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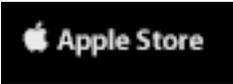
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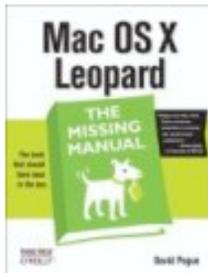
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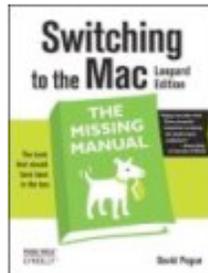
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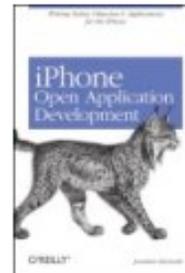
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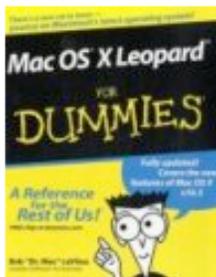
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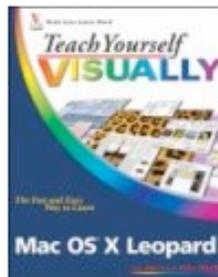
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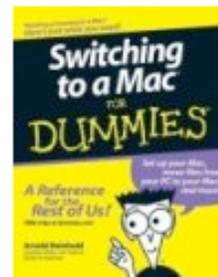
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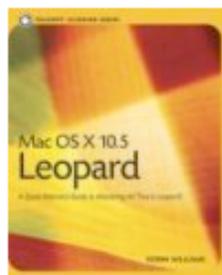
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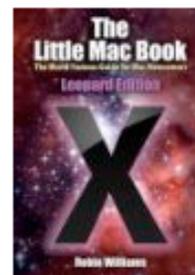
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Columns

Letter from the CEO

WWDC, Pain at the Pump and Dads

By Robert Pritchett

We do have representation on the ground at WWDC and we will get a first-hand report from Jonathan Hoyle for the World Wide Developer's Conference - <http://developer.apple.com/wwdc/sessions/> .

We also have great mind-bending commentary from other staff-writers at *macCompanion* magazine. I hope you take time to read their words and also their great reviews of books, hardware and software this month. We are still all-volunteer and it shows. Now *there* is a byline we probably could use! ;^)

Thanks so much to those of you who took the time to send us your financial support via PayPal - https://www.paypal.com/us/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_flow&SESSION=GycVdFZJTto2yFOZwd195CtlAUx8jaXuQaK1z6Q3hopB-VhCaPM8UEwtzQmC&dispatch=5885d80a13c0db1f1ff80d546411d7f823b5265b6559fc2aae010bf00cf3c64. It proves you not only read us, you respond when we ask for donations to keep *macCompanion* magazine going. I cannot express enough how grateful I am to you. It means an *enormous* amount to me. Please spread the word!

PESWiki

Personally, I've been very busy working on the PESWiki.com website – <http://www.peswiki.com>, visiting plant locations for future products in the Alternative Energy industry. Yes, you can participate by registering. I handle that manually to avoid the Spammers and Pornpreneurs from mucking things up. Just send a Username and Password and your name to webmaster@pureenergysystems.com and it will get done.

Hydrogen Generation

I'm particularly jazzed about hydrogen generation. I am driving around in a Turbo Diesel Cargo Van that *without* the hydrogen, runs like the dog it is. I have an on-off switch and it is immediately obvious when the generator is off. *Every* vehicle can become a hybrid – <http://www.h2ohybridpro.com> no matter how old it is. Improved power, cleaner exhaust, better fuel mileage (gas or diesel). It is not a scam. It works. I've proved it. The reason why it is not being approved at government levels is because the process cannot be taxed. Until water and baking soda can be taxed, it will not be "approved" for public consumption. So we are doing it at the grassroots level. One vehicle at a time.

Tens of thousands of vehicles already have these devices in them. Your pocketbook will be happier. Mine is. Listen to Brent Burns "Pain at the Pump" - <http://video.aol.com/video-detail/pain-at-the-pump-crooner-laments/801281147?icid=acvsv1>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWbjSnUIOCM&fmt=18>

Father's Day

I would like to take a little bit of time to praise my father. He kept me alive through priesthood blessings and I should have died as a child after having been a pincushion and guinea pig for months inside an oxygen tent in a hospital, as I suffered just about every childhood disease imaginable. Today most of our children's children will never have to go we at we went through in our childhoods. I wasn't a pioneer. I was just a recipient of inspired doctors and blessed enough to be the firstborn to a dad who honored his priesthood and was always worthy to give blessings.

When I wasn't working with my grandfather on the dairy farm during the summers (another great surrogate dad!), I was home and saw my father work long weeks as a music teacher in public school and spent evenings running live dance bands on Saturday nights, usually coming home smelling like a tavern (cigarette smoke) early Sunday mornings and sometime going to church meetings smelling like he smoked 6 packs a day. It was in his clothes and skin as 2nd-hand smoke.

My father sacrificed his health to keep a roof over our heads, clothes on our backs and food in our bellies. Many years later, he coughed up black stuff for weeks, until his lungs cleared.

He is now a bionic man with titanium knees. He uses hearing aids due to loss caused from sitting in front of on-stage speakers that blasted out real danced music as he played guitar. He can finally walk without chronic pain almost without a cane and is no longer bowlegged, caused by Rickets when he was a kid. Mom said he is like a young man again. The surgery was painful and difficult, but he survived and is looking good today. Next up, shoulder replacement for chronic bursitis, caused by decades of directing orchestras, choirs and music in church.

I worked with dad on Elder's Quorum projects building homes, roofing, splitting cedar rails for fund-raising, Home Teaching to members of the church, engine rebuilding of vehicles, musical instrument repairs and playing instruments in orchestra concerts.

He took time to drive us around the Pacific Northwest, go to Long Beach to dig for clams and always drove us to the farm during vacations no matter how bad the weather, so we could do our part, working vacations, by helping our grandparents milk cows, put up the hay, etc.

Dad still plays in orchestras, runs the Old Time Fiddlers music group in Kittitas County, WA and still tunes pianos.

Dad, thanks for being there when I needed you. You still are and I still do. I wish I could be as good a dad as you.

According to Hoyle...

WWDC 2008 Preview

June 2008

by Jonathan Hoyle

jhoyle@maccompanion.com

macCompanion

<http://www.jonhoyle.com>

Once again, we are bumping our investigation of retro-computing so as to give a preview of this year's Apple Worldwide Developer's Conference, the annual conference about which the entire Macintosh programming world revolves. Note that this June article is written at the end of May, prior to the start of the conference. Those of you reading this after June 9th will have far more information available about the conference. This is a preview based upon information available to me at the time of this writing. The July column will cover more in-depth the actual announcements made at this conference.

Sell-out Crowd

On May 14th, Apple announced that WWDC completely sold out, the first time in this conference's history. With over 5,000 attendees planning to attend, the Moscone Center fire and safety regulations require closing out any more ticket sales. Those with spare WWDC e-tickets have been selling them on EBay, with winning prices much higher than the original purchase price. (One sold his ticket for \$3550, more than double the original purchase price.) Those developers with ADC Premiere memberships each get a free WWDC e-ticket with their purchase. Those companies with these free tickets who are not planning to attend, may find that selling their unused tickets works out to everyone's benefit.

Here, kitty kitty kitty...

So, assuming the conference does indeed introduce the next version of Mac OS X, what codename will Apple use? *Cheetah*, *Puma*, *Jaguar*, *Panther*, *Tiger* and *Leopard* were the names for versions 10.0 - 10.5, respectively. I doubt very much Apple will break from the big cat tradition with 10.6. The smart money is on *Cougar* or *Lynx*, as these are names Apple has trademarked but not yet used. *Cougar* seems to be the most likely, but *Lynx* is a smaller, lighter cat, one which may fit more closely with the iPhone strategy. But what if Apple does not wish to yet broach the topic of 10.6 yet? Perhaps this year will cover smaller Mac changes, a Mac OS X 10.5.5 maybe? If so, it would seem a waste to use up another cat name for a half upgrade. *Snow Leopard* could be used, as the snow leopard is truly a different species from the leopard, yet the *Leopard* trademark may still apply. I find this an unlikely scenario, but if it does turn out to be *Snow Leopard*, remember you heard it here first! :-)

It's also possible that Apple will not address the next version of the operating system at all, as *Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard* has been out for only a short time. This happened seven years ago at WWDC 2001, as it was essentially a repeat of WWDC 2000 (due to the fact that Mac OS X 10.0 had been released just two months earlier in March 2001). I also find this scenario unlikely. Apple always has something on the back burner, and I am sure that it is in Apple's benefit to get developers excited about the future.

Assuming for the moment that *Mac OS X 10.6* will indeed be introduced, I think that it is extremely probable that this new operating system will be Intel-only. With Power Macintoshes being resource-stretch just to run *10.5 Leopard*, it seems unreasonable to assume that 10.6 will run any better on such hardware. By the time 10.6 ships, it is likely that no PowerPC-based Macintosh will be younger than 5 years old. For this reason alone, Apple will probably do well if they optimize their next OS to be Intel-only.

Just for the Phone of It

Looking at Apple's preliminary schedule for WWDC <http://developer.apple.com/wwdc/schedules/>, and there is no mistaking that the iPhone will be a big deal this year. After having to eat crow from last year's blunder of offering no iPhone SDK, Apple has made a 180-degree turnaround. It appears that the Cocoa API will be extended to include iPhone development, based upon the crossover sessions listed for both iPhone and Mac. *Mobile Computing* is the operative phrase this year, and it is pretty exciting to think that with little effort, Mac developers can compile apps that may perhaps run on both iPhone and Mac OS X 10.6.

The Full Deprecation of Carbon

Well, here it finally comes: The Death of Carbon.

It's not like this was unexpected. Apple has been slowly killing the Carbon API for years now. Even when it gave birth to Carbon, it did so begrudgingly. At WWDC 1997, Apple attempted set the future of *Mac OS* with *Rhapsody*, a Mac port of the *NeXTStep* operating system. *Rhapsody* had *Yellow Box* (the equivalent of Cocoa) and *Blue Box* (its equivalent of Classic), but no Carbon. *Rhapsody* was rejected by the Macintosh development community since it required all Mac applications to be completely rewritten from scratch in Objective-C to be native. The following year, Apple changed direction to *Mac OS X*, a mixture of *Rhapsody* and *Mac OS* which contained Carbon, an API evolved from the standard Mac Toolbox. Carbon allowed developers to transition their Classic applications to *Mac OS X*. Although Apple continued to push the benefits of Cocoa, the vast majority of the Mac community stuck with Carbon. With each passing year, relatively more functionality was added to the Cocoa API, but Carbon continued to be embraced by developers. A major blow came to Carbon Developers at last year's WWDC, when Apple reversed its decision to extend the Carbon API to the 64-bit arena. 64-bit apps must be rewritten in Cocoa. Furthermore, Senior Vice President of Apple Software Engineering Bertrand Serlet made the following ominous statement: "*There will come a time when we will stop investing in Carbon*". I believe that time is now.

It is also my belief that all new functionality available in Mac OS X 10.6 will be Cocoa only, and the entire Carbon API will be officially deprecated. Although well-behaved Carbon apps ought to continue to run just fine in 10.6, they will be living on leased time. But Mac developers wishing to take full advantage of mobile computing will have no choice but make the jump to Cocoa and Objective-C.

Introducing Xcode 3.1 and gcc 4.2

Apple has published its preliminary schedule for WWDC 2008

<http://developer.apple.com/wwdc/schedules/>, and at Tuesday 3:30 is Session 907: *New Compiler Technology and Future Direction*

<http://developer.apple.com/wwdc/sessions/#tab=mac&descriptions=on&session=907>, which discusses *Xcode 3.1* and its updated compiler *gcc 4.2*. Version 4.2 is a great improvement over 4.0.1 (the version Apple is currently using in Xcodes 2 & 3), particularly as it includes *OpenMP*, a compiler API with impressive multiprocessor support. Last November's *According to Hoyle...* column

<http://www.macompanion.com/macc/archives/November2007/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle27.htm> covered *gcc 4.2* in more detail, so I invite those interested to visit that article. In addition, Xcode 3.1 will include LLVM compiler technology as well, which you can read about at this link <http://llvm.org/>.

Will *Xcode 3.1* be available for Leopard, or will this be a 10.6 or higher development environment? One would imagine that a compiler version for the next big OS would be named *Xcode 4*, or at least *Xcode 3.5*. However, such a big underlying change does not seem likely to go into a simple dot upgrade. We should know soon enough, but I am hoping that *gcc 4.2* capabilities will be available for the Leopard developer.

Special Events

It seems Apple is still trying to decide how to handle Friday, the last day of the conference. No events are scheduled on that evening of course, since many people are flying back. Friday sessions tend to be lightly attended, especially the afternoon ones. In 2006, Apple decided that Friday attendance was too small to warrant a full day, so it ended the conference midday, not even providing lunch. Well, that simply caused defections to take place earlier, with few Friday morning attendees, and many people leaving Thursday night. (How is it that the geniuses who invented the MacBook and iPod could not see something that obvious coming?) So, in 2007, they returned to a full Friday schedule. This year, they have done something in between: they've kept Friday lunch and the first afternoon session (2:00PM), but dropped the remaining two (3:30PM and 5:00PM) time slots. I am not sure that this is a smart move, although keeping the Friday lunch was a good idea. I will not be flying back until Saturday, so I would have been happy to stay for two more sessions. We'll have to wait and see how Apple plans WWDC '09's Friday schedule to know how successful this year's strategy went.

Lunchtime speakers are back for Wednesday through Friday lunches, which is very nice. Why not Tuesday? I am not sure. There is no pre-announcement as of yet for the topics of these lunch talks. Perhaps they will be announced during the Stevenote? These lunchtime sessions have been hit and miss in past WWDC's, the finest being the memorable Tim O'Reilly talk a number of years back. I expect to see these and will report back next month.

The evening events remain the much same as they were in previous years: ADC Reception for schmoozing on Monday night, the Design Awards, Stump the Experts & the Scientific Poster Session on Wednesday night, and capping off with the Apple Party on Thursday night. Oddly, no events are scheduled for Tuesday evening (the second year in a row with a night off). Why this is the case is a bit of a mystery to me. Why not split up all the Wednesday events across both Tuesday & Wednesday (as they had in 2006)? Tuesday night is too early for rebroadcasts of repeat sessions. Could there be an Apple surprise awaiting that night? That is what many of the attendees suspected last year when we read the intriguing *"To Be Announced"* as the only event listed for Wednesday evening. Sadly, there was no announcement, and all were left with an anticlimactic disappointment. I am not expecting much better this year, but I hope I am proved wrong here. In any case, Tuesday has no lunchtime nor evening events currently scheduled.

For the second year running, the Apple Party will be held right there in San Francisco, at Yerba Buena Gardens, across the street from the Moscone West convention center. Formerly known as the Apple Campus Bash, this event was a party which Apple hosted on its Cupertino campus (usually on Thursday night) with music, food and drink. When WWDC was held in San Jose, buses would run continually all night between the Convention Center and Cupertino, making it very easy for the two to three thousand attendees to come and go as they please. The Apple (Employee) Store on campus was left open after hours so that developers could buy souvenirs of their visit. Beginning with 2003, WWDC was moved to San Francisco to accommodate the conference's ballooning size. This caused a change in the bussing strategy, as a ride to Cupertino went from 15 minutes to nearly an hour each way. I for one, stopped going to the party for this reason. With each year's attendance breaking the previous year's record, it finally became a logistically impossible to continue, so beginning in 2007 the party was moved to San Francisco, and I was able to attend (the first time since 2002). Apple also brought a mini version of their store to the Convention Center, so we developers could still get our souvenirs.

"WWDC Plays Your Favorite Hits!"

With the announcement of WWDC's being sold out, the following was also mentioned: *"Session videos will be available to purchase on iTunes shortly after the conference. More details will be available soon"*. This is an interesting turn of events. Since Apple cannot accommodate everyone wishing to physically attend, it can at least make money selling session videos to these missed customers. Would these be \$1.99 per session downloads? Or would all sessions become available by buying the "album" at one high price? It's too early to tell, but it could certainly be a great way for Apple to get its developer information out there.

In years past, Apple would sell video and audiotapes of its WWDC sessions at the conclusion of the conference. I recall in the 1990's, prices along the lines of about \$30-35 for a videotape and around \$10-15 for an audio. Beginning with the 1998 conference (the one which introduced *Mac OS X*), sessions became available free to view online through QuickTime streaming. From 2001-2004, Apple provided attendees with DVD sets of the QuickTime movies from conference (you can see these sets crop up on EBay from time to time). In 2005, Apple stopped shipping the DVD sets and made the videos available to download via iTunes, at no charge to attendees or those with Premiere ADC memberships. This continued for 2006 and 2007. I assume that WWDC 2008 attendees will continue to have access to these videos, although I have no confirmation to that supposition. But Apple's willingness to sell these videos online to non-attendees shows a change in Apple's focus. Up until now, Apple was concerned that by making these videos available generally, it might potentially risk lowering attendance to the conference itself. Now that Apple has more interested people that it can possibly accommodate, it no longer seems necessary to restrict these videos. It is analogous to local TV broadcasts of sold out football games. So those of you not attending who wish they were, you will be able to download and experience many of these sessions as well.

Coming Up Next Month: A full review of WWDC 2008. See you in 30!

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

Ivory Tower

Look and Feel

By Ted Bade

We have come a long way since those days in the 1990s when Apple seemed like it was on the brink of failure. Back then they had no leadership and no real plan for the future. If it hadn't been for dedicated users, Apple would have had no real market. As it was, their market share dropped from a respectable number to almost nothing. It was a terrible time for Apple Corporation.

Today that has all changed. Apple once again has a respectable share of the computer market. More importantly, they took advantage of the consumer interest in digital entertainment, created the iPod and the iTunes store to give people easy access to both music and videos. Because of their excellent market timing, Apple took a lot more than a respectable chunk of this market, sky rocketing to almost a monopoly.

The success of Apple in the digital entertainment industry has put Apple in a good light in the eyes of many people. While no piece of electronics is flawless, there have been few consistent complaints about the iPod or iTunes. Sure, there have been isolated cases of this or that problem, but isolated cases only. Not so many that groups of consumers would band together to make any real noise. Because of this positive attention, consumers look toward Apple as a dependable company, and often consider buying other products as well. This has caused an increase in Apple's computer market share over the past few years.

And now this positive attitude has shifted toward the business market. It is interesting how the market moves. Years ago, when Apple offered the Apple II, and IBM had their PC, businesses flocked toward the IBM model, since Apple was considered more a consumer toy or hobbyist computer. As time passed, people who used the IBM form of computer at work, decided that having one at home was a good idea. Colleges decided that teaching students to use these computers and their popular business applications was also a good idea. So more and more people bought the IBM/Windows based computers. It was familiar, often discounted for employees of larger companies, and it got the job done.

Then the Hackers and the concept of malicious computer code crept into the arena. There is always someone who for either the right or wrong reason, is very upset with some company, group, nation, or what ever. Malicious code gave some of these people with the right skills the ability to cause a noticeable effect all over the world that used computers. In the early days, they wrote malicious code for either Windows based PC or Macintosh. But because of the superior market share of the Windows PC, (and perhaps because there was more angst with this aspect of the market), malicious Macintosh code disappeared, but became a daily experience for the Windows based PC. While none of this code stopped the industries, some of them caused slow downs and all of them created a large secondary market which provided protection and detection of malicious code.

In a way, the existence of these hackers, that were trying to perhaps make a point against corporate greed, created a number of large companies that made and continue to acquire a lot of wealth. Think about it, large companies such as Symantec or McAfee probably wouldn't exist if not for the producers of malicious code.

In this arena, Macintosh computers fell behind. Some people say that because of the Mac's small market share and the limited effect a piece of malicious code would have, people who wrote such code didn't bother with the Macintosh market. While, to a point, this is probably true, I often wonder if the lack of angst toward those companies that traditionally use Macs as well as the toward Apple Corporation itself, was part of the story.

To me this becomes even more apparent today. Those same giant companies that owe their existence to the malicious code producers, would just love to add the growing Macintosh market to their folds. It annoys me to no end every time I see one of them sponsoring a contest to break into a Mac. But what I am seeing is that, yes, it can be done, and yes somebody walks away with \$10,000 in their pockets, but no, we don't see a flood of malicious code attacking the Macintosh arena. Could it be that a majority of this malicious code has a specific target and it's not the home consumer enjoying their Macintosh experience?

Computer users have changes and matured over the past several decades. What I see now is that the consumer is becoming educated. They want functionality, good customer relations, and a computer that works the way they do. Being more educated and experienced with using computers, they are less apt to just buy what they are familiar with and more apt to use their experience and skills to find a machine that fits them better.

With experience comes the willingness and even desire to take control of the machine. Rather than wait for a solution from the IT guru for every little issue, they want to deal with most of the daily issues by themselves. A Windows machine really requires a lot of specialized knowledge. Consider the recent release of XP service pack 3. My day job boss tried three times to upgrade his work machines, but failed due to some problems in the mysterious Windows registry. He was required to download a special application and go into this registry and modify certain files that were the issue. Had he lacked experience and done something wrong, his entire computer would stop working. Manipulating Window's registry files is a scary thing, requiring a lot of skill and experience, and a cause of a lot of problems. An experienced IT guru won't see this as a problem and might even consider the registry as a benefit to using the system. But not the home user. I don't want to spend my money having some Geek do things on my machine, I want to be able to handle the day-to-day stuff, like installing an upgrade or a new piece of software. Perhaps even installing basic hardware, and even modifying the system to my way of doing things. That's the Macintosh way ☺

That's what using a Macintosh is all about. Empower the user to take control of their computer. Using a computer doesn't have to be difficult. Using a Mac can be really easy. This is not to say that everything is perfect or that problems requiring the guru never occur. Mac OS X has some problems and every so often, an issue occurs that requires a guru. However, this isn't the norm, but the exception.

A lot of the issues people have with Macs and computers in general center around a lack of experience. This is especially true for those people who used Windows and switched to a Mac. Like trying to speak a new language in a foreign country or driving in a country with different rules of the road, learned behaviors and habits become a source of annoyance. This is especially true when those aspects of using Windows that a person actually become comfortable with, they are often just different enough in Mac OS X that they become stumbling blocks.

My advice to the switcher is to hang on and gain the Macintosh experience. Once you pass a certain point, you might find that using the Mac has become so easy that the stress of dealing with machines just fizzles away. In my case, I found this led to me being able to easily analyze issues in other operating systems I work with in a considerably more logical manner. Rather than being uptight and stressed out, I was able to think, "Yes, this can be done. All I need to do is figure out how to do it with the rules of this system". Which doesn't mean I am any less frustrated when I have to reboot Windows for every little thing that happens, but I look at it with a lot less stress. (Especially since I know, when I go home, I won't have to deal with any of these issues on my Mac!)

This is where I expect the market to move. People want computers that are easier to use, that don't require an expert on a daily basis, that can easily be modified to quickly provide those tools that are used daily and not clutter the screen with tools used rarely. Apple has done a lot of this with Mac OS X, although there is room for improvement. But I will say that they are very far ahead of Windows or any other Operating System in this regard. Even compared to the almost unlimited manipulations available to a Linux user, the Mac is better. Because it is easier to get there.

I expect that the next big thing with computers isn't going to be a new piece of software that does something we hadn't thought of before, but an Operating System that learns how the owner uses the computer and acts on this knowledge to anticipate their needs. While some people might like having unlimited ability to modify their system, I believe people take a lot of comfort in having a set of rules to follow. They become familiar and therefore comfortable with these rules.

This is one of the biggest differences between Mac OS X and Windows. Apple has always tried to enforce programmers to follow a specific set of User Interface guidelines. Consequently, almost every application you run on the Macintosh will have a similar look and feel. All the basic aspects of running an application will always be found in the same location from program to program. In the Windows arena this isn't always true. While there is a general standard, no one seems to enforce this. So a user might move from one application to another that have a completely different interface styles. This is fine for experienced people, but a turn off for the novice. More importantly consider this, if the basics of the interface are standard from program to program, any new user won't have to learn where the basic stuff is and can concentrate on learning the controls specific to that application. The learning curve is smaller.

Imagine a computer that learns as you use it. I love the fact that my word processor knows that when I type “hte”, I really meant to type “the” and will change it for me. I could take the time to teach it more of my common typing errors. Imagine a computer system that learns from your actions. That notices how you make corrections in typing, or remembers how you altered a photograph, or what tunes you like to listen to, then makes suggestions to you. We now have enough computing power in our machines to be able to do this. Intelligent operating systems that respond to how the user acts and modifies itself accordingly. Apple could write this code, they have a very good set of rules for a consistently good human user interface. We just need them to write the code into their OS.

This, I believe is the future of the computer Operating System and the next big thing with computers and intelligent electronic devices. That’s all I have for this month.

As always, keep on using your Mac!



gene steinberg's
MacNightOwl

The Tech Night Owl

So is Safari Safe?

By Gene Steinberg

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<http://macnightowl.com/2008/05/so-is-safari-safe/>

We know that Mac users stand little or no chance of being infected with malware, at least with Mac OS X so far. In the days of the Classic Mac OS, there were several dozen viruses of various levels of severity, but few that would cause anywhere near the havoc of a typical Windows outbreak.

However, with Apple now gaining huge chunks of market share, and working hard to promote its default browser, Safari, on the Windows platform, you have to wonder whether that's a safe move or if there's potential trouble afoot.

Now it's fair to say that the ActiveX feature of Internet Explorer is the real culprit for many online infections. Although there are still some misguided souls who program their sites to use Microsoft's proprietary technology, a growing number of Webmasters appreciate the fact that Internet Explorer is not the beginning and end of the Internet and there are superior options. As Microsoft's browser share dips below 75%, you can readily see that a company can ill-afford to restrict the also-rans from their content.

I mean, would you want to block 25% of your potential customers because they drove a Chevrolet rather than a Ford?

Into this mix comes Safari, and since the Windows version was finalized, Apple has used a controversial bit of stealth marketing to get people to download a copy. Although it is also offered separately, one fine day, Safari appeared along with the regularly scheduled QuickTime and iTunes updates, using the Windows version of Apple's Software Update. Since the option to download Safari was already checked for you, I suppose it was natural to assume it was really part of the package.

