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About This Particular Macintosh: About the [personal](#) computing experience™

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Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the January 2005 edition of *About This Particular Macintosh!* We begin a new year with new expectations: the Macintosh world adding new users, and new products most likely just a couple of weeks away! But first let's go to the show...

Window Dressing

We're not talking new awnings or drapes; we're talking what mutual fund managers do at the end of the year to enhance the appeal of their funds. By adding known winners to the fund portfolios at the end of the reporting periods, fund managers hope to convince shareholders they had picked the best stock no matter the net return per share. Apple's share price ended the 2004 calendar year at \$64.40 with interest from mutual funds and other institutions keeping demand high for the stock. We'll know soon if there will be a pre-expo run-up in share price. Buy on rumor, sell on fact has often been the pattern for trading in AAPL the first week or so of January.

Tickle Me With Profits

The popular Apple iPod has joined Cabbage Patch Kids and the famous Tickle Me Elmo doll as consumer items that have caused a Christmas season buying frenzy. Published reports indicate market watchers expect Apple to report iPod unit sales for the Christmas quarter to exceed four million units.

Retail reports indicated shortages of iPod at retail outlets in the final week before Christmas, including a shortage of iPods at Amazon.com. Whether or not demand simply outstripped supply or Apple constrained inventory ahead of new model introductions in January has not been made clear. But at an average wholesale price pushing toward \$300 per iPod, Apple's revenue and earnings will see a dramatic bump up from the holiday iPod frenzy.

First the Headless Horsemen

Most of us are familiar with Washington Irving's fictional villain known as the Headless Horseman. But there's another headless character making its way into computer industry lore. It's the "headless iMac."

As we go to press, rumors abound about a sub-\$500 Macintosh offered without a monitor. Ostensibly the product will be targeted at iPod owners who are interested in switching to the Mac, but who are uneasy about spending \$1,000 or more for entry into the Macintosh world of personal computing. Whether or not the headless iMac is a figure of fiction or a new Apple product line may be known shortly.

200 Million Songs and Counting

Apple recently announced that the iTunes Music Store had surpassed sales of 200 million songs since inception. Apple's digital music store is the undisputed leader in digital song sales over the Internet. However, 200 million songs is a very small percentage of overall music sales, and it may be years before this nascent market rivals packaged CDs for music sales supremacy.

Pepsi will again be offering an iTunes music giveaway this winter, and holiday season sales of iPods may push demand for online music.

Has the Mac Been Pushed to the Back?

With all of the talk about Apple iPods, has the Mac been pushed to the back? We mentioned in last [month's Welcome](#)¹ about the much-anticipated iPod "halo effect." Analysts are expecting a significant pick-up in Macintosh unit sales from Windows users intrigued by Apple products from familiarity with the iPod. Still, the Macintosh remains the company's most important line of products. Without the Macintosh it would make little difference how many iPod are sold. Watch for a resurgence in the Macintosh market in 2005 with the iPod playing an important role in the coming increase in Macintosh unit sales.

Our January issue includes:

The Candy Apple: We Are Resolute But Not Making Resolutions

Elynn Ritterskamp resolves not to make resolutions. Again.

Bloggable: Rumors, Rumors Everywhere

"What would I have to write about if everyone were skeptical? That's supposed to be my job!"

Segments: Apple, Motorola, and Cell Phones

As people get excited about any news related to the partnership between Apple and Motorola, there are certainly more questions than answers about what exactly the two companies are developing.

About This Particular Outliner: The ATPO Tracker

Ted Goranson continues to work on the wrap-up on task managers and outliners that will appear next month. Meanwhile, he reports on events in the outlining community.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/10.12/welcome.shtml>

How To: Giving the Gift of Mac

“Before you unplug your little buddy for the last time, there are some things to consider. Answering these questions can perhaps make the process go as smoothly as possible.”

Cartoon: Cortland

Cortland continues his battles in the Mudrix.

Cartoon: iTrolls

The iTrolls examine AAC compression quality, sing about Bill Gates’ Twelve Days of Christmas, and attend Lawsuits Anonymous.

Desktop Pictures: Fireworks

Web Editor Lee Bennett contributes photos of the Fourth of July fireworks show that he attended in Cherokee, North Carolina in 2004.

Frisky Freeware

Frisky the Freeware Guinea Pig checks out OSXplanet.

Review: Delicious Library 1.0.6

For all the outstanding features and its fabulous visual metaphor—especially the bar code scanner—Lee Bennett is compelled to hand out a favorable rating. Yet, he chose to not continue using Delicious Library—at least for now.

Review: MarsEdit 1.0

Wes Meltzer compares having missed the announcement of MarsEdit to someone having missed the 2001 Macworld announcement of the iPod—just one more thing!

Review: PhotoReviewer 1.4

Paul Fatula reviews PhotoReviewer, a slideshow application that lets you quickly and easily rename, file, and...well...review digital camera and other image files.

Review: StudioBoard Mechanical Keyboard

Michael Tsai reviews Kensington’s StudioBoard, a mechanical keyboard that looks like the Matias Tactile Pro, but that types differently.

Review: UI Actions 1.0

When you first hear about PreFab UI Actions, it’s understandable if you’re excited by the possibilities. Eric Blair investigates whether or not it’s an idea who’s time has come.



E-Mail

[Jobs' Return](#)¹

Amazing how old this article is (in terms of Apple's developments). Looking back from where we are now, it doesn't seem too bad with Jobs, does it?

In other words, we love Apple the way it is now! Jobs was the turning point in the personal computer revolution, and still is now in 2004, in my opinion.

Of course, I say this with hindsight, and it was fun to read an article of this sort! Wonderful!

—Parimal S.

[About This Particular Outliner](#)²

This column and John Siracusa's are the best examples of computer journalism I've ever seen. My failure to comment in the past is largely due to a perceived inability to add very much. I just do my best to understand what you're saying and find the time to try out some of the software, and adopt whatever seems to work best.

One aspect which I think could be developed in the future is looking at software from the point of view of workflows: in other words, what do we want to do, which products are likely to fill those needs most aptly, and, most crucially, how do we string the products together efficiently. For example, I use DEVONthink to gather lots of information, VoodooPad to store my own writing and selected pieces of information that I want to link to it, and Bookends to store bibliographic references. DEVONthink has now slowed to a crawl because there's so much in it, while I've never really worked out a good way to integrate bibliographic information with other information. This is part of a general problem of inter-application communication (though VoodooPad is making some progress in enabling this), i.e. a technical problem, but just as much it's a failure of imagination or knowledge as to how to choose the right tools and how to use them.

I don't know how you could write a good article about this that wasn't addressed at a very narrow range of people, but I think there is a genuine need to go beyond reviews.

—Rick

[MailFactory 1.4 Review](#)³

Excellent, useful, and very readable review.

—Ed Williams

[FrogPad Review](#)⁴

FrogPad is not for the masses yet. It is the opportunity to be fully functional in a portable environment for one who must be mobile and whose demands require that one leave the laptop behind. And considering that it normally takes a semester to learn 40 wpm, you actually did quite well in a week and a half.

The Command key, which is most critical to Mac users, is now one simple keystroke on the Bluetooth iFrog. The Web-based tutorial will soon be offered for both Mac and PC users.

FrogPad is a one-handed keyboard and cannot easily be compared to the two-handed methodology of Dvorak, yet we honor Dvorak by using his strategy of diagraphs in the letter layout. I thank you for your comments and I too am looking forward to reducing the price. Although we have only been shipping for one year, we have six years of R&D under our belt, and we are finding that, with the demand, our prices are coming down quickly.

—Linda (linda@frogpad.com)

[iTrip Static Problems](#)⁵

I had all the iTrip static problems mentioned above. I live in Toronto and there are no 'free' stations without overlap. Here's what you do.

1. [Download](#)⁶ the iTrip 2.0 software.
2. Find the 87.7.mp3 file in the folder "iTrip Stations."
3. Drag that file alone into the iTrip Playlist in iTunes.
4. Update your iPod and make sure you select the iTrip Playlist for update using the wee icon at the bottom left of the iTunes window.
5. Select 87.7 on your radio (most have it) and keep your iPod volume high and your radio volume low.
6. And, for whatever it's worth, lowering my antenna made things worse, not better.

It works acceptably now—not static free, but usable.

—Mark

[Stuffit Deluxe Review](#)⁷

The reviewer fails to mention that the so-called free Expander cannot be downloaded independently of the entire trial package. After downloading just to decompress one .sit

1. <http://www.atpm.com/3.02/page7.shtml>

2. <http://www.atpm.com/Back/atpo.shtml>

3. <http://www.atpm.com/10.12/mailfactory.shtml>

4. <http://www.atpm.com/10.11/frogpad.shtml>

5. <http://www.atpm.com/9.11/itrip.shtml>

6. http://www.griffintechology.com/software/software_itrip.html

7. <http://www.atpm.com/10.11/stuffit.shtml>

file, I uninstalled the whole package. Allume Systems has been too clever by half. One turkey at Thanksgiving is enough.

—Mike Thall

Sony DSC-P10¹

I also own a Sony DSC-P10, and at times, I'm very confused. I've been trying to take Christmas pictures of my daughter, for greeting cards, sitting by our lit Christmas tree...and using no flash, I find that the pictures are coming out very grainy and sometimes blurry. Should I be manually setting the exposure higher? And possibly using a tripod for camera shake? Sometimes it's very difficult to get a two-year-old to sit still for more than a few seconds, never mind minutes...

—Elizabeth

You are attempting an extremely tricky exposure that's very difficult to pull off even with a professional camera. Absolutely, put it on a tripod. As for exposure, your camera is seeing the lights on the tree and exposing for that, causing everything else to be dark, so manually setting a lighter exposure will help, although the tree lights will begin to look blown out and extremely bright. The graininess is caused by the camera using the digital equivalent of a higher ASA for low light.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/9.09/cybershot.shtml>

I haven't ever used a CyberShot camera, so what I'm telling you is generic advice for any digital camera. On my Olympus or my Nikon, I can manually lock the ASA to something like 400 if I wanted to reduce grain. What you may also try is turning off your tree lights, turning on a lamp or some sort of light source to illuminate your daughter's face, letting the camera get an exposure for that and lock it, then turn the tree lights back on and take the picture.

Even better would be if you can control the intensity of the flash, though I couldn't say whether the P10 has this feature. On my flash, I can dial down its intensity so that it only fills in a little bit instead of blasting out the entire tree. It also has a setting to use the flash, but also leave the shutter open as if you were exposing without the flash. I've managed some very interesting results doing that kind of thing before, such as [this photo](#)². I took another shot like this one with only a full flash and totally lost the color of the room lights. And taking it without any flash would have made the singer's face almost unrecognizable. But as you see, the lower power flash exposed the singer very well, yet the longer shutter speed brought in the color of the room. You can even see some blur of the longer exposure in the singer's arm playing the guitar and in the cymbal.

As far as getting your daughter to sit still, there's no magic trick for that. You're on your own to convince her. However, there shouldn't be need to make her sit like a statue for a couple seconds. With the proper illumination, you should be able to expose the picture for less than one second. —Lee Bennett

2. http://photos.dtpbylee.com/Adamas_RunninBlind03/PB291178

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The Candy Apple

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

We Are Resolute But Not Making Resolutions

I did a piece two years ago about [not making New Year's resolutions](#)¹. I think they are trite. I think we should resolve every day to become the people we want to become.

But sometimes we need a kick in the pants, and calendars make that easier. Fine.

Resolved: We will back up all our stuff that needs backing up. I ordered a thumb drive for this purpose after I saw one in action over the summer. For \$40 you get a thing the size of, well, your thumb, and it will hold the really important stuff as a backup. Many models have snazzy lanyards and key-chain thingies. Whatever it takes to get us to do it and quit saying we're going to do it.

Resolved: We will dust. Maybe even spray the monitor with glass cleaner. There is serious gunk back there behind the units, for those of us who do not have laptops, and it is dusty. It is beyond bunnies.

Resolved: We will change the batteries in the smoke detector. I know, you were supposed to do that in October when you changed the clocks, but just in case you live somewhere where you don't change the clocks, make two dates a year to change the batteries. Now is good. I may forget to remind you in July, but you have fancy calendar software to set that up, right?

Resolved: We will clean out our bookmarks/favorites. I mean, really. Do you visit all those places?

Resolved: We will send a postcard to a buddy. As if that has anything to do with computing. OK, send it to a computer buddy. Send it to an Internet friend you've never met in person. E-mails are terrific, and so are IMs and all that. But handwriting is also cool, and more personal. I do not mean an e-card, either! Get a real one, or a whole book of them, and send one a week. If you don't have anybody to send one to, send it to the White House. Or address it to Postmaster:

Anytown. Look up some goofy town and write to the post office staff there. I would say send it to me, but I don't know if AT^{PM} has a snail-mail address. We must have. I just never needed it. See, we're all volunteers here, and there are no paychecks or anything. Which reminds me: volunteer for something. One hour a week. You can do it. It is a good way to connect with other people, unless you volunteer to pick up trash on the highway. But then we will think you are doing forced community service, so choose something else. I'm kidding. Do whatever you like. Improving the world makes you feel better. [Write something](#)² for AT^{PM}. You probably have something to say.

Resolved: Those of you who are not using Mac OS X will think hard about moving up. I'm not saying to upgrade if you don't need to, but I do want you to know it is not hard, and you will like it. Just be sure that you back up your bookmarks and saved e-mails and address books and *everything you will ever need again*. But once you do that, the whole process takes maybe an hour. If you don't want to spend the money yet and you are getting by, fine. If it is fear holding you back, banish it. Go to an Apple store and play around with the new OS. It is fun.

Resolved: Oh, surely that's enough for now. If you are into this kind of thing, check out that old column [here](#)³. If you want an exercise plan, write me. I just created a new one for myself.

Hey, the idea here is not to turn over a new leaf. That makes it stressful and performance-oriented. If something needs fixing, just fix it. One task at a time. If you try to change all your stuff at once, it is too complicated. Do one thing until it is just what you do. Then add something else. It is that simple. Onward.

1. <http://atpm.com/9.01/candy.shtml>

2. <mailto:editor@atpm.com>

3. <http://atpm.com/9.01/candy.shtml>



Rumors, Rumors Everywhere

Would you believe that Apple owns the domain [iphone.org](http://www.iphone.org)¹ and that it points to Apple's main Web site, [apple.com](http://www.apple.com)²?

This, in combination with the rumor—via a Motorola employee who happened to [sit next to a Mac consultant](#)³ on an airplane and long-standing news insisting our favorite fruity manufacturer is [buying up flash RAM by the truckload](#)⁴—that Apple is releasing a phone in conjunction with Motorola, must mean that the rumor is true!

In fact, you should be very, very excited about this, because the iPhone will even have [Bluetooth](#)⁵ and be a “[proper accessory](#)” to [your iPod](#)⁶. Who knows, it might be a [slider iPod mini phone](#)⁷! We [used to think](#)⁸ it was just gonna be mobile iTunes, but now, well, we're getting what we've always wished for!

Remember to save up your spare change from now 'til Macworld San Francisco, because we're breaking the bank when the iPhone comes out, mama!

Or *maybe* this all points to [a coming flashPod](#)⁹, and that's why Apple is [buying flash RAM](#)¹⁰! Will it look like a Milan cookie? Will it be a cute little square? Will it [have a screen at all](#)¹¹? And it's gonna be only \$99!

Goodness! It's so overwhelming we're getting all verklempt here!

Or, well, you could take my advice and be [skeptical](#)¹² of anything that sounds too good to be true. (What would I have to write about if everyone were skeptical? That's supposed to be my job!)

I hate to be the wet blanket. But this all sounds much too good to be true. Every time even the tiniest little chink in Apple's high-tech armor appears, the blogosphere goes wild like a bunch of Northern frat boys around a topless girl in New Orleans for Mardi Gras. When even [John Gruber](#)¹³ is forced to admit that it's possible something is coming...well, I think just little ol' me remains to stand in the way.

First things first. Apple has owned the iPhone domain since 1999. And it hasn't come out yet. Who's to say it will be forthcoming?

Let me step back from that assertion momentarily. Perhaps there is an iPhone coming. Apple *has* announced a partnership to produce an [iTunes-capable cellphone](#)¹⁴ with Motorola. I am not arguing with fact. I don't think this is the iPhone.

I will publicly (and gladly) rescind these remarks if I'm wrong, but my bet instead is on a mid-range co-branded Motorola-Apple GSM phone with flash RAM in it that can synchronize with selected iTunes playlists from your computer. It could use Bluetooth or, more likely, a wire to sync. Three things I'm betting against: a CDMA version, unless Verizon shells out big time; proper functionality for American users, since cell vendors here cripple all the cool stuff; and more than 256 MB RAM. (And if that weren't bad enough, you're *still* listening to music on your cell phone, which, like listening to the radio on my dad's old Nokia 6590, is pretty miserable even with headphones.)

No, I don't think this is what you expect at all.

The Other Rumor in the Room

For you real conspiracy theorists, the iPhone and flashPod are already old hat. No, the real rumor has to be the imminent purchase of Apple by another company—[maybe it's Sony](#)¹⁵, [maybe it's Disney](#)¹⁶, or [maybe it's Sun](#)¹⁷.

Well, as soon as *The New York Times* got wind that [IBM is selling its PC business](#)¹⁸ to China's major PC maker, Lenovo, the rumor mill started churning again. It [must mean](#)¹⁹ [IBM is going to buy Apple](#)²¹!

Wait! There's a catch.

I don't think I've ever applauded CNET's coverage of the Mac world, but it says that IBM's contract with Lenovo [explicitly prohibits](#)²² IBM from making or selling PCs anytime in the next five years.

Sorry, guys. Another rumor gone. Well, just keep moving along. Sony is bound to buy Apple any century now.

