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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 June issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* We begin this year's summertime series with a quick look at the MacBook and other recent news.

The New Apple MacBook

In May, Apple Computer released the long-awaited replacement for the popular iBook laptop computer. To the surprise of many, the MacBook is shipping with the same chip found in the MacBook Pro. To the surprise of many more, the new MacBook is very competitively priced compared to other laptops with the Intel Duo Core chip. It will come as no surprise if Apple sees a big jump in Mac CPU shipments this quarter due to the debut of the iBook's successor. This is the month for Dads and grads, and the MacBook will be a very popular gift this season.

Apple Sells PowerSchool

School is moving out of session for the year, and PowerSchool is moving out of the Apple product line. Apple purchased the PowerSchool Student Information System from its developers in March of 2001. Now, five years later, Apple has sold its award-winning SIS to Pearson Education, a global publisher of educational content.

PowerSchool opened many doors in the educational community for Apple. Doors that just years earlier had been closed to the Mac maker as the company's market share plummeted and schools, once the foundation for Apple's sales efforts, turned to Windows-based products. Due to the success of PowerSchool and its popularity among educators and parents, the Apple logo was seen by millions of people as parents and students logged onto a PowerSchool server each day to check homework assignments and class grades.

Apple is first and foremost a hardware company. PowerSchool provided the company with renewed exposure in the education market, but that exposure didn't necessarily lead to more school-wide CPU sales. Nonetheless, Apple made PowerSchool a success, and that success has enhanced the company's product reputation in the education market. Watch for Apple to gain market share in education as the MacBook becomes available for students, teachers, and school district buyers this summer and in the second stage of the education buying season this fall.

Apple Store Fifth Avenue

Remember the Cube? No matter that Apple put the product on ice, the new Apple retail store on Fifth Avenue in New York gives the cube a cool new look. Gracing the entry to Apple's first 24/365 retail location, a cube-shaped enclosure greets visitors to what is now the company's flagship retail store.

Dell Goes Retail

Is imitation the greatest form of flattery? Or, are the folks at Dell just green with Apple envy? In an odd departure from the PC leader's sales model, Dell Computer has announced it will be opening two retail locations. The stores will not carry product inventory, but will showcase the company's PC products. Yogi Berra comes to mind. Is this "déjà vu all over again"? Gateway began its disastrous move into company-owned retail operations with Country Stores that at first did not carry inventory for sale.

Retail stores are again becoming popular with retail buyers in the US thanks in part to Apple's retail store presence and the preference of many buyers to see a computer first-hand before they buy it. Gateway, the successor company of the Gateway/eMachines combination, is gaining market share in the US through sales at thousands of non-company owned retail outlets after closing its hundreds of Country Stores. HP is regaining lost market share from Dell as Dell's competitors become increasing efficient and are able to match Dell on price with better quality products. Time will tell whether or not Dell can regain its lost sales momentum while seeking to protect what's left of its average gross sales margin. However, opening company-owned stores that don't carry product inventory may not prove to be the way to go.

iPod Refresh?

There's no news at this time, but a refresh to the iPod line of digital music players is widely expected. Sales have begun to slow, and new competitors in the market the iPod currently dominates are emerging almost every day. The iPod has provided Apple Computer with strong revenue and earnings while the company completes the Mac's transition to the Intel architecture. Make no mistake: the Mac is Apple's past and the Mac is very much Apple's future. But the iPod has put the Apple logo inside tens of millions of homes and in the pockets of tens of millions of iPod users. An iPod refresh is needed before the start of the Christmas shopping season, and the sooner new iPod models are released, the sooner the slowdown in sales will be reversed.

Vista Delayed Again?

Microsoft is sending subtle signals that the consumer version of its next generation operating system will be delayed again beyond the publicly stated January 2007 target date. Absent the availability of Vista for the Christmas season, PC makers have little incentive to build inventory of PCs capable of using Vista's much-hyped but hardware hungry new features before the start of the new year. Ironically, for Christmas Apple may be the only personal computer maker with a full line of Vista-capable products available for sale.

But It's Summertime

We have a few more months before we focus on this year's Christmas season. A new hurricane season has just begun, and the editors of ATPM are busy creating big storms of our own. Each month we bring you the latest news and thoughtful product reviews in our easy-to-read and popular monthly format. Please join us throughout the summer as we

continue to chronicle the personal computing experience in a decidedly Macintosh kind of way.

Our June issue includes:

Bloggable: Don't Look Back
The iBook is dead. Long live the MacBook! Apple's new product lineup may be on the verge of an Abbott and Costello routine, but the computers are so hot you might burn your lap with one! Wes Meltzer has MacBook reviews and comments, a little gloating over Windows users, zen dialog boxes, and more in this month's *Bloggable*.

MacMuser: Bombed Out
Take two PC engineers and two Mac engineers, make them rendezvous with a load of computers at a grand hotel in Cheshire's country, and see which pair wins.

MacMuser: iDisk Ennui
ennui: a feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction. Yes, that sums up iDisk.

MacMuser: Make Mine Black
Bond takes his shaken, not stirred. The Rolling Stones painted theirs. I'll just take mine black.

FileMaking: "Real" Programming with FileMaker
This month, *FileMaking* looks at scripting.

Segments: Promises and Pitfalls of the Digital Media Revolution
Just because we can create an integrated digital lifestyle doesn't mean we are doing it well.

Desktop Pictures: EAA AirVenture
Chris Lawson offers part two of his desktop photo images featuring planes being shown and flown at the 2005 Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture event.

Cortland
Uh oh—Todd thinks he's landed a girl and a job interview the same night, but he might be headed for trouble. Also this month, the Boss Control Squad infomercial.

Review: PhotoComplete 1.1
PhotoComplete is a new image-editing program which wraps the usual basic editing actions into an unusual interface, making it easy to tweak digital pictures to make them look their best.

Review: Racer-X

Wes Meltzer finds the Racer-X to be a champion bag—a briefcase for those who thought they'd never carry a briefcase.

Review: SleeveCase

Even though laptop sleeves do not have a long list of things they're supposed to do, Wes Meltzer discovers not all sleeves are alike.

Review: Worms 3D

Feral Interactive releases a game where teams of garden worms try to blow each other away with military ordinance—and ATPM is there. Check out this latest installment in the Worms puzzle and action series.

Review: Yojimbo 1.1

Yojimbo is one of the newest entries into the information management space. ATPM looks at how well the Bare Bones approach work in this crowded market.