After an outcry from some critics, including the CEO of Mozilla, which develops Firefox, Apple relented somewhat, and consigned Safari to a specially crafted "New" category in Software Update. Of course, it was still selected, which means that you'd have to make the tiny effort to uncheck the Safari download not to take it as part of the package. Apple realizes that few Mac and Windows users read those things, so they weren't losing much in making this concession.

As a Windows browser, Safari is actually quite good. It's speedy and reasonably stable, although it continues to mimic various elements of the Mac user interface. I suppose it serves Windows users right, though. After all, how many Windows to Mac ports over the years played the same trick on us? The first attempt to deliver a Mac version of WordPerfect years ago failed, because it was not sufficiently Mac-like, and Microsoft's Mac Business Unit has received an ear-full of complaints when they don't follow Mac conventions as well as they should.

Now as to Safari: Since it's not saddled with ActiveX or the interdependencies to the Windows operating system that are found in Microsoft's applications, it should fare reasonably well. Yes, Apple has to fix security leaks from time to time, but so far at least, they're not being exploited in the wild. That augers well for Safari, except for one missing piece.

Phishing protection!

You see, other browsers will warn you if you attempt to login to a site that appears to be fraudulent. Safari has no such feature, and shouldn't that be a major shortcoming?

Well, let's not forget that the online criminals who engage in phishing scams are using social engineering to entice you to visit a site and give up your personal bank account and/or credit card information. They send you emails hoping to make you believe that they really come from PayPal, Wells Fargo Bank or some other well-known financial institution, letters that say you must click a link to enter a site to fix some sort of security problem.

Now I'm sure all of you know not to fall for such scams. You just ignore the message, and if you're concerned, you contact your financial institution to confirm that your account hasn't been compromised. So you shouldn't need your browser to inform you that a site your visiting may be bogus. Or at least that's what I believe, although I can't say that I have the stats on hand of just how many innocent people have their identities compromised by such nefarious activities.

At the same time, it wouldn't hurt for Apple to have such a feature added to Safari. I doubt that the engineering work would really be so onerous that such a capability has to await another full browser or operating system upgrade.

In the meantime, if you are concerned you might find yourself an unwary victim, you might just configure your Mac or PC to use [OpenDNS](#) instead of whatever DNS system your ISP uses now. DNS, short for [Domain Name System](#), is simply a set of computer servers that convert your Web access request from, say, [www.apple.com](#), to the corresponding IP number.

OpenDNS does it better, having a huge cache and a set of servers across the U.S. and in several other countries for redundancy. They also manage PhishTank, the best-known service for monitoring phishing exploits, and that's part of the package when you use OpenDNS, which is, by the way, free.

So whatever fears you might have about Internet security, certainly Safari shouldn't be doing anything to keep you from staying safe in your online pursuits.

[Editorial Note: Mac OS X 10.5.3 was posted shortly after this was published.]

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

June 2008 Edition

By Harry {doc} Babad © 2008



This month, after hopefully winning a battle with cancer, which involved high doses of radiation therapy, I decided to do some Spring-cleaning. I found that I had several hundred unread tips/hints and other Macintosh related stuff in my Eudora In Box. I subscribe to a variety of tip/help/hints related electronic publications — I've worked through my accumulation and am passing on those that most interested me.

Some of the software related tips were tested on an 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo iMac with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM; running under Macintosh OS X OS X 10.5.3. The remainder are untested, but since I've never had a problem with any tip from either Macworld or MacFixIt, as far as I'm concerned they are good to try. My call folks, don't like my MacFixIt picks, subscribe for your self. It's well worth the \$25 [USD] price - <http://www.macfixit.com/staticpages/index.php?page=20021014135512770/>. Of course, most of us have long learned the value of the information available in Macworld, both the print and online edition. [<http://www.macworld.com/>].

Next month I'll continue sharing my other tip related finds with you including some of the Tips from Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips column <http://www.mac-hints-tips.com/>. When I use any one else's tips for this column, I acknowledge both their source and their contributors.

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

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

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

- Open new windows via Command-Tab in Leopard
- Add More Solid Desktop Color Options To Your Desktop
- Disappearing Photos In iPhoto — Rebuilding The Library
- Apple's Mail.app Is Only Printing Message Headers
- DiskWarrior 4.1 CD Updater Finally Released
- Custom Icons in the Dock Disappearing
- Problems Opening Files with Some Apps? Check the temp directory permissions.
- Problems Opening Files with Some Apps? Check the temp directory permissions.
- Column View Tricks in Open/Save Dialogs
- Easily View and Use An Application's Icons

Open new windows via Command-Tab in Leopard

As you probably know, most OS X programs will run without any open windows—close the last window, and the program keeps running. If you switch to that program by clicking its Dock icon, a new window will appear, ready for your use. But if you use the Command-Tab application switcher, the program will activate without opening a new window. You then have to press Command-N to open a new window in the application.

Here's a trick you can use—in OS X 10.5 only—to force the application switcher to open a new window when you activate an application without any active windows. Let's say you've launched Safari, browsed for a bit, and then closed your last browser window.

You've switched over to TextEdit for a bit, but now want to go check a Web page. To activate Safari with a new window, just press Command-Tab until Safari is highlighted in the application switcher. Still holding down the Command key, press and hold the Option key. Finally, release the Command key first, and then the Option key, and Safari will spring to the foreground with a new window, all ready for your use. (If the program already has an open window, this trick won't open a second window;

Instead, the already-opened window will be active when you switch.)

If the program you're switching to has a docked window—but no other open windows—this trick will spring that window free from the Dock. This is a handy way to free docked windows without relying on the mouse or navigating the Dock via keyboard shortcuts and arrow keys.

Note that this trick may not work on every application. The good news is that it's quick and easy to test it yourself with your regularly-used programs.

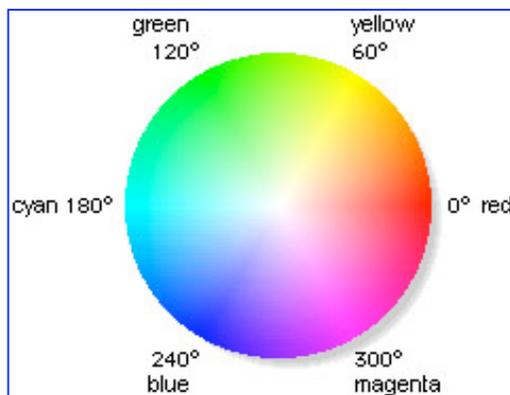
By Rob Griffiths, Macworld.com Apr 24, 2008

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Add More Solid Desktop Color Options To Your Desktop

When it comes to customizing your desktop, OS X seemingly provides anything you could want -- there are a number of Apple-provided images, there are connections to your user's Pictures folder and iPhoto library, or you can use any of 10 provided solid colors for your desktop background. But if you're a fan of solid colors, you may not agree with the 10 that Apple has provided. Thankfully, there are two relatively easy ways to get additional color choices.

One way to get more solid color choices is to actually add them to the Solid Colors section of the Desktop & Screen Saver System Preferences panel. The 10 colors shown here (Mac OS X 10.4 users -- there's a 'hidden' solid white color at the end of your list; it shows up with a drop shadow in 10.5) are just PNG files stored in a folder on your Mac. To create more colors, navigate to the top-level Library -> Desktop Pictures folder in the Finder. Select any one color in that folder, and duplicate it (Command-D, or File -> Duplicate), and then rename it to reflect the color you'd like to use. Note that colors appear in the Desktop & Screen Saver System Preferences panel based on their name. As a result, to make your colors show up at the top of the list, for instance, preface their names with a space. (*You'll need to be logged in as an administrator to change this folder.*)



Now open the duplicated and renamed image file in your favorite image editor, and change its color to the one you'd like to use. Read the rest of the hint for a solution that doesn't require any file duplication or image editing.

By Rob Griffiths <mailto:macosxhints@macworld.com>

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Disappearing Photos In iPhoto — Rebuilding The Library

MacFixIt readers semi-frequently report an issue in which photos suddenly disappear from iPhoto, generally after some change -- the addition or deletion of images, etc. -- has been made to the library. For instance, MacFixIt reader David Wizig recently wrote: "I have a 4 year old Mac and I am running Tiger on it. Every time I download a picture someone emails me on the Internet, all of my pictures (about 900) disappear from iPhoto."



The general remedy for this issue is to backup your photo library (~/.Pictures/iPhoto Library), then rebuild the iPhoto library by quitting the application if it is open, then launching it while holding down the shift and option keys for iPhoto 4.x or the command and option keys for iPhoto 5.x or later. You will be prompted to rebuild the library. We recommend making frequent backups of your iPhoto library.

MacFixIt: Tuesday, March 04 2008.

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Apple's Mail.app Is Only Printing Message Headers

Several readers have reported an issue in which Mail.app only prints message headers, leaving message body text out. The problem appears to manifest more often when the "Command + P" keyboard combination is used to print documents.

As such, some users have had success with opening messages in their own windows (by double-clicking them in the mail browser) then using the Print button at the top of the window.



Other users have been able to alleviate this problem by delete then re-adding printers and/or resetting the printing system. Open Printer Setup Utility, located in Applications/Utilities and look at the "Printer List" Highlight and delete all entries. Alternatively, go to the "Printer Setup Utility" menu at the top of the screen and select "Reset Printing System". Click the "Add" button and re-add your printer(s).

MacFixIt: Friday, March 14th 2008

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DiskWarrior 4.1 CD Updater Finally Released

Introduction — DiskWarrior is my favorite utility program when having non-permission related problems on my Macintosh. Designed by Alsoft from the ground up with a totally different approach to preventing and resolving directory damage, which is the leading cause of Mac instability. I use it once a month just for insurance, just as I insist on weekly bootable backups of my hard drive.

DiskWarrior resolves existing disk damage by rebuilding your disk directory using data recovered from the original directory, thereby recovering files and folders that you thought were lost. The directories DiskWarrior creates are also optimized for maximum directory performance.



DiskWarrior is not a disk repair program in the conventional sense. It does not attempt to solve all of the possible problems that can occur with a disk. It specializes in eliminating directory errors - the most common problems Mac OS users have with their disks.

DiskWarrior rebuilds your disk directories making them error-free, eliminating any problems the errors would have caused, and recovering lost files.

It fixes any problem with master directory blocks and alternate master directory blocks (HFS), volume headers and alternate volume headers (HFS Plus), volume bitmaps, catalog trees, and extents trees.

A Free Version 4.0 Updater — Nearly two months after DiskWarrior 4.1 was made available to new buyers [\$100 USD] of the venerable disk repair utility, the update has been released as a free CD updater for existing customers. An upgrade priced of \$50.00 is available to users of earlier (than 4.0) version of the product.

This free updater will allow you to create a new startup CD containing the updated DiskWarrior application from your version 4.0 disk.

Alsoft adds: "Please note that the new startup CD will start up the same set of Macs as your current DiskWarrior CD. Your new CD will not start up any Mac that your current DiskWarrior CD can not." The current DiskWarrior CD cannot start up the new Mac Pro and Xserve models introduced on 01/08/2008, the MacBook Air introduced on 01/15/2008, the MacBook/MacBook Pro models introduced on 02/26/2008, or the iMac models introduced on 04/28/2008.

DiskWarrior 4.1 features full compatibility with Mac OS X 10.5.x (Leopard). Primarily, this release includes the ability to repair Time Machine backups by working with damaged directory.

MacFixIt: Monday, March 17 2008, as augmented by doc_Babad

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Custom Icons in the Dock Disappearing

MacFixIt reader Scott Rose reports an issue in which custom icons for folders harbored in the Dock disappear after a restart. The icons revert to the standard, blue Mac OS X folder graphic. Scott writes:

"We have added our own custom icons to almost all of our folders in the Finder: the Applications folder, the Utilities folder, the Desktop folder, etc. When we drag these folders to the right-hand side of the dock and choose to display them as a folder, the dock correctly shows the custom icons for these folders. However, after a restart of our computer, the folders in the dock change back to their default icons that were assigned by Mac OS X. In the Finder, the folders still show their custom icons, but the dock has reverted them back to the default Mac OS X icons."

As noted by Scott, you need to control-click (or right-click) custom-icon folders in the Dock and select "Display as Folder" in order to show custom icons. However, for some users, the custom icons do not persist after restarting.

MacFixIt: Monday, April 14 2008

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Problems Opening Files with Some Apps? Check the temp directory permissions.

If you are having problems opening documents with certain applications -- particularly after an iterative Mac OS X update -- make sure that permissions are correct for the user-specific temp directory.

First, launch the Terminal (located in /Applications/Utilities) and enter the following command:

```
sudo chmod 775 $TMPDIR
```

...Then press return. You will be prompted to enter your administrator password. Try logging out then back in and check for resolution of the issue.

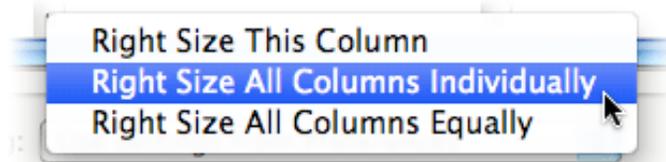
MacFixIt: Tuesday, May 06 2008

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Column View Tricks in Open/Save Dialogs

As much as I like column view mode, one of its challenges, especially in the usually-smallish Open and Save dialogs, is that the column widths never seem to be correct for the files and folders that I'm browsing. There are a couple shortcuts (in both OS X 10.4 and 10.5) that can help with this problem. You probably know that if you double-click the icon at the bottom of a column, it will "right size" that column, so you can see the entire file name. If you Option-double-click that icon, then *all* columns will be "right sized" to the maximum width necessary to display the longest item in the column. (Confusingly, it doesn't work like this in the Finder. Option-double-clicking sets all columns equal to the width of the widest column in the path, which can lead to some truly wide columns. Sadly, there isn't a "right size all columns" option in Finder.)

In 10.5, Apple apparently felt these shortcuts were too hidden; there's now a contextual menu hiding under the column resize widget, too. Just control-click on it, and three choices will appear:



These options are fairly self-explanatory; the first affects only the column whose divider icon you Control-clicked. (It's the same as a double-click on the indicator). The second will figure out the needed width of the widest column, and set all columns to that width (the equivalent to an Option-double-click in the Finder). The third will set each column only as wide as necessary to fit the longest filename in that column (the same as Option-double-clicking in the Open/Save dialog).

So now, if you have trouble remembering the shortcuts, the contextual menu is but a Control-click away. Hopefully someday Apple will figure out how to get the “right size all columns” feature into the Finder, where it would be truly useful. Until then, though, at least it works in the Open and Save dialogs.

By Rob Griffiths, Mar 20, 2008 Macworld.com.

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Easily View and Use An Application’s Icons

If you’re ever in a situation where you need a high quality version of an OS X application icon—for use in a presentation, review of a program, or other such use—it can be a bit of a chore to get that icon. The usual method, which I call the “find the icon file in the haystack” game, goes like this. Control-click on the program in question, select Show Package Contents from the pop-up menu, then navigate into Contents -> Resources. Inside that folder, somewhere, you should find a file whose name ends in *.icns*. Open that in Preview, and there are the icons.

The problem with this approach is that there can be hundreds of files in the Resources folder, and the naming of the *.icns* file isn’t necessarily logical, so it can take a bit of digging—or help from Spotlight—to find the file.

It turns out that there’s a *much* simpler—though completely non-obvious—way to get a full set of an application’s icons, at least if you’re running OS X 10.4 or 10.5. In the Finder, select the program in question, and press Command-C (or if you love menus, select Edit -> Copy). You’ve now got a full copy of the application on your clipboard. (Don’t believe me? Press Command-V after switching to another folder in the Finder—if you’re going to do this, I suggest copying a *small* program, and not something like the 337MB iWeb.)

Now launch Preview, and press Command-N (File -> New from Clipboard for you menu users). You may be surprised at the result: a full copy of the chosen application’s icons, in every available size. For instance, the image at right (click it for a full-size version) is what you’ll see if you copy Time Machine and paste it into Preview. (If you’re running 10.4, you won’t see the massive 512-by-512 pixel icons; 10.4 icons were limited to 128-by-128 pixels.)



In Preview’s sidebar, you can then click the desired icon size, and then use File -> Save As to save it to your drive in a format of your choice. (If you want to retain the transparency, you’ll need to use PNG or TIFF as the file type.) This trick worked with every application I tested it with. You can also use it to get document icons for things like Excel spreadsheets, Word documents, etc. If you try it with a PDF, though, you’ll find that Preview will actually paste in the entire PDF, not its icon.

If you do much work with images of OS X applications and documents, then this trick is a great timesaver. Even if you don't, though, it's a nifty way to check out the details in some of the amazing 512-by-512 icons you'll find in OS X 10.5.

Happy Macin' – More next Month

Harry {doc} Babad



The Northern Spy

Getting The Word Out

By Rick Sutcliffe

Technology News and Views Since 1983

June 2008

The word processor is mightier than the sword

and much more useful in the Fourth Civilization. But some are better than others. The Spy has used and reviewed dozens over the years--from venerable Apple][programs Screenwriter, Gutenberg and WriteAway, to Word, Word Perfect, and AppleWorks (in various incarnations), to text programs like Alpha, TextEdit, NotePad, BBEdit, and VI/VIM. He has played with assorted Office Word clones/replacements, with Mariner Write, Mellel, Pages, and scores of other offerings on a variety of platforms, but never adopted any of them.

Back in the day, attempts to port Word Perfect to the Mac were among the most pitiful of all, with Word version three a close second (though the latter had only its thousands of bugs, and didn't destroy hard drives.) WP's utter failure to produce a workable Mac version was one road marker in its decline to oblivion, though far from the only problem with the once dominant software company.

Long time readers know that Word in any of its versions has never been the Spy's favourite--a clumsy, non-intuitive piece of code bloat if there ever was one. (To be fair, his opinion of Excel was quite the opposite until the recent decision to abandon cross-platform compatibility). Worse, attempts to use most versions of Word with a novel-length manuscript proved an utter failure, as it was brought to its knees by a two-hundred-thousand word document. (He hasn't attempted to test the most recent version with large documents.)

The fastest and most versatile Macintosh word processor was NisusWriter, which reached version 6.5 under OS 9. Whether writing a letter, report, textbook, or novel, it had everything a writer needed, and was never troubled by document length. The search and replace function, graphics layer, invisible text (to hide markup), mail merge, and many other features made it simply the best writing tool available. Second place was distant. The only serious drawback was a quirky spell checker that the company never bothered to fix.

Then came OS X. As often happens, the programmers who'd created much of the old product code base were long gone, and porting to the new OS was a nightmare (shades of Lotus). Nisus instead purchased a competing product, Okito Composer, and attempted to merge its own ports with the new product. In time this has produced a basic product (Nisus Writer Express) and a more full-bodied one (Nisus Writer Pro). Along the way, it has improved greatly, particularly in its ability to read NW6.5 files. However, even after all this time, the Pro product, though among the better word processing environments of the last thirty years, still lacks features that were available in 6.5 on OS 9. Unfortunately for the Spy, he uses some of those extensively in creating textbooks (invisible text and file merge.)

Version 1.1 (recently released in a public beta) adds the latter. For a user of 6.5, the feature is disconcerting, because it *appears* to use the same syntax for field names (a name enclosed in chevrons), but the names are actually variables and the chevrons a screen decoration to set them off, not actual characters. Moreover, file joining via a list of files to merge into a master document is absent. So, the new mail merge is just that. It will mass produce letters and receipts, but for joining the chapters of a book into a single gigantic file, one must look elsewhere.

Elsewhere appears to be Scrivener.

Literature and Latte's product is not the only novel writing software on the market, but in a couple of months' use it has answered the Spy's needs admirably. Scrivener allows the writer to divide a project (novel, screenplay, text) into sections (say, chapters) and these in turn into scenes (more levels are possible). Each scene can have a storyboard and notes as well as the text. Other sections may contain reference material, character sketches, timelines and other information. Scenes can be edited individually, or several selected as scrivenerings and worked on together (very handy).

A project is stored as a OS package, meaning that even if something went horribly terribly wrong, the scene files inside the package would still be available as .rtfd entities. (In the Finder, control click the package and select Show Package Contents.) Such .rtfd files can be directly opened by NW Pro, among other programs.

Scrivener allows one to define a format template for exporting the project files. This allows the writer to create in one set of formatting rules and produce a document that satisfies a different set of rules for an editor (italics can be transformed into underlined, chapter headings and scene separators added, etc.) Obviously the mail merge problem goes away, and so does the issue of maintaining several formats for different purposes. (Well, html may be an issue, but....)

Scrivener is available only on the Mac, and is the kind of well-thought-out and innovative software that induces people to buy a Mac just to run it. Very highly recommended--the best truly new product seen here in many a year.

Waking up from last month's sleep problems,

the Spy notes that the latest firmware upgrade to the MacBookPro improved things substantially. Now, when moving the machine from one cradle to another, or to travel use, one only need wait a few minutes after the screen comes live, and the trackball will discover itself correctly. Actual crashes have also been minimized. Better than it was, anyway.

The acid test

for the new Canon 40D starts day after tomorrow with its first major shoot trip--a once-in-a-lifetime two week sojourn to Ireland, sourceland of most of the Spy's ancestors. Just now transferring the first 500 pics to CD and hard drive to ensure a clean slate and plenty of room for the thousands of images he expects to make. USB is so sloooooow.

iPhonomania

continues this month with reports that a G3 device is about to be released by some European carriers. If true, this might also be what Rogers is waiting for before launching iPhone in Canada, supposedly with a \$7/month unlimited data plan. Believe it when you see it, but watch the WWDC (sold out, BTW) news later in June for details. An iteration of the MacBookPro is also a possibility for WWDC, but don't hold your breath for a tablet.

Market numbers mean more bad news

for purveyors of cheap computers limited to running W*nd*ws rather than OS X as well (not to mention bad news for MS Vista sales). Some reports suggest that Apple's market share is as high as 14% overall, and a phenomenal 66% of the \$1000+ market. PC portable sales are flat, with desktops dropping some 25%, while Mac sales are up between 40% and 50%. These are much higher than the Spy's own projections, and may be slightly inflated, but the trend is very clear--the two market segments are rapidly heading in opposite directions. Apple now has a lock on the premium market. It wouldn't take much to achieve the same overall.

Don't call or write

any time soon, as the Spy may only check eMail every three days or so while away. TTFN.
--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>

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

Nisus: <http://www.nisus.com/>

Literature and Latte: <http://www.literatureandlatte.com/>

Raiders of the Lost Macintosh

Best free downloads, shareware and demos

by Dr. Eric Flescher

June 2008

Here are some of the best free, shareware and demo applications out there that I have found. Try some of these out. You will be amazed what some Mac authors have created and designed.

filezilla free

Required: 10.5 or higher

http://fileforum.betanews.com/detail/FileZilla_v3_for_Mac_OS_X/1034751598/3

OneButton FTP

You will need a Mac running OS X 10.4 or later (including OS X 10.5 Leopard) to use OneButton FTP.

(free, fast, flexible, use of drag and drop and extremely easy to use)

<http://onebutton.org/>

Free Wi-Fi spots

If you need to access Wi-Fi spots on the go while working with your PC or Mac, using any operating system, you can find one here at this website.

<http://www.wififreespot.com>

OS X 10.4 build in RSS Visualizer screen saver

Pick your favorite news feed (like BBC, CNN or ?). When screensaver comes on, you'll can then see the deadlines on your topical areas of choice.

Alloc software free Fade text

Displays any text you enter into its configuration box area- like a sign to post on your laptop (why waste electricity though- put up a piece paper?)

<http://www.alocsoft.com>

Free Weather Channel free screen saver

Shows current temperature and conditions in you regional area

<http://www.macworld.com/2490>

Apple Weather Widget

Required: OS X 10.4 free (need 800 MHz or faster running OSX 10.3 or greater
Display the current weather. To keep on constantly (or once in awhile with F12,) launch Terminal from administrator's account and type defaults write com.apple.Dashboard devmode YES). Quit Terminal and the press F12 to bring up Widget. Force to remain open click and hold F12 or restart Dashboard by logging out.

AWS WeatherBug

Also has wind speed, direction, 3 day forecast , weather radar for your area, and access to live Web cams.

<http://www.weatherbug.com>

Menu Butler

MacMage's free Menu Butler widget displays all your available Menu Extras in a palette in the Dashboard area. Click on a widget, and it appears in your menu bare area .

<http://www.macmage.com>

Handbrake or instant Handbrake

free

Converts commercial DVDs to a format that is playable on a Mac, iPod, or Sony PSP.

<http://www.macworld.com/2468>



Under the Magnifying Glass

Nurturing a Creative Culture

By Steven Fyffe

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<http://www.undermagnifyingglass.com/Site/Welcome.html>

A few months ago, my wife and I had the distinct honor of being invited by a proud mom to meet her son. To see her beaming face, full of joy, as she introduced her boy to her friends was indeed the highlight of our evening together. The Lord gives us many blessings in life. Indeed, we experience a taste of heaven when we see our children and grandchildren excel. Nothing brings more joy in this life, than when we come face to face with the fact that we are made in the image of our Creator and He has given us the opportunity to freely express that creative spark of life.

Lee Unkrich - Pixar Creative Star

Our friend, Emilie, had invited us to meet her son, Lee Unkrich (1), animation film editor and director. For several years, Lee's creative talents have been shining at Pixar Animation Studios (2). He is now director of *Toy Story 3* (3), scheduled for release in 2010. The big hug Lee gave his mom, openly showed his love for her. Very evident was his appreciation for how his mom had nurtured and encouraged him to excel. Without a doubt, in his youth, Lee's home in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, was the beginning of Lee's creative culture. When Lee introduced his former teacher from Chagrin Falls High School, I knew that those creative seeds had continued to be watered and deeply planted within him.



The Pixar Story

The occasion for meeting Lee Unkrich was the presentation of *The Pixar Story* (4) at the Cleveland International Film Festival. Lee introduced the documentary film, and afterwards, shared comments about his experience on the Pixar creative team, and answered several questions ... yes, as you might guess, someone asked what it was like to work with Steve Jobs. The most telling aspect of Lee's personality, because he sat beside me during the film, was listening to his quiet laughs as he relived those memories with his Pixar family.



We had the privilege of joining him in this dazzling journey. No wonder Lee was named among the top ten Family Directors (5), and his rising star is just now appearing over the horizon. My dear friend, Emilie, has a right to be exhilarated by her son's success.

Animation Insider stated, "*The Pixar Story* ... doesn't focus primarily on the company, it focuses on the individual people who make up the personality of the company" (6). I highly encourage you to see *The Pixar Story*. It aired on Starz in April, so keep watching for it in your area.

