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Colors



Color



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Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the November issue of *ATPM*! So much has changed in the past month that our editors worked feverishly up to the deadline to bring you the latest news and most informative views about the new world of Macintosh computing. However, our biggest challenge this month was deciding just where to start! So...

Let's Start at the Top

In this case it's the top of the stock charts. Apple Computer, trading under the ticker symbol AAPL, finished October at its highest trading levels since later September 2000. On the last trading day of October, Apple reached new four-year highs, rising to a new trading high of \$53.20 and closing at a new high of \$52.40.

Apple began 2004 at \$23.25 per share. In ten months, its shareholders have been rewarded with a \$10 billion increase in the company's market value and the share price has more than doubled since the beginning of the year. At the end of October, the company's market capitalization stood at more than \$20 billion. What a difference a little music player can make!

Why so High?

Among the reasons Apple's share price has flown north for the winter is called an earnings and revenue model. Wall Street analysts can more accurately estimate iPod sales than they have been able to estimate Macintosh sales. Apple's popular iPod is gaining new users each day, and the iPod/iTunes Music Store combination has established a formidable lead in the nascent digital music market.

In the three-month period that ended in September, Apple sold about 2,016,000 iPods including about 120,000 units under the Apple iPod from HP brand name. In the same period Apple sold 836,000 Macintosh computers.

Let's Look at the Numbers

In Apple's fiscal fourth quarter, the company had net sales of about \$2.35 billion and net income of \$106 million. That worked out to \$.26 per diluted share. The diluted share count includes unexercised stock options, and Apple has a boatload of unexercised options on the books. In the prior year period, Apple had net sales of about \$1.715 billion and earnings of \$.12 per diluted share.

To better understand the economic power of the iPod, in the fiscal fourth quarter (the third calendar quarter), iPods represented \$537 million in net sales versus \$121 in net sales the year before. Make no mistake: the success of the iPod is moving Apple's stock price higher.

Is the U2 iPod for You, Too?

In late October, Apple released a special-edition U2 iPod. Not only is the back engraved with the signatures of the members of the band, but it also comes with a face colored in red and black, rather than the iPod's trademark white enclosure. The U2 iPod costs \$50 more than a white iPod of the same capacity, but U2 iPod buyers receive a \$50 coupon redeemable on the purchase of the \$149 U2 music set available through the iTunes Music Store. We'll see if U2 fans gobble up the special-edition iPod when the U2 music set becomes available around Thanksgiving.

From U2 to Two Devices in One

The day Apple announced the U2 iPod the company also announced the new iPod Photo. The photo version of Apple's ubiquitous iPod can connect to a TV or projector so that owners can share photos on a big screen with family and friends. The iPod Photo also comes at a higher price, starting at \$499 for the 40 GB model.

Virginia Tech Revisited

The folks at Virginia Tech put the computing world on notice when the school brought online last year the world's fastest super computer cluster and the world's third fastest supercomputer overall. Comprised of Mac G5 mini-towers, Virginia Tech's cluster has helped to craft a new paradigm at universities and research laboratories. For an investment of just over \$5 million the school crafted a supercomputer cluster from commonly available computers.

Virginia Tech has retooled its supercomputer for 2004. The university has replaced its cluster of G5 mini-towers with Apple Xserves. Virginia Tech is reporting its "Big Mac" supercomputer cluster is performing at 12.5 teraflops. The cluster's new standing among the world's fastest supercomputers will be announced later this month.

The G5 iMac Has Arrived...in Quantity!

Finally...the G5 iMac supply is catching up with demand. Apple is air-shipping the new iMac from the manufacturing facilities in Asia, and according to reports ample supplies of the new iMac should be in stores in time for Thanksgiving and the traditional start of the holiday shopping season.

While consumers wait for the new G5 iMac at stores, we want to let you know what's in store in our November issue. Our latest issue includes:

The Candy Apple: Buy Low, Sell High

It is sometimes of little comfort to do the right thing and then see that you could have done it even better.

Bloggable: A Civil War of Attrition

Wes Meltzer is back from a brief hiatus with a look at what's been happening in the Mac blogosphere.

Segments: My Mac OS X Switching Saga

Reader Jon Allen Boone shares his switch story.

How To: Share Content Between Web Sites: Creating a Dynamic Hypernetwork Using PSS

Andrew Kator explains PHP Shared System.

Cartoon: Cortland

Cartoonist Matt Johnson takes Cortland into the Mudrix.

Cartoon: iTrolls

The iTrolls become art critics, then ask a rhetorical question.

Desktop Pictures: Ireland

Ireland landscapes, Kilkenny Castle and gardens, Jerpoint Abbey, and the Mt. Juliet gardens and golf course by reader Mark Dickson.

Frisky Freeware: Meteorologist

Frisky the Freeware Guinea Pig checks out Meteorologist.

Review: Waterfield Design Medium Cargo Suite Spot

Christopher Turner examines the Jan sibling of Waterfield Design's Cargo bag line-up.

Review: FrogPad USB

While manufacturers call it the keyboard of the future, Wes Meltzer calls it an expensive novelty.

Review: IOGEAR and Dr. Bott KVMs

David Zatz puts two KVM switches into the ring to duke it out.

Review: Nisus Writer Express 2.0

"Nisus Writer Express shows a high attention to detail in what really matters: the act of writing."

Review: StuffIt Deluxe 9

"Much to my surprise, I found many features in StuffIt Deluxe 9 that make it well worth the purchase."



Networking an iMac and a Performa

Could you possibly give me all(!) the details on how I can hook my two Macs to my cable modem:

The modem sits with the iMac (running 10.2.8). One floor up, about 60 feet away, sits a Performa 6290 (running 9.1). I think I need an Ethernet card for the Performa, because the communication slot seems to hold the internal modem. Should I go wireless or string a 10/100 cable? Do I need a hub/router? Any additional software? My service is through EarthLink; any considerations on that end? The Performa is used by my mother mainly for e-mailing and a few sites. I'm on the Web a lot with my iMac. Technically, I'm an amateur when it comes to the innards and hardware in general, but I know how to get into the Performa to change out a card.

—*Brigitte Starkey*

You will definitely need to get an Ethernet card for the Performa. I would probably recommend setting up the iMac wirelessly. Get an AirPort card for it (if it doesn't have one already installed) and an AirPort Extreme Base station. Then you can connect the Base Station to the cable modem, and the Performa using Ethernet cables. That allows you to position it close to the Performa and minimize the cable runs. —*Evan Trent*

TinderBox¹

Thanks for the great article.

I've been using Tinderbox for a couple of years now. I am alternately impressed and annoyed by it. As you say, it is very powerful, but I always feel that I am just not quite grasping its full range or potential. That is totally frustrating.

You compare it to FileMaker and Photoshop in its complexity and capability. The only reason why I am proficient with either of those programs is because I've spent lots of time pouring through third party manuals and how-tos. I typically need to have training presented multiple times and multiple ways before I get it. I'm not getting Tinderbox.

What I would love to see is an extended tutorial, something like "Learn Tinderbox in 24 Hours." The forums discussions are not methodical or thorough enough and aren't a substitute for a good training manual or two.

—*Michael McKee*

I used to work as an academic, teaching literature, and I used Tinderbox to track everything I did and as a teaching and presentation tool. It gave me an edge and helped keep me find new approaches to pedagogy and learning. Now I work as a journalist. I track article pitches, commissions, research,

articles, contacts, and write full time in Tinderbox. Again, it's adapted perfectly to my work because I've embraced the metaphor of Tinderbox.

At no point have I expected Eastgate to tell me what to do with the application. I've simply adapted it to the kind of work I do. I think that's the way you have to approach Tinderbox. You jump on board, keep using it, thinking (and thinking in public through blogging is a great way of learning more about Tinderbox) and reacting. At times the program *is* difficult. The user interface is initially very low-fi, but using Tinderbox has led me to clear the clutter away from a lot of applications I use. It's not superficially snazzy: it doesn't look like a super "sexy" application. But like a tough novel, once you scratch below the surface there's incredible depth. It's a robust, powerhorse.

I could go on about how to use Tinderbox but I'd be talking about how I use it. You have to discover what it can do for you. And like learning to play a musical instrument, it's hard work. But, boy, the rewards are great.

In short, I couldn't do what I do so effectively without the daily support and working environment Tinderbox provides.

—*Jon Buscall*

Outlining is a way of minimizing the distractions inherent in text processing when setting out and manipulating the structure of text. This gives rise to two standards of quality: elegance in eliminating distractions and power in manipulating text. Although these factors will have importance for all users, users seem to diverge in their emphasis. The surprise in comparing outliners on Windows and the Mac is that the Macintosh outliners are more powerful than what's available on Windows, while there are Windows outliners more nimble and elegant than anything the Mac has.

If Tinderbox is the best example of a Macintosh power outliner, BrainStorm is the best example of a super-elegant Windows approach. In answer to Ted's challenge, BrainStorm has the following ergonomic features that appear absent from any outliner on the Macintosh.

Eliminates all headers but a parent and its children, for focused work on the order and coherence.

Preserves the order of the user's selection of headers in mark and gather operations. (Not currently supported on the Macintosh, but the pre-OS X outliner MindWrite had it.)

—*Stephen R. Diamond*

1. <http://www.atpm.com/10.10/atpo.shtml>

Thanks

I have just purchased a Power Mac G4. My previous computer was also a G4, but Mac OS 9 was becoming obsolete. My new G4 has both 9 and X. This is the first time that I have seen your newsletter, and I think it is excellent. I can understand and even follow the instructions. This might not sound like a big deal, but I am sure there are many who throw up their hands in frustration or hit Delete because it is too “techy.” Thanks.

—Janice Bowley

Thanks a lot! ATPM is a great plus for anyone into Macs/Apple stuff.

—David Todd

Wow, I think it was back in 94 or so that I used to get ATPM as a DOCMaker file with *MacUser* (or *Macworld*) when I was working for desktop magazine back in Oz. I used to love it but thought it was long gone.

Great to see it's still around—and still with the good old ugly-as-hell logo!

—matthk

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The Candy Apple

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

Buy Low, Sell High

Buy low, sell high. That's how you make money in the stock market. I did that recently, but I guess I did not sell high enough. It is not so hard to do the research to decide what is a good company to invest in, but it is very hard to know when to sell. The indicators are not so obvious, at least not to me.

I bought 200 shares of Apple three years ago, not that long after it fell \$27 in one day. I believed it was a good company that had been undervalued. I bought the shares at \$21, \$18, and \$16. The average was \$18.69. I sat on them until a few months ago, when the price had crept up to the low \$30s. I began thinking about when I would sell the shares and decided that I would do so when I had doubled my money. Allowing for fees, I chose \$37.50 as my sell point.

I was determined not to wait too long and have the price drop again, as had happened to a friend. He bought Apple shares at \$20 or so and watched them soar to \$80. Rather than sell, he thought he would hang on until they hit \$100.

It was a nice idea but too ambitious. Shortly after he made this decision came the 27-point crash, and he was soon back below what he'd paid for them. It wasn't enough for him to quadruple his money. He wanted to quintuple it. As a result, he ended up making a profit but not a large one (he sold at around \$30).

So, I learned from this. I picked my sell point and sold. Days later, I watched the stock price rise \$5 in one day. As of this writing, it has risen \$11 from where I sold it. A friend asked how much money that was, and I said it is irrelevant. It is irrelevant because it is pretend money. He insisted, and I said it was \$2,200. I also told him to stop checking Apple's share price.

I sold because I was concerned that Steve Jobs might be out of action for a while after his prostate treatment, and I thought the Street would punish Apple's share price for that. I also am concerned that so much of Apple's attention is now focused on iTunes and iPods, and how much less attention is paid to the computer side of the business. It's way cool that Apple is making money on low-overhead items such as music, but I worry that the market share of desktops and laptops will continue to dwindle beyond salvation. Are there enough of us die-hards to keep the company going? Can the music and the digital music players keep the rest of it solvent?

These are legitimate questions for a stockholder to ask. The numbers look pretty good lately, but I still have a nagging suspicion that the news will not always be so good. I want to be reassured. I want to know what the market is so excited about, driving up the share price like this. Until I feel more secure about it, I will stay with ALCOA. Y'all let me know if AAPL dips down below \$20. I would buy it again.

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A Civil War of Attrition

We have two kinds of partisan affiliations in the Mac world, overlapping. First there are the two camps on whether Windows sucks or is just different; second we have the Mason-Dixon line between the brushed metalheads and the Aquaphiles. Both have provoked civil wars, and both are built on waiting for Apple to give us new fodder for something to oooooooh or aaaaaaaaah collectively about in Tiger.

I've done something unusual for this column: I will feature two major issues, with a bit of the debate about them, followed by links. If you like it, shout, and I'll keep doing it.

First, though, I'd like to offer an apology. Those of you who are regular readers may have noticed my extended absence, which took up our October as well as September issues. Some computer problems and a busy schedule meant I couldn't pay the kind of attention to the Mac blogosphere that it deserved, so my hiatus was somewhat extended. Thank you for your patience.

Well, then, let's move along!

Showdown at the Brushed Metal Corral

John Gruber seems, to my eye, to have started the fight on this one, pulling his gun out of the holster and [aiming it at the enemy](#)¹. He says that OS X's human interface guidelines statements regarding brushed metal interfaces are inconsistent and that Apple doesn't obey them, not a new argument, but, like a presidential election, it can feel new every time.

The rules *are* pretty equivocal, though:

Windows have two distinct looks in Mac OS X. There is the standard default look of windows, as shown in the examples so far. There is also a brushed metal look available, shown in Figure 8–11. You can use a brushed metal window if your application:

- Provides an interface for a digital peripheral, such as a camera, or an interface for managing data shared with digital peripherals—iPhoto or iSync, for example
- Strives to re-create a familiar physical device—Calculator or DVD Player, for example

- Provides a source list to navigate information—for example, iTunes or the Finder

Don't use the brushed metal look indiscriminately. Although it works well for some types of applications, some applications appear too heavy when using this look. For example, it works well for the iSync application window (see Figure 8–11), but it does not work very well for the TextEdit document window (see Figure 8–12).

I happen to disagree vehemently with both guidelines 2 and 3 here, but I won't go too deeply into that, because, well, there's a lot more to be said and this column is all about what other people are saying.

Gruber points out the height of Apple's inconsistency in brushed-metal HIG:

The release of Safari was a watershed; it's an application which fits none of the HIG's criteria for when brushed metal is appropriate. You could perhaps put forth a contorted argument that the 'source list' in Safari's bookmarks view qualifies it, but that's a real stretch. It's quite obvious that the one and only reason Safari uses brushed metal is that someone at Apple thinks it looks better that way.

He also can't resist remarking on the usability problems of metal windows: they look virtually identical [in the foreground and the background](#)², which means that it's quite easy to accidentally close the wrong application's window. (I've done it many times before.) Now, [there's something frustrating](#)³, says Pierre Igot at [Betalogue](#)⁴.

Michael Dupuis sees the brushed-metal controversy as the sort of inconsistency that [runs rampant in OS X](#)⁵. Think brushed metal, sure, but also think window borders, the "pro" metal theme and wooden theme, etc. Think inconsistency.