E-Mail

Switched

I have been a Mac user for just over 18 months now, after years of fighting Windows each day. I am not sure why I resisted so long; it must be my persistent nature! The viruses and spyware won in the end. I could never go back now. My Mac just works, something I was so unused to with my PC and the network of 300 of them that I used to support. As soon as I got the Mac PowerBook, I started to read the Mac magazines, subscribing to *Macworld* eventually. The subscription has run out now, and I have just found ATPM. It looks like ATPM is just another reason not to renew my subscription to *Macworld*. Thank you for all of your hard work, guys.

—Andy Hayes

Switching to Intel

I have been a Apple addict from my Apple IIe to my 17″ G4 PowerBook. I would love to move up to the new MacBook Pro but probably will have difficulty getting approval. I have justified my previous purchases of Macs in a PC-only work environment because of the large library of molecular analysis applications that I purchased over the years or have accumulated from open-source suppliers. The cost of upgrading to (or sometimes even finding) the PC version was always significantly more than the difference between the Mac and the PC. That is, until now. Someone should sponsor a contest for adapting Classic to run on the new Intel-based Macs so that we can continue to run some of the old classics. Anyone have a solution?

—Dr. Lester M. Shulman

> Perhaps the SheepShaver emulator will help you.
> *—Michael Tsai*

Outlining Workflows and ConceptDraw

Interesting and comprehensive review. I have been an outlining freak ever since KAMAS, OutThink, and MindWrite (remember them?).

I now use a combination of Tinderbox and NovaMind. If I want to start with built-in branching structure and visuals right off the bat, I start with NovaMind, export it to OPML, then import the OPML into Tinderbox. I lose the visuals in the import, but I can import screenshots of the NovaMind structures as JPEG notes into Tinderbox.

I also have a Tinderbox brainstorming template from which I open a new file. After adding a bunch of notes, I organize it in Map View, export it as a text file or HTML file, import

it into OmniOutliner to convert it to OPML, then open the OPML file in NovaMind. I can reorganize the Tinderbox map many times, resulting in different NovaMind maps for the same notes. I have tried unsuccessfully to export Tinderbox directly to OPML according to their wiki, but I have never been able to make this work. A high-functioning Tinderbox OPML export template, with finishing touches in NovaMind, would be a great boon to mankind.

—Jonathan D. Leavitt

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I recently discovered your column and today finished reading every single one from [the archive](). Just wanted to thank you for the wonderful work and hope you keep writing them. In one of the earlier columns you suggested: "For instance, should we look at little known outliners and use of unexpected applications (like Mailsmith) as outliners?" I would very much appreciate this, as it focuses on the concept of outlining rather than on application review.

By the way, if you are from Germany you can get a free version of ConceptDraw Mindmap 3.5 in the *MacLife* magazine of this month. I prefer OmniOutliner and DEVONthink.

—Anonymous

Synchronizing Windows Mobile Devices

I've tried (and tried, and tried…) to get my Windows Mobile devices to synchronize with my Mac. In frustration, partly with the devices (it *is* Windows and *does* crash) and partly with the lack of synchronization, I recently started using my Tungsten T3 again. Then I went out and bought (on trial) a Blackberry.

I have PocketMac synchronization working reasonably well. It's not as good as the Mark/Space tool with Palm OS, but it's workable. It isn't trivial nor for the faint of heart.

I really want a convergent device, and the Blackberry is the closest I've come to date. I should have looked at them before, but didn't.

—Dave Thompson

> I'm fortunate that I don't need to synchronize the device right now, because the calendar function isn't that important right now. But it will be once I have a Real Job, instead of just being a college student. Hopefully either Mark/Space or PocketMac will support WM5 by the end of the summer.
>
> My experience—after buying my Axim—is that it's a fantastic way to surf the Internet from my living room couch, or to use Skype, but it's a terrible multipurpose device, especially without a QWERTY keyboard.

So far, I think I'm going to avoid a Blackberry: the forthcoming Treo 700p will have unlimited EV-DO service for $25-$40 a month plus voice, which is a lot more multipurpose than just unlimited e-mail, and there are already Palm OS push–e-mail solutions. Plus, it'll sync.

Good luck with your Blackberry! I'm still open to the idea.

—*Wes Meltzer*

iPod 5G

I love my 5G, but I humbly offer these comments. If you will be using your iPod to transfer photos from a digital camera, by all means get the larger unit. The bigger battery in it is better-suited to transferring photos.

I have a 1 GB SD card, and by the time all the photos transfer to my 30 GB iPod the battery is nearly drained. (This for a battery in perfect condition. I shudder to think what will happen when the battery is less than perfect.) As of now, there is no pass-through dock connector that will allow you to transfer photos whilst powered from a wall outlet. Also, iPods do not preflight memory cards, so any transfer from a card is a *complete* transfer of everything on the card—every time.

—Randy B.

• • •

I finally got a 30 GB 5G iPod in March. I was a little skeptical about watching video on a 2.5″ screen, but now I'm hooked. I keep 25 full length movies and I'm able to copy movies from my home DVD collection using Handbrake to make small 320 × 144 500 MB files the play well on the New iPod. I also download Suicide Girls and Battlestar Galactica from iTunes. I also have 1,500 songs onboard.

This device needs at least a 3.5″ screen and improved battery life in the next generation of the coolest player on the planet.

—Grover Watson

SmartBoard USB5000

Or just remember to switch the Command and Option keys when starting up with the Microsoft keyboards. The Microsoft Natural Ergonomic Keyboard 4000 that I started using two weeks ago is fantastic. I just wish they would give you replacement keys to replace the Start and Alt keys on the keyboard with Mac equivalents (yeah right, dream on).

Microsoft has made great keyboards and mice at reasonable prices for years.

—Eytan Bernet

PC and Mac Networking

Firstly, although I've assiduously read through previous Q&As to make sure I'm not troubling you with a question that's already been asked, I might have missed it, so apologies if so!

Secondly, the questions themselves: I've joined the dark side, and just bought a PC to supplement the iBook that I share with my fiancée. I crudely unplugged the broadband modem cable from the Mac, and plugged it into the PC—with no configuring at all, it worked just fine. Unfortunately, this patented unplug-and-plug technique did not work in reverse, and now my wedding is in jeopardy as my better half can't access the Internet from the Mac. (We keep getting a "Specified server cannot be found" error message.) Any ideas what might be causing this, and whether it might interfere with my plan to set up a router to avoid having to unplug/replug all the time?

Many, many thanks in advance—remember: there's a marriage at stake here!