1. <http://www.iphone.org>

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

3. <http://treomac.com/v-web/portal/cms/modules.php?name=Forums&file=viewtopic&t=32>

4. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-12/10/content_2315802.htm

5. <http://macosrumors.com/121704A.php>

6. <http://www.engadget.com/entry/1234000997023998/>

7. http://www.apple.com/home/picture_f_hipod_r02a.html

8. <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2004/jul/26motorola.html>

9. <http://www.engadget.com/entry/1234000040022898>

10. http://www.forbes.com/technology/feeds/general/2004/12/09/generalbhsuper_2004_12_09_CHND_0000-2672-KEYWORD.Missing.html

11. http://daringfireball.net/2004/12/paging_beals

12. <http://www.atpm.com/10.06/bloggable.shtml>

13. <http://daringfireball.net>

14. http://www.forbes.com/technology/2004/12/16/cx_ah_1216aapl.html

15. http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/02/09/we_want_a_sony_media/

16. <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.09/start.html?pg=2>

17. <http://sunsite.nstu.nsk.su/sunworldonline/swol-02-1996/swol-02-editorial.html>

18. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/07/technology/07computer.html>

19. http://www.corante.com/apple/archives/2004/12/06/ibm_speculation.php

20. http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/12/06/ibm_apple_speculation/

21. <http://www.appleturns.com/scene/?id=5081>

22. http://news.com.com/IBM+buying+Apple+No+dice/2061-1003_3-5484184.html

A Whole Lotta...Everything Else

- If you need more iPod loving, well, I'm your man! First up, have you seen the [homemade iPod mini ad](#)¹ that's been floating around? If not, give it a watch—it will make your mind explode that this guy made it at home. Next, take a look at the hilarious so-called [new signature iPods](#)² and be prepared to be offended and horrified, so think of this as Not Safe For Work. After that, enjoy a quick comparison from Dave Shea on the [quality premium and the iPod](#)³, which is, as with everything he touches, beautifully done. And lastly, get a good laugh out of Robert Scoble's open letter to Bill Gates on [how to beat the iPod](#)⁴, in which he demonstrates that he [doesn't understand](#)⁵ the iPod's success at all.
- Did you know that your [iPod is like a Camry](#)⁶? Andrew Kantor of *USA Today* says so: “[T]he iPod has something more than 85% market share. That's incredible—that's like finding that 85% of people in the country drive Toyota Camrys. It just doesn't make sense.” Uhh? *Engadget* [disagrees](#)⁷, too.

- Apparently the U.K. and the EU intend to sue Apple for [iTMS antitrust violations](#)⁸, regarding charging British customers 79p, 11p more than Euro-zone consumers pay. Hat tip goes to [AtAT](#)⁹, who are always on top of this kind of thing.
- For those of us still interested in the Browser Wars, Rematch II, Pennsylvania State University recently told its users to [get rid of Internet Explorer](#)¹⁰ and switch to, well, anything else. Opera? Safari? Firefox? You got it. Anything else. Too much of a security disaster. I wonder if this also pertains to the now-defunct Mac IE? On a side note, maybe you'd like to be the one who produces the better mouse tra—er, Web browser? [Read up](#)¹¹ from one of IE's designers (or should we trust him?).
- Bruce Tognazzini (alias Tog) remains a critic of OS X, as I've [said before](#)¹², but seems to have expanded to computers generally. He has a list of the 10 most persistent design bugs, and they seem to be, well, mostly [anti-programmer](#)¹³ to me. But he throws in, gratuitously, the Dock, because, well, it wouldn't be a Tog article if it didn't criticize OS X.
- A quick final punch: Kirk McPike says that while Windows users may need [14 steps for security](#)¹⁴, he needs only one, [his Macintosh](#)¹⁵. He adds, “There's no step 2.”

1. <http://www.wired.com/news/mac/0,2125,66001,00.html?tw=rss.TOP>
2. <http://www.liebography.com/ipod.htm>
3. http://www.mezzoblue.com/archives/2004/12/20/the_quality_/index.php
4. <http://radio.weblogs.com/0001011/2004/12/19.html#a8932>
5. http://www.bynkii.com/generic_computertry/archives/000140.html
6. http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story2&u=/usatoday/20041203/tc_usatoday/andrewkantorcyberspeakfindingplacestocarryallyourdigitalstuff
7. <http://www.engadget.com/entry/1234000907022549/>

8. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4065539.stm>
9. <http://www.appleturns.com/scene/?id=5078>
10. <http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=55301109>
11. <http://www.uiweb.com.nyud.net:8090/issues/issue37.htm>
12. <http://www.atpm.com/10.02/bloggable.shtml>
13. <http://www.asktog.com/Bughouse/10MostPersistentBugs.html>
14. <http://radio.weblogs.com/0001011/2004/08/22.html#a8128>
15. <http://kirkmcpike.com/archives/000174.html>



About This Particular Outliner

by Ted Goranson, tgoranson@atpm.com

The ATPO Tracker

I've been working on a survey of task managers, a project that has taken more effort than expected. Part of the reason is the appearance of several high quality task managers that use outliners. These have appeared only recently and are taking a while for me to develop intimacy. In true *ATPO* tradition, they reflect deep variety in underlying philosophies.

I'm discovering some new friends in this exercise and I'm pretty excited about the possibility of making it possible for you to as well. Sorry, there are no screenshots in this edition. Bummer, huh?

The new ones are Process, ActionItems, Daylight, LeadingProject, and Merlin. I've listed them in order of increasing cost. ActionItems and Process appeared on the *ATPO* radar [two columns back](#)¹; the others are new. Well, except for one, maybe. We'll simply note the new ones here in frustrating brevity because they'll be treated fully next time.

[LeadingProject](#)²

You may recall me reporting on ConceptDraw Project in an early column. Ukrainian developer Computer Systems Odessa has a very aggressive agenda. They have been building a cross-platform (Windows/Mac) integrated suite under the ConceptDraw brand which integrates drawing, diagramming, mindmapping, presentation (like PowerPoint), and project management. The suite targets businesses, not a bad strategy, and they have a special edition for the biomedical enterprise.

Because it competes with Microsoft products, is "comfortable" on Windows (user interface-wise), and targets businesses, I find the way it works to be a bit straightjacketed compared to pure Mac products. But feature-wise what these folks have done is miraculous. What's nice about their approach is it reaches far back into the early brainstorming phase of projects, so it covers more of the life cycle than usual business suites.

That's more than I wanted to say. Anyway, they are apparently now changing their business strategy or developing a parallel one. ConceptDraw Project is now improved and rebranded as LeadingProject. Where ConceptDraw Project was \$180, LeadingProject is \$250 plus another \$50 if you want the boxed version.

We'll cover it next month.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/10.10/atpo.shtml>
2. <http://www.leadingproject.com/en/products/project/main.php>

[Daylight](#)³

Most of these applications bind contacts, schedules, and project outlines in some way. Daylight emphasizes the contact end and bills itself as a contact manager. It sells for \$149. I consider the approach to be one of building an integrated database of all the elements and presenting views that include integrated outlining. That is an approach worth examining and has lots of advantages. It syncs to Palm and integrates with Chartsmith.

[ActionItems](#)⁴

ActionItems takes a completely different approach. Instead of building a consolidated database like Daylight, it leverages existing databases and applications that every modern Mac owner has: Address Book, Mail, iChat, and iCal. It is breathtakingly different, and the difference between these two approaches is one reason for the delay in the survey. Both approaches offer significant advantages depending on how your mind (and consequent projects) is structured.

I can say that ActionItems spends more time on user interface and is probably best for smaller teams. ActionItems is \$99. The *ATPO* Tracker introduced it two months back as we did with [Process](#)⁵.

[Merlin](#)⁶

Merlin has just been released by a German group. It sells for 145 Euros (about \$193 as I write). This group takes an approach that is yet again different from the two above. It is an open database framework for program management. In other words, rather than present a set of specific tools that it hopes you like, it gives you quite a few plus the ability to adopt whatever unique management techniques you desire.

It presents a variety of report panels on whatever you want: risk, resources, issue management, conflicts, and so on. The ability to create new ones is (I assume) reflected in the name the developers chose: ProjectWizards.

Incidentally, it links to NovaMind and iCal and exports to Palm and iPod. You can see how these radically different architectures have complicated my survey. Each employs outlining in a way that superficially looks similar, but is not at all.

3. <http://www.marketcircle.com/daylite/>
4. <http://www.sailalong.com>
5. <http://www.jumsoft.com/process/>
6. <http://www.projectwizards.net/merlin/en/news.shtml>

I hope to be engaged with as many developers and users as possible in this project.

I'll be looking at lighter weight task managers as well.

...

In the general outlining community, here's what's up:

[DEVONthink](#)¹

Last month we reported on the update of the junior product, DEVONnote. Now we have the similar update of its big brother DEVONthink. This product is targeted at importing (directly or by reference) essentially any sort of document. It builds a text-based index in collaboration with you, and the utility of the thing is what you can do with this index. No competitor can currently touch it in two areas: the comprehensiveness of the documents it indexes and the inferencing it employs in the indexing and search functions (which extend to Web searches with DEVONagent).

It has been comparatively weak in user-directed tools to mature the content and the inter-relationships of its documents. This update helps. It adds metadata tags (which they call labels, something long overdue) and wiki links. It cooperates better with key mail clients and adds a synchronization function. Boy, I needed that!

Still no word on the long overdue DEVONthink Enterprise Edition.

[VoodooPad](#)²

While DEVON started with depth and is struggling to add user-directed structure, Flying Meat took the complementary approach, starting with breezy easy creation of linked notes. Now they add some depth. Version 2 was just released, and this is a whole new animal. It adds too many things to list here. I'll only focus on two that are *ATPO* hot topics.

Regular readers will know that I like metaoutlining, where notes are ordered in an outline structure and the notes themselves can have some outline structure. Its a Zen thing: atunement with graphical structure of text is as valuable in the small as in the large. Now VoodooPad joins a few others in supporting bulleted lists in notes. Hey, it's a start.

The other deal is integration with Address Book. Names in the book now act as wiki words. Good.

[FrameMaker](#)³

I'm often amazed at the surge of cleverness in the Mac outlining community. One of the main purposes of outlining is the creation of written documents. Outlining is a particularly strong paradigm when the document carries its structure into the page layout and publishing phases. Unfortunately, our strongest program for structured documents is Adobe's FrameMaker. I say unfortunately because Adobe has dropped support on the Mac for Frame.

1. <http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/devonthink/overview.php>
2. <http://flyingmeat.com/voodooopad.html>
3. <http://www.adobe.com/products/framemaker/main.html>

I'm reminded of what a loss this is, and what it means for the Mac as I sketch out an *ATPO* column on writer's workflow using outliners. Perhaps FrameMaker is obsolete. Maybe Adobe has plans for FrameMaker-like features in InDesign some day. But the sad fact is the rest of the world gets to use this powerful tool and the Mac (which had it before Windows users) is now abandoned. So Mac outliner-fed workflow is stymied because the world's top application for structured documents just isn't there any more.

This should bother you. If it does, please visit the [Frame-on-Mac OS X petition page](#)⁴ and voice your concern.

[Publicon](#)⁵

In my *ATPO* column on [user interfaces](#)⁶, I mentioned Mathematica Notebook's unique way of providing outline controls as nested brackets on the right. The notebook is a pretty elegant outliner in a way and scriptable to an astonishing degree. But to use it you had to buy the whole, pricey Mathematica package. Well, no more.

Now you can use Publicon, which is the notebook stripped out of the Mathematica package and goosed up in the editing, styles, templates, and publication areas. It's a whole different approach to outlining in a word processing context and is worth tracking. Now we have three in this space: [Mellel](#)⁷, Word, and Publicon.

[iDive](#)⁸

I'm thinking of doing a column on multimedia outlining. It has become quite a challenge, forcing me to rethink just what outlining means in a video context. I suppose we'll get to some of those advanced notions in due time. But in my research, I discovered iDive, a very nice piece of work. You can consider it a specialized consumer database for video clips and projects that has the outline as its basic organizing paradigm. [Portfolio](#)⁹ has an outlining view as well, but is oriented to static images.

[StickyBrain](#)¹⁰

Finally, several *ATPO* readers have advised me that StickyBrain has been reincarnated as a Cocoa application. The un-Mac like interface is gone. As with a growing number of outliners, it now supports Palm and iPod export, and Address Book integration. It has good clipping services and supports internote links (now also links to Address Book entries).

...

4. <http://www.petitiononline.com/fmforosx/petition.html>
5. <http://www.wolfram.com/products/publicon/index.html>
6. <http://www.atpm.com/10.02/atpo.shtml>
7. <http://www.redlers.com>
8. <http://www.aquafadas.com/overview.html>
9. http://www.extensis.com/en/products/product_family.jsp?locale=en_US&id=prod60005
10. http://www.chronosnet.com/Products/sb_product.html

That's it for this month. I apologize for not having our trademarked extensive screenshots.

Copyright © 2005 Ted Goranson, tgoranson@atpm.com. Ted Goranson has been thirty years in the visualization and model abstraction field. He is slowly beginning a [new user interface project](#)¹.



1. <http://www.sirius-beta.com/ALICE/>

Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

by Eric Blair, eblair@atpm.com

Apple, Motorola, and Cell Phones

Back in July, Apple and Motorola announced a deal to allow Motorola's next generation of cell phones to transfer music from iTunes. Based on a recent article in *Forbes*, it looks like that deal is coming [closer to fruition](#)¹. The project appears to be far enough along to warrant a quote from somebody at Apple—Eddie Cue, Vice President of Applications—so perhaps we'll be getting more information at Macworld San Francisco in January.

The aforementioned *Forbes* article was fairly light on details, so there are plenty of unaddressed issues to tide us over until one or both of the companies make an official product announcement.

Cell Phone Carriers and Networks

A little more than a year ago, cell phone users in the US gained the ability to keep their existing cell phone numbers when changing carriers. When people attempted to switch carriers, some were surprised to learn that they would need to replace their existing cell phones—in many cases, their older phones were incompatible with the network used by their new carrier.

The [original press release](#)² announcing the Apple-Motorola partnership made it sound as though Apple would simply develop a version of iTunes that ran on Motorola's line of next-generation cell phones. In that case, I'd expect models that support all of the major carriers.

However, this quote from the *Forbes* article makes me wonder if the nature of the partnership has changed:

“What we've talked about is a something that is valuable for the mass market,” Cue says. “It has to be a phone in the middle-tier of the market, not a \$500-tier phone. It has to be very seamless to use. And we're very happy with the results.”

This makes me believe the partnership has evolved to a point where Motorola and Apple are collaborating at some deeper level. Is Apple still producing a version of iTunes that will run on the general Motorola platform, or is this going to be limited to a single model of phone? If the partnership is only going to produce a single model of phone (which, for the sake of simplicity, we'll call iMoto), what networks and carriers will be supported?

Off the top of my head, the only phones capable of being used with all four of the major carriers (Verizon, T-Mobile, Cingular, and Sprint) are from the [Treo](#)³ line (though there are different versions of the Treo models for the different networks). Developing a CDMA phone would allow the phone to work on (I believe) the number two and three carriers in the US. Developing a GSM phone would allow the phone to work on the number one and four carriers in the states, along with most of the European carriers, though Cingular uses a slightly different flavor of GSM than the rest of the world.

Macintosh Integration

I've wanted an iSync-compatible phone for a while. I've gone so far as to test out a [Sony Ericsson T610](#)⁴, only to give up on it because of the phone's poor reception in my office.

According to the compatibility chart on the [iSync Devices](#)⁵ page, Motorola phones support the fewest features of iSync out of all the major cell phone manufacturers. If Apple is simply providing music playback software that runs on the Motorola platform, then I wouldn't expect to see a major change in the level of iSync support. If Apple and Motorola are corroborating at a deeper level, though, perhaps the resulting device(s) will feature a greater degree of integration.

Pricing and Availability

According to Mr. Cue, the iTunes phone will be a priced as a “middle-tier” phone. With carrier subsidies, \$500–550 looks to be the high end of the price range and \$0 (i.e., “free”) looks to be the low end. That says to me that “middle-tier” means about \$150–200, give or take. That seems to get you a color screen, Bluetooth, a camera, MMS support, and, in some cases, an FM radio or MP3 player.

As I said, these prices are after carrier subsidies. In order to get carrier subsidies, manufacturers need to find carriers willing to subsidize the product.

Based on the publicly available information, Apple views your computer as your music acquisition platform and your handheld device, be it an iPod or a cell phone, as a playback platform. This stance could cause Motorola and Apple some [trouble](#)⁶ finding carriers willing to subsidize their phone.

3. http://web.palmone.com/products/communicators/treo600_overview.jhtml

4. http://www.sonyericsson.com/spg.jsp?cc=us&dlc=en&ver=4000&template=pp1_loader&php=php1_10055&zzone=pp&dlm=pp1&pid=10055

5. <http://www.apple.com/isync/devices.html>

6. http://www.mobiletracker.net/archives/2004/07/28/motorola_itunes.php

1. http://www.forbes.com/personaltech/2004/12/16/cx_ah_1216aapl.html

2. http://www.motorola.com/mediacenter/news/detail/0,,4505_3838_23,00.html

Most carriers are pushing their own for-pay services to supply things like ringtones and images—for instance, Verizon has Get-It-Now and T-Mobile has t-zones; selling and sending music directly to your cell phone seems like a natural extension to this business model as network speeds increase (in fact, it was recently revealed that Sprint will be [partnering with Music Choice](#)¹ to stream music to selected phones models for \$6 a month). If the idea of the computer as acquisition platform and the cell phone as playback platform takes off, though, it could undermine the plans of the carriers.

Cingular and T-Mobile seem to have been the least restrictive about letting people load their own content onto phones, via Bluetooth. I don't know much about Sprint's policies today, but I remember they originally put some restrictions on the first Bluetooth phone they shipped. Verizon has easily been the most restrictive in this regard—they sell only a single Bluetooth-enabled phone, the [Motorola v710](#)², and that phone's support for Bluetooth devices is limited to hands-free kits and headsets—no data transfer is allowed.

Would Motorola and Apple be willing to market a cell phone without dealer subsidies? While this would free up Motorola and Apple to build whatever functionality they would like into iMoto, I don't think it's likely to happen. For starters, this would probably create a great deal of friction between the carriers and the Apple/Motorola team. This might not bother Apple, but Motorola would still have to do business with these carriers.

Another item standing in the way of Motorola and Apple teaming up on a subsidy-less phone is, simply enough, the matter of cost. If iMoto costs \$200, it had better provide

1. <http://www.mobileburn.com/news.jsp?Id=1005>
2. http://commerce.motorola.com/cgi-bin/ncommerce3/ProductDisplay?prfnbr=260904&prmenbr=126&phone_cgrfnbr=1&zipcode=

similar functionality to what you would get from a \$200 phone purchased from a carrier as opposed to the \$50 camera phone they use to get people into the store. The iPod showed that people are willing to pay a premium for something that's well designed, if not chocked full of features. The iPod mini drove home that point. What I don't know is how *much* more people are willing to spend.

