ATPM

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This month's issue includes:

The Candy Apple: Technology Is Only What We Make of It

Ellyn Ritterskamp unmasks a myth about the Internet.

Bloggable: Like It's 1999 All Over Again

Wes Meltzer shows signs of waxing cynical this month as he examines Pismo revivals, the loss of HyperCard, the possibility of the return of virii for Macs, Playfair, the Microsot/Sun settlement, iPods in the airport, and headless iMacs.

About This Particular Web Site

In this month's *ATPW*, Paul Fatula shows you where to download movies and hear national anthems. He also offers hints on finding free e-mail service and qualified IT personnel. And what *ATPW* would be complete without an artichoke festival?

About This Particular Outliner: NoteTaker and NoteBook

In response to many requests, this month Ted Goranson surveys AquaMinds' NoteTaker and Circus Ponies' NoteBook together as outliners.

How To: Cloning Mac OS 9 and Other Questions

Sylvester Roque shows how to make a Mac OS 9 emergency CD and tells why he keeps one handy, even though he uses Mac OS X.

Report: National Association of Broadcasters Convention 2004

Reader Andy McConnell shares his experience at this year's NAB Convention.

Cartoon: Cortland

The Consultant has been defeated, but at what cost?

Cartoon: iTrolls

The iTrolls take on Microsoft and Dell.

Desktop Pictures: Puerto Rico

Web Editor Lee Bennett offers images from his trip to Puerto Rico last month.

Review: Dancing Barefoot (book)

Ellyn Ritterskamp discovered that a popular blog led to a pretty good first book.

Review: iFlex & SightFlex

Lee Bennett has found an iSight accessory that will let you ditch the chintzy mounts provided by Apple once and for all.

Review: iLap

Chris Lawson believes the iLap is the most amazing accessory for laptop-owning couch potatoes ever conceived, and pretty useful for the rest of us, too.

Review: Mac OS X 10.3 Panther Little Black Book

While reasonably pleased with the reading, Wes Meltzer feels this book falls short in trying to simultaneously benefit OS X 10.3 newcomers and die-hards.

Review: Style Master 3.5.2

Eric Blair investigates whether the CSS editor Style Master is truly master of its domain.

Review: TextWrangler 1.5.1

Long-time Mac developer Bare Bones Software replaces BBEdit Lite with TextWrangler, effectively handing it the mantle of "text editor for the rest of us." Its powers have been increased over version 1.0 (hint: AppleScript and expanded color-coding), but Matthew Glidden wonders if it move you emotionally. Will you laugh, cry, or kiss $49 goodbye?

Review: Trans Lucy 1.01

Though there's some room for improvement, Ted Goranson has found a replacement for Apple's DVD Player.

E-Mail

iTrip Review

My iTrip works pretty well, but beware—it eats up the iPod battery even when everything is turned off. My advice is to always disconnect it when it's not in use.

—John B.

Bloggable

PalmSource dropping Mac support (from March's column) is one more reason to look to alternative PDAs. It's unfortunate that the one developer who supported Mac users has decided to discontinue that support when it would be so easy to incorporate SyncML. I no longer have a reason to recommend Palm devices over others to my clients. "So long, Palm."

I agree with much of what Charles Moore had to say in the April issue about a more usable PowerBook. Forget the "who can make the thinnest" contest for a 17-inch model and give us something that can be moved but has a *full* keyboard and includes card slots and expansion bays (I like the idea of the detachable screen). I personally think the current 17-inch PowerBook looks funny…silly-putty, anyone?

However, the idea of a module-based iMac is *not* a good idea. iMac buyers—in my experience as a computer consultant and tutor—want everything in one, easy package. Can you imagine a novice user trying to figure out which monitor to purchase in today's market? Yikes!

—Jan McClintock

FORE/1

You really got me on this. I'm almost crying after your "disclosure." Except for the painting of furniture in ugly (shudder) colors, I was almost trembling of wonder and expectation…and it sounded so much like MORE…I was sure no one would get *me* on April 1st. Thanks for all your great columns and for putting so much love and hard work in your writing!

—*Inge-Monika Hofmann*

You are a very funny and entertaining guy, Ted. I read the entire piece with my jaw on the floor until the revelation. I believe my head actually rotated 360 degrees on the "Jeholodens" line.

As an outliner junkie desperately in need of a support group, your column makes my month.

—*Petey*

Soundsticks Review

What a cool review! This is the most witty and sardonic piece I have read for a long time. May not have blown my tympanic membranes, but sure blew my sides away with laughter. You made my day, dude.

—*Mike Chee, Singapore*

A truly edifying article. I feel so much more informed and on top of things since reading it. I have a problem though. I've got the original sub and would like to find Soundsticks without the subwoofer. One is enough, but it seems the sticks are not sold separately. I'm reduced to using satellites from Wal-Mart. I wonder how their sound quality holds up to the Soundsticks? Why not save another $190?

Were those tubes used in the old Dynaco amps? I think I remember buying a Lion brand tube that was similar for about thirty dollars in 1964.

—*Krazykat*

I do not know if you can get the Soundsticks sans-sub.

Dynaco made many different amplifiers but none of them used 300B tubes. They were mostly EL34- or KT88/6550-based. Also, Dynaco amps were all push-pull pentodes, whereas the 300B is a triode and most commonly used in single ended configuration, although there are some amps that use the tube in a push-pull configuration. The Manley monoblocks I mentioned actually work in *either* SE or PP mode. You can switch them on the fly, during playback, and effectively double the output power by going to PP (so you get about 25 watts vs. 12), which is a neat trick. They are the only amp I know of that does this, and Manley invented the circuit that allows switching "on the fly" from SE to PP.

FYI, the EL34 and 6550 tubes used by Dynaco and still in use by many other amplifier manufacturers (including Manley—they make a series of push-pull pentode amplifiers like the ol' Dynaco's) are much less expensive than 300Bs. You can pick up an good, new EL34 for about $12.   —*Evan Trent*

Networking With Windows

I have a 20" iMac with OS X 10.3.3 and a Windows 2000 box. I have them networked with a Linksys router to share a DSL connection. We have recently decided that we want to share files, as well as a printer (HP 880c). The printer is hooked up to the Windows 2000 box. And the iMac does not want to see it. (I believe that printer and file sharing is turned on, on the Windows machine.)

I have done a little research through Apple on how to accomplish this. I have turned on file sharing and the firewall on the iMac. From the Windows box I can access my account on the iMac. However I can not access the Windows box from the iMac. Its kind of confusing. I am pretty sure that I have file sharing turned on both computers, which should allow access. I have shared the drives that I wish and set the person whom I wish to share with. However I still can not connect to the PC.

Any suggestions? I don't think that I am leaving anything out.

—*SuNfAiRy*

OK, first things first. Probably the easiest way to share that printer is not to network it but simply to plug in the parallel port to your PC and the USB port to your Mac. Using Windows Printer Sharing with a Macintosh isn't going to work. In order to share the printer on a Mac/PC network you would need to use PC MacLan to make it an AppleTalk printer—Windows does not know how to do that out of the box.

Second—to access your PC from your Mac, you need to make sure that file sharing is turned on under Windows. You may have it turned on but you may not have set up the sharing preferences to determine which files, folders, drives etc. are shared. It is also possible that you have a firewall on the Windows machine that is blocking the iMac's attempts to connect. Turn off any firewall software on the Windows machine (you don't need it if the Linksys router's firewall is turned on anyway) and see if that solves the problem.

Also—if you get PC MacLan to share the printer, you can use that to share files with the Mac. It will allow you to share your Windows files using AppleTalk, which can simplify the process and also allow access under OS 9 (which does not support Windows File Sharing)   —*Evan Trent*

Upgrading and Networking Old Macs

Hello I am currently trying to set up an after-school club in London England using the old beige Macs. I have four 5200s, one 5400, two 5300s, one 5320, two 6400s, and five 8200s. I am aware that I have to upgrade the RAM on each machine. I would like to know what would be the best router to use and or switch/hub. Also, what would the most stable operating system be for these computers? I would also like to hook up a printer and scanner through a beige G3; would this be possible or feasible? Also, could you recommend the most cost-effective way of upgrading the RAM in these computers?

—*James Osho*

OK, we have a lot of ground to cover on this one.

1) Best router or hub—this is open to some debate. Personally, I am a big fan of Asante products. They tend to cost a bit more than some of their counterparts, but I feel they are worth it. They are usually among the fastest in their class, and tend to be pretty Mac-friendly (both the products and company). Some other good choices are Netgear and Linksys. If you just want to network these machines together, a switch will do the trick. If you want the entire network to also be hooked up to the Internet, you will want a router.

2) You can see full specifications for all of the machines you have on EveryMac. It will tell you what the max RAM capacities are for each machine, and also the most recent OS revision each machine can run, etc. If memory serves, all the machines you mention can run OS 9 and that would probably be the best choice.

3) Some great sources for RAM are dealram, and ramseeker. These will help you find competitive prices, and they have very good selections of RAM for new and old machines.

4) Yes, you can certainly hook up a printer and scanner to a Beige G3. What printer/scanner are you trying to hook up, and are you implying that you want to network these devices or just hook them directly up to the G3? Networking a printer is usually pretty straightforward. Networking a scanner may or may not be possible depending on the model.   —*Evan Trent*

Upgrading a LAN

As we are about to move into a new office, I figured that now is also a good time to upgrade our LAN.

We have installed: a DSL connection and a four-port D-Link router.

We have not installed: a G4 to be reconfigured as a server, an iBook, a PowerBook, two PC laptops, a USB printer, and a Maxtor USB backup drive.

Question: do I need to buy a hub/switch to connect all the devices on the LAN? Can some devices be connected to the router and some to the switch, and still be part of the LAN? Any other hardware/software that is needed here? Print driver?

—*Peter N.*

Yes, you will need a hub/switch to connect more than four devices to the router. What I would recommend is buying an Asante (or D-Link, Netgear, Linksys, etc.) eight-port switch. Plug all of your devices into the switch, and use the "uplink" port to connect to one of the four LAN jacks on the router. That should do the trick. The other thing this will do for you is allow you to use AppleTalk networking on your LAN, which may be useful for the OS 9 machines. Some routers do *not* pass AppleTalk even on their LAN ports. It can be a nuisance. But most hubs/switches *do* pass AT, and if you have the devices plugged into the switch, and then the switch plugged into the router, the router will not block AT because internal traffic goes through the switch and never goes to the router.

Yes, some devices can be connected to the router and some to the switch. You could buy a four-port switch and use both sets of LAN ports. However, the cost of an eight-port switch vs. a four-port is not substantially higher, and you would lose AT (see above) networking. Beyond that the repercussions are negligible.

No special software is needed. However you should be aware that if you share a USB printer under OS X it will not be available to OS 9 machines. So you should share the printer on an OS 9 machine (like your G4 server) and then it will be accessible to all the Macs. —*Evan Trent*

Technology Is Only What We Make of It

I'm tired of defending what is good about social contacts made on the Internet. I will continue to do so, but it feels like a lost cause. The anti-technologists say that the Internet provides us with a wall of anonymity, a way to mask ourselves from other people. I'm not denying this, because for some people, that's the only way they choose to use the Net. I'm saying that for lots of people, myself included, it is an opportunity to make real connections with real people that are deep and meaningful and fulfilling.

I have three friends now that I didn't have two years ago, and they are as important to me as anyone in my day-to-day life. More important than most. I met them online, and have since made a point of meeting them in person. The in-person meetings are irrelevant to the affections we have for each other. With these friends I have particular kinds of interpersonal connections I've never experienced with face-to-face friends. I trust them with thoughts and information about myself that I have not told many face-to-face friends.

One of these friends and I agree that if we lived in the same town, we would not have met or become friends. We know how things are in real life, and we would never have bumped into each other, or likely not clicked if we had. In our online relationship, though, we are able to be totally honest with each other, in ways that would have been difficult in a real-life friendship, had it ever gotten that far.

A second friend and I know that we would have bonded if we'd known each other in real life. We share a common interest in writing and editing, and an affinity for bridge (which I gave up but still enjoy talking about). We only have one significant ideological gap, and it is easily talked around. In fact, in writing this column, I talked with her about it, to make sure she knows where I stand and why, and that I understand where she stands and why. We appreciate what is generous and courageous about the other.

The third friend…I can't guess if we would have met, or hit it off, if we lived in the same city. It's not as clear to me as the first two. As it is now, though, we often spend half an hour on the phone discussing Title IX, or a movie, or anything face-to-face friends discuss. The e-mail exchanges are not jokes and pictures, but authentic conversations about meaningful topics. Mostly. There is nothing artificial or contrived about any of these friendships. The only artificial aspect is that without an online community, we would never have met.

I know it's possible to fake a persona online, but I believe that over time, the genuine person comes through in the words. Over time, you can tell who are the people you trust. You can tell who are the people who annoy you but you know that might be because they have something useful to say. And you can tell who are the ones who just annoy you. Those qualities cannot be masked for very long. In fact, against popular opinion, I think of the Net as a place for *un*masking. In real life we disguise ourselves, or augment ourselves, with particular clothes and houses and possessions. Online we do not. We are naked. The people we talk to do not have any clue what we look like, or how old we are, or how tall or what color we are, or any of those things that should not matter about human beings. We are able to be ourselves, far more than on some occasions when we play a role to impress someone else.

It's not all peaches and cream. Plenty of folks use the Net as a way to withdraw from social connections in real life. For me, though, it has been a way to meet lots of new people with a common interest, people who have helped me and whom I have helped. The beauty of this kind of set-up is that I can leave a note for one of my particular friends (or for a member of the larger group) at any hour of the day, and she can reply at her leisure. I work nights, and often post notes at 2 AM. The reply will come the next day when the recipient sees it in the morning. The buffer gives us time to reflect on what to say and how to say it, which I'm thinking might be handy in some face-to-face conversations, where people so often say things they regret. When you type those hurtful words and then see them staring at you, it makes it very hard to hit that Send button. You have time to consider how your words might make the other person feel, and to choose them carefully. We don't always have that in real life. Might be better off if we did.

Like It's 1999 All Over Again

Did anyone else notice the Mac virus alert level briefly spiking to mauve from its previous lowered state at taupe? Or maybe you caught the return of "DVD Jon" Johansen to the DRM-cracking stage? Are you feeling nostalgic for products from a time when Apple's prodigal son returned as triumphant CEO?

You belong in April, then. Flip your calendar back a month and try over again. Besides, April was a good month.

What's with all the retro hubbub? Brownie points to anyone who can explain why it wasn't, I don't know, the Apple I (oh, wait), the mullet, or polyester leisure suits. Not like that would have been much of a *Bloggable*, but it might have made more sense.

Before I forget to write this, I want to point you to this column's new companion blog, where from time to time I will post links that I don't think are going to make it into the column or that are pretty timely and interesting. All the columns will also make it there, with various degrees of fleetness depending on my schedule during the school year. If you don't feel like checking back manually, you can read my RSS feed, which is how I get most of the stuff I link here anyway.

OK then! First and foremost, rewind your 8-track all the way back to April 1 and refresh your memory of the CUPS chatter. We have an update, folks; it just took awhile. John Gruber, who must write his weblog *knowing* what I'm going to write about to be mentioned here as often as he is, jumped into the fray on April Fool's Day with an impressive analysis of just what he sees as wrong with usability in the free software world: free software projects lack a firm controlling hand to force the issue. He cites Mozilla as a rare example of usable free software and then says that Mozilla isn't so special either because the original Seamonkey UI sucked, too.

And we're off to the races! [Michael Tsai](#) (yes, I know, my boss) has a good and pithy [summary](#) of the argument itself, with links that I won't bother replicating. [Rui Carmo](#) [summarizes the entire debate](#) from the perspective of someone who uses OS X, Windows, and Linux. John Gruber [revisits the question](#) in explaining why some of the criticisms you can find via Michael don't necessarily answer the question. [Matt Gemmell](#) thinks that the reason free software (and plenty of payware) is so hard to use is because programmers put user interface last and most users rightly put it first; make your application [pretty without](#) [makeup](#) is the general thrust. Also, not everyone agrees with Gruber's criticisms, including his indictment of GNOME; I ran across a [defense of GNOME 2.6](#) the other day.

Now we turn our clocks back to the early days of Apple's Renaissance, after Gil Amelio's Middle Ages. I'm going to fudge the dates of that period a little, but hey, all this happened when I got my learner's permit the first time, so you'll forgive me my time myopia.

- Kevin Webb at [Low End Mac](#) and Charles Moore at [MacOpinion](#) are now certain Apple should bring back the Pismo PowerBook, or that you should at least buy one used. Does anyone remember our discussion of the Mac Portable [last month](#)? Well, imagine the same arguments, but for the Pismo instead. Kevin traded in his 12" aluminum PowerBook for a Pismo and loves it—dual expansion bays, black "wet suit" shell and all. He wants Apple to give it a G5 and lots of video RAM and thinks it'll sell like [air](#) [conditioners on an 80-degree April afternoon in Chicago](#) (my phrase, if you're quoting). Charles has his [tricked out to the hilt](#) and thinks it's a better value than an iBook and more expandable to boot. (Plus, no logic board failures there.)

- HyperCard is, sadly, gone. I can't believe it took Apple this long to delete the pages its Web site, but yes, until March of this year you could even still *buy a copy!* [Kevin Altis](#) mourns its passing and refers users to either [Runtime Revolution](#) or [PythonCard](#). [Tim](#) [Oren](#), who actually worked on HyperCard, worries that its fatal flaw might have been that it was [too many things to too many people](#) and hopes for the future of the concept rather than the language in particular in other projects to come. [Kirk McPike](#) says that Apple [should have given HyperCard away](#), and that they could have reaped the benefits they're now seeing with Xcode if they'd done that, along with making HyperCard networkable and cross-platform.

- Are Mac users back in virus-land? Think of the karmic retribution we've earned for our schadenfreude in PC users' misery—or not. [Intego](#) interpreted a Usenet poster's proof-of-concept Mac binary, which can also be an MP3, as a [major virus threat](#). Well, a lot of

news sources, including [Wired News](#) and [BoingBoing](#), [bit on](#) [the threat](#) and then had to correct their accounts. It turns out it's not a problem; not only does it not exist in the wild but it's not nearly so stealthy as it seems to be. Apple's response was as [vague](#) as it needed to be, but it remains to be seen if it or Symantec can *do* anything about it.

However, the increasingly famous [Miraz Jordan](#) [hunted down](#) a program called [TrojanDefuser](#), which can solve this particular problem—even in the wild—by copying the file without its resource fork, where the malicious code would be stored. And, because I can't go a page without his name, [John Gruber](#) grades the various characters in this sordid tale, saying that Wired and [CNN](#) were [the worst offenders](#) besides Intego themselves. He also criticizes the Mac press for running press release info as fact without bothering to report (which is admittedly an easy trap for a journalist to fall into, speaking as a journalism major). Anyone remember the last Mac virus? Wasn't that in 1998? Crack out the Ricky Martin album!

- Now what was this I said about Jon Lech Johansen's second debutante ball? Cory Doctorow at [BoingBoing](#) is a substantial iTunes Music Store customer, and he was thrilled to see that with no fudgery you can make [VideoLAN Client](#) [play an iTMS track](#) on a computer with access privileges, and with a little (probably illegal) tinkering you can make even a computer *without* [iTMS-granted access](#) play them in VLC. Who's behind this? Of *course* it's DVD Jon! And you can almost print [the instructions](#) for this crack on a T-shirt, too. As it so happens another piece of software, PlayFair, popped up this month and then was removed by Apple, and I'm a little afraid to link you because it might expire. You can always check up on [the companion blog](#).

- You know what else is back? Microsoft antitrust pontification from the punditocracy! If I spot more I'll keep you posted, but [Robert Cringely](#) insists that now that Microsoft and Sun have (strangely) come to a settlement, Microsoft can only die by [committing suicide](#), i.e., missing the boat again like it did with the Internet.

- Apparently Virgin Airlines thinks its high-end users will like having iPods [in their airport lounges](#). This reminds me of the frenzy over the iPod's initial release. Cory Doctorow at [BoingBoing](#), always funnier than I am, wants to know if you'd really want to listen to [40 GB of generic airport music](#)—and also wonders at the sterilization required to use an iPod's trademark earbuds after one of the other passengers. [Gawker](#), not ordinarily a resource for this column, weighs in with the brief remark that sums it all up quite well: "Why aren't rich people's assistants properly [managing their own iPods for them](#)?"

- Last but not least, since it's impossible for such a rich topic to die off, the headless iMac (and its twin sibling the Cube) refuses to go away. I was surprised the first 19 times anyone brought this up, like in February, but now I'm just amazed that people insist on holding out that hope. It's about as likely as Apple buying time at another Super Bowl for Ridley Scott's famous "1984" spot; sure, it might be fantastic, but it's not happening. Anyway. Stephen Van Esch at LEM wants a Cube again because there are lots of small PCs coming out now. He thinks maybe the Cube was just a little too far ahead of its time and targeted at the wrong end of the market. Jeff Adkins (also at LEM) wants to see a headless iMac model rather than a perverted, revamped Cube for the education market particularly, saying that the eMac just doesn't always work out.

That's a wrap for this month, readers. But don't forget to poke your heads in at Your handy "Don't Panic" guide to the Mac blogosphere if you want more news. I'll see you over there—oh, don't forget to reset your time warp clocks back to this month, or you'll never get back on track.

About This Particular Web Site

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

Programming Language Inventor or Serial Killer?

Because it can be hard to tell: this quiz invites you to test your ability to "tell a coder from a cannibal." Unfortunately, my guesses were correct only 60% of the time. Any serial killers interested in writing reviews for ATPM may contact me at the e-mail address above. Sorry, but we are unable to accept submissions through postal mail at this time.

Internet Archive: Feature Films

Want to watch a movie tonight? You could turn on the television and flip through the channels or hoof it to your local video store, sure, but why not just download a movie? That's what this site lets you do, and let me add: legally. And if you tire of film hits from the 30s, the Internet Archive also offers a variety of other video, audio, and textual media.