—Al Goodwin

> Many—though not all—cable modems or DSL modems tend to lock on to the MAC address of whatever is connected to the Ethernet jack. Consequently if you unplug from the modem and plug in a new machine, typically the modem will not recognize the new machine because it has a different MAC address. Usually the solution is to power down the modem, plug it into the machine you wish to use, and power it back up so you reset the MAC address it is assigned to. This is one of several reasons why a router makes life easier. It shows the same MAC address (its own—or if you want, most routers these days can present a MAC address you specify) to the cable modem regardless of what is then plugged into the router. It's one of the ways in which it facilitates using multiple machines on one broadband connection. Get a router and save your marriage.
> *—Evan Trent*

Boswell

I've tried out plenty of programs in the last year or so and presently I'm settled on DEVONnote (I may upgrade to DEVONthink Pro, but DN does the job for now). One of the programs I tested briefly was Boswell, and I loved the thinking behind the program—namely the reliance on metadata for archiving/finding files, as opposed to using a hierarchy of folders. Correct me if I'm wrong, but this seems to be the main principle behind Boswell.

Anyway, I almost registered until it occurred to me that I could more or less replicate this system in DEVONnote. (I have one single 'archive' folder for all my writings, with no subgroups. Each file has its own metadata—I add keywords to the 'Comments' pane and assign a color label too. By searching 'Comments' I can retrieve any file, or grouping of files, in an instant. I use folders only as workspaces for current projects. When I'm done with a project, all the files get dumped into the archive. If I want to retrieve them all again, I simply search 'Comments' for the keyword(s) then throw the results back in a temporary folder...you get the drift.) The point is, I'm finding it really liberating to have done away

with my old complicated hierarchy of folders; everything now is in one place, and it is easier than ever to retrieve files if I need them.

On to my question...

What essentially is the difference between my setup and the idea behind Boswell? Surely any program that is good at handling metadata can work along the same lines as Boswell? Obviously there are plenty of differences between the way DEVONthink and Boswell work, but it seems to me that DEVONthink can be bent to do what Boswell does, plus a whole lot more (if you need it). Or am I missing something important about Boswell? (Thanks for the great review, by the way.)

—Jim Alexander

• • •

Disclaimer: I am an avid user of Boswell. The application fits with my personal philosophy of document storage in a nearly perfect manner. So add that as salt.

You ask some good questions. When I first came across Boswell, I almost immediately shunned it. The interface put me off, frankly. This was back when it was in its version 3 cycle. A while later, I saw that it had gone through a new version, and I had grown a bit as far as my information needs went, so I decided to give it another try. It took a while to understand the philosophies, but once it all clicked, I bought it immediately and have been using it ever since.

My initial response, before the "click," was precisely what you said: Hey, I can just emulate Boswell using Tinderbox (which I already own). A reasonable assumption, after-all, as Tinderbox is uniquely outfitted to create systems tailored to your way of thought. However, it is not actually possible without a lot of run-around, because Boswell does a lot of things which are unusual in the digital information management world. By themselves, they are little, and can be sometimes ignored, but all together they create a symphony of philosophy that no other application I've come across possesses.

Let's look at one fundamental problem with your setup (and perhaps you have even discovered this by now). DEVONthink is very heavily invested in group hierarchies. It relies upon them to establish connections between word pairing structures in your documents. In other words, if you have 15 documents on fruit, five of which are about apples, it would help DTP to group those five documents into an Apple sub-group. If you put every single document into one group, then you are losing a very vital part of the DTP's AI equation, and given that this is DTP's primary asset, you are losing quite a bit to do that.

The fundamental problem I ran into is that there is no analogue for Boswell's Notebook idea. This is the same for DEVONthink. There is a way, using AppleScript and the comments field, to hack together "smart groups," in DTP. These operate as an extremely limited

version of what Tinderbox can do with Agents. But while the searching mechanism is vastly superior in TB, both produce nearly identical results. They contain a fully dynamic alias/replicant set based on the results of the search. TB does this continually in the background (based upon the Agent's priority setting), and DTP does this whenever you click on the group. So, at first glance, you could emulate Boswell's auto-archive function. Boswell just uses filters based on simple text matching to do that. Any contains based match in content or metadata will cause Boswell to place a copy of the document in the directed Notebook, upon auto-archival. Now, if you ignore the fact that both TB and DTP have no "journal/archive" metaphor, the act of searching for a text string and adding documents which match this text string to a group, is simple enough with Smart Groups and Agents.

But this ignores an extremely important aspect of Boswell's Notebook metaphor. It is semi-dynamic; in other words, it is generated automatically (or manually), but remains static and adjustable after that point. In other words, if I remove a filter down the road, the entries that it placed in the Notebook do not disappear from that notebook. They have become a permanent part of it. In either TB or DTP, removing the search term will destroy the dynamically created copies in the group. Even more important is the post-creation aspect of the Notebook. Say you have had a Notebook collecting written articles for a while. You come along and notice a few errors in the automatic process. Some documents did not get added, and a few got put in by error. Simply delete the ones you don't want, add the ones you do, and move on. Write another article, and it will get automatically added to the Notebook; your pruning remains. So you have an organization unit which is dynamically created, but remains fully editable during the creation process.

There is nothing like that in either TB or DTP. You are not allowed to do any pruning in TB. Deleting or adding notes to an Agent will result in their re-addition or removal in a matter of seconds. In DTP, any pruning you do will be lost the next time you click on the smart group. Of course, you can "freeze" the results. Make a standard group or container, and copy the current search results to it. Now it is "frozen," and you can remove and add items to that group all you want—but of course now it is no longer dynamic. New documents will not get added to this group, requiring you to do manual labour to get new results in, periodically. If you have several dozen of these, that can get to be a real waste of time.

I would not use the "Smart Folder" analogy at all in trying to explain how Boswell works. The only thing that comes close is Gmail's labeling system. Labels can be somewhat viewed as Notebooks, and both use filters to automatically assign inbound messages/documents to labels. Of course, you can manually change which labels a note has, too. So the dynamic portion of the equation is all on the inbound end of things. Actually, Gmail's original conception was very much along Boswell's line of philosophy. Originally, you couldn't delete anything. Sorting was a semi-dynamic process that was non-hierarchal. Things have changed since then, however.