1. <http://daringfireball.net/2004/10/brushedmetal>

2. http://daringfireball.net/2004/10/does_brushed_metal_matter

3. <http://www.latext.com/pm/betalogue/P1314/>

4. <http://www.latext.com/pm/betalogue/>

5. <http://www.advenio.com/weblogs/2004/10/on-software-design-consistently.html>

After all, he says, you could argue that NetNewsWire should be metal, based on Apple's guidelines, and, uhh, that doesn't really make any sense at all to those of us who use NNW. (If you decide that it does, I probably can't tell you how, but nib hacking isn't that hard—try it out.)

Both Dupuis and Gruber agree that the potential inconsistency, too, of a rumored coming *fourth* theme is [all the more damaging](#)¹ to Apple's traditional reputation as a company obsessed with consistency—the Classic Mac OS may not have been pretty, but it was awfully clear how something was supposed to look. Igot disagrees, saying, “[I]t looks like Apple's new ‘theme’ in Tiger might just fit the bill.”

We'll see what this new theme is used for and what it looks like, but the long-lost metal-window killer would sure make this happy user of Demetallifier even happier.

Windows on Unhappiness

Mac users often complain about Windows. As I said earlier, it's more that we can't decide on whether Windows sucks or is just plain different, than that we uniformly hate it—but this doesn't resolve the controversy that comes with Windows, in the Mac world.

First up, we hear from everyone's favorite former Mac user, Evan DiBiase at [MacAndBack](#)², who says that he's [increasingly unhappy with Windows](#) because of a variety of strange behaviors in Windows that he dislikes: Outlook 2003's IMAP handling, Cygwin's peculiar secondary root, Windows' inability to handle high-resolution displays, disastrously bad error messages and dialogs, weird and excessive noises, etc. He closes the article by saying, “I can do everything that's important to me on a Mac, and end up feeling empowered. Windows just makes me frustrated...I'm starting to wonder if I made a huge mistake.”

Do you want me to answer, Evan DiBiase? The answer is, yes. This former Switcher—back before there was a Switch campaign—hasn't looked back to crashes, unhelpful dialogs, stupid hardware incompatibility problems, and just plain incompetence from Redmond and most of the other software vendors. I gave up on Windows in 1998 and used SuSE Linux for four years, and then got a Mac. You have my empathy.

If you read the comments on MacAndBack, you'll often feel the real tug-of-war between, to appropriate somebody else's dialogue, the WinRelativists and the WinAbsolutists. I think WinAbsolutists, myself included, win with DiBiase's examples.

Also on the Windows front, anyone who wants to use Firefox on the Mac will quickly discover that it [doesn't quite behave right](#)³ in OS X. Why? Well, it's missing a lot the Windows version has, Jeremy Zawodny and his commenters agree. Little things, like not being able to use Command-M to minimize or the phantom Exposé window.

1. <http://daringfireball.net/2004/10/themes>

2. <http://www.macandback.org>

3. <http://jeremy.zawodny.com/blog/archives/002517.html>

This all adds up to [Adam Kalsey](#)⁴ telling us that he [doesn't recommend Firefox](#)⁵ except to technically savvy users. He has a bunch of user interface critiques that, I'll admit it, Safari would fall prey too, but then again, Safari fits the IE model better than the Firefox model.

Other Chatter From September and October

- An extraordinarily exciting new blog for readers: [43 Folders](#)⁶, for power users who want to make their Mac that much better. It's covered all kinds of exciting topics, my favorite being Quicksilver, so take a look if you want to get things up to speed.
- Five parts in a great series from [MacDevCenter](#), “Mac OS X for the Traveler,” by François Joseph de Kermadec. You can learn how to travel with your laptop, including traveling with and toting the 'Book, software and encryption, equipment and support information. If you own a 'Book and it ever leaves your desk, make sure you read this. Get them sequentially: [Part I](#)⁷, [Part II](#)⁸, [Part III](#)⁹, [Part IV](#)¹⁰, and [Part V](#)¹¹.
- [Watson](#)¹² is [going to be end-of-lifed](#)¹³, according to creator Dan Wood, due to Sun buying the software. I'd like to congratulate him on an *awesome* product; it was the first Mac application I bought, and I'll be sad to see it go. Goodbye, Watson.
- Walt Mossberg, the *Wall Street Journal's* tech reviewer and resident curmudgeon, absolutely [loves the iMac](#)¹⁴. He's glowing about its looks and its cost, and he likes the iApps. It's not immediately clear to me why he chooses as one of his two primary flaws the absence of a digital memory card reader, but he did; the other was the usual (and correct) complaint that Apple gives short shrift to RAM in its machines. We'll take Mossberg on our side any day; the man can sink a product like a rock, and having his recommendation may just make PC-toting *Journal* readers take a second look.
- Khoi Vinh of [Subtraction](#)¹⁵ lists a bunch of tweaks he'd like to see in OmniWeb. It's a great Web browser, sure, he says, but even Omni could use a little user

4. <http://kalsey.com/blog/>

5. http://kalsey.com/blog/2004/09/why_i_dont_recommend_firefox/index.html

6. <http://www.43folders.com>

7. <http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2004/08/31/traveller.html>

8. <http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2004/09/03/traveller.html>

9. <http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2004/09/10/traveller.html>

10. <http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2004/09/21/traveller.html>

11. <http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2004/10/01/traveller.html>

12. <http://www.karelia.com/watson/>

13. http://weblog.karelia.com/Watson/Watson_s_Life_Comin.html

14. <http://ptech.wsj.com/archive/ptech-20040923.html>

15. <http://www.subtraction.com>

interface help sometimes. He [Photoshops a few differences](#)¹, which he thinks might make a big impact.

- Jason Kottke thinks Apple finally figured out what [they have to do to be successful](#)²: Be “not about sales and market share but products and innovation.” He quotes our Dear Leader, Steve Jobs, and reminds us that Apple is essentially a luxury goods manufacturer like Bang & Olufsen or Calphalon—and what he leaves unsaid is that the hideous Gil Amelio- and John Sculley-era Macs (the 20th Anniversary Mac notwithstanding) were clearly not marketed at the luxury demographic.
- Is Apple falling behind by not embracing a subscription model for music? [Gary Robinson](#)³ [thinks so](#)⁴, and he says, for instance, “With a subscription model, no mental energy need be expended deciding what to buy and not to buy. You can focus on enjoying music, without that ‘tax’ on the experience.” I happen to disagree, because I would never buy music online if it had a recurring fee. (Then again, I’m a college student, which means I buy music when I have the money and don’t when I don’t. I hope Steve Jobs remembers that the demographic that buys the most iPods is mine, not Gary Robinson’s.)
- [Damien Barrett](#)⁵ wants us to know that he loves Mac OS X because [he’s learned Unix](#)⁶ with it, and that gives him skills that scale outside the Mac world. He apparently helped clean out students’ Windows machines recently, and discovered the other factor that makes the Mac great: spyware begone!
- Will Windows programs ever run on your Mac? *Slate* thinks so. They say that Java is [the next big thing](#)⁷. Aside from the irony of the ’zine Microsoft pays for saying that Java is coming...uhh...haven’t I heard this before? Call me when the revolution comes. But I’m not saving up my minutes for it.

- *BusinessWeek* thinks Apple is making a mistake by not licensing the iPod’s OS to other manufacturers. They liken it to [not licensing the Mac OS](#)⁸. I will not even comment on this.
- Aren’t you glad you don’t use IE/Win? I am. Especially when *CNET News* reports that IE users will not get any updates [unless they buy XP SP2](#)⁹. Doesn’t Jaguar still get updates? I mean, I know Microsoft is planning on lots of updates in SP2, but for the tech world’s biggest corporation, would it be too much to expect a little something for free? Windows users already pay way more than Mac users for their OS. I predict a surge in viruses after no one bothers upgrading.
- The *Cornell Daily Sun* is reporting that [students are not happy with their Napster service](#)¹⁰. Why? Cornell IT says at least half of Ithaca’s best and brightest have iPods, which are useless with Napster service, and they’re complaining about having to pay for it when their free trial is up, if they can’t use it.
- Unsanity makes lots of cool software. Some software that other developers sell is not so cool—especially the kind that [deletes your home directory](#)¹¹ as privacy protection. Permanently deletes. That strikes me as a bit harsh.
- Elliot Van Buskirk, who edits CNET’s MP3.com, says that he loves—[really, really loves](#)¹², à la Sally Fields—the iPod’s latest click wheel. Apparently the company that manufactures it, Synpatics, has done some really slick work in the past, and was under exclusive contract with Apple to fab them. However, Creative has licensed them to make something for Creative’s latest MP3 player, except, of course, that just like the awful Dell jukebox it has a vertical scroll wheel. It makes perfect sense, as Van Buskirk notes, until you realize that making the circular motion with your finger is a lot easier than scrolling through a long list in an down-pick up finger-down motion. As usual, iPod 14, competition 0.

1. http://www.subtraction.com/archives/2004/0902_omniweb_twea.php
2. <http://www.kottke.org/04/10/business-motivation>
3. <http://www.garyrobinson.net>
4. http://www.garyrobinson.net/2004/10/steve_jobs_vs_s.html
5. <http://www.mrbarrett.com>
6. http://www.mrbarrett.com/mt/archives/2004_10_17.html
7. <http://slate.msn.com/id/2108399/fr/rss/>

8. http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/oct2004/tc20041014_9962_tc056.htm?c=bwtechoct19&n=link2&t=e-mail
9. http://news.com.com/Microsoft+to+secure+IE+for+XP+only/2100-1032_3-5378366.html
10. <http://www.cornellsun.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2004/09/08/413e68c135c82>
11. <http://www.unsanity.org/archives/000361.php>
12. http://news.com.com/The+secret+of+iPods+scroll+wheel/2010-1041_3-5375101.html?tag=html.alert

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Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

by Jon Allen Boone, ipmonger@delamancha.org

My Mac OS X Switching Saga

First Impressions

In 1978 or 1979, my father took programming courses at the University of Houston, TX. One day he took me to the computer lab at the campus so that I could see what went on there. He punched out the card deck with his FORTRAN program on it and handed it to the operators to run. I asked him where the computer was, and he pointed through the area where the operators were to what seemed like large rows of unidentifiable machines. He explained that the computer would run his program when it was his turn and the output would be put into the appropriate output bin for him to pick up later. My first experience with a computer proved to be nearly unremarkable. This form of non-interactive access to the computer didn't really appeal to me.

Apple II Forever?

In 1982, we moved out of Houston to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The International Harvester dealership my father worked for had Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) mini-computers at each branch. I spent many Saturday mornings working on my keyboarding skills on the VT-102 video terminals with dot-matrix printers or the DECwriter LA120 teletype. Meanwhile, I was exposed to a wide variety of computers at the homes of friends. I knew a young man who had a Tandy CoCo II. Another friend had a Timex Sinclair 1000. Both of these attached to a television set for display output. Yet another friend had an Apple IIe. When the Sinclair was augmented by a Coleco ADAM, we were introduced to something we had never seen before: letter-quality printed output via a daisy-wheel printer. All of these machines were programmable in one form of BASIC or another, which is what my friends and I spent most of our time doing.

In the 1983–4 school year, I met my best friend for the next four years: Neil Edward Moore. Neil owned an Apple IIe, which he used extensively. This was where I picked up the Apple bug, big time. Neil's parents operated a bulk-mail business, using Apple IIs, Apple IIcs, and an Apple Macintosh or two. I had friends who used a wide variety of computing equipment: Commodore VIC-20s and C64s, Atari 800XL, IBM PCs, and even a TI 99/4A. But, Apple is what appealed to me—and it was Apple I had to have.

In the summer of 1984, I got my first personal computer—an Apple IIc with a color monitor. This lovely transportable computer came with 128 KB of RAM, the

ability to do 80-columns of text, Double High Resolution Graphics (560x192), the ability to toggle between standard and Dvorak keyboard layouts, and a Western Design Center 65C02 running at 1.0 MHz! This “Snow White” dream machine cost nearly \$2000 when you included the RGB color monitor. From that day on, I was a confirmed Apple fan—and I truly believed it would be Apple II Forever! The machines seemed so accessible—both from a price and expandability perspective. I didn't realize at that time that there is an enormous difference between marketing hype and product strategy.

With the release of the failed Lisa and the successful Macintosh, Apple had invested a lot of money into a new way of interacting with the computer, which wasn't fully realizable on the Apple II line—Graphical User Interfaces. The future of Apple was riding on the Macintosh line of computers. However, there was a need to keep the substantial base of Apple II users from abandoning ship while the Macintosh was developing its own user base—hence the Apple II Forever lie.

Not realizing the realities of the marketplace, I was totally stunned when the Apple IIGS came out in 1986. It had a 2.8 MHz 16-bit Western Design Center 65816 processor, 512 KB of RAM, and mind-blowing graphics and sound capabilities (for the time). It even had a GUI interface for those who wanted it. Clearly this was the answer that the Apple II folks had to the whole Macintosh phenomenon. It was time to start saving for a real computer to replace my trusty IIc. The excitement didn't last long, though. Even the dealers who were stocking the IIGS knew that Apple wasn't committed to the Apple II platform. All Apple wanted to focus on was the Macintosh and its peripherals. This was so disenchanting that I began to distance myself from Apple computers for the better part of the next 17 years.

In 1987, I began working at Pan American University in Edinburg, TX in their computer labs. This was an incredible opportunity, as I was exposed to many technologies that I had never run into before, such as BITNET, Pascal, Prolog, Unix, and VMS. I also did support for the MS-DOS systems (mostly AT-compatibles). I even got the opportunity to learn Macintosh programming using Turbo Pascal! Despite the fact that I was able to master the Mac programming model relatively quickly, I was still very unhappy with Apple and

didn't particularly care for Macs. At home, I spent my time working on my Apple IIc and attempting to learn 6502 Assembly language.

Wandering in a Maze of Twisty Passages, All Different

When I first stumbled across System V Unix at Pan American, I didn't particularly care for it. One reason for that is that the systems I was using (AT&T 3B1s) were only networked to a single server (an AT&T 3B2), which I did not have access to. I also didn't have access to any information about System V Unix itself. The VMS system connected to BITNET was much more interesting, as BITNET connected us to other sites from all over the world.

In the Fall of 1988, I went to Carnegie Mellon (with my IIc in tow) and was introduced to Unix systems in a big way. CMU had a large number of Unix systems (most of which were derived from BSD Unix) and an absolutely incredible user community. These systems were networked together locally at CMU, but also were connected to the fledgling Internet and BITNET (for mail messages). This was such an incredibly rich environment to be in. I soon obtained a position working at the CMU computer "clusters" (as the labs were called), which meant having to support Macintosh as well. I learned a lot about Macintosh systems—but my heart had been won over by Unix. Finally, a system that I could use as I wanted! This meant sometimes using a windowing environment (like the X Window environment)—but sometimes just using the command line.