The Creatives Rule

One line in the documentary made a deep impact upon me. Someone stated that Pixar was run by the "creatives and not the MBAs" ... oh my, that cubicle seems so very much smaller and suffocating since then. Recently, I heard one person who saw *The Pixar Story* comment, "It made me realize just how much I hate my job." However, let us not dwell on the MBA-culture so many of us must endure. With our Macintosh, iLife, Keynote, and other third party software in our storytelling-storycrafting apparatus (7), we have in our hands a great tool for activating our own, personal creative culture. Once we realize how the MBA-culture dominates in most corporations, we can easily understand why windoz and peecees dominate there, as well. On the other hand, when we realize how the imaginative and innovative culture is so essential in the film industry, visual communications, and the design world, we can appreciate why Macs and Apple software reigns supreme in a creative milieu.

Innovation Lessons from Pixar

Ten days before *Ratatouille* won its Oscar, *The McKinsey Quarterly* interviewed Brad Bird, Pixar's two-time Oscar-winning director (8). The authors' initiated the article by stating, "Innovation lessons from Pixar ... What does stimulating the creativity of animators have in common with developing new product ideas or technology breakthroughs? A lot." (9) While most of us are not building our own businesses or seeking to invent a new gadget, there is considerable joy in building up our own innovative prowess and, even more so, when we play a part in building up the creative culture of our children and grandchildren, as well as, our friends and extended family.



Involved and Engaged

The McKinsey Quarterly (9) asked what sort of people make the best innovators. Brad replied ...

I would say that *involved* people make for better innovation. Passionate involvement can make you happy, sometimes, and miserable other times. You want people to be involved and engaged. Involved people can be quiet, loud, or anything in-between—what they have in common is a restless, probing nature: "I want to get to the problem. There's something I want to do." If you had thermal glasses, you could see heat coming off them.

Discovery of Mac Trifles

If you have been reading *Under the Magnifying Glass*, you may have observed that I have repeatedly encouraged you, through the discovery of trifles (10), to get more involved and engaged in discovering the power of your Mac. I illustrated the point with the fictional sleuth, Sherlock Holmes. He is certainly a portrait of what Brad Bird described as "a restless, probing nature". I would suggest that you set your sites on discovering at least one new function of your Mac every week and to determine to show it to a friend. In this way you are taking ownership of your personal creative culture. If you wish to have a guided discovery (20) of your Mac's powers, listen to Marv and Tim's podcast, *The MT Show* (11).

Macintosh Afficionados - Put on Your Thermal Glasses

I have two friends, Larry and Rob, who are avid Mac aficionados, like myself. I have discovered that the three of us have a common trait ... none of us can let go of a nagging problem until it has been solved.

Recently, Larry was tackling the new Leopard function *Back to My Mac* (12) which is available to anyone with a .Mac (13) account. This really nagged Larry until he worked out all the kinks. I greatly benefited by Larry's passion to solve the problem, because he shared what he learned each step along his path to discovery. Indeed, he is the personification of being "involved and engaged" when it comes to all things Mac.

My other Mac amigo, Rob, and I have had several very passionate and animated discussions, debating which makes the best home media center ... a Mac mini (14) vs. Apple TV (15). If you read my last column (16), you know I am a strong advocate for Apple TV. Rob, on the other hand, has very compelling arguments in favor of the Mac mini. He has built a Mac mini home entertainment system which would give shivers to any Mac aficionado. Of course, we have placed into competition a fully functional Mac against the minimalist Apple TV. One is designed to “do-it-all” compared to one dedicated to a specific purpose ... like comparing an iMac to an iPod Touch . Who is right? We both are! In other words, I believe both of us made the best decision for the specific needs of our family at the time. What is funny is that at the beginning of the discussion I was the advocate for a Mac mini and Rob was the advocate for Apple TV. We helped each other to change our advocacy. Each of us became a staunch supporter of the opposite view point ... whodda think it? Talk about being “involved and engaged”. BTW. If you saw Rob and me together, you might suspect that, with our follicle-challenged heads and salt & pepper beards, we were, as Rob describes, “Twin Brothers of Different Mothers”.

I count Larry and Rob as closer than brothers when it comes to our passion for Macs. We are the very definition of *aficionados*, i.e. “a person who is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about an activity, subject, or pastime” or as Brad Bird described, “what they have in common is a restless, probing nature: I want to get to the problem”. There’s something I want to do.” Larry, Rob, and I would certainly be defined by Brad as *innovators* when it comes to our passion for Macs. We have developed our own **creative culture** which is contagious ... it might be called *infectious imagination*. More than one person has blamed their Mac spending habits upon Larry, Rob, and I, almost to the point of calling us Macintosh evangelists.

A Well Rounded Education

The McKinsey Quarterly asked the Pixar director (9), “Is there anything else you’d highlight that contributes to creativity around here?” Brad Bird replied ...

One thing Pixar does—which is a knockoff of old-school, Walt-era 1940s Disney—is to have all kinds of optional classes. They call it “PU”, or Pixar University. If you work in lighting but you want to learn how to animate, there’s a class to show you animation. There are classes in story structure, in Photoshop, even in Krav Maga, the Israeli self defense system. Pixar basically encourages people to learn outside of their areas, which makes them more complete.

It is not easy to develop a creative culture in a vacuum. If you want to nurture your creative culture, keep learning and expanding your knowledge into areas which feed your imagination and innovation. If you are not already a member of a local Mac User Group, join one or more today. Also, look for a Special Interest Group where you can learn and your passion for creativity is encouraged. One other source for the growth of your personal creative culture, is formal classrooms. For example, last fall, I audited a Pre-Production & Art of Story class in the Visual Communications department of a community college. This was great fun and I learned a lot.

Creatives Breed Creatives

The McKinsey Quarterly (9) also asked, “What does Pixar do to stimulate a creative culture?” Brad Bird described Steve Jobs philosophy at Pixar ...

Steve Jobs basically designed this building. In the center, he created this big atrium area, which seems initially like a waste of space. The reason he did it was that everybody goes off and works in their individual areas. People who work on software code are here, people who animate are there, and people who do designs are over there. Steve put the mailboxes, the meetings rooms, the cafeteria, and, most insidiously and brilliantly, the bathrooms in the center—which initially drove us crazy — so that you run into everybody during the course of a day. He realized that when people run into each other, when they make eye contact, things happen. So he made it impossible for you not to run into the rest of the company.

As I mentioned above, Mugs, SIGs, and classrooms are great occasions for learning. However, of even more importance, these groups encourage face to face contact with others creatives ... others who have that innovative and imaginative contagion which will rub off on you. iChat (17) audio-video conferences allows you to take this principle into a global arena. I have had video conferences with creatives in Canada, New Zealand, Florida, Australia, and England. With the price of gasoline over \$4 a gallon, it will allow me to continue to have contact with iChat buddies over 30 miles away. WOW!

Pass On Your Creative Culture

One of the best ways to learn and grow, is to share and teach, as I discussed in a previous column (18). Inductive learning (19) is best taught through guided discovery (20) and is a terrific way to nurture your own creativity. While nurturing your own creative, innovative, and imaginative culture, let me encourage you to plant and nurture a creative culture within your children and grandchildren, as well as your friends and family.

My Creative Friend, Emilie

You would be well served to follow the example of my dear friend, Emilie Unkrich. She nurtured her son, Lee, who went on to become a dynamic force on the Pixar creative team. Emilie did not stop there in her quest to advocate for an innovation and imagination culture. She is an active member of two Macintosh User Groups and has served in several leadership roles, as well. Emilie has spent many creative hours with her Macs as editor and publisher of the *Apple Bits* (21) newsletter for the Northeast Ohio Apple Corps.

Let Them Be Little

When it comes to your children and grandchildren, one of the most precious gifts you could give them is to nurture their creative culture and help them to develop their innovation and imagination as far as the Lord will lead them. One of my favorite songs, which I have often shared with Jared's mom and dad, is Billy Dean's "***Let Them Be Little***" available from iTunes (22). Part of lyrics (23) are ...

Please, let them be little,
'Cause they're only that way for a while.
Give them hope, give them praise,
Give them love every day.
Let 'em cry, let 'em giggle,
Let 'em sleep in the middle,
Oh, but let them be little.
The so innocent, precious soul:
You turn around, an' it's time to let them go.

Thanks for stopping by for a visit. You all take care.



References

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- 22
<http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?i=71554270&id=71554877&s=143441>
- 23 <http://www.hit-country-music-lyrics.com/Billy-Dean-little.html>

Books

Big Book of Apple Hacks

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

O'REILLY[®]

Author: Chris Seibold

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596529826/#top>

Released: April 2008

Pages: 640

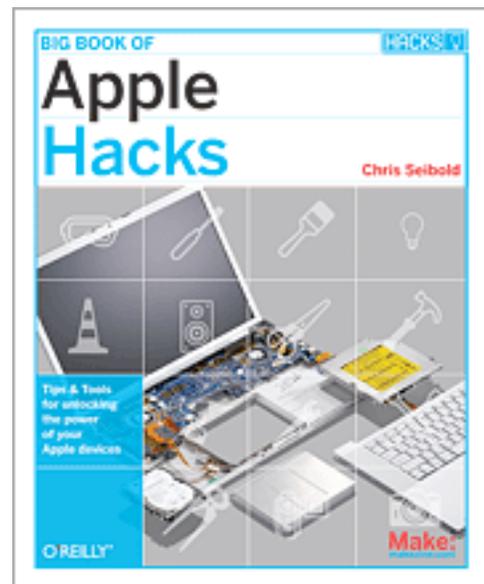
\$35 USD

ISBN 10: 0-596-52982-1

ISBN 13: 9780596529826

Strengths: Compilation of hacks for power users.

Weaknesses: Not intended for "Beginners".



Intermediate to Advanced



Introduction

The new Big Book of Apple Hacks offers a grab bag of tips, tricks and hacks to get the most out of Mac OS X Leopard, as well as the new line of iPods, iPhone, and Apple TV.

With 100 entirely new hacks presented in step-by-step fashion, this practical book is for serious Apple computer and gadget users who really want to take control of these systems. Many of the hacks take you under the hood and show you how to tweak system preferences, alter or add keyboard shortcuts, mount drives and devices, and generally do things with your operating system and gadgets that Apple doesn't expect you to do. The *Big Book of Apple Hacks* gives you:

- Hacks for both Mac OS X Leopard and Tiger, their related applications, and the hardware they run on or connect to
- Expanded tutorials and lots of background material, including informative sidebars
- "Quick Hacks" for tweaking system and gadget settings in minutes
- Full-blown hacks for adjusting Mac OS X applications such as Mail, Safari, iCal, Front Row, or the iLife suite

- Plenty of hacks and tips for the Mac mini, the MacBook laptops, and new Intel desktops
- Tricks for running Windows on the Mac, under emulation in Parallels or as a standalone OS with BootCamp

The Big Book of Apple Hacks is not only perfect for Mac fans and power users, but also for recent -- and aspiring -- "switchers" new to the Apple experience. Hacks are arranged by topic for quick and easy lookup, and each one stands on its own so you can jump around and tweak whatever system or gadget strikes your fancy.

Since this is a new printing and things change, there is an Errata sheet getting populated already - <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596529826/errata/>

There are 15 chapters on hacks for Safari, Network and Security, Customizing Mac OS X, Command Line, the iPod, Multiple OS, iLife, Apple TV, Leopard, iPhone, Laptops, multimedia and even real hardware hacks for cars, scratched DVDs and CD, Weather-monitoring, Smart Homes cables and even cleaning the Mighty Mouse.

Do you have the itch to mess with your Mac or a hankering for hacking and even possibly void the warranty? Do you feel comfortable tweaking the Mac systems? I asked my daughters if they wanted to hack their iPods and they turned up their cute little noses and said, "No WAY"! So this book is not for them. It's for guys like me who are computer shadetree mechanics by trade and like to optimize everything. This book would intimidate my mom and drive my dad crazy. This book is not for Attention Deficit Syndrome types either.

May be if the title had been "Customize" instead of "Hacks" there would be a larger audience for this kind of book.

Conclusion

Get the geekbook par excellence for Mac Geek types.

Color Confidence: The Digital Photographer's Guide to Color Management, 2nd Edition

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Tim Grey

Wiley

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0471786160.html>

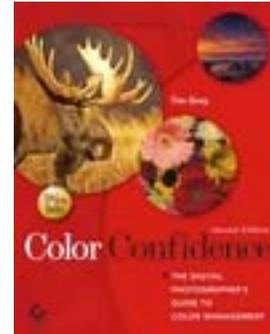
Released: April 2006

Pages: 256

\$40 USD, \$52CDN, 26 UK

ISBN: 0-471-78616-0

Intermediate/Advanced



Strengths: Screen shots are ok ample size and very readable. They tie into the tutorials. Good glossary and index are very helpful for searching and finding targeted information.

Weaknesses: Wish there were circles, pointers or some visuals to indicate within the screenshots targeted information.

Introduction

Working with color is the “heart and soul” for creating photos and then making them better. The focus is to get the best color results and this book’s emphasis is getting the best color results. Since I have read the author’s book previously, I was interested in finding more tips and tricks about color management and if this book has more ideas than I know. Color Confidence does just that, giving you better insights to working with color for your photos.

The author, Tim Grey, is a renowned Photoshop and digital photographer. He is Microsoft’s Chief ambassador to professional photographers and presents workshops on digital imaging. This book is the latest version of this book.

The book has 8 chapters, index and glossary. There are not many brilliant photographs because most of the “action” involves working with the software tools and the amply sized screenshots provide the visuals to drive across the main points of the author. Notes are also “peppered” throughout the fourteen chapters.

Hands- on guides provide; choosing, calibrating your monitor and scanner; configuring Photoshop color settings, evaluating images and making accurate color adjustments; managing digital camera color with presets and custom profiles; working with color-adjusted and black-and-white images; learning how to build custom printer profiles or generic ones; preparing/adjusting images for print; evaluating prints against standard targets; problem solving out when prints don't match; producing accurate color images for the web, e-mail or digital slideshows, becoming familiar with process-specific workflows: (scan to print, digital capture to print, CMYK output etc.) The Glossary is well done and the index has very specific oriented to target, search and fine targeted discussion, hands-on work and more.

Appendix has a sample workflow checklist which makes sense. I like that the chapters for target objectives are included here (but I would have been even better if the pages were listed). Finally the index is well done.

Conclusions

This book is not for beginners. It is a fine one for intermediate and advanced photographers. Beginners may find it however useful once they upgrade their skills, learning about Photoshop and with other graphic editors and practicing working with photos.

I would have liked to have seen arrows or pointer to the parts of the histogram that the instructions "talk about". With some other of the author's books, there has been too much "verbiage" and all the words make your "head swim". However in this book, while there are a lot of words, the information is tightly focused regarding the tasks and tutorials so it is an easier reading. Screenshots tie into the tutorials and make for a good reading regarding color management. I'd recommend.

Color Management for Digital Photographers for Dummies

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Authors: Ted Padova and Don Mason

Wiley

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470048921.html>

Released: February 2007

Pages: 318

\$30 USD \$39 CND, 20 UK

ISBN: 978-0-470-04892-4

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

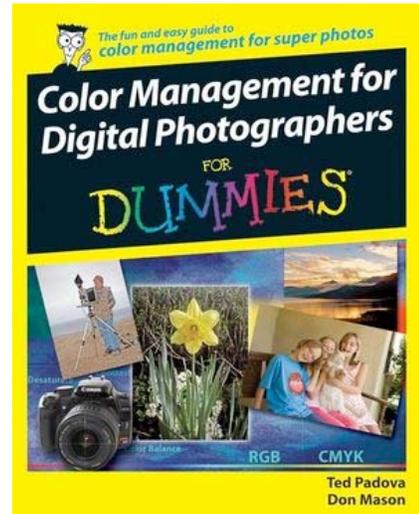
Strengths: The book is easy, helpful and instructive in many ways. The index is well done. Titles and numbers of the chapter and sections are highlighted at the edges of the tops of the pages makes for easier identification of the specifics within the book for easier thumbing through. Authors do highlight what specific techniques for Photoshop, versions of Photoshop Elements are good or not for using Macintosh.

Weaknesses: Circles or pointers would have been good to highlight more specifically the focus of the color and other adjustments concerning the photographs. There is no glossary but that would have been useful for the better understanding of related terms.

Introduction

The Dummies books are visual manuals that provide guided information. The authors have extensive experience with digital photography. Ted Padova has written many computer books and is an international recognized conference presenter of digital imaging topics. Don Mason has been a commercial photographer for more than 25 years. Both have lent their valuable skills and experiences into creating a worthy guide for learning about digital photography but particularly color management.

There are a variety of other specific stylish techniques that are used that make instruction more manageable and really make the book fun and easy to read. The page numbers are in bold type in either light yellow or light blue at the top outside edges of the pages.



The section of the book (called Parts) is titled on the top left page outside corner while the chapter numbers and titles are on the outside right page. Of course, the review would not be the same without pointing out the other helpful informational icons “peppered” throughout the book which include additional helpful information to find and learn about. These are: Notes, Tip, Technical stuff; Warning!; Remember; on the Web. These have valuable insights about various thoughts concerning color management.

Helpful information and visuals are packed into the 5 part/sections and the 16 chapters. The introduction lays out the specifics for the rest of the book. Part 1 includes the basics of color editing. Part 2 focuses on image brightness and contrast correction. Part 3 works with color correction while Part 4 has finishing work techniques. Part 5, “The Part of Tens”, is a potpourri about working with better tones and color and information about upgrading to Photoshop.

Colorful screenshots are integrated within the instruction and demonstrate how the tools can be utilized to complete carefully designed tasks. The screenshots are of ample size and very readable. The visuals not only save time but illustrate how to make your graphic endeavors more productive. Bold-faced text is used in parts of the numbers tasks for the tutorials and helps the user to focus on the specifics as well as additional information that follows. This makes for an easier reading and flow of learning and information. To the authors’ credit, you are “drawn into” the step-by-step instructions which reads more like a guide than a textbook.

Illustrations and additional visual aids are in color. The only missing part to being more helpful in the chapters is that some of the screenshots or photographs would have been even more useful if there were indicators within these (ex. circles, pointers, etc.) that highlight exactly what the authors were focusing upon (for example, pages 189-194), there are nice photographs of the same landscape which are then enhanced to make these even better. However the authors are not specific about which parts of the landscape photos were adjusted and specifically why, even though there is a vague reference which the reader can only surmise.

The index is well done. A glossary would have been. The page numbers are inset in either light yellow or light blue at the top corner of each page. In addition, the titles for that particular part/section is on the left hand top edge of the left page while the chapter number and the title are on right hand pages next to the page number. It is little “touches” like this that make information more easier to read and find.

Conclusion

The authors have crafted a book that is both instructive and helps to the user. This book is a great instructional guide for the learning of color management for digital photography. The content is easy to read and the step-by-step numbered instructions have great information. The text offers a good way to start learning about color management. The book covers content in depth and breadth using tools that are found in Photoshop Elements 4 and 5 (more advanced specifics pertaining to color management are found with Photoshop version however and readers who use Photoshop should look for related books if they desire).

The colorful screenshots are Windows specific, but can be used in the Macintosh specific version of Photoshop Elements 4 or could be used with other Macintosh specific shareware programs as in Graphic Converter. Macintosh specific related information is found in this book concerning color calibration, curves, monitor profiles, printing, soft proofing and general usage with this book. However if you want and need a more specifically targeted Macintosh using guide or using Photoshop then this book might not be for you. But it does have a lot going for it and could be a valuable resource.

iMovie '08 & iDVD: The Missing Manual

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

O'REILLY®

Author: David Pogue

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596516192/index.html>

Released: October 2007

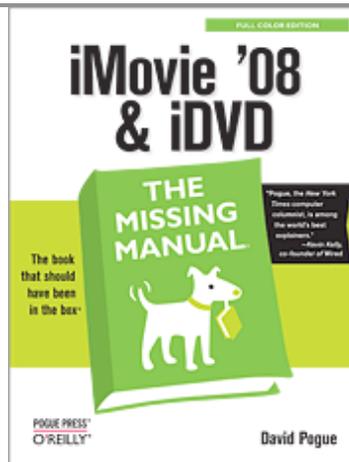
Pages: 464

\$40 USD, \$48 CND

ISBN-10: 0-596-51619-3

ISBN-13: 9780596516192

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced



Strengths: There is no CD with the book but at the website you can find additional information that can be found and utilized. The index is well done. The book includes colorful screenshots which are very readable. Helpful hints and techniques



Weaknesses: Most of the information is in regarding iMovie. Troubleshooting ideas for using iDVD are missing for the most part. These are relegated to looking into 4 areas which include discussion groups, lists, official iMovie area and Official in regard to iDVD troubleshooting. I know there is more that could have been said.

Introduction

No doubt about it. Since I created videos with iMovie and iDVD for my private use as well as a for business. But I have not been real happy with iDVD. I have found iMovie and iDVD 6 a mixed blessing and lacking in several ways. In many regards, I think that the radical shift to iMovie 8 from iMovie 6 is due to that many Mac users have had problems with various parts of iMovie and iDVD or both. I know this is the case for me as I have had continual problems with iDVD. And I have not been able to correct them while PC users are humming along creating their DVDs. Maybe Apple heard about this from others as well or possibly was thinking that the two products were getting too close and taking away sales from Final Cut Pro or Express. In any case, I was hoping that the author could shed some light on using these two iMovie versions to a better extent and why.

This book series is written by David Pogue, the New York Times Technology columnist. He continues to be the author at the helm of this series of books called “The Missing Manual”. These series of books are self help guidebooks for learning and using software and hardware that go beyond the meager original documentation /manuals. I like some of the series of these themed books. So I thought it would be interesting to review iMovie 08 & iDVD missing review for several reasons.

This thick book has 448 pages and not filled with “fluff” but has page-by-page insights that will help you along way with iMovie and iDVD. It is divided into 5 parts spanning 21 chapters. There is a good Appendix with 4 sections (iMovie 08 menus, troubleshooting, master keyboard shortcuts listing and visual cheat sheet. There is a shorthand system of arrows that replaces the use of “much more text information” that guides you through the learning process and where to use the applications. Other visual aids are in color, the screenshots are of a good size and readable. Throughout the book, there are helpful tips, help boxes, notes and more. Throughout the book, there are helpful ideas in the way of tips, (up to speed, FAQ -frequently asked questions, Poweruser information, Clinic, tips, notes gem in rough hidden techniques). This is a nice way of targeting specifically helpful information without having to wade through the text (which is well written, authoritative and insightful).

Additional highlight included the following. Chapter 1, tips on recording time (page 25) was nicely done; Chapter 2 framing and rules of 3rd is something I know of with photography but this is one of the only times I have seen it spoken and used in terms of videorecording. There are 22 different ways to use weddings was very interesting. Chapter 4 is packed with various iMovie strategies using digital 8 and recording DV, importing older iMovie has some good ideas (also practical information about the cables and webcam to FireWire information). Chapter 5 (page 113) includes all video codes and recording onto DVD. Chapter 6, includes copying, posting and deleting most will already know but Chapter 7 Favorites, Chapter 8 transitions and Chapter 9 histograms are done very well. Interesting tips in Chapter 10 title and credits how to Chapter 11 narrative and can install news and effects.

Chapter 12 has photo browser tips, and great tips concerning photo browsing, filmstrips, using fade to black and there are some nice specific hints that I would like to use. The section on power editing and power up editing is excellent. Chapter 13 moving from v8 to v6 or vice-versa is well done and helpful to many videographers who read the book. Chapter 14 has an interesting section with ideas on expert iPod, iPhone, Apple TV use. Chapter 16 covers iMovie to QuickTime (page 285), while Chapter 17 provides QuickTime information about using the QuickTime player.

Finally there is more about DVD use and burning in Chapter 18. DVD has the information for two ways to burn your DVDs (OneStep or Magic iDVD). These two different methods and techniques are included in step-by-step fashion. Chapter 19 make up slide show while Chapter 20 talks about the using of themes. Should you want to work with scripting, Chapter 21 is for you.

Conclusions

The frank discussion about iMovie O8 “hits you in your face”. You know that this is a radical new “upgrade” in many ways but why this was done is really a mystery. You will have to make up your mind whether to use either iMovie version or like many, both. Solid, informative and packed with techniques, hints and ideas, this book is a great resource despite the new versions.

The Missing Manual is for those trying to make sense of this new shift and in that way this book has hit the mark. The screenshots, visuals and tips, techniques and other notes are well done and insightful. There is a six page section on working with iMovie 6 and iMovie 8 and while it is okay, I think it should have involved more troubleshooting information especially on the pros and cons and on transferring to iMovie 8. I would have liked to have seen a listing, when not to use iMovie 8 in plain language. Overall I think this book is well done but the proof in the pudding will be whether iDVD and iMovie work better for me and others. To get there you have to try and try again. This book may help you solve some of the shortcomings now and in the future for iMovie and/or iDVD. If iMovie08 & iDVD Missing Manual can't help, it might be time to switch to another video editor and DVD burner. Time to read the book, try out the new version and see if you want to try it, use both or use the older versions.

iPhoto '08: The Missing Manual

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

O'REILLY®

Authors: David Pogue and Derrick Story

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596516185/index.html>

Released: January 2008

Pages: 424

\$30 USD, \$39 CND

ISBN-10: 0-596-51618-5

ISBN-13: 978-0-596-51618-5

Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Strengths: This book is an in-depth and resourceful guide.

There is no CD with the book but at the website you can find additional information about the book in addition to shareware that can be found and utilized. The index is nicely done and helpful. The book has color and the screenshots are large enough to read with ease.

Troubleshooting section is excellent. In-depth guide in many ways. Ample sized screenshots and color throughout. Easy to read and nice looking book. Price is right for many insights the content may give and which you can learn from.

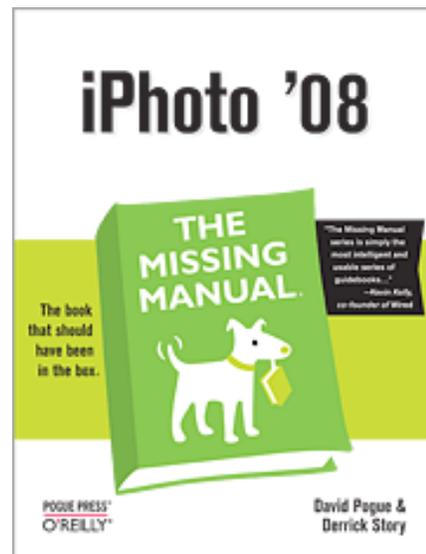
Weaknesses: None.