The immutability of archived documents is not something that comes automatically in either applications, though it can be emulated to a certain extant. In TB, I can create an Archive

container which automatically sets the ReadOnly attribute on inbound notes. This will not lock the metadata, and I will still be able to delete it, but document contents will be locked. If I duplicate the note and move it back to Journal, another trigger can reset ReadOnly and make it editable again. In DTP, there is of course the Locking function, which does not protect metadata, and cannot be activated automatically except with, what would become a very expensive, AppleScript sitting on the Archive Group. Locking a file requires mouse usage, and making a new version requires several mouse actions: duplication, moving, and unlocking.

So here we start getting into what makes Boswell so special. It is not that its features cannot be "somewhat" copied by other applications, it is the ease in which it allows you to use them. To make a new version in Boswell—I hit a custom shortcut, Command-D. The document is transferred to the Journal, and the application focus switches to it. I can begin typing immediately. No mouse movement; no menus; no fuss. Notebooks accumulate new documents according to specific rules you have specified, for years, without any freezing/un-freezing rituals. As common search terms, they exist until you are done with them. Using a simple name hack, when you are done with it you can just sort it to the bottom of the list and forget about it. Delete only when necessary.

Boswell's Manager is an extremely powerful tool which allows you to do bulk actions on large groups of documents (or just collect them into various Notebooks if that is all you want). It also gives you access to everything it is not currently in a Notebook. And there is another often overlooked feature of Boswell that is radically different than most anything else. The basic idea is that much of your collection has no need to be visible. If a document is not in a Notebook, there is no way to run into it without using the Manager. The Notebooks then, are not the summation of the collection, but more like portals in which you can see into the Archive. That might seem like a bit of a down-side to some people, but consider this: it is a very simple search away if you want to actually view every single document in the Archive. Secondly, Boswell is designed for scope. If you put truly everything into it, that Archive is going to become fairly massive. 25,000 items—50,000 why not? I honestly wouldn't trust either DTP or TB to open a group/container of that scale without becoming a performance hog. I know for a fact that TB's format slows down considerable with a semi-large amount of data in it. I kept my diary in it for a few years—probably 230,000 words in 500 notes. It was getting to be very slow to load and save. I have that diary, along with another ten years worth, several novels, five large collections of short stories, e-mail, forum discussions (like this one), and so forth. Boswell opens before I'm even done clicking the icon. No delay. I've never put quite so much in DTP, but I have heard of performance problems with large databases. Many people have left DT for that very reason. DTP is supposedly much better, but still. I have no idea what DEVONnote with 50,000 items in it would be like.

Anyway. The manner in which you are using DevonNote is very Boswellian. You treat Notebooks as temporary working areas, or permanent collections of documents, whatever. If you destroy one and ever need it back again—just use the Manager to reconstruct it. The problem is, you are not using DEVONnote the way it was intended to be used. The

AI will be hampered by this method. If you never need the AI—then the need for any of the DEVON line of products shrinks dramatically. Beyond the AI and document collection functions, the user interface of the DEVON products is quite a bit behind other applications, such as Mori.

It all comes down to what application feels best in your workflow. DTP is a powerful application, and I really wish that I could have gained some sort of affinity with it. However, I just really do not jive with the heavy reliance on AI. I am always going to be more familiar with my own work than the computer is, so why waste time supervising its assumptions? And I really do not jive with hierarchies. I do believe the tag+collection system will be the organization method of the future. Dynamic tag clouds, such as seen on Flickr, and Del.icio.us, combined with semi-dynamic working areas like Boswell's Notebooks, is far more powerful and flexible than any hierarchy could ever hope to be. So forcing me to use nested groups to get the full potential of the program felt wrong. If I wasn't going to use that system, and didn't like AI, then I found a plethora of other applications which had far better UIs that could do nearly everything DTP could do (sans AI of course).

One could argue that user-created filters and AI-created filters are both going to produce moderate errors, so there is actually little difference between them, practically. I disagree. An AI requires a lot of prior data to make any sort of reasonable guess about classification. In terms of DTP, this means spending a lot of time loading it up with a vast quantity of very carefully arranged data, before it will even start working. With Boswell, you can be up and running from the very start. The background data necessary to form a smart filter is already in your head. Secondly, depending on how you use your filters, you might have a close to zero error rate. I never have errors. Auto-archival in Boswell is truly automatic for me. Write and forget. And it's been that way since I started using it. I only have 2,000 documents in my library right now. From everything I've read, that would barely be enough for DTP to get a grip on classification. In other words, the program would only now began to be of use to me in the Write-and-Forget way of doing things.

In the end, Boswell matched me perfectly. I have some serious issues with the aesthetic. The UI itself is actually not that bad. The manner in which you move data around is pretty smart. But the presentation of that UI is lacking by about ten years of Apple innovation. There is one thing to be said though, it does disappear. Once you get familiar with Boswell, everything is so minimal that using it is not at all like using an application. It is simply "there." DEVONthink is always getting in my way. Tinderbox is even worse. The only application I have used that disappears in this fashion is Ulysses.

So, these are all of the things you pay for with Boswell. A unified philosophy where each feature supports that philosophy. There are no superfluous features outside of it. Everything in the application suits the method. With a little keyboard shortcut customization, accessing these functions is second-nature.

Now, throw a Cocoa interface, and all of the nice things that come along with it, into Boswell—and it would be nearly perfect.

—Amber Vaesca

We'd love to hear your thoughts about our publication. We always welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, and praise. Or, if you have an opinion or announcement about the Macintosh platform in general, that's OK too. Send your e-mail to editor@atpm.com. All mail becomes the property of ATPM.

Don't Look Back

A remarkable thing happened this month: We have now all but severed our ties to the past.

When Apple removed the Happy Mac from the OS X boot sequence in the Jaguar release, I lamented the loss of a close friend. The Happy Mac, along with the smiley Mac face on the "Welcome to Mac OS" logo, had been my first introduction to the Macintosh world. To have it taken away was a powerful experience.

Not long before, they had started taking away the fonts. First, the OS X interface uses Lucida Grande for all its labels, where OS 9 used Charcoal. And the old rainbow Apple with a bite taken out of it was replaced with a monochrome-gradient Apple in the OS X interface. In 2003, Apple replaced its Apple Garamond signage and product logo types with Myriad, a sans-serif font.

We Mac users are a nostalgic bunch, so there are hacks that allow you to return to any or all of these things, up to and including a Platinum interface for OS X, although I doubt anyone has repainted his PowerBook to use Adobe Garamond for the product label on lid—that would be a seriously committed act of fandom.