Castroville Artichoke Festival

Hey everybody, it's May, and we all know what that means: it's time to "Celebrate the vegetable everybody likes at the festival everybody loves!" This two-day festival offers everything from a classic car show to AGROart, which invites you to create a sculpture from fresh fruits and vegetables. For two magical days in sunny California, it's OK to play with your food. Coming from out of state? No problem. The site offers directions and numerous lodging options, including the Artichoke Inn.

Free Email Providers Guide

There are thousands of free e-mail providers on the Web, so it's pretty easy to find one. It's a bit harder to find the right one. This site offers a database search that allows you to specify features you're looking for and then shows a list of free e-mail services that may fit your needs. (Sorry, Gmail, there's no option for seeing ads based on e-mail content.) Listings can also be viewed by country or by special interest, in case you want to be expressive with your domain name.

David Kendall's National Anthem Reference Page

As I write this, I am nearly overcome with pride, my computer playing Burkina Faso's national anthem at full volume. (Though it seems to be the karaoke version. Fortunately the lyrics are provided, so I can handle the vocals myself.) Anyway, this Web site offers the national anthems to over 300 current and former countries, often with music and lyrics, and sometimes even with sheet music. Now you too can play the Finnish national anthem on your ukulele while guarding a near eastern antiquities museum at 3 AM. (Don't ask.)

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NoteTaker and NoteBook

This month we take a look at AquaMinds NoteTaker and Circus Ponies NoteBook. I have gotten more mail requesting a look at these two than any subject other than the legacy outliners.

NoteBook and NoteTaker Icons

Both of these give their own joy depending on how your mind is sculpted. I can recommend either. Both push the user interface and feature envelope into new territory in slightly different ways, and they compete against each other. Both are on a fast track development-wise and would be good candidates for partners for the future, but they are different enough in their underlying philosophies that they will find distinctly different user bases.

I admit that I got into the business of writing *ATPO* precisely because I was confronted with these two applications. I am a heavy outliner and use several programs intensively. Moving part of my life into an application is a heavy commitment, and I was already in love elsewhere. I had to upgrade, but to which app? And for what use?

This forced me into a period of introspection about outlining possibilities and tools, the results of which grew into *ATPO*. The idea is that your typical Mac user has a clever imagination that wants to spin up great stuff. How that imagination moves is largely dependent on the tools used and—most importantly—the philosophy behind them.

These two tools, NoteBook and NoteTaker, superficially look like twins. They both present as multipage spiral notebooks with cover, table of contents, section dividers with section contents and tabs, "regular" pages, and several types of index pages at the back. Both have stamps/marks, text highlighters, labels, and support multimedia and advanced clipping. There are other superficial similarities as well.
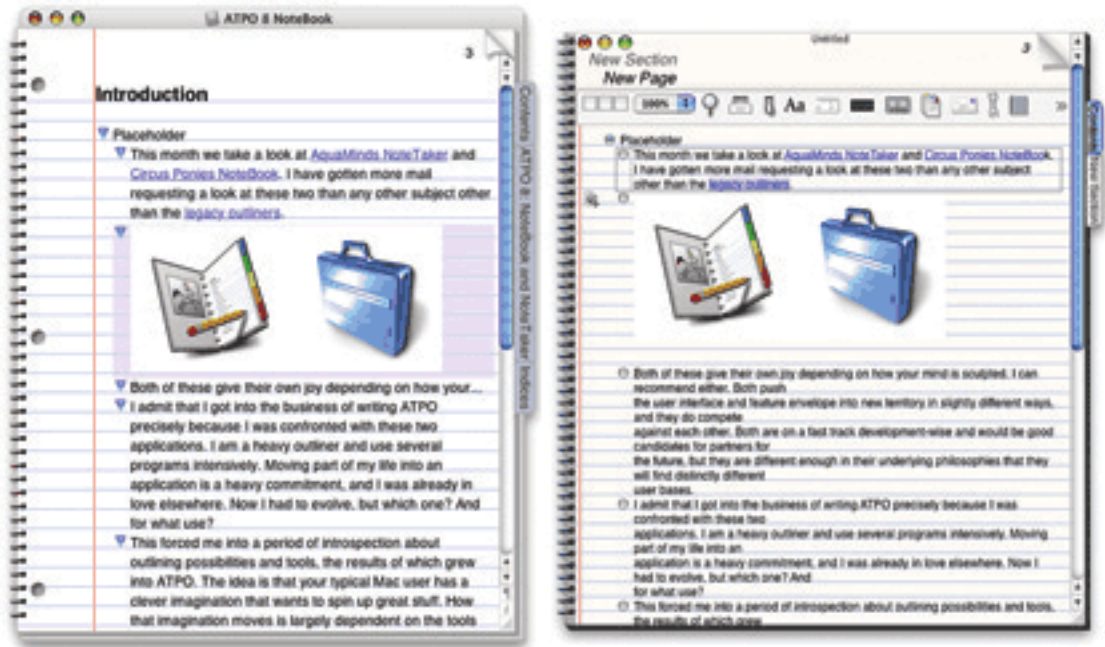
NoteBook and NoteTaker With Default Settings

The things that attracted me were that they are Cocoa applications that promiscuously exploit the strengths of the modern Mac; their multipurpose functionality meant that either could serve as someone's only outliner; and (big fanfare here) they both have a feature that no other outliner has: multilevel outlines. Multilevel outlines are outlines of outlines. These notebooks literally have outlines of the pages that contain outlines, potentially powerful stuff. We discussed this feature in some detail in October.

Common Heritage, Different Philosophies

A particular background is always mentioned in this context: once upon a time there was a much admired NeXT notebook outliner called "NoteBook," from Millennium Software. At some point, the two principals left and started their own companies, those we see here. Jayson Adams is the man behind Circus Ponies NoteBook; Scott Love heads AquaMinds and NoteTaker.

Both seem to have kept the rights to the original NoteBook code and certainly some NeXT code has been brought forward, but I suspect it to be a small portion in each case.

Most prospective users might think this indicates that the products are as similar as they initially appear. But consider that these two developers quarrelled severely enough to get a divorce. Presumably they differed on fundamental aspects of the notebook and the philosophies behind it. I think this is the case, because under the similar skins are two different religions.

User opinion seems to have established that NoteTaker has more frequent updates and more features, while NoteBook takes more care to be elegant and complete in executing features. That wisdom also holds that while NoteTaker's features always work, they sometimes seem comparatively slapdash and carry minor glitches such as redraw problems until the next update. In my experience, this was the case early in the game, but NoteBook's feature set is now in the same ballpark and NoteTaker's unpolished quirks seem to have abated.

Another difference: Circus Ponies has pretty dreadful documentation (no index or search!) but a great, friendly support forum that involves the developers: feedback is direct and honest and suggestions and bugs are dealt with speedily. On the other hand, AquaMinds has a flood of complete, impressive, and effective documentation, videos (for $80) and tutorials, but no public support forum at all!

Incidentally, I find it absolutely goofy that outliners in general do not deliver their documentation in their own format. It is doubly strange with these two that have so much to offer.

I do not intend to give a complete review here; those tend to be death marches of feature counting and list comparison. (But check out my first official review—of a non-outliner application—elsewhere in this edition of ATPM.) Instead, we'll focus on the outlining functions of these multipurpose applications and try to dig deeply enough into their philosophies to help you see if one can be Your Particular Outliner.

Outlining Features

These are applications that bust software categories, though outliners have been doing that for some time. They are outliners in the sense of being ready repositories for collecting thoughts and items related to them, then slowly adding order according to your work style. This outlining function is our focus in this column.

But they also function as high level clipping services, scrapbooks, and freeform databases. They even could be seen as a new form of Web site development tool. Each of these functions supports the outlining which we'll assume is the core you are looking for, though it need not be so.

Outlining on a Page

In one sense, these outliners are an elegant implementation of tabbed windows instead of the multiple windows that typified the original Mac interface. Each "page" in the notebook is an outline, so if we are looking at core outlining competence, we need to start here.

Both of these notebooks rashly chose a shiny jellybean widget metaphor when Apple was into lickability. NoteBook uses an inflated glossy equilateral triangle. It employs a not widely used triangle convention that has "collapsed" arrows pointed right and "uncollapsed" arrows pointing down. I think this is a big mistake because headers with
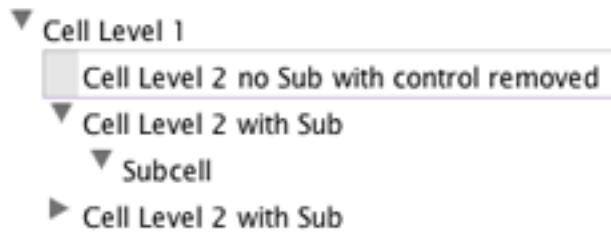
nothing under them at all (even text intended to be note paragraphs) have the same indicator as those that say "look below for content." This is the same goof that the Mac Finder makes, by the way.
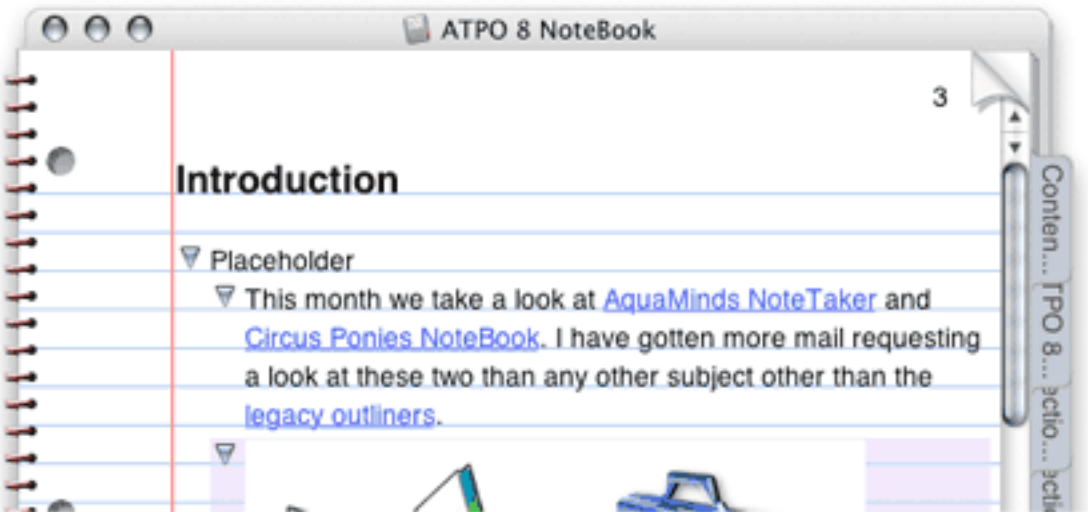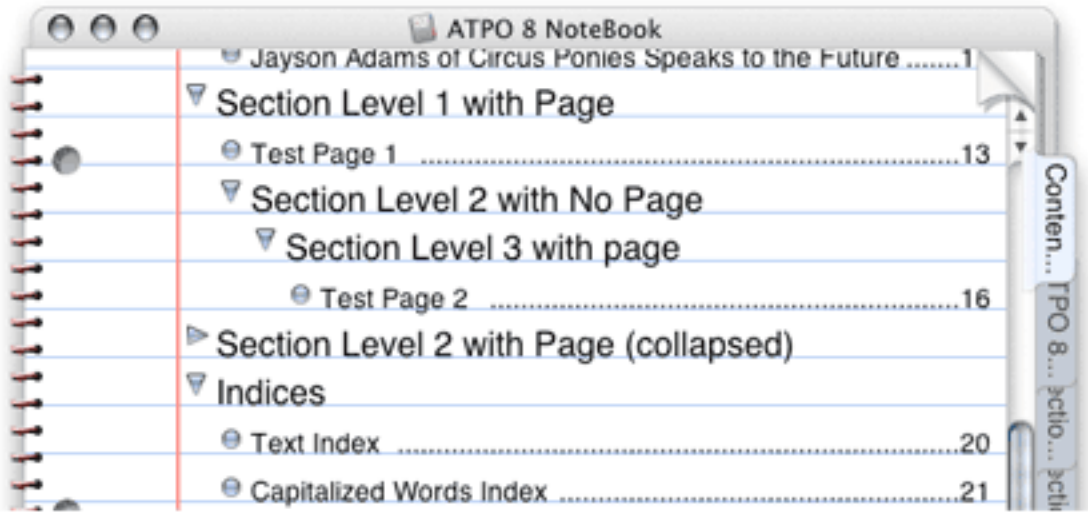
NoteBook Widgets

Fortunately, Circus Ponies has added an option to change the widgets to the ordinary grey ones we know. We'll show those in the NoteBook screenshots that follow. There is a separate option to eliminates any arrow for a cell with no subcell. Together, these are much nicer.

Controls Modified

▼ Cell Level 1
  Cell Level 2 no Sub with control removed
  ▼ Cell Level 2 with Sub
    ▼ Subcell
  ▶ Cell Level 2 with Sub

Familiar NoteBook Widgets

NoteTaker on the other hand has taken a wholly different tack. It uses the Aqua-fied "plus-labels" we described in a previous column that originated in the command-line world and was brought to the Mac by MORE. (Scott Love worked on MORE.) No other modern outliner in the Mac world uses these plus and minus labels, but they are common in the Windows world. NoteTaker has announced their intentions to enter the Windows market, and this choice may reflect that strategy.

On the other hand, you can quickly get used to it. It has the purity of a functional logic (plus for collapsed cells, minus for uncollapsed and no character for a cell with no subcells). Also, it looks nice and consistent, at least on the outliner pages. The "section" pages are a different story, but again you can switch to the familiar Mac arrows if you

wish. When doing this, NoteTaker uses a dot for a cell with no children, like OmniOutliner does. We'll make the switch in NoteTaker in what follows. Why use Windows conventions when these Mac ones are so much better?
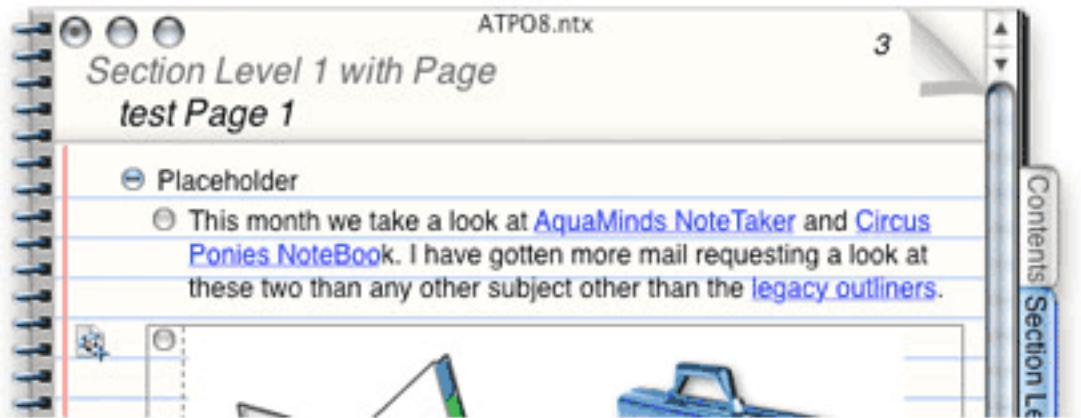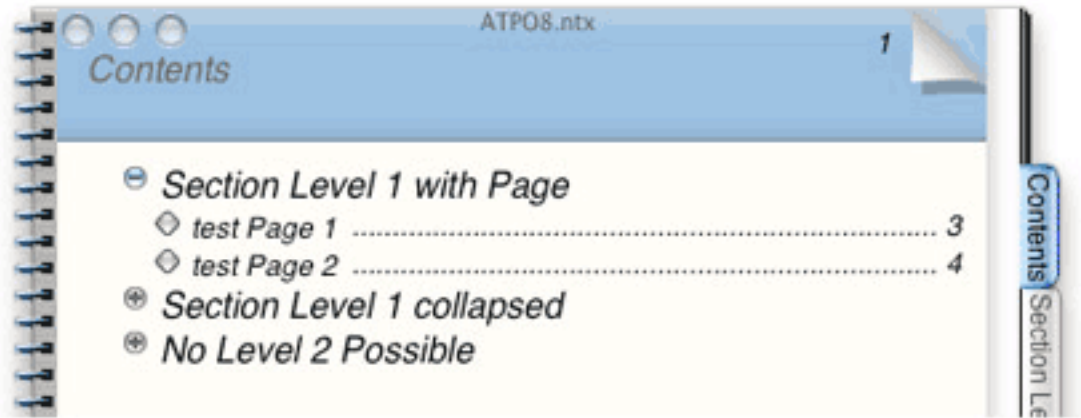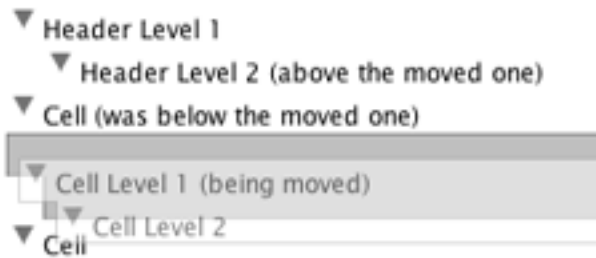

NoteTaker Widgets

Already we encounter some of the larger differences between these two outliners. NoteBook has been working hard to court MORE-type users and has implemented every applicable key command and operation from that venerable outliner. Some of these are quite esoteric but very handy for power outliners. They've given options so that arcane but useful MORE behavior is used. For instance, NoteBook has an option such that if a cell has children and you hit Return, you enter a child at the top of the stack. These little things are great if you are deep into using your outliner as a writing tool.

Both have a more elegant drag indicator than any other outliner. As you drag the cells to their new location, an outline appears where the drop would occur with everything below moved out of the way. NoteBook goes a little further in that their drop box reflects the indented structure of the dragged cells.
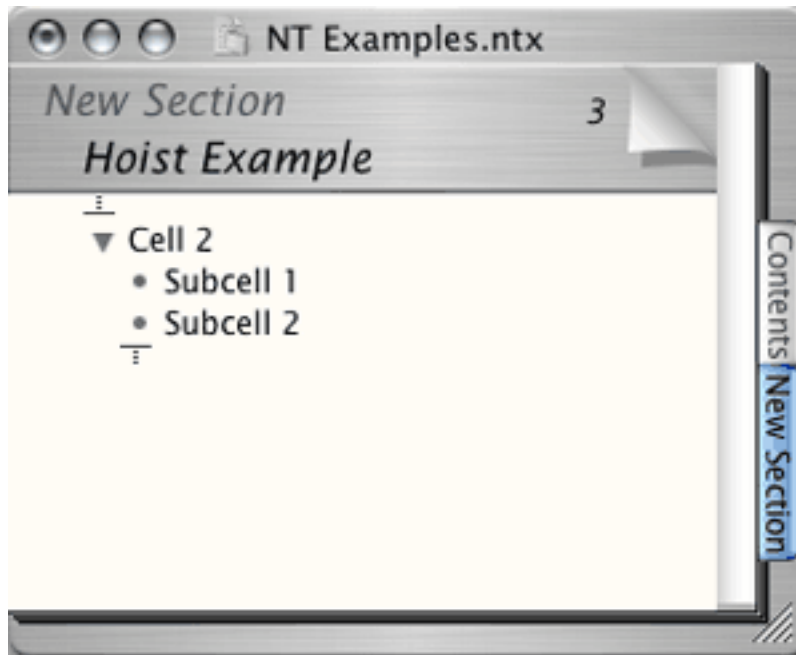
Drag Indicator

▼ Header Level 1
　　▼ Header Level 2 (above the moved one)
▼ Cell (was below the moved one)

　　▼ Cell Level 1 (being moved)
　　　▼ Cell Level 2
▼ Cell

NoteBook Drag Indicator

Both have an elegant hoist feature, and they both use the same hoist indicator, a dash with three dots. But look how differently they are placed.

Hoist Example

▼ Cell 2
　　▼ Subcell 1
　　▼ Subcell 2
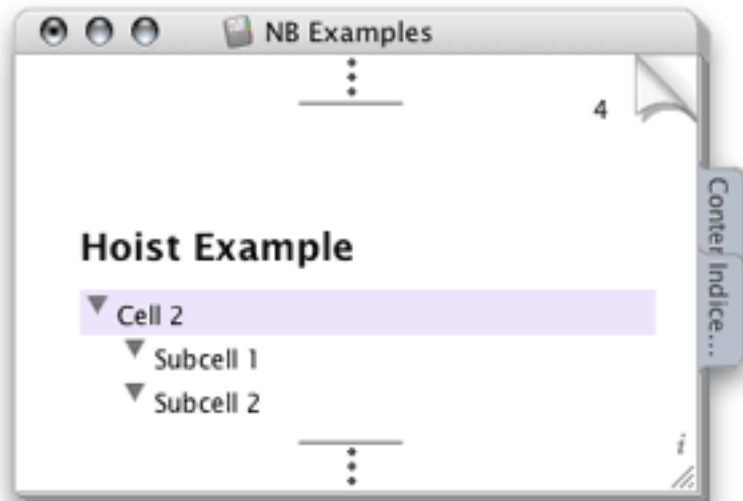
NoteBook Hoist Indicator

NoteTaker "Focus" Indicator

Neither notebook allows you to place cells just anywhere on the page like Curio (whose pages are not outline pages) or OneNote for Windows (whose notebook pages can contain outlines).

Neither of these supports clones, a prerequisite of a power outliner. And neither supports columns.

Outlines of Outlines

The huge advantage that both of these have over all other outliners is the outlines of outlines feature. The notebooks are set up so that they have an overall contents page of everything in the notebook. This is an outline as well. But it has some subtle differences from page outlines.