Introduction

I did not find iPhoto that useful when I first started with it several versions ago. But as different features were added and I needed to upload and organize all my digital photos, I used it more and more. The latest iPhoto version has more tools for discovery and use so I turned to the Missing Manual to take a look at iPhoto 08. I am glad I did.

This book series is written by David Pogue, the New York Times Technology columnist, continues to be the author at the helm of the series of books called “The Missing Manual”. Pogue worked with Derrick Story, a digital photography, music and Mac computer expert who also writes for Macworld magazine. They create an excellent step-by-step guide.

There is a short hand system of arrows that replaces the use of “much more text information” that guide you through the learning process and information.



Illustrations and additional visual aids. The colorful screenshots are integrated within the instruction. Throughout the book, there are helpful ideas in the way of tips, help boxes, notes, and specialties called “gem in rough”.

What I also like is some of the little touch that make a book even better. On each outer top edge of each page there is a blue tab near the top with each written in a little text that explains the exact nature of that particular page. On the bottom on the right pages are the numbers for the chapter so you are informed in more ways than one. This helps for easy index searching. These visuals title not only save time but add to the look and feel of the book overall.

There are four parts to the book spanning 15 chapters. Part 5 has two appendices (troubleshooting and iPhoto menu by menu). Chapter 1, explains the new features in this version, buying a camera and other essentials. Chapter 2, includes composition, information about the rule of thirds (I have previously seen information about this rule with other camcorder books but most high profile photography books). Chapter 3 covers shooting different types of photography and settings, and while good photography books that I have reviewed include more in-depth information. With Chapter 4, you learn to compile, manage your photos while, Chapter 5, has information about the library and all the photos work here. With 6 Gradually I have found the use of keywords and more to classify the images. and Chapter 6 helps you here. With Chapter 7, editing your shots will have you learning how to compose your best photo and finalizing them for your files, websites or printing. There is a nice section on using RAW files and now I know about how to use these files. Part 3 Chapters 8,9, 10, 11, 12 (information concerning exporting and audio control is well done), 13 ideas with printing, slideshow production, using email your photos, creating in web galleries, calendars and more. Part 4, Chapters 14 and 15, covers scripting instruction. There is also more about file management merging libraries and beyond iPhoto.

Conclusions

The authors have created an in-depth and resourceful guide. A wide variety of ways to work and produce with iPhoto are covered in a very readable manner. The troubleshooting appendix section is excellent and while it might not solve all your questions, it should answer quite a few. The section, about RAW files and using these with their recognized JPEGs in iDVD and iMovie, is well done. Simple but direct instructions told me more that I needed to know about working stand alone RAW editors with RAW, changing the preferences and more. A nice looking book, full of easy to read instructions and has visuals to make learning the process a more visual one. If you need more from iPhoto '08 I recommend this book highly. The price is right and you will learn more in no time. Plus it will be handy guide for the near future and working with all of those digital photos.

Photoshop Elements 5 Workflow: The Digital Photographer's Guide

Reviewed by Dr Eric Flescher



Authors: Tim Grey and Peter K. Burian
SYBEX

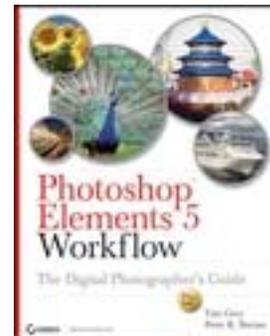
<http://www.sybex.com/WileyCDA/SybexTitle/productCd-0470100869.html>

Released: March 2007

Pages: 286

\$40 USD, \$42 CND

ISBN: 9780470100868



Strengths: Includes information on raw format images. An in-depth highlight of curves with the applications, which is a very difficult topic, is applied in an excellent fashion in this book. Information regarding adjustment layers well done. Keyboard shortcuts for Macintosh (not yet released software at the time of publication) and Windows. Book can be used by users of previous versions of the software.

Weaknesses: Too much verbiage which may not be suited for novice Elements or photography users. There is a need for more arrows and pointers to integrate the information laid out in the screenshots and applied to the text and tutorials. Inside introduction is missing sectioning of the Parts. The style of the book continues to be a source of problems as it does not read like a guide, it reads more like a textbook. This book may not be suitable for beginners or novice Photoshop Element users but may be better for intermediate and advanced.

Introduction

“Workflow” can be used with any software as a means for understanding and taking your images from the beginning to end and all the processes, tasks and management issues that are needed. Photoshop Elements 5 Workflow: The Digital Photographer's Guide possibly can help you establish your workflow.

Tim Grey, is a renowned Photoshop and digital photographer, is a Microsoft’s Chief ambassador to professional photographers and presents workshops on digital imaging. Peter Burian is a freelance photographer, author of photography books and is a contributor to several magazines. The authors combine their background in photography and Photoshop to create a book that is useful for understanding and using Photoshop Elements. I wanted to see what new insights these authors had.

The book contains 13 chapters. Part 1, covers workflow foundations, downloading and sorting and RAW conversion with Adobe Camera Raw. I like the premise laid out in the book that “quality, efficiency and consistency” are the main benefits of workflow use. Part 2, focus is on cropping, tone and color, image cleanup. I particularly like the section “ Benefits of Adjustment Layers” gives a better understanding of “why” using these layers can help provides for better understanding. Part 3, has information about working with advanced adjustments (tone, color, making selections, targeting adjustments and creative adjustments). Part 4, key processes include saving files, output processing. In this book I particularly like the information concerning tonal adjustments.

Within the book, screenshots and photographs highlight the points the authors are trying to demonstrate. Notes are also “peppered” throughout the chapters providing additional worthy insights related to the techniques. Many screenshots, which are large enough to understand and read, help illustrate the learning process but I would have liked to have seen more icons (like red circles or pointers) that could have served to highlight and focus what the authors focus in about in the text.

Conclusions

The tutorials that the authors portray using Photoshop Elements are well thought out. However the style of these texts still continues to confound me. This series of books uses too many “words” and reads more like a textbook then a guidebook. In many cases, I am looking for the ideas to stand out a little more. Not in these text books. You have to read through the paragraphs to pick out the really important points. Also the book says it covers the major new updates to Photoshop Elements, but there is no “one stop listing of these”. There should be instead of hiding them in the text. Also a book like this should be easy to find what is important. This series still continues to make it difficult to “thumb” through it. The Chapter titles are on the left side in the center and are not in bold. There are no section titles at all. The page titles are on the right hand page side but on the outside center too. For easy access, these should be on the top tabs like some other books.

The authors stress.

I recognize the talents of these two authors but they make this book difficult for browsing and reading. Part of a book that instructs about workflow is making the workflow within the text more flexible and easier to read. There is good information within this book , but you have to find it by wading through many paragraphs. I won’t use this book as a tutorial, but might use it as a “spot reference book” to compare notes, information and more. Before you decide on a workflow or Photoshop Elements book, look elsewhere first before you choose this book. This one might be right for you. For me it is not.

The Principles of PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Meri Williams

Sitepoint

<http://www.sitepoint.com/books/project1/>

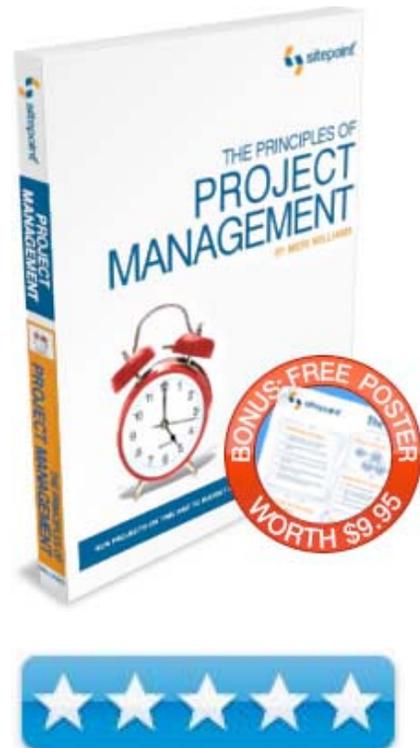
Released:

\$40 USD, \$40 CND

ISBN: 978-0-9802858-6-4

Strengths: Focuses on what is really important on PMing any project.

Weaknesses: None found.



Introduction

You don't need to sit through months of boring lectures, painstakingly work your way through 1,000 page plus monstrosities, or take an exam to become project manager. Learn only what really matters with The Principles of Project Management.

What I Learned

I learned the Meri Williams is incredibly readable and gets right to what really matters in running and successfully managing projects.

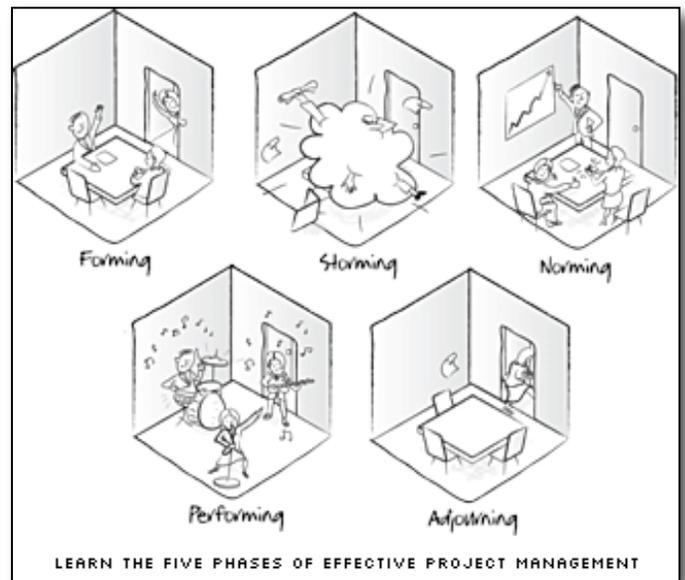
Her approach is a refreshing break from the "norm". And because I am managing a few websites and attempting to get them updated, her examples related to creating a website hit home. I think that is why her book is published by Sitepoint, since that publisher is focused on software developers and programmers.

There are 5 simple sweet chapters on the art and science of project management, picking (if you can) the right projects, figuring out who should be on the team, figuring out what has to be done and controlling projects and keeping things on track, how to deal with changes, improving communication and collaboration skills and wrapping up and handing off the final project to the client.

Take-aways



I think what stuck out for me was that Meri breaks the "Project Management Mold" by addressing the "too perfect" software that makes a quick gut-reaction and back-of-the-napkin estimate look like a finished product and how that gets so many PMers into so much trouble with clients.



Rule of Thumb – don't let estimates look like finished products. If the estimate is handwritten, make it look like it was written by hand, instead of as a polished finished project management worksheet.

There is nothing wrong with offering information that looks like it was custom-made instead of looking like a computer did it. It always amazes me that we take something typed as having more weight than something written on a piece of paper. What is transferred from our minds is much more important than making Gantt charts look pretty.

I know, I've wasted untold hours messing with Microsoft Project software to get things just right and allowed the software to manage me, rather than letting me manage the projects.

And that is why I like this book. Meri Williams stepped outside the box and focused on what is really important.

Conclusion

If you are sick and tired of "project managing" by being shackled to specific PM software, get this book. It puts the focus back on what is important.

Subject To Change: Creating Great Products & Services for an Uncertain World: Adaptive Path on Design

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

O'REILLY®

Authors: Peter Merholz Todd Wilkens Brandon Schauer
David Verba
O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596516833/index.html>

Released: March 26, 2008

Pages: 186

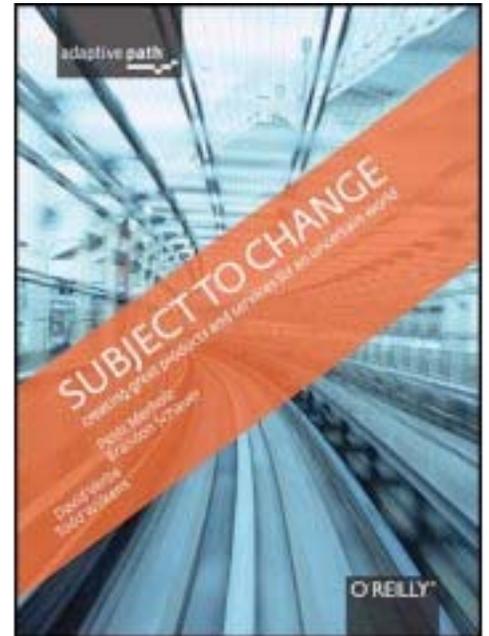
US \$25 USD

ISBN-10: 0596516835

ISBN-13: 978-0596516833

Strengths: Discusses some successes and positive turnarounds by certain companies Adaptivepath ahs been involved with.

Weaknesses: A self-promotion book by Adaptivepath.



Introduction

To achieve success in today's ever-changing and unpredictable markets, competitive businesses need to rethink and reframe their strategies across the board. Instead of approaching new product development from the inside out, companies have to begin by looking at the process from the outside in, beginning with the customer experience. It's a new way of thinking-and working-that can transform companies struggling to adapt to today's environment into innovative, agile, and commercially successful organizations. Companies must develop a new set of organizational competencies: qualitative customer research to better understand customer behaviors and motivations; an open design process to reframe possibilities and translate new ideas into great customer experiences; and agile technological implementation to quickly prototype ideas, getting them from the whiteboard out into the world where people can respond to them.

In Subject to Change: Creating Great Products and Services for an Uncertain World, Adaptive Path, a leading experience strategy and design company, demonstrates how successful businesses can-and should-use customer experiences to inform and shape the product development process, from start to finish.

This book is a rah-rah piece for Adaptive Path and how they were able to help clients climb out of downward-spiraling vortexes and overhaul business practices through focusing on customer satisfaction.

There are 8 chapters on the usual and hackneyed "best practices" approach to saving companies from themselves; "Experience is the Product, Experience as Strategy, New Ways of Understanding People, Capturing Complexity, Building Empathy, Stop Designing Products, Design Competency, the Agile Approach and An Uncertain World. Yes there is an Bibliography and an Index.

Yes there are surprisingly quite a few examples of Apple Corporation's goofs and what they did to overcome them. Ditto for Kodak, OXO and yes, even a smattering of Microsoft. They went after the low-hanging fruit. I think Microsoft has gone mental, myself, but hey, what do I know? I've only successfully served customers and established good will for 30 some years. Companies come and go. Relationships can last forever.

Conclusion

If you never, ever read a book about picking your failing business back up by its bootstraps by using a service company that can do it for you, then get this book. Otherwise, figure it out on your own. See, the decision is still out on Microsoft as far as I'm concerned. They haven't made a successful money-making product in years. Hey Microsoft, I know this company that sells solutions named "Adaptivepath" who does business consulting for a living...

Web 2.0: A Strategy Guide

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

O'REILLY®

Author: Amy Shuen

O'Reilly

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/9780596529963/>

Released: April 2008

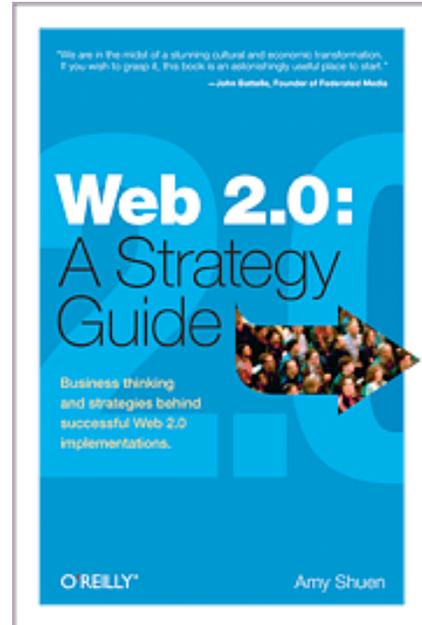
Pages: 243

\$25 USD

ISBN: 9780596-529963

Strengths: Offers intelligent reasons for using Web 2.0 concepts and technology by showing how entrepreneurs have become successful through collaborative innovation. Learn the "power of community" and how two or more minds can be better than one.

Weaknesses: Some typos.



Introduction

"Web 2.0 makes headlines, but how does it make money? This concise guide explains what's different about Web 2.0 and how those differences can improve the bottom line. Whether you're an executive, a small business owner, or an entrepreneur, *Web 2.0: A Strategy Guide* illustrates through real life examples how various businesses are creating new opportunities on today's Web. This book is about strategy rather than the technology itself."

Jeff Lippencott wrote over on Amazon,.com the following;

In the Q&A sections there are both strategic questions and tactical questions to help the reader get a better handle on how Web 2.0 allows entrepreneurs to make more money by targeting a smaller market that seeks hard-to-find products and services instead of large volumes of popular items. Apparently Web 2.0 is all about "the niche". And it is all about networking with other sellers and the customers.

This book points out that Web 2.0 is about creating multiple streams of revenues as opposed to single streams. Instead of just generating sales of a product or service, Web 2.0 thinking and logic demands that the Web site owner consider generating membership fees, advertising fees, licensing fees, sponsorship fees, and yes, sales of product and services of their own or through affiliate relationships.

The five-step action plan included in this book includes the following steps:

- Build on collective user value
- Activate network effects
- Work through social networks
- Dynamically syndicate competence
- Recombine innovations

What I Learned

Depending on who you read, Web 2.0 is a thing of the past, not a panacea for business or it is where people can collaborate anywhere, using any device, in any mode they want. **Reference:** *NetworkWorld* May 26, 2008, Maria Pardee, President of Global Integration, James Lin, CIO of Forbes and John Chambers, Cisco's founder.

Amy Shuen sees Web 2.0 as a business strategy using such things as freemiums (free access, but with paid subscriptions for value-added content) and using the power of stickiness and embracing social networks like LinkedIn or MySpace.

LinkedIn I show I got my current position with Pure Energy Systems Network. My boss was not too impressed with LinkedIn until I told him that is how I discovered him through acquaintances. People networking is enhanced through Web 2.0 technologies.

Web 2.0: A Strategy Guide provides business plan outlines, which coincidentally are what we are updating right now for our business as we expand operations as a true alternative energy system information portal and consulting service in bringing together inventors, innovators, their ideas and concepts and prototypes and introducing them to those who have money to invest in their ideas and innovations, in order to bring those into public distribution as soon as feasibly possible.

Examples of companies that have morphed by listening to their customers and rapidly adapting to their needs are Amazon.com, Facebook, Flickr, Google and NetFlix.

We can take Rogers Adoption Curve (rate of adoption of a new product or technology) and reach a level of self sustainability and exponential growth using online collaboration. This is a "Why" book and not a "How" book looking at strategies instead of tactics. It refers to both online and offside innovative collaboration.

There are 6 chapters on value, network multiply effects like N-sided markets (two or more customer/users to sellers/partners), positive feedback, social networking, capitalizing on competences, using syndication, integrating ecosystems (using iPod and iPhone as examples) and building Web 2.0 business plans through building and bridging instead of replacing or disrupting activities.

The bibliography is huge and there are plenty of endnotes. The Index is also a nice touch.

What value-adds the book is that each chapter ends with both lessons learned and questions to ask.

Conclusion

If Web 2.0 has become another buzzword instead of a viable concept, then take a look at this non-geek approach to the topic and see how the ideas behind Web 2.0 are what it is really all about.

Recommendation

I would recommend this book to those who are willing to figure out how best to use online tools to enhance their bottom line and are into recombinant collaboration and less into "control".

Greenware

An Introduction to Gravity Modification" A Guide to Using Laithwaite's and Podkletnov's Experiments and the Physics of Forces for Empirical Results

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Universal  Publishers

Author: Benjamin Thomas Solomon

<http://www.iseti.us/>

Universal Publishers

<http://www.universal-publishers.com/book.php?method=ISBN&book=1599429926>

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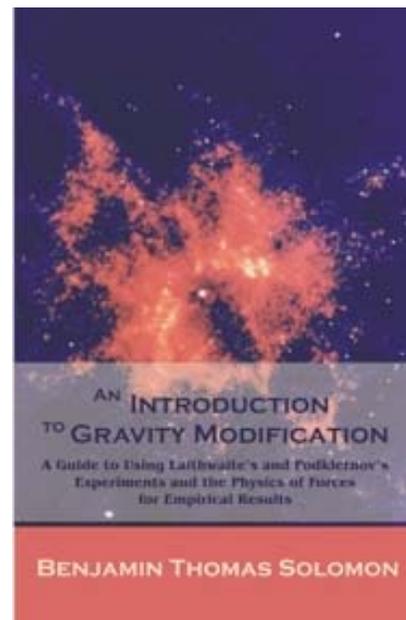
Strengths: Nearly one-of-a-kind book of tried and tested processes for modifying gravity.

Weaknesses: You might need a Ph.D to enjoy this book to its fullest.

Interview: <http://archive.thespaceshow.com/shows/874-BWB-2008-01-20.mp3>

Introduction

An Introduction to Gravity Modification will enable academics and technologists to comprehend the physics and facilitate the engineering of gravity modification today, using real dimensions, real fields, real materials, and real forces. Based on Solomon's research with electrical circuits that change weight, and extensive numerical modeling of experimental data, Solomon presents the new physics of forces and reviews Laithwaite's



and Podkletnov's experiments. *An Introduction to Gravity Modification* is the first book to explain how relativity and quantum mechanics will change to accommodate gravity modification as a working technology.

The author wrote this - *An Introduction to Gravity Modification* is a daring and courageous rewrite, starting from a clean slate, of the physics of forces in a world where gravity modification is taken for granted. This book is the first step to gravity modification as a technology, using *real dimensions, real fields, real materials, and real forces, today*. There is no 'the magic happens here' in the book.

After a number of mathematical manipulations, formulations and interesting graphics, these findings were given in the book –

- Force is a non-inertia field. The macro forces, gravity, electromagnetic force, and all mechanical forces, obey non-inertia fields exactly. This is a major step forward towards unification of forces, as gravity is included.
- A review of published experimental data shows that a particle's probability distribution is not Gaussian, but a new distribution (not one of the 37 known distributions) that under certain conditions is a Gamma distribution.
- Gravity modification consists of two parts, field modulation and field vectoring. The non-inertia field is the way to effect both modulation and vectoring, using electromagnetic fields.
- Approaches are suggested for interstellar travel (consistent with Special Theory of Relativity) and spectrum independent electromagnetic cloaking as new technologies of the future.

The first 25 pages can be downloaded as a PDF -
<http://www.bookpump.com/upb/pdf-b/9429926b.pdf>

Twentyfour spreadsheets of the findings can be purchased at
<http://www.iSETI.us/GMExcel2007Purchase/>

And over at PESWiki; there is this page dedicated to Benjamin Solomon's work regarding Quantum Ring Theory and Repulsive Gravity (no, it's not *that* bad!) -
http://www.peswiki.com/index.php/Review:An_Introduction_to_Gravity_Modification:by_Benjamin_Solomon

What I find fascinating is that the Star-Treky experiments are reproducible and Dr. Benjamin T. Solomon shows how we can modify gravity to the extent that space travel is viable.

This is pretty heavy applied theory and requires not just a cursory reading of the book. It requires some time and effort to wade through and absorb the information. After all, it is based on at least 10 years of research in gaining an understanding of gravity, force velocity and acceleration with the intent of modifying gravity today and not sometime way in the future.

Benjamin Solomon's goal is to put not just one or two people into space, but thousands at a time. If you have watched any of the Sci-Fi channel "future" programs, you will pick up the lingo fairly quickly. Otherwise you are going to stretch your mind considerably.

What opened my mind a little was the discussion of the lifting a motorcycle wheel with one hand once it began spinning. The gyro effect lowered its weight and allowed it to be lifted with one hand. The nit got me thinking about the sci-fi movies where the UFOs have a spinning portion that keeps them aloft. That would be the Laithwaite example -

<http://www.iseti.us/ISDC/2006/ISDC-2006-LaithwaiteGyroscopicWeightLoss-AFirstReview.wmv>

Eric Robert Laithwaite enjoyed gyroscopes - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Laithwaite

See, Benjamin Solomon has developed a proprietary electrical circuit that accomplishes the same thing with no moving parts. There is a lot more information over in the Whitepapers section of the Interstellar Space Exploration Technology Initiative. A LOT more!

Now remember, the title of the book says this is just an "Introduction", so the book introduces us to the concept and lays the foundation to understanding how moving through space can be accomplished using electronics.

One interesting aspect is in establishing a force field that either speeds up or slows down time to help heal the body or establish a force field to protect the body. This extends the research done by Podkletnov on gravitational shielding - <http://www.americanantigravity.com/podkletnov.html> using superconductivity materials. Benjamin Solomon has figured out how to get superconductivity at room temperature electronically *without* the use of special superconductive materials.

The book comprises 6 sections covering experimental evidence, new concepts for gravity modification, new methods for force and momentum and going beyond gravity modification discussing non-local properties of nature and alternative structures for spacetime.

There is also an Appendix with the solution for center mass calculus modelo equation 9.4.11 and the bibliography.

Conclusion

If you want to spread your wings, expand your mind and perhaps float your boat, you might want to look into this book, but you will need a higher education to really get the gist. Watching the videos over at the iSeti website.

I wish the graphs in the book were interactive or were Mathematica models. Perhaps Benjamin T Solomon might take that into consideration and get beyond Excel and into mathematical modeling using online apps that can elevate visibility and discussion up a notch or two.

Mileage Results from Hydroxy Boost Addition

By Robert Pritchett

Ford E350 Super Duty Power Stroke Turbo Diesel. The vehicle look similar to this one, except it has double side doors instead of a sliding door and wire-mesh back windows. The inside is empty, except for a bench seat behind the cab. And the ladder rack was different than pictured here. The cargo van has been renamed, the "Hindenburg II".



[Ford E350 7.3 Liter Super Duty Power Stroke Turbo Diesel](#)

Manufactured: 03/01

Miles traveled: 182,901

10 MPG average before tweaking

New transmission, new tires

Ladder rack assembly

Non-intercooled [Power Stroke](#) engine.

Fuel tank capacity: 35 Gallons

[New Energy Congress](#) member, we installed a hydrogen-oxygen (hydroxy) electrolysis unit in this van and along with previously added lubricants, saw the mileage go from 9.8 MPG to 19.65 MPG. This is my report of that conversion.

Before Tweaking

Driving experience before tweaking – It was sluggish, slow to ramp up to speed, like driving a battleship. I struggled to do much over 65 MPH with the foot down on the accelerator. It was no fun watching the fuel gauge rapidly go from full to empty when driving long distances or short ones, for that matter. The cargo van drove like a truck. Then again, it is a 4-ton behemoth.