But all this year we've been losing our beloved product lines. The "PowerBook" is now the "MacBook Pro," after 15 years with the moniker, and as of this month, the iBook is now the "MacBook." (More later.) Apparently Apple filed a trademark on the name "Mac Pro," which would mark the loss of the long-lived "Power Mac" line.

Will the iMac be renamed the "Mac"? It would be consistent with the current naming scheme for Apple's computers, and finally unify the pre- and post-Steve Jobs product lines (the 'Power' and 'i' lines). On the other hand, the entire country would break out in a modern-day "Who's On First":

> Me: I'm buying a Mac.
> You: Which Mac?
> Me: A Mac.
> You: You mean you don't know what Mac?
> Me: Well, I should.
> You: Well, then, what Mac are you buying?
> Me: Yes.

So here's to hoping that little 'i' stays.

All this nostalgia for a couple of adjectives, right? This month, we cordially welcome the MacBook to the Apple lineup. The newcomer, in lieu of the iBook, splits the difference between the old 12″ and 14″ sizes (and there is no 12″ model anymore), with a 13.3″ widescreen display and 1280 × 800 resolution. For reference's sake, my 15″ Titanium PowerBook has a 1280 × 854 display, which means that the new iBook—err, MacBook—has virtually the same number of pixels, in a smaller space. This seems to me to be a good trend, but it may dismay some people with poor vision, for whom the 14″ iBook must have been a godsend.

Early reviews of the MacBook seem to make two points in particular: They're really fast, and they're really hot. *Macworld* and *Engadget* both liked putting their hands on them, in spite of the warmth: *Macworld* calls them "more powerful and full-featured than the [iBooks]." *Engadget* is hung up on the keys, which are curiously raised out of the surface of the computer, rather than the old removable keyboard platform; they say they're much less mushy, but that they take some getting used to.

Ars Technica was not thrilled about the glossy screen, however. They, too, got a review model, and note that while it's great to go to widescreen, if the cost is a glossy, super-reflective screen, it might not be worth it. Of course, it's still a really, really powerful machine (and hot), as *Ars Technica's* Clint Ecker writes: "The leap from an iBook to the new MacBook is quite dramatic." Even PC users seem to appreciate what a remarkable computer it is, as *Notebook Review* took a look at it and concluded that, other than the heat, it's one hell of a computer.

(Hint: if you are in the market for a graduation present for me, or maybe someone else you love. . .this would be a good time to consider placing an order. Just a thought.)

This heat problem is, well, a real problem for MacBook and MacBook Pro buyers. However, there's good news and there's bad news, as James Duncan Davidson noted at O'Reilly's *MacDevCenter*. Word had been floating around the Internet that a less hurried application of thermal paste had resulted in huge surface and internal temperature decreases in the computers. However, Davidson cracked his computer open and did just that, and found a decrease of just 2°F. On the other hand, he accidentally disconnected the temperature sensor, which sent his (fairly quiet) fans into overdrive and transformed his MacBook Pro from a griddle into a computer that was actually cool to the touch. He thinks *that's* how others on the Internet got their "better application of thermal paste" results. Good news: Your MacBook (Pro) has great fans. Bad news: Apple has configured the computer to run hot, and therefore quieter. Tanya Klowden at *Ars Technica* thinks Apple's latest MacBook Pro firmware update is shifting the balance toward lower temperatures.

What about the strategy of producing a black model with a price premium? (If you're interested, it's about $150 after the other associated upgrades.) Julio Ojeda-Zapata at *Your Tech Weblog* cites anecdotal evidence that they're selling out faster than the white models. On the other hand, under at least one possible interpretation these MacBooks are cheaper than similarly configured Dells; whether it's true or not, the fact that we can make the comparison is all the more interesting.

And in case you know some fence-sitters, folks, remember that the MacBook will run Windows, too. The *Unofficial Apple Weblog's* Dave Caolo reports that he got two potential buyers to buy Macs just by telling them that they can run Windows on them. Congratulations, Dave! Hope you got a commission.

Last but not least, Apple just rolled out a new commercial campaign to get PC users to buy Macs, which ends with a shot of the new MacBook. They aren't using the "it runs Windows" line, but they're entertaining nevertheless. Watch them yourself, then read what John Siracusa and my boss Michael Tsai think of them. I find myself laughing, especially with the commercial involving the Japanese woman.

Far Away and Left Behind

- While we Mac users enjoy the excitement of a newly rejuvenated product line and an upcoming OS, we should take a few moments to ponder the plight of the Windows user. He's been using the same OS since 2001, and Microsoft keeps pushing back the release date on Vista and taking features away from it. Bad news just keeps getting worse. Now, even Paul Thurrott (!!) has soured on the whole megillah—he says all he hopes is that when Vista *does* finally arrive, it'll be worth it. What's next, will Bill Gates come out as lukewarm on his own product? Brian Tiemann thinks Vista may be Microsoft's Copland; and *Coding Horror*, Rick Strahl and *The Old New Thing* all express their dismay at what a train-wreck Windows Vista is turning into. It's almost painful to watch…and this is speaking as a Mac user.

- Apple is building a second campus in Cupertino. This one will have 50 acres, and apparently Apple paid $160 million, which is money they didn't want to spend on it, according to the *San Jose Mercury News*. Anyway, they're flush with cash, and it seems they may as well use it to build a campus that could cost us as much as $500 million.

- To put it mildly, the universe contains some mind-numbingly bad error messages. Unfortunately, Unsanity's Rosyna found one in connection with the PowerPC-to-Intel migration which doesn't bode well for all those MacBook (Pro) buyers: one that reads, "You cannot open FontCard preferences on this computer. Contact the developer of this software for a newer version." This is one of the worst error messages I have ever seen, because it doesn't even explain the problem. And Rosyna agrees, obviously. But nothing is quite so bad as the ultimate Zen dialog box Matthias Thorn at *Thornography* got…you have to see it to believe it. Here's to hoping we haven't jinxed you, Matthias!

- Have you ever felt ripped off? Imagine how Panic Software feels, since they have some of the best graphics and UI work in the business. They put together a whole gallery of all the painful rip-offs of their work they've seen. Sorry, guys…If it makes you feel any better, Samsung ripped off Apple, of all companies, on some of their cell phones.

- In iPod news, longtime iPod CPU-maker PortalPlayer will not be supplying the chip in forthcoming flash models with screens. Because the universe has a sense of humor, and I do not, Samsung will be the supplier. Also, SanDisk is starting an "iDon'T" anti-iPod campaign, in the hopes that they can use guerilla marketing tactics to convince people that the iPod is too trendy. Um, good luck with that, guys.