Below is a typical NoteBook contents page. (I have put a tiled image on it and changed the outline widgets to make it look nicer.) You'll note that there are two types of headers, pages (which have page numbers) and section headers. Subsection headers are called "dividers" but they behave just like section dividers and have tabs. Section dividers have tabs and a subset of the table of contents that applies to that section.
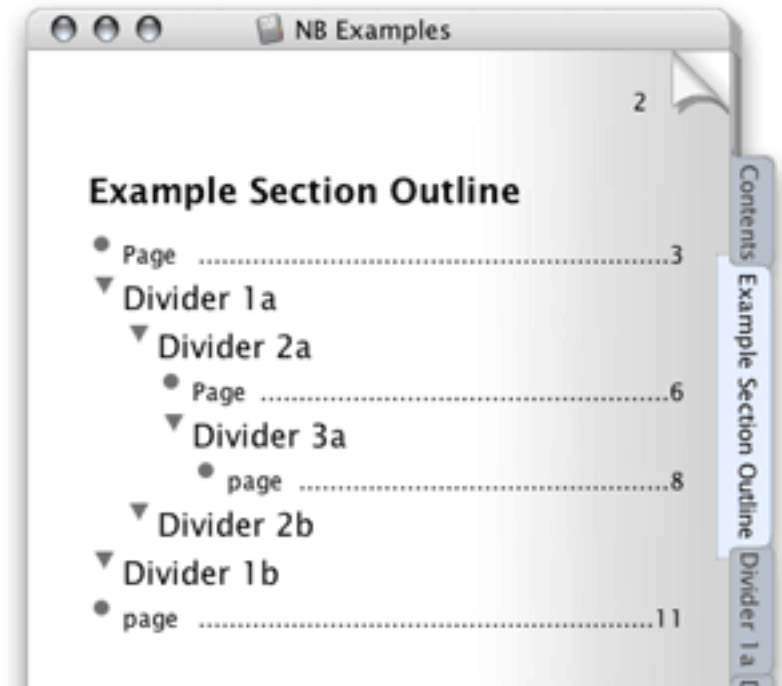
NoteBook Contents Page with Contents Outline

Taking the levels further down, in either notebook you can give any page a tab.

In NoteBook, all of the important outlining commands can be used here on these meta-outlines. Way cool. There's more: this contents outline can hold pretty much any object the page outlines can, so you can literally have a page title that is a graphic. NoteTaker only allows text in its contents outline.
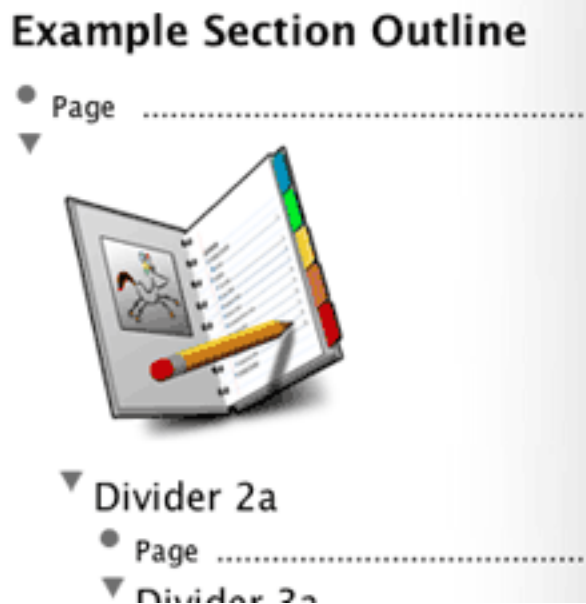
Partial NoteBook Contents Page with Graphic

Now we will see how NoteTaker handles this same problem: its solution is radically different. It doesn't have the coolness of NoteBook's outlining on contents pages. Instead it goes in a different, but still cool, direction. First of all, NoteTaker does not allow much of an outline on its contents pages. Only two levels are supported: pages and sections. Bummer.

But look at the screenshot below. NoteTaker squarely faces a key problem with the notebook metaphor: you can only see one page at a time. That means you can be looking at the contents outline or a page outline, but not both. NoteTaker has a drawer that displays the contents outline so that you can navigate to any page from any page. Objects in that outline can be double-clicked, but they cannot be rearranged. Shucks.
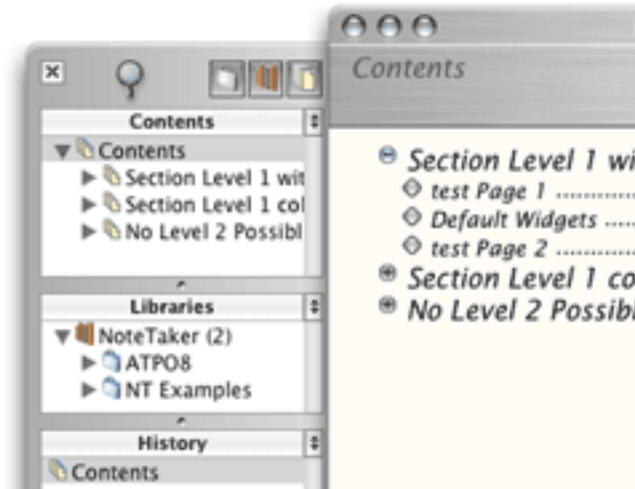

NoteTaker MetaOutline Drawer with Default Buttons

And look below in the same drawer and see yet a third level of outline—sort of! This (called the "library") is a subset of the Finder view of available NoteTaker notebooks. Below that is a "history" list of visited pages.

This is a fabulous feature (configured by several options in the preferences). It helps with navigation. But it is pretty clumsy in appearance because it uses completely different outline widgets and commands than the default shiny plus-labels. Oh well, switch to the Mac labels to feel more comfortable.

Both NoteBook and NoteTaker take advantage of contextual menus in a great way. If you hover over a tab (usually on the right side of the notebook) and control-click, you get a list of the pages in that section—way cool navigation. The screenshot shows NoteBook's implementation, which allows hierarchy. NoteTaker's is similar except it doesn't permit subdividers so just gives a flat list of pages.
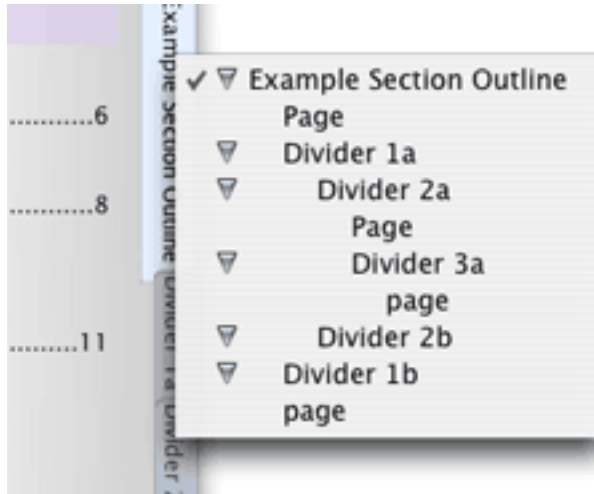
NoteBook Contextual Pop-up

So NoteTaker has three ways of page navigation (drawer, contents pages, tab contextual menu) and NoteBook has two which exploit outlines much more fully.

Now we come to my major heartbreak with both of these outliners. Outlining is about structuring and restructuring. They both have this neat idea of double outlines, but there is no way in either to go back and forth between outline levels without going around the barn. Suppose I discovered that I had a very large page; there is no way to promote a page to a section or the other way around: "demoting" a slender section to a page.

And it gets much, much worse for the outline user. Outline restructuring is primarily a matter of keyboard operations in four directions or dragging. Suppose you want to drag a group of cells from one page to another in the same notebook: you simply cannot do it. You cannot open multiple copies of the same notebook. And you cannot drag to a tab, have that tab open the desired page and then drop on that page. OmniOutliner, one of

the competitors for serious outlining, can readily drag anything among "spatial" windows. This is where the idea of stacked windows as pages kicks you in the butt. Not even NoteTaker's neat drawer can be dragged to.

No robust drag-and-drop functionality within a notebook is heartbreak city. But both of these outliners are improving at breakneck speed so perhaps this deficiency will be addressed soon (especially if you request it). NoteBook recently delivered the capability to drag items between notebooks and both allow dragging of pages and page groups.

What we need is springloaded tabs, but we haven't got 'em. NoteBook *can* drag cells with siblings (but not groups of cells) to another page in the same notebook under certain conditions. The pages have to be of the same type ("section" or outline pages), the target page must have a tab, and the dropped cell goes at the bottom of the page. A workaround.

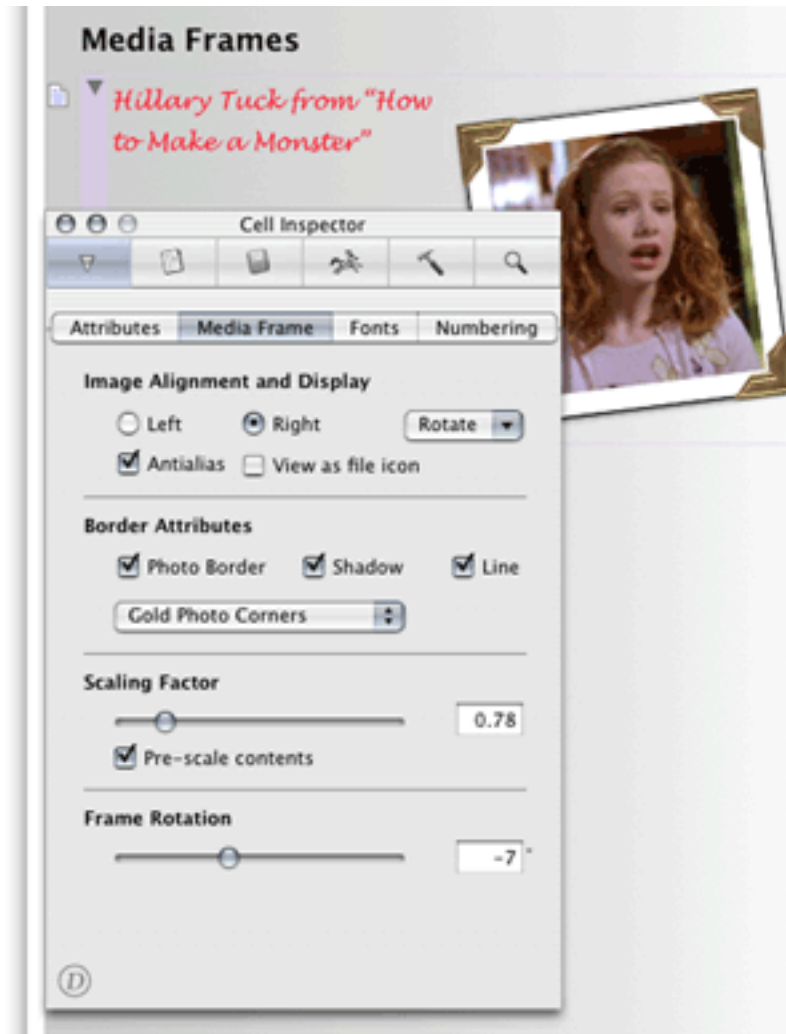### Integration of Multimedia and Web pages
We mentioned OmniOutliner, which can only handle text. Both NoteTaker and NoteBook do well with multimedia, NoteTaker on regular pages only. They can handle pretty much anything you can throw at them: nearly any image, movie, or PDF. Files can generally be embedded or referenced (in which case the file is not copied). We'll deal with database issues surrounding multimedia below.

If you drag a media file, the content is copied into the notebook. If you Option-drag, the file contents are copied by reference like we had in OS 9's Publish and Subscribe. This is true in both.
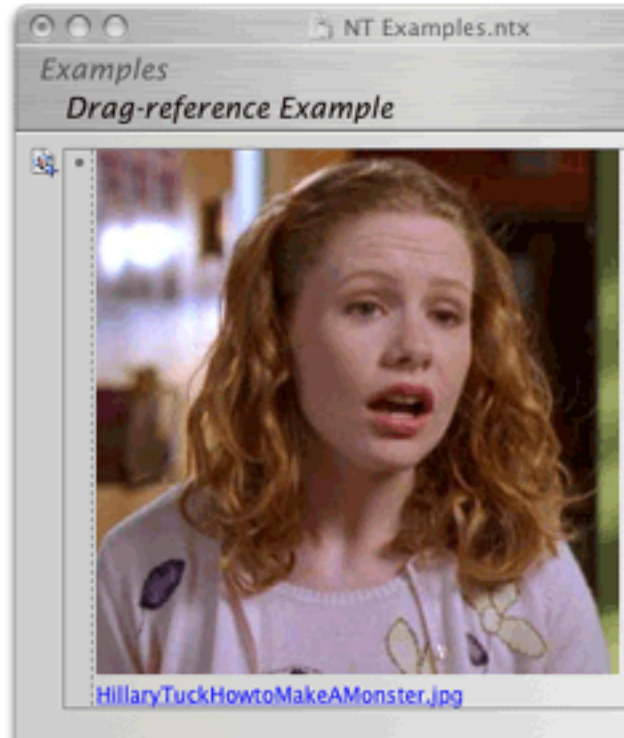
NoteTaker Image that Has Been Drag-Referenced

NoteBook allows for "media frames," a collection of display options for media, including scaling, rotating and other attributes.


Media Frames

Hillary Tuck from "How to Make a Monster"

Cell Inspector

Attributes | Media Frame | Fonts | Numbering

Image Alignment and Display
- Left / Right / Rotate
- Antialias / View as file icon

Border Attributes
- Photo Border / Shadow / Line
- Gold Photo Corners

Scaling Factor
- 0.78
- Pre-scale contents

Frame Rotation
- -7

NoteBook Media Frames Options

NoteTaker can do some limited scaling through a contextual menu, but otherwise lacks the options of NoteBook. Instead, NoteTaker displays a hotlink to the file, and pressing Option while over the file displays the path, something they call "x-ray."

Presumably you can already see what is obvious to me after a few months with these programs. NoteBook sees itself as a power outliner with database and other capabilities, while NoteTaker exists as a great freeform database with outlining and other capabilities. Those "other capabilities" are similar and in some cases identical, but the basic identities of these are fundamentally different. Every design decision we see where they differ can be explained this way.

Both notebooks allow voice annotation, something apparently important in a laboratory environment. I did not explore the relative merits of the implementations.

Both notebooks are extremely friendly to Web content. URLs display as links, and clipped or dragged Web content displays in a cell precisely as it does in a browser. NoteTaker offers a few more options in this regard, but neither seems to have done what Tinderbox has: allow automatically refreshed pages and RSS content. Neither supports wiki links, like Hog Bay Notebook.
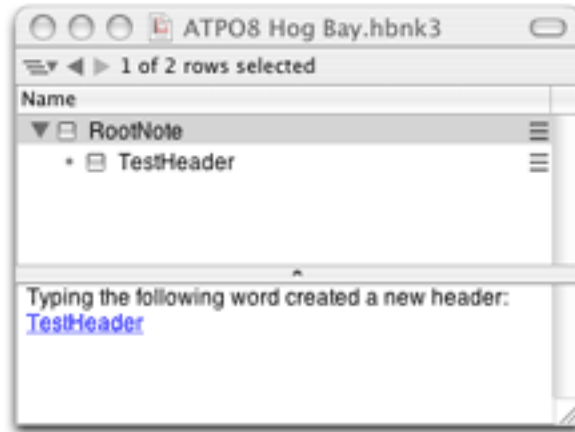
Hog Bay WikiLinks

NoteTaker has however incorporated Web services in such a way that one can make a cell a browser! Clicking a link in a Web page opens that page in the cell just as if it were Safari.


NoteTaker Cell as Web Browser

Integration into Workflow

Any serious outliner is going to wonder how this fits into the workflow. We'll address the "goesinta" in another section below, as that is largely a clipping, scrapbooking, databasing sort of thing with its own competition like DEVONthink. Here, we'll only mention that both notebooks are good citizens regarding import and export of OPML, a standard XML format for exchanging outlines. Hog Bay Notebook and OmniOutliner also support OPML, and DEVONthink support has been announced. Many users seem to combine several of these outliners in an OPML workflow.

The big question is what *more robust* options exist for designing workflows.

Both notebooks allow publishing to the Web. They do it by creating an HTML version of their notebook appearance and (most) functionality. You upload this to your Web site or local server and people can read your notebook pretty much as if it were in the host application on your machine. I'm told there are minor quirks with NoteTaker due to the goofy variety of browsers and "standards," but I haven't exhaustively tested this.
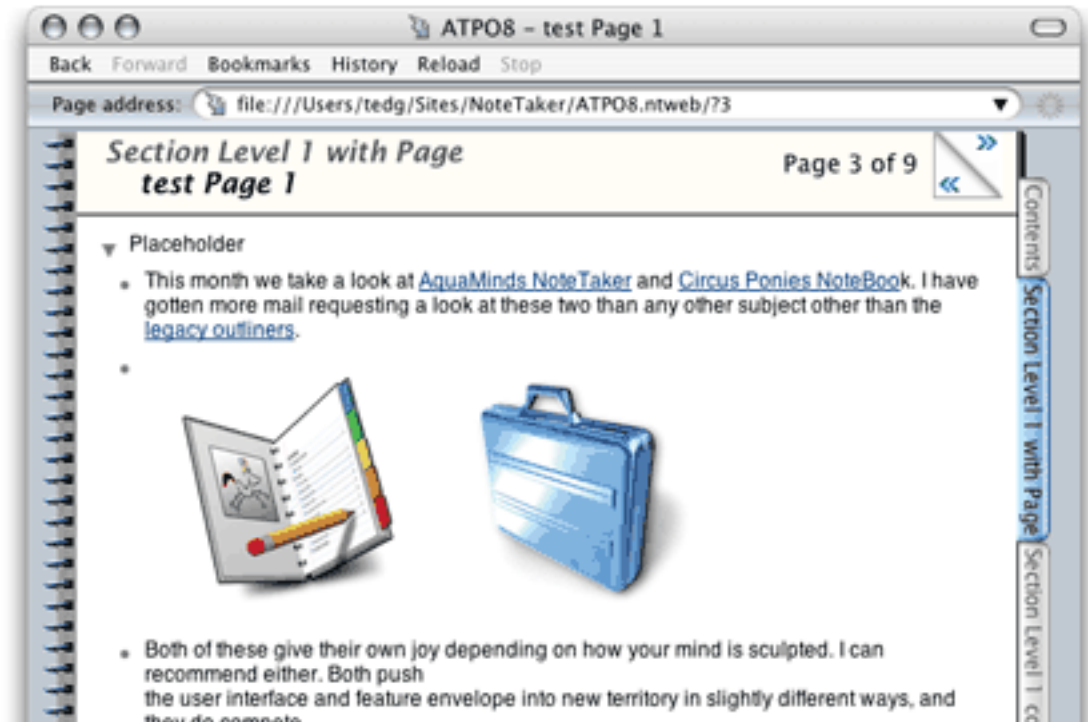

NoteTaker Web Outline Publishing

I have to say that doing it at least once is a pretty cool experience.

But what if you want to export to InDesign, or Word, or Dreamweaver?

NoteTaker imports and exports native Word format, though it exports awkwardly. Referenced content is lost, as is most formatting and all outline structure. By that I mean if you enter Word's outliner, no structure will be there. As a worst-of-both-worlds situation, the indents are carried over to the layout view so that the *appearance* of an outline is displayed.
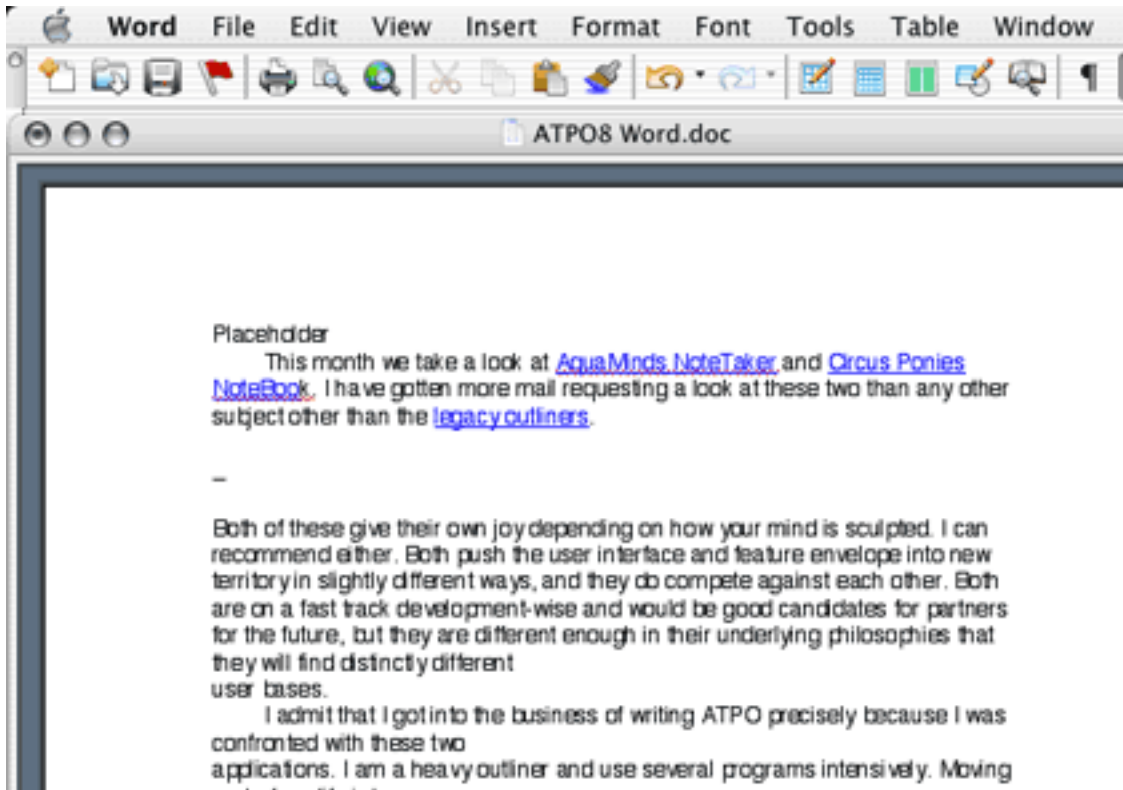

NoteTaker Content in Word

In NoteTaker's defense, export to Word seems to be a heck of a challenge, even using Panther's support for Word format. Inspiration has focused on just this capability for years and does only a little better.