Then again, the success of the iPod and the iPod mini could be enough to convince Apple and Motorola that they can successfully market a cell phone in the US without the help of the carriers. The Apple iPod from HP brought the iPod to RadioShack. Could the Motorola iMoto from Apple bring the cell phone to the Apple Store? I have my doubts, but it's fun to consider the possibilities.

The (Not So) Long Wait?

I started writing this article as the last few days of 2004 were being crossed off the calendar. Some people use this time to reflect on the past year and consider what they want to do with their lives in the upcoming year. I, however, ponder the plight of unannounced cell phones. I'm not really sure what that says about me.

However, by the time you are reading this, it will already be 2005. It's likely that Steve Jobs will be taking the stage at the Moscone Center in a few days to present the keynote address at Macworld San Francisco. Perhaps he will use the opportunity to unveil what Motorola and Apple have been working on over the last few months.

Maybe we'll see something completely amazing, something that will dominate the world of cell phones the way the iPod has dominated the music player market.

Maybe we'll see multiple cell phone models that simply connect to iTunes.

Maybe we won't see anything at all.

Who knows. I guess we'll just have to wait and see.

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Giving the Gift of Mac

As usual I was a few days behind writing this article. Since it's now only a few days before Christmas, I was thinking about those of you who will be fortunate enough to receive a new Mac. Congratulations: apparently you have indeed been very good this year.

After a little of the excitement has worn off, you may be wondering what to do with your old Mac. I faced this dilemma a few months ago when I replaced FrankenMac. I have faced this problem one or two other times in the past as I have disposed of aging equipment, so it's not exactly a new problem. I wish I knew then what I am learning now.

This is the first of what I hope will be at least two articles focusing on what to do with older Macs that are no longer your primary machine. In the spirit of giving, this article will focus on giving away your little silicon buddy. A future article, probably next month, will focus on things you can do with aging Macs.

Before you unplug your little buddy for the last time, there are some things to consider. Answering these questions can perhaps make the process go as smoothly as possible.

Is It Dead Yet, Jim?

Before you decide who should get that beloved member of your computing family, think about its current condition. Does your little friend need some "tender loving care" to get up and running again? If you're not willing to make the necessary repairs, pass it on to someone willing to make them. Otherwise you have passed on a potential doorstop.

If you are beyond the point where a little rehabilitation will help matters, don't just haul your friend to the local landfill. Many of the internal components in modern computer systems can be recycled. In addition to taking up space in the landfill, some of the [components can be toxic when not disposed of properly](#)¹. Check with local user groups or your local sanitation officials for any recycling programs that might be available in your area. The National Recycling Coalition's Electronics Recycling Initiative also maintains a [searchable database of recyclers](#)².

Who Will be Providing Technical Support?

How much technical support will the potential recipient have available? Macs are remarkably easy to use, but questions do arise. Are you willing to provide that support? Is there a user

group available that might fill this void? This can be a particularly important question if the potential recipient has little or no experience with Macs.

Lack of tech support might even be an issue if you are going to donate to a school. Some districts are more Mac-centric than others. The company that provides support for the schools in my district has one or two Mac users on staff, but the district is running various forms of Windows. If you are determined to donate to a school, ask around. Even if the district is using Windows, there may be individual teachers who would like Macs in their classrooms and have the knowledge necessary to go it alone. If you are inclined to donate to a school but can't find a local partner, check out the [MacTreasures](#)³ Web site. On their main page is an e-mail link to request information about their 2004 Macintosh Donation Program.

What About Friends and Family?

When casting your net for potential recipients of your generosity, don't neglect friends and family. A reliable, stable, easy-to-use Mac might be an excellent first machine for someone. I've read numerous stories over the years of Mac users setting up machines for older members of their family who simply want a reliable machine to surf the Web or send e-mail to friends. Chances are that you also know several people who might like a second machine so there's less competition for computer time.

Which Machines Should I Donate?

When you are deciding to give away a Mac, think about the system you are giving away. Some organizations would prefer that equipment they receive be less than five years old. Even if you are giving equipment to family and friends, keep in mind that older equipment does not always make the best impression. For example, one of my previous systems was a Power Mac 6500. Now, there are still a number of useful things you could do with such a machine, but it's not a great standard-bearer for what you can accomplish with the modern Mac OS. That can be particularly important if the recipient is a new Mac user.

1. <http://www.nrc-recycle.org/resources/electronics/managing.htm>
2. <http://www.nrc-recycle.org/resources/electronics/search/getlisting.php>

3. <http://www.mactreasures.com>

Charity at Home and Abroad

Even if you have exhausted your list of friends, family, and co-workers, that doesn't mean your Mac is headed toward the landfill. There are many charitable organizations that could benefit from your donation. While researching this article, I encountered Web sites for numerous charitable organizations that accept used computer equipment. I focused on the following because the projects were interesting to me and because they specifically mentioned accepting used Macintosh systems

[The MacRenewal Project](http://www.macrenewal.org/about.html)¹, headquartered in Eugene Oregon, was first to capture my attention. In existence since 1999, the organization aims to recycle or restore used equipment, match the technology with people who need it, *and* teach them how to use it. The organization accomplishes its goal by working in partnership with several other organizations.

While checking out the MacRenewal Project I found out about [The National Christina Foundation](http://www.cristina.org/about.html)². Established in 1984, this organization provides technology and training to people who are disabled, economically disadvantaged, or educationally at risk.

If you are inclined to think globally, there are a number of projects designed to provide used equipment internationally. CARE Canada's Web site outlines a project to [donate used tools](http://www.care.ca/make_a_diff/tls/tlsfrm_e.shtml#computer)³ to entrepreneurs in the Third World. This project caught my attention because they not only accept donations of Macs but also a host of other tools including fork lifts and metal working tools.

If none of these projects sounds interesting to you, keep looking. There are numerous other worthy projects out there. A recent eHow.com story about [recycling computers](http://www.ewh.com/how_9173_recycle-used-computers.html)⁴ also includes basic information on several other international projects involving used computers.

When making donations to charitable organizations keep in mind that some organizations only accept working systems. US residents may qualify for a tax deduction when donating to these organizations. The deduction is often equal to the fair market value of any donated equipment plus the cost of shipping. The laws change frequently, so you will need to talk to the organization receiving the donation or a tax professional for specific details.

Although the projects mentioned above strike me as interesting uses for used computers, I have not investigated these organizations personally. Before you make contributions to any charitable organization, investigate them for yourself. For a list of important questions to ask,

consult the [Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance Charity Standards](http://www.give.org/standards/index.asp)⁵ or the [American Institute of Philanthropy's Tips for Giving Wisely](http://www.charitywatch.org/tips.html)⁶.

Final Steps to Take

Before you give away that Mac, there are a few very important steps to take. I encourage you to take these steps whether you are donating to an individual or an organization.

Make sure you have a working backup of any data on the machine. The joy of giving can be seriously hampered by the realization that you forgot important data on a machine that you no longer own. Whether you are talking about financial data or photos from your last trip, copy anything that you want to keep.

If you have made purchases from the iTunes Music Store, be sure to remove that computer from your account. If your Mac is still operational, launch iTunes, navigate to the Advanced Menu, and choose Deauthorize Computer. This is important because even [initializing the hard drive does not deauthorize the computer](http://www.apple.com/support/itunes/authorization.html)⁷. If you need to deauthorize a computer you no longer have access to, fill in the Web form at the bottom of that page

Take steps to remove any confidential information stored on the system. Use a disk utility to not only erase the drive, but zero it as well. Writing zeros to the drive reduces the likelihood that someone can gain access to sensitive information. Some of my Windows-using friends have even suggested removing the existing hard drive from the machine and replacing it with a new drive. Given the price of some internal drives that would be tempting to me.

While we are talking about what to remove, think about the software you will be giving away. Check out the license agreement for any software you plan to give away. As general rule, you can't give away a version of a piece of software that you will be using on your system. You might also need to keep older software that you have upgraded. Suppose, for example, you have used several versions of Microsoft Word or Photoshop. You bought the full version initially and that became the basis of future upgrades. I think passing the older versions on would violate the licensing agreement.

There might be a number of other software issues to be considered. I recently purchased a piece of software that is keyed to a specific machine on which it is installed. Check the documentation or contact technical support to determine the correct procedure for transferring the software from one machine to another legally.

When I initially conceived of this article I was thinking in terms of things to do with a Mac you were thinking of keeping. There are a number of useful tasks that can be performed well with older equipment. ATPM publisher Michael Tsai suggested setting up a backup server, and I ran a

1. <http://www.macrenewal.org/about.html>
2. <http://www.cristina.org/about.html>
3. http://www.care.ca/make_a_diff/tls/tlsfrm_e.shtml#computer
4. http://www.ewh.com/how_9173_recycle-used-computers.html

5. <http://www.give.org/standards/index.asp>
6. <http://www.charitywatch.org/tips.html>
7. <http://www.apple.com/support/itunes/authorization.html>

6500 as a file server for several months a few years ago. We will tackle those types of projects next month. Until next time the door to the lab is open. Enter if you wish, but ignore that weird greenish glow at your own risk.

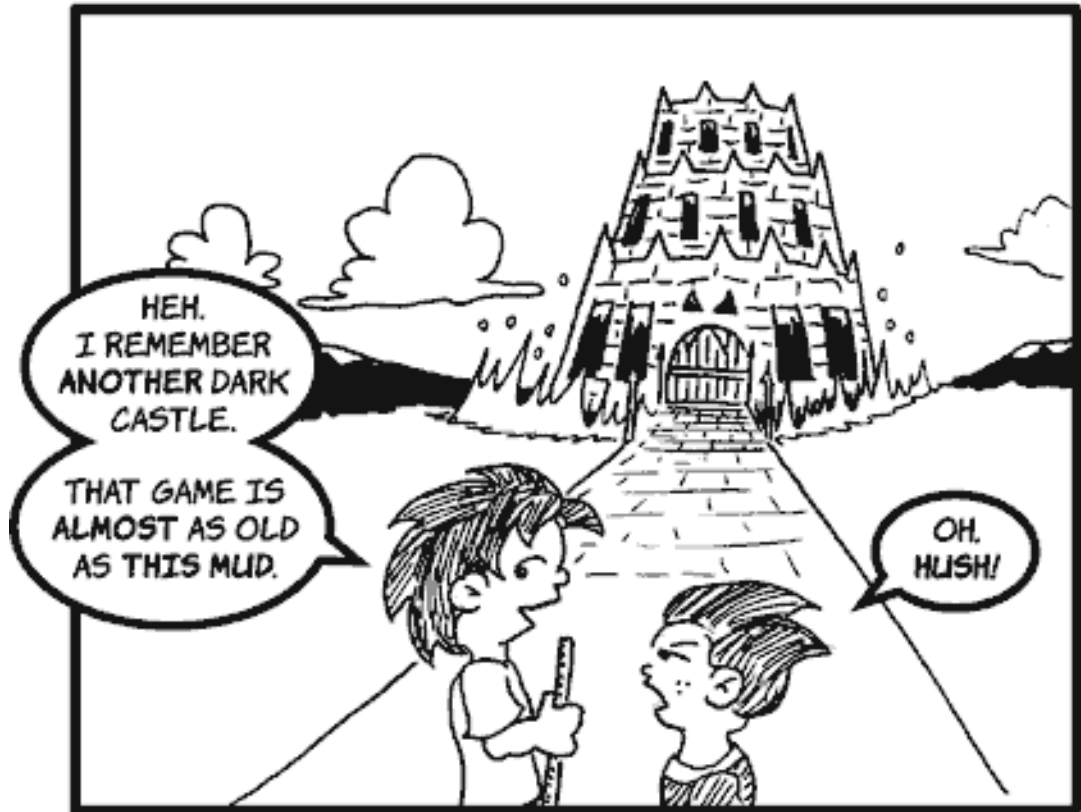
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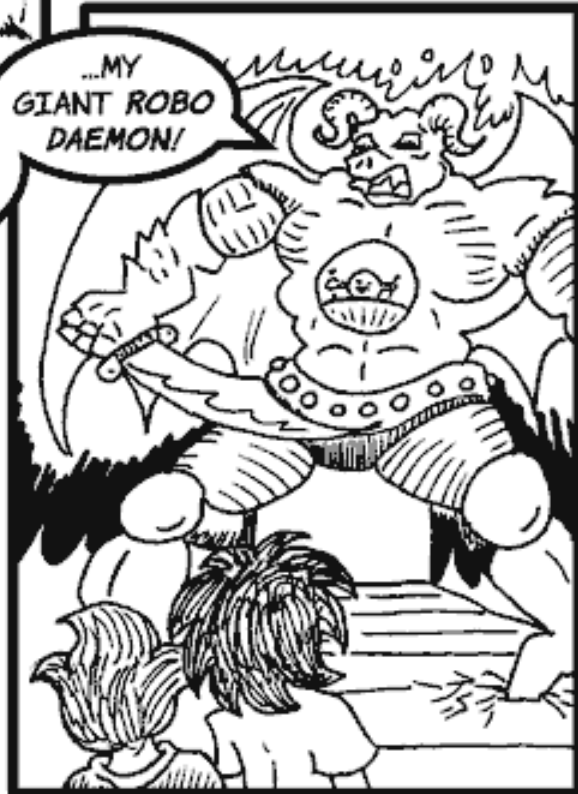
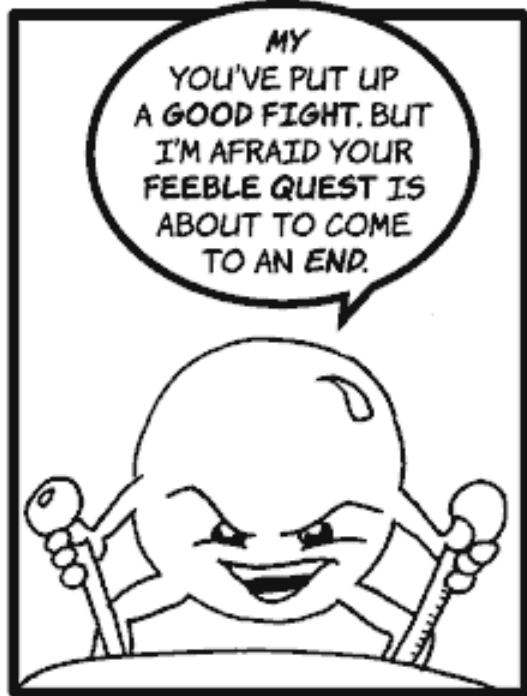
Cartoon: Cortland

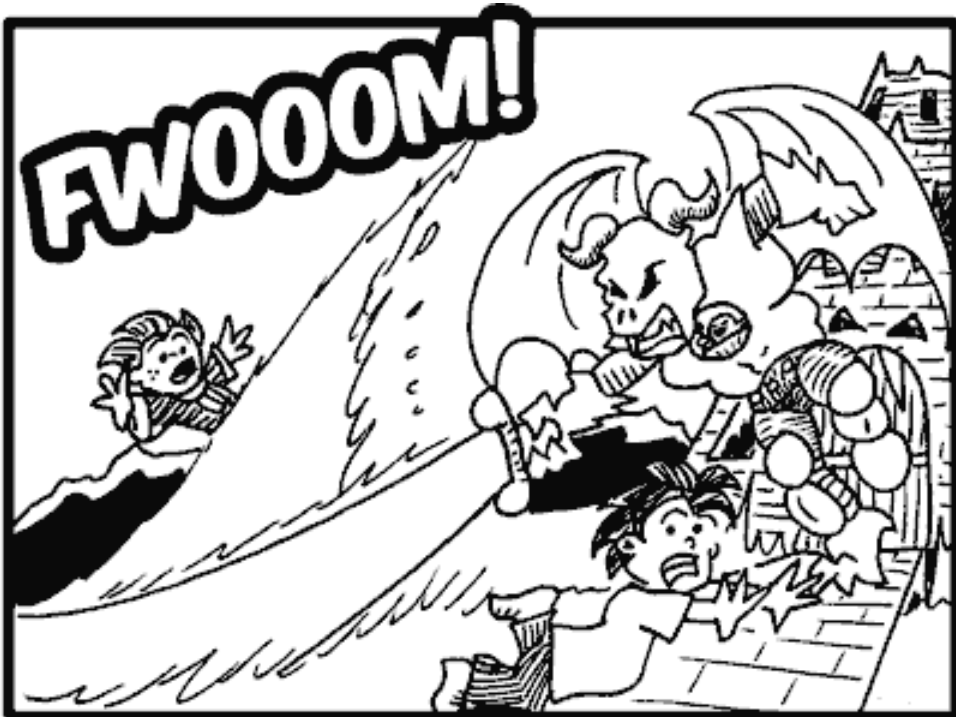
by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