- Since I've been down on the idea of Apple entering the mobile world before, and in March I gave away my *JFK Shot By LBJ Award* to a writer who believes that Apple will market an iPhone as an MVNO, I feel obligated to link to Rui Carmo's timeline of iPhone rumors. Talk about fascinating.

- Speaking of awards, I have another to announce: the *Dave Winer Award*, which celebrates the dumbest thing Dave Winer said in any given month. (Yes, this means I have to keep an even closer eye on Dave Winer. This month, as every month, the award goes to Dave himself, for writing that his data is locked into Apple applications and linking to a photo of a grain silo—a "silo" is an application that locks your data into it. Why does this merit a *Dave Winer Award*? Les Posen notes that it's actually quite easy to get your data out of those Apple applications. . .But then again, unless an application uses OPML or his officially sanctioned RSS, Dave Winer will happily blast it. So, congrats, Dave.

Bombed Out

Back in 2000 I stood facing a man holding a loaded and cocked Heckler and Koch submachine gun. His finger was on the trigger and the barrel was pointed directly at me. This was a definite brown trouser moment.

For us Brits, guns are still something the A-Team shoots the baddies with. Lots of bangs from weapons that hold an unlimited supply of bullets, and then the baddies hold up their hands and give in. Nobody gets hurt, naturally, except Mr T, who has to be drugged to get him into the helicopter. In general, we don't see or hear guns in real life in the UK other than perhaps the occasional distant sound of a shotgun, or after 9 PM in some of our city centers such as Manchester. From what we see on TV, it seems the reverse is true in the US. Policemen carry guns by default, and it seems every kid in middle America is given an automatic weapon as soon as she is able to walk.

Luckily for me, the gun-toting man was a special policeman on duty at the venue I was trying to enter. It was the Grand Hotel in Brighton where 16 years earlier the Provisional IRA tried to blow up Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, at her political party conference. In those days, my home was less that a mile away. The explosion woke me up, and later I saw its dreadful consequences. In fact, I actually did quite well from the bombing, because I salvaged for my antiques shop many of the fine fixtures and fittings thrown away as builders rebuilt the hotel.

The policeman confronting me was checking my entry pass for the Grand Hotel where our present government was holding its Millennium Labour Party conference. My colleague and I had been contracted to supply and install a large network of over 20 computers. As the Labour Party's color is red, we naturally got a lorry load of strawberry iMacs, plus a couple of G4 desktop computers, both of which came home with me after the event.

Once the policeman let me through and the bomb detectors decided there was no Semtex in my underpants, we got down to the installation. All the Macs were brand new. Installing them meant opening their boxes, fixing up the keyboards and mice, adding extra RAM to each Mac, and installing Mac OS 9 and software before getting them physically networked together via a heavyweight Buffalo switching hub that also came home afterwards. By lunchtime we completed the job, tested each computer, set up ISDN, and tidied all the boxes away.

In the room next door were a couple of PC engineers who had three or four computers to install. They had arrived before us and were hard at it even as the gun had been thrust in my face. When we returned to check the Macs the next day, the two PC experts were

still completing the job. They had got the computers networked but hadn't managed to get them all talking to the printer, let alone connected to the outside world.

It is no wonder then, that CNET runs so many free online courses for computer users. Nearly all are geared to the needs of Windows users, but there are some concerning cross-platform applications such as Photoshop or digital photography. Looking at the list, one wonders why anyone would ever use Windows if they need a course to tell them how to make a home network or set up video conferencing—let alone how to update their iPod or build a photo library.

We Mac users have life easy because all of the above are very simple point-and-click affairs. Networking at most involves plugging the wires into the right sockets and turning on file sharing for each Mac. Updating iPods is usually done automatically by Software Update when the iPod is connected for charging or reloading with tunes. Photo libraries are almost too simple to build and share with iPhoto. There are times when specific images on a digital camera are not intended for long term storage, yet iPhoto will happily download them if one isn't careful. Apple's latest computers come with a camera built in, so video conferencing is poised to take over from standard voice-only telephones, and iChat makes it easy to accomplish.

Moreover, Apple has progressively made things even easier. Bonjour was first included as Rendezvous in Mac OS X 10.2. It supplies an automatic, zero configuration network without special servers and was devised by Englishman Stuart Cheshire. He had earlier written, amongst other things, an addictive computer game called Bolo, a multiplayer networked tank game. There are still versions around for Mac OS X including XBolo and nuBolo. Stuart is now "Wizard Without Portfolio" at Apple. This is a video of Stuart describing his zero configuration networks to engineers at Google.

Zero configuration was pioneered by Apple and adopted in its move from AppleTalk to IP (Internet Protocol) networking. It automatically identifies each networked device (computer, printer, etc.), gives each its own numeric address and name, and works out where to get services such as printing. Apple has made Bonjour open source. The purpose of zero configuration isn't just to make it easy to network computers together, which it does already. It has a much longer term goal to create new kinds of networked products that are not available today because they would cost too much or would be too difficult or inconvenient to set up.

What these will actually be is unknown, but intriguing to think about. We've already got networked scanners, telephones, fax machines, printers, cameras, music and video devices. So what's next? Distributed, Bluetooth washing machines perhaps, all sharing the washload?

iDisk Ennui

At last! The weather in England has shaken off winter's gloom, and spring has started for real. The longer days and shorter evenings mean that we can sit in the garden watching the sun disappear into the horizon rather than behind rain clouds.

It was such an warm evening recently that found me sitting in the evening sun, listening to bell-ringers practice in the distant church tower while I nursed a glass of chilled English bacchus wine from my local vineyard. So few of my fellow countrymen know we produce superb wines and some that beat even the best in the world. After all, we share the same soil and climate as the Champagne region of France, and the Romans knew a thing or two when they planted vines here a couple of thousand years ago. It was a Dutchman and German I met at a party who told me about English wine. A quick scan of Yellow Pages proved I am surrounded by vineyards, all of which have to be visited…regularly. In the name of research, naturally.

As I sat sipping, the bush next to me was humming to itself. It isn't much of a plant, comfrey, a Russian infiltrator that grows wild. But bees love comfrey, and it was these causing the humming. Most jars of honey name the type of plants the bees have fed on, but I have never seen one advertising it was from comfrey. Maybe they have it in the Ukraine? Comfrey flowers don't share the same intense smell one associates with Australian leatherwood honey or Mexican orange blossom, but obviously bees can find some attraction.

Humming Bush

Unfortunately, the bees also describe how I feel about Apple's .Mac service—"hmmmmmm, where's the attraction?."