AquaMinds exports to NTML (NoteTaker Markup Language) and NoteBook does NBML. Both are XML-based and are more robust than OPML. Once you have your outline in XML, you or another user can write translations to do pretty much anything. This is about as open as a format can get.

Meanwhile, both have options for tailoring their HTML output on a page-by-page basis so that you can produce a "normal" looking site automatically. And NoteTaker supplies a free "reader" so that you can distribute your notebooks as-is.
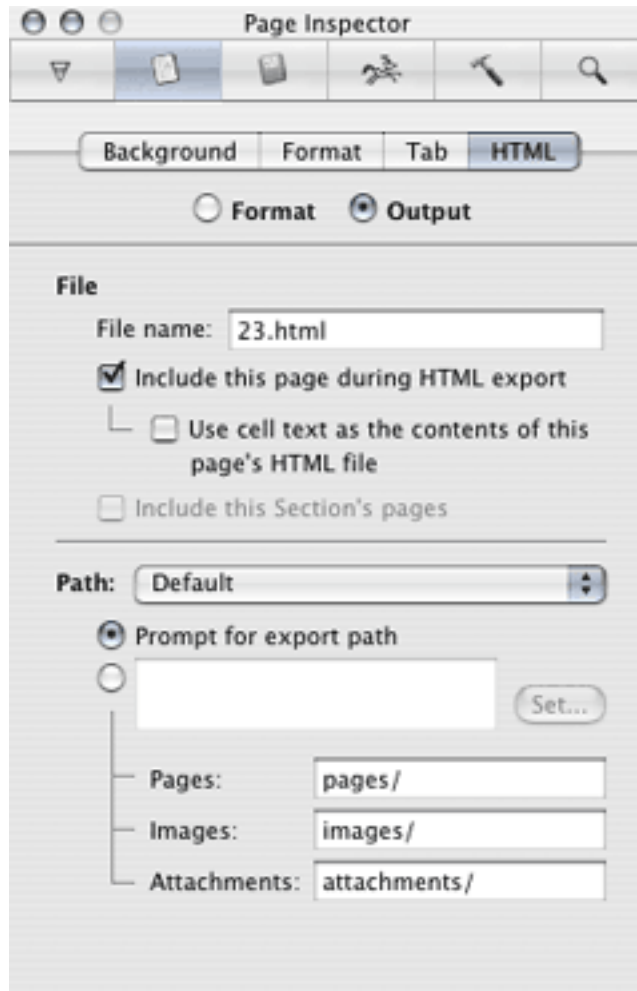

NoteBook HTML Export Options

For now, both notebooks export equally useful PDF, OPML, their own XML and RTF. Both have facilities of different types and robustness to excerpt parts of notebooks, and in NoteTaker's case, to e-mail them.

Links

We've talked about URL links a little. What about links within the notebook and to other notebooks? NoteTaker has this well in hand. It is not as robust as Tinderbox's many *types* of links—NoteTaker links are just like HTML links. But they can be two-way (very nice), and they can be from text or cell to text, cell, or page. They are designated by a badge to the left of a cell and—as with referenced Web and image content—Option-hovering reveals the source. NoteTaker links can be to other notebooks as well.
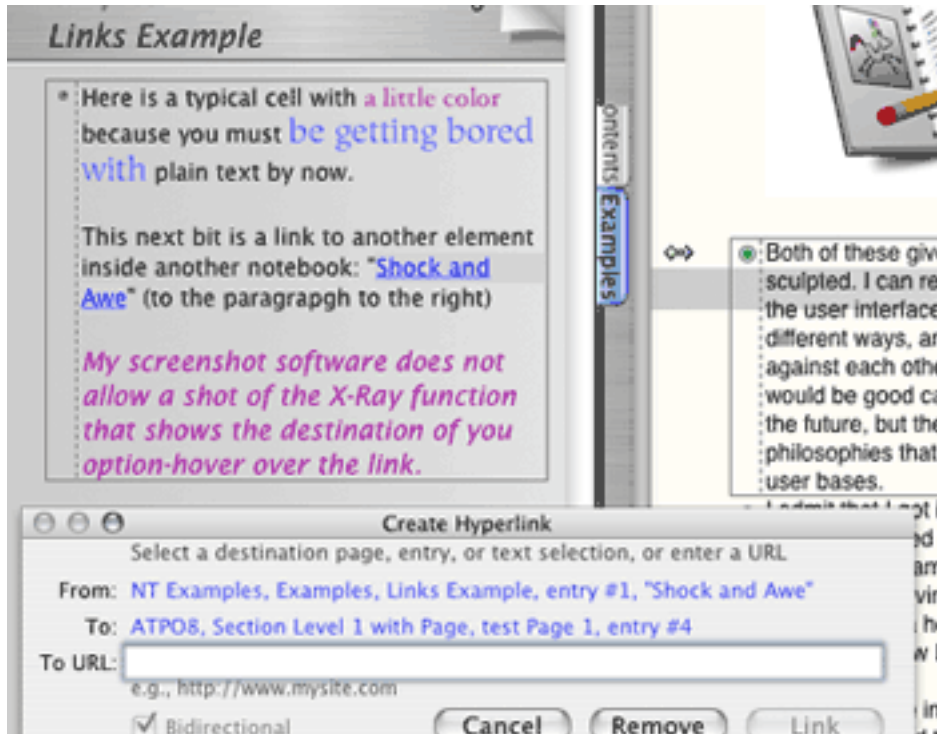

NoteTaker Links and X-ray Pop-up

NoteBook's links can presently be only from text to a page within the current notebook.

See the pattern of NoteBook drifting to power outliner and NoteTaker to power freeform database?

Outline Formatting

I've discovered that one hot button among outliner people is their appreciation for sophisticated outline formats. They want control. They want visible structure. They want options.

Both notebooks allow you to change font styles individually. How could they not? Additionally, NoteTaker has a "Favorite Styles" submenu where you can name styles and apply them to selected text, but otherwise, NoteTaker considers all cells to be the same style regardless of placement in the outline.
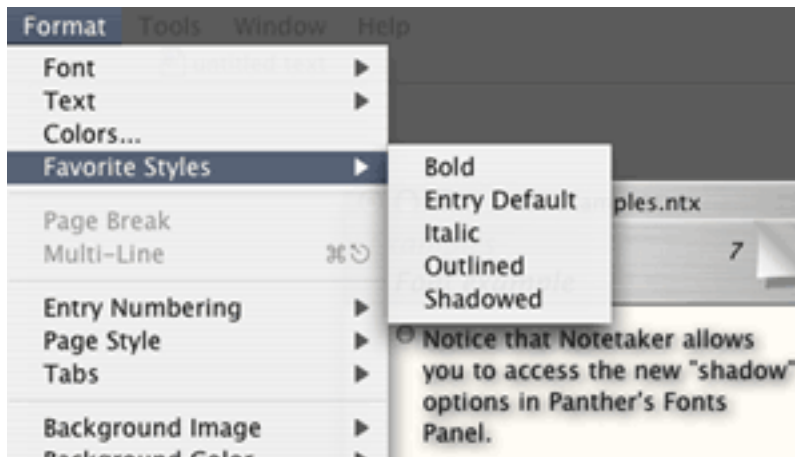
NoteTaker Favorite Styles Menu

NoteBook goes much further, at least as far as MORE and OmniOutliner in level-specific styles. You can specify styles for outline levels so that you can—for instance—specify that Level 2 is a little smaller or less bold (or red) than Level 1. NoteBook also has quite a few more options with label style. Labels are the numbers in parentheses or letters that many outliners use.

NoteBook Level Styles

Both allow all sorts of honking around with margins, images on background, removing the "binding," three-punch holes and paper lines. You can color, remove, or relocate the tabs that are normally on the right. NoteBook considers its contents/section pages to be different animals so you can format those differently. I find that a great help in reminding me that the outline level has shifted.

Folding

Folding, in normal outlining usage, is the ability to collapse cells to only their first lines, independent of collapsing subcells up underneath. It is very handy when you want to get a big picture of the outline because no cell takes more than one line.

Both NoteBook and NoteTaker support the same method of folding, which is the sweetest I have ever seen. You can fold any text cell or collection or selected text cells by using a key command (Command-Esc for NoteTaker, Esc for NoteBook). They then fold to one line followed by an ellipsis.

The cool part is that once you enter a folded cell, it automatically expands it for editing. That's an attention to detail that takes the breath away.

NoteTaker's folding goes one better and is the only case where it beats NoteBook in the outlining area. That same key command when no cell is selected toggles what they call "multiline" mode so that all new cells are presumed to be folded.

Other Miscellaneous Outlining Stuff

NoteTaker lets you assign and change keystrokes for menu items, even the "favorite styles" you will certainly add. NoteTaker has all the outlining menu commands NoteBook does, I think, so you could emulate the MORE command set if you wish. NoteBook does not allow custom key assignments, and as I will remark later, many of its important controls are not in menus anyway, but in "inspectors."

NoteBook has superior typographic controls, allowing for shifted baselines, ligatures, and kerning. Great, but these settings are not included in the custom styles for outline levels. Ouch!
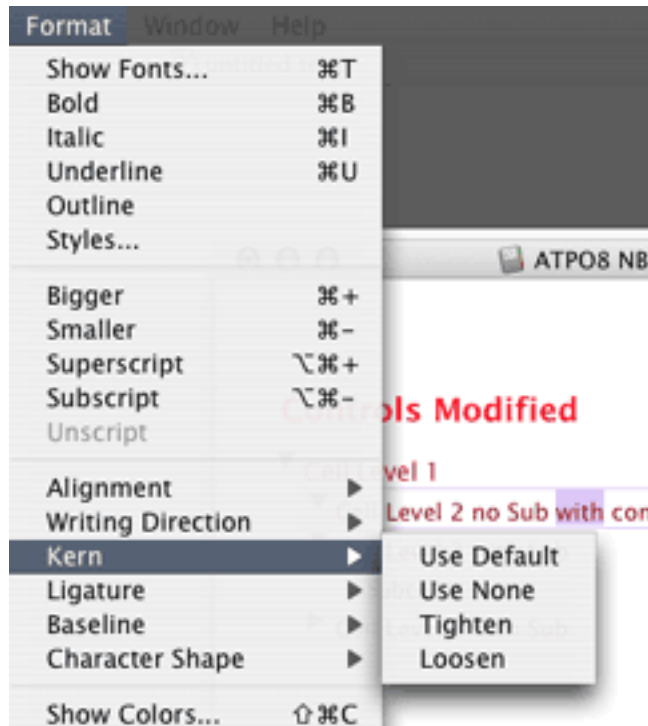
NoteBook Typographic Controls

I consider "finding" to be a basic outlining capability. NoteTaker has a minimal find/replace (find a text string, but you can search over many notebooks) while NoteBook's "superfind" also considers assignable cell attributes (keywords, "stickers," highlights,

dates, and priorities) that will be mentioned below. The results of a "superfind" are presented as a page on the index. Results are displayed with surrounding context so you can actually understand them. Each result is hotlinked to its occurrence. Nice.
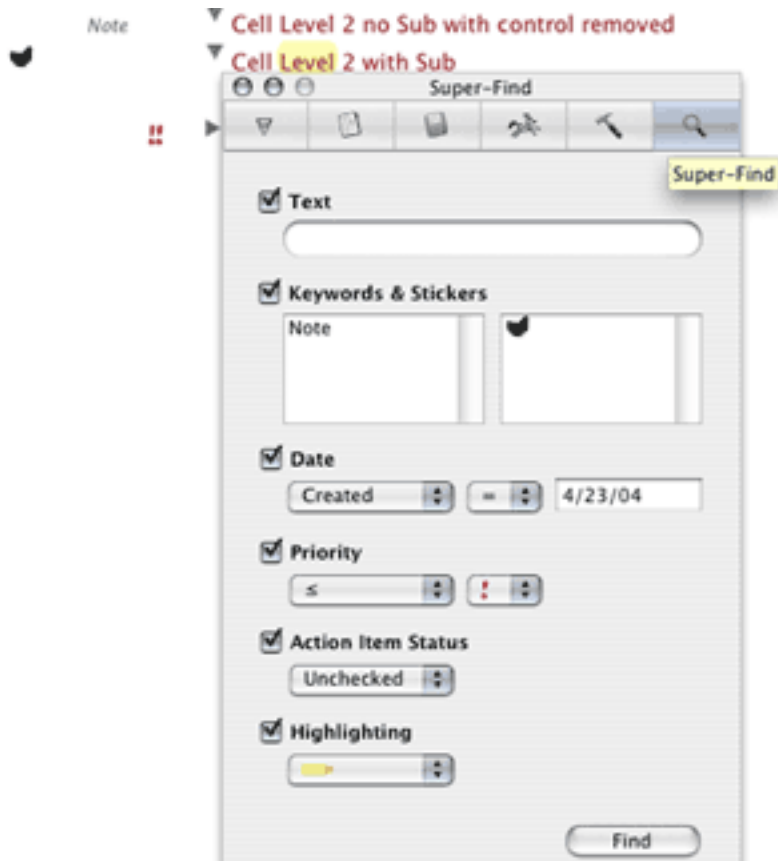
NoteBook Super-Find Panel

Incidentally, this "superfind" is close in effect to MORE's much-celebrated "search, mark, and gather" feature.

Database Features

My job here is to focus on the outlining capabilities. As you've seen, both are worthy outliners but they also serve as freeform databases. For many outlining uses, the merger of these two capabilities is natural.

The idea behind a database is that there is "metadata" associated with an item. Here we see an even bigger difference in underlying philosophy.

NoteBook's approach is the most straightforward. Metadata is handled as simple attributes. You can make up and assign keywords to cells. You can also apply "stickers," which are the same type of thing, except little pictures. These are optionally displayed to

the left of the cell. Priorities are a similar attribute.
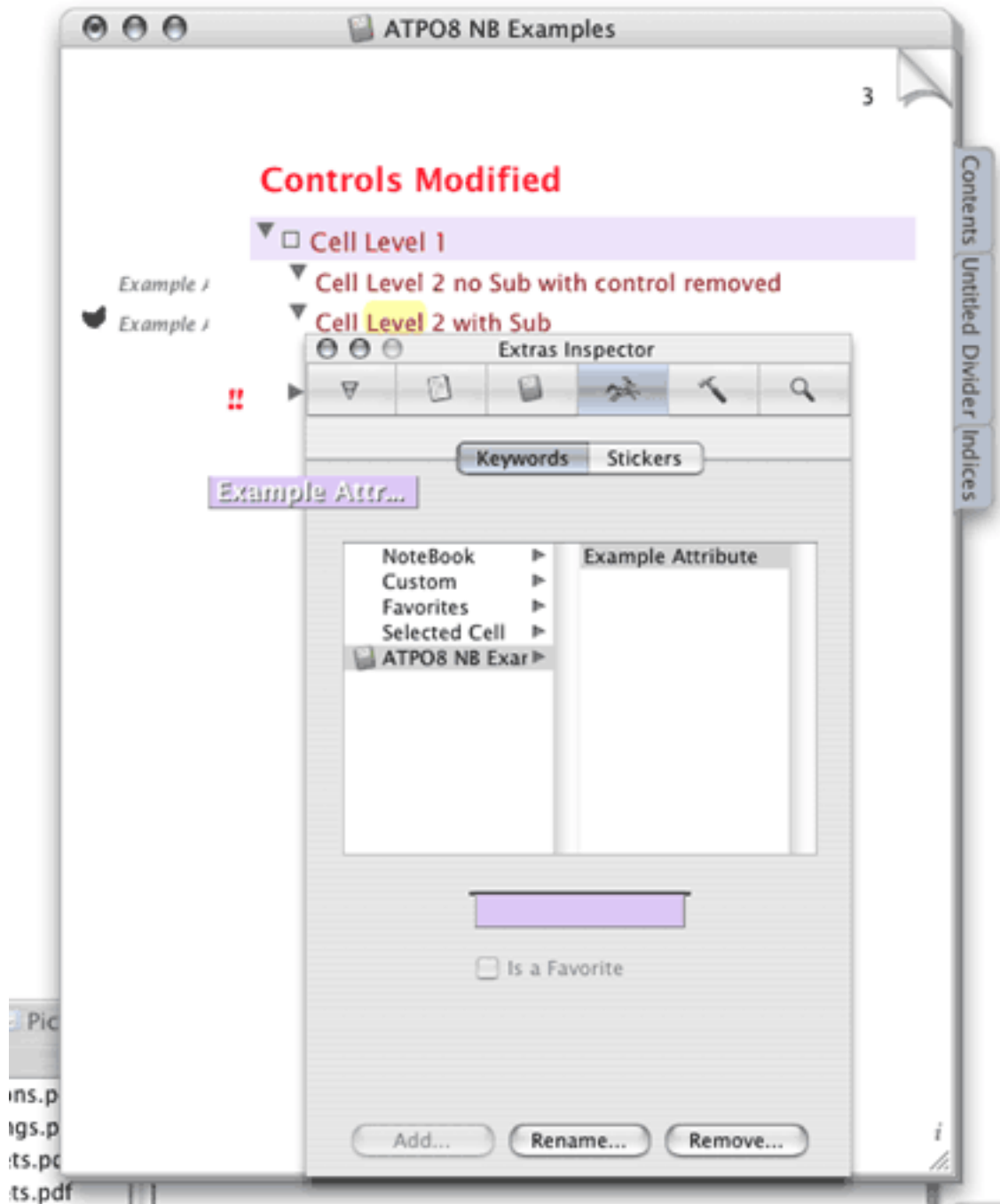
NoteBook Attributes

Each is collected into a group for organization. Once applied to a cell, the group assignment is lost. Cells also have invisible date attributes: date created and date modified.

You assign attributes to text blocks in NoteBook by "highlighting" via one of six colors. This text attribute may not seem like the other attributes until you realize that highlighted text is indexed and you can "superfind" using highlight as an attribute.

NoteBook automatically builds indexes of each of these plus all the words in the notebook (more of a concordance, really) and the "superfind" results already mentioned. There's also a list of "attachments," which is NoteBook's term for referenced files, but none for internal links.

NoteTaker superficially seems identical. It similarly builds indexes of words, proper words, numbers, documents (identical to NoteBook's "attachments"), date last changed, dates in cells, e-mail addresses, URLs, and "categories." This seems the same except for a few details and that last thing, "category." But that last item is radically different.

First a word about NoteTaker's index display. It uses outline organization where it can, for instance all words starting with "A" would be collapsed under A. Next to an index entry is a number representing the page number(s) where that item—in this case a word—might

be found. Clicking on that page number takes you to the page. Option-hovering on one of those numbers displays a window with the item in context. This "x-ray" feature is used elsewhere in NoteTaker.
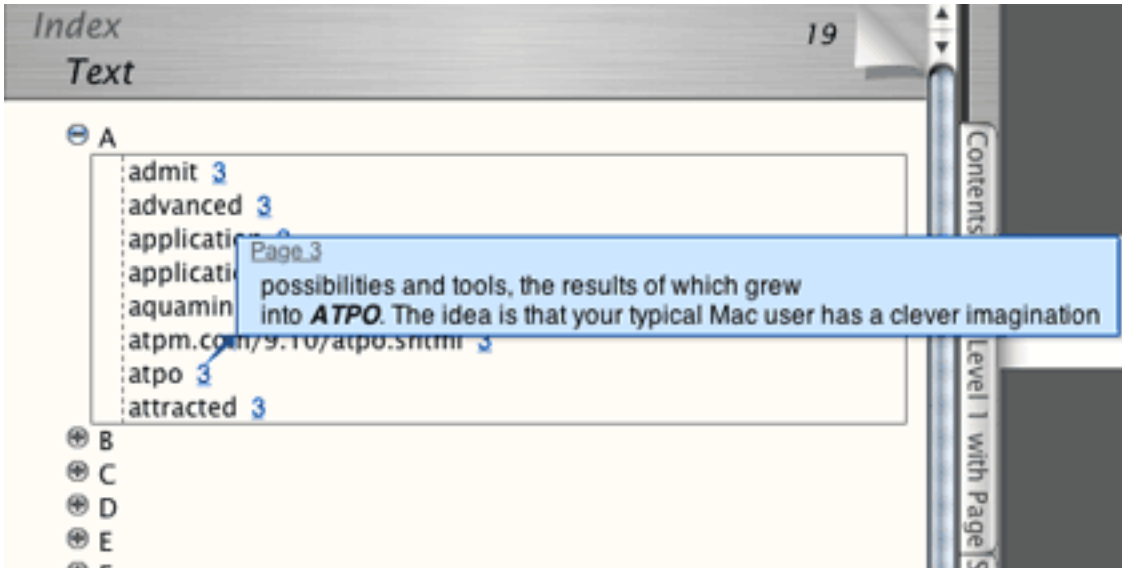
A NoteTaker Index

NoteBook takes a different approach. It does not use a collapsible outline format. The numbers next to the index entry are not the page numbers but the number of occurrences, for instance (1,2,3). A contextual menu will pop up to tell you the page title of that occurrence.
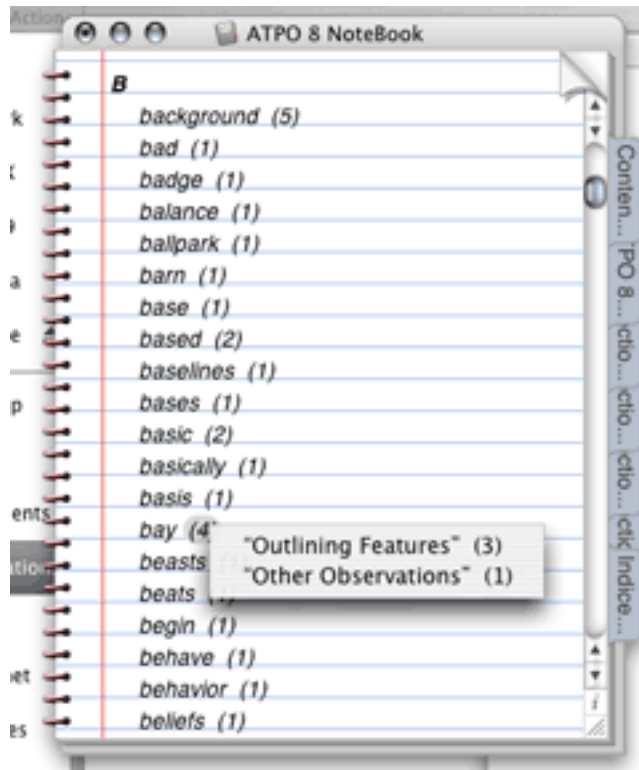
A NoteBook Index

NoteTaker Categories, Templates and "Summarize"

Now let's dig into NoteTaker categories. These are not the "passive" descriptors of NoteBook. They can be; you can make up any group and category and use it just like NoteBook's attributes, as tags. But NoteTaker also rolls its internal attributes into this list, stuff such as whether a cell is an image, link, movie or such. You cannot edit this group.