The vehicle is registered to [Century Roofing](#) in North Bend, WA. It is on loan to me from my youngest brother, Tom Pritchett, who owns *Century Roofing*. He also likes to tweak vehicles and race them for a hobby. He is allowing me to run mileage improvement experiments on this "worst-case scenario" vehicle.

I drove the truck home to Richland, WA on a full tank (35 gallons), arriving with around half a tank left, so 17.5 gallons were used to go 172 miles (going by way of Vantage is 10 mile shorter than going by way of Yakima). Driving the vehicle was still a chore and suffered from the slow acceleration and labored efforts by the engine. **That calculates to $172/17.5 = 9.8$ MPG one way.**

De-frictioning

I purchased lubricants from Gerald D. Hamilton, 800-725-6199 or (Cell) 509-460-0390 in Kennewick, WA, [PowerUp! Lubricants Gen49D for Diesel Fuel](#) and [NNL 690 for Engines](#). Why? Because my past experience in using PowerUp! with a gas engine (VW Bug) has been around 10 miles per gallon improvement in combo treatment of the engine and fuel. This is the first time I have also added treatment to the transmission too. Anything would have been an improvement, so I did what I was already familiar with – reduce engine friction and add fuel treatment.

This was done 2 weeks prior to adding the hydrogen generator to the cargo van. By adding the fuel and engine treatment, this gave me an immediate result of quieting the engine down a bit and providing a performance boost to the accelerator.

Beginning Hydrogen Generator installation

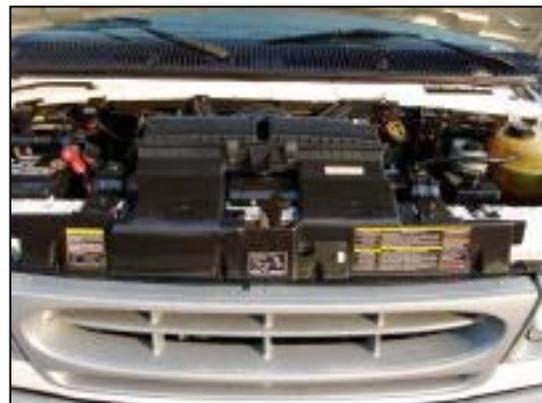
I had to get back over the Cascades, because my youngest brother got the back-ordered kits and his roofing crew was putting [hydrogen](#) in mylar balloons and [popping them off like M-80s](#). Obviously, one of the hydrogen generators was working. Also, the Nickel and Iron oxide plates had arrived and I figured we had better see if we could use them to enhance the generators.

Note: Check dimensions "BEFORE" ordering materials!

I refueled, adding another 17.5 gallons of diesel to top off the tank. Going back across the Cascades was a chore, because I was pushing against the wind the whole way. There were whitecaps on the Columbia River at Vantage. Pushing towards 70 MPH was difficult, so I treated it like the truck it is and obeyed the truck speed of 65 MPH on the highway. I used up 1/2 tank getting to North Bend from Richland.

Nuts and bolts

The Hydrogen Generator instructions said it would not take long to install the kit. I figured a day. The manufacturer figured 3 hours. Tom figured a few minutes. In reality, it "took all day", but we took essentially a 5-hour break doing other things and waiting for parts to arrive. We wrapped everything up at 9 PM. What took the longest was figuring out where to put the canister in relation to the motor. You can see there was no room under the hood.



There also had to be access to refill the canister with water. We opted to mount it behind the driver's seat with the on/off switch on the metal divider between the cab and the bench seat in back on the right-hand of the driver. Tom used a Dremel tool to cut a switch hole out of the steel plate. I have to reach back to turn it on or off. We could have mounted it higher, but didn't. We also had to get extra clamps, hose (the hydrogen hose that came with kit almost looked like shrink-tape, flimsy with no reinforcement to prevent collapse) and electrical connectors and wire. A battery cable was already in place by the bench seat, unterminated. We used it for power and used the metal frame for ground.

The business end of the Hydrogen generator ends in the rubber Turbo air intake, after a 12-foot trip from the unit behind the driver's seat, under the running board, up through the dash and down through the firewall into the Turbo section of the engine.

International Truck & Motor (Navistar International Corporation) makes the engine for Ford, which has been the exclusive diesel engine supplier for Ford's heavy-

duty trucks since 1979.

There were two relays in the kit for two sets of electrodes in the canister. Tom used a few Y connectors to tie wires together. It was a wet and rainy day and the instructions were made on an inkjet color printer. They didn't last long, once we got them wet. But Tom "Got-R Dun"(tm)!

Not shown in the pictures at <http://www.h2ohybridpro.com/> (H2O Hybrid Pro (order tab) through Gary Hall, Walla Walla, WA, there is a water recycle pump mounted on the bottom of the canister. (The units we bought are 4-inch x 10-inch painted black PVC pipe.)

Update: Mention I sent you and if you purchase a system, I get a Referral Fee, if you use my name [Robert L Pritchett](#). I also have the "H2O Hybrid Pro" signage on the Van now. I see I'm listed as a Dealer for the Tri-Cities, WA on Gary's website, which allows me to talk to others about my real world experiences and opens dialogue regarding tools and techniques on "hybridizing" any vehicle.

There is a transmission radiator cooler unit included in this kit and apparently it was needed. The mixture gets over 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Hydrogen boils at 197.2 F. I'll add a heater meter later to monitor the situation.

One other thing we did before I came home with the Hindenburg II, was that we removed the ladder rack off the roof of the van. That would add a 2 to 3 mile per hour improvement by removing one wind barrier.



After Tweaking

I drove back on less than 1/4 a tank of diesel with the hydrogen generator using baking soda and water. Yes, I double-checked - 1/4 tank of diesel used to come home. **That calculates to 172/8.75 = 19.65 MPG.** The van ran like it had a new lease on life and "floated" up to Snoqualmie Pass like I was on a magic carpet ride from North Bend. And the wind had stopped, so I had no wind behind me either. I barely had to put my foot on the accelerator and had to struggle to keep it down to the speed limit. It wanted so much to run at 80 MPH. The engine did not struggle at all. I could tell instantly when the engine was using the hydrogen or not with the on-off switch.

We did not need to install the flashback arrestor, because we inserted the hose in front of the Turbo intake filter - and [diesels](#) don't use spark plugs! The flashback arrestor is simply a tube filled with what looks like steel wool and was difficult to blow through. Since we did not want to restrict flow, we did not install it on this vehicle.

The kits were also supposed to have a one-way check-valve and our kits were missing those. None were added.

The radiator unit and recirculating hoses were hot enough to burn fingers. It is simply amazing what a little water and baking soda can do! (3 1/2 teaspoons per 48 ounces of water)

The hydrogen generator kit has an external see-through tube to show water level. We filled the unit close to the top over in North Bend and it was down about 2 inches after I got home. So roughly 10 ounces of water were consumed. I understand that when hydrogen is extracted from water, it expands [1600 times](#).

All I can say is, it took nearly a day to install, but to me, this is an "instant gratification" process. Fuel is close to \$5 per gallon as of this writing. Fuel efficiency by any means necessary is a must. Any reduction in not having to put more money into the fuel tank is welcome.

The iron and nickel oxide plates I bought from Quantum Sphere in California would not work in these units from Florida, because the units are "sealed" and the canister dimensions are too small and the 6x6 plates were too large and dwer were not going to cut them to size. Tom has other plans for them. He wants to build a hydrogen-engine car.

It was also good to be able to see the fuel gauge not move much and on final destination, still have plenty of fuel above empty (as in, still a quarter tank left), even though much of the trip back was between 70 and 80 MPH.

Advantages

- This makes me feel like I just ["Tim Taylored"](#) the vehicle. It went from land-based albatross to soaring eagle, from road-weary ugly duckling to gliding goose.
- The engine feels like it runs smoother and is quieter, almost muted.
- The cargo van has more "pep", so I have to watch the heavy foot. No more labored acceleration from stop lights or stop signs.
- This vehicle uses a LOT less diesel!

Cautions

- The mixture does get very warm, very fast, so don't touch the radiator.
- The PVC pipe canister "looks" like it is collapsing at the strap holding it due to heat stress and possible implosion. **We probably added too much baking soda in the first batch and that may have caused the overheating issue.** (I don't think the manufacturer used Schedule 80 pipe, but went with thinner material.) **The 2nd batch of water and baking soda isn't as quick to heat up the radiator.**
- The opaque plastic drain plugs get loose due to heat/cold cycle, causing leaks. We need to use teflon tape instead of plumbers' putty.
- Be sure the On/Off switch is off when engine is not running.
- Make sure the canister has enough liquid to operate.
- Gary Hall said that he was experiencing issues with fuse blows, as the electrolyte he uses ([KOH](#)) was drawing too much amperage (one teaspoon per quart of water). My recommendation with these kits is to use a 30-amp connection in the relay box - nothing less.
-

I changed out the first batch of water, since it had turned brown (iron oxide?), is most likely due to stainless steel leaching, as the iron is removed from the metal.

Conclusions

Others tout these hydrogen electrolyzer systems as providing anywhere from 15% to 50% increase in mileage, some as much as 100%, by adding them to either a diesel or gasoline internal combustion engine. I'm witnessing approximately a 2-fold increase in mileage per gallon of diesel using this system on this truck. I also understand that as time passes, the electrolyzation process improves as the stainless steel electrodes "cure" and miles per gallon improvements occur, so we may see a 10% further increase with use, without further tweaking.

We went from 9.8 MPG to 19.65 MPG doing the following; added friction-free lubricants and fuel treatment, removed the external ladder rack and added the hydrogen generator. THAT, my friends is over 100% increase, right?

Observations and Updates

Why are hydrogen electrolyzers not being installed in all vehicles? Probably because of the unwritten alternative energy system axiom we at "Pure Energy Systems Network" have been observing, that "if it can't be taxed, it will not be endorsed"(tm). It is hard to tax water and baking soda beyond getting out of the tap, well or store. If the governments can figure that out, they will endorse using hydrogen electrolyzers in vehicles.

The amp meter on the dash goes from 8 to 18 amps. It has stayed around 10 amps with A/C running, radio running, lights running, etc., so the issues related to "hydrogen production uses too much in electricity to process" is essentially a mute point. Power draw is based in this case, on what kind of electrolyte is used. In this case, I can see an immediate jump up of what looks like 2 amps when I throw the switch to turn on the hydrogen generator.

We were challenged by someone in a hydrogen forum about asking a chemist if using [baking soda](#) would be dangerous (that person, as far as I'm concerned, was either April-fooling people or was spreading FUD). He might have been referring to using [table salt](#) as an electrolyte. Table Salt (NaCL) has the potential of producing chlorine gas and sodium hydroxide when introduced to electricity. My neighborhood Ph.Ded trusted chemist said that was pure bunk. I believe him. Now perhaps he will believe me when I show him this [Rube Goldberg-ish](#) setup for fuel efficiency.

I have received feedback from one reader who insisted that I install the spark arrestor in the system as a safety precaution. I repeat - this is a diesel installation and not a gas engine installation, No spark arrestor is required because the diesel engine works of compression and not spark to ignite the fuel.

In two or more weeks, this unit will be swapped out with a new and improved model. I understand that it is designed so the radiator is not needed. By then the Scan Gauge II will also be installed, so we can look at some real-time digital reading results.

Questions

Question: What is the law of diminishing returns with regards to hydrogen mix and hydrocarbon fuels? In other words, is it possible to use "too much" hydrogen when using a hydrogen electrolyzer?

Question: What does it take to make a "real" hydrogen car? [Bob Boyce's system](#)?

Question: How can we harness the heat generated by the electrolysis process?

Material and Labor Costs

Model 12A HHO \$410 (Shipping and Handling included.) Extra materials; i.e., hose, clamps, electrical connectors, wire, baking soda, estimated at around \$40-ish. If we had had somebody else do it (i.e., Gary Hall), it would have cost another \$130 for 2 hours labor, plus additional hours of \$75 each. RVs start at \$300 for 3 hours and Semis start at \$400 for 4 hours. We took probably around 5 hours, once all was said and done, so factor in \$280 for labor for this project.

So we are looking at around \$730 or at today's prices, close to 146 gallons of diesel, or approximately 4 tankfuls for just the hydrogen generator install.

The lubricant treatment costs were around \$425 for the set, enough to last for a while. I could have done a one-shot for around \$120 or \$65 less than a tankful of diesel. So for the price of 6 tankfuls, we have turned an old cargo van into a new machine again.

Using both processes together, I am seeing over 100% improvement in fuel mileage, plus an incredible performance improvement in how the vehicle handles, sounds and acts.

If we can get that kind of performance improvement out of an 7-year old truck, imagine what we can do with newer vehicles!

The kit we installed was for a 7.3 liter engine. The cost for kits for 1.0 to 3.0 liter engines is around \$200.

Next Steps

- I need to get some potash lye (KOH) to use instead of the baking soda and see how well that performs. I'd have to be much more careful about drainage though. I don't want the lye eating through the truck floor. Baking soda cleans. Lye is caustic and probably not as eco-friendly unless really diluted. Gary Hall says he gets twice as much hydrogen production from potassium hydroxide (KOH). If we can get even a 10% performance boost, it would be worth the spillage. I'll just have to be real careful.
- Add a water reservoir to keep the canister topped off.
- Experiment with the Nickel Iron oxide plates from Quantum Sphere.
- New improved hydrogen generators are being made by the supplier to "H2O Hybrid Pro", so the issues with material sturdiness and heat creation will have been dealt with in about 2 more weeks (say June 2008). I'll get one and swap this unit out then.

To Dos

- Get Scan Gauge II from Sterling Allan (Coming. Thanks Sterling!).
- Get Photos of installation.
- Add heat sensor or temperature gauge.
- Add some kind of hydrogen meter to the system to monitor production.

Rethinking BioFuel

By Robert Pritchett

I'm going to rapidly run through a few biofuel hot buttons in this article.

Speculation

And I'm of the mind that the real reason why prices are going up is because the speculators have moved their money from real estate deals to commodity futures and skewing statistics and market demand.

What used to be free now has a cost and the agribusiness industry smells green gold and have adjusted their price per bushel accordingly.

As folks begin looking at staycations (stay at home vacations) this summer, we watch fuel prices continue to escalate – due mostly to speculation not just stopping at \$200 per barrel, but seriously expecting \$300 per barrel - http://seekingalpha.com/article/78941-the-truth-about-oil-prices?source=d_email

Diesel is close to \$5 at the pump and gasoline is getting closer every day. But is Biofuel really the answer?

World Market for Biofuels Expected to Double?

Only double? Maybe it is because for most biofuels we are talking biodiesel and not Ethanol. http://seekingalpha.com/article/76991-world-market-for-biofuels-expected-to-double?source=d_email

Ethanol as Biofuel

Ethanol would be used in internal combustion engines that use spark plugs and not in diesels that run by compression, rather than by spark. I include Ethanol into the biofuel mix, along with biodiesel, et al. I don't consider "biofuel" to be a bad word, but the petroleum-backed press is making it so. However, until Ethanol can prove itself as being enviro-friendly and better than zero-sum carbon-footprintwise, I do consider it to be a bad word. And I'm not alone in my estimation either. The industry has to prove it can be developed for less than it costs in fuel to make. Right now, it is less than zero-sum to produce. Meaning that for each gallon of ethanol, it takes 1.5 gallons of hydrocarbon-based fuel to get from process to market. See the article by Robert Bryce - <http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm?aid=891>

I agree with Chris Calder that taking food off the table to feed a machine does not make a whole lot of sense. There is also a class-action suit in California due to the fact that ethanol destroys fiberglass storage tanks on boats, let alone the damage it does to the environment in contamination in drinking water –

http://boatingsailing.suite101.com/article.cfm/ethanol_fuel_problems_for_boaters

Brad Zigler notes what he calls the "dead-cat bounce" of the corn-based Ethanol market- <http://seekingalpha.com/article/78183-are-we-at-the-bottom-of-the-ethanol-barrel?>

Food for Fuel

I've gone back and forth with Christopher Calder and he has modified some of his content on his site regarding Biofuel as a Hoax - <http://home.att.net/~meditation/bio-fuel-hoax.html>

I couldn't find the origin of the saying that if we burn our food, we go hungry, but it is attributed to an ancient Chinese proverb. If we produce biofuel from non-food biomass sources, we are a lot better off than if we continue down the road of turning food crops in to fuel crops.

A biorefinery pilot plant designed to extract ethanol from sugarcane is running in Jennings, LA starting May 29, 2008 - <http://www.verenium.com/>

Invasive Species and the Law of Unintended Consequences

Giant Reed (*Arundo Donax*) dries up wetlands when used as a biofuel crop and *Jatropha curcas* is poisonous and has been banned in 2 states in Australia as an "invasive" species (not *Jatropha multifida*). So can straw be made into cellulosic ethanol liquid gold?

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/21/science/earth/21biofuels.html?_r=1&th&emc=th&oref=slogin

Swaterro wrote;

"When land and other resources that would have been used for a crop (e.g., corn) are diverted to another crop (e.g., switchgrass), the price of the displaced crop will tend to increase because of the decreased supply, which will in turn tend to increase the price of any substitutes for the displaced crop, such as rice for corn. References to this dynamic are few and vague.

A biofuel plant's ability to grow on marginal land does not mean it will not be grown on good soil if it is more profitable than the alternative; even planting on land that is marginal or was not previously used for agriculture can have negative consequences, e.g., the increased deforestation in Asia related to the creation of palm oil plantations for biofuels. I have yet to see references to the first part of this statement and scant reference to the second." <http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/21/more-unintended-risks-from-biofuels/index.html?ref=environment>

Pollution

The *Seattle Post Intelligencer* posted this table -

HOW GREEN ARE BIOFUELS?

Biofuels are getting a bad rap as stories of rising food prices and shortages fill the news. But the environmental, energy and land use impacts of the crops used to make the fuels vary dramatically. Current fuel sources – corn, soybeans and canola – are more harmful than alternatives that are under development.

CROP	USED TO PRODUCE	GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS* Kilograms of carbon dioxide created per mega joule of energy produced	USE OF RESOURCES DURING GROWING, HARVESTING AND REFINING OF FUEL				PERCENT OF EXISTING U.S. CROP LAND NEEDED TO PRODUCE ENOUGH FUEL TO MEET HALF OF U.S. DEMAND	PROS AND CONS
			WATER	FERTILIZER	PESTICIDE	ENERGY		
Corn	Ethanol	81-85	high	high	high	high	157%-262%	Technology ready and relatively cheap, reduces food supply
Sugar cane	Ethanol	4-12	high	high	med	med	46-57	Technology ready, limited as to where will grow
Switch grass	Ethanol	-24	med-low	low	low	low	60-108	Won't compete with food crops, technology not ready
Wood residue	Ethanol, biodiesel	N/A	med	low	low	low	150-250	Uses timber waste and other debris, technology not fully ready
Soybeans	Biodiesel	49	high	low-med	med	med-low	180-240	Technology ready, reduces food supply
Rapeseed, canola	Biodiesel	37	high	med	med	med-low	30	Technology ready, reduces food supply
Algae	Biodiesel	-183	med	low	low	high	1-2	Potential for huge production levels, technology not ready

* Emissions produced during the growing, harvesting, refining and burning of fuel. Gasoline is 94, diesel is 83.

Source: Martha Groom, University of Washington; Elizabeth Gray, The Nature Conservancy; Patricia Townsend, University of Washington; as published in Conservation Biology

SEATTLE P-1

http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/361634_biodiesel03.html and *Treehugger* put it into global perspective - <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2008/05/biofuel-comparison-chart.php>

"Oil and glycerin deplete the oxygen content of water very quickly, and that will suffocate fish and other organisms. And for birds, a vegetable oil spill is just as deadly as a crude oil spill."

<http://newenergytimes.com/Inthenews/2008/Q1/NYT-PollutionIsCalledByproduct.htm>

Bankruptcies

A number of companies that stepped into the biofuel arena have stepped out because of rising costs associated with feedstocks. Lots of biofuel plants are declaring bankruptcy and shutting their doors or are trying to. The US Judiciary system is forcing them to stay open, reorganize and not go under in order to comply with Federal mandate to meet goals for alternative fuels. Sounds very much like Soviet Planning™, doesn't it?

Gas stations make 1 penny per gallon on fuel sales. Fuel delivery trucks do not make any money doing deliveries now. One guy I listened to says he delivers from Walla Walla from Yakima every day (fresh produce) and last I spoke with him, his route delivers to around 75 locations with a fuel delivery charge of \$2 per stop. He spends over \$300 per day in fuel to do the deliveries and the Delis and fast food locations were not doing much business, so his deliveries were either being postponed or not being renewed. \$2 times 75 doesn't even cover his fuel costs anymore and when fewer orders are taken for deliveries, he is in a losing proposition. And that is the main reason I am no longer at Giggles Gluten Free Custom Bakery & Deli.

BIOFUELS IN WASHINGTON

The use of biofuels in Washington is increasing – but the crops used to make the ethanol and biodiesel come mostly from out of state.

BIOFUEL USE BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS in gallons for 2007

	TOTAL BIOFUEL	TOTAL FUEL	PERCENT BIOFUEL	SOURCE
City of Seattle	717,000	897,000	79.9%	Imperium Renewables
King County	1.7 million	13.3 million	13.1%	Imperium Renewables

BIOFUEL USE BY MOTORISTS In gallons for July-Dec. 2007, statewide

	TOTAL BIOFUEL	TOTAL FUEL*	PERCENT BIOFUEL	SOURCE
Biodiesel	4.9 million	536.4 million	0.9%	In and out of state
Ethanol	43.2 million	1.5 billion	2.9%	Out of state

* Includes methanol

Source: Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment, King County Executive's Office, state Department of Licensing

WASHINGTON BIODIESEL PRODUCERS

COMPANY	LOCATION	FUEL SOURCE	ANNUAL CAPACITY* In gallons
Imperium Renewables	Grays Harbor	Canadian canola	100 million
Standard Biodiesel	Arlington	Restaurant cooking oil	8 million
Columbia Bio-Energy	Othello	Northwest canola, Midwest soybeans, animal byproducts	6 million
Gen-X Energy	Burbank (near Tri-Cities)	Restaurant cooking oil, industrial cooking oil, Northwest canola	15 million (only permitted for 5 million)

* Not all facilities are functioning at full capacity

Source: Northwest Biofuels Association

SEATTLE P-1

We have personally witnessed the trend of next to no customers throughout the region for the Delis and fast food restaurants as prices for fuel escalates. Feed your vehicle or feed your family, but it is getting increasingly difficult to do both.

http://www.biodieselmagazine.com/article.jsp?article_id=2258

<http://www.biodieselinvesting.com/biodiesel-archives/2008/03/17/bioenergy-of-america-loses-bankruptcy-case/>

<http://www.biofuelsdigest.com/blog2/2008/03/25/today-in-biofuels-biotown-usa-falters-ethanex-files-for-bankruptcy-20-percent-increase-in-global-ethanol-demand-through-2011/>

<http://no1203.blogspot.com/2007/12/e3-files-for-bankruptcy.html>

<http://www.7gen.com/blog/20071114/2819-biodiesel>

EarthFuels is surviving because they diversified and are now into Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), to make ends meet - <http://www.earthbiofuels.com/> only after their bankruptcy proceedings were dismissed and they reorganized -

<http://www.bizjournals.com/dallas/stories/2007/12/10/daily9.html>

Gen-X Energies

At our Speaker's Symposium in our annual Alternative Energy Expo in Pasco, WA -

<http://maccpanion.com/RenewableEnergy/AlternativeEnergyFair.html>, we heard from Scott Johnson, President of Gen-X Energies <http://www.genxenergies.com/> and his challenges in the Biofuel markets. He is operating in the red after being in business for over a year with plans for expansion and more hiring has now been curtailed. He was refreshingly open about what he has learned and what he faces today. He has reduced his team by two and is not making any money at \$4.60 per gallon selling wholesale to the Biofuel industry, even as he has market supplies sold out two years into the future. He is negotiating for more customers, so he can sell the higher Cetane, tallow-based oil generated from beef fat received from Tyson Foods in Wallula, WA.

Gen-X Energies puts out a batch-processed quality product that meets all fuel-processing tests and yet, they can't sell tallow-based biofuel in Portland Oregon, because the vegans have put a cabosh on the smell of hamburger in the air. Gen-X Energies can only sell Portland Oregon, veggie-based oil from the waste stream.

Scott is championing a new seed for oil (Camelina Sativa) that has been harvested the Russian for years that only requires 3 to 7 inches of rain per year, so we can grow it here in dry-land wheat country in my region. Two crops can be harvested per year. 600 acres are in test right now in Montana. He is waiting for the FDA to approve it as a feed crop for animals so the bioremainds can be used as a cash crop as well. It is so hardy that it will even grow on parking lots (well, per haps not, but you get the idea) and has even better food characteristics (Omega3) than grape seed. ;^) http://www.targetedgrowth.com/agriculture_camelina.php

The current batch-process at Gen-X Energies is "sustainable", even as they get their methanol from and Integrated Circuit plant in Moses Lake, WA. The chip plant produces methanol as an unwanted byproduct from producing electronic chips and were disposing of it. Gen-X Energies was paying \$4 per gallon from the Pacific Ethanol plant in Boardman, Oregon and are now purchasing it for around \$2.

What keeps them going even as they are losing money on the current biofuel proposition? Federal rebates and a promise of better things to come. But for how much longer this situation can go on, Scott doesn't know.

Gen-X Energies expects to be doing \$25 million this year in business. But they are looking for capital funds to keep operating. Why? Commodities went through the roof. When Scott Johnson started Gen-X, he figured he could make a profit at \$2.50 per gallon. Today he can't break even at \$4.60. The only thing that is keeping Gen-X Energies afloat are the Fed subsidies at \$1 per gallon. That means he is running on fumes, based on taxpayer funds from a government that is already deeply in the red itself.

Scott Johnson also would like to get into algae for fuel processing. Two other companies in Washington State are already doing so on the west side of the Cascades. We don't know if they will stay in business or not.

Methanol Fires

There has been one methanol fire in Portland, Oregon that took down a biofuel plant and injuries resulted. A week later, another biofuel plant blew up, killing one person. It also was a result of using methanol in the biofuel process. Even though the Gen-X Energies own plant is up to standard, the EPA dropped by to have them make changes to make their plant even safer as lessons learned based on other plants that have burned down recently.

