pressure and abuse of force (Awareness Training and Crisis Management).

Chapter 10 is something that the author should have put up front of the book. This is his 2-page legal disclaimer section (Author Independence) not holding him responsible in any way, shape or form, regarding use of his suggestions.

He states that he “has not been indoctrinated in any particular point of view regarding gasoline and/or petro-diesel”. Well, based on his presumptions regarding Abiotic Oil (he denigrates it), and falling hook line and sinker for the “Global Warming religion”, I think he has been unknowingly swayed by so-called Environmentalist doctrine and is being used as a tool and does have an axe to grind, so I think that “**Author Independence**” chapter is an attempt to protect himself from any possible backlash by business entities.

Nits

All the way through the book there are these (Rxxx) things within sentences and at the end of paragraphs that are designed to be Reference notes. I found that they got in the way. I would have used footnotes or endnotes instead. Anyway, Chapter 11 is around 200 pages of annotated text interspersed with hyperlinks. It should have been published as an Index or Annotated Appendix instead of as a chapter.

I would have made the Table of Contents and the Rxxx Adobe-based anchors as internal document hyperlinks, since Charles Wood used *InDesign CS2* and *Adobe Acrobat* to make the eBook version into a password-encrypted file. Instead he expects us to use the *Adobe Acrobat* search function as described in Appendix 6, “**Navigation Guide To This Book**” which I think also should have been at the beginning of the book.

And where would you like to see an “**Executive Summary**”? Not as the last thing in the book, right? It is in this book.

I would suggest that in future editions, that Charles Wood look at Lindsay Williams' videos on PESWiki on capped wells in the Prudhoe Bay region and elsewhere and Lindsay's essay on the "Energy Non-Crisis" as a reference.

And he really ought to take a look at the Progressive X Prize \$10 million challenge, based on Alternative Energy vehicles for 2008 also posted on our PESWiki website. With all his references, that one is glaringly missing.

I think that the "Net Energy Ratios For Alternative Fuels" (Appendix 4) is a nice try. It points out the known costs associated with producing alternative fuels, but it is weasel-worded such that much of it is based on assumptions, presumptions and estimates, rather than on scientific studies. I would like to see solid studies.

Kudos

Appendix 1: Suggested Criteria For Evaluating New Energy Technologies has no less than 97 things to consider in evaluating new technologies.

Appendix 2: Suggested Criteria For Making Transition-Related Business Decisions provides no less than 31 options to look at when making transition-related business decisions. It wouldn't take much to put these into a decision tree or "What-If" spreadsheet format.

Appendix 3: Gallon Of Gasoline Equivalent Cost For Alternative Fuels offers cost-comparative numerical scoring based on existing fuel pricing (which continues to escalate daily) at the time of publication. Instead of price fluctuations affecting these numbers, Charles Wood has based them on energy content as British Thermal Units (BTUs). There are 6 caveats regarding the numbering process, however due to volatility, assumptions based on delivery technologies, annual driven fuel costs, where fuel is sold, possible government subsidies and locomotive efficiency. With so many variables, it is nice to at least get a ballpark figure going for alternative fuels for comparisons.

Appendix 5: Alternative Fuels At A Glance is a 2-page chart showing comparisons between 12 known alternative fuels, whether they are renewable, are currently available, relative price, use in existing vehicles, ease of distribution and suitability for long-term storage.

Appendix 7: Exemplary Transition Scenarios offers 4 hypothetical scenarios, however again not constituted as recommendations, but only as possibilities regarding fleet trucks, service vans, luxury cars and self-commuting with cars, SUVs and Pickups.

Conclusion

Note: ~~I'm attempting to find out if the original price for the book (\$2,000 for the electronic copy and \$2,500 for the hard copy) is real or a misprint.~~ If the price is correct, this is way overpriced for the content.

Feedback

“Hello Robert -

Thanks for your interest in the report. The book is not for individuals. It is for government agencies, corporations, and non-profit organizations. The pricing is in keeping with market research reports, and other specialized reports for this audience, which have a narrowly-defined market. You will note that many other market research reports sell for \$1,000-10,000.”

Best wishes,

/s/ Charles

The book is a nice attempt at providing management ways and means to come to decisions regarding lowering transportation costs associated with the current petroleum-based issues. However, while the information gathering is good, much of the information is presumptive and assumptive, instead of being based on empirical evidence and scientific knowledge. *That* is an “Inconvenient Truth”!

I look forward to the next revision of this book in transition, in the hopes that the proper evidence can be gathered sufficiently enough to overcome the flaws found. Perhaps then we can see something beyond “hypothetical”, “caveats”, etc. and the author can stand behind his findings, instead of covering his tracks.

I asked Charles Wood to lower the price, since it is a book and not a report and that he post it on lulu.com. But hey, if you can get that kind of money for publishing something, you don't have to sell very many... I'm jealous.

Sustainable Urbanism – Urban Design With Nature

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Douglas Farr

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

Wiley

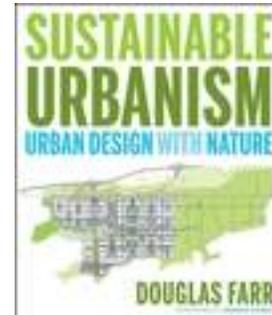
<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-047177751X.html>

Released: November 2007

\$75 USD

ISBN: 978-0-471-77751-9

Guidebook for urban designers, planners, and architects.



Strengths: Excellent compilation of articles on what works in Sustainable Building.

Weaknesses: Tends to lean towards the left a little regarding social engineering.

Introduction

Douglas Farr makes a powerful case for sustainable urbanism, showing where we went wrong, and where we need to go. He then explains how to implement sustainable urbanism through leadership and communication in cities, communities, and neighborhoods. Essays written by Farr and others delve into such issues as:

- Increasing sustainability through density.
- Integrating transportation and land use.
- Creating sustainable neighborhoods, including housing, car-free areas, locally-owned stores, walkable neighborhoods, and universal accessibility.
- The health and environmental benefits of linking humans to nature, including walk-to open spaces, neighborhood stormwater systems and waste treatment, and food production.
- High performance buildings and district energy systems.

Enriching the argument are in-depth case studies in sustainable urbanism, from BedZED in London, England and Newington in Sydney, Australia, to New Railroad Square in Santa Rosa, California and Dongtan, Shanghai, China. An epilogue looks to the future of sustainable urbanism over the next 200 years.

What I Learned

Douglas Farr looks to modern transportation as the cause of Urban Sprawl and has laid down the gauntlet and challenge to change the course of “community” by laying out justifications and reasons for sustainable living based on geography and resources and moving away from dependence on wheels to get places. He does this by showing intelligent design one hamlet at a time.

I learned that collaborative design can allow human settlements to co-exist and even enhance localities by working with the natural terrain, instead of working against it. Part of that is through what the LEED organization would call a “Charette” – an event in the planning process where all parties involved get together to hash things out before any dirt is dug up.

Here is the Challenge as set forth by Douglas Farr to the Engineers and Architects for 2030;

The average American family is dependent on cars to meet their daily needs, driving 21,500 miles a year, nearly the circumference of the earth. Without a change in course, total vehicles miles traveled (VMTs) is expected to grow 2.5% per year, energy consumption and CO2 omissions will continue to increase, while obesity and other side effects of an inactive lifestyle are predicted to shorten life span as much as five years per American.

The 2030 Community Challenge proposes to reverse the increase in VMTs and adopt LEED for Neighborhood Development as a municipal standard by 2030. The challenge calls for a 50% decrease in VMTs from 2005’s baseline of 8000 VTM per capita, to 4000 VTM and aims to have 100% of public and private development projects achieve LEED-ND Platinum certification by 2030. Working in parallel to the 2030 Architecture challenge, the 2030 Community Challenge serves as a viable standard to address the challenge of climate change in the transportation sector, while improving community health and well-being.

The book has four parts on why the American Lifestyle is non-sustainable, and how that can be changed for the better with sustainable corridors and neighborhoods, open spaces and improved energy-friendly facilities. There are also a few case studies of lessons learned, for both “Infills” (rebuilding in established areas) and “Greenfields” (new undeveloped spaces).

Conclusion

Wiley Press has kindly provided a whole “Sustainable Design” section with over 20 books on the topic –

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-292376.html>

Sustainable Urbanism happens put “Greenism” into proper perspective by offering intelligent and well-researched information based on what works and what doesn’t work in building developments into well-knit communities.

Software

Bento, Version 1

Reviewed by Ted Bade



FileMaker

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

\$49 or \$99 (family pack) USD

Requirements: Bento requires Mac OS X v10.5 (Leopard). Any Mac computer with an Intel, PowerPC G5, or PowerPC G4, 867 MHz or faster processor, 512MB of RAM; 1GB recommended, A CD drive is required for installation of boxed product software



Strengths: Nice presentation, easy to work with, easy access of Address Book and iCal data.