So far, NoteTaker "categories" are just like NoteBook's collection of attributes (keywords and stickers and such) but less visually exploited on outline pages. So why am I excited? Because NoteTaker users can build "templates" with these categories.

A template is a group of cells with assigned categories and styles. Suppose you wanted to make a movie notebook and had a section where each movie had a page. You'd want some cells to be like fields in a database, with titles like: "Movie Name," "Director," and other text entries. But you would likely want a date cell as well, and some for images and video clips and URLs. Easy as pie to make such a template for a page.

ATPO readers may remember us enthusing about an identical capability with the long lost Arrange in our survey of legacy outliners. NoteTaker's template cells allow you to attach style, formatting, and outline hierarchy information to template cells (as in Arrange). You can see that NoteTaker's attention to styles is over on this database side rather than outlining.

Now remember that all categories are automatically indexed. Sweet, if you've set things up right.

NoteTaker has a cool feature called "highlight and summarize." Basically it is a progressive find feature that searches for text, categories, priorities, date, and flag. You can page through found results, highlight them and/or create a "summary" which appears as an index. The result looks much like NoteBook's "superfind," but the underlying approach is quite different.

(Highlight in the NoteTaker context is not like NoteBook's where you highlight a text block with different colors. Instead, you have one color that highlights the whole cell. "Highlight" and "flag" are ways of marking a cell.)
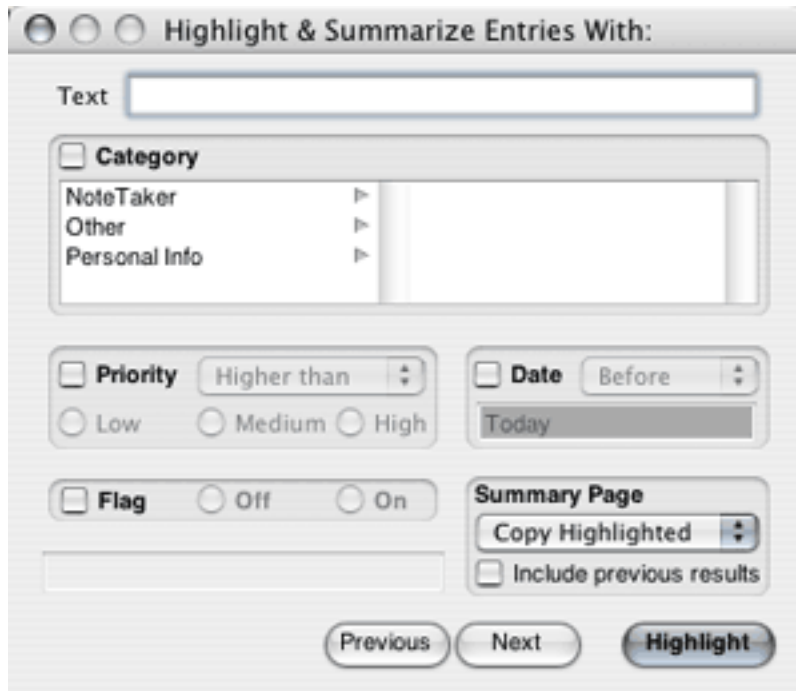
NoteTaker Highlight and Summarize Dialog

Neither NoteTaker's nor NoteBook's supersearch dialogs allow for patterns, Boolean searches (except in the text field), or relatives (find cells that have the priority "high" and modified one day ago or less or with the priority "medium" and modified three days ago or less).

## Scrapbooking and Clipping Features

Okay. Both outliners and freeform databases need good clipping services. Perhaps the expectations are higher for someone targeting the database side.

Let's just mention a special kind of capture first: both notebooks allow you to scan images directly into them. NoteBook additionally supports direct camera linkage, while NoteTaker has a snappy slideshow mode.

Both also fully support dragging of different types of stuff into them.

So far as clipping, NoteBook does fairly well on this score. What you do is set up a "clipping service" which designates a page. That service then appears in the services menu as a submenu that says "Clip to *page* of *notebook*" where *page* and *notebook* are the names of what you have designated. You can assign a unique keystroke to each service. NoteBook supports a similar service through contextual menus.
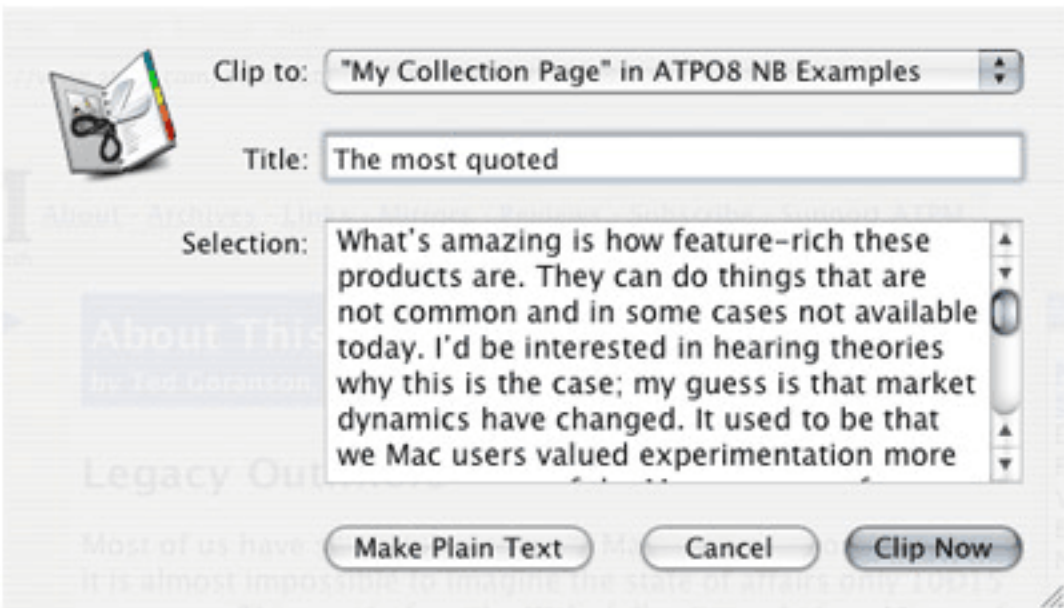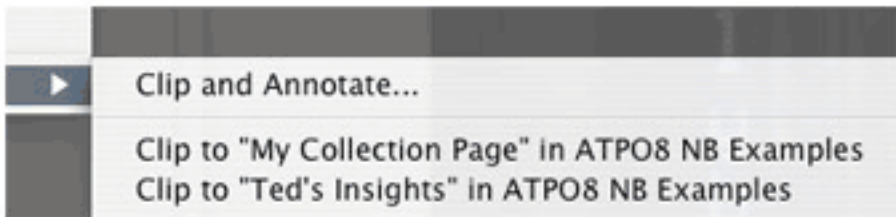
NoteBook Clipping Service Contextual Menu

That contextual menu also has an option to "clip and annotate." In this case, a dialog appears. You type what you wish and the result pastes in the notebook page as your typed text with the clipped items as a child. This is how an outliner person thinks; just get my stuff into the outline and I'll arrange it later.

NoteTaker's clipping services work precisely the same way except you don't have the option for annotation. Instead you have the option of pasting a link in the outline page that takes you to the source. Now that's thinking from the database side and is pretty clever thinking. See what I mean about two different philosophies?

Other Observations

User Interface

Both of these notebooks have user interface quirks. Part of the problem is that they have had to reinvent stuff that other applications can take for granted. Background images don't cover the whole background; until recently you could move NoteTaker's title bar under the menu bar with disastrous consequence; NoteTaker's setting for a new cell on "Return" was erratic over several months till now; there's lots of similar stuff not worth listing.

But most of the quirks are because they have added a huge number of features without re-engineering their interface strategy. NoteTaker has a sparse preferences panel and has shoved all sorts of functionality into menus. Options, toggles, commands, and selections are mixed helter-skelter.

NoteBook has a completely different strategy. It is based on an "inspector" paradigm, the inspector pane openable from a logo in the lower right corner of pages. NoteBook offers many more options than NoteTaker and as a result has a rather confusing inspector layout. One goof is especially notable in an otherwise elegant application.

Remember that both companies are innovators in tabbed windows. Now look at one pane in NoteBook's inspector, shown in the screenshot below. That row of icons at the top are essentially tabs, but rendered as rectangular buttons. The second row is another kind of tab, and rendered as another kind of button. And the third row of those two radio buttons? Yep, another tab using yet a third type of button. Think about this coming from

one of the geniuses of the UI field and an expert in tabbed design. This is as ugly and jarring as NoteTaker's odd outline widgets in their drawer. Both can do better and doubtless will.
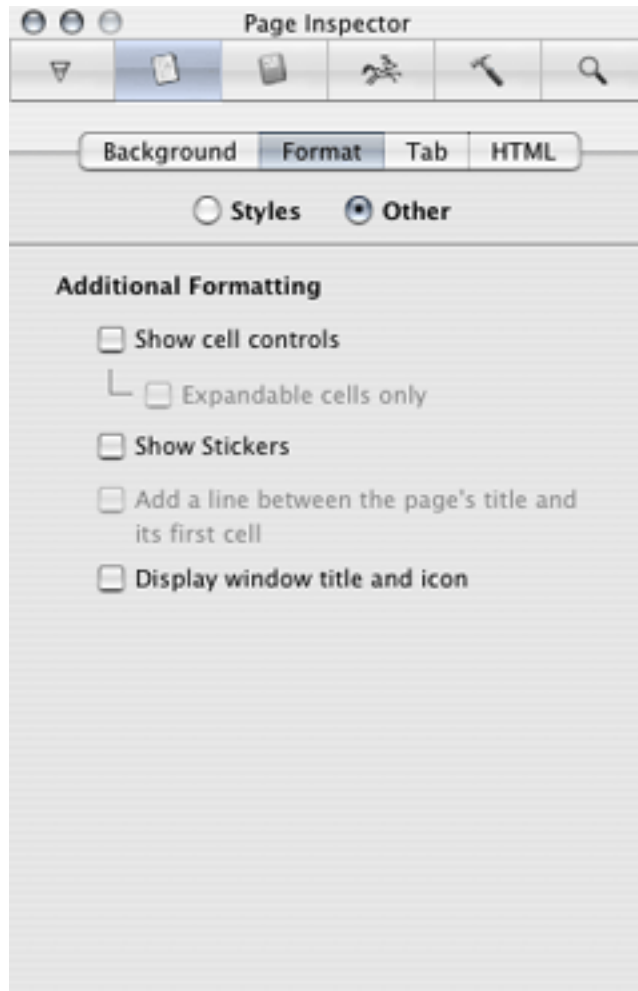
NoteBook Page Inspector

But as ugly as it is, you can muddle your way through. I think I'd rather have that than the toolbar of NoteTaker. It breaks the notebook metaphor so boldly it discomfits. Fortunately, you can easily hide it and retrieve it only when needed. Things don't look so bad in NoteTaker if you go with the brushed metal. Their Aqua look has no soul.

NoteBook makes its own design mistake in this department. It has a huge ruler that comes and goes where NoteTaker has its toolbar. When you hide the ruler, that huge space simply becomes blank. It doesn't shrink to allow the user as much room as possible.

Well, growing pains I suppose.

Scriptability and Encryption

NoteTaker is moving toward AppleScriptability, which puts it in a class with only OmniOutliner and now Hog Bay Notebook. Many serious outliners are also serious scripters, and usually share what they write. NoteTaker has come a long way in this regard and deserves a special acknowledgement, though it still has a way yet to go. In fairness, it has way more stuff to access than the other two.

Also, it is still not recordable, but that's Apple's fault. For some reason, Cocoa's AppleScript framework doesn't support recording, and Apple hasn't seen fit to fix it. Please complain to Apple, as recordability is what makes scripting available to the novice.

NoteBook allows you to encrypt pages, which is to say you can protect an outline. NoteTaker allows you to password protect (much weaker protection) a notebook, in other words, protecting that database.

To Do List Capabilities

Both notebooks have capabilities to handle to do lists. Whereas they are among the best in class in outlining and databasing, their to do management—except for their strong sorting routines—is nothing to get excited about. And since they don't exploit the outlining paradigm in this regard, I'll just pass on making this column needlessly longer.

I do expect them to cover this base in due time. But it's a tough nut with heavy competition.

Wrapup

So there you have it, fellow outliners. Both of these are powerhouse applications, NoteBook more from an outlining philosophy and NoteTaker more from a perspective of the freeform database. Each is world class and contender for best-in-class. Which type of thinker are you? What forms do you use when being clever?

NoteBook is $50. NoteTaker is $70. Both have 30-day demo versions.

NoteTaker requires OS X 10.2 and up, while NoteBook runs on 10.1 and up. I recommend checking them both out. Even if you did so in the past, they are different beasts now and among the most exciting things happening on the Mac.

In presenting this column, I have avoided using a review format. I have instead focused on some key features that I think will interest readers of *ATPO*. Naturally, I have not mentioned *all* features; that's for the companies to do themselves. And I mix in my own impressions. I hope you found this column useful. If you disagree or would like to mention something I have missed, please post a comment on the ATPM site.

I've asked the gurus behind these programs to say a few words about the future.

Scott Love of AquaMinds Speaks to the Future

"Our product roadmap is called the SilverStar Technology Plan which we've been discussing with our users over the past year or so. SilverStar is the combination of specific technologies that we're delivering along with a commitment to make sure we never lock you into a proprietary file format. Our Export NTML is the foundation for unlocking NoteTaker data and using it with other applications via plug-in XSLTs which will bridge across multiple platforms. This is why XML is so important to our current and future product plans. As such, more XSLTs will begin to appear that will transform NTML to other formats.

"Secondly, you'll see the ability to go way beyond mere AppleScript to customize and personalize NoteTaker's capabilities. This is the platform part of SilverStar that we're delivering very soon. It will create a whole new way to think about using NoteTaker as a solution/application-specific environment.

"Finally, AquaMinds will deliver NoteTaker later this year on multiple platforms. OS X is still our innovation platform of choice but we're expanding to other platforms to make NTML ubiquitous. This will mean both NoteTaker and NoteTaker Viewer versions running everywhere."

Jayson Adams of Circus Ponies Speaks to the Future

"I believe that the only way to create truly breakthrough software is to balance your own strong design beliefs with a close relationship with your customer. That balance is the source of Circus Ponies' strength and will continue to drive product development for many years to come. Customers keep telling us that one of the things they love about NoteBook is our company's willingness to listen and engage them in conversation about the product—that's just not something you can buy from other companies at any price. On our discussion forums, we have hundreds of customers talking to us and to each other about what would make them love NoteBook even more.

"I don't want anyone to walk away with the impression that we're foregoing certain features because we're making NoteBook into more of an outliner than a freeform database. Cell linking, templates, and other features were in the original NoteBook when I wrote it for NeXTSTEP over 10 years ago. I left them out of NoteBook for OS X because they weren't implemented correctly that first time out (the benefit of 10 years of hindsight). NoteTaker is a clone of the original NoteBook, and you can see these features in their original form. We chose instead to take the time to get them right—look for 'cell linking done right,' etc., in a future version."

Department of Corrections, Apologies and Additions

There has been some debate here at *ATPO* headquarters. Some of us would like to add a feature to the column noting the updates of outliners we track with a couple sentences about what has been added or changed. We already do that for outliners that freshly appear. Would you consider that a valuable service?

Cloning Mac OS 9 and Other Questions

All right, I confess. As usual, I was having a little difficulty coming up with a topic for this month's column. Just as I was about to pull out most of my hair, some of our readers came to the rescue with some interesting questions. It seems that there is quite a bit of interest in creating utility disks with custom installations of Panther as well as "cloning" OS 9. I will also briefly mention a good reason for having an OS 9 disk around if your system can still boot from it. Let's step into the lab and get to work.

The Mad Scientist's Toolbox

If you have been reading my column for a while you know that I often tinker with several Macs. Tinker with any computer long enough, it will eventually rebel and refuse to work. Even if you do not tinker with your Mac, eventually something will go wrong and repairs will become necessary.

Making disk-based repairs on your Mac often requires more than one utility. That used to require some variation of the following procedure: boot your system from a utility disk, repair the disk drive, boot your system from a different utility disk to correct any problems left behind by the first utility. This process would continue until the drive was either repaired or so badly damaged that further repairs were impossible.

Give It the Boot?

In a previous column, I described a procedure for creating an emergency CD capable of running several utilities without the need for multiple reboots. Although that procedure worked well under Jaguar, it does not work for those of us running Panther.

You may recall that under Jaguar the process of creating an emergency CD relied on a program called BootCD. In theory, it should have been possible to use the same process under Panther even if it meant using a DVD instead of a CD. Well, the reality is a bit

different. The current version of BootCD is not compatible with Panther. With all the new features included in Panther, there were numerous changes to the underpinnings of OS X. Somewhere along the way, we lost the ability to create our own "bootable" CDs.

I am not usually good at taking no for an answer, but this time I may have to for a while. After haunting several message boards and reading posts from Mac users who have tried just about every conceivable method of creating a bootable Panther DVD, I am forced to conclude that it cannot be done right now. Since "cloning" Panther is still possible, your best bet seems to be to copy your installation to another drive and use utilities there to correct any problems.

What about Nine

I also received some questions about cloning OS 9. That one was a bit of a puzzler for me. I rarely use OS 9 or Classic anymore except to run a handful of applications that I have not upgraded yet. Even though I do not often use OS 9, I must admit cloning it is a good idea.

Cloning OS X is a complicated process. Along with its Unix underpinnings comes a plethora of invisible files that need to be copied. Cloning OS 9 is a much simpler process by comparison, in part because there are far fewer invisible files to cause problems. So just how do you clone OS 9 anyway?

In your quest to clone OS 9 you might be tempted to simply use the Finder and copy files from your source drive to the target drive. This may work in some circumstances but the difficulty is that some programs might not work properly. If this happens you will often see problems with programs not remembering their serial numbers.

Since my basic philosophy is to use as few tools as possible, my first choice for cloning OS 9 is to use the same tool I would use to clone OS X. I have used Carbon Copy Cloner several times to clone OS 9 and it seems to work well.

Cloning OS 9 using Carbon Copy Cloner is essentially the same process used to clone OS X. It has been a while but here are the basic steps:

Launch the program and select your OS 9 installation as the source drive. If OS 9 is on a separate volume, you can simply select the entire volume. This is the best way to assure that you get any invisible files that have been created by your favorite program.

If you are running Classic from the same drive as OS X, you need to select the right folders. The order that the folders are selected in is not as important as getting the right folders. Look for the following items: Applications (Mac OS 9), Documents, System Folder, and any other files that you want to copy. It may take some trial and error to get all of the necessary files. The exact files vary from one machine to another.

I tend to deselect any Norton FileSaver files from the list regardless of whether I am cloning OS 9 or X using Carbon Copy Cloner. It seems to hang every time it encounters one of these files. Once you have finished selecting files, click Clone and wait for the process to finish.

If you are not running OS X, you are not left out in the cold. Any of the third-party backup programs should be able to clone OS 9. At one time, I used LaCie's Silverkeeper. I used an earlier version of this program some time ago but stopped using it when I migrated to OS X because it did not work properly. ATPM reader Tyler Stringer informs me that the current version of this program does a great job cloning OS 9. It was also a Pick of the Week at Mac OS X Hints. There are versions of Silverkeeper for both operating systems. It is a free utility but you must provide your name and an e-mail address to complete the download.

Hanging on Just a Little Bit Longer

I was on the verge of completely removing OS 9 from my system because I had not run it or Classic for months. Now I have a project at work that will require running some software that I have not upgraded. The upgrades are available but not a high priority right now.

There is another reason to keep OS 9 around or at the very least to keep an OS 9 CD around. Under OS 9, you can see most files that are normally invisible under OS X. If you do not have an OS X utility that allows you to delete such files, they can often be removed under OS 9. You must do this with caution. Removing the wrong file can ruin your OS X installation until that file is replaced.

Given the potential dangers, why would anyone want to remove invisible files from an OS X installation? That's what I thought too, but while haunting Mac OS X Hints one day I ran across this tip from a fellow Mac user having difficulty deleting a huge log file that had grown to consume several gigabytes of hard drive space. Why the file refused to be deleted under OS X is open for debate. Most likely, it was still registering as "in use" by

some extension or process. There was also some debate about whether this task could be accomplished from the Terminal. If you experience this problem and are reluctant to use Terminal this might be an option as long as you know what you are deleting and what it does.

Well that's it for now. Summer vacation is approaching, and I may have time to test a few ideas that I have seen recently. Until then the lab door is open and I'll keep an eye out for new questions.

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National Association of Broadcasters Convention 2004

Well, another NAB convention has come and passed.