One of the important Unix systems that I used at CMU was NEXTSTEP 1.0. In 1989, CMU took delivery of a cluster-full of NeXT cubes and NeXT representatives provided information to interested people about the various capabilities. Some important qualities of the original NeXT setups have made their way into Mac OS X. For example, although it was based on Unix, the NeXT system booted up with a graphical splash screen (hiding the normal plethora of Unix system boot messages) and then loaded a GUI system whose desktop had a Dock for launching applications and storing icons of running applications. Another example was in the programming system: NEXTSTEP 1.0 used Objective-C (and the GCC compiler suite), which is the same system used for Cocoa in OS X. NEXTSTEP 1.0 provided an Interface Builder for designing GUI interfaces; OS X Interface Builder is descended from the one in NEXTSTEP 1.0. NEXTSTEP 1.0 used Adobe PostScript for displaying output on the screen; similarly, OS X uses the successor of PostScript, Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF) for its display engine. Finally, NEXTSTEP provided for having your "home" directory on a removable optical disk. This same notion has been proposed many times for OS X, but with the iPod taking the place of the floptical! Although it was ultimately unsuccessful on its own, NeXT produced some

truly revolutionary systems. Despite its small impact on the market place, a NeXT was the machine to have—if you could afford one.

Other than my duties in the computer cluster, I rarely used an Apple product at this point, as my Apple IIc was back home in Houston. Still, after five years of heavy use, it still worked wonderfully, allowing that initial \$2000 investment to amount to just \$400 per year. And in that time, I only had one hardware problem. I passed the system on to younger relatives and it continued to receive regular use until 1992. However, I would only see it again briefly on visits home before I eventually lost track of it around 1995.

In 1990, I began my career as a professional Unix systems administrator at the CMU Statistics Department. This further reinforced my displeasure with Apple, as I now had access to amazing (for the time) machines from DEC. My personal workstation was a DECStation 3100, which had a 16.7 MHz MIPS R2000 processor, 16 MB of RAM, a multi-hundred MB hard drive, and built-in Ethernet! This was beyond just having the use of a shared workstation in a computer cluster—this machine was dedicated to my personal use. With the largely text-based mode of operation that I employed, this thing could run rings around the Macintosh systems of the day.

My wife had spent her time at CMU working primarily on Macintosh systems. In early 1991, she purchased a Mac Classic and a Personal Laserwriter 610. The Mac Classic lasted for nearly four years, while the Personal Laserwriter 610 lasted for twelve!

In 1992, I started maintaining the comp.os.mach FAQ. I was excited about MACH because it was developed at CMU. NeXT had picked it to be the basis of their NEXTSTEP 1.0 operating system. The Open Software Foundation (a Unix vendor group that was competing for market-share against Unix International, another vendor group) chose Mach as the basis for their "OSF/1" system, which still exists in HP Tru64. But, the most attractive part of it was the idea that you could run Mac Mach on a Macintosh IIx or Quadra. This was very interesting, as it not only provided a reasonable Unix system for the Macintosh hardware, but it could also run System 7.x programs at the same time!

I could no longer take it. There was no way I could afford a Macintosh IIx or Quadra. There was also no way that I would consider running just System 7.x when I knew that Mac Mach existed. Macintosh had to go out of my life completely! I ignored my wife's Mac Classic as well as those of my coworkers, while continuing to use the various Unix workstations made available to me through work, including a NeXT Cube and an SGI Indy.

A Life Without Apple

The final straw that exorcised Macintosh from my day-to-day existence was when I became the sole network engineer for an ISP in 1994. Since I had to do a lot of travel, it was

necessary for me to have a laptop to work in the field. I also needed access to MS Office applications such as Word and Excel. Sounds like a perfect fit for a PowerBook, doesn't it? Alas, my need for Unix precluded any Apple product from consideration, especially since CMU no longer operated the Mach research project (which meant no more Mac Mach). Instead, I turned to Linux running on an Intel-based laptop. For MS Office applications, I dual-booted into Windows 3.1, staying only as long as absolutely necessary.

Once I perfected my setup for work, I turned my attention to home. I needed to wean myself off of depending on my employer to provide for my computing needs. I needed to run some variant of Unix. However, I also needed to share the computer with my wife. After careful deliberation, I convinced my wife that we needed an Intel-based system. To help fund the purchase, she sold her Mac Classic.

I largely ignored what was happening in the world of Apple, despite having coworkers who were Macintosh devotees. Occasionally, some news would break through. When I heard about Apple purchasing NeXT after Steve Jobs' return as CEO, I briefly thought that perhaps some day Apple would make a product that I would want to use again. After listening to some details about the proposals for Rhapsody, I wasn't convinced. The next time I thought I might be interested in an Apple product was when I discovered an unused Newton. I used it for a while and even enjoyed it somewhat, but the handwriting recognition on it was terrible and I had no funds to purchase add-on software like Graffiti to improve the situation. Ultimately, though, I found little to attract me to Apple products.

I used a combination of Unix platforms: Linux on laptops, Linux at home, Digital Unix on my Alpha-based workstation at work. The Linux systems were all set up for dual-booting, of course, as I could not get away with not having access to MS Office programs, both at home and at work. Although I was not fanatical about it, I was a big fan of open source software. I worked with it frequently and even based my M.S. thesis on a technique for augmenting the security of the Linux kernel. Despite my strong interest, all was not perfect in my computing world. For one thing, dual-booting was a major annoyance. Another was the difficulty I had in getting some open source software to work on my systems. Usually, if I waited long enough, the problem would be resolved by someone else, but not always.

My frustration with this situation was palpable. MS Windows supported the hardware that I happened to have (though not flawlessly). Linux supported most, but not all, of the hardware that I had, and vendors did not always provide Linux support for their hardware either. I couldn't get a decent e-mail program to work well under MS Windows. I couldn't watch DVDs or Windows Media format streams under Linux. Occasionally, I couldn't even get the X Window

system configured to work on my hardware. And upgrading a system to run a new version of my Linux distribution took many hours.

After nine years of working with Linux and MS Windows, I had reached the end of my rope. I could no longer tolerate dual-booting. Either Linux or MS Windows had to go. I started by assuming it would be MS Windows. I set up one of my systems to contain no trace of MS Windows. Instead of MS Office, I used StarOffice, which provided a reasonably compatible environment. However, there were still some things that didn't work for me reliably: audio output, listening to streaming media, watching DVDs, and playing audio CDs.

Since my employers insisted on providing MS Windows as an operating system (and I wasn't being paid to provide support to Linux platforms), my next decision was to attempt to eliminate Linux. Starting from a base of Windows XP, I added on a product from RedHat called CYGWIN. This product, originally created by Cygnus Solutions, provided a Unix-like interface to MS Windows-based systems. It included support for many open source tools, such as bash, gcc, etc. While the system provided reasonable support, Windows XP is not a Unix system. Despite being able to run XEmacs and Gnus for e-mail and Usenet news under Windows XP, I still couldn't do basic things like print out my e-mail.

The frustration was beginning to drive me up the wall. Every time I turned around, I was confronted by a deficiency in either Linux or MS Windows that enraged me. I began to hate using computers, viewing the interaction as more likely to end in anger and frustration than in some satisfactory result. Something wasn't right: I had twenty years of experience working with various computing systems. I had thirteen years of experience as a professional Unix systems administrator. Why was I finding it so difficult to do things that I considered to be "basic" functionality?

A Fresh Look

In desperation, I turned to the only platform that I thought might solve my problems—Mac OS X. I was not very well informed about it, but had heard enough to make me think that there might be a solution from Apple. I looked further into it via the Internet. Mac OS X was based on Unix. In fact, it was based on Mach. It had a beautiful GUI system. It had productivity applications in the form of MS Office. It had QuickTime, Real Player, and Windows Media Player support. It had iTunes. It had iCal. It had support for X. It had support (via open source software) for most of the traditional Unix applications I was used to. It didn't require dual-booting. I had to try it.

I was aware that my past was littered with the carcasses of failed computer purchases. At the time, I had no fewer than six computers running some combination of Linux and MS Windows. Being unsure that Mac OS X would be any better

than the other options, I was reluctant to spend much money to try it out. So, I purchased the cheapest new Macintosh I could get my hands on quickly in January of 2003. It was an eMac 700 MHz G4. I fell in love with it right away.

The first thing I liked was the all-in-one design, which was somewhat reminiscent of the original all-in-one Macintosh design. I liked that the G4 processor provided snappy response from the GUI, as well as quick software compilation times. I liked that I could install open source software rather easily through Fink. I liked that so many things that I could almost never get working under Linux worked out of the box on my new eMac. It was perfection itself.

By April, I had convinced my wife that she needed a Mac too—so we bought her an iMac G4 with 17" flat-screen. No small part of my motivation was my remorse at having caused her to sell her Mac Classic. For nearly a decade, she had suffered through using MS Windows on various machines, each one seemingly flakier than the last, though all in unique ways. Her reluctance to revisit the Macintosh as a computing platform was not easily overcome. But I persevered and was victorious! I knew at this point that I would eradicate as many traces of Windows as I could from my life. Further, I would only use Linux as a server OS—at least until I could afford an Xserve.

With our primary platforms being Mac OS X, it seemed a bit odd to think of using MS Windows on a computer just so that our children could play educational games. As I planned for the purchase of another Macintosh, I got the opportunity to get a Power Mac G3 desktop system for \$25. This was a deal that was too good to pass up! It was now June of 2003, and in the space of six months, I had gone from no Macintoshes to three!

As I grew more and more adept as working with Mac OS X, I felt more comfortable recommending it to other people. When I decided in November to purchase a 12" iBook for myself (my first Apple laptop), the opportunity to share the wealth came my way. My brother-in-law's MS Windows system had died a horrible death. While advising him as to his options, I volunteered that I had a system to replace his with. Since he knew that I had a number of Intel-based systems, he probably assumed that it was one of those. However, since I had begun using my iBook as my primary platform, I actually took him my beloved eMac. They've been happily using the eMac for the last year, and I imagine that when they purchase their next computer, it'll be a Macintosh.

The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

Computers are the most powerful tool yet created by humans. No small portion of this power comes from the computer's flexibility, which allows it to accommodate a wide variety of uses. That flexibility is wasted, however, when it is not put to the service of the user of the machine. The power of the GUI and the desktop metaphor is that it takes enormous strides

toward working the way that the user is accustomed to, rather than forcing the user to be trained to work the way that the computer expects. Yet all too often, that power is squandered by developers who do not understand the point of their work. This is the essential reason why I switched away from Apple in the late 1980s and why I switched back in the early 2000s.

By eliminating the Apple II line and putting all of their eggs in the Macintosh basket, Apple violated the principle that the computer should accommodate the user. The Macintosh system provided no means to allow those of us trained in command line interactions to work comfortably. Instead, we were forced to re-learn how computer interactions were supposed to work, as if all of our cumulative experience was nothing more than old code that needed to be replaced. Yet learning to work with a computer system is a long, intensive process. The most productive step is to build on that experience, rather than attempting to discard it altogether.

By putting the major emphasis on the Macintosh and neglecting the Apple II community, Apple squandered the best transition path they had for retaining their user base. The Apple IIGS was a reasonable platform for beginning the transition from command-line processing to GUI-based interaction. Apple seemed to latch onto this idea in 1987, when they introduced the Finder in the Apple IIGS System Software v3.1. With the writing on the wall for the Apple II series, though, there was little incentive for people to invest even more money into a platform that was on the glide-path to termination. By 1995, nineteen years after the introduction of the Apple I, Apple had ceased to support command-line interaction.

Microsoft, on the other hand, took over seventeen years to force users from a primarily command-line oriented form of interaction (via MS-DOS) to a primarily GUI oriented form of interaction (via Windows XP Home). Along the way, both forms of interaction have been available—and continue to be available today. This process was much easier on the user base, allowing them to learn new ways of interacting without depriving them of the ability to get things accomplished via the old means.

The Unix world has taken this a step even further—continuing to actively support command-line oriented interaction as a major mode of operation, over 30 years from when Unix development first began. Along the way, GUI interfaces have been added on, allowing a whole new mode of interaction, without forcing users to convert over wholesale. In fact, Unix does not even force one mode or the other as the primary mode of operation. It is entirely flexible—capable of being customized to suit each user.

With the release of Mac OS X, Apple has given tangible proof that they have learned the error of their ways. Mac OS X allows for users to continue to use Mac OS 9 software through the use of the Classic environment, continuing to provide support for Macintosh users. It allows for command-line interaction via Terminal and X11 applications, providing a

means for Unix users to switch without experiencing enormous mental anguish. It supports many different flavors of server connections (AppleShare for Mac users, SMB for Windows users, NFS for Unix users). It truly attempts to be all things to all people. And it manages to largely pull off this feat while maintaining a distinctive Macintosh aesthetic style. With the introduction of newer models that offer increasingly better price/performance ratios, Apple is in an excellent position to reclaim some (if not most) of their lost Apple II user base. Along the way, they will have the opportunity to pick up market share from disgruntled MS Windows users (who are looking for stability and style) and Unix users (who aren't militantly opposed to GUI interaction).

When viewed from this perspective, I haven't switched at all. I started off using a command-line method of interaction. When Apple stopped supporting this style of interaction, I moved to Unix based platforms. Along the way, I learned to do new things (and relearned a few old things) in a GUI oriented way. This was the crux of my predicament for the better part of fifteen years: Unix GUI support wasn't sufficient for what I wanted to use GUIs for. Macintosh and MS Windows didn't offer adequate command-line capabilities. Apple earned my business with Mac OS X—a Unix based system supporting command-line interaction, but with excellent GUI support. The key to successfully switching is to minimize the required number of changes in the process of how the user interacts with the computer. At long last, Apple has figured this out.

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Share Content Between Web Sites: Creating a Dynamic Hypernetwork Using PSS

In early years of Web development, a common type of hypernetwork seen on many sites was a webring. Webrings were usually created by people with Web sites that shared common subjects and themes, and allowed for visitors to one site to easily move onto other sites in the webring presenting similar material.

There are a few drawbacks to the webring system. Many webrings are not regularly updated, meaning there is little to no guarantee that the other sites in the webring still exist. There is also no preview of the next site's content, so while one site can be recently updated others may not have modified for years.

A dynamic hypernetwork resolves these problems by previewing and including some material from the other sites in the network. The hypernetwork is a group of mutually syndicating sites. It is essentially a shared site, a super-site getting the best information and news from other nodes in the network. News published on one of the sites is perfectly integrated into the others. When one network node updates its homepage, all the other nodes are updated automatically.

Take a look at the homepages for dedalo-3d.com¹ or blender3d.it². You can see this super-site at the first page of each URL, but the home pages are never an exact copy of each other—each site has its own logo, side bar contents, and specific news not shared that are always on top. The user can navigate from one site to another without leaving the network.

A hypernetwork can be used by anyone, and it is perfectly suited for clubs, associations, and affiliations of all kinds. Some examples include sports clubs, development teams, academic interests, school systems...the possibilities are limitless.

One easy method for creating a hypernetwork is to use the open source [PSS scripts](#)³. PSS stands for PHP Shared System. It uses a combination of PHP scripts and CSS style sheets.

Each PSS Web site administrator has his own independent Web site in the hypernetwork, but at the same time all resources are perfectly shared and integrated. You are working on your personal pages but also adding to the super-site—all resources go into one professional layout, with advantages for the surfer (great accessibility) and for the

administrators (seeing their visibility multiplied). Your site exposure and visitation increase because your integrated content appears on the other network nodes.