I let Apple's previous attempts at presenting an online experience—AppleLink and eWorld—pass me by. Apple had originally used AppleLink as a support service for dealers and developers, but it was expensive to run. They decided to expand it to consumers, to switch suppliers, and lower running costs. The new AppleLink Personal Edition, started in 1987, was supplied by Quantum Computer Services who renamed in 1991 to America Online. Apple licensed the original AppleLink software and changed its name to eWorld.

Apple introduced eWorld in 1994 and for two years supplied e-mail, news, and a bulletin board system in return for large amounts of their clients' wealth. eWorld never took off, probably because Apple kept it proprietary and closed to the burgeoning Windows community. Plus, it was in direct competition with America Online, who supplied eWorld.

eWorld had been devised in the days when the only Web browser available was Tim Berners-Lee's imaginatively named WorldWideWeb. Tim wrote this for NEXTSTEP, which a decade later became Mac OS X. Where, in 1991, no-one had a Web site other than the boffins at CERN, by 1993 other browsers such as NCSA/Mosaic had been devised by clever

people who were to go on to found Netscape, among others. The new cross-platform browsers took off and left online communities such as eWorld behind.
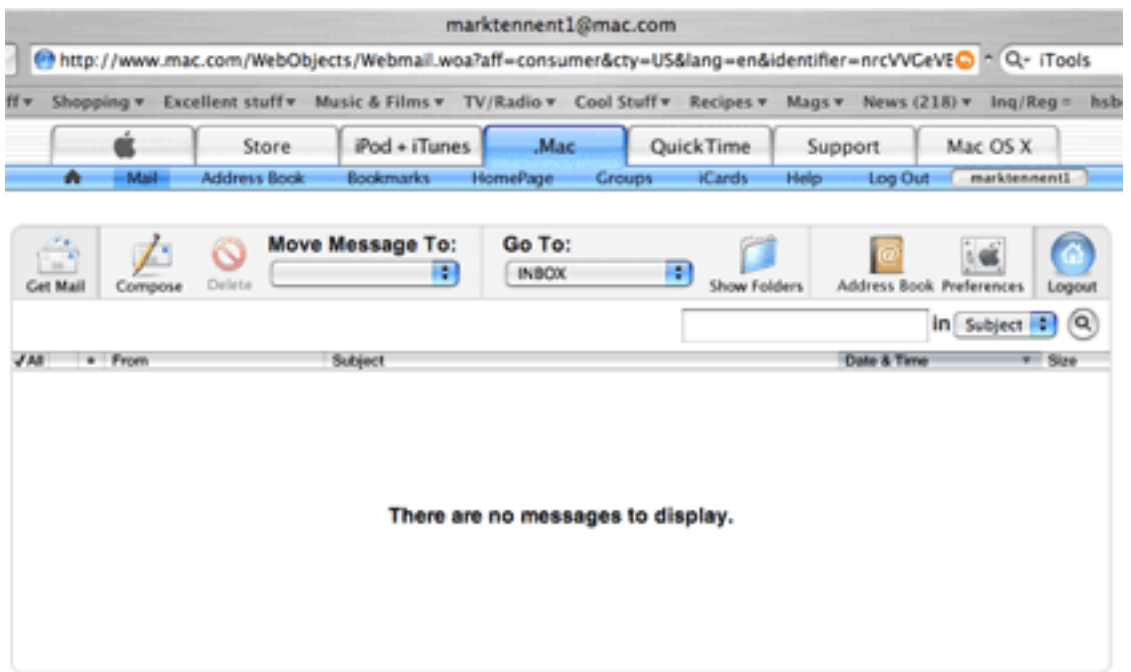
Apple's latest online offering grew from iTools, originally a free part of Mac OS 9 and the new Mac OS X. Included were HomePage, a free Web hosting service; iDisk online storage; mac.com, a free e-mail service; and iCards, free greetings cards.
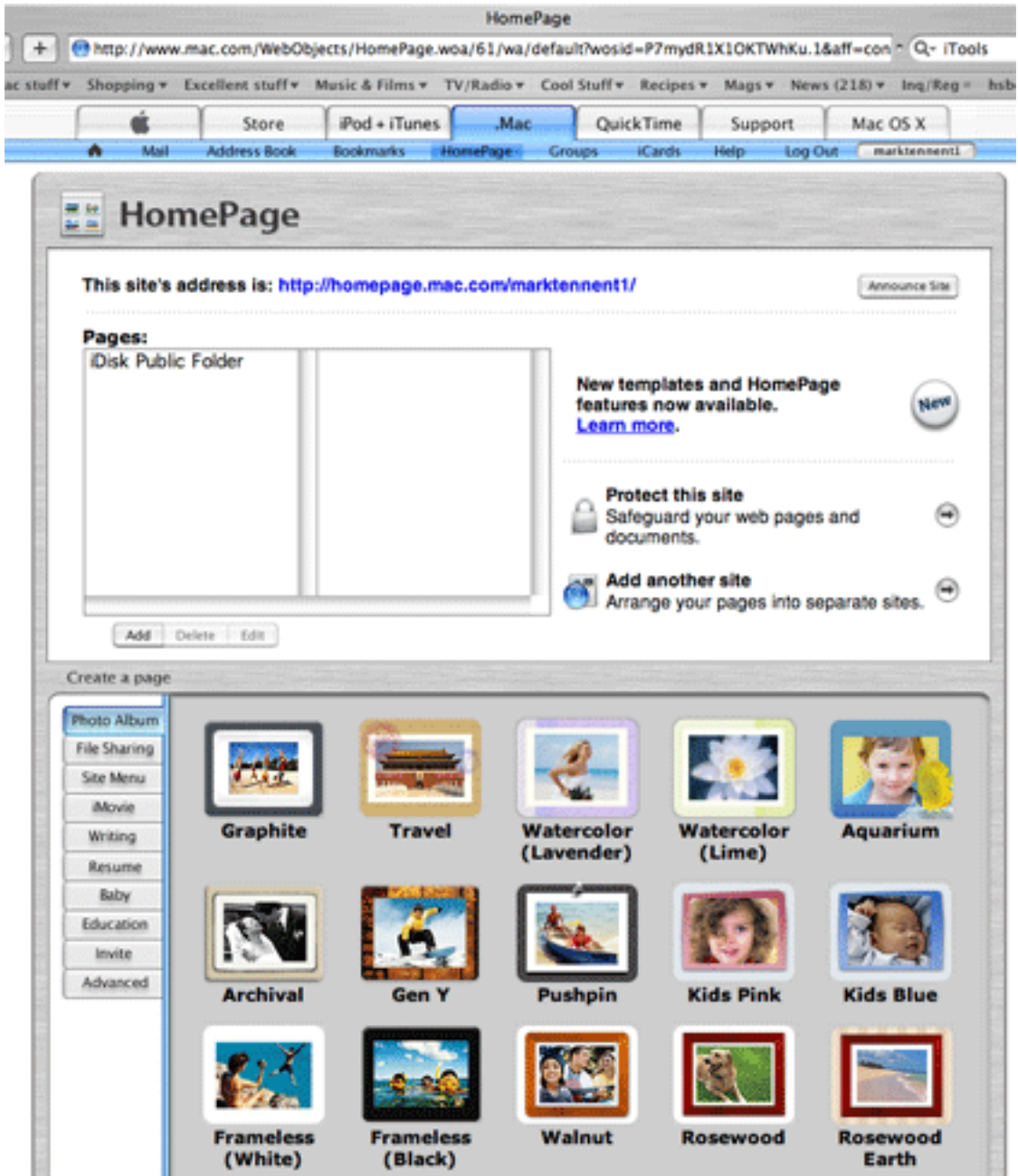
HomePage
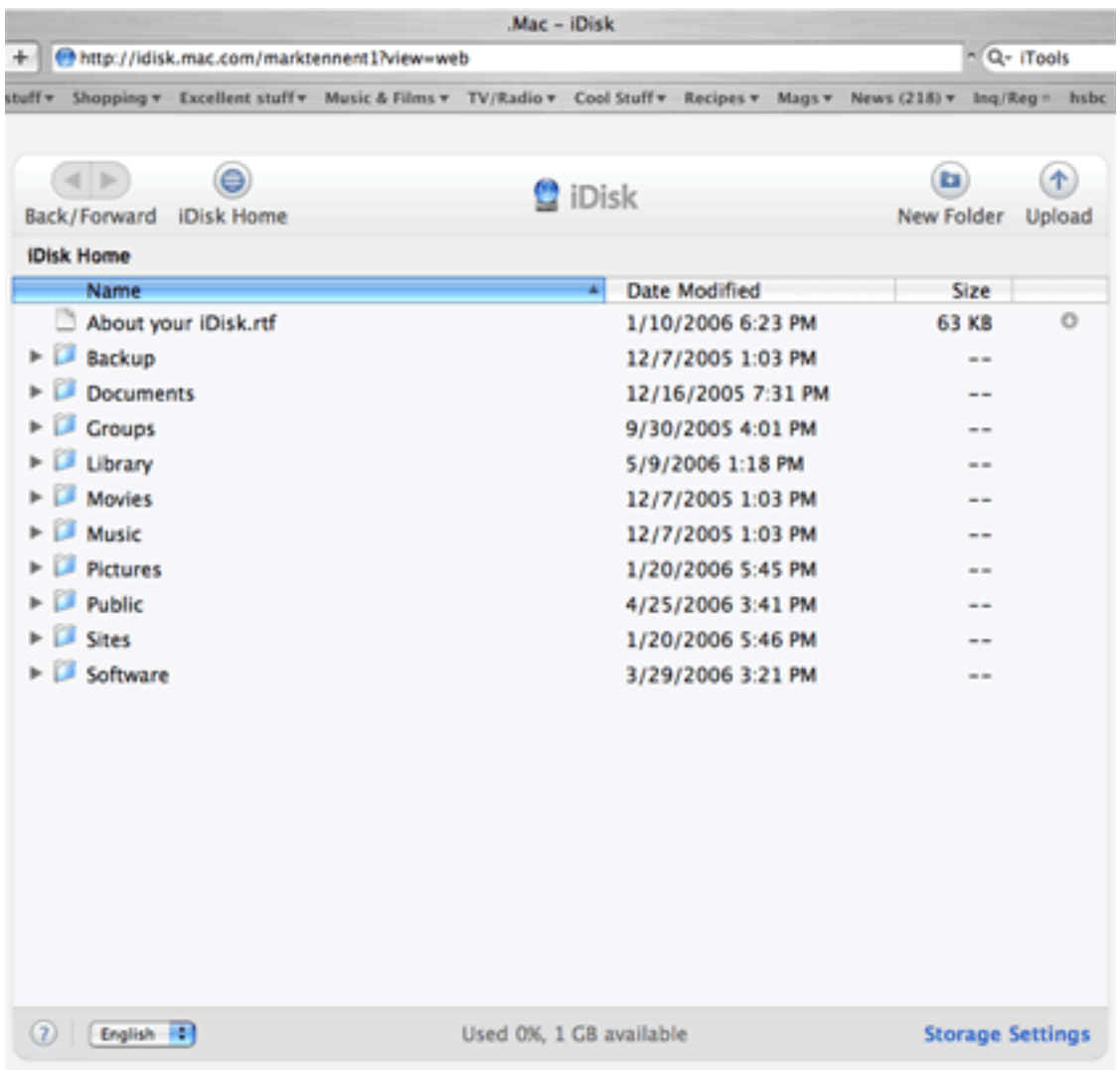
iDisk