This year was my ninth show in the last ten years, and a lot has changed. Since last year, "HD" has become *the* buzzword. This year's show also had (according to the Lost Remote TV Weblog) more than 94,500 attendees, up from last year's 88,000. Accordingly, there was less bellyaching about the economy, and the exhibitors who came with things to sell seemed to be moving inventory or placing Sold signs on their demo units.

Ten years ago, the Internet didn't get any attention from the convention-goers, and I counted on one hand with two fingers to spare the number of booths that were offering Internet services or products. I also recall how, back in '95, Avid and Media100 had similar-sized booths and were neck and neck in their respective technology. I think Avid is now more worried about what Apple engineers are doing. One person I chatted with at the Promax Digital Video Cafe is a Media100 user. He was telling me how he visited Media100's booth, hoping to be reassured about the company's future, but unfortunately left feeling more worried.

Here are the highlights (IMHO) from NAB 2004:

Apple hosted an invitation-only event at the Venetian and announced Final Cut Pro HD (a.k.a. FCP 4.5, so it's a *free* upgrade available now for FCP 4 users). According to Rob Schoeben, Apple's vice-president of Applications Marketing, there are more than a quarter million FCP editors in the world. Live from NAB has more info on FCP HD.

Apple also announced DVD Studio Pro 3, the Xsan High-performance Storage Networking system, and Shake 3.5. Working together with Panasonic, Apple introduced the new compact AJ-HD120 0A DVCPRO HD VTR. Now you can shoot in HD and import your footage into FCP via FireWire.

The announcement from Apple that I'm most excited about (read: can't wait to get my hands on) is Motion. Bye-bye After Effects. Well, almost anyway. AE still has the ability to do animation in Z-space. But the way Motion uses behaviors and not key frames to create animations is *very cool*, and it will only cost $299 when it ships this summer! Creative Mac has more info on Motion.

Apple's booth was always very crowded. It's no wonder Apple won six National Association of Broadcasters Best of Show awards.

Sony's killer app—OK, killer hardware, actually—was the Sony Anycast, a control room in a suitcase. The video guy at my church has ordered one, so I am looking forward to getting my hands on it when it ships in August.

AJA Video introduced its Kona 2—a new dual rate HD/SD PCI capture card for the Power Mac G5.

Focus Enhancements has been around for a couple of years, and after seeing its latest DR-DV5000 system, I really want one.

In Huge Systems' booth, I got a close-up look at its MediaVault 320-R. Wouldn't one of those look sweet next to your G5? Huge was one of the presenters at the Promax Digital Video Cafe and made some interesting comments about how it feels that the technology of network storage is going to go Ethernet—not Fiber Channel.
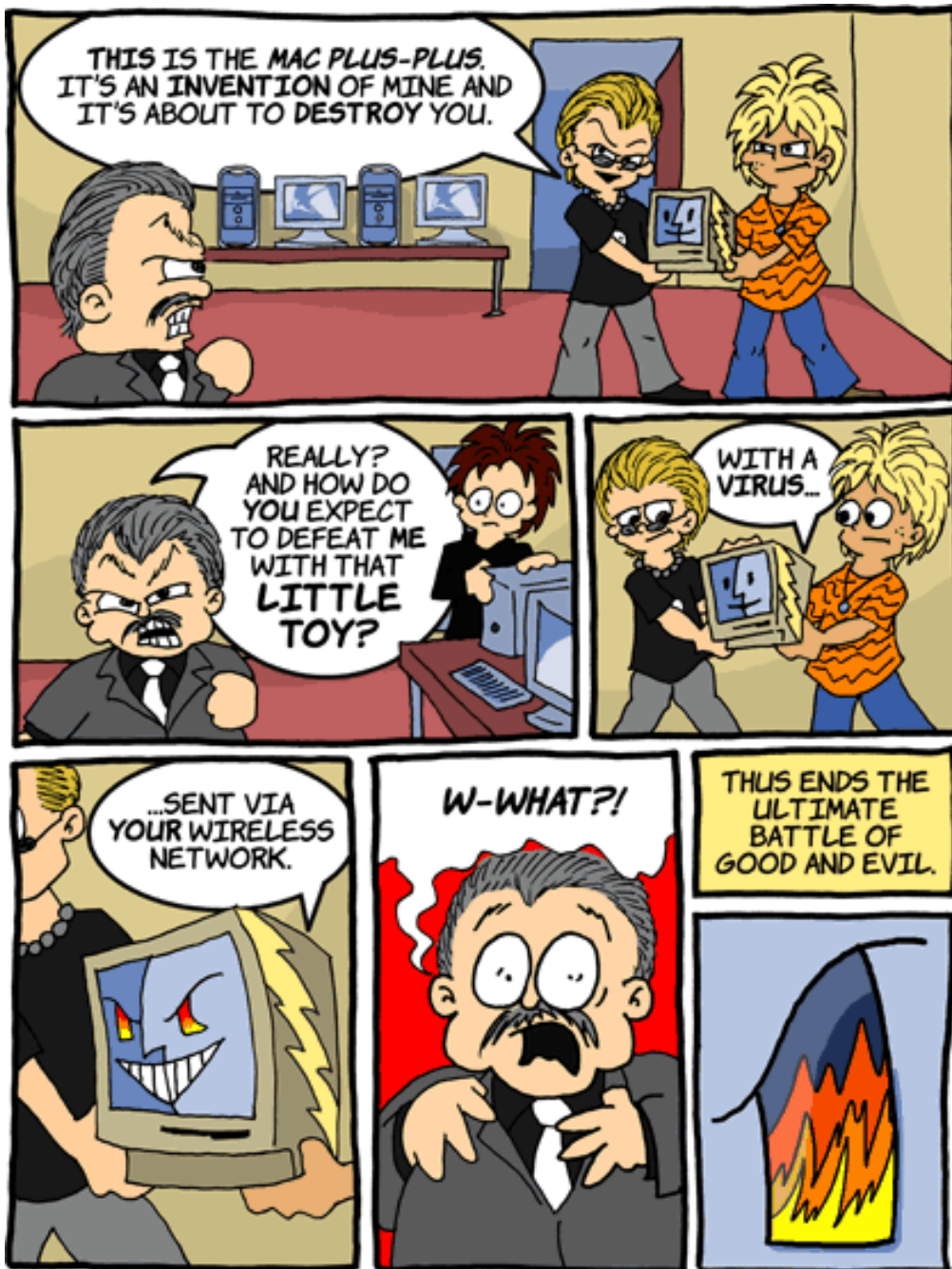
Of course, there were many other cool things that time and space don't allow me to opine upon. Overall, it was a good show, but there was not enough time to see everything I wanted to see—and I didn't spend much time sitting through demonstrations, either! It was good to see all the third-party hardware and software for Macs this year—accessories, plug-ins, and other things made to work with Final Cut. It's an exciting time to be working in this field, and I can't wait to see what exciting things will be shown at NAB 2005!

Matt Johnson is currently seeking full-time employment in the graphic design field and can use every bit of freelance work he can get! He has a portfolio online. If you like what you see there and would like him to do some work for you, please drop him a note.

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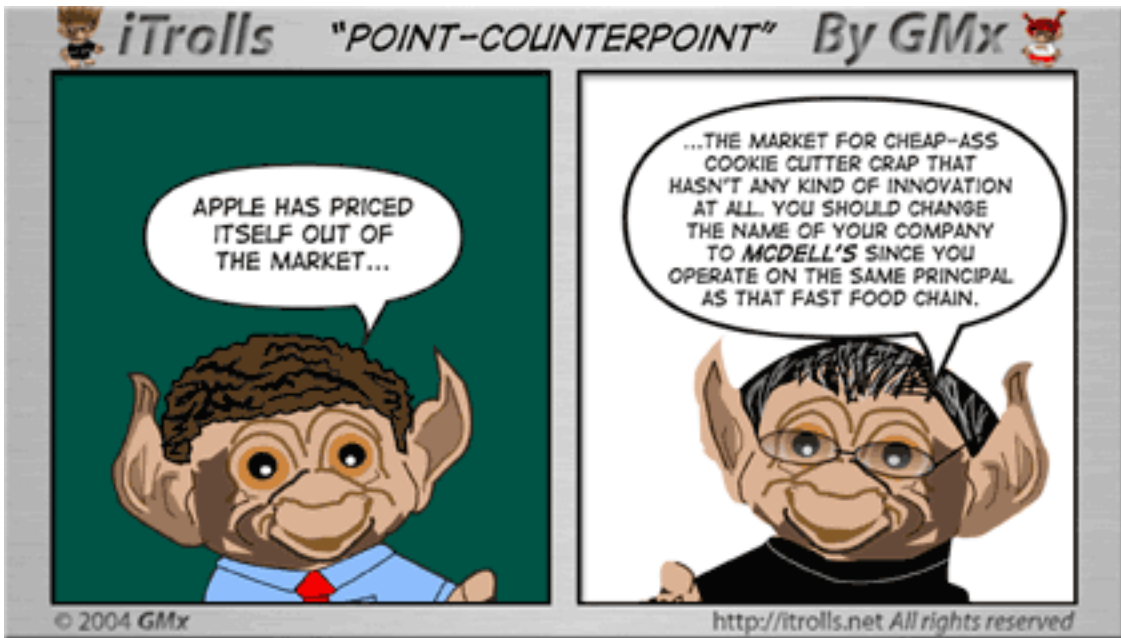
Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico

These desktop pictures were taken by ATPM Web Editor Lee Bennett during his April 2004 vacation to Puerto Rico. The images are of various flora, fauna, and constructs from numerous locations throughout the commonwealth. Additional photos from the trip are on Lee's personal online album. All images were taken with an Olympus C-5050. Resampling and retouching were performed with Adobe Photoshop 8.0.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

Pictures from previous months are listed in the desktop pictures archives.

## Downloading all the Pictures at Once

iCab and Interarchy (formerly Anarchie) can download an entire set of desktop pictures at once. In iCab, use the Download command to download "Get all files in same path." In Interarchy, use HTTP Mirror feature.

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

If you have a picture, whether a small series or just one fabulous or funny shot, feel free to send it to editor@atpm.com and we'll consider publishing it in next month's issue. Have a regular print but no scanner? Don't worry. E-mail us, and we tell you where to send it so we can scan it for you. Note that we cannot return the original print, so send us a copy.

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.3.x

Choose "System Preferences…" from the Apple menu, click the Desktop & Screen Saver button, then choose the Desktop tab. In the left-side menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X's built-in screen saver. Select the Screen Saver tab which is also in the Desktop & Screen Saver System Preferences pane. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, click on the Pictures Folder in the list of screen savers. Otherwise, click Choose Folder to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

Mac OS X 10.1.x and 10.2.x

Choose "System Preferences…" from the Apple menu and click the Desktop button. With the popup menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X's built-in screen saver. Choose "System Preferences…" from the Apple menu. Click the Screen Saver (10.1.x) or Screen Effects (10.2.x) button. Then click on Custom Slide Show in the list of screen savers. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, you're all set. Otherwise, click Configure to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

Mac OS X 10.0.x

Switch to the Finder. Choose "Preferences…" from the "Finder" menu. Click on the "Select Picture…" button on the right. In the Open Panel, select the desktop picture you want to use. The panel defaults to your "~/Library/Desktop Pictures" folder. Close the "Finder Preferences" window when you are done.

Mac OS 8.5–9.x

Go to the Appearance control panel. Click on the "Desktop" tab at the top of the window. Press the "Place Picture..." button in the bottom right corner, then select the desired image. By default, it will show you the images in the "Desktop Pictures" subfolder of your "Appearance" folder in the System Folder, however you can select images from anywhere on your hard disk.

After you select the desired image file and press "Choose," a preview will appear in the Appearance window. The "Position Automatically" selection is usually fine. You can play with the settings to see if you like the others better. You will see the result in the little preview screen.

Once you are satisfied with the selection, click on "Set Desktop" in the lower right corner of the window. That's it! Should you ever want to get rid of it, just go to the desktop settings again and press "Remove Picture."

Mac OS 8.0 and 8.1

Go to the "Desktop Patterns" control panel. Click on "Desktop Pictures" in the list on the left of the window, and follow steps similar to the ones above.

Random Desktop Pictures

If you drag a folder of pictures onto the miniature desktop in the Appearance or Desktop Pictures control panel, your Mac will choose one from the folder at random when it starts up.

DeskPicture

An alternative to Mac OS's Appearance control panel is Pierce Software's DeskPicture, reviewed in issue 5.10 and available for download.

Review: Dancing Barefoot (book)

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

Author: Wil Wheaton
Publisher: O'Reilly
Price: $15
Trial: Portions available on Wheaton's blog.

Bloggers can grow up to be real writers. That's the moral of the story of actor Wil Wheaton, who started a weblog and discovered he has a talent for writing.

Too often it doesn't work out that way. Too often, bloggers use their public space as a diary, a public space in which they vent what perhaps ought to be private thoughts. As readers, if we stumble across a blogger whose thoughts don't interest us, we can close it up and not read it. Now and then, though, we find a blog that informs us, or entertains us. I read one such blog recently, during the run of a seven-time Jeopardy champion. Each day after the show aired, he posted explanations of his strategies, behind-the-scenes anecdotes, and all that stuff that is genuinely interesting to game show fans. (In case you are also a game show geek, his name is Tom Walsh—look for him this fall in the Tournament of Champions.)

I don't intend to put down bloggers in general, but lately I've been doing research on the way newspapers have made technological changes over the years, and I keep running into references to weblogs. The problem I have with this overlap is that blogs are not journalism. That's the disconnect that keeps coming up for me. Even if a blog is operated by a newspaper writer or columnist on its own Web site, I still cannot call it journalism. Blogs do not, by definition, have ethical rules underlying them, while responsible journalism has lots of rules. Responsible journalism has multiple layers of fact-checking and verification (which sometimes breaks down, but it supposed to be there regardless). Blogs are merely opinion.

That said, some people's opinions are more interesting than others. If you are a *Star Trek* fan, Wil Wheaton's blog may be interesting to you. Of the many actors and writers in the *ST* community, Wheaton is one of the most polarizing. Lots of viewers loathed his character, who was a young teenager on the second series, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The creator of the series, Gene Roddenberry, intended Wheaton's character to

represent all the wonder and awe most of us would feel on our first trip into space, on our first interaction with important ship's personnel, and on meeting new alien life forms. Since the character, Wesley Crusher, was young, he sometimes made mistakes that endangered the ship or crew. As a boy genius, though, he was able to devise solutions to the problems. Viewers tired of storylines in which Wesley saved the ship from problems of his own creation. In actuality, these totaled perhaps four episodes in four seasons. His callowness became exaggerated by viewers, who also could not separate the character of Wesley from the actor Wil Wheaton.

Wheaton started his blog a few years ago. It is read by upwards of 100,000 people each week and was named Best Celebrity Weblog by Forbes.com in 2003. A friend told Wheaton he should publish his stories in a more permanent format, and he began compiling a book, which will be released this summer entitled *Just a Geek*. He realized he had too much material for the book, so he removed some segments that he liked but that were not essential to *Just a Geek*. These segments are presented in *Dancing Barefoot*.

The first four segments are very short, only a few pages each. Each shows us a warmth about Wheaton. Three describe moments with his family members, and one gives us a teenage memory that especially shows us Wheaton's genuine geekiness. We all have some of that geek in us, and it's easy to feel the connection with him.

The final segment is much longer, and tells of Wheaton's adventures on a weekend in Las Vegas. Yes, there are some of *those* kinds of adventures, and some off-color language here and there, so readers with sensitive ears will not care for this story. The reason Wheaton was in Vegas the weekend in question, though, was not so much to gamble but to participate in a *Star Trek* convention. He understands how much money attendees pay for those experiences, and he is determined to do his part to make their time worth the investment. He talks about signing autographs, giving a talk, and writing and performing sketch comedy that has nothing to do with *Trek* but whose audience is enthusiastic *Trek* fans.

Wheaton lets us know how *Star Trek* affected him as a young man. There were parts of the experience that he resented, even though he understood why they happened. One of the most interesting moments he describes is when he first met William Shatner, the star of the original *Star Trek* series and its many follow-up movies. Shatner treated him badly when they met, and Wheaton felt humiliated and angry. They later made up, although they will never be great pals. Wheaton was determined not to deliberately make any fan

feel the way Shatner made him feel, so he does his best to treat even the nut cases with respect or at least courtesy. Near the end of his story, he visits the Star Trek Experience at the Las Vegas Hilton.

Quick review of The Star Trek Experience: I recommend this for fans; non-fans should save their money. The ride is good but not worth the total admission, which includes a museum and stuff that fans will adore but non-fans will hate. Quark's Bar is a hoot for fans and non-fans alike.

Spoiler In Next Paragraph—Don't read if you want to be delighted when you read the book.

So Wheaton is standing on the "bridge" of the Enterprise in the ride simulator, and he hears and sees on-screen actor Jonathan Frakes, playing character William Riker as part of the simulated ride. Wheaton is transported back a decade, and he has an epiphany. He realizes that even though there are plenty of things about *Trek* that have plagued him, there are also plenty of things that were good, and rewarding, and fulfilling about the part he played in a culturally significant story.

It was a nice moment, reading it. He has become A Real Writer.

I have a couple of criticisms, neither of which have that much to do with Wheaton himself. I think *Dancing Barefoot* is a little overpriced at $15. Not much anyone can do about that, except consider other options such as buying used or borrowing from the library. I want Wheaton to make money off these books, though, so if you're a *Trek* fan, you will probably find it worth the money. It's a short book, so take your time and make it last.

There's a reference late in the book, in which Wheaton says he was not "thinking that in just two days I will never want to board an airplane again." I had to do a little too much work to place this story in time, and realize that it took place the weekend before terrorists flew airplanes into US buildings. That is more an editing mistake than a writing problem, but it might have been nice to have one more clause there to remind us of the date of the convention he was writing about.

Wheaton has a nice, easy writing style. He understands that to write well we must write about things we know, and that we should write in our own voices. He's done both. This is a very good first effort. I look forward to *Just a Geek*, coming out this summer.

Review: iFlex & SightFlex

by Lee Bennett, lbennett@atpm.com

iFlex

Developer: MacMice
Price: $20
Trial: None

SightFlex

Developer: MacMice
Price: $30
Trial: None

This is the product that Apple should've included with the iSight camera. One almost wonders why the team that developed the iSight didn't come up with this in the first place. Instead of bundling a variety of cheap-looking pieces of plastic for mounts and a spaghetti-thin FireWire cable, why not simply make a FireWire cable out of a metal gooseneck?

The desk-in-mind SightFlex and the laptop-in-mind iFlex combine goosenecks with FireWire cables for the ideal iSight mount.

As far as the design concept goes, I can't think of a single improvement. You don't even have to futz around with an attachment to act as a go-between that connects the iSight to the end of the gooseneck. The camera simply attaches directly onto the end. In the case of the SightFlex, the other end of the gooseneck sports a weighted base with a typical FireWire cord on the edge that plugs into your computer. The gooseneck is tall enough to peek over even the largest Apple displays. The iFlex, on the other hand, is only the gooseneck with a standard 6-pin connector on both ends and is designed to be used with laptops.

Possibly the most common SightFlex positioning.

The best feature of these products will be best-realized by someone who wants to take an iSight to different computers. I, for example, can leave a SightFlex at work, attached to my desktop G4. At the end of the day, I can slide the iSight into the clear plastic container that came with the camera, drive home, then reattach my iSight to the iFlex connected to the back of my PowerBook.

I said a moment ago that probably nothing could improve on the concept of these products. In application, this remains true for the iFlex. The only quirk you may find is a simple matter of physics. If you type on your laptop with an iFlex attached, the camera is naturally going to jiggle around a little bit. The gooseneck would have to be made too stiff for practical use to prevent the jiggling. But, if you think about it, when you are video conferencing with someone, aside from the occasional "Hey, look at this Web site"

moment when you have to type a URL, you're generally just leaving the laptop sitting on a desk or even on your lap as you lean back and chat with your buddy. Ergo, no more camera jiggle.

You'll no longer have to wonder if you're squeezing
the laptop screen clip too tight, nor have to put up
with a thin FireWire cable hanging down to the floor
and back up to the rear of the computer.

For the SightFlex, however, two miniscule gripes kept it from reaching highest marks. The first gripe didn't even dawn on me until I read Snaggy's review on the Geek Culture Web site. Snaggy seemed to think a combo version (which implies a higher price) would be a good idea. Such a product would include the basic iFlex and the base portion of the SightFlex with a FireWire jack in the top to plug the iFlex into. Personally, I'd like to see the SightFlex simply sold in this manner. Just because you use a laptop doesn't mean that the SightFlex version wouldn't be helpful. For example, I have a chain of hard drives plugged

into my laptop's single FireWire port when I am home. This precludes using an iFlex. A perfect solution, besides purchasing both a SightFlex and an iFlex, would be if the SightFlex were plugged into the end of the FireWire hard drive chain and, when I took to the road, I could simply disconnect the iSight, pull the gooseneck portion of the SightFlex out of the base, and drop it in my laptop bag—instant iFlex.

The one other small disappointment for the SightFlex pertains to the weight of the base. It either needs to be just a smidge heavier, wider, or both. On my desk at home, the space behind where my laptop sits isn't exactly ideal to place a SightFlex. My original plan was to set the base to the right of my laptop and twist the gooseneck to the side so that my iSight was in its usual position above the center of my screen. Unfortunately, the base is not heavy enough for this position. The weight of an iSight on the top is enough to tip over the SightFlex if the gooseneck is positioned at lower angles.

Don't plan on angling your SightFlex more than perhaps 30 degrees or so. It *will* tip over under the weight of an iSight camera.

Lastly, when you get your hands on either product, don't get freaked out at the popping sound you'll hear when you bend the gooseneck. When I first heard it, I thought I'd broken it. But I now understand that the sound is a side-effect of the strengthened gooseneck. You're *supposed* to hear the sound!