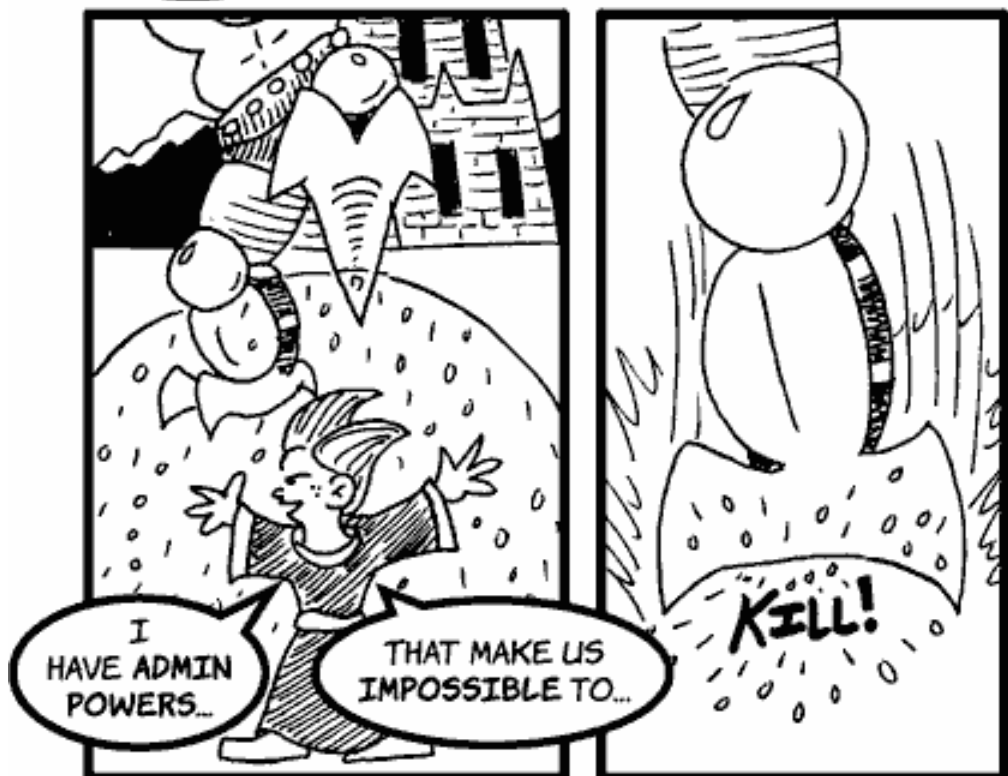
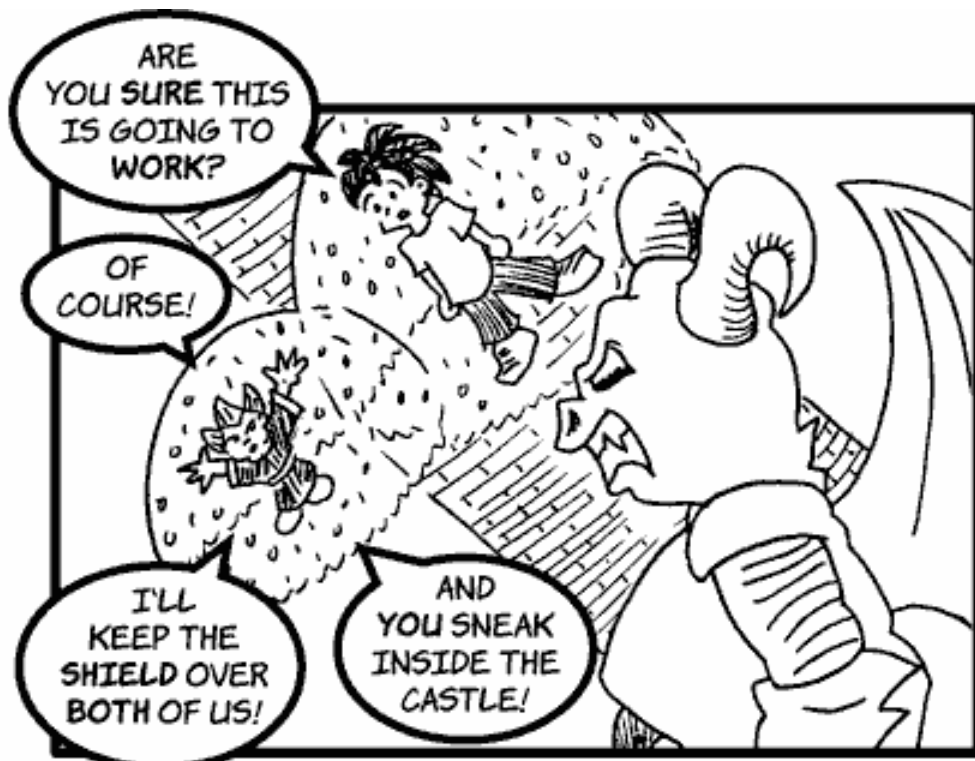


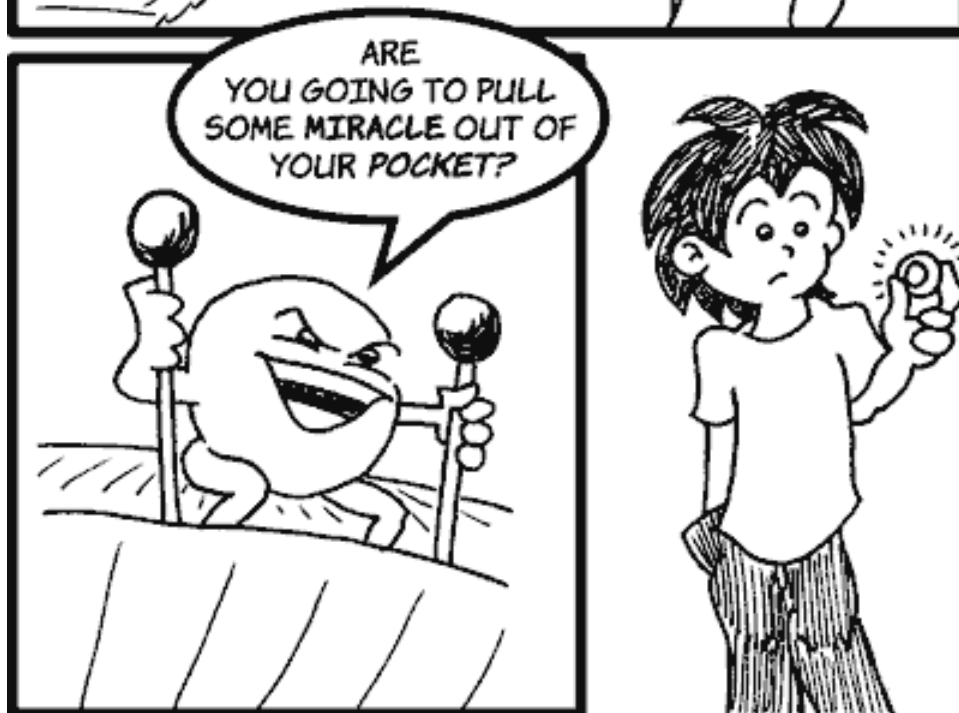
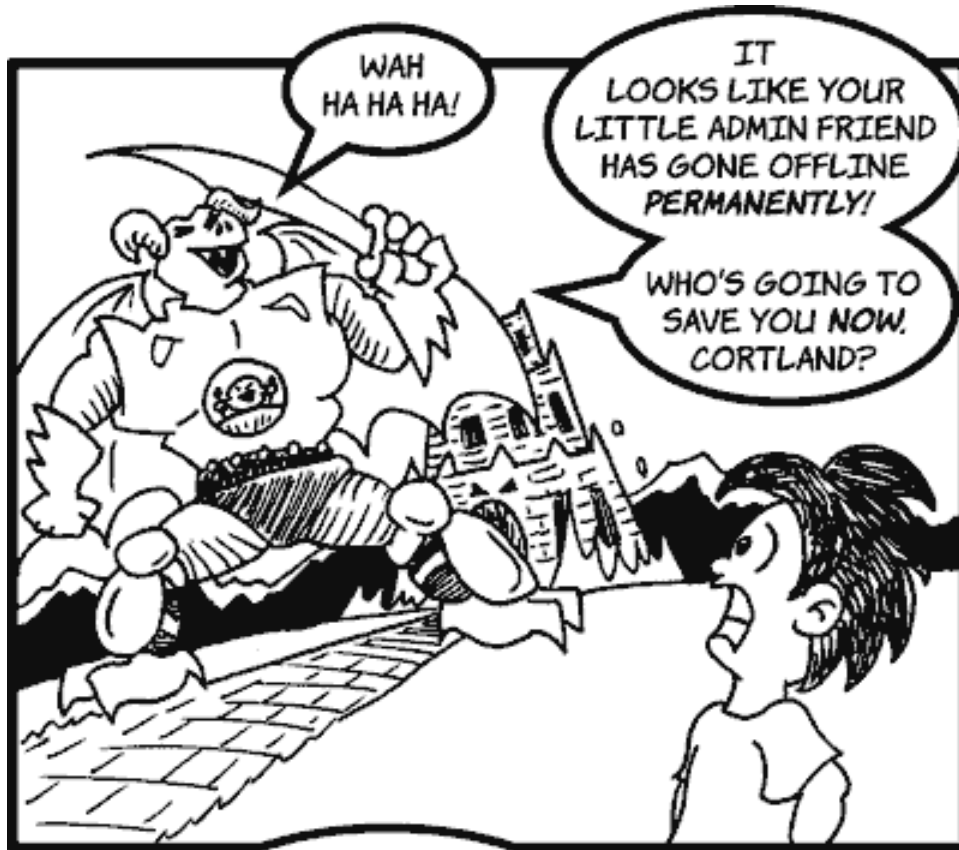


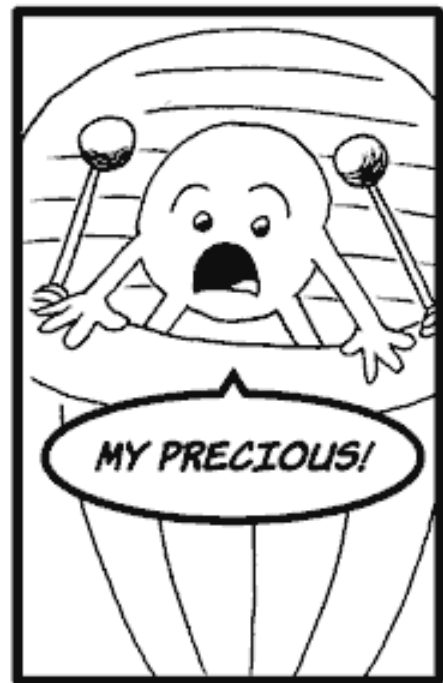




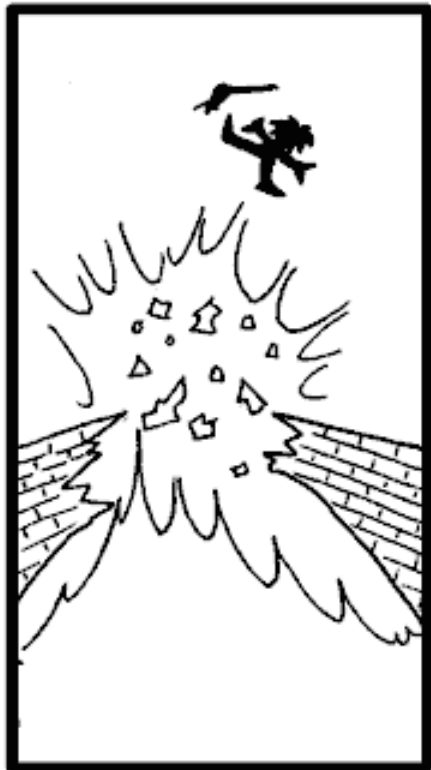


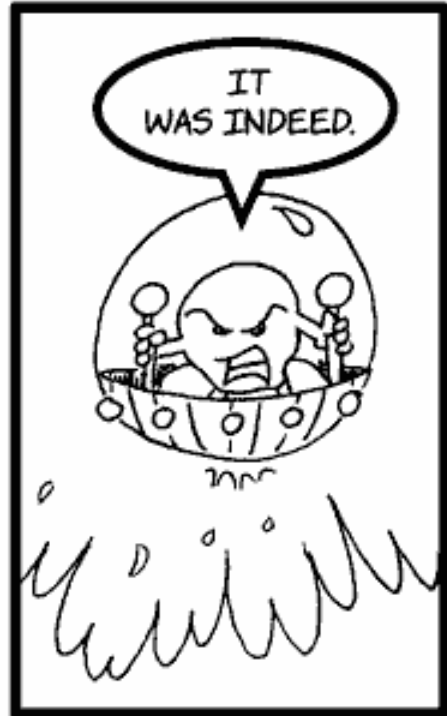
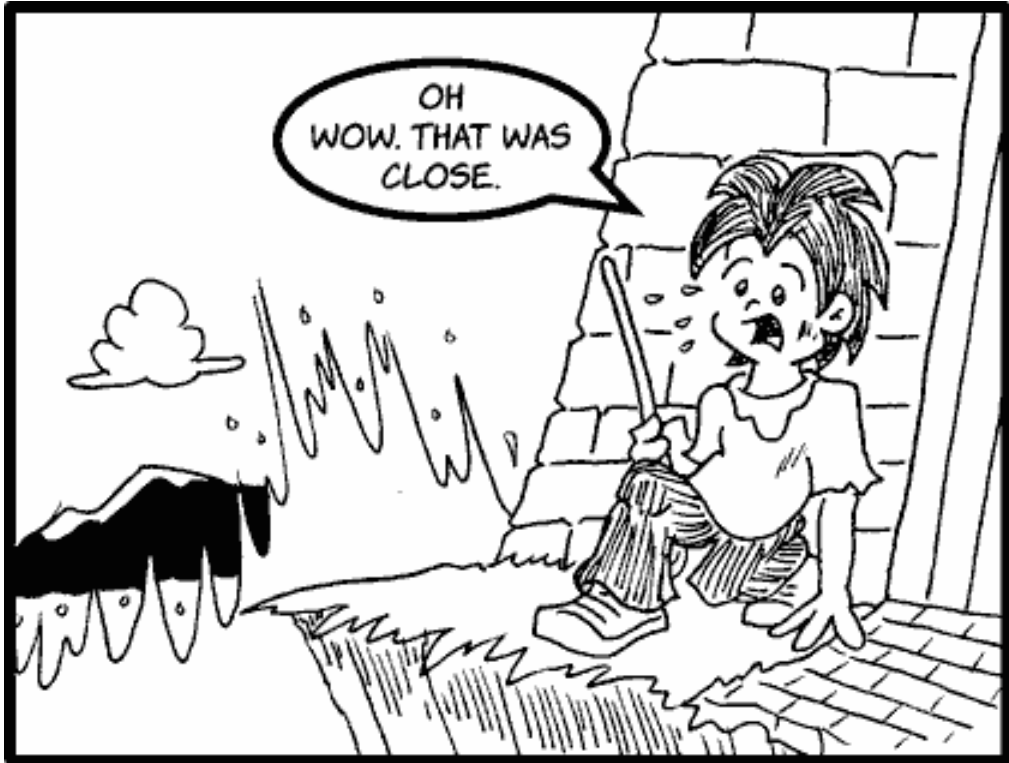