Alternatives to BioFuel

I would also like to point you to a page we created on an alternative to biofuel that produces real petroleum products from waste solids. This is a company that I am under non-disclosure (NDA) and limited to discuss beyond what we posted earlier. As a member of the New Energy Congress, I participated (along with Sterling Allan who is the owner of Pure Energy Systems Network and who helped found the New Energy Congress and who I work for), toured their facility the last week of May with a few folks from around the world looking for viable solutions to help reduce their growing municipal waste streams. I think that they found one. And they are in my own "back yard" in Pasco, WA. **Green Power** - http://peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Green_Power_Inc%27s_NanoDiesel:Catalytic_Pressureless_Depolymerization_%28Oiling%29

This isn't biofuel. This is real petroleum that is created through a proprietary catalytic process that accelerates time and temperature to create the same products that the earth itself produces (see my article on Abiotic Oil - <http://www.macompanion.com/macc/archives/April2008/Greenware/Fossil.htm>) and is commonly referred to incorrectly as fossil fuel. It is created in a matter of minutes instead of millions of years. It makes petroleum a renewable resource.

You can also read my other article this month on my experiences with hydrogen generation in a Ford E350 Cargo Van that appears to have helped doubled fuel mileage.

Conclusions

Forced mandates by government for no-win alternative fuels (i.e. Corn Ethanol) is a no-win proposition and rapes the taxpayer. Subsidies don't make companies profitable.

Biofuel companies will continue to close their doors as food for fuel directives take food off the table and money out of our pockets. That needs to stop. The parts of vegetation that are non-edible should be the focus for fuel and not the parts that are edible.

Processes need to be changed to reduce having to use chemical processes that pollute the environment and destroy buildings and businesses. Accidents happen. A spate of accidents at different locations would indicate something else is happening that would keep conspiracy theorists busy. And it is no secret that the petroleum and agribusiness industries are interested in eliminating any kind of competition to their control.

Companies like Gen-X Energies will continue to operate safely and be enviro-friendly, even as they continue looking into innovations that will eventually cost less in the future – such as continuous-process algae-based biofuels that Valcent in Texas is developing -

<http://www.valcent.net/s/Home.asp>

Sapphire Energies is producing gasoline from algae

http://www.sapphireenergy.com/mediacenter/press_release/1

We can meet the challenge of biofuel production, if the petroleum and agribusiness industries can stop pushing government to squeeze out biofuel production as competition to petroleum production and allow the biofuel industry to literally grow.

Support your local producer.

Further Reading

<http://www.greenworldbiofuels.com/> Greenworld Biofuels

<http://lists.nwbiodiesel.org/mailman/listinfo/discussion> Northwest Biodiesel Discussion List

<http://www.tulsabiofuels.com/> Tulsa Biofuels

http://www.utahbiodiesel.org/biodiesel_links.html Utah Biodiesel Cooperative

Here in the Northwest, we also have Lyle Rudensey, with his BioLyle Blog -

<http://biolyle.blogspot.com/> with an entry from May 14, 2008 – "Bio-Confusion- the Biofuels debate".

We've been busy adding to the PESWiki site almost daily as we monitor the situation –

http://www.peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Fuel_Efficiency_Alternative_Fuels

<http://www.peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Biodiesel>

<http://www.peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Biofuels>

<http://www.peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Ethanol>

<http://www.peswiki.com/index.php/Videos:Biodiesel>

http://www.peswiki.com/index.php/Directory:Biodiesel_from_Algae_Oil

http://www.peswiki.com/index.php/Videos:Algae_as_Fuel

The Shell Game

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Steve Alten

<http://www.stevealten.com>

Sweetwater Books

<http://www.sweetwaterbooks.net>

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

\$27 USD

ISBN: 978-1-59955-094-7

Strengths: Interesting Plot line.

Weaknesses: Swearing.

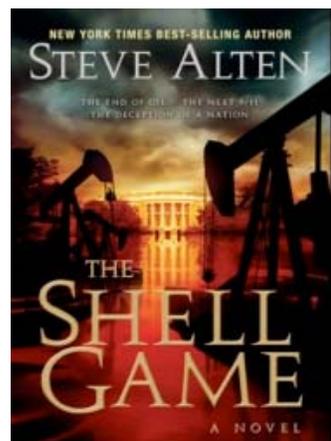
Interview:

http://cdn.libsyn.com/visibility911/visibility911_steve_alten.mp3

Oil Trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUUHCFiGbSU>

Jack Blood Interview:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YgUiiqpqjs>



Introduction

I'm so glad I didn't read any reviews or sites regarding this book, because some folks in the "9/11 Truth Movement" pretty much diss this book, because it doesn't finger the Israeli's in connection with 9/11 but rather, goes after the House of Saud, instead. This kind of activity against the author is obviously misinformation and disinformation brought on by intelligence community trolls. Steve Alten does rely heavily on a truthful book, "Crossing the Rubicon" by Michael Ruppert for the basis for his plotline.

On the other hand, my research goes in a different direction and no, I'm not a "Neo-Con", but I believe that the so-called oil shortage and Global Warming™ activities are blatantly false (read my article on Global Warming from the May 2008 issue of macCompanion magazine). Ergo, Steve Alten end sup becoming a possible tool of the left by preaching the same goofy Gaeist Gospel.

Now remember, "The Shell Game" is a work of fiction and a novel. It essentially fits the "edidence" (wrap a truth with lies) mode of writing. But look for the nuggets of truth. They are in there. If that is what is keeping the Intelligence community up nights, then it must be a good plot line.

What I Learned

Much of what I read confirmed my own suspicions regarding the existing state of politics and that our Constitutional liberties have been shredded by unchallenged Executive Orders (11310 and 11921) and the Patriot Act, so Steve's book becomes a Word of Warning. His fiction may become fact, if indeed we end up attacking Iran.

Part way into the book I read that a President McKuIn is in charge and neither Osama (not mentioned) nor Hillary Clinton are in the Oval Office with things happening in 2012. I finally did a doubletake after seeing McCain as President. McKuIn – McCain. Get it? And Ron Paul is not mentioned either, however, there is a guy named Mulligan who speaks a lot like Ron Paul and becomes president later. So it really is a work of fiction ;^)

We are lead to believe that there is a piece of software that allows Intelligence Agencies total view of worldwide electronic surveillance using an app named "Promis". It is reworked to take down the Arabian banking system's support for anti-American groups.

What really is the message behind the book? Our freedoms and liberties are on the brink. There is time, but not much, for us to do course corrections regarding our combined future.

Why would there be groups attacking the author directly and threatening his life for a work of fiction? The book might otherwise be forgotten after a while, but because the negativism against the author, this indicates that there may be more truth amidst the evidence than previously supposed.

Do we accept the baby food we have been served by our government? Can we turn things around with a sea change of opinion regarding the setups time and again by our so-called leaders and their handlers?

I enjoyed the quotes interspersed between the short, sometimes disjointed chapters. I liked the fact that Steve included a "Facto or Fiction" section at the end of the book along with a Suggested Reading section.

Why 2012 as the year for the story? The Mayan Calendar.

Conclusion

Usually I read a novel just for fun. I could do that with this book, but it made me think about what possibly could happen – and very well could happen. After all, a Nuke does go off in the US as part of the storyline, so this is a "Pre-Jericho" point of time. (Jericho is a 2-season story of corporate take-over of the country after a number of nukes take out parts of the country and the survivors work at trying to stay civilized.)

Will the current US Administration be tried for treason? Will we be able to get away from oil as currency? Does "Promis" exist? (Yes, it does - <http://www.rense.com/general17/maf.htm>.) Is there a nanobot Mu chip that can be inserted into us as part of a vaccine? (Yes, that RFID chip does exist - <http://www.technovelgy.com/ct/Science-Fiction-News.asp?NewsNum=939>.)

The twists and turns in the book really are apt in the title. And the cover art is really good too.

I enjoyed the book, except for the occasional use of mild profanity. That is why I lowered the rating on the book. Plausible? Yes. Probable? Only time will tell. Hopefully I will live long enough to see beyond 2012 and our troops will be home and we will be using other sources of energy that do not compromise our country and not literally keep us over a barrel.

For more reading, see http://peswiki.com/index.php/Site:LRP:The_Control_Paradigm by Leslie R. Pastor.

Hardware

Tom Bihn's Swift Bag

By Guest Contributor, Kristine LeFevre



Tom Bihn

www.tombihn.com

\$70 USD, \$69 CND, £35 GBP, 44€ Euro

Requirements: Desire to be organized



Strengths: Roomy, attractive, heavy duty construction and easy to carry.

Weaknesses: None. The perfect crafting bag.

Previous Reviews: [Large Café bag](#)

Introduction (Hi!)

First, a bit of background. As reviewed before here at macCompanion, Tom Bihn makes top shelf bags. All types of bags, but mostly having to do with any and all types of computer totes. From any type of notebook, specializing in fitting all the Apple brands, to even having a snug container for the Mac mini.



However, this particular bag is not one of their normal computer bags. It is a bag made for crafters of yarn, not crafters of code. It can go far beyond that. You see, I am a quilter, not a knitter, let's get this straight from the top. I know how to knit, and I have made a few scarves but this review is not about knitting. It's about quilting and the Swift knitting bag by Tom Bihn. This is a great bag that any crafter will appreciate, not just the knitters.

Description (all the technical stuff)

Made of 1050 denier Ballistic nylon or 1000 denier Cordura®;
Two clear vinyl zippered pockets backed with Dyneema Ripstop fabric
Button closure has three adjustments
One Black/White Dyneema Clear Bottom Yarn Stuff Sack with yarn guide is included
Button closure won't catch on yarn
Overall measurement: 7 1/2" x 12 1/2" x 13 1/2"
Volume: 15.5 liters / 950 cu.in.
Handles padded with Poron® foam

Made in the TOM BIHN Factory in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A

Using the Bag (The best part!)

What I like best about this bag is (everything) I can put all my quilting stuff into it and it fits. I have an 18 inch ruler that I have a hard time carrying with me, usually my other bags are too small. With the Swift, it is tall enough and wide enough that I can put it in at an angle and only a small portion sticks out. I love the see through pockets. When I am at a quilt class or a quilt day, I don't want to spend time searching for my tools. I can see right where they are, especially my phone. The Swift is so roomy, I can load it up with fabric, (the thought of all that fabric gives me chills) or the parts to my sewing machine, scissors, rulers, my lunch and drink, cell phone. I don't have to take my purse I can toss my wallet in and I am set.

I use the Black/White Dyneema Clear Bottom Yarn stuff sack to hold my pins, seam ripper, which I never really need but bring for my friends, and other small items. I put this right next to my machine to keep everything neat and organized. I have also used the stuff sack to hold my binding when sewing it on the quilt. It helps keep it from tangling up while sewing it on. I also use it to hold smaller bits of fabric for appliqué and hand piecing.

The handles are fantastic. They are so comfortable and just the perfect size for shoulder or hand. I also appreciate the button closure. It has 3 loops that let you close the bag no matter how full it is.



Conclusion (just wrapping it up)

I love this bag, and when I can put 2 of my favorite things together, bags and quilting, I am a very happy person. You don't have to be a knitter to appreciate this bag. The first time I took my bag quilting I had two friends ask me where I got it. They took everything out of it and really fell in love with it. **One offered me money for it.** Her comment was "if I am going to invest money into my hobby and use quality tools, I need a quality bag to hold it all in, and this is the bag" . **She ordered one this week** I believe. I am always looking for excuses to use this bag. It is great for all kinds of crafts and for anyone who loves quality. Since I have been using Tom Bihn bags I have not needed to buy other bags because these bags do everything and last forever.



Software

BannerZest Pro version 1.1.2 - Hassle free Banner Animation software

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Aquafadas SAS
Cap Omega
Rond-Point Benjamin Franklin
34 960 Montpellier FRANCE
sales 'at' aquafadas.com

<http://www.aquafadas.com/en/bannerzest/>

Released: Latest version May 28, 2008

\$49 Individual, \$129 Pro or get family packs.

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.11 or later; 1 GHz G4, G5 or Intel-based mac;
512 MB AM; Internet connection.

Forum: <http://mac-video-forum.aquafadas.com/en/>

Theme Options:

http://www.aquafadas.com/en/bannerzest/bannerzest_sdk.php

Wiki: <http://www.aquafadas.eu/wiki/Welcome>

Strengths: Quick Flash-like 3D banner animation.

Weaknesses: Banner Blockers do stop this from being visible.

Other Reviews: <http://www.aquafadas.com/en/bannerzest/reviews.php>

Introduction

Enliven your website or blogs in seconds and at low cost with BannerZest. It's the fastest and easiest way to add punch and movement to your still images online, and get the professional-looking slideshows.



BannerZest talks to all the leading website and blog editors. So whether you are using Apple iWeb, RapidWeaver, Dreamweaver, Freeway or any other tool, BannerZest allows you to get your banners online easily. Uploading work via FTP or to your .Mac account is fully supported from within BannerZest. To integrate a banner on a page you simply paste a code snippet that BannerZest has automatically prepared for you. Nothing could be easier.

My Experience

We can Flash without needing Flash, but I have it. Maybe you don't.

I downloaded and installed the version prior to the one listed above and it took a little getting used to figure out how to intuitively use this banner-animation app, but I finally figured it out and have it running happily on two sites – <http://www.macompanionc.com> and <http://www.synergycentre.net>, both of which are Dreamweaver sites. I haven't tried it on the PESWiki.com site yet, because it is based on the same technology as Wikipedia.com and we are in the middle of switching platforms and upgrading the server software for that site. One thing at a time.

I can only guess that the software developers at Aquafadas would be willing to do a version for wikis, because they did it for Web 2.0 sites such as Facebook and MySpace.

The Pro version does everything the Standard version does for about \$80 more - <http://www.aquafadas.com/en/bannerzest/standardvspro.php>. What that entails is media browsing, integration with Aperture and Adobe Lightroom, attaching the URL to media (which I had to back off because of website performance being less than stellar), custom JavaScripting for click-handling, integrating media viewers, loader optimization, Pro themes, access to the SDK and Developer resources and a little Email support.

The Quick Start Tutorial will give you just about everything you need to get up and going - http://www.aquafadas.eu/wiki/BannerZest:Quick_Start_Tutorial and the "How to" is the part I didn't have when I started, so it is now a very welcome addition to their site - http://www.aquafadas.eu/wiki/BannerZest:How_to#Integrating_your_banner They show it was there back in February and I guess I just didn't notice.

All I had to do was corral a bunch of pictures, set them in order, figure out which process for presentation I wanted to use and upload to the home pages of the websites. There were a few other site-specific files involved that had to be tweaked, but I go through it and you can see the results. Have any sales increased ramped up as a result? N Not that I know of. Has traffic improved? Not if the majority of readers are still using phone modems or using mobile connectivity to surf (as in Vince Serf, bet it?) the Internet. We tend to get spoiled when we are accustomed to fat pipes and figure everybody else is up-to-speed. Not so.

What changed with the update? Things that affect the rating, so now I can give it a wholehearted 5 out of 5 macCs. Those updates resolved FTP publishing issues, hyperlinking (my bugaboo), book theming (which I started with and then changed to other themes in both sites) and server authentication security support for .htaccess.

Greg Healy did a pretty good review (pictures and everything) over at MacApper – <http://macapper.com/2008/04/03/publishbannerzest-pro-flash-at-a-fraction-of-the-cost/>

I do, however have to agree with Karl Hodge over at MacWorld UK - <http://www.macworld.co.uk/procreative/reviews/index.cfm?reviewid=2550> that BannerZest Pro is much more than just a cheap Flash 3D act-a-like. It really is a web-based slideshow presenter.

Spring 2008 is almost Summer 2008 and I have not seen the Programmer's SDK for Themes yet. Maybe they are waiting to release during WWDC. I'm on the announcement list...

Conclusion

If you run websites and think a little pizzazziness and snazziness are worth pursuing, you might as well get a copy of BannerZest Pro and "GetR Dun"! This is just another great tool for those who use Macs to get their work done professionally and in a timely manner. It could very well be a "killer app " for all those webmasters who are hobbled to PC-based websites in getting them to move to Macs.

Bento 1.0v2 – A FileMaker Pro Users

Perspective

By Harry {doc} Babad © 2007



FileMaker, Inc.

<http://www.filemaker.com/products/bento/overview.html>

Released: Feb 13, 2008

\$49, Family Pack \$99 [USD], \$49 CND, £25 [UK], €33 [Europe].

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5.2 or later; Universal binary, 120 MB Hard Drive Space.

Strengths: Simple, Flexible, Template Rich, and User Friendly. It should well serve those who are new to database use and can live within its data handling limits. A useful to database newbies, a 100-page user guide.



Weaknesses: The lack of the ability to import, correctly format and do computations of fields associated with a totals or other mathematical function other than the basic four makes it both difficult to fully utilize for anything but the simplest types of data. My attempts to add a subset (17 records) to Bento were an exercise in frustration.

Previous Reviews: Ted Bade, macCompanion.com, Volume 6, Issue 4, April 2008.

For a demo of this product check either MacUpdate site or the FileMaker site.

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

Reviews were carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with a 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X version 10.5.3.

Introduction

Having read the reviews and other information that both announced and then assessed Bento, I decided to do a review on the product from a FileMaker pro [FMP] user perspective. I have long kept up with FMP upgrades. This is not because I needed the newer features — I don't. I was however trapped in the Macintosh OS update mode; an update or abandon your key applications *do-loop*.

Specifically, I use FMP to keep track of my media collections, address books and in the past, my Macintosh tips and hints and shareware serial number collections. I also use FMP to accumulate tax records, from scraps of paper (receipts) and e-receipts for my tax and other financial records.

So, why not do a comparison, after all FileMaker claims Bento is a "new personal database from as easy to use as a Mac". Indeed perhaps Bento is the missing iData from iWork.

Therefore this review predominantly focuses on the following questions, some of which parallel Ted Bade's review testing efforts.

♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦

The Task Was Straightforward, Implementation less so —

- Was it possible to replicate (recreate) a representative sampling of My FMP databases from scratch, to Bento?
- How much work, would it take to set up the database structure either using Bento's templates or from scratch?
- Could I accurately export FMP data base contents to Bento maintaining field function and data integrity?
- How did I like the Bento interface and usability compared to the FMP version's I've long used?

Since the developer claims, "Bento organizes all your important information in one place, so you can manage your contacts, coordinate events, track projects, prioritize tasks, and more — faster and easier than ever before"...I thought, why not.

♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦ # ♦

My Database Use – Flat Files Über Alles

Unlike Ted, I have about 50 databases 25 of which I use regularly, all in FMP format.

My individual active media plus collections, all in flat file formats, include:

- Books — Science fiction, mystery and I just started cataloging cookbooks as a separate database.
- Media — CD's & DVD, Vinyl [LPs mostly but some 78s] as separate files
- Collectables — Fine art, Beanie Babies and other collectable stuff.
- Addresses — Professional, Family & Friends, Crafts Business Customers, Musicians & Craftsmen Plus, and Stuff Suppliers.
- Technical Document/Bibliographic Indices — A listing of documents on science and technology topics I've collected, and their location, which contains document abstracts and biographical information and key word listings.

There is less than 1% overlap, relative to either the individuals' names or their businesses affiliations in my address files and none in the other databases. Well, there may be an overlap or two for Sci-Fi Mystery novels. Therefore, I've never seen the need to make these separate files relational, except as practice in database integration. Although educational, several attempts I made, when FMP turned relational, weren't worth the time.

As a personal information manager [PIM] including tips and URLs of note [PIM], I long ago switched to DEVONthink Pro [<http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/devonthink/>] another, for me more personally versatile, database application for stuff collection.

Recipe Management — As far as putting the 19,000 recipes I've gathered and organized as ca. 300 hieratical folders, at times linked with alas', {e.g., text/rtf/MSW, images and searchable PDF files} it would take a secretary. And the collection grows. So as much I like the features of *TheRecipeManager*, which I own. Life is too short and there are more recipes to discover then time to enter them into a database. [<http://www.therecipemanager.com/>] However, that will not stop me from doing future reviews of other recipe tools I found un MacUpdate : MacGourmet, Organized Gourmet; Yum, and Yummy Soup and perhaps A Cook's Books, that's the reviewer in me not the recipe collector.

Getting Started and Using the Software

Having read that "Bento organizes all your important information in one place. That it allows you can manage your contacts, coordinate events, track projects, prioritize tasks, and more — faster and easier than ever before. "The new personal database from FileMaker that's as easy to use as a Mac." Why not try it, sez doc.

Check out Ted Bade's Review — Ted Bade has done an outstanding review of Bento from a new users perspective. I agree with most of Ted's findings. [*Bento, Version 1*, Reviewed by Ted Bade, macCompanion.com, Volume 6 Issue, April 2008.]

I also began, as did Ted, with the tutorial to checkout how the program works but I know more in general about databases then the tutorial provides.

According to its publisher, "Much like FMP, One of Bento's strengths is the sheer variety of data types it handles. You can create basic fields for text, numbers, drop-down menus, or checkboxes. You can also store pictures, sounds, movies, ratings, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and more. Bento even has a calculation field for combining text and values for multiple fields or for simple mathematical operations." All of that sounded great— it's time to play.

So Here's My Tests & Results

Having selected two subsets of my CD collection FMP data and from Crafter Addresses databases, I exported a copy of each subset using either my total data index card input layout or my most useful table report. I exported the four files as comma delimited text, which gave a .csv (excel-like) format to be imported into Bento. I also captured, screen shorts of the field list for the two databases, to act as a guide to dealing with the linking, if necessary, field content-type information to Bento.

I made a screen shot of the complete list of field names from my CD database to serve as a reference for creating *test versions* of the FMP database from scratch in Bento. That turned out to be a double edge sword... useful in general, but unneeded when getting into the data import details such as correctly creating and labeling fields.

Field Name	Type	Options / Comments (Click)
Album Title	Text	Indexed
Category	Text	Indexed
Sub.Category	Text	Indexed
Cost	Number	Indexed, Auto-enter Data
Date Bought	Date	Indexed
Lead Artists	Text	Indexed
Notes	Text	Indexed
Order!	Text	Indexed
Record Company	Text	Indexed
Main Instruments	Text	Indexed
Disks	Number	Indexed
Total Cost	Summary	= Total of Cost
Total Disks	Summary	= Total of Disks
URL	Text	
eMAIL	Text	
Demo CD	Text	Indexed
Dupl	Text	Indexed
BIO	Text	Indexed
DVD	Text	
Owner (Other)	Text	
Action	Text	

Specify Field Order for Export

Select and move the fields to be exported. If you want to group data, choose the 'Group by' fields before moving the other fields.

Current Layout ("Index Card")

- Action
- Album Title
- BIO
- Category
- Cost
- Date Bought
- Demo CD
- Disks
- Dupl
- DVD
- eMAIL
- Lead Artists
- Main Instruments
- Notes
- Order!
- Owner (Other)
- Record Company
- Sub.Category
- Total Cost
- Total Disks
- URL

Group by

- Lead Artists

Field export order

- Lead Artists
- Album Title
- Order!
- Category
- Record Company
- Action
- BIO
- Cost
- Date Bought
- Demo CD
- Disks
- Dupl
- DVD
- eMAIL
- Main Instruments
- Notes
- Owner (Other)
- Sub.Category
- Total Cost
- Total Disks
- URL

Clear

CD 21 Fields Index Card List

Arranging Field Export Order in FMP

I will concentrate the remainder of the review on my findings with the CD collection records, using a subset of my son's albums. Bruce is musician and jazz educator who bothers records with his college groups, gigs with other more famous artists and does his own stuff.

Why you ask, only the CD collection? The CD FMP database had a significant number of both calculated fields, which are not a part of an address collection. Although bother databases contained web links and email address; why do double the amount of testing. Import of the more complex data set will clearly demonstrate what I need to test. Since both databases contain specialty fields such as numbers, dates, URL's, and email information as well as text and graphics; of all of the more usual standard field types were represented in my CD Collection database.

However, keeping the FMP file open to the subset I was importing to Bento was critical to completing the import. This turned out to be important because, the data subset I used, my son's albums, did not have entries in all of the 21 individual FMP data fields over the collection of 17 records (17 CD descriptions) I attempted to accurately import. That left me with a number of fields for which I had to guess about their field contents in order to *map* the data to the field. Okay I needed smartness pills.

Read the manual, at least the part of it, 5 pages, on importing data. I've reproduced a summary of that information in the table below. Alas, the instructions did not resolve my problems with field names. Neither did reading information on importing data help with my efforts to create a useable CD collection database from my FMP file.

Exporting CSV Files from Other Applications – Bento User’s guide page 76.

For the best results when importing information into Bento, follow these guidelines:

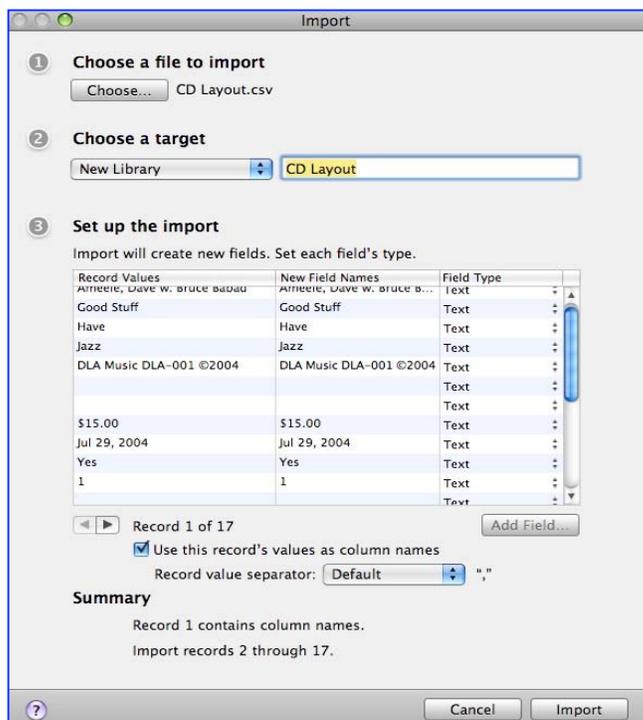
- Export your data from the other application as a CSV file. If you have multiple worksheets in a single spreadsheet file or multiple tables in a database, export each one into a separate CSV file.
- If your CSV file contains multiple tables because you are unable to export individual tables, then split the file into separate CSV files, creating one file for each table.
- Note whether your CSV file contains a row with the column names. Bento can use the values in that row as field names when you import the information into a new library. In Bento, these field names appear as labels in form view and as column names in table view.
- Make a note of the order of the fields in the CSV file. If the file doesn’t contain a row with the column names, you can refer to your notes to manually name the fields when you import the file.
- If your application is not able to export information in the CSV file format, check whether it can export a tab-delimited file instead. Create the tab-delimited file, and then import the tab-delimited file into an application that can create a CSV file, such as Microsoft Excel, FileMaker Pro, or Numbers. Or use a text editor to replace the tab characters in the tab-delimited file with commas.