Weaknesses: Poor import abilities, very minimal printing abilities. Needs some work before it will be a truly wonderful program.

For a demo of Bento: [Demo download page](#)

Introduction

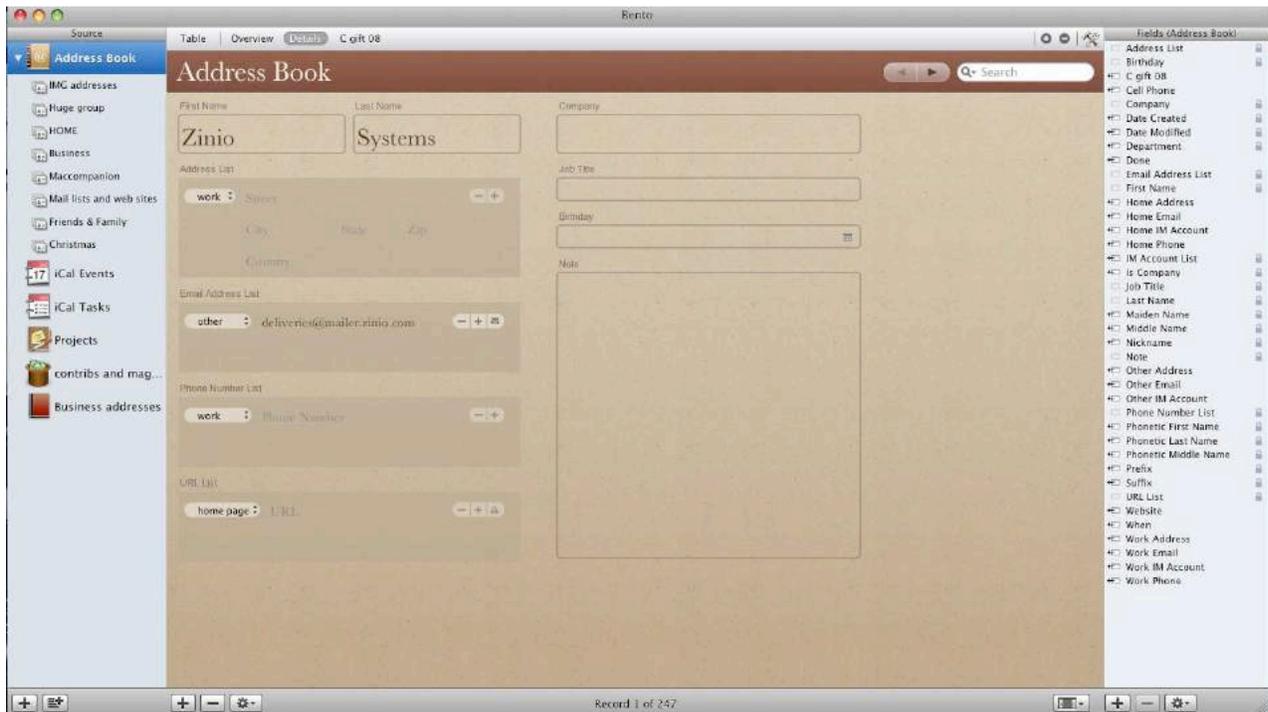
Bento is a beautifully rendered database program that takes advantage of all of Leopard's grace and elegance. It is a new product from Filemaker Inc. Bento is easy to work with, makes working with database layouts fun, and is simple to use. It doesn't have the power and programmability of FileMaker, but is designed more for the simpler needs of the home user.

Before you begin reading, remember this important fact. Bento requires that your Macintosh be running Leopard. If it is not, the program will not run.

Let me start this review by explaining my position. When I heard about Bento, I hoped it would be both a replacement for the soon to be totally obsolete AppleWorks (aka ClarisWorks), as well as a less expensive although less powerful replacement for FileMaker. My database needs aren't that complicated. I have several databases I manage using AppleWorks and my household uses FileMaker Pro to manage a more complex database of contacts (more on that later). I really, really wanted a program that would replace how I use these two programs, make it easy for me to convert my data, and provide extra features to allow me to do even more with them.

When I first started Bento, I was impressed with the look of this program. You can begin with a tutorial to see how the program works. The tutorial is nicely done, but lacks detail. It is really more of an introduction. However, since using Bento is very easy I didn't feel a need for a lot more information. The program comes with online help and a digital manual to answer questions as well.

Once you start using Bento the first database you can work with is that of Apple's Address Book. It is already shown in your Bento data area along with any sub-groups you might have made with it. I was excited to discover that updating the address book database using Bento was a lot easier than doing it directly with Address Book! Over the years I have added information to Address Book, but never took the time to check it out and make sure it is correct. Bento makes doing this easy in an eye pleasing way. I found working with the data in Address Book a lot easier using Bento than working with it directly in Address Book.



In a fashion similar to iTunes, Bento works on three levels: the database, subsets of the database, and the data record. You are probably familiar with how Address Book allows you to create subsets of all your contacts, like personal, family, work related, and so forth. Bento follows this rule. This comes in handy later when working with your own databases.

Bento comes with a nice layout for the Address Book records, providing text areas for the various bits of data found in a standard Address Book records. From this pleasant layout you can make changes that affect the database and will be seen next time you visit Address Book. Using this layout gives the user a good idea of the many possibilities of how they can layout the data in their own databases. Bento includes a number of colored themes you can apply to your layouts and tools to make very nice on screen presentations with the data. Bento also loads in your iCal events and ToDos, give you the ability to manage them here as well.

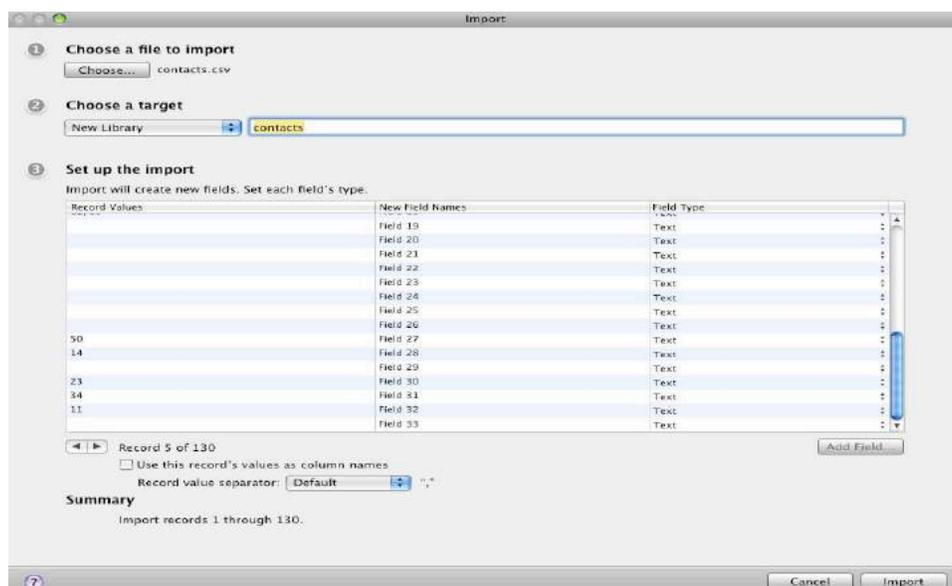
If you want to, you can create other layouts, showing only the data that you want to view. Once you have a layout created, you can easily move to a particular record by using Bento's search abilities to move you to a record that contains the data in your search. An advanced find feature uses a Spotlight like interface to create several search arguments to find exactly the right record. As with Spotlight, you can save a search criteria once created.

The ability to create artistic and as well as useful visual layouts is something Bento truly excels at. But I found it lacking in some areas of great importance to me. It's ability to import data is really lacking, it's lacking printing abilities, and there is only one option for a table view per category. Please allow me to discuss these issues.

Importing files

Bento recognizes only one type of file for importing, the .csv, used by Excel spreadsheets when exporting data in "comma delimited format". This is great if you want to export data from an Excel spreadsheet into a database. But my two important test cases are FileMaker and AppleWorks, not Excel..

I have several databases that I work with using the last version of AppleWorks 6. AppleWorks 6 doesn't have an export function and saves files only as Apple or Claris Works formats. Since it cannot save in a usable format and Bento cannot read its files, I could not convert these databases. Oh well. Not much help there. There might be a third party conversion program, but I didn't take the time to search. I could enter the data manually, but...