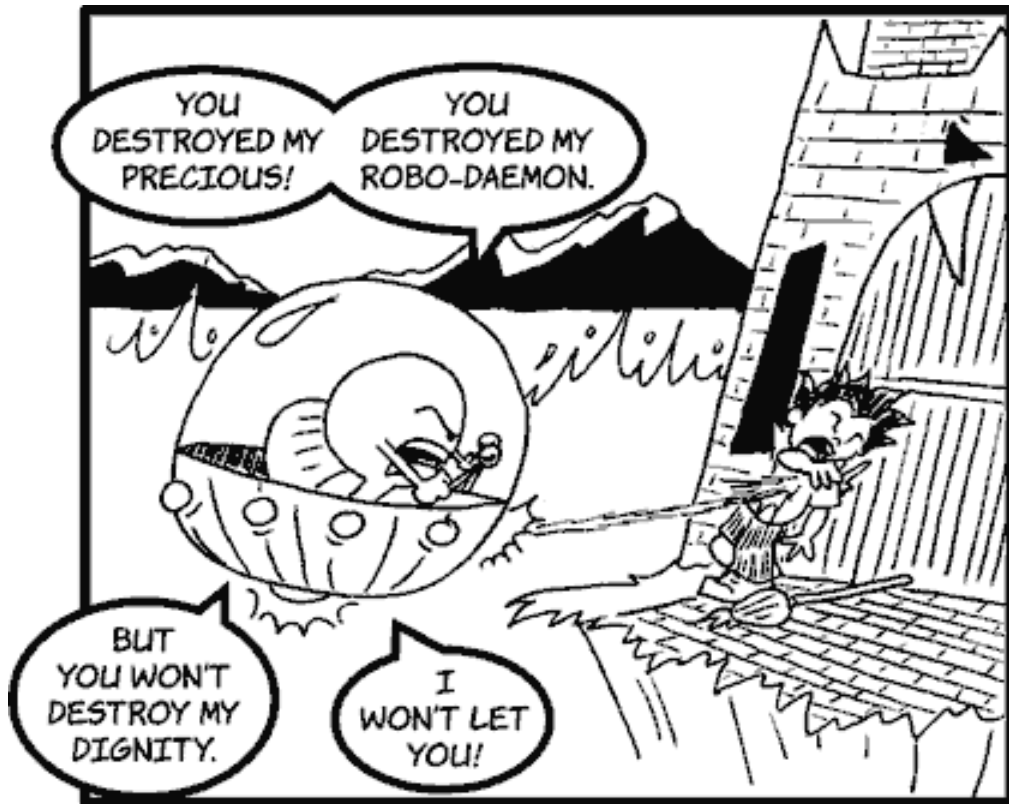


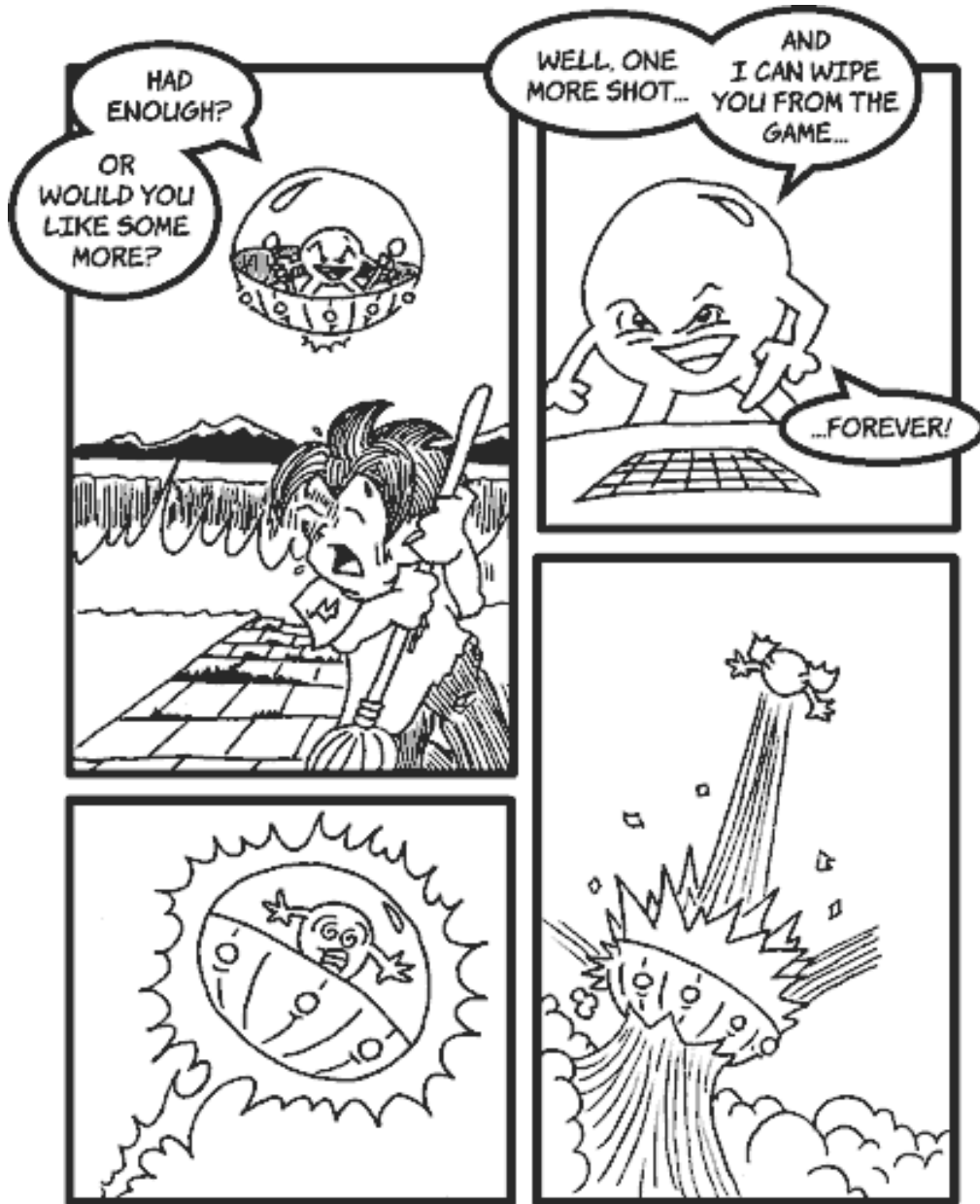




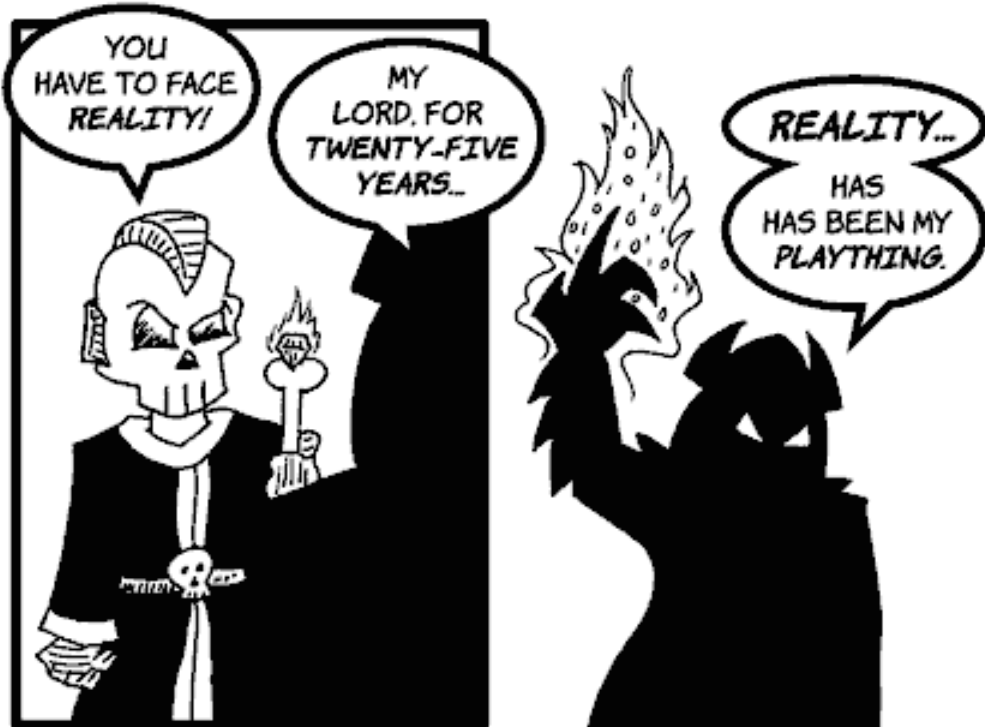




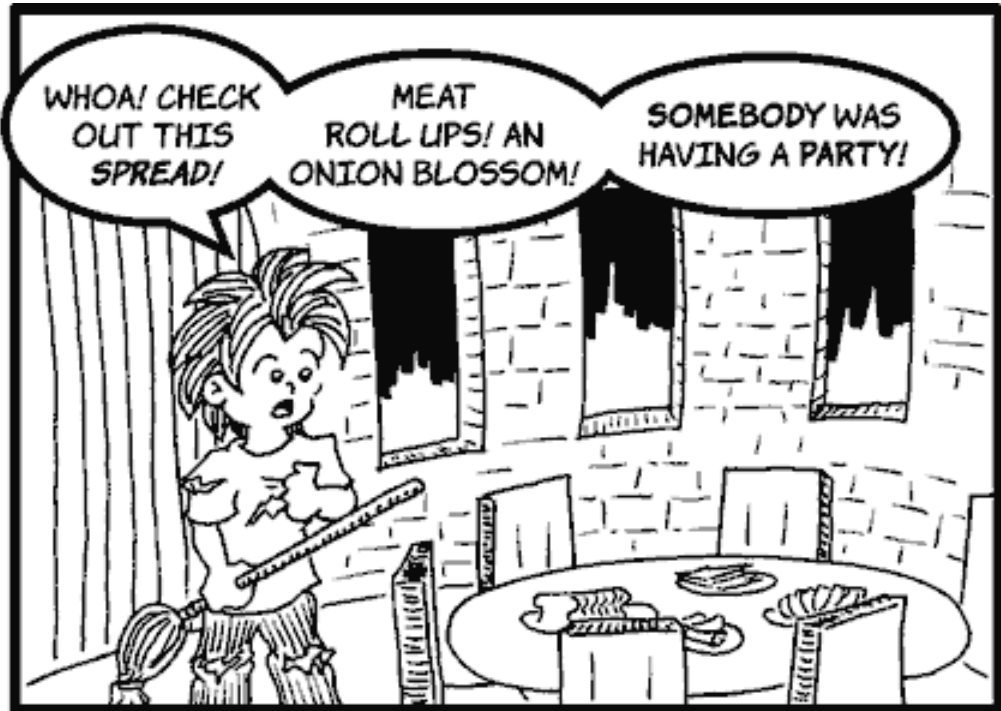






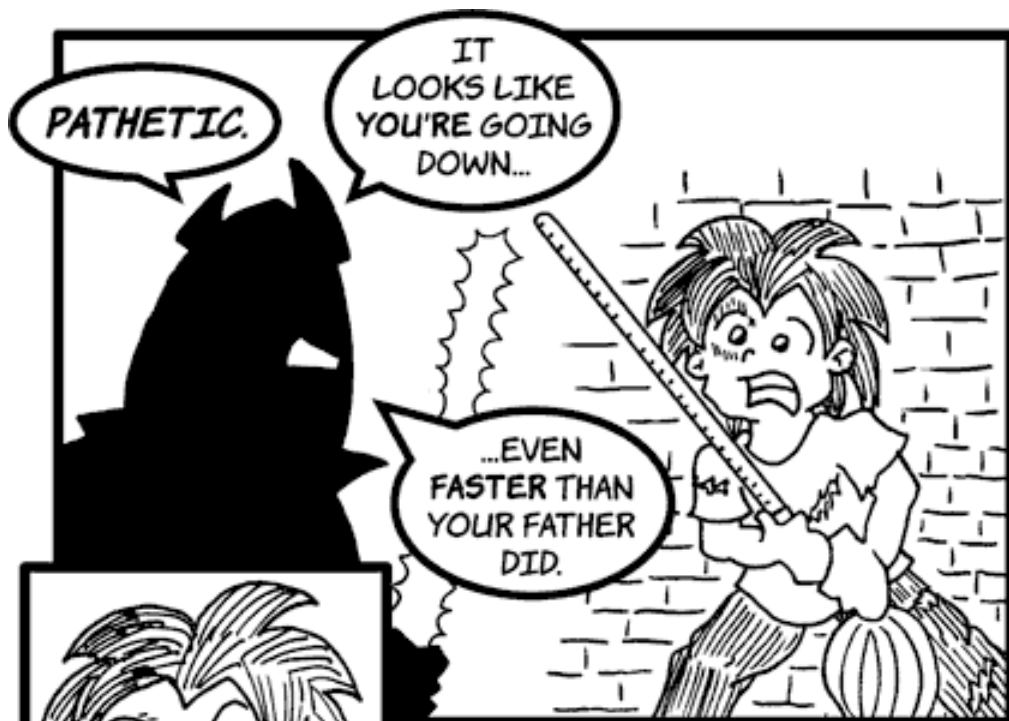


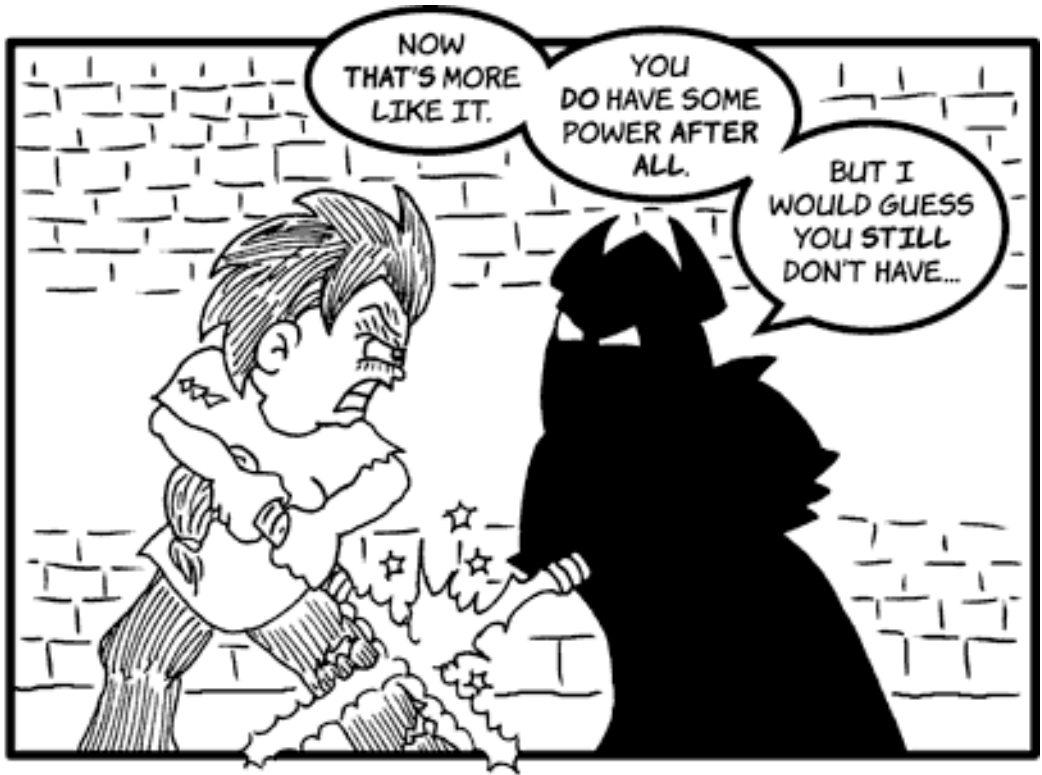


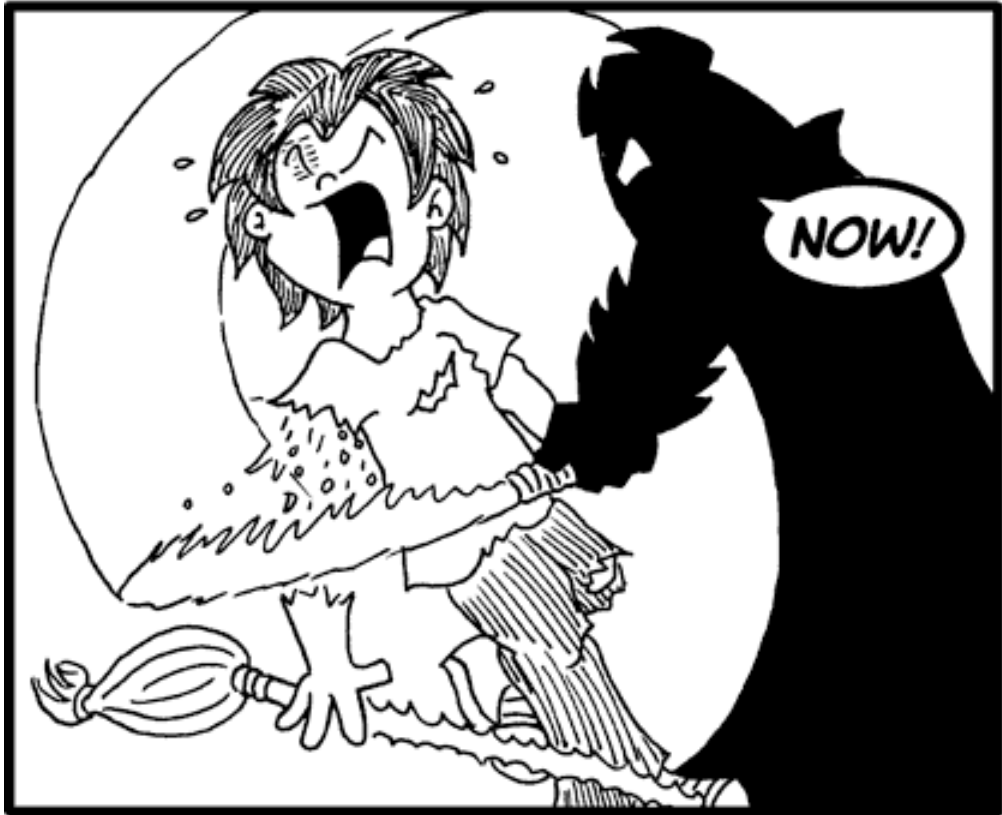














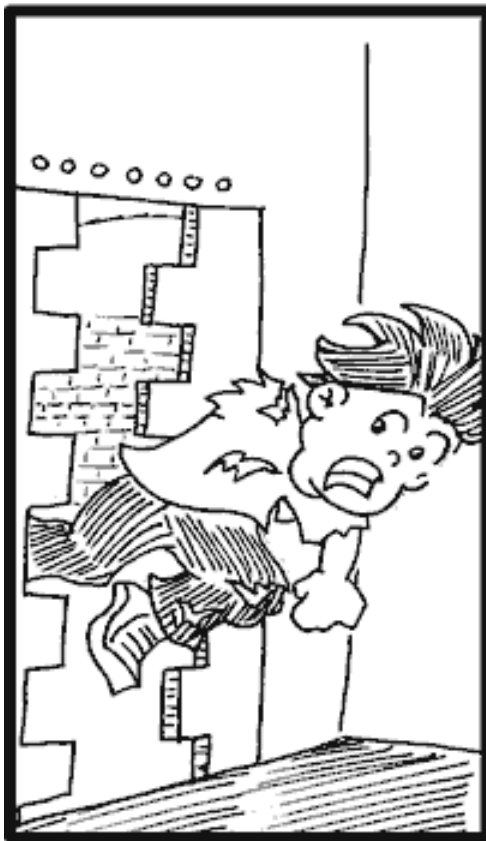
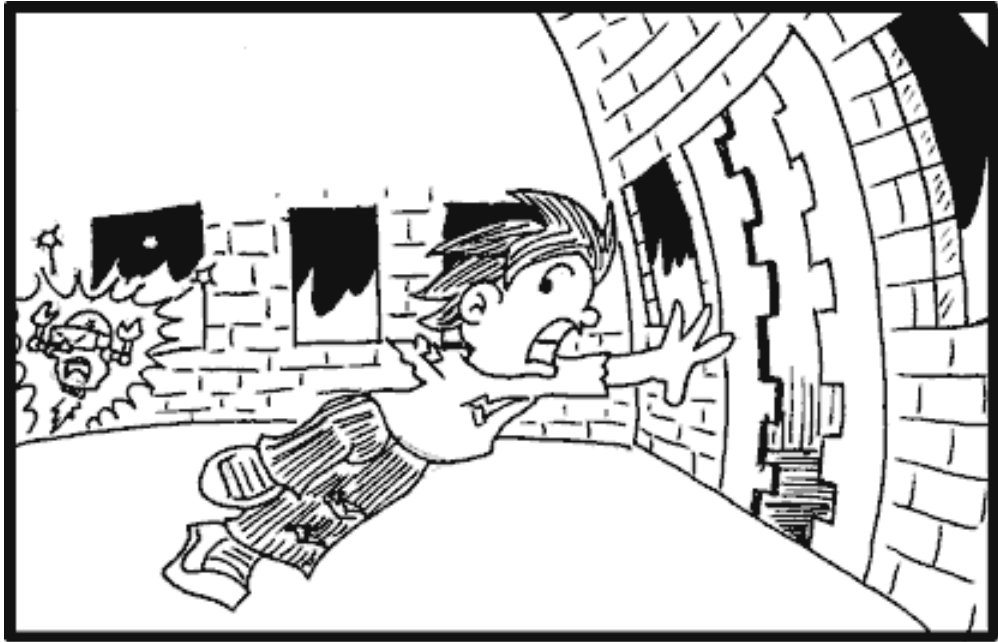


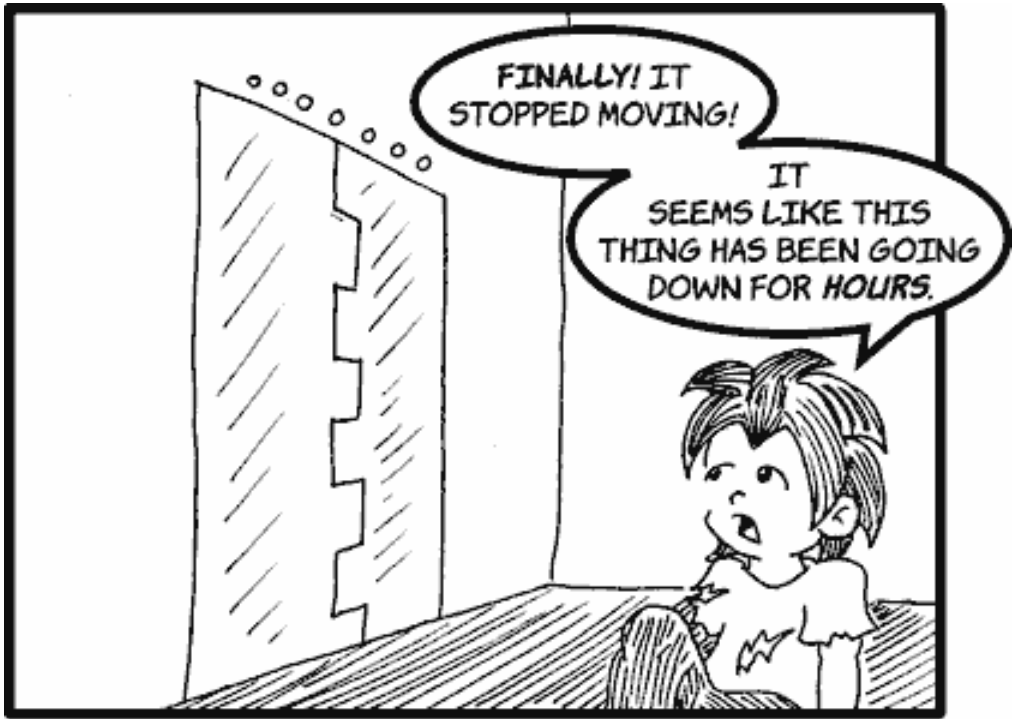
A
SPARE
ROBOTIC BODY
WITH I.T.'S SPARE
ROBES. WHAT WAS
I THINKING?