Note: I followed the suggestions by exporting on both the index-card view and my main table, equivalent to creating several CSV tables and therefore Bento database files.

Bottom line – I managed to transfer with some they shortfalls a 17 items subset of the CD collection FMP database to Bento.

The following items were not achievable, at least by me.

- **Changing the File Field Type in an Existing Database** — When I first installed the CVS for my index card records, I inadvertently left all imported fields designated as text. I could not change these from text, so I could not correct them as appropriate, to currency (cost), number (of CDs), URL, or eMail... If I didn’t identify (e.g., change the default text field) and define field types at the beginning of setting up a new Bento database, you cant, change them.



- Reconciling Imported Field names between FMP and Bento — After several tries to match up field names to the incomplete information (data) I imported into Bento, I needed a work around. It turns out that in the subset of my son’s albums, I had not used five fields and could not get from the structure of the Bento database what items were mapped to what field. I finally had to create and import an artificial record that identified all the fields in that given CD collection index card form as part of the real data set.
-
- When I tried this in two steps, first import the field map, and then separately import the 17 album records, I could not get the importing process to work. [More on my problem in the following paragraphs.]
- I Could Not Create Calculated Fields in my Existing Bento CD Collection Database. — I wanted to create a calculated field in which the TOTAL individual record (CD) costs showed up in Collection Value. I also wanted to create a field that totaled up the number of CDs, not data records, in a total number of CDs field. After all, some albums come with multiple CDs. Despite the provided examples, I could not convert the imported field to a calculated one.

I tried a number of approaches ranging from starting all over with an added field record in FMP that contained the field ID added to a blank record. That helped because I could use that new, but unneeded record (no real CD information data) to reconcile the blank (unfilled) fields in my partial CD Collection new Bento database.

Just using a single record of data name ID entered did not work. I created a single data-Bento database (One entry in the CSV file) that I could use to link the transferred fields to the field contents, but the next import step did not work. I could not meaningfully (visibly) import my data containing 17-item CSV file in a way that allowed me to review their contents. Therefore I had no way of determining whether I maintained the integrity of my fields between FMP (CSV export) and Bento.

I could not create a new field in a Bento existing data set that used my costs to achieve a calculated total as a count (number) or to a dollar amount (currency).

Growl - I Won't Give Up! — Okay, how about starting a new database from the start on the feeding in the records from my FMP database. So I created a new Bento database and copied all of the fields I identified in the FMP original and tried it all again. Alas even when manually creating the fields I wanted and designating the field type, I was still stymied when I went to import the data from my CSV file. No matter what I tried I could not get the data into my “blank Bento database. It did mysteriously have over 40 non-visible records... Several hours and lots of caffeine later, **I gave up!** After only a partial success one in which I added an unneeded in FMP, field map to the record set for my son’s CDs. There were other formatting glitches by they were annoying but minor.

Babad CD Collection Card

Artist: Luther Hughes & The Cannonball-Coltrane Project (Glenn Cashman, tenor sax / Bruce Babad, alto sax / Luther Hughes, bass / Tom Raner/Dick Coash, piano / Paul Kreibich, drums)

Album Title: Luther Hughes & The Cannonball-Coltrane Project — LIVE CONCERTS

Record Company-Album ID: Provided by Bruce Babad 07-25-05

Notes-Instruments-Tracks-BIO:
 Notes for Cannonball Coltrane Concert Recordings General Album Name: Luther Hughes and the Cannonball-Coltrane Project Disks 1 and 2 are longer versions of the commercial album and were recorded live at the Orange County Performing Arts Center- Founders Hall - January 8, 2005 - Combined Sets Disk #1 1 Super Jet (T. Dameron) 09:52 Bass Blues (J. Coltrane) 14:37 Partido Mar Vista (P. Kreibich) 16:48 4 Trane Remembered (G. Cashman) 09:165 Sapphire (B. Babad) 02:52 05:54 Disk #2 1 No Mercy (G. Cashman) 09:165 Impressions (J. Coltrane) 06:47 3 Julian (B. Babad) 08:08 4 Ball and Trane (B. Babad) 08:15 Love For Sale (C. Porter) 11:36 6 Limehouse Blues (P. Braham/D. Furber) 10:26 Disk 3 (7:30p Set) & 4 (9:30 PM Set) of Live at the Orange County Performing Arts Center [01/05] *****Another set of CDs CD-1 and CD-2 Live at Clancy's January 14, 2005 Recorded by Steve Barker: BBAT Productions, 818/382-2515

=> Check the notes field layout above.

Bento Imported Record Live Concert CD

Notes for Cannonball Coltrane Concert Recordings

General Album Name:
Luther Hughes and the Cannonball-Coltrane Project

Disks 1 and 2 are longer versions of the commercial album and were recorded Live at the Orange County Performing Arts Center - Founders Hall - January 8, 2005 - Combined Sets

Disk #1
 1 Super Jet (T. Dameron) 09:51
 2 Bass Blues (J. Coltrane) 14:37
 3 Partido Mar Vista (P. Kreibich) 16:48
 4 Trane Remembered (G. Cashman) 09:16
 5 Sapphire (B. Babad) 02:52 05:54

Disk #2
 1 No Mercy (G. Cashman) 07:25
 2 Impressions (J. Coltrane) 06:47
 3 Julian (B. Babad) 08:08
 4 Ball and Trane (B. Babad) 08:15
 5 Love For Sale (C. Porter) 11:36
 6 Limehouse Blues (P. Braham/D. Furber) 10:26

Disk #3
 Disks 3 (7:30p Set) & 4 (9:30 PM Set) of Live at the Orange County Performing Arts Center [01/05]

 Another set of CDs CD-1 and CD-2
 Live at Clancy's
 January 14, 2005
 Recorded by Steve Barker: BBAT Productions, 818/382-2515

Notes Layout From FMP Record

Discomforts to Put it Mildly

The Overall Interface — Yuck, I already miss FMP. – Although Bento allows me to show only the record field as an index card hiding the other two panes. But there is no way to only show a subset of the table to create a custom report. With 21 fields, that’s an awfully wide table even on a 24-inch monitor. Unlike in Excel, you can’t hide fields. Ted’s review describes the interface so I needn’t repeat that here.

I want my database to open in my favorite view, and to have the relevant data fields accessible in that view. If I need new fields, I’ll add them, in a separate window that is designed just to do that. While I’m the field definition window, if I want to designate or change the filed type [text, number, data, calculation] I can, and as needed assign the appropriate field attributes (date style). No unneeded screen space is used and I switch back to my data when I’m done tweaking the fields.

Layouts – Reports – Data Subset Layouts — Using a database to search for data is a much happier experience if you can take the master (total) set of data (e.g., all identified fields) and subdivide them it more narrowly focused views, Therefore, you can look at only the data you want to access or analyze. All of your data is still in the database but your only view part of it in a customized subset. This process is called creating a report from your total set of fields, allowing you to view different reports for different data analysis uses. You therefore, avoid going to an index (all fields) display. As noted above, Bento does not yet have this ability.

In my test example a musician-artist list, an album title and whether I own or have listed the album for future purchase. Another report could contain musician-artist list, an album title and the notes that contained their track names and times or a musician-artist list and a BIO.

URLs and Email Fields — I found it uncomfortable to use Bento when creating databases that had no basis or links to Apple's Address Book, iCal applications, when trying to create URL or email fields. I did not want my fields to have any link to Apple's applications since I don't use them. Yet I still am not sure whether the software will always allow me to enter email address unrelated to Address Book or those that might also be in Mail without adding information to those Apple applications.

Conclusions/ Recommendation

Bento, FileMaker's new consumer-level database, aims to do for the database what iWork's *Numbers and Pages* did for the spreadsheet and the page layout program, respectively: make them easy and accessible.

My main reason for considering moving from FMP to Bento would be to maintain my FMP databases using a simpler and leaner interface. Alas my test demonstrated, that at least for me, that could not be achieved. If you our reader has a way to make the FMP to Bento transfer work, I'd be happy to try it but for now, NADA.

I look forward to Apple's (e.g. FileMaker's) evolution of this software as they've done with the iWork and iLife 2008 tools. Indeed before I use Bento again, to migrate my databases or extend the one I use for business purposes it needs serious upgrading.

Let's Get Focused — What I really need is a variant of Leopard (OS X) FileMaker Pro, which contains Bento's rich user interface but has richer features. It in effect would revert FMP back to version 3.0 (or so) that was released around 1995. It was at the time, not only a significant overall upgrade but had added new relational and scripting features, which many users found useful.

As I noted earlier, I didn't use the additional relational and scripting features, but creating the databases I do use became with version 3, quite flexible and simple. The product could be called FileMaker Lite and should sell for under \$100. Alas this product is totally useless to me, despite its easy to use and otherwise outstanding features — It simply does not import and then address the data I've collected for many years, and continue to collect in FMP.

To be generous, despite my frustrations with Bento's import and field treatment, I'll tag team with Ted and give it **3.0 macC's**. After all I made importing work, sort of!

PS

I have also used Macintosh versions of MS File, an early version of Microsoft's Accent, and the database included in the now discontinued and unsupported AppleWorks. Neither did much for me.

Photoshop Elements version 6

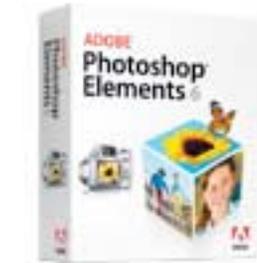
Reviewed by Ted Bade



Adobe Photoshop Elements version 6
<http://www.adobe.com>

\$80 USD, \$ CND, £ GBP, € Euro

System Requirements: PowerPC G4 or G5 or multicore Intel® processor, Mac OS X v10.4.8 through 10.5.2, 512MB of RAM (1GB recommended), 64MB of video RAM, GB of available hard-disk space (additional free space required during installation), 1,024x768 display resolution, DVD-ROM drive, QuickTime 7 software required for multimedia features, Internet connection required for Internet-based services



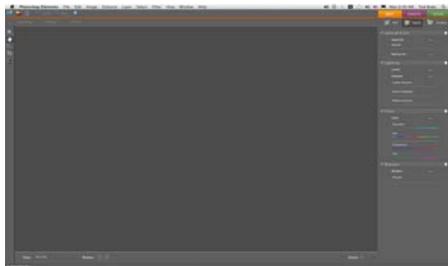
Strengths: Powerful, fast, easy to use, guided modes, work well on older G4 Macs as well as newer multicore ones.

Weaknesses: Default interface leave little space for image.

For information and a demo of this product: [Adobe Elements For Macintosh](#)

Adobe Photoshop Elements 6 is the latest version of Adobe's consumer level photo manipulation program. It is peppy and full of features for automatically or manually tweaking your photos to perfection. There has always been a lot to like about Photoshop Elements and version 6 is right on track offering even more options than before.

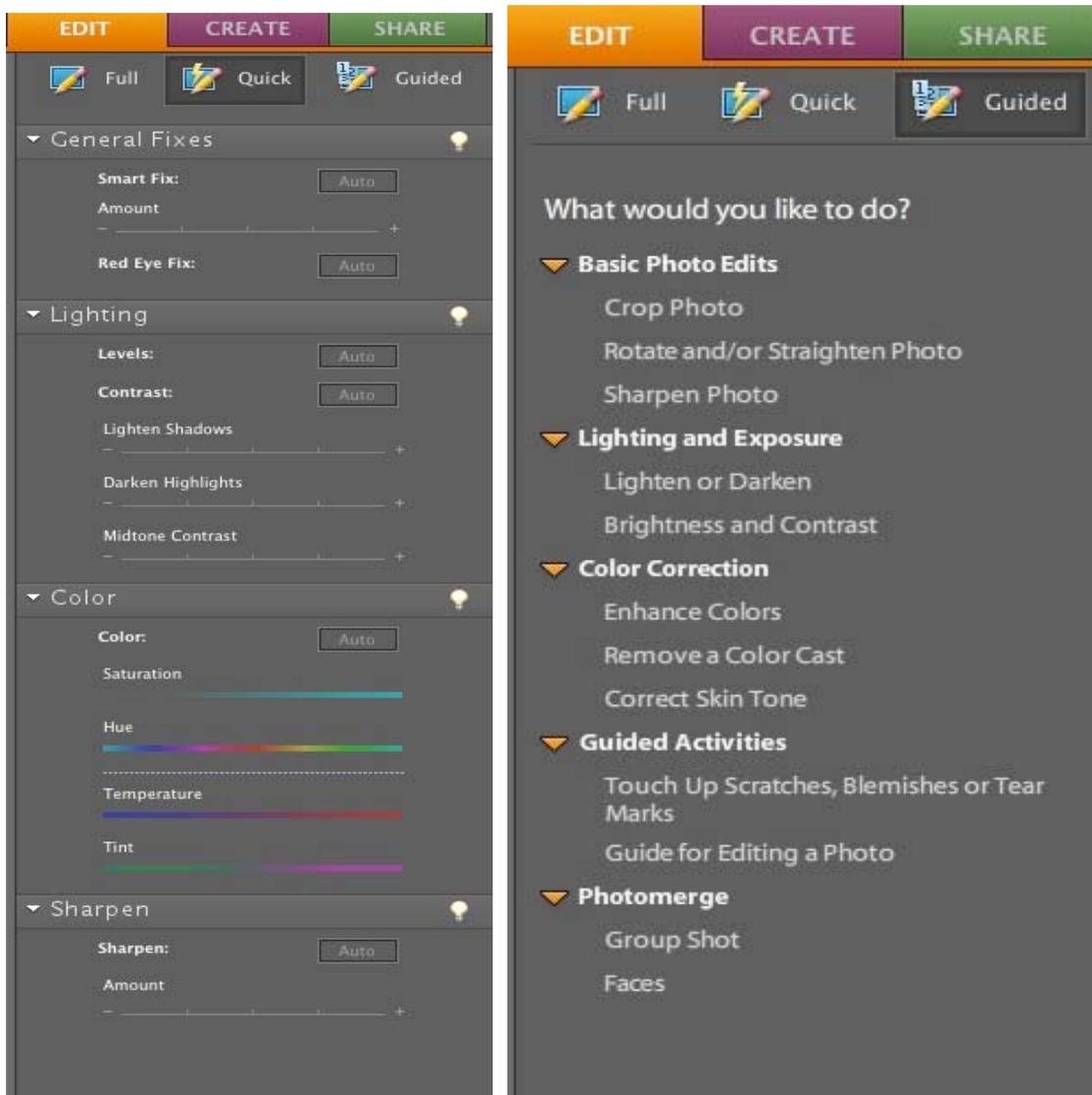
Photoshop Elements might be a bit less powerful than Photoshop, but from the viewpoint of the amateur photo hobbyist, there is little this program lacks. Unless you are a high-end photographer, you won't find Elements lacking. If you do find it lacking, you probably have a profession that justifies the cost of Photoshop. ☺



(The working window)

Element's screen presentation truly cries for a large monitor space. The new gray background color of the interface does make images seem more bright and beautiful, but there is still a lot in the way of crowding the screen with tools. The top of the window contains the menu bar and some sizing tools, the bottom has some more controls as well as a "Project Bin", showing an icon of images in the current project. The left side contains the typical tool palette, and finally the right side contains a large space called the palette bin, providing access to a variety of palettes depending upon what you select. While all these features are useful, they do reduce the space available for the image. This, I feel, makes it more difficult to edit images. This wasn't such a big deal on the 22" screen connected to my MacPro, but does become an issue when working on my 15" PowerBook. On the small screen, I found myself spending some time getting the image larger and the Elements interface stuff smaller. This is my only complaint about this program.

Even though it takes up visual space, the Palette bar can be useful. I found it a quick way to access and even learn about using Element's features, using Element's guided tools feature. This new addition is a good way to learn about and experiment with the features contained in this program. A real boon to new or novice users.



(Guided menus, great for novices)

On the top of the Palette bar are three tabs, Edit, Create, and Share. Clicking any tab provides controls reflecting that choice. The Edit tab has three sub-tabs, Full, Quick, and Guided. In the full mode, the user controls Elements using the pull down menus, keyboard short-cuts, and so forth. In the “Quick Edit” mode this area shows a bank of controls that are typically used when editing a photo. Broken into the four categories: General Fix, Lighting, Color, Sharpen. The user can manipulate the image clicking on buttons or moving sliders to cause an effect. Since the image changes in real time, you can instantly see the results of your manipulations. (and if you have enough monitor space, you can have both the original and modified images shown for comparison). Buttons are provided to easily step back if you don’t like the results of your adjustment.

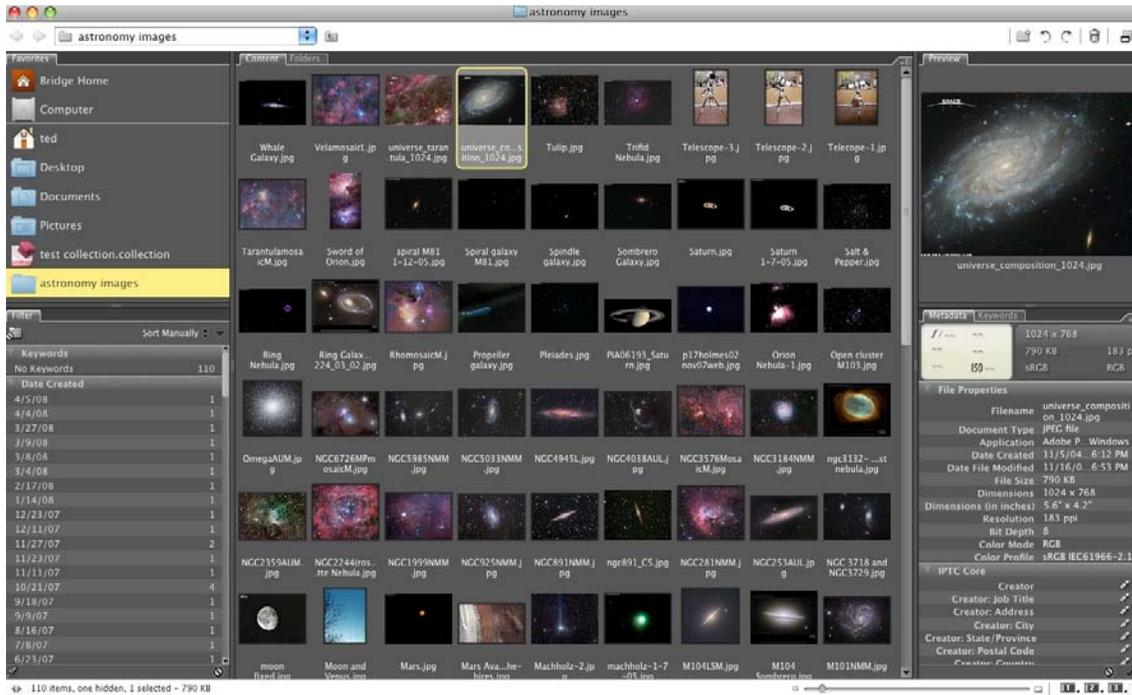
The guided edit mode is designed for people new to using Elements and working with digital images. I found working in this area very comfortable and a lot easier. This section divides the tasks of editing a photo into categories: Basic, Lighting and Exposure, Color correction, and Photo Merge. There is also a guided activity section that asks a series of questions about what the user wants to do with the image and provides the tool to make each adjustment. This area, is a real benefit to someone new to digital photo editing. If you have the screen space, turning on the before and after views is a terrific way of seeing how the tolls affected the image.

The Create Tab provides tools to create a variety of different ways of presenting your images, such as making a photo collage, a photo book, or even a PDF slide show. Besides the regular items, you can also create greeting cards and CD/DVD labels and jackets. The Elements package includes a goodly amount of artwork that can be used to enhance such projects.

The Share Tab gives the user ways to share their images. You can build a variety of web pages, burn images to a CD or DVD, attach your images to an email, or even order prints, right from Photoshop Elements (through a service called MorePhotos).

As in previous versions, Elements includes Adobe's Bridge application, an easier means of accessing and working with images. Bridge provides a lot of information about the image and gives the user tools for organizing photos and setting up automated jobs sets among many other abilities.

As I expected, PhotoShop Elements ran really fast on my MacPro. This is the first version of Elements that is Universal Binary, so it is ready to take advantage of the stack of fast Intel processors in that computer. What surprised me was how well it worked on my older PowerBook G4 laptop. I was easily and quickly able to manipulate a variety of images with it, and didn't really notice much in the way of hesitation when using the PowerBook. The only disadvantage with the laptop was the screen space. I closed as many tool bars I could when editing images so that I could see it well. This means that Elements 6 is definitely the application to take along on a trip or special event!



(A view of Bridge)

Most of the editing I tried was a spectacular success. But that is to be expected from this program. I was able to easily remove scratches from an image without any trace of my playing around. I removed a person's elbow from one image, easily replacing it with the brick pattern that would have been there if the elbow hadn't. These effects occurred almost instantly with either of my test machines. I found working with the guided tools area interesting, but so well laid out that I adapted to it easily. Almost all of the important fixes are available in that section. I did run into one or two issues, but nothing that was really annoying. My biggest problem is that there were so many tools to learn about and too little time before this review was due!

While not every picture can be saved, it is amazing how a little constructive tweaking with Elements can take the average "ho-hum" image and make it a good one. More importantly, it can do some truly fabulous things to good or great images, giving you truly excellent results. There is a lot to like about this program. There is also a lot of depth to it, which can be mastered over time.

Besides all this power, there are a couple of interesting features in Elements 6. They have automated the process of moving a person or a face from one image to another. A feature like this can be used to correct a problem when taking group shots. Take the better faces from several images and replace them in one image, theoretically producing a "perfect" shot from several okay ones. Nothing really beats getting it right when you shoot the image, but in a pinch, a cheat like this can get that one good image from a set of not so good ones! The feature works pretty well, and I am sure that as one gains experience using it, the results will become better. This tool set can also be used to paste together shots to make a panoramic image, adding a breath of detail to a series of images.

Conclusion

If you want a powerful tool to edit your digital photographs, you need look no farther than Photoshop Elements. It offers plenty of power, a terrific selection of tools, many features for not only editing your images, but also for presenting them, and is a breeze to use. If you are a beginner to the world of digital photography, the guides available in this program are a must have and if you are more experienced, they can be kept in the background and out of your way. By far, Photoshop Elements 6 is the best program I have ever used to work with digital photographs! It is well worth the cost.

FileUtilsCM X 1.7.3

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2008

Aracode, Inc

<http://free.abracode.com/cmworkshop/>

Release Date: 04 November 2007

Freeware, Donations requested

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later including Leopard; Universal binary.

Strengths: Easy to install use to give faster access to some finder actions via you contextual menus



Weaknesses: Information about some of the modules is sparse unless you are a user of non-Macintosh operating systems..

Previous Reviews: links to previous *macCompanion* reviews on the same product.

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

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

Reviews were carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X version 10.5.3.

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

Introduction Including Publisher's Summary

Over my years as a Macintosh user both of the Classic and the newer Macintosh OS X version, I have sought out applications to add functionality to the OS's interface. For the most part I've found individual applications and more recently Contextual Menu Items that I individually installed — something I found more esthetically cluttered then I'd like.

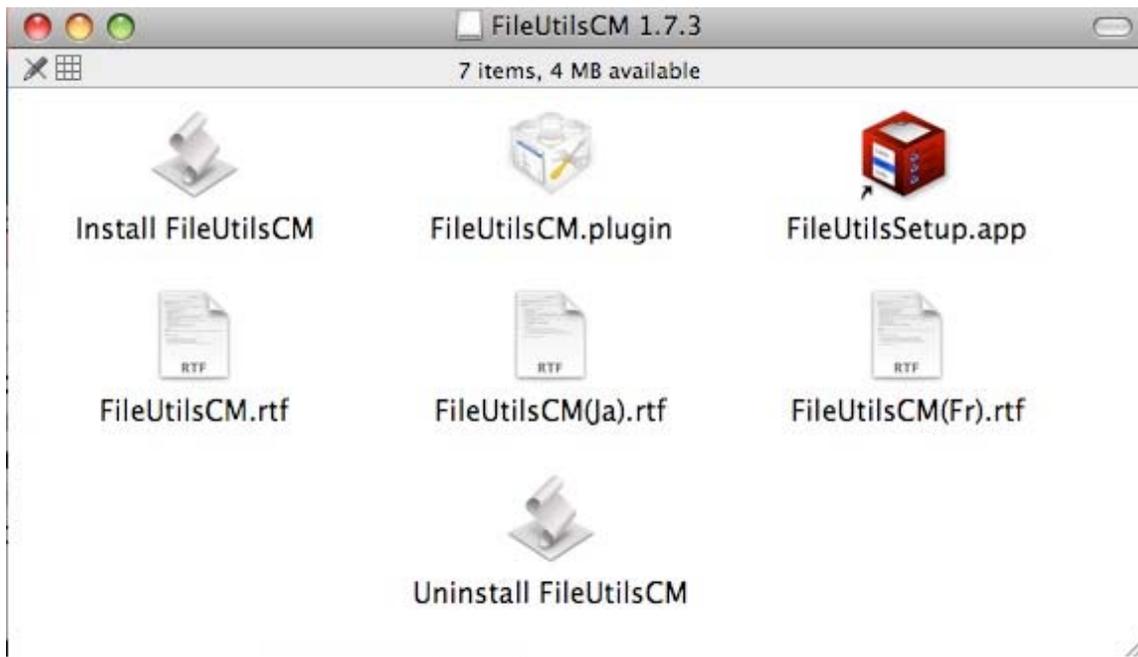
So when I discovered that FileUtilsCM installed tools which included the ability to:

- Copy a document or folder path to clipboard
- Toggle a file or folder into lock/unlock
- Set file type and creator from extension
- Occasionally, remove file type and creator, and
- Refresh the look of an object in Finder

I thought, why not — the result is this review. Although the program has other attributes, see its features, these were the tools I use, having installed individual application/CM to handle the specific tasks.

Getting Started

Installing the program was easy using Install FileUtilsCM, a script. It was also simple to set up its attributes (features) using the program's FileUtilsSetup application. Should I want to try something else there is also a deinstaller script.