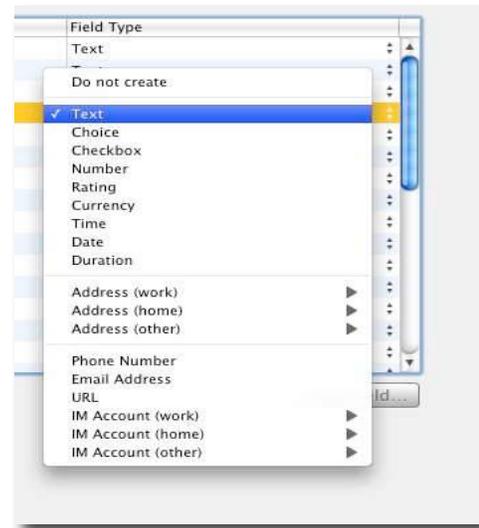
(there are 33 fields I need to enter names for in this import)

Moving from Filemaker was a little easier. I own an old copy of Filemaker (6). My wife, who has some experience from using it at work, has created (and maintains) a database of our contacts. We decided to import that database.

Unlike Excel, FMP doesn't include column titles when it exports a database as a comma delimited file. This means you need to record the column titles and enter them manually. This can be done when you set the import up, if you know the column titles. However, if your database has a lot of columns, this can be a bit of work. (My test case had 33 fields! A lot of entry). You can also modify the data type for each of the entries, doing this formats the information correctly or provides a widget for data entry as in the case of date.

We do a lot of things with this database. Print lists of contacts (it is always good to have a paper copy around when you need to make a call), print mailing labels for mailing cards to friends (holiday, birthday, etc.), keep track of gifts purchased for friends (holiday shopping starts in March at out house!), and much more.

Now I realize that Bento, for \$50 will never have anywhere near the power of Filemaker (even an older version). I didn't expect that. But I had hoped to be able to do some basic functions with it, other then presenting the data on screen.



(many data types to select)

Printing

I decided to try printing mailing labels. I was going to invite several friends to a party and wanted to mail (USPS, not email) invitations. My wife thinks of everything and the database of friends has a field that indicates specific sub groups of friends. So it was easy to use Bento to show me a list of people that fit the category I wanted. (You know the MUG club friends, college friends groups, astronomy club friends, and so forth). I could even create a new subset and call it MUG friends or whatever, moving those files from the main database into this subset. This would make it easier to work with this subset in the future.

For printing labels I figured the table view is what one needs. Bento allows the user only one table view format. This table view can be manipulated in a variety of ways, but each time you want a new view, you must re-manipulate the one view. So I set up a table view showing the fields of a label and created a form view to duplicate an Avery peel and stick label. With Avery label sheet in hand, I was ready to print my labels.

I couldn't convince Bento to print the records in a label format. It would print the records on a sheet and I could make it do several records per sheet. but no label formats. I went to the help

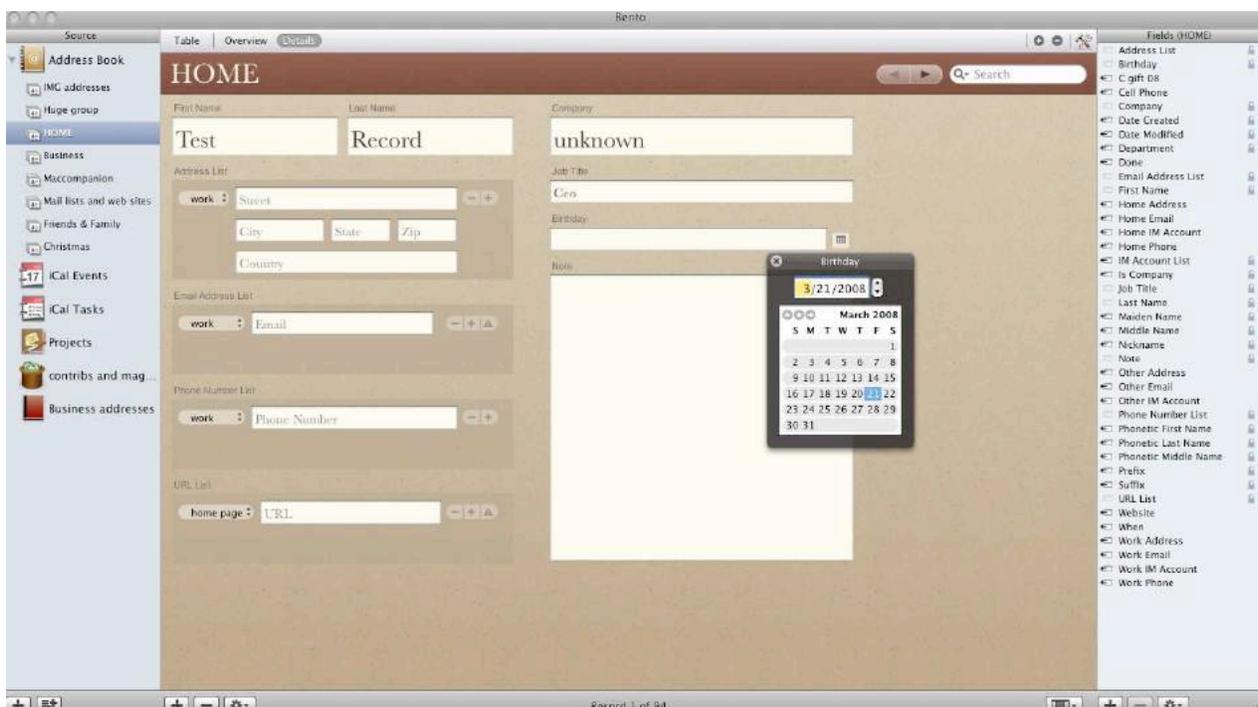
area and their solution is to use the printing abilities of the program from which the database came. Well, then why buy Bento in the first place? If I was just going to keep Filemaker or Excel, or AppleWorks, or Address Book around to do the printing, there is little need for the middleman.

Table views

We could create a layout to list the people we purchase holiday gifts for, then create a search strategy to view only the records for those people we exchange birthday gifts for. Next we want to list the people in this list and see who hasn't had a present bought for yet. My wife likes to look at a table of data to see where she stands with different people. Bento will only show one record on the screen at a time, even if there is plenty of free space. Table view could be arranged to show the data, but the table limits how much data can be seen. Also, Bento allows only one table view per category. So if you need a different view, you need to rearrange the view each time. You can create a subset database and create the table view that works best for that subset, which is what I did in this case.

The problem with a subset database is that it isn't "Smart" (as in "Smart Playlists" in iTunes). I could run a search and use the results to create a subset database. As time passes data changes people are added or removed from the category. The changes would be made in the main database but aren't automatically added to the applicable subset. I could run the saved search again and replace the records with the new search results, but that's extra work.

Putting these problems aside, I do like working with Bento. One of the databases I wanted to convert from AppleWorks was the one I use to keep track of Charities and magazine subscriptions. Both of these group are notorious for sending multiple mailings warning you that you haven't subscribed/donated this year (or in some cases this minute ☺). The number of records in this database wasn't so large that it would take me forever to manually duplicate it.



(the date widget is cool)

Now, when I get a mailing, I just pull up Bento, search for the charity name, and then modify the record in whatever way I need to. For dates, Bento includes a widget that you click on to see a calendar. So if I am making a contribution on March 12th, I open Bento, when the record is up, open the calendar and select the data I want! (although I couldn't find a way to get this widget to automatically move to today's date). It is very easy to use and I love the presentation of the data. Bento's view is light years ahead of the dull view I was presented with when using AppleWorks or even FMP. It's search capabilities are also far beyond anything I could achieve using AppleWorks.

I plan to manually convert other AppleWorks databases to Bento as time goes on. It is visually pleasing and easy to manipulate. While it doesn't do things exactly the way I want, there is one thing I have learned over years of working with computers, one often needs to change the way one does business as the programs used change. Consider that I started playing with databases on an Apple][+ using Apple's original version of AppleWorks. Today's Macs are significantly more powerful and with this power comes new ways of doing business. One thing that I see Bento moving me toward is less use of paper (lol). Seriously, I mentioned that I have always kept a printed list of personal contacts so I could make phone calls. With today's equipment, I have room on my cell phone to keep the entire phone number database. If I used an iPhone, I could move my address book database to it and have a digital copy with me all the time. I can already do that by moving my contacts to my iPod. So why keep the paper around?

I would really like to see Bento increase its ability to import from other database sources, directly. This means it should recognize FMP and AppleWorks formats, as well as Excel and any other formats people commonly use and would like to move from. There might be a number of popular database programs on the Window side that people switching to Mac OS X would like to carry the data from. There is a real market here, I believe.

Also, I think Bento should have it's own set of print features and not be dependent upon another program for this functionality. We might want to reduce our use of paper, but there is still a need to print on occasion. I expect Bento will improve as time moves on and will become a favorite database program for me.