If one or more nodes have low activity (no recent updates), this is not a problem because the other nodes cover the latency and the super-site is always updated. New content will automatically appear on your homepage even if you have not changed your Web site.

PSS is open source and licensed under GPL, and installation is very simple and should take only a few minutes. Because PSS is made with PHP, your Web server must have PHP capability. Check with your Web hosting company if you have questions about your server's abilities.

As a minimum, you will need a text editor to edit the HTML and PHP files, but these files can also be edited in a Web design application. FTP software is required to upload the files to your Web server.

Installing PSS

Download PSS and expand the Zip archive. The following files must be uploaded to your Web server: class.html, images (folder), networkstyle.css, public (folder), tools (folder), uptodate.php, url_list.txt.

One of the most important files in a PSS Web site is presentation.html. This file is the content shared over the hypernetwork. The first step is to create a new file titled presentation.html. Because this file will be shared over the network, it is important that it contains the standard PSS stylesheet tags to display properly on other Web sites. If you omit these tags, your news will not display properly on the other sites in the hypernetwork.

The first line contains the title of your Web site and a link to your Web site, all contained in the `<div class="littletitleDiv"></div>` tags. For example, if your Web site was named John's Blender Models at the domain johnsmodels.com, your first lines of HTML would look like this:

```
<div class="littletitleDiv">
  <a href="http://www.johnsmodels.com" >John's Blender
  Models</a> - LATEST NEWS
</div>
```

1. <http://www.dedalo-3d.com>

2. <http://www.blender3d.it>

3. <http://www.blender3d.it/index.php?filename=SXCOL/PSS/download.html>

Below your title we will add your Web site news. All of this content is enclosed by the tags `<div class="newsBody"></div>`. The news might appear as seen below:

```
<div class="newsBody">
<b>15 Oct 2004 - New Web site!</b><br />
  <p>After several months creating some exciting new
Blender 3D models, we've launched our new Web site.</p>
<div class="footer"></div>
</div>
```

Be sure to include the final `<div class="footer"></div>` CSS tags in your news.

Because the presentation.html file is shared over the hypernetwork, it is important to keep images in your presentation.html as small as possible so that users will not be forced to endure long page-loads while visiting other sites on the network.

Make sure that all linked files and images use absolute links, meaning the links include your domain name in the link source. A hyperlink should always start with your domain, for example `http://www.yourdomain.com/images/myimage.jpg` is correct but `images/myimage.jpg` will not load properly when your news is displayed on other sites in the network.

If your news describes a specific page to visit, you might consider adding a link to that page to the footer. Add your text and link in-between the `<div class="footer">` and `</div>` CSS tags. Following the example above, a customized footer might look like this:

```
<div class="footer"><a href="http://
www.johnsmodels.com">Read More</a></div>
```

This is how the completed presentation.html code might look, followed by how the same code would be displayed on the network:

```
<div class="littletitleDiv">
  <a href="http://www.johnsmodels.com" >John's Blender
Models</a> - LATEST NEWS
</div>
```

```
<div class="newsBody">
<b>15 Oct 2004 - New Web site!</b><br />
  <p>After several months creating some exciting new
Blender 3D models, we've launched our new Web site.</p>
<div class="footer"><a href="http://
www.johnsmodels.com">Read More</a></div>
</div>
```



Of course, the code will be different for your site. This example is shown as an idea of how you might customize your presentation file.

Once you have finished your new presentation.html, save the file and upload it to your Web server.

The text file `url_list.txt` contains the other Web sites on the hypernetwork that will be displayed on your Web site.

Open the file and add the address of the other sites. Each address should only include the domain, for example `www.pbsite.com`. If there is more than one site, each additional site must be on its own line so there is only one domain per line in the text file.

As an example, there are currently four Web sites on the GNOS Network. If you want your site to join that network, you would add the following addresses to `url_list.txt`.

```
www.blender3d.it
www.dedalo-3d.com
www.katorlegaz.com
perso.wanadoo.fr/blenderic
```

PSS doesn't have to be used with GNOS. It can be used to create an entirely new network as long as the other Web sites on the new network use either PSS or PSB.

Upload your saved changes to `url_list.txt` to your Web server.

Because the network uses PHP, it is important that your homepage be PHP as well. Your homepage should be named `index.php`. If it is currently named `index.html` or `index.htm`, change the file extension to `.php`.

Add the following lines of code to the `<head>` of your homepage:

```
<link rel="stylesheet" href="networkstyle.css" type="text/
css" />
```

And place this in the body of your homepage where you want your network news to appear:

```
<php include ('class.html'); ?>
```

For example, if you want the network news to appear at the bottom of your homepage add the code at the bottom.

Save the changes to `index.php` and upload to your Web server.

By default the network is automatically updated every six hours. If you would like to manually update your homepage to display the latest news now, enter the following address in your Web browser:

```
http://www.yoursitedomain.com/tools/force.php
```

You may also have to use this script to force an update to your homepage after first installing PSS.

The following CSS classes are used by PSS to display the news.

- `littleTitleDiv`—Banner title for Web site news, increases font size, and makes text bold.
- `newsBody`—General news content.
- `illustration`—Aligns images to the left of news content with padding so text is not flush. against image.

- `newsBody`—Formatting for lists in news content, including a document image and padding.
- `footer`—Creates a dashed line, reduces text size, clears all formatting so additional content displays properly.

By using PSS and following the steps covered in this article, you and your friends can easily create a hypernetwork to share similar information and news between your Web sites.

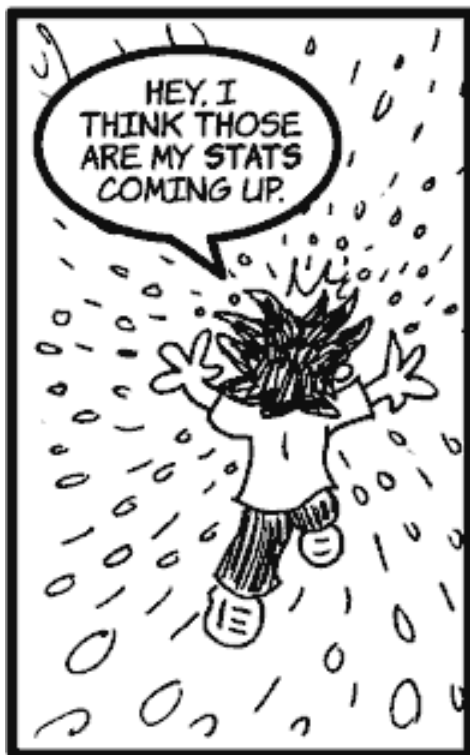
Copyright © 2004 Andrew Kator, akator@atpm.com.



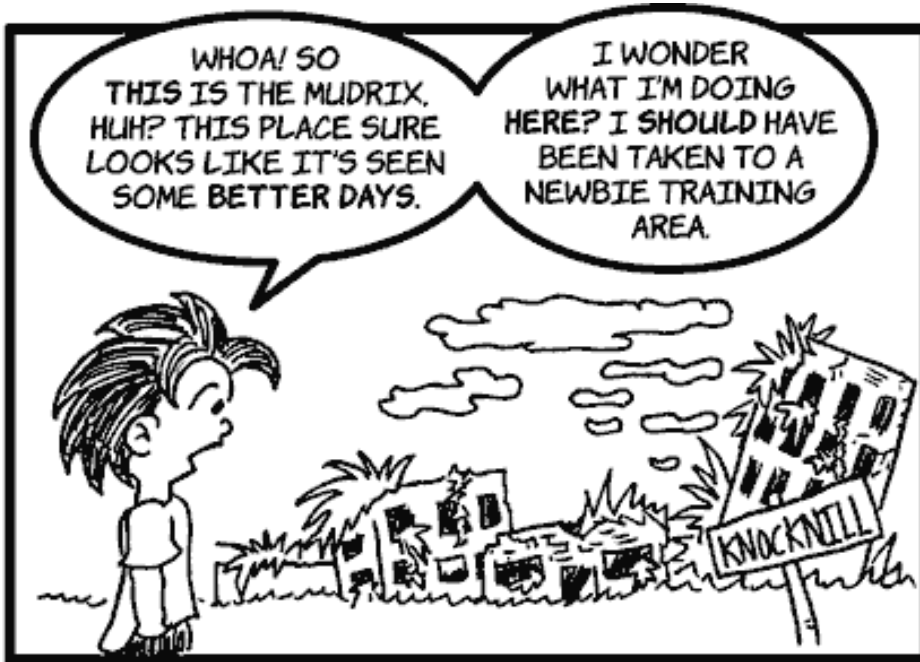
Cartoon: Cortland

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

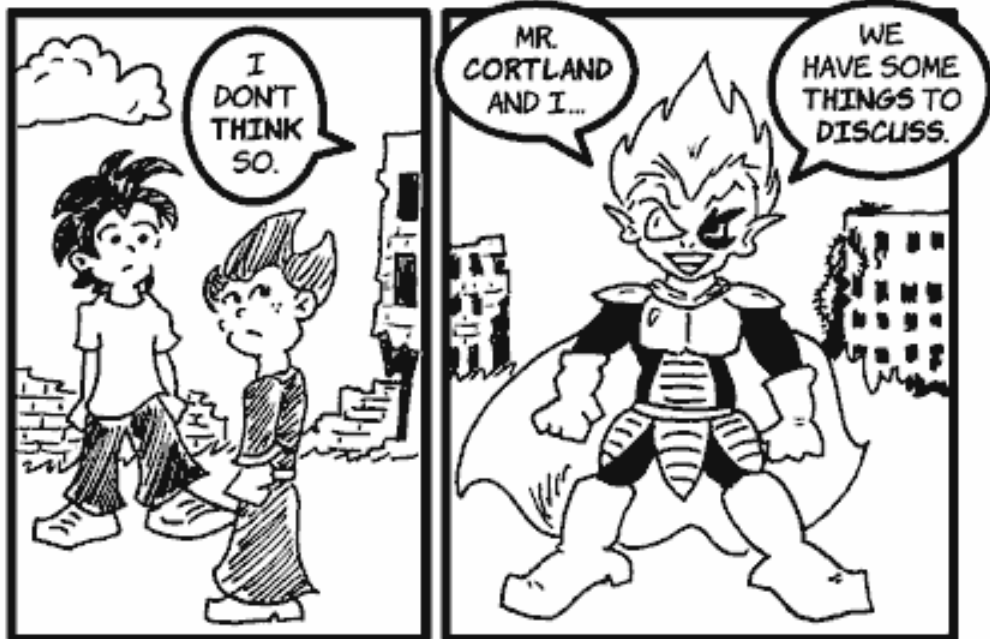
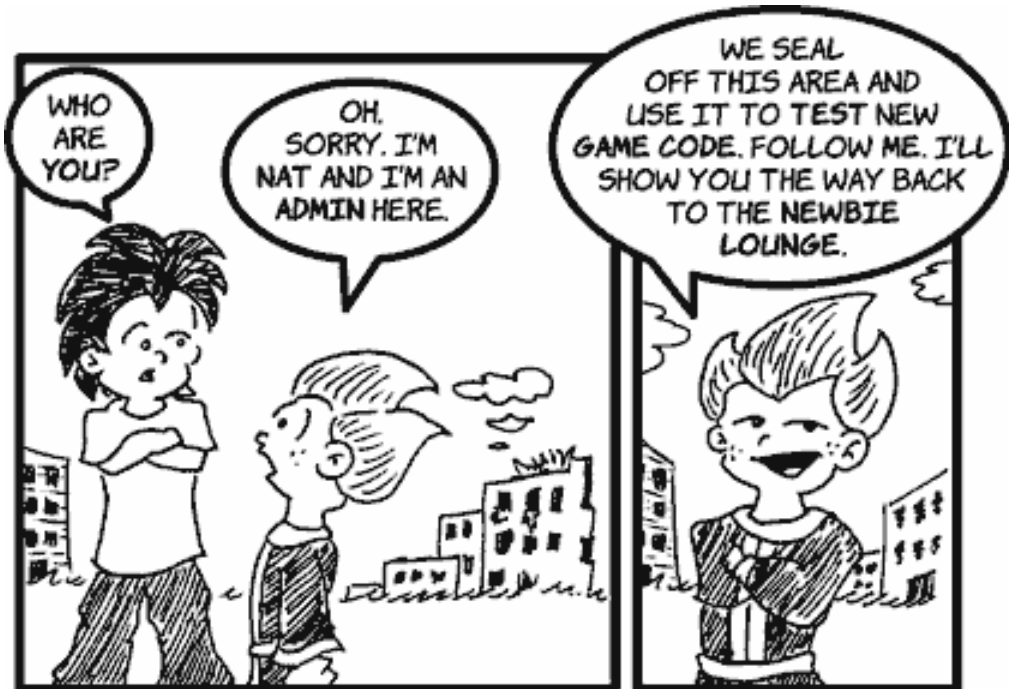