I'm not going to try to claim that every iSight owner needs to have one of these products. If you are only an occasional video conferencer and/or have already stuck the iSight mount to the back of your display with no real need to use it elsewhere, you're probably good to go. However, if you've just purchased an iSight and are still feeling as though it would be a crime to stick something to the back of your display, you're definitely a good candidate to become a SightFlex owner. Laptop users who frequently use their iSights at a variety of locations are equally good candidates to own the iFlex.

Review: iLap

by Chris Lawson, clawson@atpm.com

Developer: Rain Design
Price: $50-70
Requirements: any laptop computer
Trial: None

It isn't often that a product comes along that's so good at what it does, you go out of your way to use it. Rain Design's iLap is just such a product. If you have a laptop and spend any time working away from a desk or other hard, flat surface—for example, on the couch, in a chair, sitting outside, in front of the TV—go buy an iLap. You don't even need to read the rest of this review. Just go buy it. Even if you already own a CoolPad, go buy an iLap. You won't regret it. I showed the Web page to a fellow ATPM staffer and he bought it on sight. That's how good this stand is.

Lap work

What makes this product so amazing? Simply put, there is nothing else on the market that serves this function, and probably no better way to implement it. Constructed from a very attractive silver-anodized, sandblasted sheet of aluminum and two black faux suede–covered foam pads, the iLap beats both CoolPad models hands-down when it comes to off-desk use. On the desk, where the front pad can (and should, unless you have an external keyboard) be removed for easier typing, the iLap is at least as good as any

stand of comparable height. There are better desk stands when it comes to ergonomics, but none of them is particularly portable, and there's no *way* any of them will work on anything besides a desk. Just *try* balancing a loaded iCurve or NoteRiser on your lap. Or don't, because ATPM will not be held responsible for any damage that results from attempting such a circus stunt.

Desk work

The aluminum material is touted as a great heat dissipater, but the real advantage of the iLap, like most similar stands, comes from elevating the bottom of the laptop off the user's thighs. Any guy who has used a recent PowerBook on his lap for an hour or two will recall what an uncomfortable experience that can be for certain, uh, "residents" of that region. Greatly improved airflow over the bottom surface of the computer is the primary side effect of elevating the laptop, and in this respect, the iLap certainly does no worse than any other stand. The faux suede material covering the pads grips clothing very well, preventing the laptop from sliding around on the user's lap, especially when wearing nylon or similar synthetics. Maybe I'm in the minority, but I often use my PowerBook while watching TV, wearing gym shorts. Keeping the bare laptop on my lap is a real problem in this situation, and the iLap makes it a non-issue.

There are 12" ($50), 14" ($60), 15" Wide ($60), and 17" ($70) versions available for the corresponding PowerBook/iBook models, and a 15" ($60) normal-width model for the appropriate Wintel laptops. An iLap model matrix is available on the site to assist in determining the appropriate size for non-Apple laptop users.

The 15" Wide version ($60) reviewed here is substantially larger than most "portable" laptop stands, but it will still fit into most laptop bags that would hold its corresponding 15" PowerBook. If portability is a major concern, you can probably get away with using one of the smaller models, as the stand is plenty stiff. Be aware, however, that different-sized people have different-sized laps, so a smaller model may not fit your lap as well, depending on how you sit. The 15" Wide model fits the lap of this five-foot ten-inch reviewer perfectly.

This stand will do for couch potatoes what the CoolPad did for hard-core road warriors. It may even replace the CoolPad in the laptop bags of many casual laptop users. You owe it to yourself to check out this incredibly useful product.

Review: Mac OS X 10.3 Panther Little Black Book

by Wes Meltzer, wmeltzer@atpm.com

Author: Gene Steinberg
Developer: Paraglyph Press/O'Reilly
Price: $30 (list); $20 (Amazon)
Trial: None

If you think you know your way around Mac OS X pretty well but wouldn't mind a reference guide for when you need to know every system preference imaginable or a jumpstart introduction to backup software, consider Paraglyph Press' third OS X Little Black Book.

If, on the other hand, you want a guide to using Mac OS X more generally—the other half of this book's audience—this is not the right way to spend $20-$30. Go buy a round of lattes for your local Mac guru instead.

Gene Steinberg's *Mac OS X 10.3 Panther Little Black Book*—a misnomer of Carolingian proportion given its girth—is an excellent resource to the seemingly endless variety of actions one may perform in OS X 10.3. Want to know what to do with Classic apps to make them launch faster? How about how to set up a restricted account for your younger sibling? Nixon's little helper has the answer, and it does a good job of making that clear.

However, Paraglyph seems to have been unsure as to the proper approach to the book. They describe it as being for "[a]ny Mac user preparing to upgrade to Mac OS X Version 10.3 (Panther)" and for "[a]ll Mac OS X power users." That's a pretty tall order, and the book occasionally falls short because of that mismatch.

Each chapter begins with a narrative as to how to use the feature generally; it is followed by a collection of tips, both general and specific. Although this may make it useful as a resource, it is not comprehensive enough to be a useful manual, and its tips are comparatively basic. Its twin goals of presenting OS X to power users and to users upgrading sometimes seems forced. As a result, while the road-warrior section might alone be worth the cost of the book, one of the Safari tips explains how to access a command *in the Safari menu*.

One of the book's real strengths is its design and organization. Visually speaking, it is a triumph as far as clean, accessible design is concerned; the content is largely reinforced by the layout as well. Moreover, the organization around topics or tasks is more helpful and better executed than most tech books are.

Even seeking to cover all the bases, the latter half of the book is thoroughly impressive in terms of its usefulness. Chapter 12, about taking a laptop with Panther on the road, and chapters 16 and 17, about backups and security, are well organized and helpful even to this road warrior who thought he'd figured it all out. However, the first 11 chapters, about Panther and installing it, often feel torn between the book's two audiences: Chapter 10, for instance, contains a discussion of how to use Save and Open dialogs, something which seems a little out of place, and the Panther preferences guide (in Chapter 3) is a little too hefty and comprehensive for the average Mac user.

On the whole I found the "Little Black Book" to be a useful guide, but certainly a little too broad in terms of its audience. It seems to be trying too hard to be a book for both the average Mac user looking to use Panther and for the Panther power user, and occasionally gets caught in the quandary of either being too simplistic or too complex and detailed. The segments that allow the power user to shine through are excellent, however, and will probably help any experienced OS X user get his PowerBook on the road or get regular backups set up.

Review: Style Master 3.5.2

by Eric Blair, eblair@atpm.com

Developer: Western Civilisation
Price: $60
Requirements: Mac OS X
Trial: Fully-featured (30 days)

ATPM RATINGS
VERY NICE
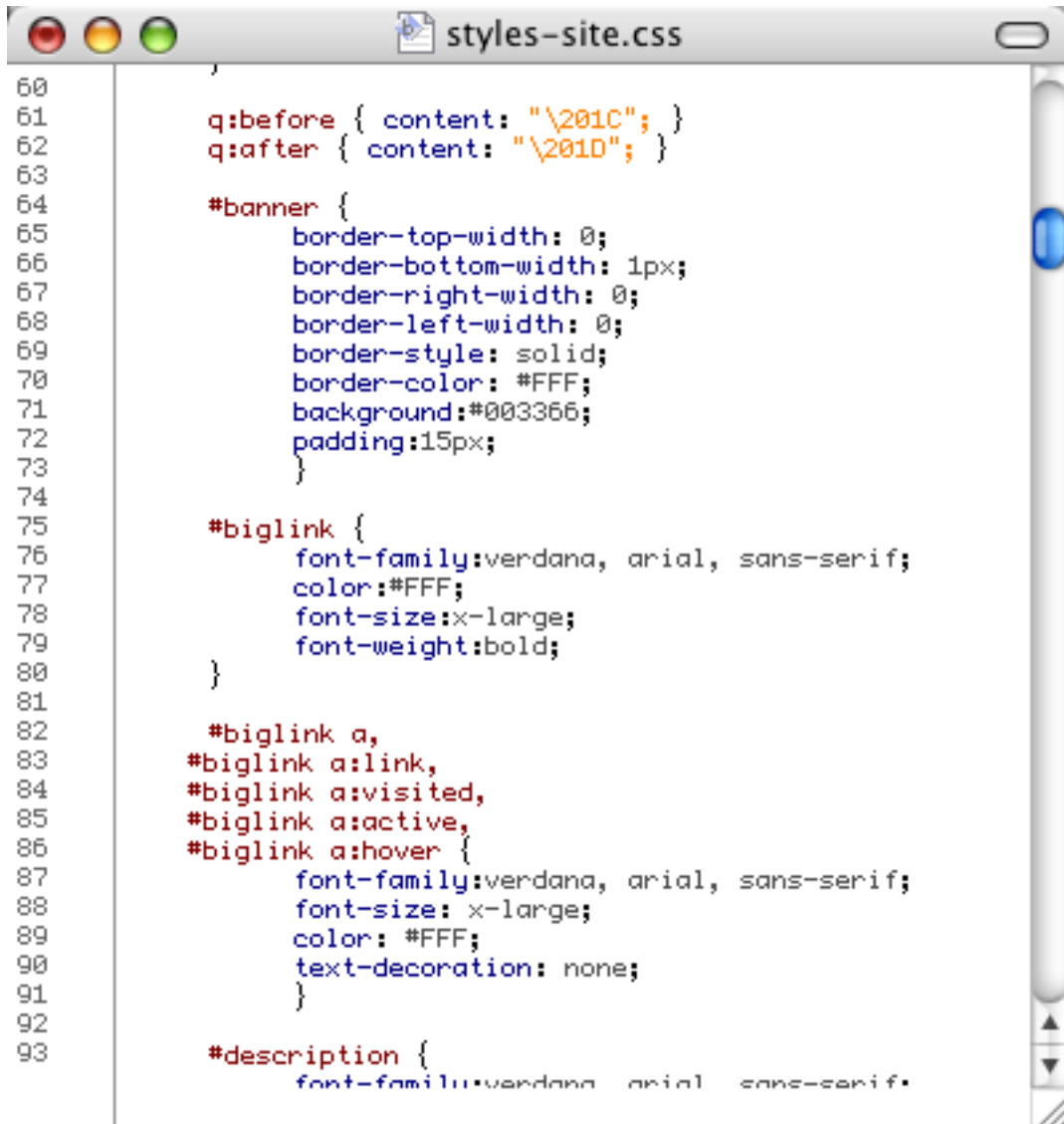
In recent years, there has been something of a push to separate the layout of Web sites from their contents via the use of Cascading Style Sheets, or CSS. Some of the reasons for this push are to reduce code complexity and increase support for different media formats.

While designing Web sites with CSS has many potential benefits, mastering CSS take some work—what with type selectors, class selectors, block level elements, style attributes, and so much more. It can be a bit overwhelming to figure out which bit of CSS code will give you the desired output.

Style Master is a CSS editor aimed at helping Web site designers bridge the gap between knowing how they want their Web site to look and getting their site to look that way. Instead of jumping back and forth between a text editor and the various CSS specifcations trying to figure out which attribute you need to get the desired effect, Style Master presents you with a Mac-like interface for setting your Web site's display options.

```
60
61    q:before { content: "\201C"; }
62    q:after { content: "\201D"; }
63
64    #banner {
65            border-top-width: 0;
66            border-bottom-width: 1px;
67            border-right-width: 0;
68            border-left-width: 0;
69            border-style: solid;
70            border-color: #FFF;
71            background:#003366;
72            padding:15px;
73            }
74
75    #biglink {
76            font-family:verdana, arial, sans-serif;
77            color:#FFF;
78            font-size:x-large;
79            font-weight:bold;
80    }
81
82     #biglink a,
83    #biglink a:link,
84    #biglink a:visited,
85    #biglink a:active,
86    #biglink a:hover {
87            font-family:verdana, arial, sans-serif;
88            font-size: x-large;
89            color: #FFF;
90            text-decoration: none;
91            }
92
93    #description {
             font-family:verdana, arial, sans-serif;
```

You can view and edit your CSS code in Style Master.

Editing CSS in Style Master is a bit like working in a schizophrenic word processor. Like a word processor, Style Master provides easy ways to change things like font settings, page borders, and page background. Since CSS files don't contain page content, though, these options modify the CSS code instead of modifying the appearance of the file (as opposed to a WYSIWYG HTML editor like GoLive). For instance, turning on the bold and centered options doesn't give you bold, centered text, it gives you something like the following:

```
p {
    font-weight: bold;
    text-align: center;
}
```

Style Master has two main ways of giving you easy access to the various CSS attributes. Many font-related attributes can be accessed through a floating tool bar, as in most any word processor. The vast majority of all other CSS attributes are accessed through a

collection of 13 drawers that let you modify just about any CSS attribute you can think of. However, should Style Master not have built in support for some CSS attribute you need, you can also write your own CSS code.
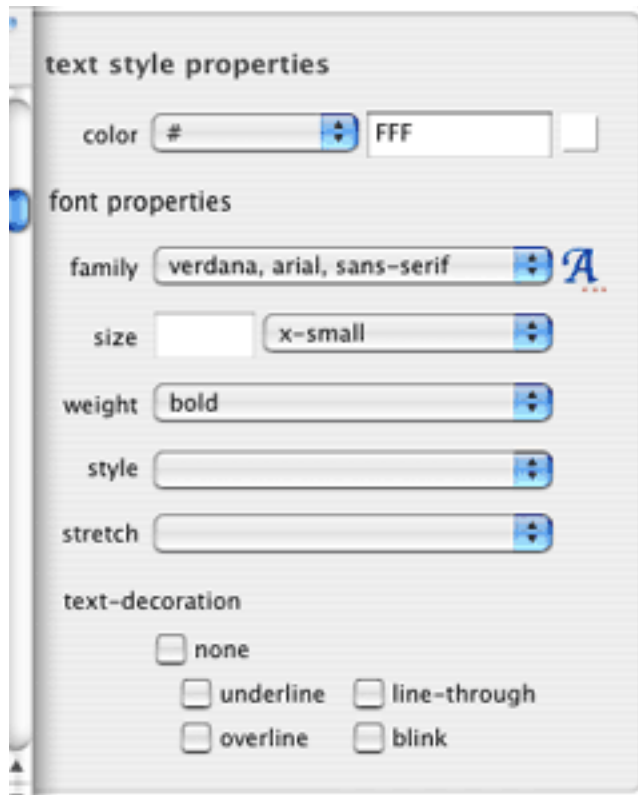

This drawer gives you easy access to most of the CSS text style options.

The collection of drawers works fairly well—you can quickly access most CSS attributes without cluttering up the screen with infrequently used floating palettes. I have noticed one shortcoming to the usage of drawers, though. You cannot tab between the various fields in the drawer. Since you need to switch between the mouse and the keyboard for changing settings, it can slow down editing considerably.

CSS in Action

Sometimes, it can be hard to tell what effect CSS code will have when it is applied to HTML. Style Master provides several methods for dealing with this issue.

Two of the more useful features are the Info and Compatibility options. The Info option gives a textual description of the CSS element. The Compatibility option explains the levels of support for the given element across a number of different Web browsers. If a particular browser doesn't completely support the element, the Compatibility feature explains the limitations specific to the browser. Although Web designers may have several Web browsers installed on their computers, they may not have easy access to Windows Web browsers. Using the Compatibility feature, these designers at least have some sort of idea what to expect when viewing the Web site on a PC.
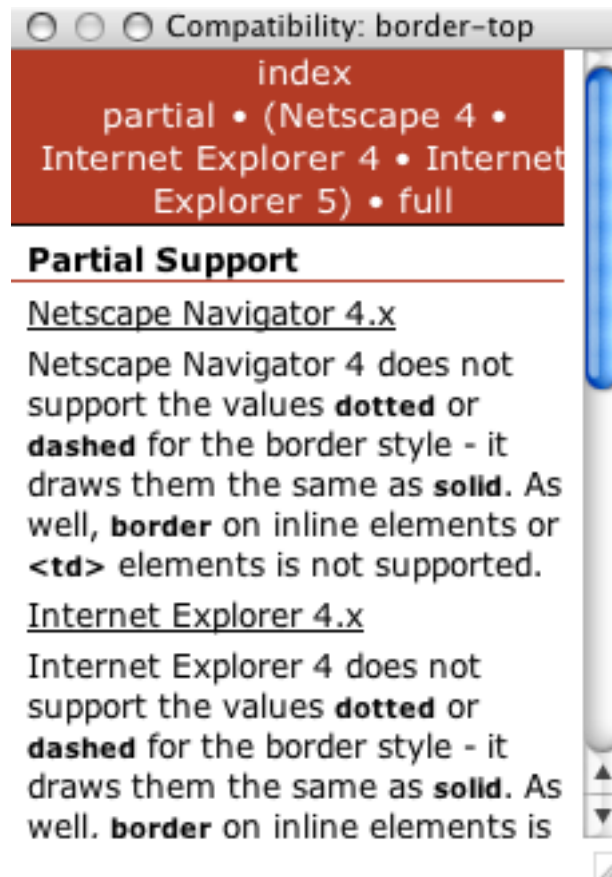
Compatibility information for the `border` element.

Style Master also offers several options for previewing the effect of the CSS. If you are developing a fairly basic style sheet, then you might be able to use Style Master's built-in preview document. This default Web page includes a collection of standard HTML

elements, including paragraphs, five levels of headings, ordered and un-ordered lists, and block quotes. The advantage of this approach is that you can develop your style sheet before you've written a single line of HTML code.

For more advanced style sheets, you will need to create a custom HTML page containing the CSS tags you want preview. Once you've saved this page, you can tell Style Master to use the new page for previews.

You can preview your design using either the built-in preview or the external preview. The built-in preview displays the selected Web page in a floating window. I can't be certain whether or not Style Master is using OS X's WebKit renderer, but the built-in preview does a very good job of displaying the Web pages. Since the preview is in a floating window, though, you cannot move it behind any other Style Master windows. If you're like me and you work on a laptop, you might not have the screen space to keep a floating window around.

Previewing your design inside of Style Master.

For people like me, Style Master also offers support for previewing your style sheet in a Web browser. From what I've been able to determine, Style Master can automatically detect whether or not Safari, Internet Explorer, Camino, and iCab are installed on your system. You can also choose to add any other Web browser to the list of preview

browsers. I used this latter method to add Firefox. However, whenever I tried to preview my style sheets in Firefox, Style Master crashed, losing any unsaved changes to my style sheet.

The final aid that Style Master offers in checking your CSS is quick access to the CSS Validator, either inside of Style Master or through your Web browser. I've yet to see any code generated by Style Master that failed to validate (and I would be very surprised if this were possible), but it is certainly possible that your hand-written code could contain errors.

Style Wizards

Although Style Master greatly simplifies the process of writing CSS, there are still some tasks that could be simplified further. In some cases, it's the basic tasks like setting up a set of common selectors. In other cases, it's more complex tasks that might otherwise leave you wondering how to accomplish your goals.

Style Master provides a set of five wizards for accomplishing a variety of tasks. The basic wizards cover creating new style sheets and creating selectors for the four link states. The more advanced wizards cover creating CSS layouts, bread crumbs, and navigation bars.

My taste in colors notwithstanding, the Layout Wizard makes it possible rapidly generate multi-column layouts for Web sites.

The more advances wizards generate both CSS and the HTML code necessary for displaying the desired results in a Web browser. As somebody who has spent a good deal of time looking through some of the various CSS navigation bar examples available on the Web, I can tell you it would have been a huge time saver if I'd had Style Master's Navbar Wizard when I'd started thinking about redesigning my Web site.

Wrap Up

As I said earlier, CSS can be difficult to master because it enables you to do so many different things. I find Style Master very powerful because it enables me to sit down and generate the CSS code I need without mentally switching between "design" mode and "research" mode like I would when I needed to determine exactly how to achieve some desired effect.

If you are just dabbling in CSS, Style Master might not be for you. The built-in wizards certainly make it easier to get started creating a new style sheet, but if you're not going to go much further than styling your paragraphs, links, and headings, there are probably better ways to spend your $60.

If you want to hit the ground running and get serious with CSS, you should consider Style Master. Reading the CSS specifications has its benefits, but when you're trying to make your block quotes stand out from the rest of your content, it's certain simpler to select a few background and border properties from Style Master's drawers than it is to go digging through the specification.

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Review: TextWrangler 1.5.1

by Matthew Glidden, mglidden@atpm.com

Developer: Bare Bones Software, Inc.
Price: $49
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2
Recommended: Mac OS X 10.2.6
Trial: Fully-featured (30 days)

Haven't We Met Before?

TextWrangler 1.5.1 is the latest and greatest incarnation of Bare Bones' lightweight text editing and development application. For many years, BBEdit Lite filled this important niche for Bare Bones and TextWrangler inherits much of its legacy. BBEdit Lite is still available as a free download, but is at the end of its development life. TextWrangler includes a number of additional features as a justification for the $49 price tag, including AppleScript support, integrated FTP tools, and the ever-popular "much, much more."

ATPM didn't review TextWrangler 1.0, so this article will cover the application as a whole, with some comments on new 1.5 features.

Beautiful, Elegant Text

TextWrangler thrives on text in its many forms and doesn't pretend otherwise. It's strongest in the basics of day-to-day programming, particularly for those with a Unix background. If you enjoy hacking out functions and objects, TextWrangler gives you an easy blank slate to work with. If the blank page is just too scary (ask any writer), use the Stationery Window to create a template file to work from.

The easiest-to-spot feature is color-coding support for several languages, including C, C++, Perl, and several others. Colored text breaks up the syntax nicely and makes it easy to spot typing errors before you go to a compiler. The color-coding in TextWrangler is very snappy, with no delay between selecting your language and seeing the pretty colors. Once you've experienced it in action, it's hard to do without.


```perl
sub Convert {

    local($x) = @_[0];
    die("Argument out of range : $x") if($x <0 || $x > 255);

    printf("%3d : ", $x);
```

Color Coding

If you've used the Find & Replace dialog in another Bare Bones application, you know how handy it is. Besides the typical "Find *Peter* and Replace with *Paul*" operations in the active file, you can make replacements across multiple files and directories and use grep patterns. Technically, they're Perl-Compatible Regular Expressions (PCRE to its friends), but if you know grep and regular expressions, you know PCRE. Fire the army of trained monkeys! Updating blocks of similar text becomes a snap, even for files scattered across a project.