This article is part one of a two part review on Bento. The next part will be done by *macCompanion* staff writer Harry Babad, who will give you his views of how Bento works for him, a long-time user of FileMaker and File Maker Pro. He has used these programs mostly to create dozens of flat-file databases and is just experimenting in consolidating sets of these to a relational data set or three. The FMP series is as you know the "daddy program for Bento. Bento requires Mac OS X 10.5 (leopard). Harry had a few issues getting Leopard installed, so he is a little behind on this project. Hopefully we will hear his views in a short while.

deskUNPDF 2.03

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2008

 <p>Docudesk, LTD. http://www.docudesk.com/deskUNPDF-PDF-Converter-for-mac.shtml Release Date: 19, March 2008</p> <p>Cost: \$69.95 List, \$52.50 discounted price [USD].</p> <p>System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 & 10.5, Universal binary, 160 MB Hard Drive Space; Processor: 1.5 GHz or greater (PowerPC or Intel) And RAM: 512 Mb or greater.</p>	 
<p>Strengths: Easy to use and relatively error free way to convert PDF files to other formats. A well written heavily illustrated users manual, also accusable as help files.</p> <p>Weaknesses: The product user interface would be strengthened if one could drop and drag file into it for processing, a claimed functionality I could not get to work.</p> <p>Previous Reviews: links to previous <i>macCompanion</i> reviews on the same product.</p> <p>Demo Limitation: deskUNPDF operates in trial mode, allowing for single page conversions, until a product activation code is provided.</p> <p>Copyright Notice: Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.</p> <p>Review was carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X version 10.5.2.</p> <p>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?</p>	

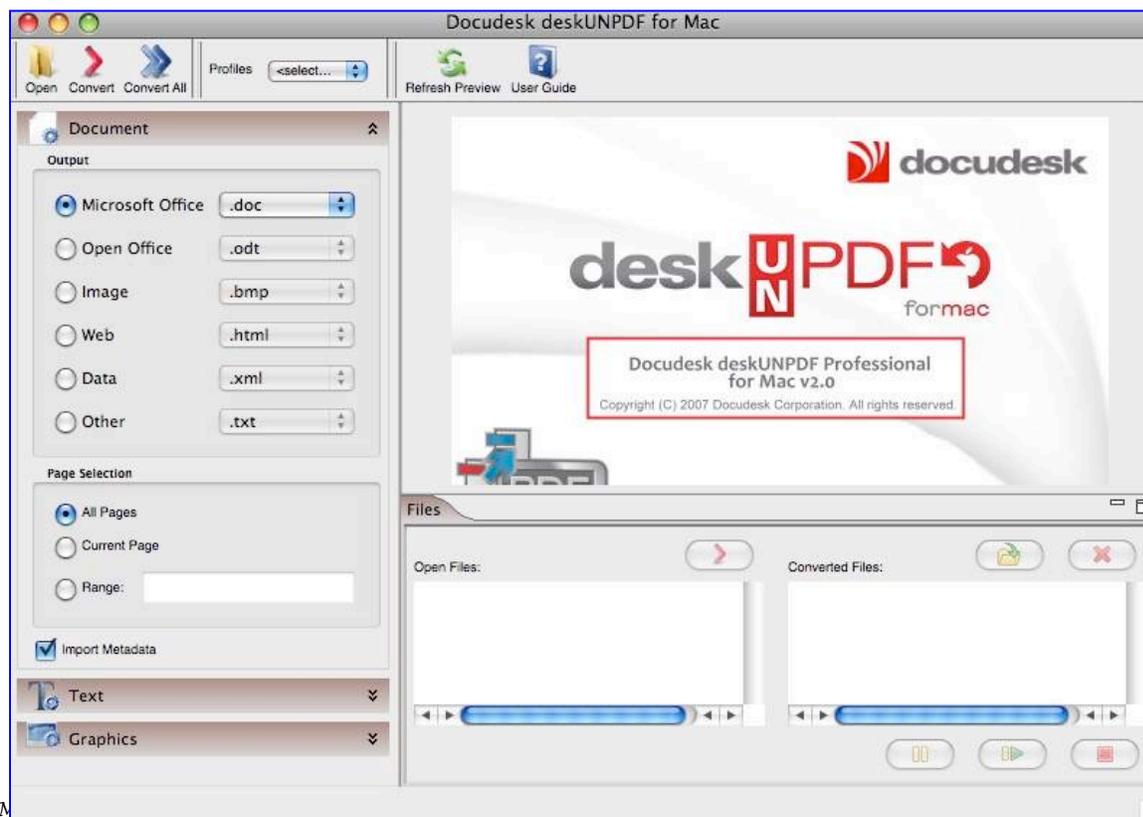
Introduction Including Publisher's Summary

Before I start this review, I want my readers to remember two facts; First, I own and almost exclusively use Adobe Acrobat Pro (now 8.1.2) for all of my PDF work and Two, I also, since Acrobat and Acrobat Pro are pricy tools (\$160-220) do enjoy testing other PDF tools that can fulfill some of Acrobat's function. These have included, all published in macC, several evolving versions of:

Product Name	Function
PDF2Office	A PDF document conversion and data extraction tool that converts PDF documents into fully editable Microsoft® Word, RTF, AppleWorks, HTML and other files recreating the original construction and layout of the document.
PDFKey Pro	Unlock and decrypt password-protected PDF documents. By removing editing and printing passwords if these have been forgotten.
PDFpen Pro	Split, combine, reorder, and augment PDFs with text and image overlays.
PDFLab	Lets you split and join PDF documents as well as insert images and blank pages. You will also be able to easily create PDF documents out of several images
PDFshrink	Reduce most PDF files—including those created by Mac OS X iLife and iWork applications, Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Word & PowerPoint—by as much as 90% of their original size.

When evaluating such products, I both test them to determine how well they do their job and whether I think they are good value compared to a discounted Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Pro.

deskUNPDF is a PDF converter that converts PDF's to Word (2004), Excel, OpenOffice, HTML, XML, Images, and more. Includes batch conversion and command line interface. Convert and edit the contents of PDF documents with deskUNPDF. Easily and quickly convert PDF's into Word (.doc), Open Office (.odt), Excel (.xls), HTML, and many more formats. In addition the application has a very small footprint compared to applications such as PDF2Office and Acrobat Standard, both of which have such functionality as part of their functions



Getting Started

You have two options for installing the product. In its installer volume, you can do a custom installation and uncheck the contextual menu integration if you so desire, or install the application by a simple drop and drag to your application folder. I used the installer because I wanted to activate contextual menu features and to work from within MS Word available. Unfortunately on my Leopard based system, these access functions did not work and time constraints did not allow me to contact the developer, despite deleting and reinstalling the application

Note that you can eliminate the preview window as well as the *open-converted* panes to minimize screen space. On my 24" monitor it did not matter.

While deskUNPDF has available options to refine and optimize your document's conversion, in most instances all that is needed is to open the PDF document from within the application, select the output format and click the *Convert* button. deskUNPDF does the work to optimize your conversion so it appears as close to the original as possible. If more is needed, advanced options features allow you to refine the format for any more specific output requirements.

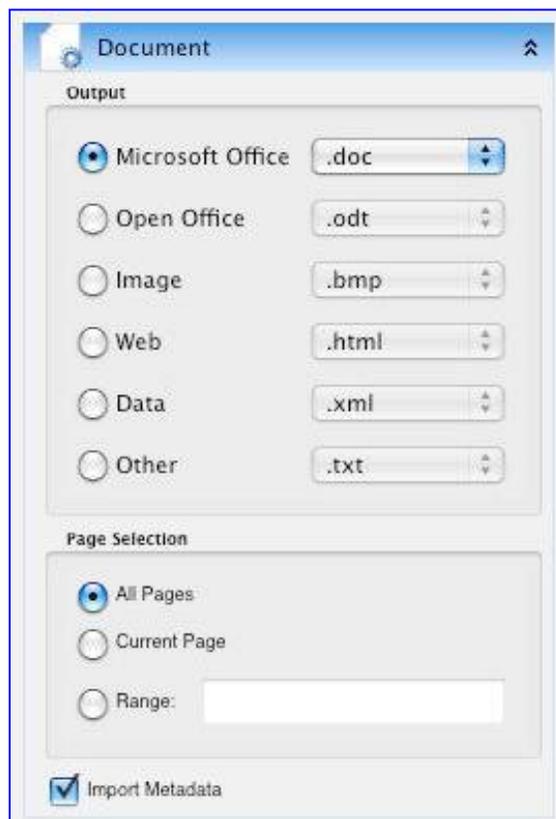
Using the Software

I tested the product on both downloaded PDFs and PDF created from MS Word 2004 documents. The document complexity ranged from simple letters, documents, and illustrated recipes to material that was more highly formatted (e.g., tables and columns.) In addition, I converted a number of graphic containing PDFs and some straight PDF formatted graphics files, a process that was straightforward.