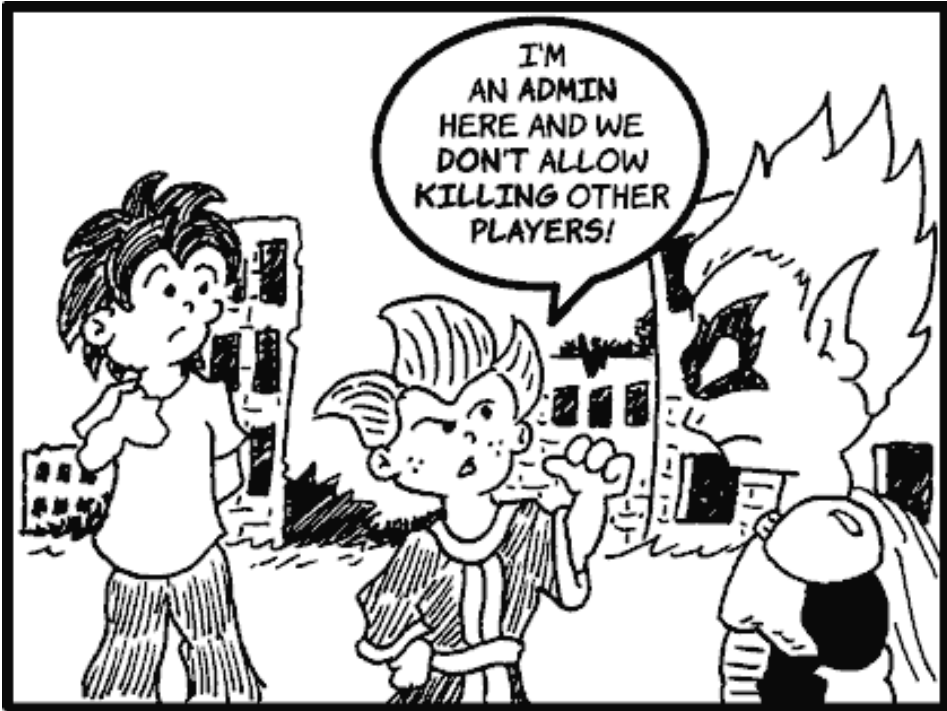














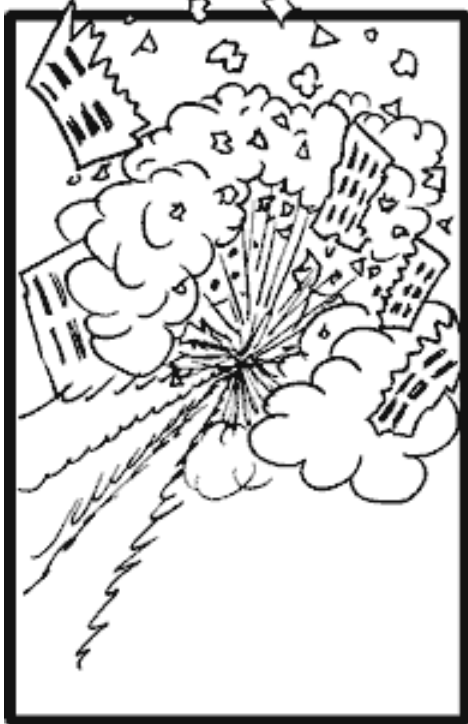
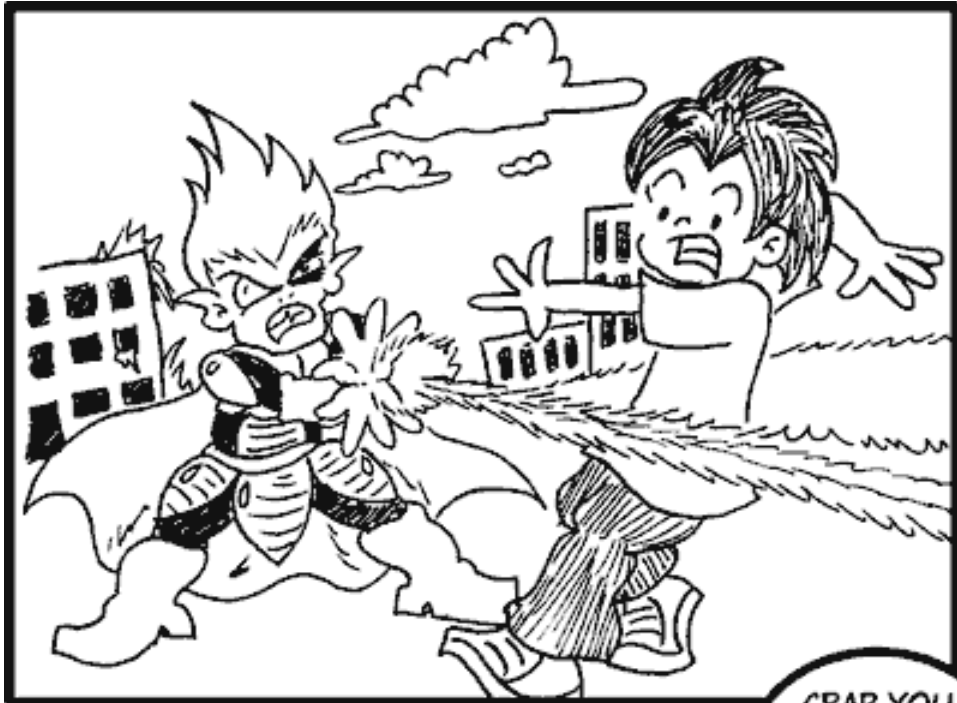
AND NOW, MY DEAR CORTLAND, COMES THE END FOR YOU.



JUST DISCONNECT, CORTLAND! HE'S TOO POWERFUL!

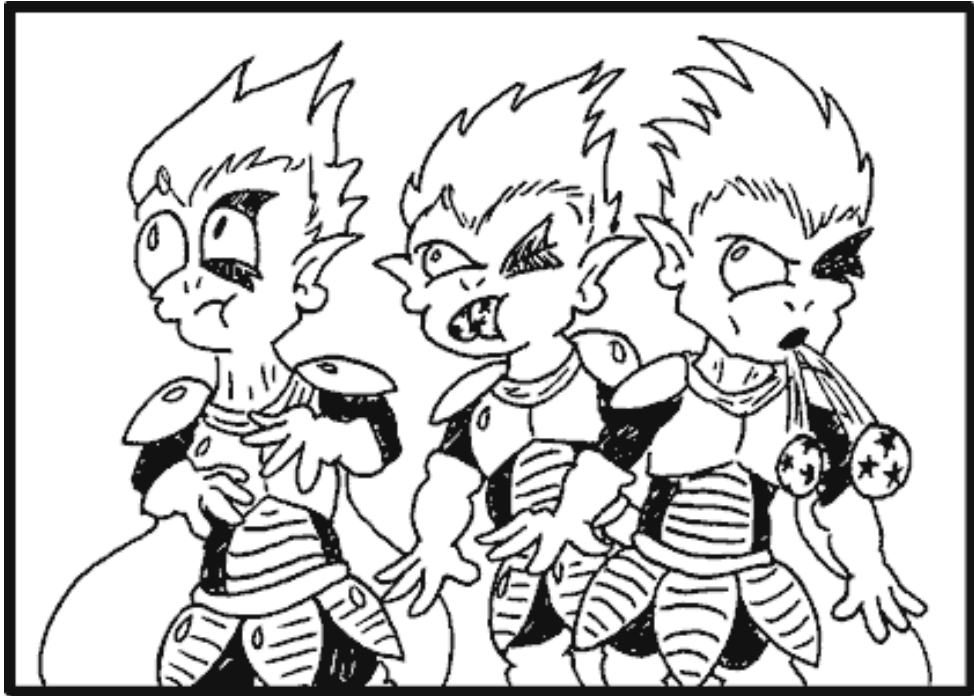


UM... I DON'T THINK THAT'S AN OPTION HERE!

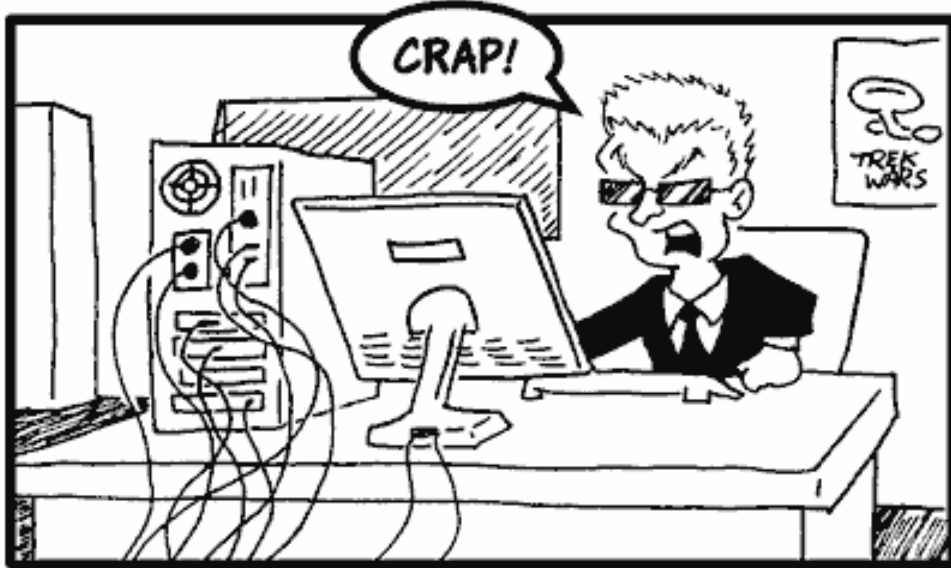


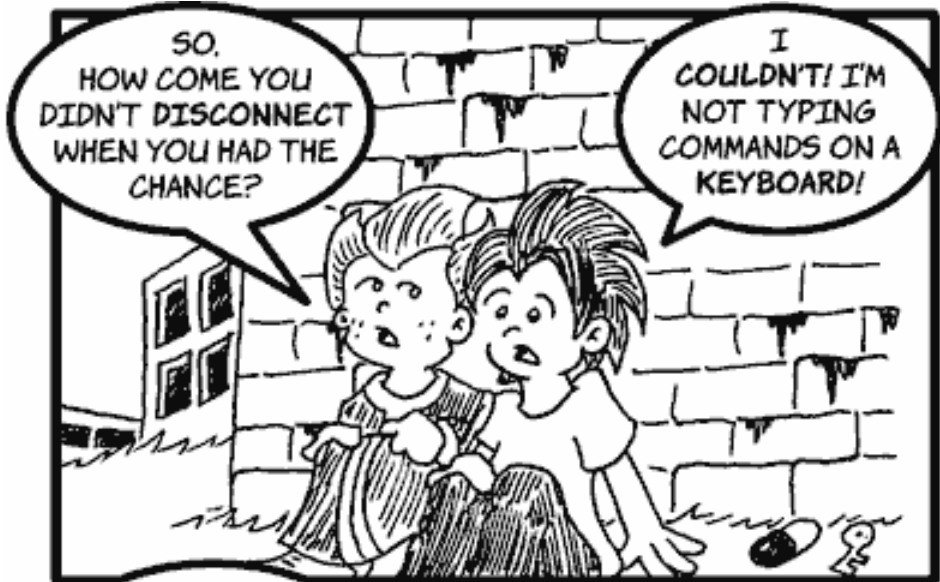




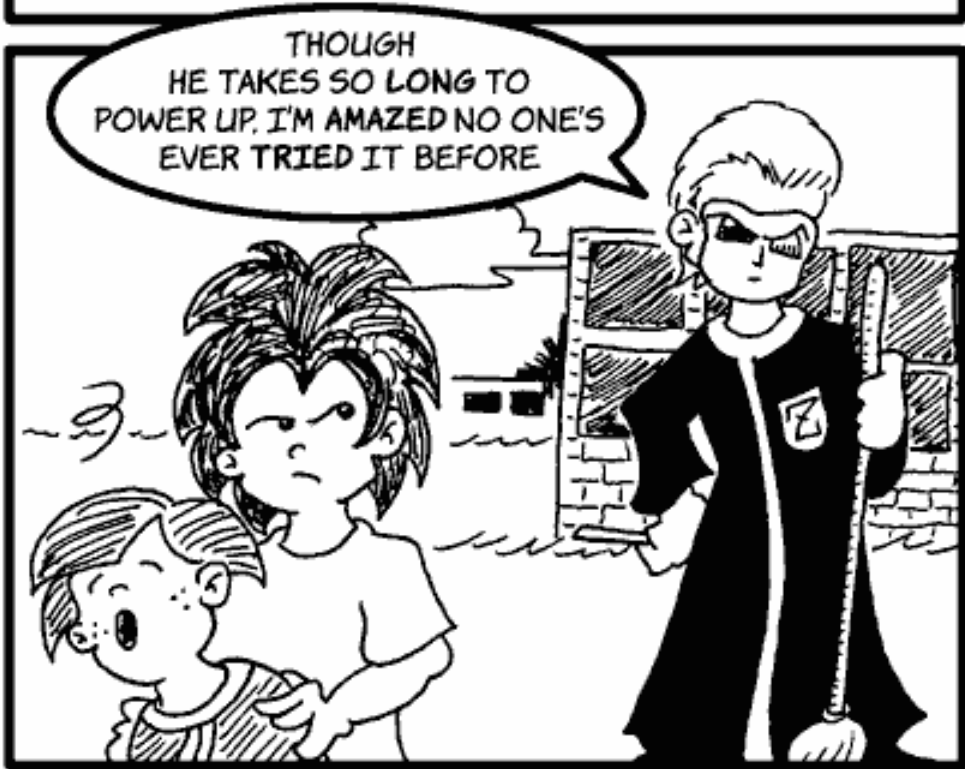


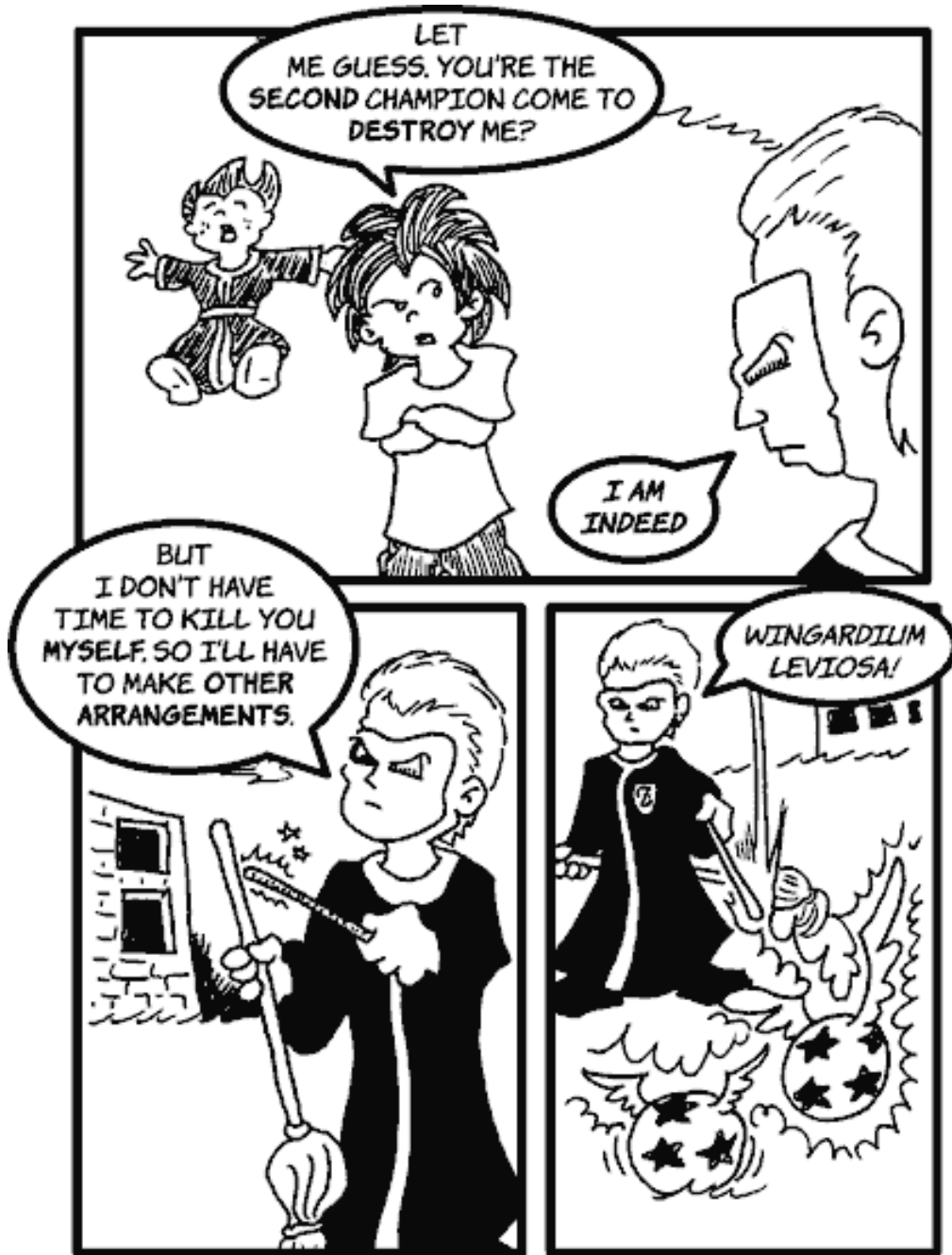












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Cartoon: iTrolls

by GMx, <http://homepage.mac.com/gregmx>





WHICH APPLE IS A LEADER IN TODAY'S MUSIC INDUSTRY?