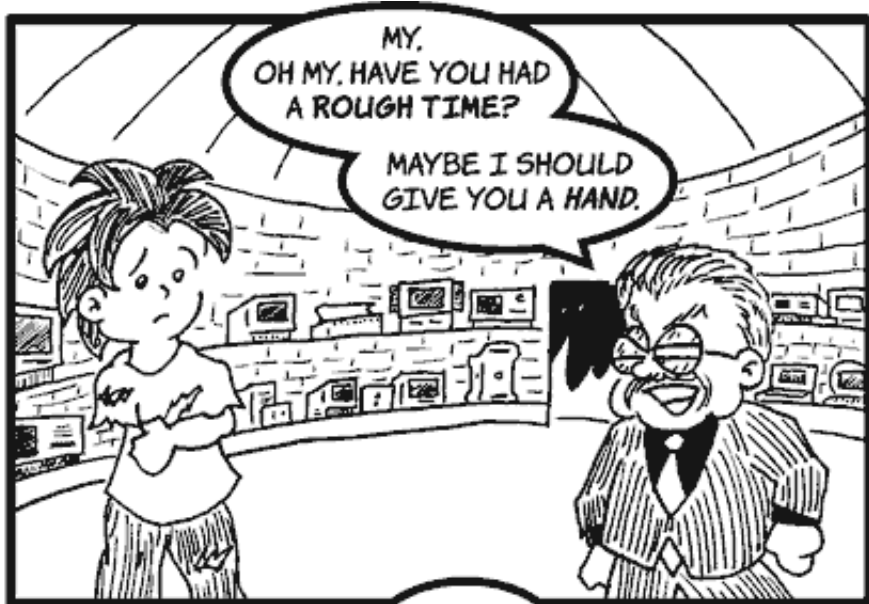


WELL, I CAN
STILL...







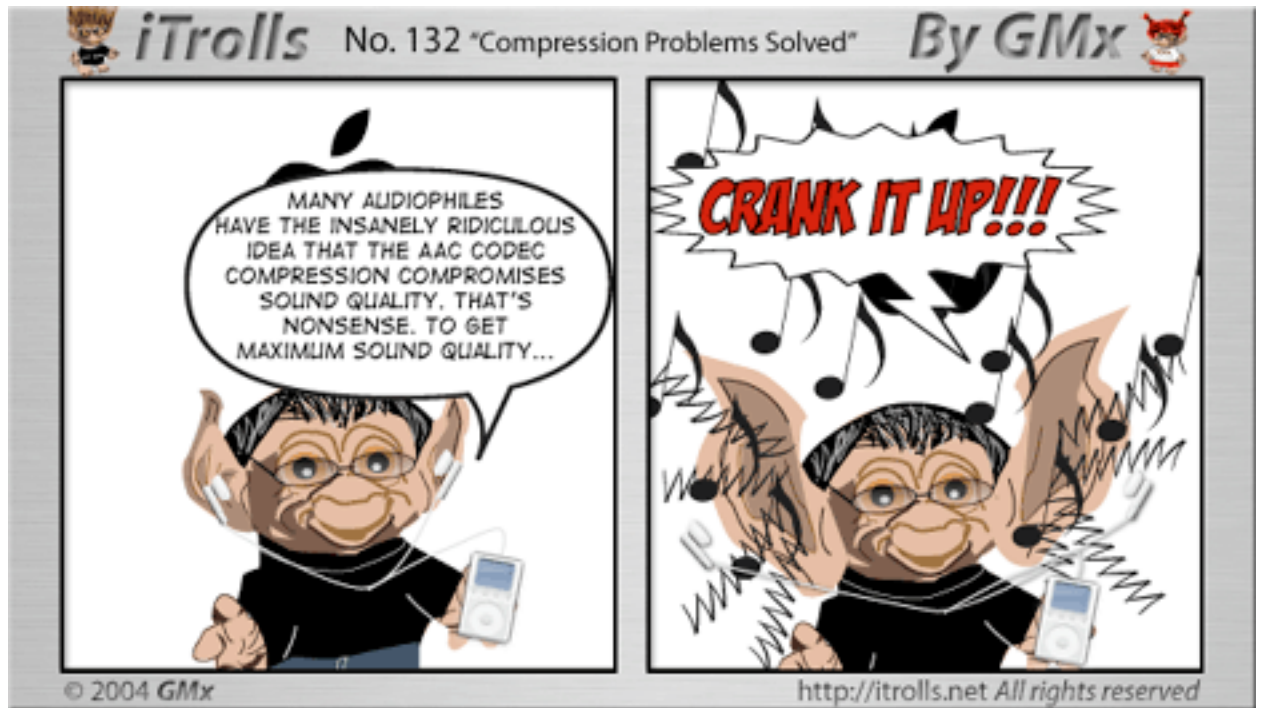


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Cartoon: iTrolls

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





Bill Gates' Twelve Days of Christmas

On the twelfth day of Christmas Bill Gates gave to me:

- 12 windows crashing
- 11 lawsuits pending
- 10 patches trashing
- 9 bugs a-bugging
- 8 bloatwares a-bloating
- 7 coders stealing
- 6 spywares lurking
- 5 SOFTWARE AM-NES-TIES!
- 4 viruses churning
- 3 liars lying
- 2 playschool icons
- AND A BALLMER SWEATIN' UP A STREET!



**DEVELOPERS!
DEVELOPERS!
DEVELOPERS!
DEVELOPERS!**





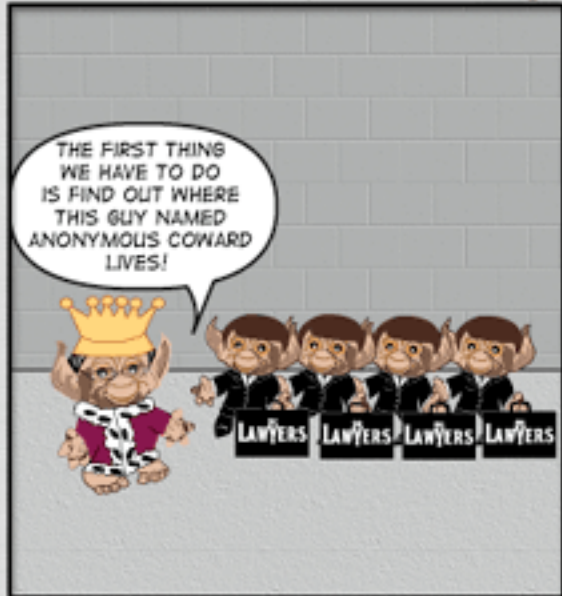
iTrolls

No. 145 "Lawsuits Anonymous"

By GMx



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iTrolls

No. 146 "Lawsuits Anonymous, Part II"

By GMx



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Fireworks

Fireworks

This month, ATPM Web Editor Lee Bennett contributes [photos](#)¹ of the Fourth of July fireworks show that he attended in Cherokee, North Carolina in 2004.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

Pictures from previous months are listed in the [desktop pictures archives](#)².

Downloading all the Pictures at Once

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

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

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

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.3.x

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

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

Mac OS X 10.1.x and 10.2.x

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

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

Mac OS X 10.0.x

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

Mac OS 8.5-9.x

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

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

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

Mac OS 8.0 and 8.1

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

Random Desktop Pictures

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

1. <http://www.atpm.com/11.01/fireworks/>

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

DeskPicture

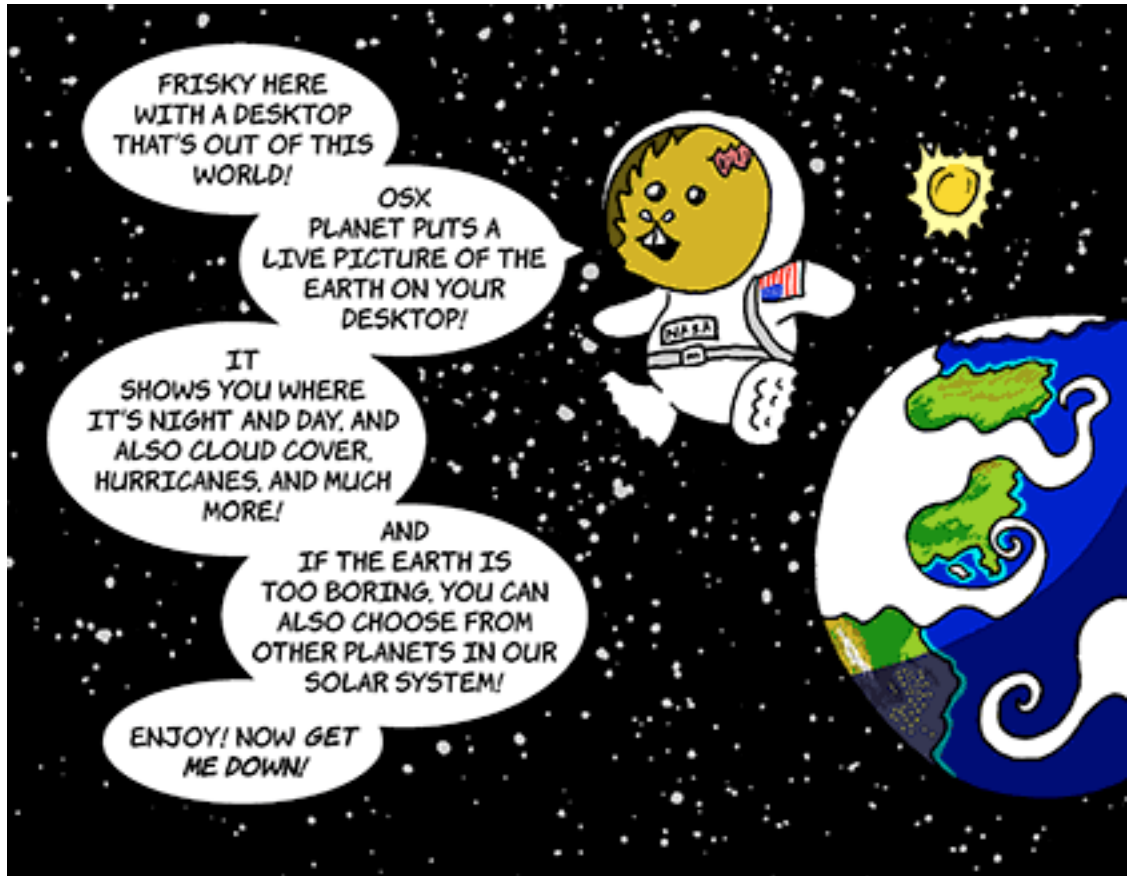
An alternative to Mac OS's Appearance control panel is Pierce Software's DeskPicture, [reviewed](#)¹ in issue 5.10 and available for [download](#)².



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

Frisky Freeware

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com



[OSXplanet^a](http://otte.ucsc.edu/%7Egabriel/osxplanet.html)

a. <http://otte.ucsc.edu/%7Egabriel/osxplanet.html>

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Review: Delicious Library 1.0.6

by Lee Bennett, lbennett@atpm.com

Developer: [Delicious Monster](#)¹

Price: \$40

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3.

Trial: Feature-limited (25-item limit)



Admittedly, ATPM is a little late with a review of Delicious Library. Everyone and their mothers [seem](#)² [to](#)³ [have](#)⁴ [already](#)⁵ [reviewed](#)⁶ [it](#)⁷ and everyone largely feels it's the greatest thing since popcorn was first sold at movies.

So, I finally got my hands on the application to give it a try and I, like everyone else, was immediately stunned by the “wow” factor. Yes, “eye candy—and lots of it” was at the forefront of my initial opinion. However, eye candy usually refers to interface elements that are pretty but not necessarily functional. With Delicious Library, the bookshelf metaphor (the most blatant eye candy) really works. It's exactly how I wish I could store my DVDs in real life. Since I don't have a living room the size of a Blockbuster Video store, a digital version is the best alternative.

Yet, as I prepared to start writing about it, I could truly come up with no description of its outstanding features that hasn't already been said. Beautiful display of media cover art—check. iTunes playlist-like interface for various collections—check. Full-featured interface for managing who borrowed what from you—check. Information-packed details downloaded from Amazon, Internet Movie Database, etc.—check. Quick link to purchase items not already in your collection—check. Greyed-out icons for search hits that are already in your collection—check. And, of course, that awesome scan feature that turns your iSight into a bar code scanner—*check!*

Other reviews have even touched on the more subtle eye candy, such as the texture that is placed on top of DVD cover art to simulate that unmistakable slightly warped plastic that is so much a part of a physical case.



The plastic-like texture is more easily visible on darker DVD cover art.

2. <http://maczealots.com/reviews/delicious/>
3. <http://arstechnica.com/reviews/apps/delicious-library.ars>
4. <http://www.macmerc.com/reviews.php?op=showcontent&id=107>
5. <http://productreviews.maccritic.com/showproduct.php?product=163>
6. <http://www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=20041116090142760>
7. <http://www.powerpage.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/powerpage.woa/wa/story?newsID=12566>

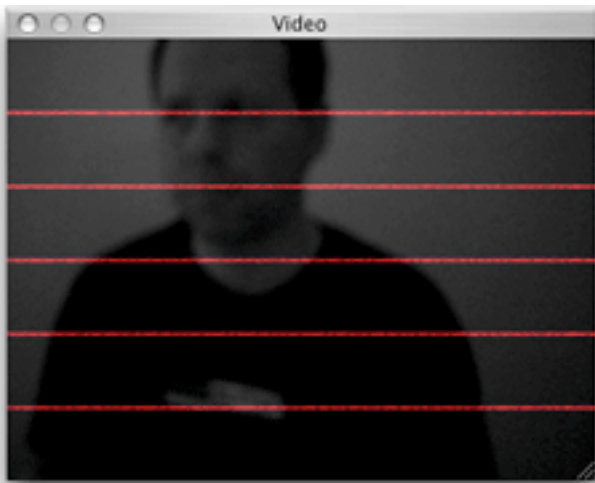
1. <http://www.delicious-monster.com>

How about the little plastic tabs that CD cover art slips behind?



Looks just like a real CD jewel case.

There's also the ever-so-slight noise motion of the red bar code sensors in the iSight preview window. A plain, one-pixel-thick bright red line would have easily made a great metaphor for the laser light, but the developers took it one step further by giving it that real-life touch.



See the little dimples in the scan lines? Those are actually in perpetual random fluctuation.

Speaking of the bar code reader—easily Delicious Library's single most cool feature—there's something I want to stress. I currently own 71 items on DVD (it suits me that things like the 10-disc Ultimate Matrix Collection is counted as just one item). Not a huge collection, I know, but it's enough for now.

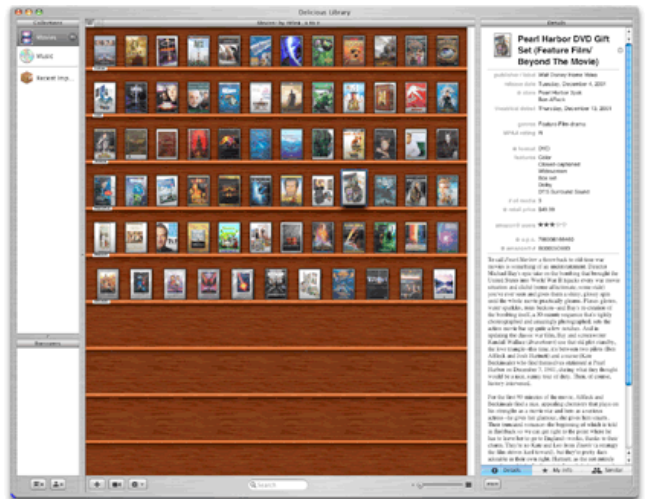
I spent the better part of a weekend a couple months ago with the original DVD library application I have been using (more on it later) inputting all my movies. Yes, it is able to download data from Amazon and IMDb, but it's not as handy as a bar code reader. What took me many hours to do in this application only required an hour and a half in Delicious Library, and that time would have been less if I had really set my mind to doing it quickly.

The View From Here

But I digress. What I want to accomplish here is to point out three small issues that other reviews seemed to have overlooked. But do not think that I'm pooh-poohing Delicious Library. You'll note that I gave it a Very Nice rating, and don't forget that this is still a version 1.x release. No doubt the developers are going to take Delicious Library's features to even more amazing levels. I'm confident version 2.0 is going to kick proverbial butt!

What I want to share is not so much nit-picks at this early version as things to keep in mind as you decide whether Delicious Library is for you.

For example, a neat feature of the thumbnail view of a collection is that each shelf has a label that reads, "AAA to BBB" where AAA and BBB are the first words of the leftmost and rightmost titles, respectively, which are sitting on that shelf. Its problem is that it changes size along with the size of the thumbnails, and the text is unreadable at the smaller settings. By the time I increased the thumbnail size enough to make the label text readable, there were only a couple items on the shelf (I don't have a *really* wide monitor) and I no longer needed the label to see, at a glance, what the first and last items were.



Above: Delicious Library's full window with thumbnails at the smallest setting. Below: An actual-size view of the illegible labels at the smallest thumbnail settings.