Since I have no need for conversions to a web friendly output, I did not test that output feature but conversion of one complex table to a data XML file went well and I easily pulled that information into FileMaker Pro.

Complex Inputs — I tested a number of files that contained information in multi-column format, or whose contents were text-filled tables. These were output in their correct formats but some of the multiple paragraph containing table cells captured some paragraphs as “frames”; strange but easily fixed.

Tables — I did several tests in converting simple and somewhat complex technical tables from PDFs to both MSW and Excel files. These were full of numbers, symbols or short pieces of text. When the tables contained cells that well ordered, and regular (think checkerboard squares), the conversions went smoothly. The results were accurate both in content and formatting. This held true whether I was translating to either a DOC or RTF file.



However more complex tables did not convert well to MS Word or RTF. The example I used had a header title block, column headers and cells of data (a 5 x 5 array) footnotes. It contained oddly distributed sized merged cells in its data containing body. deskUNPDF was not useful for converting these tables to MS Word. Not only was formatting lost, but also an occasional number or letter had moved from its original table cell to an incorrect one. This was my only unacceptable result, in over three-dozen tests. But I didn't despair, since as described below, success only took an added step. The *complex table test* was the hardest challenge I gave the software.

However converting such complex tables containing PDFs to an Excel file behaved perfectly. All items were not only correctly formatted but all the entries were accurate. That XLS file could then be exported to word in MS Office, keeping both its content and formatting intact.

deskUNPDF Technical Basis — The program quickly converts the entire document, including all the images, lines, and hyperlinks, and offers an accurate choice of fonts while maintaining the text layout from the document being converted. The Accu-Text technology digitally maps text placement and chooses the best font and font size to maintain the look of the original, but you can override the choices to change the layout manually. I chose to ignore the font selection capability because it was easier to change in MS Word.

When to Use deskUNPDF for Mac (Paraphrased Publisher's Recommendations)

- Recovering PDF contents for editing
- Editing grammar and typos on a PDF
- Updating dates, times, making small revisions, etc.
- Modifying an image or text placement
- Migrating PDF's to ODT for standardization
- Improving PDF's accessibility with an HTML copy.
- Changing line placement or colors
- Removing watermarks - i.e. Draft
- Changing font appearance - i.e. color, size, styling
- Making thumbnail images of PDF pages for a gallery

Product Features Include:

- Uses Accu-Text Conversion Technology as its engine. This allows to the product to offer reliable reproduction regardless of the chosen output format.
- With deskUNPDF WYSIWYG Preview you can visually see how the converted document will look, highlighting the text, font size, and format of each page that is to be converted.
- Multiple output formats: Text (.txt), HTML (.html, .xhtml), Open Office (.odt), Microsoft Word 97-2003 RTF (.rtf), Microsoft Excel Workbook (.xls), Sony eReader BBeB format (.lrf) and various image formats.

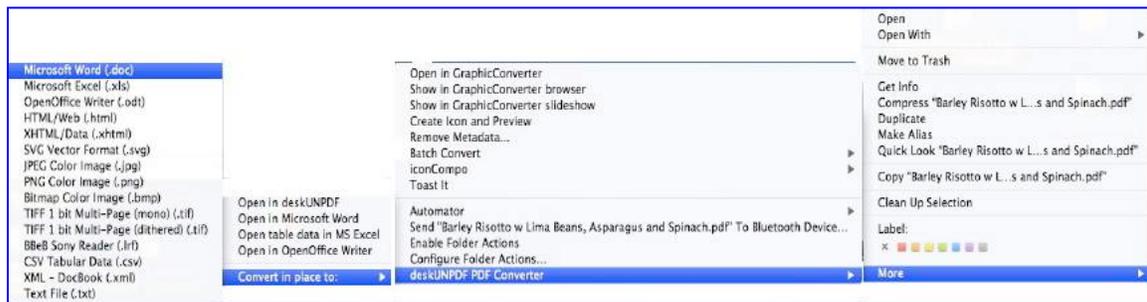
- Makes available 4 Page Layout Options
- Has font replacement capability
- Allows batch conversion to any given conversion format

Discomforts:

Dock Icon Not Active — I could not use the product icon in the Leopard dock to open and convert a PDF whether created in Acrobat, Print to PDF (Apple), or downloaded from the web. Neither could I drop unopened PDF files on either the application's icon or its alias.

The developer claims "deskUNPDF for Mac includes several ways to launch a conversion. PDF files can be opened directly from Microsoft Word, dragged onto the deskUNPDF desktop icon, via right-click. I could get neither of these features to work.

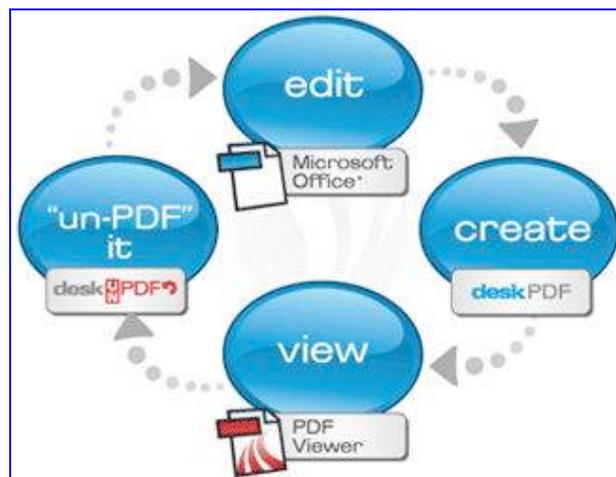
I was however able to use Apple's contextual menu, feature using deskUNPDF feature, to transform PDF directly from my desktop but the mouse's tail was very long (See the image below.)



The GUI is Needlessly Awkward — In order to access a pdf, you must open it, navigate the finder to locate the PDF or group of PDF, and then convert them to my desired format. There was no way to drop files into the products operating window. You do however have the choice of where you want the converted document to open; I chose the desktop.

The Converted File Titles Do Not Contain Files Extensions — When working conversion to a variety of file types, the product did not append an extension. This would be useful, especially with text-RTF-DOC or graphics formats. Having a file extension appended when saving the converted PDF would save typing it in. For those who are converting a largish number of files into different graphics formats, it would save some dancing around relative to predefining application in which to use the new files.

Handling Mixed Images and Text — All of the half dozen randomly selected image containing and otherwise highly formatted recipes I'd download for the web translated perfectly to MS Word. However, PDF's with active links need item-by-item attention to reactivate them in MSW [Command-K.]



Conclusions and Recommendation

The product was easy to use, although I cheated and read the manual first, and met most of its developer's claims. The conversions were, for the most part accurate, with respect to spelling, even when my text base input document was formatted in small font sizes. General layout was usually well preserved and the end conversion could be easily used and edited when I worked from RTF, TXT, and DOC output.

On occasion, despite what appeared accurately in preview made, I lost extra paragraph white spaces for paragraph-separated lists, but that was a trivial fix.

Although a bit more expensive than I'd have like for fair values, it is less pricy than available options of PDF2Office and Acrobat Standard. Try it; although one page only conversion in the demo is limited, I think the product will serve you well.

This is especially true of you are need to edit and otherwise work with web downloaded information in PDF format. The edit cycle is displayed below, the image also illustrates *deskPDF* and other of the vendors products.

Internet Cleanup

Reviewed by Ted Bade

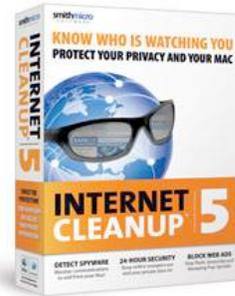
mysmithmicro

Internet Cleanup Version 5

Smith Micro website

Internet Cleanup website

\$30 USD



System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.2 or higher; 80MB of free hard disk space; Universal binary.

Strengths: Easily manipulate various Internet related files.



Weaknesses: Program has some issues. Some protection features consume processor abilities and can slow down your Mac. No way to control where it looks for data, it's all or nothing. Very limited documentation and help, you are on your own as to what to do with a lot of the stuff you find.

Introduction

Internet Cleanup is a suite of utilities that is designed to protect your Mac from online sources of mischief. It includes features that detect spyware, help you remove Internet-related files, block your system from advertisements, and help you search for and clean out all types of garbage. If you have concerns about security on your Mac, read on.

While some of the functions the utilities provide could be done manually, such as cleaning out the cookies in a browser, the average user might not know where these files are or how to remove them. Using Internet Cleanup makes this a lot easier through an effective interface.