A SPECIALTY LABEL THAT ONLY HAS ONE BAND AND THAT BAND BROKE UP OVER 30 YEARS



AGO AND TWO OF THE MEMBERS OF THAT BAND ARE DEAD?

© 2004 GMx

OR THE WORLD'S LEADER IN DIGITAL MUSIC?



WHEN SOMEONE SAYS APPLE WHICH OF THE TWO DO YOU THINK OF?

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Ireland

Ireland¹

This month's desktop pictures were contributed by ATPM reader [Mark Dickson](#)². The pictures were taken on a recent trip to Ireland, and they include landscapes, Kilkenny Castle and gardens, Jerpoint Abbey, and the Mt. Juliet gardens and golf course.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

Pictures from previous months are listed in the [desktop pictures archives](#)³.

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.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/10.11/ireland/>

2. mt dickson@direcway.com

3. <http://www.atpm.com/Back/desktop-pictures.shtml>

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](#)¹ in issue 5.10 and available for [download](#)².

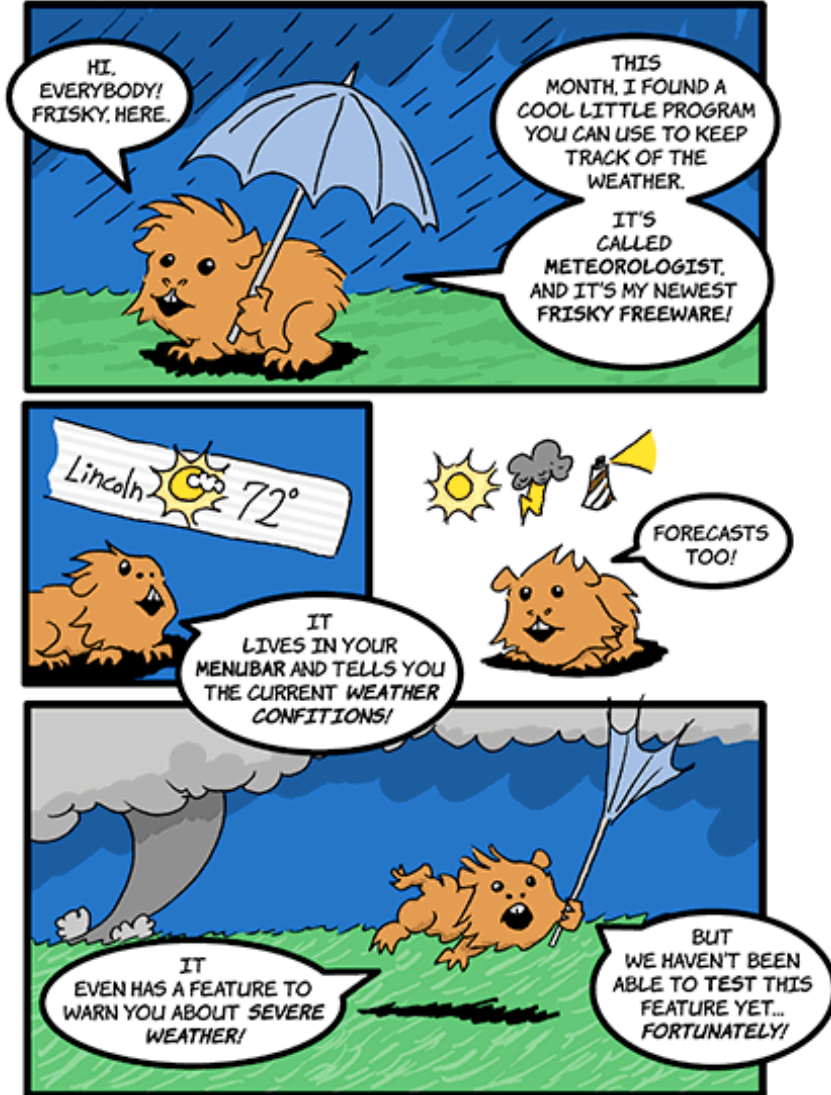


1. <http://www.atpm.com/5.10/roundup.shtml>
2. <http://www.peircsw.com/DeskPicture.html>

Frisky Freeware

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

Frisky Freeware



[Meteorologist^a](#)

a. <http://sourceforge.net/projects/heat-meteo>

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Review: Waterfield Design Medium Cargo Suite Spot

by Christopher Turner, cturner@atpm.com

Developer: [Waterfield Design](#)¹

Price: \$219

Requirements: The size of the iBook or PowerBook will determine the size of the proper SleeveCase.

Trial: None



I have never hidden the fact that I am a backpack guy. I don't ride a bike to and from the office, and I don't deliver packages in the urban jungle, so messenger-style bags are lost on me. Neither am I a misanthropic, self-centered metrosexual obsessed with style above all else. I don't wear a suit, so I don't have to concern myself with having a professional-looking, briefcase-type bag. I am your run-of-the-mill suburbanite, driving my Honda SUV where I need to go, and I prefer to hike when driving won't do. I am a backpack guy.

So it takes a really special kind of briefcase bag to make me switch, even if just for a while. The Medium Cargo, from Waterfield Designs, is such a bag.

I selected the Medium Cargo because I have a 12-inch PowerBook G4, and felt the Large Cargo was unnecessarily, well, large, as a bag for the PowerBook and accessories. The Medium Cargo measures 16 inches long, 3 inches deep, and 12 inches high, for those keeping score at home. Waterfield is even kind enough to offer a [comparison of all the Cargo bags](#)².

Also, Waterfield Design is currently running a promotion for the Medium Cargo called the [Medium Cargo Suite Spot](#)³. For \$219, you get not only the Medium Cargo bag, but also the SleeveCase of your choice (sizes 1-9, 11, and 15), and the Medium GearPouch. Priced separately, these items would cost you between \$248 and \$253, before shipping.

The first thing that struck me when I pulled the Medium Cargo out of the box was the [airliner-style buckle](#)⁴ for the front flap. It is certainly a unique feature, and makes your bag easily identifiable should you become separated from it. It also makes it very easy to get open the bag's flap with one

hand, which can come in handy at the airport or train terminal when you need to retrieve your identification, passport, or travel pass.



Front view of the Medium Cargo.

While the Medium Cargo is available in five colors (Blueball, Celeste, Lead, Peppercorn, and Taxi), I elected to go with basic black. However, even with that choice, Gary and company at Waterfield aren't going to let you get away from color. All of the interior pockets on my black Medium Cargo were lined in an orangish-gold color, which the company says makes it easy to identify items placed therein quickly. I would have to agree; when there is a myriad of cables, smaller pouches, and other accessories, the bright color does make it easy to see what's what.

The front flap has a large diagonal zipper on it that conceals a thin pocket. Actually, the entire flap is the pocket. It's very handy for throwing your PowerBook's flat power adapter and AC cable in, when you're suddenly called to a meeting across town.

Undoing the airliner-style buckle and lifting the flap reveals a three-pocket system. In the front is the larger of the three, with a half-circle zipper that opens up to yet another orange-gold lined pocket that also contains a flap pocket.

2. http://www.sfbags.com/PRODUCTS/CG_SLIDE/CGL_SIZE.htm

3. http://sfbags.com/PRODUCTS/Suite_Spots/CGSS/CGM.htm

4. http://www.sfbags.com/PRODUCTS/CG_SLIDE/3.htm

1. http://www.sfbags.com/PRODUCTS/CGM_INFO/cgm.htm

Behind the zippered space are two open pockets of equal size, which are larger in their capacity than they would first appear.



The three-pocket system, with the zippered compartment open, and a flyer for reference.

That is all that is under the flap. Sounds like an awfully small bag, doesn't it? If that were indeed the case, the review would be nearly over.

Surprisingly, the main cargo area is not located under the flap, as one might expect from a bag of this type. Behind the spine of the front flap, in between the leather-wrapped carrying handles on the top of the bag, is a zipper that runs the length of the Cargo. This is main storage area. Like the other pockets, it has the Waterfield orange-gold lining. Herein the SleeveCase containing the PowerBook is deposited, along with whatever else I can fit. Normally, my [RoadTools Podium CoolPad](#)¹ slides in alongside the SleeveCase. There's plenty of room for other odds and ends, including the Medium GearPouch that is part of the Cargo

Suite Spot package. My GearPouch holds my assorted RJ-11 and Ethernet cables, a couple of small FireWire cables, and my iPod's AC adapter.



The main compartment, with the SleeveCase and GearPouch inside.

The [GearPouch](#)² is rectangular in shape, with a zippered pocket on the front, and the zipper for the main compartment on top. The nature of its design lends itself well to cables and flat-like items, such as the aforementioned iPod AC adapter.

Finally, on the back side of the Cargo is a magazine pocket, which can be more generous than a first glance might allow. On one side of the Cargo is a mobile phone pocket, which my Sony Ericsson T616 slid in and out of effortlessly. The main strap for the bag is two inches wide, and quite comfortable on the shoulder, especially with the included shoulder pad.

All in all, the Medium Cargo is my ideal briefcase-style computer bag for light- to medium-duty use. I can easily see myself lugging it across the country for a few days, though for a week or longer stay, I would opt for a larger bag.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/7.08/coolpad.shtml>

2. http://www.sfbags.com/PRODUCTS/GP_INFO/gp.htm

This review wouldn't be complete without noting the included-with-the-suite [SleeveCase](#)¹. Many road warriors on the Net have noted their delectation with the SleeveCase. Some even use it as their only means of PowerBook transport. I can see why. The SleeveCase is padded, fits the PowerBook like a glove, and simply feels like the hefty, protective sort of covering case you want for your portable computer. You can even order your SleeveCase with a vertical orientation, if you are so inclined, though I wouldn't recommend that with the Cargo bags. With the optional shoulder strap and [Piggyback](#)², you can have a PowerBook-hauling system without a large bag, as Maury McCown of

RAILhead Design [discovered](#)³. I have found that I like my SleeveCase so much, that I am using it in other bags, many of which came with their own sleeve for the PowerBook.



The SleeveCase and GearPouch.

I lamented to head Waterfield honcho Gary, via e-mail, that, after living with this fine piece of equipment, I wished his company made a backpack. Based on his reply, look for a review in these pages some time in the future. Fellow backpack folks, rejoice. In the mean time, you simply cannot go wrong with the Medium Cargo Suite Spot. I should note that the Suite Spot offer has been available for a few months now, so there's no telling when Gary and the gang might decide to pull it. I am impressed with the build quality of all of the items in the Suite, and feel they will hold up for a good while, whether you are trekking across the country or just across town.

1. http://www.sfbags.com/PRODUCTS/SC_INFO/sc.htm
2. http://www.sfbags.com/PRODUCT_LARGE_SHOTS/SLEEVECASE/Piggy1.html

3. <http://www.railheaddesign.com/pages/various/Sleevecase/Sleevecase.html>

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Review: FrogPad USB

by Wes Meltzer, wmeltzer@atpm.com

Developer: [FrogPad](#)¹

Price: \$169

Requirements: Mac with USB, Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X

Trial: None



Its manufacturers bill the FrogPad as the keyboard of the future. Classrooms will be filled with students happily typing away on one, and PDA users who need an effective method of text entry, versus a stylus or thumb pad, would choose one, too.

That's a lot of hype for one device to live up to. Unfortunately, it fails, however admirably, on all counts.



It's really quite a simple device, at first glance: a small, cute, green pad roughly the size of my Visor Edge, with 15 keyboard-sized keys, a space key, and four command keys. But the FrogPad grows more complicated when one tries to do the obvious and, well, use it. The keys you will most frequently use are immediately available for access, and the keys you'll use less frequently require hitting Fn. In addition, punctuation marks are all accessible via another meta key, and a variety of keyboard functions (Home, End, Delete, etc.) by hitting a third. One of the function keys doubles as a Shift key, another as the Space key.

When the FrogPad arrived in the mail, I immediately plugged it in and started running through a few of the exercises listed in the manual. The training CD is Windows-only, and I no longer own an IBM-compatible PC at all, so proper training was out of the question. At the same time, I taught myself QWERTY typing in the second grade with only

part-time assistance of software, and I know a lot more about computers 12 years later, so it seemed like I ought to be able to pull all of this off.

Not true.

As I said, I'm a quite experienced QWERTY typist, and I can transcribe at roughly 100 words per minute. I did not expect a speed increase, and it is not possible, the manual insists, for me to exceed about 40 WPM.

What they don't tell you is that if you're lucky you *might* reach 40 WPM, but either my pinkies and thumbs are not sufficiently developed despite all these years of typing...or the layout just doesn't make sense. I found that after a week and a half of typing exclusively with the FrogPad, I was reaching at best 15 words per minute, and much of that involved looking at the keyboard while I was typing. (For comparison's sake, I reached 15 WPM typing in Dvorak layout in three days, without relabeling my key caps.)

Now, in the FrogPad's defense, I might have spent more time mastering it if I hadn't needed to return the unit to Corporateville, USA, but in my own defense, I might also have lost my sanity had I continued using it for another week or two. Not to mention that I might never have been able to type again on a QWERTY keyboard.

I'm not sure what kind of market the FrogPad seeks. If I, an experienced computer user and writer (i.e., routine typist) who has learned to type at reasonable proficiency in two different keyboard layouts, struggle with 15 WPM after a pretty substantial incubation period, then how do they expect third-graders to learn to use it? And the PDA user who uses one—why use it and not T9 predictive input or Graffiti?

I just can't see any significant advantages to using the FrogPad over any other keyboard or text-input system. RH or LH Dvorak layouts seem like a better and faster way of entering text into a computer, if someone needs to use one hand. The PDA example still strikes me as pretty artificial, as the FrogPad seems a bit larger than a keyboard-less PDA like the HP iPAQ 4150.

There were several snafus with the execution as well: it's a significant hassle to produce the chord for the command key, and that information is not even included in the manual; the

1. <http://www.frogpad.com>

training CD, as I said, was Windows-only; occasionally, the keyboard would stop responding, something I've never caught my USB keyboard doing.

I'll admit that I enjoyed the novelty of something like the FrogPad, but at the price they want for the USB model—much less the Bluetooth model, at \$195—I'll pass, and try one-handed Dvorak again, thank you very much. It reminded me a little too much of one of my favorite songs, Donald Fagen's sarcastic indictment of techno-idealism:

On that train,
All graphite and glitter,
Undersea by rail,
Ninety minutes from New York to Paris,
Well, by '76 we'll be A-OK.

What a glorious world it would be,
What a wonderful time to be free
What a glorious world it could be
What a wonderful time to be free.

Donald Fagen, "IGY," The Nightfly

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Review: IOGEAR and Dr. Bott KVMs

by David A. Zatz, dave@allpar.com

IOGEAR Miniview KVM II

Developer: [IOGEAR](#)¹

Price: \$114 (street)

Requirements: Mac or PC with USB, DoubleCommand or similar key remapper for the Mac.