Second, the information pane is splendid, making room for extremely detailed facts about each title—especially if the information is pulled down from Amazon. Delicious Library makes a bad assumption, however, in the My Info section. Granted, some people may scan in their DVDs the same day they purchase them, but that can't be assumed. When an item is scanned, the current date is automatically filled in as the date of purchase. Consequently, I ended up with 71 additions to my Delicious Library collection, all of them reporting that they were purchased on December 13, 2004. Fortunately, when you highlight multiple items in a collection (all of them, in my case) only the information fields that are identical for the selected items appear in the pane. Thus, I was able to delete the date from all 71 items at once. But I'd still like an option to disable this activity so I won't have to remove the date from future additions. Or perhaps a better idea is to change "Date of Purchase" to "Date Added."

Finally, a decent HTML export function is going to have to be incorporated for Delicious Library to be useful to people who want to place a functional listing of their collection on their Web site. Delicious Library itself doesn't have an HTML export of any kind—yet. There's only a text output. Someone

else has, for the time being, stepped up to the plate with a third-party utility that creates a Web page from your Delicious Library collection.



Delicious Exporter output closely resembles the actual Delicious Library view.

While [Delicious Exporter](http://www.agencesi.com/DeliciousExporter/)¹ solves the problem, it's far from perfect. Granted, it's still in development—not even version 1.0 yet—but there's virtually no customization. You can choose not to include thumbnails, but the resulting HTML is just filled with broken-image placeholders. You cannot opt to have no e-mail link. The "Send Me a Message" graphic is always added, and the text that is linked to e-mail always says "{your OS X user name}'s library." If I can't remove that, I'd at least like to make it say "Lee's Library" or "Lee Bennett's Library." The width of the representation is fixed, too. It won't get wider or narrower.

An Alternative

In short, if you don't need flexible HTML output and \$40 is not what you'd consider a "major purchase," Delicious Library is very intuitive and very fun to use. If you'd rather try out something with a bit less overhead and a better HTML export, there are plenty of choices that can be found by searching either VersionTracker or MacUpdate. I believe I'll stick with Fennel's [DVDManager](http://dvdmanager.free.fr)². This utility does not have as many information fields as Delicious Library, but it has what I need. It's able to pull down information for a title based on a keyword search and has a basic borrower-tracking function. It also happens to be free (donationware, to be

1. <http://www.agencesi.com/DeliciousExporter/>
 2. <http://dvdmanager.free.fr>

exact). It will not suit you if you want to catalog music, books, and games, but if you only wish to deal with your DVD collection, this may be for you.

The one DVDManager feature that is holding me is one that could easily be incorporated into Delicious Library. That feature is the no-frills HTML export—probably 90% of the reason I wish to catalog my DVDs on the computer.

DVDManager's output isn't quite XHTML compliant (some people care about this), but a few mass search and replace queries can take care of that.

Using DVDManager, my personal DVD collection now has [its own page](#)¹ within my weblog. If this style of export ever becomes an option in Delicious Library, no doubt it would immediately become my media collection manager of choice.

1. <http://blog.secondinitial.com/dvdlist.html>

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Review: MarsEdit 1.0

by Wes Meltzer, wmeltzer@atpm.com

Developer: [Ranchero Software](#)¹

Price: \$25, \$40 with NetNewsWire 2.0 beta, free with registered NetNewsWire 1.x

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3, and an XML-RPC API-compatible weblog (Blogger, Bloxom, LiveJournal, Movable Type, Radio, TypePad, WordPress, etc.)

Trial: Fully featured (30 days)



Somehow, in the days immediately following the release of a [public beta for NetNewsWire](#)² (ATPM [review](#)³), Ranchero Software's RSS reader ([background here](#)⁴), I missed out on another part of the announcement.

In retrospect, it's as if I left Steve Jobs' 2001 Macworld New York keynote speech right before "Oh, and just one more thing...."

That just one more thing is MarsEdit, an editing application for weblogs, and a could-be iPod-like "just one more thing." (In technical terms, MarsEdit is a Blogger XML-RPC API client.) Weblog editors are the answer to the question, "Do I *really* have to write posts in my Web browser?" They vary greatly in interface, from the now-defunct [Userspace](#)⁵ to [Ecto](#)⁶, but all seem to share the same basic features: post to almost any weblog system with XML-RPC support, preview an entry, avoid writing HTML, upload files, and integrate with Web browsers [and RSS readers](#)⁷, so you can easily blog an RSS item. I don't want to get ahead of myself, but so far, MarsEdit is the best of the breed—all two clients that are still under development. I'm an ex-Userspace user, and I've become a convert.

Brent Simmons, who is exactly half of Ranchero, [recently laid out](#)⁸ what he did when he started writing MarsEdit. (For one thing, it was originally intended to be an outliner.) NetNewsWire 1.x has a weblog editor built in, and it was always a bit feature-anemic, so I stuck with Userspace for a long time. But when he decided that he wanted to split out the weblog editor, he settled on a document-based application made to look like an e-mail client. That's MarsEdit's schtick.

A brief historical diversion, if you will: going all the way back to LiveJournal clients, weblog editing clients have tended to be non-document-based, until quite recently. I used the original Windows LiveJournal client, which was modal way back when, and there weren't a lot of alternatives.

Sure, if you had a Radio blog, you had a document-based application—but the huge proliferation of blogs, as [Maciej Ceglowski](#)⁹ demonstrated in the [NITLE Weblog Census](#)¹⁰, means that most people use Movable Type (about 44,000) or the big hosted services, BlogSpot and LiveJournal (707,690), all of which now support some form of remote posting. Between Ecto and MarsEdit, though, the future is clearly in document-based weblog editing.

So, yes, I know, I panned PulpFiction [last month](#)¹¹ for relying too heavily on an e-mail metaphor. But I've been persuaded that Brent is correct here. E-mail is, after all, one of two major document models; the other is word processing documents. But, of course, word processing doesn't ordinarily include titles independent of file names or writing in markup. Resorting to an e-mail model, additionally, means that you can easily access multiple past entries and drafts, each in its own window.

That's precisely what MarsEdit does. The main window lists entries, in four columns, by default: title, weblog, date, and category. In addition, MarsEdit is built for multiple weblogs: the Weblogs drawer serves double duty for account preferences management and as a folder for entries. (A brief caveat: I only have a Movable Type weblog, so I don't know if other platforms show up this way.)

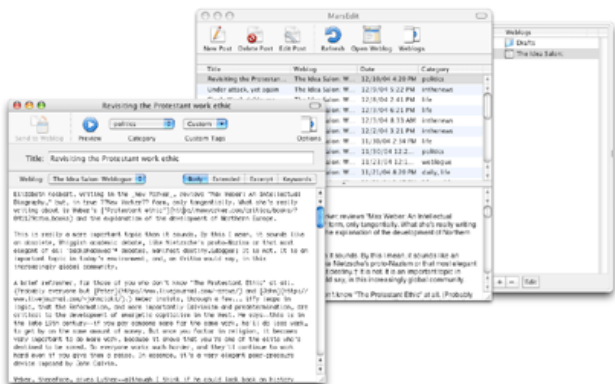
You edit an entry, in an e-mail-like window, with a large text field, a Title field, a configurable toolbar, and a secondary button bar with a pop-up menu to select a weblog, and a (confusing) set of tabs for Body, Extended, Excerpt, and Keywords. A side drawer stores weblog-specific options, like Movable Type categories and comments options. A preview

2. <http://ranchero.com/netnewswire/beta.php>
3. <http://www.atpm.com/9.04/netnewswire.shtml>
4. <http://www.atpm.com/8.10/paradigm.shtml>
5. <http://interalia.org/archives/2004/09/18/do-it-yourself-userspace-kit>
6. <http://ecto.kung-foo.tv/>
7. <http://ranchero.com/netnewswire/developers/externalinterface.php>
8. <http://inessential.com/?comments=1&postid=3004>

9. <http://www.idlewords.com>
10. <http://www.blogcensus.net>
11. <http://www.atpm.com/10.12/pulpfiction.shtml>

1. <http://ranchero.com/marsedit/>

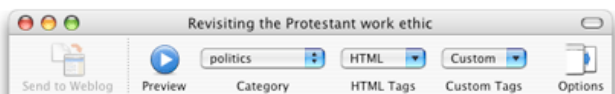
window is separate, and in the Preferences dialog it's possible to enable live previewing, though for technical reasons it's quite slow.



MarsEdit's main window and a weblog entry open.

Nevertheless, I do have a few complaints. One of the peculiarities of editing in MarsEdit is that although the HTML Tags menu on the toolbar offers HTML tags and you can add custom tags in a separate Custom Tags menu, it is not easy (or obvious) how to add tags for non-HTML markup systems. If, like me, you use [Markdown](#)¹ or [Textile](#)², you will have to custom-configure your tags. There's no link editor that doesn't insert an <A> tag, so a quickie shortcut I'm used to, the link editor, is useless if you use non-HTML markup. Setting the HTML or markup for the tag menu was always a preference in Userspace, and I wouldn't mind seeing it come to MarsEdit, especially since Userspace let you set keyboard shortcuts as well.

To add some confusion to the complexity, keyboard shortcuts for tags only work if the HTML Tags (or Custom Tags) menu is on your toolbar. I see no obvious explanation for this except that there are no menu bar formatting options. Right out of the box, the HTML Tags and Custom Tags menus will be on your toolbar—but if, like me, you remove toolbar items you don't see a use for, your keyboard shortcuts will stop working until reinstated.

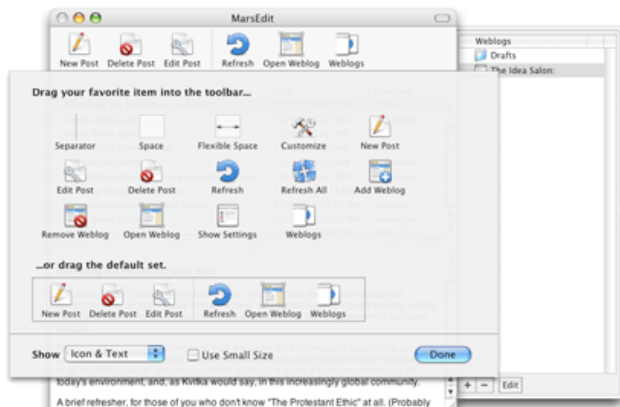


MarsEdit's editing window's confusing toolbar.

1. <http://daringfireball.net/projects/markdown/>
2. <http://www.textism.com/tools/textile/>

Since MarsEdit is designed to act like Mail, it *looks* like Mail, too, just adapted to Weblogs. The toolbar buttons are all different, magnificent [Bryan Bell](#)³ creations along with the application icon. Like all of his work, they're super-clean and fit in nicely with the overall feel and concept.

In fact, this is one of the application's greatest strengths. I'm no expert on iconography, though I play one on TV, but all the icons seem immediately recognizable for what they are. That's a formidable challenge with a weblog editor, since it doesn't have any real-life analogues, and piggy-backing off of Mail could be confusing. I am especially fond of the way the "... Weblog" command icons look: an action symbol superimposed on a Safari-esque window. And the "... Post" command icons use a sheet of paper with action symbols. It's a very clean way of saying a lot with a little, and they make an abstract concept much more approachable.



MarsEdit's set of very attractive icons.

This is not to say that you will necessarily find an XML-RPC client that useful. After all, it's not like an e-mail client; your weblog platform should have an in-browser editing interface, and not every platform supports external editing clients to begin with.

But if you've ever thought it would be nice to write a weblog entry while you're not connected to the Internet, or to be able to easily spell check and copy edit them before posting, you should give MarsEdit a whirl. I'm a believer.

3. <http://www.bryanbell.com>

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Review: PhotoReviewer 1.4

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

Developer: [Stick Software](http://www.sticksoftware.com)¹

Price: \$10

Requirements: Mac OS X

Trial: Fully-featured (15 runs; "Unregistered" message always on screen)



It's unfortunate: my digital camera and I do not speak the same language. Sure, I know what I'm taking a picture of, but the camera has no idea. As far as it's concerned, DSC04521.jpg is a great name for the lump of data being recorded, and there's nothing wrong with putting all my images in the same place. But when I get home, I have a list of uselessly-named pictures I'd like to sort into appropriate folders...

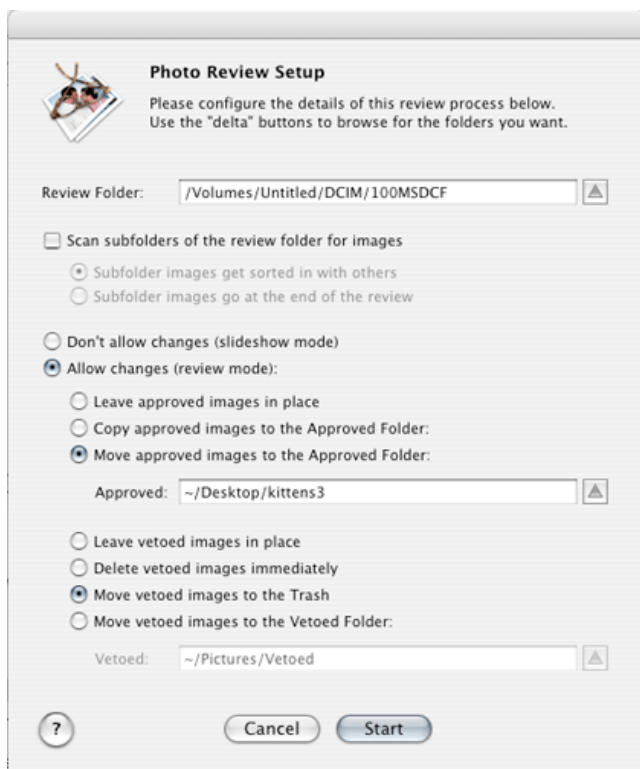
So begins the long and tedious process of opening a picture in Preview, deciding whether it's worth keeping, closing it, dragging it to the right folder (or the trash), and repeating the process until I start longing for the simplicity of my film camera.

There's got to be a better way, and I don't mean iPhoto. It just doesn't make sense to start putting images into albums before editing and organizing them. I want to be able to find and view and edit my pictures quickly and easily in any application, and while iPhoto makes nice albums for browsing, it just doesn't give me that. PhotoReviewer does.

Reviewing

When you open PhotoReviewer, you're shown a dialog box asking which folder of images you'd like to review and where you'd like to put approved and deleted images. It's pretty

basic: the idea here is to show you a slideshow of images and let you quickly eliminate those pictures which came out too badly to be worth keeping.

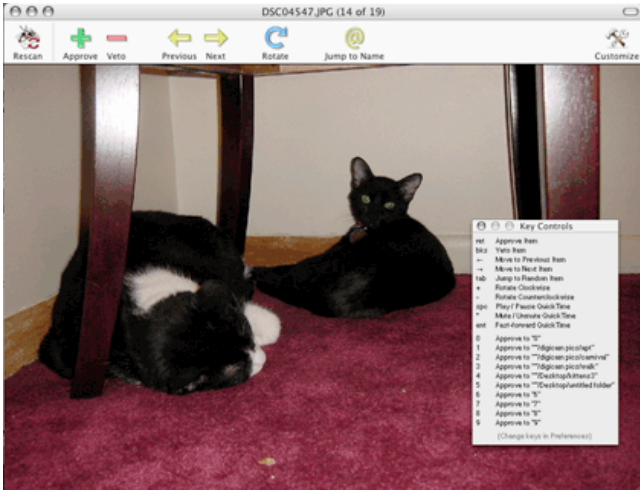


The main PhotoReviewer window displays the full image, scaled to fit in the window. Unlike in Preview, the image scales "live" as you change the size of the window. The graphical toolbar on top is customizable, but to be honest, I never use it, preferring to use my keyboard to tell PhotoReviewer what to do. To that end, a "Key Controls"

window can optionally float above the image being reviewed (or off to the side), offering a quick summary of which key

1. <http://www.sticksoftware.com/software/PhotoReviewer.html>

does what.



PhotoReviewer isn't just for deciding which images to keep and which to discard. Much more usefully, you can configure up to ten different "sorting folders" (folders into which you might want to put images), each with its own user-assigned key. Once that's done, PhotoReviewer will display your images one at a time. At the press of a single key, the displayed image will be whisked away into the specified folder, and the next image will appear. Clean and simple.

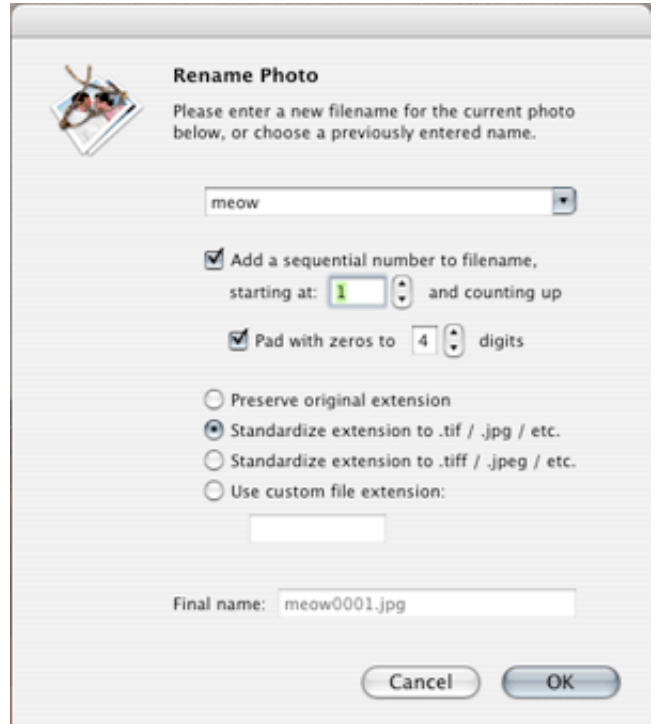
Most digital cameras can record movies as well as still images; PhotoReviewer uses QuickTime, so it can display your movies for review along with your photos. The movie plays in PhotoReviewer's main window, with an optional controller below so you can pause, fast forward, and so on. Just like images, movies can be approved, sorted, or discarded.

The only flaw with the sorting process is that when reviewing photos from one drive (or on your digital camera/memory card) and saving approved images to a different drive, PhotoReviewer changes the "modified date" and "created date" to the present. I use those dates, set by my digital camera, to keep track of when my photos were taken, so it's important to me that they be preserved. The workaround is simple enough: before using PhotoReviewer, copy the images into a Review folder on the target computer's hard drive. When PhotoReviewer moves images from one folder to another on the same volume, it doesn't change the dates.

Names

Remember those meaningless names assigned to your images by your camera? Since you're sorting your pictures into usefully-named folders, you might not care too much about the file names...until its time to e-mail a few of them to a friend. Suddenly it looks like meaningful file names might be a good thing after all.