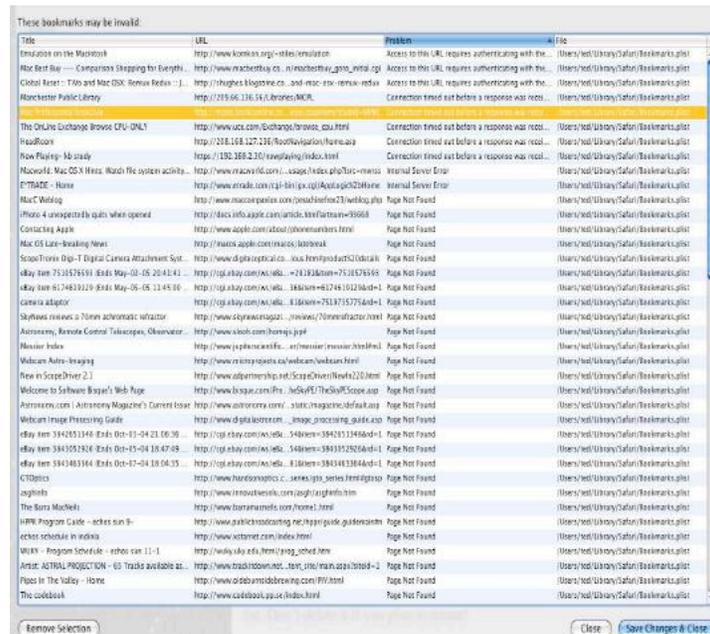
There are three areas that Internet cleanup affects. Web Browser maintenance, Privacy Protection, and System Protection. In each of these areas there are a set of utilities you can run or turn on. My experience with this program was to start by turning on everything and slowly turning off those utilities that I found get in the way.

We all have friends that insist on using Windows based machines, so we are all familiar with their complaints about how programs such as these are a lot of annoyance. On the Mac side we haven't had to deal with this very much, since most of the malicious-ware out there doesn't affect us. This may or may not change in the future. I would like to think that all the \$%#@& computer users really like their Windows machines and won't buy Macs, but who can tell? Then there are all these companies trying to attract the malicious programmers to the Mac platform by offering cash prizes for figuring out how to break into Mac. Ugh! Well, I guess a company has to attract business to stay alive, lol. Let's hope they take the cash and depart out happy universe.... In the meantime, a Mac user has to decide if they want to deal with this type of hassle in light of the fact there is so little in the way of malicious software out there for Macs. Luckily, Internet Cleanup also offers other features that one might find useful.

Internet Cleanup's web Browser Maintenance section includes four utilities: Bookmark Manager, Cookie Finder, Internet File Finder, and Web History Finder. Each of them give the user an easy way to manipulate the items they affect.

With Bookmark manager you can sync bookmarks between various browsers. This is a great feature for people who use a variety of browsers and might not have a particular bookmark in the browser they happen to be using at the moment.

When you choose to synch the bookmarks, you can either select a particular browser as the master and sync the other browsers from that, or you can import bookmarks from each browser to all the others. Internet Cleanup will locate the browsers you have on your Mac, then display a list. You can decide if you want them or any part of the group to participate in the sharing by clicking on or off a button and can select one account as the master.



You can also use Internet Cleanup to “validate” your bookmarks. What this means is it visits the bookmarks you have saved and checks to see if it still exists. If you don’t have a lot of time on your hands, this is a good way to weed out bookmarks that are no longer valid. (Alternatively, if you have a lot of time, you can visit every bookmark stored and see what happens! This is a lot more fun, but can take a lot of your free time.) When the program finishes a validation, you are presented with a list of bookmarks that have issues. So instead of taking hours and hours checking all the bookmarks then deleting the bad ones, you can spend (at least in my case), hours looking at all the invalid bookmarks and evaluating them. If you just don’t care, there is an option to delete the entire list of bad ones. The result list provides a number of reasons there was an issue with the bookmarked site.

Be careful, a web site you may want to log into comes up on this list even though it is still active. Don’t delete it if you plan to return! Another issue I found with this check is that if some sites don’t respond quickly enough, it says the site is invalid, when it isn’t. My suggestion is to look over the list carefully and delete only those you know are no longer needed.

Going through the list of cookies can be a real task. Unless you are a web Guru, most of the information in them will be meaningless, except for, in some cases, the name of the web site. In case it means anything to you, Internet Cleanup will show details of a cookie. You cannot edit these details. Perhaps someone can use the information in the details, but I couldn't.

Internet File Finder locates the cache, cookies, history, and form files from all or a selected browser. From this utility, you can delete the entire file for each of these categories, or review them. I couldn't find much use for the review process provided. When I looked at the items in my Safari cache file, they were all "documents" and the "preview" was merely a generic document icon. There was no way for me to see what the contents of that item was. I tried double-clicking on them, but this just caused the Finder to tell me it didn't know what to do with the item either. Other browsers don't hide the content like Safari, so you might find an image or movie file or something else to review and/or delete.

When looking at the other files this utility gives, your only option is to delete the entire file as well. If you choose to let Internet Cleanup automatically delete certain browser files, the Advanced setting feature in this utility lets you set some options.

The final browser utility is web history finder. This one does for web history what the cookie one does for cookies. You can have it give you a history list from one or all of your browsers and selectively delete items or delete the entire list. In this case, you get a bit more information about each history entry. There is no problem in just deleting your entire history, it doesn't affect your bookmarks, and it does get rid of files you might find useless from your hard drive as well as remove the history of where you have been with this browser..

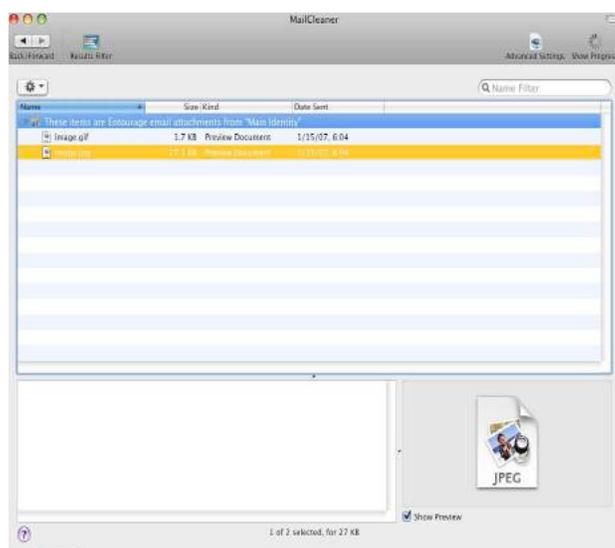
Since history doesn't take up a lot of space, I usually keep it around, in case I want to go back to a site I looked at a few days ago and forgot to bookmark. Where I see a lot of use for this feature is on a public access machine, where one might not want a list of the sites they visited remain after they left. Also good for teenagers to hide where they have been from their parents and vice versa! ;-)

The Privacy protection section provides utilities to clean up you IM logs, Mail, a secure delete file utility, and a file hider utility.

Users of Instant Messaging (IM) programs may or may not realize that the program can and usually does store a file of each of your messaging sessions and provides a copy of the text of that session. While this doesn't take up a lot of space, and can be easily accessed from the Finder (if you know where to look), Internet cleanup provides easy access to these files, let's you take a look at them and delete them.

You can have the program select a particular IM program to inspect or just look for them all. It digs through all your folders and locates the information from these sessions for you to review and delete or save as you choose. The results screen shows the application's name for the session. If you want to review it, double-clicking on the entry opens the appropriate IM program and shows the text of the session. Now you can reminisce or delete to your hearts content.

A context pull down menu lets you do a number of things to each session or a group of them, such as delete, archive, burn to disc, or even secure delete. Advanced settings let you choose which IM programs to inspect (actually to not inspect certain ones, since the default is they are all on), and to set up things for automatic deletion if you let Internet Cleaner do this. Since Internet Cleanup looks at all drives attached to your Mac, you will see multiple copies of your chat sections if you use Time Machine or any other backup utility.