Text editing means different things to different platforms. Windows text files, for example, might mark the end of a line with multiple characters, creating junk characters when opened in Unix or Mac OS. TextWrangler opens files from any platform and can translate the line breaks in the process. If you work across multiple platforms, or are targeting a non-Mac platform, this is quite handy. Nothing grates on the eyes like those Windows-

spawned box characters at the end of each line. (I used to picture myself using Godzilla's radioactive breath to destroy those noisome boxes back in my younger years—but, you know, keep that between us.)

```
"Lorem ipsum dolor sit amem□□
consectetur adipisicing elit, □□
sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt □□
ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. □□
Ut enim ad minim veniam, □□
quis nostrud exercitation ullamco □□
laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea □□
commodo consequat. Duis aute irure □□
dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate □□
velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat □□
nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint □□
occaecat cupidatat non proident, □□
sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt □□
mollit anim id est laborum."
```

Boxes

Before I forget, TextWrangler includes two handy file features: a disk browser to navigate directories without switching to the Finder and a "Find File by Name" command to locate all files of a given name (such as "error.log"). You're sure to use both.

## Web Editor? Word Processor? Next Window Please

Many people use BBEdit's included HTML tools for Web site management and editing. That's not practical for TextWrangler, since you have to handle all the tagging by hand. It would possible to construct a raft of plug-ins for the job, but you'd save time by just buying BBEdit.

TextWrangler supports many BBEdit plug-ins, with the capacity to add your own. It's likely you'll never need to add more, but it's Bare Bones' way of saying, "Hey, even we don't know everything." If you're interested in creating your own plug-ins, see the Bare Bones Developer Support page.

Use TextWrangler as a word processor only for the simplest of documents. If you like one font, all the same size with no styling, you're in luck—it even has a spelling checker. It can't do italics, bold, or anything fancy, though. Stick to AppleWorks or Microsoft Office for "real" word processing.

Clipboards Are Go!

Multiple clipboards seem to be popular these days, what with people actually wanting to remember two (or three!) things at once. Traditional cut and paste works as you'd expect, but check out TextWrangler's Edit menu for commands to swap between the half-dozen clipboards. There's also a separate window to view the contents of each. (It's a shame you can't edit the Clipboard contents from its window, though.)
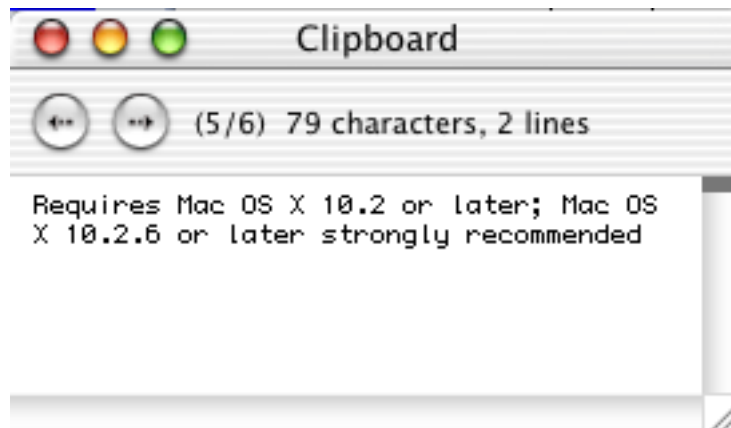

Multiple Clipboards

The notion of multiple clipboards subtly changes how you work in an editor like TextWrangler. With only one, you do a lot of window switching, copy here and paste there. This increases visual fatigue and takes extra time. Remember that you have the extra slots and copy everything you need from one place before pasting in the other.

The More Things Change, the More They Diff

TextWrangler conveniently "diffs" files (compares previous and current versions) and its color-coding makes it simple to recognize and reconcile differences. Diffing is a common programming need, since tracking changes by hand is a quicker headache than juggling hammers.
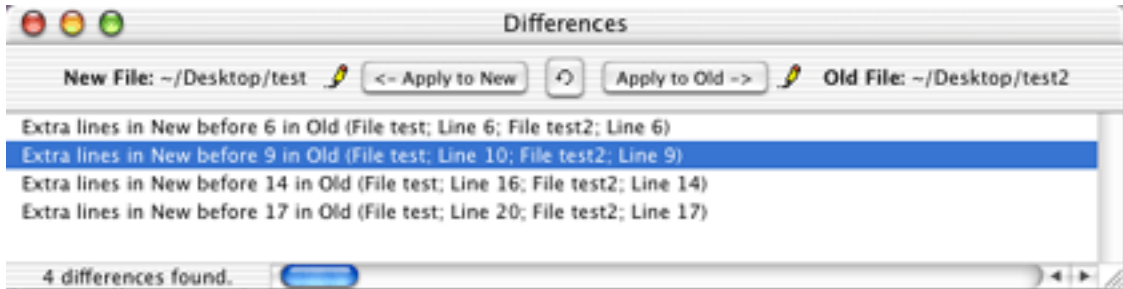

Find Differences

BBEdit has integrated support for source control programs (such as CVS), something TextWrangler doesn't include. TextWrangler can, however, open files as the administrator (assuming that's you), to change files you don't directly "own."

Depending on the configuration of your source-control and development environment, you could use TextWrangler as your editor, though its directory tools would be limited if you only check out individual files. Project Builder 2.1+ can use it as the integrated external editor.

Splitting

For many, splitting the editor window to track multiple points in the same file is essential to programming. You could set multiple Markers and jump back and forth between them, but then you're fatiguing those delicate eyes again. TextWrangler is happy to provide a split editor screen for you (one split is the limit, though).
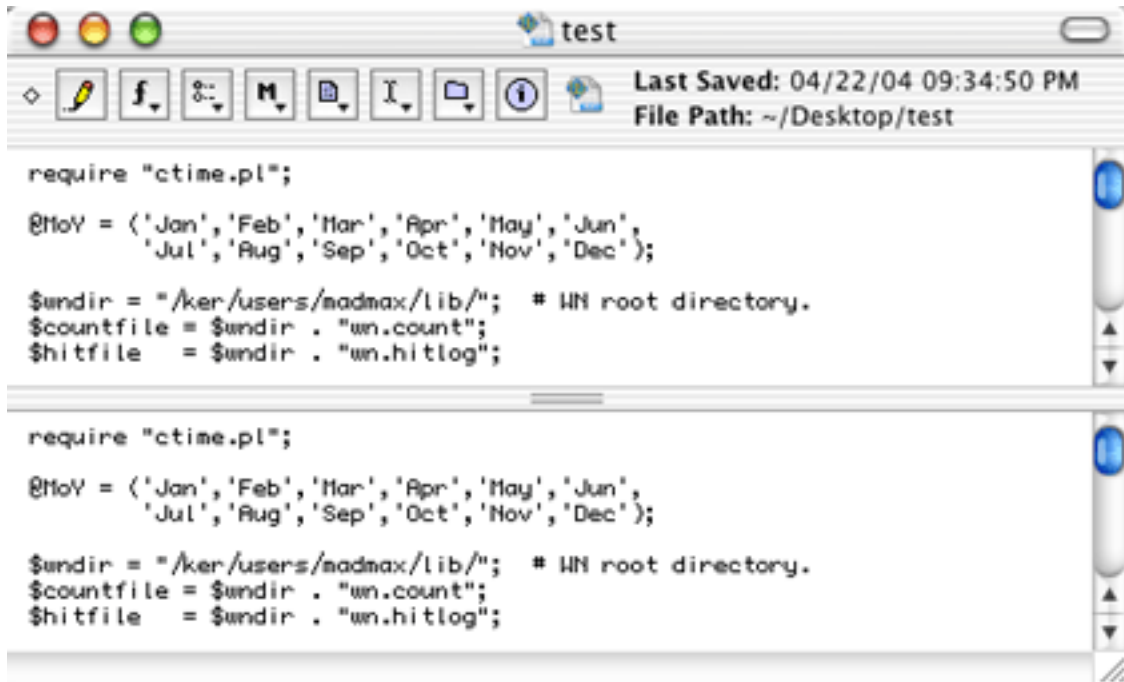
Split Editor

Balancing

If you type a "close" bracket or parenthesis without a matching "open," the screen "bounces" visually. It surprised me the first time it happened and remains visually intriguing. Sometimes, late at night, I type close brackets just for the bounce. (That's probably another thing to keep between ourselves.)

New for 1.5

My undercover contacts tell me that TextWrangler 1.0 didn't have AppleScript support. "Lies!" I said. "It can't be so!" Yet it was true. Version 1.5 changes this, adding a scripting dictionary and the ability to record actions in the editor. I discovered limitations to recording (you can't jump to a Marker and copy its paragraph, for example), but that's small potatoes compared to no AppleScript at all.

The number of color-coded languages expanded significantly in 1.5 to include the aforementioned Unix languages. The complete list: ANSI C, C++, Fortran, Java, Object Pascal, Objective-C, Perl, Python, Rez, Tcl, TeX, and Unix shell scripts.

What the Pundits Say

I've seen reviews and opinions that question the utility of including FTP tools and color-coding support for "only" a dozen languages, instead of hitting a wider audience (such as Web client scripting). Given my experience with existing tools and Unix development, the narrower focus makes sense to me. The supported languages are all familiar to the Unix community, and Unix is the core of the Mac OS now. If you want to build a Web site, well, that's a job for BBEdit. I'm sure TextWrangler holds that line between programmer and Web professional fairly tightly to avoid impacting the more powerful, more expensive product.

Summary

You can still download BBEdit Lite 6.1 for free from Bare Bones' TextWrangler vs. BBEditLite page). So should you pay $49 for TextWrangler? It's an excellent product, providing wonderful text-manipulation features and color-coding for many languages. If you find yourself coding more than casually and don't need BBEdit's additional tools, TextWrangler is a worthy investment.

Review: Trans Lucy 1.01

by Ted Goranson, tgoranson@atpm.com

Developer: CE Software Inc.
Price: $15
Requirements: Mac that supports Quartz Extreme, Mac OS X 10.3.
**Trial:** Fully-featured (30 days)

It's quite a show, watching Apple's effect on software development. In some cases, it has the "Microsoft effect," shoving out competition, as in Final Cut and maybe with GarageBand. But there are lots of examples where Apple supplies a good basic application, leaving room for developers to do far better. This happens in many areas: e-mail, browsing, script editing, notebooking, maybe even the Finder.

We have such a case with Apple's DVD Player. It does the job, but now comes Trans Lucy, an alternative DVD player with some cool features that so far exceed Apple's that it has the potential to become a hit, like SoundJam was in the old days. (SoundJam became iTunes.)

That's because Apple likes to keep its versions of these types of applications simple. Plus, there are all sorts of property rights issues that it treads lightly around. For instance, you cannot pause a DVD and "copy" a screenshot with Apple's player. Also, these small programs that emulate hardware seem to be under very strict, dogmatic user interface control, depending on larger Apple strategies.

Trans Lucy is an application that has a radically novel and apt interface. Its most notable feature is the ability to play a movie—in full screen if desired—as a translucent layer over your work, allowing you to click and type through as if it weren't there. This is one of those things that sounds like it really wouldn't work. And it may not for some people.

I was skeptical myself, but then I tried it and now find myself addicted. It's because the thing is so well thought out. You can adjust the level of translucency to suit your taste; I find 50% works the best on my 17" PowerBook for most films. If you keep the controller visible in full screen mode, it fades away just like Apple's. And if you move the cursor over it (or where it was), the entire movie becomes opaque like normal.
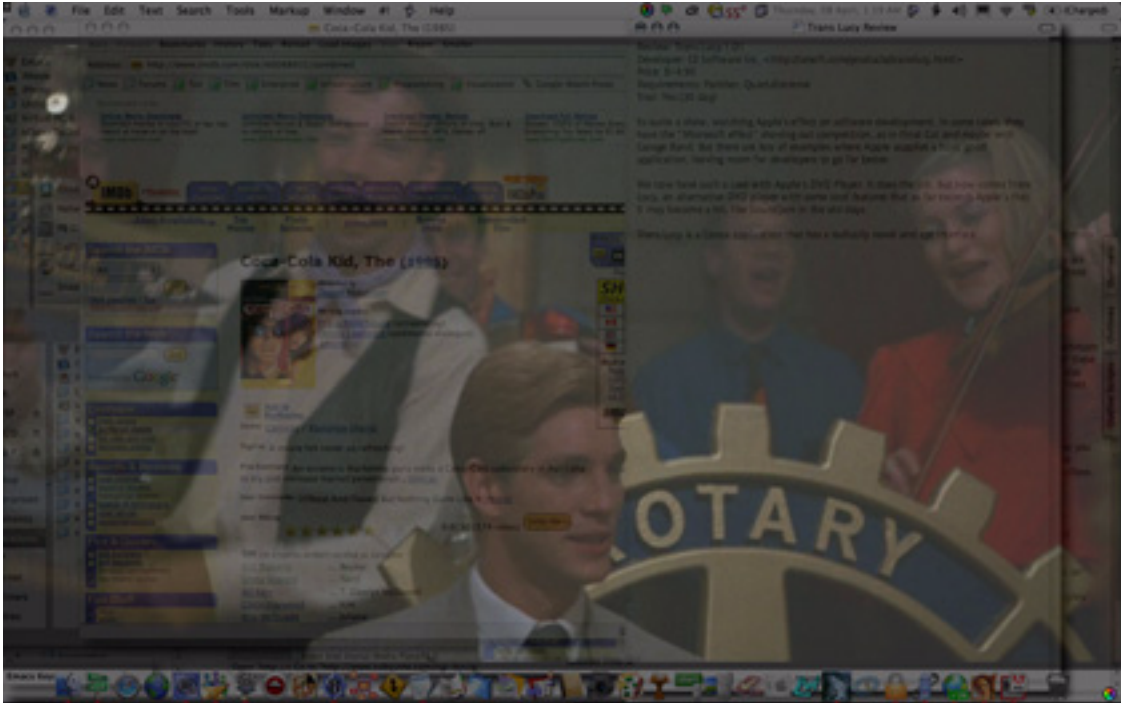
Trans Lucy on My Desktop

It is a great trick. As you probably know, I write ATPM's outliner column. My present outliner project is a huge specialized survey of movies. There's a certain "folding" in the way many films are made that can be captured by advanced "folded" outliner modes. I have literally watched thousands in the past two years, during which I take notes, and must watch many more.

You won't want to watch a *fine* film in translucent mode nor divide your attention away from it. But many films aren't of that type, and if you can multitask this is a great little tool. Even the most cinematic films are given a new, more ethereal "stained glass" quality.

I use Trans Lucy as the default player for *all* my DVD watching, even when not using transparency. That's because I like the controller better.


The Trans Lucy Controller

Most of the controls should be obvious. Those three things that look like dials? Well, they *are* dials that you can grab and then swing around in huge arcs, like we had in an older version of QuickTime Player's controller. The lower left knob controls the percentage of translucence and the lower right the volume.

That one in the upper right is what they call the Jog Shuttle. By turning this dial, you can make the movie go backwards or forwards at varying rates. Clicking in various quadrants steps forward discrete amounts.

One of the things that annoys me with Apple's controller is that it doesn't have variable controls for backing up or fast-forward. That's fixed here.

That colorful DVD icon in the middle is a menu. It appears in three places: here, in the menu bar, and in the lower right of the screen when a DVD is playing. Everything in the menu is self-explanatory.
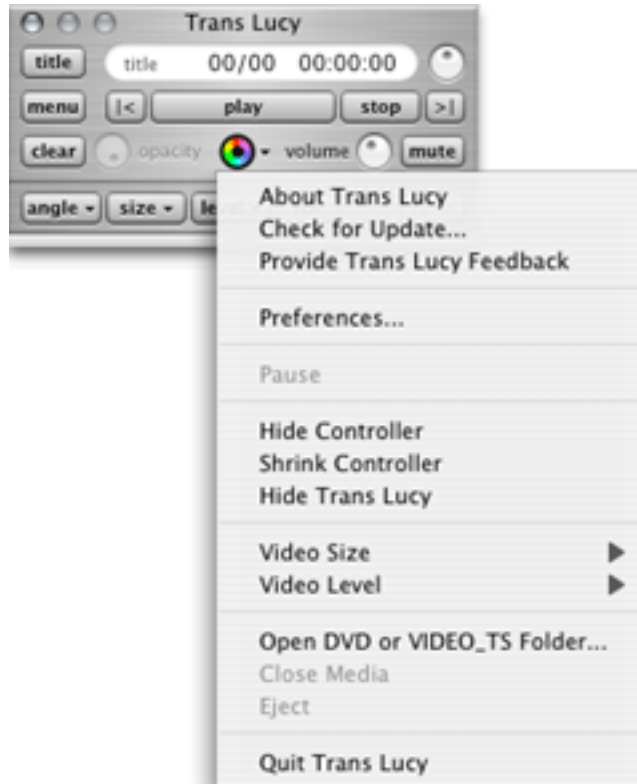
The Pop-up Menu

Trans Lucy has assignable hot keys for all the common functions, but you have to be really careful; usually the keyboard is controlling whatever is underneath, so you have to pick your shortcuts to be some that are *never* used elsewhere.

That cuts both ways, too. All DVDs have menus that you need to click to select items, even just to play the movie. But you just punch through a translucent Trans Lucy screen as if it were a ghost. They've solved this with a little pop-out drawer that appears when a DVD menu is on-screen. Oddly, some DVD menus just work the regular way, even in translucent mode!
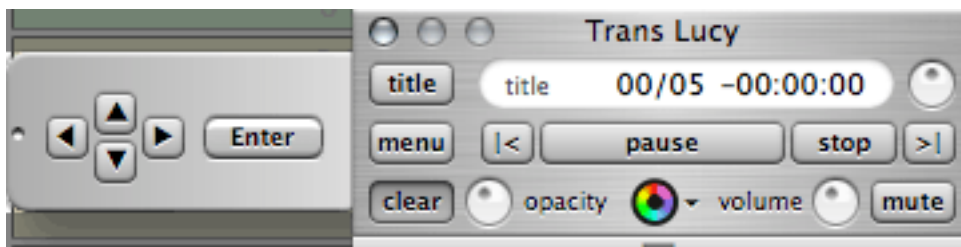
The Trans Lucy Pop-out Navigator

So far, it sounds perfect, doesn't it? Well, it is not. It offers three advantages over Apple's free player: it does the translucent thing, it has an arguably better controller, and it supports many non–Apple-supplied DVD drives. (Apple's controller only supports the Apple SuperDrive and combo drives.)

But it has a couple of disadvantages also: it ain't free (though $15 is *almost* free); it drops more frames than Apple's player (meaning you get occasionally jumpy playback, but some of this is because you are doing stuff underneath); and it is not scriptable.

Apple has a very bad record of making its own applications scriptable. DVD Player is possibly the *most* scriptable application it currently supplies. But if you are not a scripter it won't matter to you. On the other hand, Trans Lucy is sold by CE Software, the same folks who brought us the venerable QuicKeys. It would be terrific if QuicKeys could better integrate with Trans Lucy.

Here's what I think Trans Lucy needs to be perfect:

• Give us scriptability of some kind;
• Figure out how to make the black letterbox bands completely transparent instead of a bothersome grey;
• Give subtitles their own display area and translucence controls;
• Factor logically into Exposé behavior;

- Provide region-free playback;
- Play video media other than DVDs;
- Perform the superior DVD de-interlaced mode like the free VLC Media Player does (and Apple does not).

If it did this, it would be awesome, earth-shaking. Open source code exists to allow the last three already. As it is, Trans Lucy is very nice and worth checking out.

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

What Is ATPM?

About This Particular Macintosh (AT℗M) is, among other things, a monthly Internet magazine or "e-zine." AT℗M was created to celebrate the personal computing experience. For us this means the most personal of all personal computers—the Apple Macintosh. About This Particular Macintosh is intended to be about your Macintosh, our Macintoshes, and the creative, personal ideas and experiences of everyone who uses a Mac. We hope that we will continue to be faithful to our mission.

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What Are Some Tips for Viewing PDFs?

- You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader for free. If you have a Power Macintosh, Acrobat Reader 5 has better quality and performance. ATPM is also compatible with Acrobat Reader 3, for those with 680x0 Macs.
- You can zoom the PDF to full window width and scroll through articles simply by single-clicking anywhere in the article text (except underlined links).
- You can quickly navigate between articles using the bookmarks pane at the left of the main viewing window.
- For best results on small screens, be sure to hide the bookmarks pane; that way you'll be able to see the entire page width at 100%.
- Try turning Font Smoothing on and off in Acrobat Reader's preferences to see which setting you prefer.
- All blue-underlined links are clickable.
- You can hold down option while hovering over a link to see where it will lead.
- For best results, turn off Acrobat's "Fit to Page" option before printing.

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What If I Get Errors Decoding ATPM?

ATPM and MacFixIt readers have reported problems decoding MacBinary files using early versions of StuffIt Expander 5.x. If you encounter problems decoding ATPM, we recommend upgrading to StuffIt Expander 5.1.4 or later.

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Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

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Hardware and Software Reviews

ATPM publishes hardware and software reviews. However, we do things in a rather unique way. Techno-jargon can be useful to engineers but is not always a help to most Mac users. We like reviews that inform our readers about how a particular piece of hardware or software will help their Macintosh lives. We want them to know what works, how it may help them in their work, and how enthusiastic they are about recommending it to others. If you have a new piece of hardware or software that you'd like to review, contact our reviews editor at reviews@atpm.com for more information.

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What If My Question Isn't Answered Above?

We hope by now that you've found what you're looking for (We can't imagine there's something else about ATPM that you'd like to know.). But just in case you've read this far (We appreciate your tenacity.) and still haven't found that little piece of information about ATPM that you came here to find, please feel free to e-mail us at (You guessed it.) editor@atpm.com.