Trial: None



Dr. Bott Moniswitch USB 2

Developer: [Dr. Bott](#)²

Price: \$139 (list and street)

Requirements: Mac or PC with USB, DoubleCommand or similar key remapper for the Mac.

Trial: None



As a Mac user in a PC world, there are times when I need to switch out of the stable, safe Mac environment and dabble in the Windows world. Many people rely on VirtualPC, but I found it to be too slow for the software I use; a real PC, albeit a cheap one, had to find its way under my desk, complete with monitor and keyboard. It was sometimes handy to have two screens, but the space started to be a nuisance, not to mention having to move back and forth. In the end, I broke down and bought an IOGEAR Miniview KVM II (GCS1712).



A KVM is a sophisticated electronic version of the old A/B box: with the switch in one position, you can use one computer; in another position, you can use the second one with the same keyboard, video-monitor, and mouse (hence KVM). Indeed, there are four-position and larger KVMs that let you control a large number of computers from the same monitor and keyboard; they're mainly used in server closets where having a separate monitor for each of a large number of computers would be wasteful.

The KVM is a wonderful device because it lets you avoid not only the space a second monitor and keyboard takes, but also the expense of buying them and the power a monitor uses. A good KVM is fast, easy to use, and flawless. It is also fairly expensive for an A/B box—and for good reason. Computers don't like having their mice and keyboards constantly yanked out and plugged back in. The monitor's configuration must be passed on, and electrical interference must be reduced to avoid fuzziness on the screen. What's more, the KVM must pass along keyboard signals faithfully, no matter what keyboard is used; and it has to convince the computer you aren't using that the peripherals are still plugged in, so it won't go through a "hey, someone just unplugged my mouse! Oh, there it is!" process every time you switch back and forth (this takes longer on Windows than you'd think). Cheap KVMs may have any or all of these problems.

Our first KVM was an IOGEAR 1712. Sleek and slim, ready to be used in vertical or horizontal positions, it came with heavy-duty combination USB and monitor cables that

1. http://www.iogear.com/main.php?loc=productcategory&category=kvm&category_id=301
2. <http://www.drbott.com/prod/db.lasso?code=1101-MSU2>

avoided spaghetti syndrome. It allows the computers to share a single mouse, keyboard, and monitor, and also switches other devices; the IOGEAR features on-screen configuration, mainly for USB port sharing (you may want one port to be shared, another to stick with a particular machine). No drivers are needed.

We started out liking the IOGEAR, but quickly realized some limitations. It seemed picky about keyboards, though it could deal with the standard Mac keyboard; F-keys (F2, F3, etc.) failed to work on the Mac, as did the Power key and the Scroll Lock key (leading to issues within Excel until we hooked up a keyboard directly and shut off Scroll Lock). Some IOGEAR models (GCS1732 and GCS1734) work with Apple keyboards, but may still not work completely with many aftermarket keyboards—even though basic functions work. A related problem with the IOGEAR was losing scroll wheel capability on our Logitech wheel mouse—not fatal, but inconvenient.

IOGEAR recommended that if we wanted these functions, we get our money back on the GCS1712 and buy a GCS1734. The company blamed keyboard vendors, saying that many kept the rights to their own vendor identification numbers.

Perhaps more serious, the IOGEAR kept our Mac and PC from sleeping, keeping the monitor on at all times. Shutting down the PC turned out to be impossible without flipping the physical power switch (it has a total off button, but normally the “soft” power button is used, as with many 68030/040 and early PowerPC Macs); it would go through the shut-down process, and then reboot itself. This was the straw that broke our liking of the IOGEAR switch, even though it kept our desktop clutter-free and their tech support people responded quickly.



We contacted Dr. Bott next, and they claimed that their Moniswitch USB 2 would solve these problems. We hooked it up, and discovered that it only had a single shared USB port; you are supposed to put that into the keyboard, then have the keyboard provide a port for the mouse. Most PC keyboards, though, don't have a built in USB hub—and we don't like using the Apple keyboard. We ended up keeping two mice, both Logitech wheel mice, but different colors to avoid confusion. The IOGEAR is more flexible regarding USB ports, and has more of them.

The Moniswitch provided full keyboard function from our generic PC keyboard (and let the PC use our Mac keyboard, though the PC seemed confused about how to set it up at first). From the start, with no configuration, the Moniswitch understood about the F-keys, the Power button, the Control and Scroll Lock, and even Number Lock. In short, with no fuss or effort, it simply worked. That's good, because there are no controls—a big dial that goes to A or B, and a switch on the back that turns out to control the brightness of the indicator LED (which, on our switch, frequently forgot to light up in the B position).



You pretty much need to use two-button mice to use Windows, but it's not a wasted purchase: Mac OS X is fully two-button enabled, and you'll start loving the extra button for all those contextual menus. PC keyboards are dirt cheap

and while many are rubbish, quite a few are rather nice and easier for people with long fingers and a firm touch, like me, to use. With both keyboards, we found uControl, a free key-swapping utility, to be essential, and made a donation to the writer; uControl easily swaps the control and command keys so a PC keyboard will be mapped like a Mac keyboard. (DoubleCommand does the same and can be more flexible but harder to use.) There are also a number of OS 9 utilities—we tested the Moniswitch briefly with OS 9, and it worked perfectly.

While we initially used a cheap PC keyboard on both computers, we eventually switched to a Mac keyboard—an old ADB model, converted to USB using an eBay-sourced iMate device. The result is a good old-fashioned Mac keyboard with real key switches that works perfectly on both Mac and PC. The PC does recognize it, but often the keyboard must be unplugged and replugged. A standard Mac USB keyboard works better, and seems to always be recognized (though Windows takes a long time to figure out what it is at first); but either way, you'll then need to remap your PC keys. We used a program called KeyTweak, which is extremely flexible and free, albeit slightly confusing to use, to swap the Mac Option and Command keys (on the PC, the Left Windows and Left Alt keys). Then, the only problem we experienced—which we had with the PC keyboard, and both with the switch and Remote Desktop Connection—was remembering that Command-C is copy with the Mac, and Control-C is copy with the PC.

After using this setup for a while, we started to access the PC, which has Windows XP (SP1 at first, and SP2 later) from the Mac using Microsoft's free Remote Connection utility. Normally we stay away from Microsoft, but it worked faster and better than the free VNC did. This provided us with the ability to very quickly log into the PC from the Mac, do a few quick PC things, and even copy and paste from the PC to the Mac (using, confusingly, Control-C on the PC and Command-C on the Mac). We ended up pasting into Word or Eudora first and then copying and pasting into BBEdit a lot of the time, since BBEdit refused to take PC text until it had been through another program, but that was a minor issue (amusingly, we have to put SPSS output into BBEdit before it

will go into Excel!). Using Remote Connection means we don't have to use the switch as often, can have Windows running in windows, can copy and paste, and can very, very quickly switch from computer to computer as easily as from program to program. Not only that, but Remote Connection passes your Mac mouse through to the PC, so that thing about having two mice becomes a non-issue most of the time.

Remote Connection is not a total solution, because it will not let you restart, shut off, or hibernate the remote computer. We ended up setting the PC to hibernate after ten minutes, which effectively shuts it off completely, but lets it wake up relatively quickly, as though from sleep: the contents of RAM are saved to the hard drive, and it comes up running the same programs, and showing the same files, as when it hibernated. This means the PC doesn't stay on all the time, sucking up prodigious amounts of power and converting it to heat (handy in the winter, less so in summer).

The other issue with Remote Connection is, as one might expect, screen lag, which isn't a big deal most of the time, but sometimes can make it difficult to work properly. When we go through screenfuls of Access data, we use the Moniswitch and go into full PC mode—just as we do when we reboot.

A good KVM in conjunction with Remote Connection offers the best of both worlds—at times it's like having VirtualPC (but with full speed), while at other times it is simply having a real PC, but with considerably less desk tonnage and heat generated. Switching to this system has actually made me more productive, even as it freed swathes of space and cut back on electricity use.

There are many types of KVM on the market, and Dr. Bott sells a variety of Moniswitches for different numbers of computers. Some KVMs work only with PCs because they rely on PS/2 mice or non-USB PC keyboards. The IOGEAR KVM we tested was advertised as working on Macs as well as PCs.

The IOGEAR Miniswitch II is promising, with its plethora of USB ports and flexibility, but when it comes right down to it, we recommend the box that actually works right and does exactly what you'd expect it to do, without having to think about it: the Dr. Bott Moniswitch USB 2.

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Review: Nisus Writer Express 2.0

by Watts Martin, watts@ranea.org

Developer: [Nisus Software, Inc.](#)¹

Price: \$70 (boxed); \$60 (download); \$45 (upgrade)

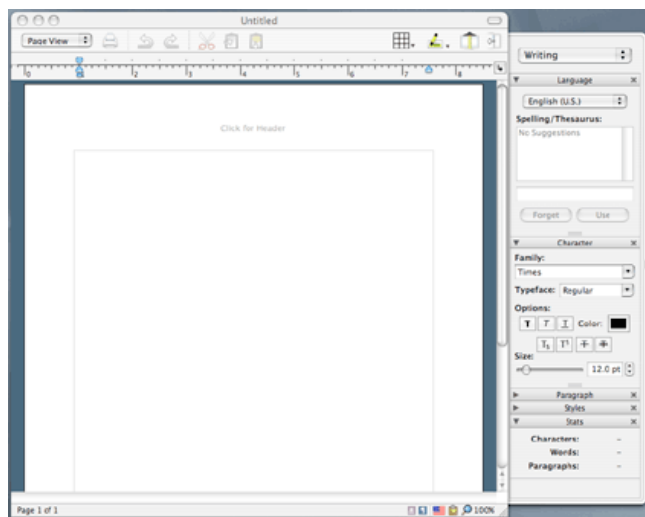
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.8

Trial: Fully-featured (30 days)



From its first release in 1989, [Nisus Writer](#)² gained a following as a power user's word processor in the pre-OS X world for its sophisticated macro capability, regular expression-based PowerFind, non-contiguous text selection, and other features that, 15 years later, are still rare.

With the advent of OS X, Nisus faced a choice of Carbonizing Nisus Writer or starting over with a Cocoa-based application. Concurrently, independent developer Charles Jolley was working on a word processor called Okito Composer that, while aimed at the low-end market, took full advantage of OS X technologies. Nisus bought Composer, hired Jolley, added some of Nisus Writer's unique features, and released Nisus Writer Express 1.0 in 2003.



Document Window and Tool Drawer

The original release of NWX was promising, but it lacked in both features and performance and met with lukewarm response from new users and disappointment from old Nisus fans. In September 2004, Nisus introduced Express 2.0, adding some of the most-requested features including styles,

2. <http://www.atpm.com/8.03/nisus.shtml>

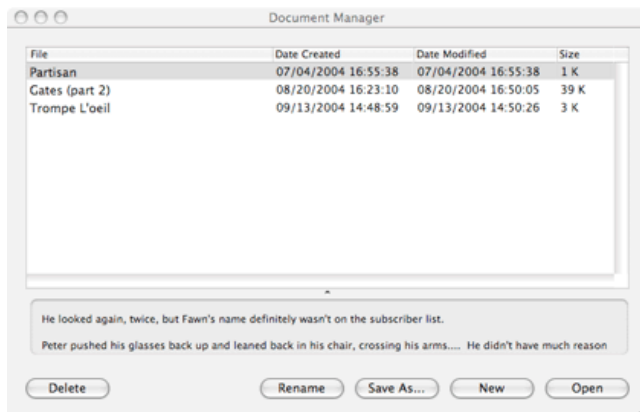
1. <http://www.nisus.com/Express/>

tables, and footnotes. This helps make NWX competitive with other alternative word processors—but it's the unique features that set it apart from the competition.

Overview

NWX's most distinctive user interface feature is the tool drawer, which contains different sets of palettes that can be grouped together. In this screen shot, the group is named Writing. In addition to collapsing palettes as shown, the palettes can be rearranged within a group, put into new groups, and even dragged out of the drawer completely.

NWX also has a standard Cocoa toolbar (shown above in the small icon, no text view). It offers a relatively limited set of icons beyond the default set shown.



Document Manager

In the bottom right of the window in the status bar you'll see a series of small icons, which NWX calls "tags." Some tags are always present—the magnifying glass and percentage show the zoom level, the flag shows the current language, and the clipboard allows access to NWX's multiple clipboards, including the ability to edit them in separate full editor windows. Most of the other tags appear as needed to provide context-sensitive selection capability. A color-filled circle will appear to let you select all the document text that's the same color as the current selection if it's different than the document default; an underlined "a" selects character

formatting such as underline and italics; a ruler (which longtime Nisus Writer users will recognize) selects for tabs and margins. While tags aren't even mentioned in NWX's feature list, they may be one of the program's most powerful features.

The document manager window is also an unusual NWX feature; it "manages" documents in a single folder, Nisus Documents (stored in your Documents folder). Documents will be autosaved with filenames equivalent to their first few words, and a Preference option can direct NWX to automatically place new files in the Manager.

Using Nisus Writer Express

The style implementation is straightforward, with styles divided into paragraph and character formats. However, NWX lets you view and modify the style sheet for your document as a separate view that occupies the whole document window.

Styles can be created by defining them in the style sheet or by using the New With Selection option in the Styles palette. Styles are fully hierarchical and can be easily edited in the style sheet view—even to the point of saving new snippets of sample text with each one. All styles can also have keyboard shortcuts defined for them.

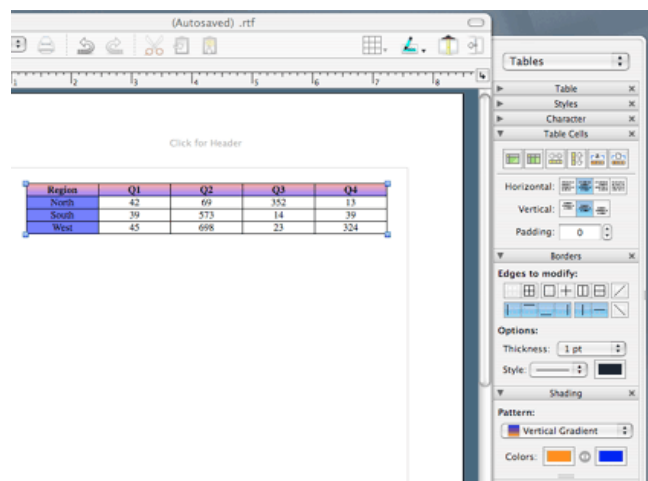


Table Tool Drawer

Tables are extremely well implemented. The button on the toolbar lets you specify table size and mark the top row as the header with two clicks; the table palettes allow other aspects—from borders to text formatting—to be modified quickly and efficiently. You can set *two* background colors, which will be used in patterns, gradients, and blends.

The Find/Replace functions in NWX are among the most powerful you'll find in a word processor. PowerFind builds regular expressions from a pop-up palette, giving you all the power without the fiddly Unix syntax. If you want to replace all the occurrences of "lemon pie" and "peach pie" with "lemon tart" and "peach tart" but leave all the other pies

alone, you can do that in one step. And, if you *know* the fiddly Unix syntax, PowerFind Pro lets you enter it directly: search for "(peach|lemon) pie" and replace it with "\1 tart." Naturally, you can get considerably more complex than this. This power is normally found only in programmers' text editors such as BBEdit and Emacs.