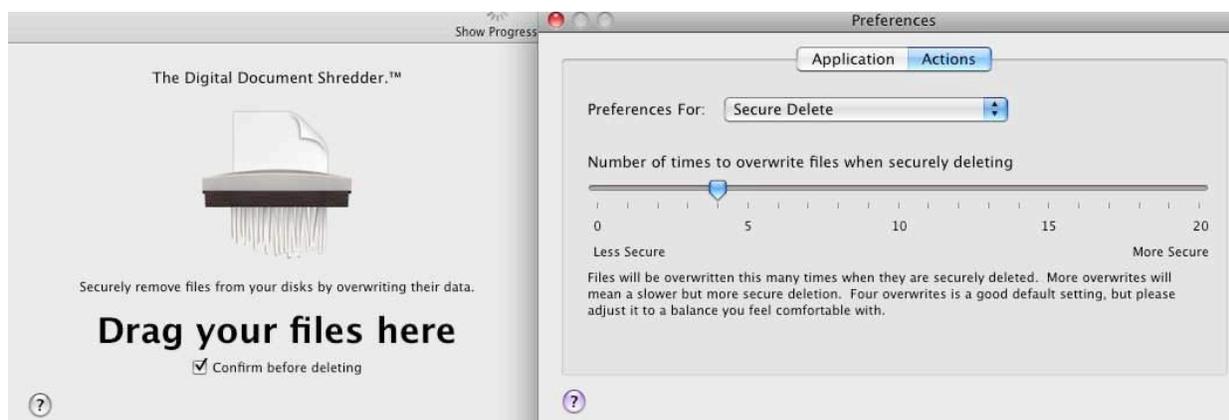


Mail Cleaner lets you locate and delete attachments to email messages. If your friends have a habit of sending you an email you want to keep and attaching a huge movie files to it (for your entertainment), this feature can be used to delete the attachment while keeping the message. You need to select which email program you want to clean from a list that includes Apple Mail, Entourage, Eudora and Thunderbird.

After the search, you get a list of attachment files and have many options for dealing with them. Such as delete, or archive. Again a lot of this can be done by simply going to the correct directory on your Mac, if you know where that directory is. Alternatively, you could simple delete all those messages with large attachments. But everyone uses their email program differently.

I had a real issue with Internet Cleanup here. First a little history. I recently had moved from using Microsoft's Entourage as my main email program to using Apple's Mail. I still use Entourage for appointments, especially those already scheduled that I am too lazy to move to iCal. I tried using Internet Cleanup on my Entourage folder. For some reason, when I ran the utility, it created a new pristine mail identity, and dumped my current one. Luckily, I was able to recover most of the stuff by reloading a recent backup of my main identity. I was quite surprised something like this could happen. Technical support explained that this shouldn't happen and did provide me with details on how to recover the lost Identity file (which I had already done). I wasn't too happy about what had happened and so didn't try it on my other email program!

The Secure Delete utility is very similar to what Apple's secure delete feature does, but with slightly more options. You can select how many time the data is written over. Obviously, the more times it is over written the more difficult it would be to find the data. It is commonly known that high end data recovery people can find data that had been zeroed out by looking for "shadow" data. This is because even though a bit is changed, nearby (and underneath) hard drive material will hold a trace of what it was before. By overwriting many times, you not only erase the bits, but alter the shadow information as well. If you are a spy or work for a company that could be spied upon for some reason, a feature like this might be of great value. Or you might simply want to rest assured that the private information on your hard drive has been deleted for good. I have no way to test if this works, but the theory is nice.



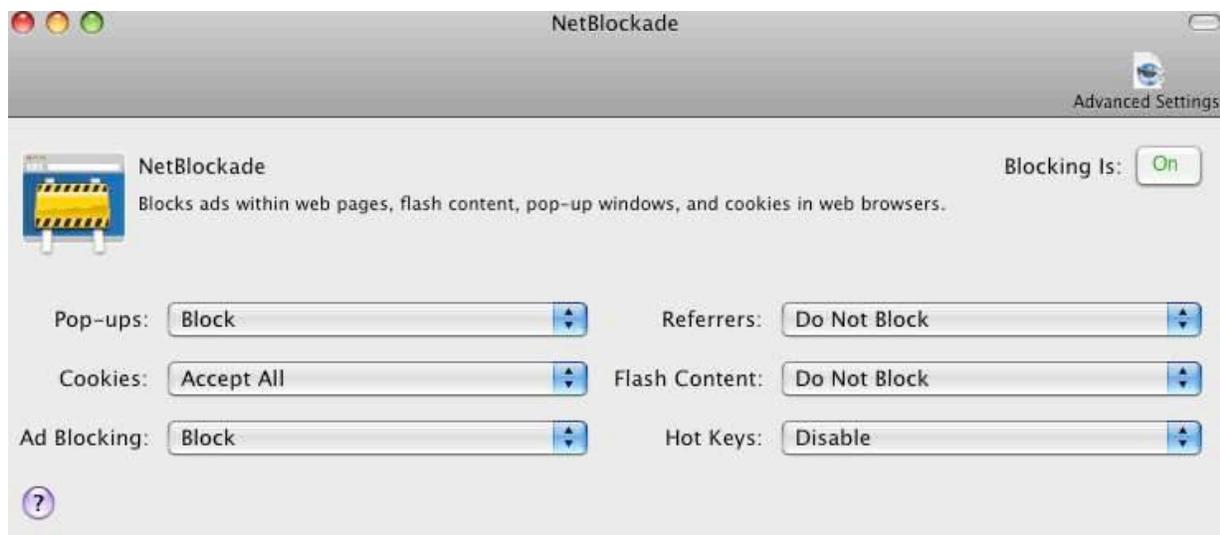
Simple File Hider is a utility to, hide files and folders from view. It isn't very complicated. What it does is change the file into an invisible file (or folder). While the item disappears from normal view, a search for invisible items using Spotlight easily turns it up and it can also be opened from spotlight. This feature might be nice for hiding something from your spouse, but don't try using it on your kids, they probably already know about searching for hidden files and folders!

If you choose to use this feature, you need to set a master password. This needs to be entered to return the files to visibility later. You can also select to have the utility, which shows the files you have hidden, to automatically close after a selected amount of time. This way, if you leave your computer, prying eyes won't be able to see what you have hidden.

The last section of utilities comes under the general heading of System Protection. Essentially it works with system wide security.

The Device Sentry utility would be a great one in an office or public access setting. Here you are required to enter an administrative password before allowing a device to be mounted on the desktop. Where I work, the IT guys have taken to turning off floppy drives and USB ports on the PCs they control. However, once in a while they need to actually use these ports, which turns out to be a major hassle for them. An application like this would be a real benefit. How it works is this, you insert a removable device, then need to type in the administrative password before the item is mounted. Pretty slick.

There isn't much in the way of options. You can turn the feature on or off and lock the ability to turn it on or off with the administrative password. Unless you are trying to control what your kids or friends are doing with your computer, a feature like this might cause more issues than it prevents for the home user. But every situation is different.



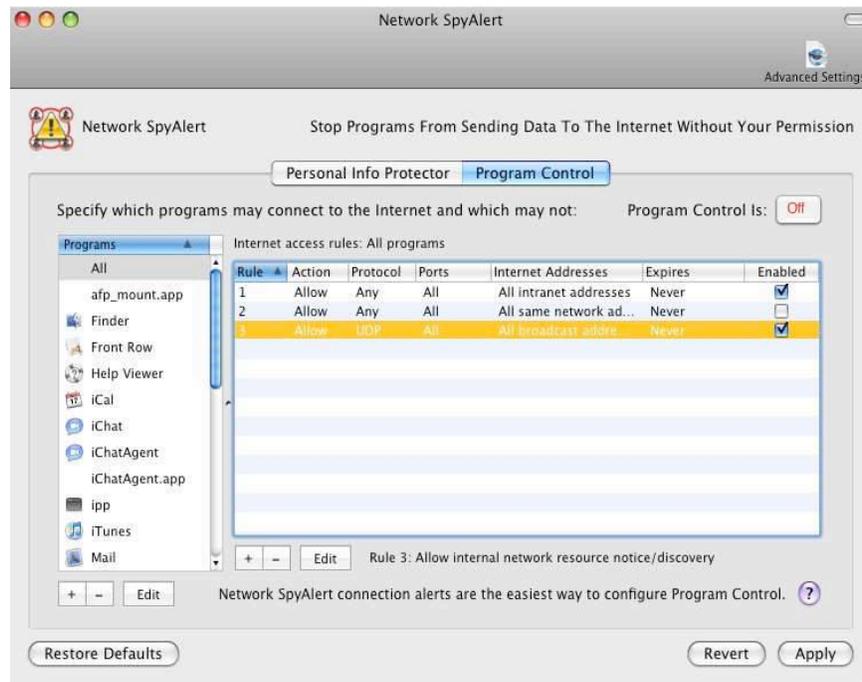
Net Blockade serves to block a variety of different ways Internet sites can affect your Mac. It gives you the ability to control how your Mac deals with pop-ups, cookies, ads, and flash content. Some sites have links on them that refer you to another site, this is prevalent in many sites that are trying to help other sites get advertising "hits". You can select to block these referrals.

Each section gives options for how to deal with each item. For instance, for blocking popups you can use the default, just block, but Internet Cleanup adds a "Block Aggressively" feature that I imagine works on even those sites that have figured how to get around Safari's standard blocking feature. In the cookies section, you can reject or allow everything or permit those you have selected or alternatively reject all those you choose to reject.