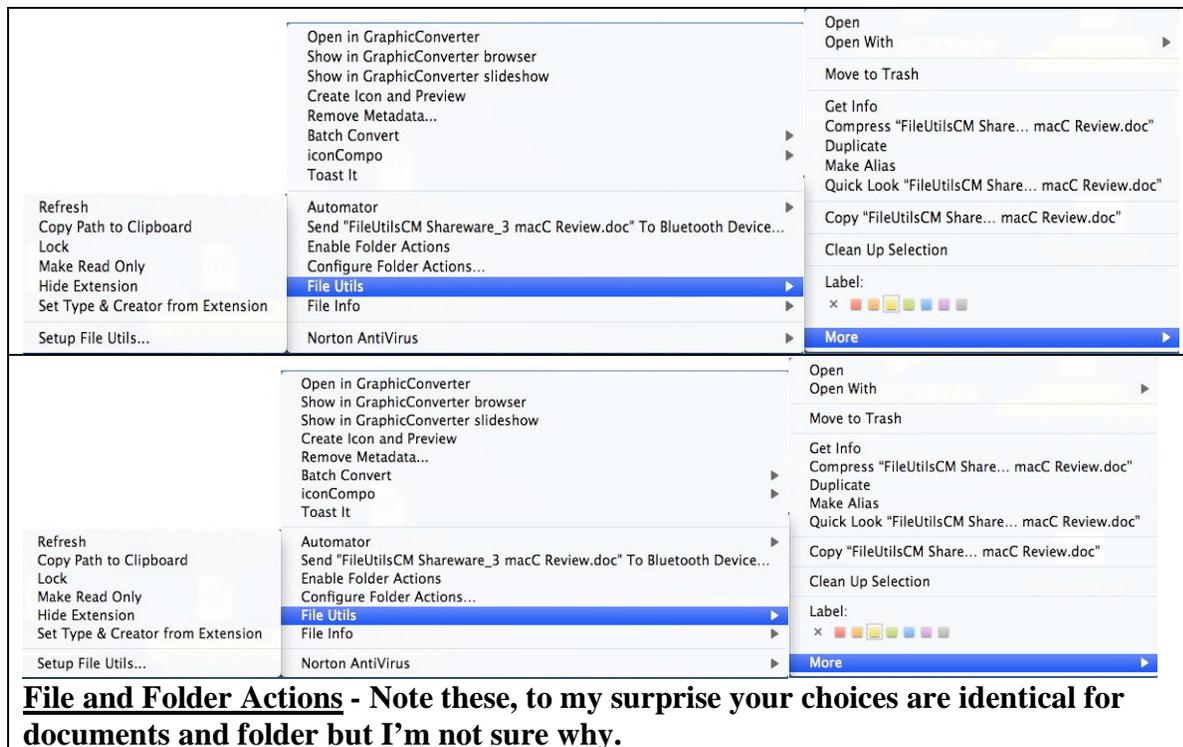


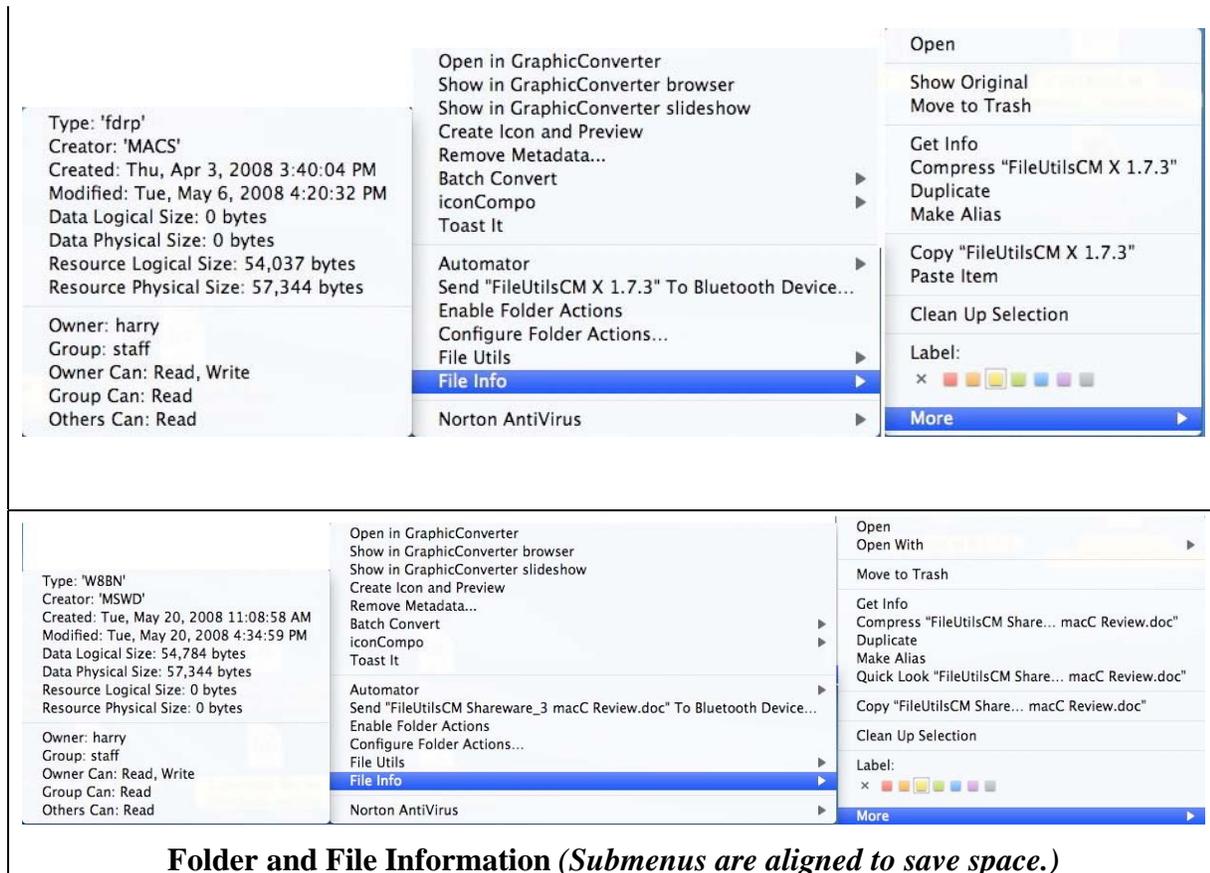
Once installed, you may deactivate any module you do not need via the software's preferences which are accessed directly from the contextual menu.

Accessing and using the products features is trivially easy. Any selected plugin is activated when you click on any object in Finder. By either control clicking (one-button mouse) or using the right hand button on three-button (or more) mouse brings up a contextual menu appropriate to the format of the selected item. There are different actions/choice available for document, folder and/or applications.



As illustrated below, when you open a contextual menu, an item called “more” is found at the bottom of the window. Access “more” brings up a second CM window that lists the available actions or leads to further nested utilities. Because it has so many features, FileUtilsCM places its options in two submenus, one listing actions it can perform and another showing detailed information about the selected Finder item.





I've used FileUtilsCM for several weeks, in anticipation of this review. It's saved me both time (minutes) when bringing up finder info and refreshing finder objects. I also have used it to occasionally tweak file type and creator to access orphan files to extract their content. The later use is on recipes from downloaded recipe collections for which I don't own the software. It even works on occasion and is more fun than the alternative. The alternative, of course is to do Google searches on each in individual recipe based on its file name — aren't thousands of hits wonderful.

Complete Feature List — FileUtilsCM is a contextual menu plug-in for setting different file or folder attributes. It is a set of several utilities, which can:

- Refresh the look of an object in Finder,
- Copy path to clipboard,
- Touch (reset) creation and modification dates,
- Toggle document/file/application lock,
- Set write/read-only Unix attribute — Untested, have no need
- Toggle extension visibility,
- Set file type and creator from extension (by consulting internetconfig preferences),
- Remove file type and creator — Untested, have no need
- Remove resource fork — Untested, have no need since my email program deals with sending email from my Macintosh to users using other platforms like Linux.
- Clear "execute" Unix attribute — Untested, have no need.
- Obtain file information in "File Info" submenu.

Discomforts

There are a number of limitations to the program of that I'd like added at the next major update.

- Alas, a folder or disk size is not calculated (nor are bundled applications.)
- Neither are aliases resolved, but you can set properties or view information about alias file itself. (I have no idea why I would do the later.)
- Although I checked both the product's readme files and information on the website, I had a bit of trouble understanding what the individual modules did, once I stepped outside the standard /Finder/OS — vocabulary; please add longer definitions please to the readme file.

The former would be useful, but I'm not sure whether I'd use a more robust alias tool.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Abracode's FileUtilsCM 1.7.2 is a contextual-menu plugin that provides a number of options for working with file attributes in the Finder. I found many of the freeware the FileUtilsCM useful, other not so much or not at all. However the price is right — Free. So try the product, and if you find it eases your daily repetitive file associated chores by using conceptual menu, go for it. Despite I only found half of its modules useful, I have not yet deinstalled CM utilities such as the *Path Finder CM* <<http://www.cocoatech.com/>>; but there's no conflict between the two CM's. Never the less, I cannot deny it 4.5 macCs.

I also recommend you check out the developers QuickAccessCM which I will review next month. It is CM tool for getting easy access to frequently used folders, documents and applications.

Note

"Touch" is a Unix command that updates the modification date of a file, changing it to the current date and time. So, "touch modification date" means to update the modification date of the target file. As noted elsewhere, alas no reference, better names for the menu item might be "touch file" or "Update modification date".

iKey 2.2.2 - A system & applications wide utility for creating short cuts

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2008

Script Software
essential utilities

Developer: Script Software
Programming by Philippe Hupé.

Manual by Adam Engst

<http://www.scriptsoftware.com/ikey/>

License: Shareware

Released: 07 Aug 2006

\$30.00 [USD]



Audience: All user levels.

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later; Universal binary; It works with Leopard OS X 10.5.3.



Strengths: You can easily use iKey to automate countless tasks, freeing you to do things that are more interesting, perhaps more shortcuts than you than you might usually need or memorize. But you can access list of created short cuts, if memory fails, so why not play.

Weaknesses: Although the interface is straightforward, as a user of QuicKeys and MS Word both of which allow recording shortcuts, I still found the interface took a bit of getting used to. After all, there is a difference between simply and carefully recording a complete sequence of actions, and taking a few minutes to plan, stepwise enter and test a set of actions with the built in iKey Editor. On the positive side, it's easier to edit an iKey macro then a recorded sequence.

Previous Reviews: iKey 2.1b by Harry {doc} Babad, macC August 2005

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Reviews were carried out on an iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X version 10.5.3.

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

Introduction

During the years that have passed since owning my first Macintosh, an SE-30, my feeling about macro generating tools have, several times, waxed and waned. When first introduced with tools like MS Word's built in ability to record repetitive actions, and the earliest versions of *QuicKeys* (now X 3.2.1 - <http://www.startly.com/products/qkx.html>), which not only recorded your sequential actions as you "input" them but also added a macro editor to tune up individual entry steps.

I got all fired up and created shortcuts by the score. These non-programmer automation tools were going to save me lots of time and hopefully, somewhat protect me from getting repetitive motion disease (e.g., carpal tunnel syndrome). Well, perhaps not!

In my Classic OS Macintosh macro-mania days, to stay organized, at least when creating shortcuts, I made macro lists. These were cheat sheets of shortcuts as a function of both their use and focus and pasted them near my monitor. (e.g., I recorded a specifically formatted recipe document in MSW to make cutting and paste of recipes easier.) Since then MSW has strengthened its template functions so that shortcut was no longer needed.) As months passed, I was down to only a few items I used, *more or less*, repetitively.

I also found, as the years passed, and I switched to OS X, that the QuicKeys software became more flexible and powerful. But as it gained features and complexity it soon became just a bit over-priced for my needs. [It did however retain the strong recording feature I loved, to parallel its "programming {scripting} tools.

So I abandoned *QuicKeys* and on occasion chipped with other macro tools I found on MacUpdate.com. But there were still things I wanted to do, often, outside of MS Word, that Apple's Keyboards and Mouse preferences software did not allow me to create as a macro. [Oh, I don't script nor do I want to learn, and don't yet know how to use Apple's Automator. I didn't even learn how to create HyperCard stacks. *If I can't record it; I don't want it...* unless I can download it for easy use.]

When I recently re-discovered **iKey**, which had continued to be evolved since I tested it years ago, both OS X and was Leopard compatible, I decided to try again, despite the fact that I had no *sequential sequence steps record* feature. Here's my updated review.

Note: I herein distinguish between recording a key sequence, which iKey does and recoding a sequence of combined keyboard entries, mousing around folders in the finder to a selected folder or document; and the like — that's a recorder. Although capturing a set of keystrokes or mouse clicks literally records them into a part of a macro sequence that is not where my needs focus.

Product Description

The iKey software allows creation of shortcuts that perform an action or sequence of actions each of which can be launched by key combinations or menu or event. iKey is an *automation* utility, a program that creates shortcuts to accomplish repetitive tasks.

Key adds an essential but missing element in Mac OS X, automation! iKey will save you and your company precious time and energy. Its all about efficiency, we call this "doing less and accomplishing more." iKey can turn some repetitive action that might consist of thousands of mouse clicks (in various applications, in menus and different dialog boxes) and pages of typing into one iKey shortcut that can be launched anytime to perform the exact same action with a simple key press.



The software allows you to assign global hotkeys to a wide variety of single or multiple step complex actions. In essence, an iKey shortcut is a little program in its own right, but you don't need to know the first thing about programming to create one. All you have to do is put together the three necessary parts of a shortcut: one or more commands that give the shortcut its functionality, a context in which it runs, and a launcher that defines how the shortcut is activated.

Shortcuts can be scoped to work in all applications or limited to only work in a specific application. iKeys provides a wide range of ways to trigger your shortcuts, including hot keys, timers, date & time, application events, time range, toolbars, and USB devices.



iKey lets you create shortcuts, which can run an action based on:

- a keyboard equivalent or click from any USB mouse, trackball, game pad and keyboard. Compatible accessories include those from Mighty Mouse, Xkeys, Contour Mouse, Shuttle Pro, USB devices from Kensington, Microsoft, Logitech, etc.
- and/or combined with an item of a menu
- and/or including programmed time/date.

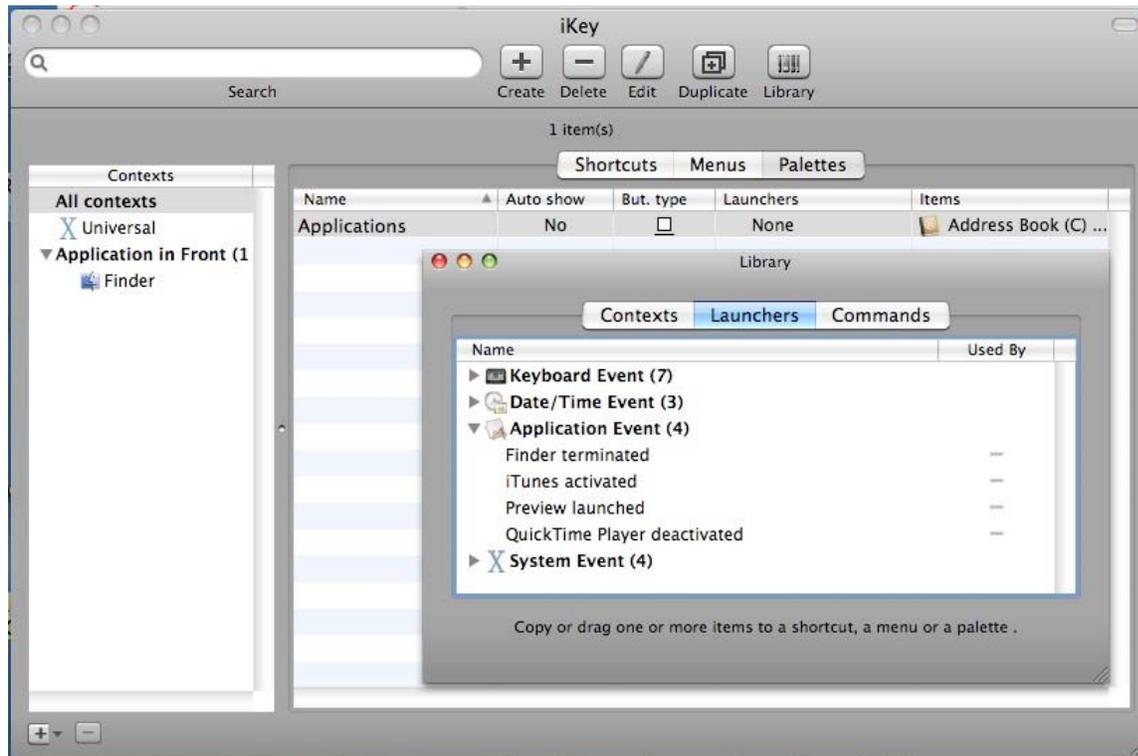
The product comes with a suburb manual; one written by Adam C. Engst entitled the "Take Control of iKey" Manual. His manual helps you install iKey and provides a step-by-step usage tutorial for this essential software. For a change, in this my second

review of the product, I worked through the examples until I was comfortably familiar with the product's "programming" interface. That few hour exercise was well worth the trouble.

As an aside: Adam started the TidBits newsletter and has written numerous technical books, including the best-selling Internet Starter Kit series, many magazine articles and the highly successful [Take Control Electronic Books Series](#), some of which I've reviewed.

My Experience Using the Software

I downloaded the product, copied its folder into my Applications folder, and the software is ready to use after the usual password and if desired preferences tweak. The first time you use the iKey editor, it asks you for your administrator's password, because some the shortcuts will likely be applied system wide. iKey comes with a largish number of built-in shortcuts, but I found all of them unsuited to my computing needs and style since I don't use most of Apple's iApplications. All of this of course, started after I had again skimmed the manual.



iKey Editor Interface

Despite having been last updated 16 Jun 2006, I had no problems either replicating sample from Adam's book shortcuts or creating a few, using the latest version of Macintosh OS 1X 0.5.3 Leopard on a new iMac.

I also, in its preferences, added an icon to launch iKey Editor directly from the Apple Menubar. I'll likely to remove this access, since I don't usually get short cut happy.

To create a new shortcut, launch the iKey Editor. When it opens, select "New", and the shortcut creation screen will appear. Then do your thing – Combine a keyboard equivalent or click from any USB input device with an item of from an application menu and, if needed, a preprogrammed time/date.

Not all my shortcuts worked the first or even the second time I created them. Hint, work out the steps needed on your computer and copy them to a piece of paper. Use it to collect your shortcuts event sequence. Testing-testing. Make correction to the instruction set as needed. For this review, I created my own shortcuts focused on MS Word, and the Finder, I part to launch obscure but necessary applications and documents.

Discomforts:

Recorder Needed — As I've previously noted, a *click and peck* recorder to capture my actions would be welcome. Perhaps an iKey Lite, which records would be with the developer's time.

Recommendations

The iKey software was not intuitive, but once I done some refreshing of my memory, it was again surprisingly easy to use. Although my test time was limited, I found I could create, reliably, almost all the shortcuts I might once have wanted.

From the perspective of working with the product, and formerly working with QuicKeys [\$80], iKey is a cost effective productivity aid for Mac OS X. iKey is a moderately priced shareware product [\$30] which at times could likely meet my relatively simple needs.

If you are willing to take the time to create shortcuts and can remember their hotkeys, iKey will be a useful shortcut creation tool. It can save you many, many keystrokes and reduce the tedium of repetitious actions. If you want or need a utility that allows creation of shortcuts to perform an action or sequence of actions, each of which can be launched by key combinations or menu or event, iKey is the utility for you. This easy to use, macro/automation utility can save time, typing, and hundreds of clicks everyday.

iKey helps you combine these parts to achieve your automation goals. This relatively easy to learn macro/automation utility can save time, typing and hundreds of mouse clicks everyday. Avoid carpal tunnel, get more accomplished and have fun with iKey. An excellent manual written by Adam Engst is included.

Conclusion

iKey is not a tool I'm likely to use often. Extensive use of shortcuts is not my computing style. The product has a bit of a learning curve, which is fully compensated for by Adam Engst's outstanding manual. However, if macros turn you on and automation is your thing, try and then buy the product. It is less costly than the most feature-rich competition, and is effective "macro" tool that should meet all of your current and longer term needs.

Indeed, if you don't mind the lack of a recording feature, Script Software's "motto" for iKey is to the point... ***Do Less and Accomplish More***

As I noted in an earlier review, once you get your mind around the use and vagrancies of the iKey editor, the actual process for setting up shortcuts is not complicated. To the contrary, if I used shot cuts more frequently, I would soon find it quite intuitive leading as happened previously into a bad case of hyper-shortcut-ites. However, for now, it's the months between creating a new macro that gets to me every time.

If I've not convinced you of iKey's merits, check out David Pogue, New York Times article "Homemade Shortcuts for the PC" published August 23, 2007. Watch its accompanying video — you too will become a believer

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/23/technology/circuits/23pogue.html?pagewanted=1&ei=5090&en=f5976d203490eb85&ex=1345521600&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss>.

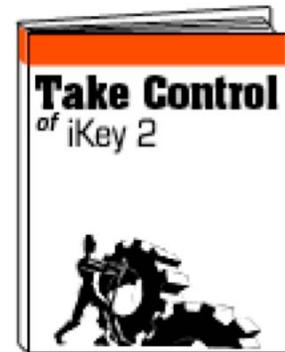
If you script, automate, created HyperCard stacks, or do even simple programming; iKey should meet most, if not all of your macro creation needs. — I rate the current version at 4.0 macC's.

After Note (Paraphrased from “Take Control if iKey” book)

As the manual notes — In reading this manual, you may encounter a few unfamiliar terms, but it's extremely important that you understand them from the start. Doc sez, learn the iKey terminology; it will save you lots of false starts.

Words we commonly use in the context of Macin' around , have specific and at times special meaning in the context of using iKey. These include the terms: command, context, hotkey, launcher, library menu, palette and shortcut

iKey of course lets you simulate the keyboard and mouse, it also offers a plethora of higher level commands: launching and quitting applications, choosing menu items, copying and pasting text, running an AppleScript script, visiting URLs, creating email messages, and much more. *Hey I said if before — read the manual.*



Manga v. 3.1

Reviewed by Taylor & Wayne LeFevre



The TAB Manga
www.the-tab.com

\$200 USD, \$196 CND, £101 GBP, 126€ Euro

System Requirements: PowerPC G4 or G5, or Intel-based Macintosh, Mac OS X 10.4 or later
512MB of RAM, 80MB of available hard-disk space
1024x768 or higher monitor resolution
Graphic Tablet recommended for better drawing functions

Strengths: Easy to use tools and menus with pre-made characters, backgrounds and animations.

Weaknesses: Can be slow and not able to load any photos into the program. Very, very un-Mac-like.

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

Introduction

I recently got into drawing Japanese Anime and Manga style characters. I wanted a program in which I could bring these characters to life on the computer.

I would have to draw the character out by hand, scan it on to the computer, then use layer after layer in Photoshop to color, put shadows in and clean the picture up. It took a long time. But with Manga, I could produce a nice, quick picture with out all the hassle of scanning and worrying about layers.

Manga has many easy-to-use features including the basic tools such as: circle and rectangle/square tool, pencil and paintbrush, fill bucket, eraser, straight line tool, grab and move tool, copy, cut, paste and the resize tool. It also has many new tools such as: the transformation tools, you can make a circle or square and deform or move only one part of the shape, the tape tool which you can connect two points with a line, and the knife tool which enables you to create a gap in a line.



Using the Software

I will begin with one of my favorite features, the different menus. There are three distinct menus, the load menu, the creation menu and the comic book page editor.

When you open the application, it will present you a screen in which is the creation menu. If you look at the upper right hand corner, there will be a dark blue triangle. If you click on it, it will bring you to the load menu.

Within the load menu there are five different places to save, the characters, animation, the sounds, the background, and the scenes area. To go back to the creation menu, just click on the triangle in the upper right hand corner.

In the creation menu, on the left you have your tools, underneath your tools you have the color picker. In the color picker you have all of some of the basic colors. Then, next to the basic colors, you have a place where you can pick the colors from the rainbow box given. After the rainbow box, you have your patterns, music, video remote (play, pause, fast forward, stop, rewind), and your movement pad (up, down, rotate left, rotate right, zoom in, zoom out, etc).



On the right side of the creation menu, you have your different scenes. If you were making a animation/movie, this is where you would put all of your different scenes. There are different colored tabs for you to put different aspects of the scene, like background, character and props. On the top, you have your basic, save, cut, paste, copy buttons.

When you click on the upper right hand corner triangle again, it will lead you the comic book creator and editor page. Here you are able to create your own comic book by using the box tool, and the speech bubble tools. On the left you have your tools, the bottom you have your completed pages, and on the right you have your scenes.

Of course there are many more features in this program.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this is an excellent program. Even though the buttons look a little childish, they get the job done, and that's what matters right? I wouldn't recommend buying this program right off, I suggest trying the free demo to get a feel to it and see if it is right for you.

There are, however, two major flaws that I see that would prevent me from rating it higher. The first is the price. \$200 is a mighty hard pill to swallow, especially with other, lower priced alternatives out there. This puts it right up into the pro category, which brings me to my second gripe.



If you did not know the price tag of the application, at first glance and while manipulating its features, you would swear you were looking at an application that is strictly for kids. Toddlers, actually. There are no menus, so to speak. The navigation around the program and making it do what you want is a nightmare! Yes, the Bezier curves are sweet, as is all the vector forming graphics, but seriously, who has the time to figure out that the figure of a star is really the File>New Creation menu?

In other words, it does not have a menu bar! You want to make a new comic book? Hmm... Well, I guess you would have to figure out that the little folded page symbol in the upper right will take you to there by flipping through all the different pages. Oh, then you would need to know to click on the little kitten. Intuitive or menu standard? Absolutely not.

For a pro-priced application, it certainly can make your manga movies. But plan on a steep learning curve, a steep price, and feeling a bit like a 4 year old. But then, maybe that's your goal?

Download the demo at <http://www.the-tab.com/htm/download/download.htm> and also try other Tabco products and check out the different art that people just like you have done with this product.

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

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

Statistical Analysis

We are very excited about our site statistics! The multilingual-capable [macCompanion](#) website is close to 2 million page views a month and readership continues to increase rapidly through our "whisper campaign".

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

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

The *macCompanion* Staff