One interesting feature in the Find window is a Find All button, which selects all of the occurrences of the search term in your document at once. While NWX 2.0 lacks the ability to do a direct search and replace on styles, between Find All and the status bar tags it's very easy to change all the occurrences of a word in the document to a new character style or replace all underlines with italics.

The language pop-up in the status bar can be hooked into OS X's language palette to automatically switch fonts and input methods when you switch languages. NWX's spelling dictionaries are tied to the currently chosen language, and it allows "languages" such as "Tech" to be defined that prevent it from performing a spellcheck within blocks of code. NWX also has a real-time thesaurus and dictionary: stop typing for a moment (or make a selection), and it will show you either suggested spellings or suggested alternative words. This is another unique feature, going beyond the real-time word-counting function it also provides. NWX's only major weakness in language handling for most users will be its lack of hyphenation dictionaries; it doesn't seem to support manual hyphenation with soft hyphens.

NWX also has a few features that, while they aren't unique, mean you won't miss them if you move from another word processor. It supports "smart" quotes and automatic correction of common typing errors. Unusually, it also supports dictionary-based word completion: type the first part of a word and press Option-Escape, and a pop-up list box of possible completions appears. In Preferences, you can set this feature to be on all the time (which strikes me as a terrible idea for both program performance and writing flow).

NWX's other Preferences allow you to configure and name its multiple clipboards, control language settings, and set new document defaults—which can also be configured by using a template file. (As with Microsoft Word, any file can be saved as a template. While NWX's manual refers to using the Stationery checkbox in the Finder's Get Info for this purpose, in my experience, you must save the file from within NWX as a template.) You can also set the keyboard shortcuts for any menu item, although the preferences do not let you change editing keys.

Scriptability

While the original Nisus Writer macro language is a thing of the past, NWX takes advantage of OS X's Unix nature to offer another interesting approach: you can write macro scripts in Perl. I've already put this to use with a script to do simple

conversions from Nisus documents to John Gruber's [Markdown](#)¹ formatter, which I use in an online magazine I publish.

Currently, the support for Perl has limitations—its support for formatted text is limited, and not all of the documented NWX-specific directives work as advertised. Even so, some users will already find it a welcome alternative to AppleScript or Word's internal Visual Basic.

NWX can also be scripted in AppleScript, although its dictionary is extremely basic compared to some of its competitors such as Mariner Write and Microsoft Word.

Problems and Missing Features

Nisus Writer Express 2.0 has no way of doing automatic bulleted or numbered lists. While it's easy to do bullets with hanging indents, there is no way to do outlines or other lists that require automatic numbering. You can export RTF from a stand-alone outliner, but NWX doesn't read OPML directly. In fact, there's no automatic list generation in NWX at all. You can't create tables of contents, indexes, or lists of figures.

The original Nisus Writer handled graphics through a "graphics layer," which could be placed over or under text. NWX can only handle imported graphics as inline text and has no ability to set text flow around images (or tables).

While I'm impressed overall with the Find/Replace implementation, the first version of NWX displayed all the results of a Find operation in a Search drawer, letting you quickly scan the results without changing your place in the document and clicking on any result to navigate to that point. This was a great idea, and its removal from the second version is a step backward, not forward.

NWX doesn't have a split bar to let you see the same document in two (or more) places at once. And, it has no special features for correspondence, such as mailing lists or envelope printing. In more specialized features, there's no way to track revisions or do document comparisons (a "diff" feature). It has no functions for formatting mathematical formulas and no automation functions for bibliographies. As with outlines, you can use external programs to do some of these functions, but they may not integrate very elegantly.

The most common complaint with NWX 2.0—and a problem I've noticed myself—is speed. It is slow opening files and even slower scrolling them, although editing in draft view can be considerably faster. And, even after the 2.01 release, it still has some stability issues. It doesn't crash that frequently, but it does crash on occasion. Turning on autosave is definitely a must.

1. <http://daringfireball.net/projects/markdown/>

NWX has an extensive manual, available both as an Apple Help file and as a downloadable PDF. While the manual is complete, it's not terribly well organized and is in need of proofing and much greater need of good layout. The Mac Help file is prettier, but unsearchable, so you're better off with the PDF.

File Compatibility

Nisus Writer Express uses RTF as its native format—you can send an Express document to a Word user without saving it as a Word file, and it will open correctly. (In fact, NWX's Save as Word function appears to change nothing but the file extension from the normal save command.) This is a boon if you need to import files into other applications, such as a desktop publishing program; they already know NWX's format. InDesign, at least, even imports style names correctly.

Reading actual Word .doc files with NWX, though, is another matter. I tested it with a few sample files: a very simple fiction manuscript, my resumé, and a complex manual I did on a technical writing contract. Even a moderately simple document isn't likely to be imported without some conversion errors. And, NWX won't read old Word documents (from version 5.1, for instance) at all.

But, this must be seen in perspective. I tested the same files with Mariner Write 3.6, AppleWorks 6.2, Ragtime Solo 5.6, Mellel 1.8, OpenOffice.org's NeoOffice/J 1.1, and AbiWord 2.2. *None* of them imported any of the documents without flaws that ranged from inconvenient to crippling. And none of them were able to read the Word 5.1 document, either.

If your non-negotiable requirements for a word processor include the ability to read and write Word documents as perfectly as Word itself does, you simply need to buy Word. If you get an alternative word processor, purchase it for its own sake, not because you really want a lower-cost Microsoft Word clone.

Conclusion

Nisus Writer Express isn't—yet—the power user's word processor its namesake was. But it shows a high attention to detail in what really matters: the act of writing. And, more than any of the alternatives—Mellel, Mariner Write, Microsoft Word itself—it has a high quality of "Mac-ness." Express just *feels* right in a way that no Mac word processor has to me since the venerable WriteNow. If you're looking for a writer's word processor from a responsive company, definitely take a look at Nisus Writer Express.



Review: Stuffit Deluxe 9

by Andrew Kator, akator@atpm.com

Developer: [Allume Systems](#)¹

Price: \$80; \$30 (upgrade)

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3

Recommended: G4 processor, Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X

Trial: available for [Stuffit Standard](#)²



Almost anyone who has used a Mac in the past decade is familiar with StuffIt as a long-standing superior compression format and application. As Macs gradually joined the world of Unix systems and became even friendlier with PCs, Apple added simple Zip compression to the contextual menus in the Finder. Recently, I have found myself using the OS X-included Zip archive tool more frequently, even though the StuffIt formats are superior. I suspect there are many other OS X users that have followed similar practices.

In writing this review, I wanted to find out what StuffIt offers over the free Zip compression that makes it worth the price? Much to my surprise, I found many features in StuffIt Deluxe 9 that make it well worth the purchase, and worth the upgrade from previous versions of StuffIt Deluxe. For those who are unfamiliar with the offerings of previous versions of StuffIt Deluxe, check out the [review of version 7.01](#)³ in the ATPM Archives.

Things have come a long way since the days when users needed to compress data to fit large files on removable media and save hard drive space, but compression is still very

necessary for e-mail, Web sites, and Internet/network file transfers. Combine that with the massive amounts of downloadable content, multimedia, and general data we all accumulate on our hard drives and compression becomes even more necessary to backup onto CDs and DVDs. StuffIt Deluxe has adapted to our changing computer needs to offer new tools for common compression use.

Improvements

There are several significant new features in StuffIt Deluxe 9 that make this a worthy upgrade. The first noteworthy improvements are compression speed and archive size. I tested the built-in OS X Zip archive compression against StuffIt Deluxe 7.03, 8.02, and the new 9.0, using a 119.3 MB folder containing a wide range of file types, including QuickTime movies, text documents, 3D models, databases, and various image formats. Except where noted, the default StuffIt settings were used. The system used for testing was a 1.25 GHz iMac G4.

3. <http://www.atpm.com/9.01/stuffit.shtml>

Application	Format	Time	Size (MB)	
Mac OS X Finder	.zip	1:56	85.6	
Stuffit Deluxe 7.03	.sit	5:15	83.1	
	.sitx	3:23	84.7	
Stuffit Deluxe 8.02	.sit	5:10	83.1	
	.sitx	2:48	85.4	
Stuffit Deluxe 9	.sit	4:18	82.9	
	(default)	.sitx	3:09	79.8
	(faster)	.sitx	1:25	84.6

1. <http://www.stuffit.com/mac/deluxe/index.html>

2. <http://www.stuffit.com/mac/standard/index.html>

Testing indicates an overall improvement in compression times and file sizes with each successive version of the software, with the most remarkable improvement being the .sitx compression time.

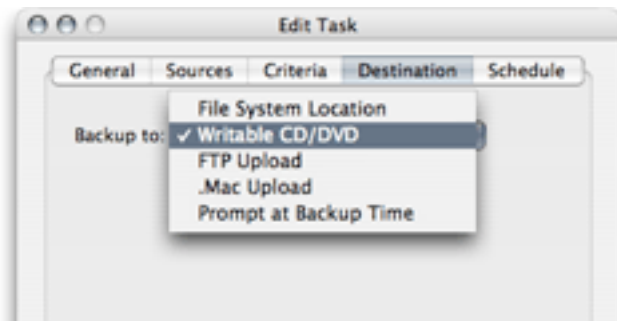
It should also be noted that StuffIt Deluxe 9 more accurately represents the time remaining for compression. The estimates in versions 7.03 and 8.02 were often off by several minutes, a problem resolved in 9.0.

StuffIt Deluxe 9 is multiprocessor aware, and should offer worthy speed increases to those with dual-processor Macs. Rudimentary testing indicates approximately 30% faster compression with dual-processor machines.

One new and remarkably useful feature is selective file expansion from archives...using Finder contextual menus! While previous versions offered compression tools within contextual menus, expanding certain files from within an archive required launching the StuffIt Deluxe application. Now all that is needed is to Control-click (or right-click) on an archive file, and a hierarchical list of archive contents appears for immediate expansion of specific files and folders. This timesaving feature is in itself one of the most useful additions to this upgrade.

Another major addition to 9 is the Archive Assistant, which offers automatic scheduled archiving and backup of specified data to either CD, DVD, or your hard drive. This is a useful tool for those using compressed archives for backup purposes.

The Archive Assistant interface is a little more difficult to use than expected, differing from several other backup applications that I have used. The software is straightforward after reading the included Help tools, which are definitely recommended for those intending to use the application.



The improved archive segmenting features were tested with a 19.8 GB data folder that was compressed to 10 GB using the .sitx format. This archive was then divided into two 4 GB and one 2 GB segments for DVD backup. The contents of the segments could be easily browsed without rejoining them, another useful improvement.

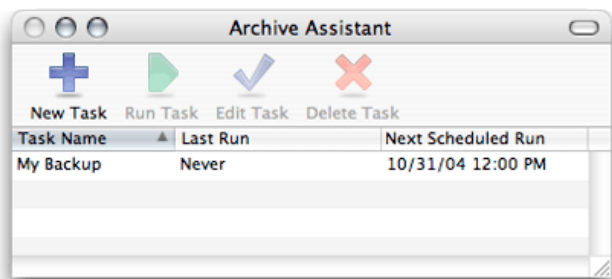
4 GB is the maximum segment size allowed, but unfortunately this was only discovered from testing. This setting is simply titled “Maximum Allowed” in segmenting options with no indication of the maximum value. It would be nice to have this setting more specifically labeled.

Other improvements worth mentioning are more encoding and security features (including a drag-and-drop Secure Delete application), a set of add-ons to integrate StuffIt with other applications, and a unified drag-and-drop application for all formats instead of the previous separate DropStuff, DropZip, and DropTar applications.

More so than in previous versions, StuffIt Deluxe 9 offers significant features that make it useful for those needing more archiving power than the built-in OS X tools, and the speed and feature improvements also make this a worthwhile upgrade.

For those considering whether to purchase StuffIt Standard or StuffIt Deluxe, the [list of additional features](#)¹ (including those covered in this review) separate StuffIt Deluxe 9 from its siblings more so than in previous versions. StuffIt Deluxe 9 offers significant features that make it useful for those needing more archiving power than the built-in OS X tools, and the speed and feature improvements also make this a worthwhile upgrade.

1. <http://www.stuffit.com/mac/standard/index.html>



FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

What Is ATPM?

About This Particular Macintosh (AT^{PM}) is, among other things, a monthly Internet magazine or “e-zine.” AT^{PM} 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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The [Online Webzine](#) edition is for people who want to view AT^{PM} in their Web browser, while connected to the Internet. It provides sharp text, lots of navigation options, and live links to AT^{PM} back issues and other Web pages. You can use Sherlock to [search](#)³ all of the online issues at once.



The [Offline Webzine](#) is a HTML version of AT^{PM} that is formatted for viewing offline and made available in a Stuffit archive to reduce file size. The graphics, content, and navigation elements are the same as with the Online Webzine, but you can view it without being connected to the Internet. It requires a Web browser.



The [Print PDF](#) edition is saved in Adobe Acrobat format. It has a two-column layout with smaller text and higher-resolution graphics that are optimized for printing. It may be viewed online in a browser, or downloaded and viewed in Adobe's free Acrobat Reader on Macintosh or Windows. PDFs may be magnified to any size and searched with ease.



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What Are Some Tips for Viewing PDFs?

- You can [download](#)⁴ Adobe Acrobat Reader for free. If you have a Power Macintosh, Acrobat Reader 5 has better quality and performance. AT^{PM} 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. Links to external Web sites are reproduced in footnotes at the bottoms of pages, in case you are reading from a printed copy.
- 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.

Why Are Some Links Double-Underlined?

In the PDF editions of AT^{PM}, links that are double-underlined lead to other pages in the same PDF. Links that are single-underlined will open in your Web browser.

What If I Get Errors Decoding ATPM?

AT^{PM} and MacFixIt readers have reported problems decoding MacBinary files using early versions of Stuffit Expander 5.x. If you encounter problems decoding AT^{PM}, we recommend upgrading to [Stuffit Expander 5.1.4 or later](#)⁵.

How Can I Submit Cover Art?

We enjoy the opportunity to display new, original cover art every month. We're also very proud of the people who have come forward to offer us cover art for each issue. If you're a Macintosh artist and interested in preparing a cover for AT^{PM}, please e-mail us. The way the process works is pretty simple. As soon as we have a topic or theme for the upcoming

1. editor@atpm.com

2. <http://www.atpm.com/subscribe>

3. <http://www.atpm.com/search>

4. <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>

5. <http://www.aladdinsys.com/expander/index.html>

issue we let you know about it. Then, it's up to you. We do not pay for cover art but we are an international publication with a broad readership and we give appropriate credit alongside your work. There's space for an e-mail address and a Web page URL, too. Write to editor@atpm.com for more information.

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This is one of our most successful spaces and one of our favorite places. We think of it as kind of the ATPM "guest room." This is where we will publish that sentimental Macintosh story that you promised yourself you would one day write. It's that special place in ATPM that's specifically designated for your stories. We'd really like to hear from you. Several Segments contributors have gone on to become ATPM columnists. Send your stuff to editor@atpm.com.

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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.



1. <http://www.atpm.com/reviews>
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