In case you might need to turn these block on or off quickly, there is an advanced feature that lets you set up and activate hot keys to do this. There are some web sites that use popups for legitimate reasons. Generally they will tell you there is a need to temporarily turn off pop up blocking. Also, you might block flash content, but then visit a flash site you aren't concerned with and want to temporarily turn blocking off. For that matter, you might want to see an ad on some site! In any case, Internet Cleanup lets you set up a keyboard combination to do this quickly.

In the advanced section, there are a number of URL bits (called patterns) and set up rules for how Net Blockade deals with them. For instance, sites ending with .edu or .gov are never blocked. Obviously, you wouldn't want to block the content of educational or government sites. The program includes a long list of URL pieces that are know issues and has a default on how the program deals with them. You can add your own as well and I imagine that the company will issue updates as they learn more.

With Net Blockade on, when you open a web page, you will see a little “New Blockade” logo in the place where an add or animation should have appeared. This lets you see visually what is being blocked.



Network Spy Alert is a feature that prevents applications on your computer from sending data out its various data ports. There are two sections to this utility. Personal info Protector lets you protect and encrypt data that you choose, requiring a password to get access to it. The other part lets you make rules about what applications can access the Internet.

Using Personal info Protector, you first set up a password, then choose data and information you want to encrypt and protect. Obviously, you will need this password to access the data. You can also tell the application not to allow any of this information to be sent out over the Internet without use of your password. Once you enter your password, you are presented with a variety of data you might want to enter as well as the ability to create items of your own choosing to add. By default, the data you are hiding is shown as bullets, but you can turn this on or off by using your password. If you choose to block any of this data, Internet Cleanup scans the text data that is sent from your computer for this information, and blocks transmission of any it finds.

The program control area can be turned on to prevent applications from using the Internet for anything. On the left side of the window, there is a list of common applications that use the Internet. The list starts with some general rules for all applications, then moves onto specific applications and rules pertaining to them. The right side of the screen lists the “rules” associated with the selection. For each rule you can select the action (allow or not allow), the type of protocol that it would use, which ports or range of ports it would use, allow all or only specific internet addresses, create an expiration date for this, and finally to enable the rule or not.

Conclusion

My overall feeling about Internet Cleanup is that, for the most part, it works and works well and performs as expected. From what I can tell, it also does a good job with what it does. I am not totally sold that there is a real need for a lot of this stuff and I would rather not endure the extra processing needs of running all these utilities for the few times where it would protect me. However, if there were a lot of know issues or when those issues hit me (if they ever do), I would think differently about that.

Internet Cleanup could use a little improvement overall, but it does work and it does provide the protection it promises. If you are concerned about these issues and want the protection, you won't go wrong with this program. If you are involved with running Macs in a business or public location, some of these features would be very beneficial.

SimpleMovieX v. 3

Reviewed by Wayne LeFevre

Aero Quartet

SimpleMovieX 3.6.3

www.aeroquartet.com

\$35 USD, \$ CND, £17 GBP, 22€ Euro
Education and Volume licensing available

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later;
Universal binary; QuickTime 7.0 or higher, (QuickTime
Pro not required; 700Mhz processor recommended, but not
required.



Strengths: Easy multi-format editor, chapters, audio synching, converter.

Weaknesses: Timeline and controllers sometimes difficult to use, but there is a Quick Reference pane right in the application.

For a demo of this product: [SimpleMovieX](#)

Introduction

I only wanted to do one thing with my movie editing software. Just one, (with a few steps.) I wanted to be able to take a bunch of avi movie files, turn them into one large movie, place chapter markers at the beginning of each individual movie within the larger one, and play it on my iPod.

The concatenating of the movies weren't a big deal. You can use QuickTime for that with, something as simple as cut and paste. Of course there is other software like the utility AddMovie that will do it far quicker and easier. AddMovie is donationware from [limit-point software](#). Chapter markers aren't a big problem at this stage either, as you can also use QuickTime, if you enjoy pain. An application like [MovieChapterizer](#) can insert chapters into AVI or MOV formats, or even AddMovie will automatically place chapters as you concatenate. Both much, much easier than QuickTime Pro.

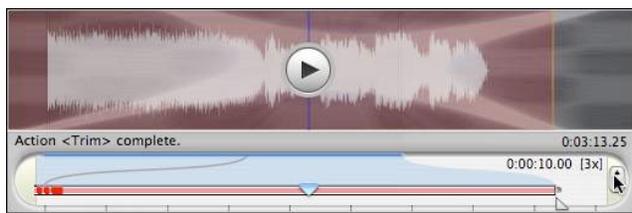
But now the biggie. When converting for the iPod or AppleTV, the conversion process to MP4 will wipe out all chapters. So the problem becomes finding an application can easily add chapters of your own making into an MP4 file. I stumbled upon one a few weeks ago that is brilliant. Not only will it do everything I wanted it to, but a whole lot more. That application is SimpleMovieX.

SimpleMovieX by Aero Quartet's Benoît Joosen, easily and quickly edits your mov, mpeg, avi and mp4 movies. It can also do batch conversions, audio syncing, and makes movies instantly searchable by quickly breaking it up into thumbnails that you can select. Explaining everything that it does is the hard part. Actually using the software is deceptively simple.

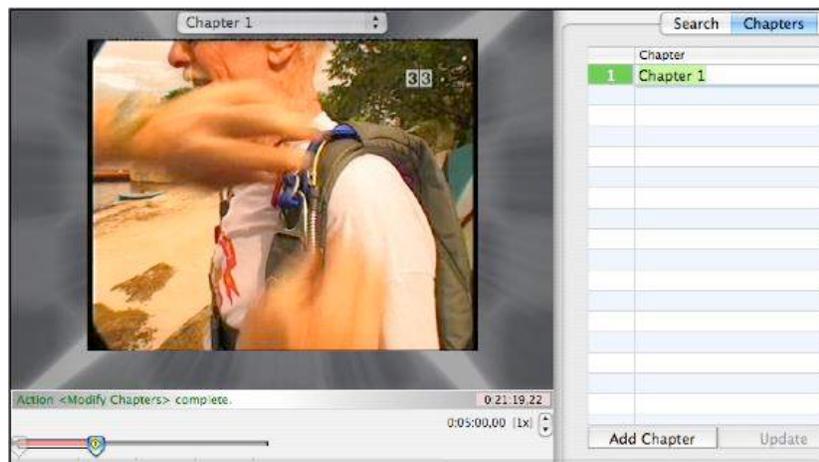
Using the Software

I'll begin with the feature I most wanted, and one that SimpleMovieX does very well.

Chapters. After opening the application it will present you with a simple window, a timeline, volume slider, a play/pause button, a key frame indicator/selector and a cut button. The only other controls on the front are a quick link to the Gallery and Tools.



Chapters are made by selecting the Tools link in the lower right hand of the window. Under that link, a sidebar slides out of the side and you are presented with a Search Feature, Chapters, Audio and Quick Reference. A click on the Chapters button will allow you to create and name a new chapter wherever the playhead is currently at. After adding all the chapters you like, the other options are to update or delete them. It doesn't stop there, though.



Chapters are also how you can edit out content such as commercials. It will color code each chapter and you can delete all of one color or the other. You can also use it to extract content into other video clips as one, or as separate videos. Really pretty cool if you have a concert video that you would quickly like to split up into songs. iDVD also recognizes the

chapters if you choose to import your creation to DVD.

The second feature I'd like to make you aware of is Audio Syncing.

No matter what you use to import your video to mp4 for the

AppleTV, every once in awhile something goes wrong and you end up feeling like your watching a badly made foreign film. The actors voice on the screen doesn't match up to the audio. It can be very frustrating.



It's done by simply selecting the Audio button in the slide out Tool panel, and offsetting the audio with the arrow keys. It's true that you can also do this in VLC, but the difference being with SimpleMovieX is you can do it by chapters. Often, only a portion of a movie will go out of

synch, and this is the cure to that. Also, if you didn't know that VLC did this specifically, it's not very intuitive in finding out.

There is also an option to display the waveform. This can be very useful in determining exactly what the audio is doing in relation to the video.

The Search feature can be used by scanning the movie either by 16 frames or 64. This gives either a rough or fine visual index to your video. Jumping to that spot is as simple as clicking on it's thumbnail.

A keyframe indicator allows you to not only see where your keyframes are in the video, but also lets you jump from keyframe to keyframe.

Conclusion

There are many other reasons for checking out this fine piece of shareware. The author himself is something of a video guru who also has a Movie Repair service for professionals that can do wonders on corrupted or otherwise lost video. It has replaced my QuickTime Professional in all editing functions that I would have normally used it for.

If you have QuickTime Pro, take a look, you really might prefer it. If you are thinking about purchasing QuickTime Pro, try this instead. I really think it will fulfill all your needs.



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

Statistical Analysis

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

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

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

The *macCompanion* Staff