PhotoReviewer can help with you that, too. Just hit Command-R for the Rename Photo dialog box. You type a file name (e.g. Vacation) and optionally let PhotoReviewer append a sequential number to the name. Then you can move to the next image and use Command-Shift-R to rename it in sequence (Vacation002.jpg, Vacation003.jpg, etc.) without bringing up the dialog box.



It's easy to see that that's more convenient than renaming images in the Finder, but there's still room for improvement in PhotoReviewer. If you rename an image in sequence, approve the image (moving it to another folder), and try to rename the next image in sequence, you'll find the sequence number does not increment: you'll end up with a second Vacation001.jpg. As PhotoReviewer works now, you have to rename all your images first, then go back through them a second time to approve them. That's enough of an annoyance that it really ought to be fixed.

More in the realm of longer-term feature requests, an option to name the file after the folder it's being sorted into would be useful for when you're sorting images into multiple folders. Another (more complicated but also more flexible) way to go would be to allow the user to specify a default "base file name" for each sort folder. Throw in an option to automatically rename images when sorting them, and you'd have something really slick: a single keypress could assign a meaningful, unique name to an image and move it into the desired folder.

Duplicates

One thing the Finder has always been bad at is handling duplicate file names. Try copying “me.jpg” into a folder that already holds a “me.jpg” and the Finder offers you two undesirable options, Replace and Stop. You don’t know if the two files contain the same data so you don’t want to replace. You’d really like to know if the files are the same: if they are, you just need one; if they’re not, you want to rename one and keep them both.

PhotoReviewer offers a “Delete Duplicates...” function. It looks at the content (not the names) of images in the Review, Approved, and Vetoed folders and deletes duplicate images. In my tests it worked beautifully, recognizing very similar images as different, and same images with different names as being the same. That’s important since the operation cannot be undone: duplicate images are really deleted, not merely moved to the trash.

So what happens if you didn’t run “Delete Duplicates...” on your images, and you try to sort an image into a folder that already has an image with that name? PhotoReviewer quietly appends a random six-digit number to the end of the filename, renaming it for you before moving it: there’s no useless replace-or-stop dialog. It would be awfully cool if PhotoReviewer could examine the possibly-duplicate image and silently avoid putting a second copy of the image into the target folder if they’re the same; maybe in a future version?

Speed

The thing that blows me away about PhotoReviewer is how fast it is. While I’m reviewing one image, PhotoReviewer is loading the next image, and the next one, and the one after that. My camera is old—it only takes 3-megapixel images, roughly 1.2 MB in size. But I can review pictures on my G4 PowerBook at a rate of about two per second without having to wait for an image to load. (If I really push it, the word “Loading” will display as PhotoReviewer catches up.) This sucks up a lot of RAM—when I quit PhotoReviewer after a long session, I have to wait for other programs to climb out of virtual memory before I can use them—but it’s worth it for the performance and responsiveness.

Conclusion

PhotoReviewer isn’t there to replace Photoshop or iPhoto; its goal is to make organizing images as files much easier. And it succeeds: it’s incredibly fast and easy to use, saving me lots of time and frustration. Some of PhotoReviewer’s features are a bit rough around the edges, but they are simple enough to work around. Hopefully the workarounds won’t be necessary in the future, but even as it stands, I find PhotoReviewer to be an indispensable addition to my digital imaging toolbox.

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Review: StudioBoard Mechanical Keyboard

by Michael Tsai, mtsai@atpm.com

Developer: [Kensington](#)¹

Price: \$80 (list)

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1.5

Trial: None



When I reviewed the [Tactile Pro keyboard](#)², I explained how Mac keyboards have changed over the years and why good keyboards matter. Many people prefer keyboards with mechanical key switches (rather than membranes), yet few companies still make them. My USB Mac keyboard of choice has long been the Micro Connectors flavored keyboard. However, this keyboard has an older key layout (sans volume and eject keys), styling from the “transparent Mac” era, and is no longer being manufactured. If you want to get a new Mac keyboard today, what are your options?

The Tactile Pro, introduced about a year ago, is still being built and seems to be popular. Although I wasn’t entirely happy with the Tactile Pro’s feel, I was nonetheless very happy that Matias had decided to build it. It was seemingly the only non-membrane keyboard, and I thought it was far superior to all its competition. However, there is actually a second mechanical Mac keyboard: the Kensington StudioBoard. Anyone who’s serious about Mac keyboards should consider both.

Looks

The StudioBoard and Tactile Pro look almost *identical*. Both are made of white and clear plastic and resemble the Apple Pro Keyboard that shipped with the iMac G4. They don’t look quite as slick as Apple’s own products, but they’re much better than the other third-party keyboards. There are only two cosmetic differences between the StudioBoard and the Tactile Pro. First, the keys on the Tactile Pro are marked to show which characters and symbols are available when you hold down Option or Option-Shift. Since I do not find these markings useful, I prefer the StudioBoard’s less cluttered

look. Second, the Tactile Pro is branded on its spacebar. The StudioBoard has a blank spacebar, and the Kensington logo is placed, more tastefully, above the F15 and volume keys.



Layout

The StudioBoard and Tactile Pro have the same keys, but the StudioBoard has a non-standard layout. Normally, Mac keyboards have a short and wide Return key just to the right of the apostrophe, and below the bracket keys and the backslash. The StudioBoard’s Return key is tall and narrow, and the backslash key is situated between it and the apostrophe. If you’re used to the regular Mac layout, you’ll at first find yourself accidentally typing backslashes. I didn’t

2. <http://www.atpm.com/10.09/tactile.shtml>

1. <http://www.kensington.com/html/2529.html>

find it hard to adjust to the StudioBoard's layout, but I wouldn't recommend it for people who need to switch among different machines and keyboards throughout the day.



Key Combinations

The StudioBoard that I used had a defect. If I held down the left Command and Option keys and pressed F (for instance, to start a Google search in Safari), nothing happened. Command-Option-D and other similar combinations worked, as did Command-Option-F when using one or more of the Command and Option keys on the right side of the keyboard. Kensington's technical support replied within two days, saying that this is not a problem with all StudioBoards and that I could contact the reseller to set up an exchange. I did not notice any such defects in the Tactile Pro that I used.

ATPM reader Paul Haddad has both a Tactile Pro and a StudioBoard and [reports](#)¹ that *both* have problems with certain (different) key combinations. (Unlike Haddad, I did not find that either keyboard slid around or that the keys on the Tactile Pro wobbled.)

Feel

Since the StudioBoard and Tactile Pro share the same case design and have similar looking keys, I was surprised to find that they feel and sound quite different. Although it's pretty good, I think that the Tactile Pro's action is too tight, and a bit uneven. Sometimes pushing a key requires a bit more pressure than I'm expecting, and sometimes a key doesn't seem to spring back fast enough. This prevents me from sustaining a good typing rhythm. Also, the Tactile Pro is extremely loud and, in addition to clacking (which doesn't bother me), the keys make a high-pitched ringing sound that I find very distracting.

In contrast, the Micro Connectors keyboard is not as stiff and not as loud (though it is loud compared to any membrane keyboard).

The StudioBoard feels almost exactly like the Micro Connectors. The tightness and springiness seem more even and predictable. For me, the typing is comfortable and efficient. The StudioBoard's clacking is slightly louder than the Micro Connectors', but it is much quieter than the Tactile Pro. The sound has a higher pitch. The Micro Connectors and the StudioBoard also make a ringing sound, but it's much quieter than the Tactile Pro's and it did not bother me.

Conclusion

Both the StudioBoard and the Tactile Pro are far superior to Apple's offerings. Fortunately, although the two keyboards *look* similar, they type differently. I think most people will strongly prefer one or the other. The Tactile Pro is a bit more expensive, but some people will like the markings on its keys and its tighter feel. Personally, I think the StudioBoard looks and types better than the Tactile Pro. I only wish it had a standard Return key.

1. <http://www.atpm.com/10.09/tactile.shtml#12970>



Review: UI Actions 1.0

by Eric Blair, ebclair@atpm.com

Developer: [PreFab Software, Inc.](#)¹

Price: \$35

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3

Trial: Fully-featured (30 days)



When I first heard about PreFab UI Actions, my eyes lit up. Being able to run any AppleScript in response to any action in any application?!? Sign me up!

The PreFab UI Actions package consists of two separate applications: the UI Actions back-end and UI Actions Setup. The UI Actions back-end is a background application that listens for messages from standard Mac OS X applications, using the new notification system built into Panther. UI Actions Setup is the application you use to attach AppleScripts to these notifications. If you don't want to use a graphical interface to attach scripts to events, you can also attach AppleScripts to notifications via other AppleScripts.

As a reviewer, UI Actions presents a bit of a challenge. At its heart, UI Actions acts a bridge between your applications, Panther's notification system, and your AppleScripts. If something doesn't work like I expect it to work, where is the failure occurring? Is it a problem with UI Actions? A bug in the operating system? Did I screw up my AppleScript? In any case, it can be difficult to tell whether you're actually evaluating UI Actions or some other part of the system.

Actions

The notification system used by UI Actions is designed to send out notifications for common events, such as opening, closing, and resizing of windows; opening and closing of menus; selection of menu items; activation and deactivation of applications; and things like that. These notifications are "free" for Carbon and Cocoa applications, so pretty much everything should support them. Application authors can add additional notifications to their programs, but there's essentially no way to discover these additional notifications if the developers do not supply a list of them to their users.

These notifications are the events that trigger your UI Action scripts.

Notifications would be sort of useless if you had to respond to every notification you receive, so you can also choose to respond to notifications that match a given filter. Additionally, you can apply your own filtering in your AppleScripts.

One of the first things you need to understand about notifications is that they typically don't get sent until after the triggering application has completed the associated event. This means that you can't write UI Action scripts that replace the functionality of an application. This is a little disappointing, but understandable.

My first idea for a UI Action script was to augment Safari's "View Source" command so I could view and edit the source in BBEdit. I already have [an AppleScript](#)² that lets me view the source code for the current Web page in BBEdit, so I figured it would simple to modify the script to work as a UI Action script. All I'd need to do would be close the source code window that Safari opened, paste in the existing AppleScript code, and use the UI Actions Setup application to attach my script to the "View Source" command.

These first steps went smoothly enough, so I selected "View Source" from the View menu. Success!...or at least it seemed. I tried this a few more times and I noticed that it was taking longer and longer for my UI Action script to run. Sometimes, I'd get impatient and close the source code window myself. Then, my script would finally run and close the browser window, since that was now the frontmost window. Rebooting my computer seemed to improve the situation, but the notifications seemed to bog down the longer my computer was running. If I had to guess, I'd say this is probably an issue with Panther's notification system, but I could certainly be wrong.

Speed wasn't the only issue that impacted my View Source UI Action script. While the script was eventually triggered when I selected "View Source" from the View menu, it was never triggered when I used the Command-Option-V shortcut. I did a little digging and found that support for keyboard shortcuts for menu items was a bit spotty. In the Finder and in BBEdit, I was able to trigger UI Action scripts for menu items using the associated keyboard shortcuts. In Safari, [MarsEdit](#)³, and iTunes, the keyboard shortcuts did not trigger any associated UI Action scripts. Again, I suspect the

2. http://daringfireball.net/2003/01/safari_source_in_bbedit

3. <http://www.atpm.com/11.01/marsedit.shtml>

1. <http://prefab.com/uiactions/>

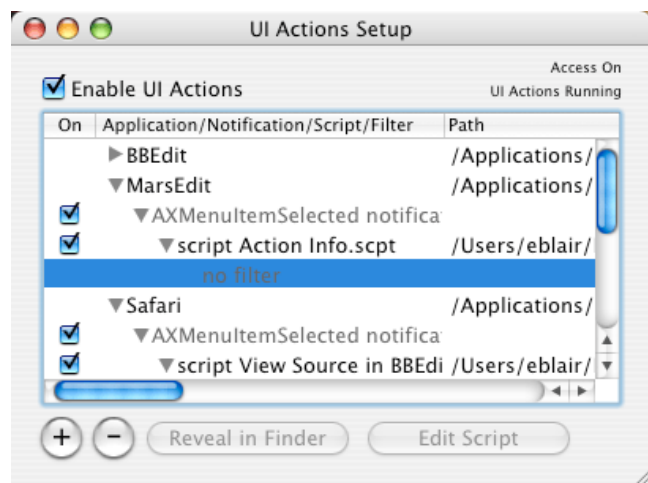
problem lies in Panther’s notification system, as opposed to UI Actions. However, this shortcoming severely limits UI Actions’ usefulness.

UI Actions Setup

As I mentioned earlier, there are two ways to attach AppleScripts to UI Actions. The first is through the UI Actions Setup application and the second is through the AppleScript interface.

If you’re developing UI Action scripts that you want to install on multiple machines or for multiple users, you’re probably better off using the AppleScript interface. In that case, you would simply install the necessary AppleScripts on each computer and run a setup script to attach them. Depending on how you distribute the AppleScripts, you could possibly integrate the entire process into an installer.

If you’re simply attaching AppleScripts to UI Actions on your own machine, you probably don’t want to write setup scripts for each and every UI Action. This is where you would use UI Action Setup.



Configuring UI Actions with UI Actions Setup

On the surface, the interface seems simple enough. The main interface is an outline that shows you applications that have UI Action scripts connected to them. You can expand the outline to see which notifications your scripts are monitoring, which AppleScript will be run, and which filters are applied to the notification for the given AppleScript. You click the + button to add an entry to the outline and the - button to remove an entry. The “Reveal in Finder” button will, appropriately enough, show either the selected application or the AppleScript in the Finder, and the “Edit Script” button open the selected AppleScript in your script editor of choice.

Once you start using UI Actions Setup, you will quickly realize it’s nowhere near as simple as it looks. To be honest, the interface does some downright strange things. I found it quite counter-intuitive at times and frustrating.

When you want to add a new UI Action script, a sheet appears and you supply the application you want to monitor, the notification for which you’re listening, the AppleScript you want to run, and the filter, if any.

The only way to choose your application and your AppleScript is via a standard file choose dialog. Drag and drop would be a nice option. Also, I would love if there were a menu of running applications. Navigating to your application isn’t too much of a burden, but this feature would keep me from needing to remember that the Finder is actually located in /System/Library/CoreServices.

I’m a little disappointed by the filtering options. It appears that your filter text needs to be an exact match, including case. As far as I can tell, you cannot filter anything with dynamic text, like the Copy and Undo commands in the Finder. This also presents problems when dealing with menu items that contain leading spaces, like many of the entries in Safari’s View menu.

UI Actions Setup gives you the ability to disable some or all of your UI Action scripts. You can disable all the scripts by deselecting the “Enable UI Actions” option at the top of the UI Actions Setup window. In the notification outline, you can choose to disable notifications or scripts—so, you could turn off all of your Application Activated scripts, but only disable a subset of your Sheet Created scripts. Unfortunately, there’s no visual indication of whether or not a script has been disabled by something further up the event hierarchy. If you deselect the “Enable UI Actions” options, the entire outline should appear grayed-out. If you deactivate a notification, any AppleScript triggered by that notification should be grayed-out.

At one point, I spent nearly 10 minutes trying to figure out why a UI Action script didn’t appear to be working the way I intended. Both the notification and the script were enabled. Eventually, it dawned on me that I’d turned off all the UI Actions. If the user interface did a better job of relaying this information, I would have realized my error much quicker.

Instead, UI Actions Setup apparently uses grayed-out text to indicate text that cannot be double-clicked: application names and script names appear in black, notifications and filters appear in gray. I’m afraid I just don’t understand this design choice.

Editing and removing filters on existing UI Action scripts is also problematic. Basically, you can’t edit a filter once it’s been placed; you have to remove the existing filter and add a new one. That’s a little harsh, especially if you just want to fix a typo. Furthermore, if you remove the last filter from an AppleScript, it doesn’t clear the filter; it removes the script! If that was the only script attached to a notification, it removes the notification! If that was the only notification...well, you get the idea. To remove the last filter from a script, you need to add the AppleScript to the notification with no filters. The whole process seems a bit backwards to me.

All of the options available through the UI Actions Setup window are also available through the “UI Actions” menu... except there are no keyboard shortcuts for any of the commands. I suspect that there’s a decent amount of overlap between the group of people willing to write their own UI Action scripts and the group of people that prefer the keyboard to the mouse, so I don’t get why these shortcuts were omitted.

UI Actions Setup does have one rather nice touch for dealing with notifications—you have the option of viewing the notifications with their official, Apple-supplied names or their more readable English translations. The official names aren’t impossible to understand, but English translations are certainly more readable. Like my fourth-grade teacher tried to drill into my head during penmanship class, things are a lot more readable when there are spaces between the words.

Documentation

I found the UI Actions documentation a bit sparse. There was one document that went over the basics of writing UI Action scripts, a pair of documents listing the valid notifications and roles, and a number of AppleScripts showing what struck me as some fairly basic functionality—responding to application activation, window switching, and menu commands. The scripts integrating UI Action scripts with GUI Scripting could be useful, since GUI Scripting opens up additional possibilities. There was also one AppleScript that dealt with UI Actions over a network, which struck me as interesting, though I wasn’t able to attempt anything along those lines.

The reason I felt the included scripts were fairly basic was because they seemed like little more than notifications combined with filters. I’d hoped to write a UI Action script that would make a backup copy of my weblog entries whenever I clicked the “Send to Weblog” toolbar button in MarsEdit, but after much trying, I wasn’t able to figure what combination of notifications, filters, and AppleScript would let me identify a toolbar button by name.

Final Thoughts

Although my experience with UI Actions has been somewhat lacking, I’m still excited by the basic premise and I hope that continued development on both the UI Actions software and the underlying operating system will lead to an improved user experience. It seems as though the folks at PreFab Software feel the same way—while I was preparing this review, I was informed that an upgraded version of UI Actions will be released once Tiger is available and that this upgrade will be free for owners of the current version.

If you have a need for UI Actions today, you need to figure out whether you can accomplish your goals, given the current state of things. PreFab offers a 30-day demo for UI Actions, so if there’s something that you need to do and you know that UI Actions is the best way to get it done, get the demo. If you get everything working to your satisfaction, then I suspect you will become a very happy customer.

If you’re like me and think that the idea behind UI Actions is insanely cool, but you’re not exactly sure about how you’ll use the technology, you might want to wait a bit.

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1. <http://www.atpm.com/reviews>
 2. <http://www.atpm.com/Back/>
 3. <http://www.atpm.com/search>