iCards

To get around disk storage limitations, users created two or more accounts. Recognising a revenue-earner when they saw one, in 2002 Apple renamed iTools to .Mac in parody of Microsoft's .Net service, and started to charge for it. To sweeten the blow to users, Apple threw in free software including McAfee's Virex virus scanner. I was an early adopter of OS X and iTools but decided to pass on the paid-for version, only to change my mind a little later, resulting in the numeral 1 being added to my old mac.com e-mail address.

In the four years since then, .Mac has changed a little and not all for the better. Account holders no longer get a copy of Virex, for example. Nowadays the iDisk limit is 1 GB with

more available at extra cost, and mac.com e-mail has a few more tricks up its sleeve. Home-Page, the free Web site host and generator, has also gained some features, including more templates, and Groups—a way to create your own online community to share information, calendars, announcements and files. These online tools are tightly integrated with Apple's free desktop software including iPhoto, Backup, and iSync.

Groups

.Mac is based on the [WebDav](#) and [IMAP](#) protocols. The former is an extension for HTTP, the hypertext transfer protocol the Internet uses to share information and publish Web pages. The latter is one of the standard ways to exchange e-mail messages across the Internet. Together they make .Mac available to any computer able to access the Internet, and one would think they would work reliably and efficiently. Not so in my experience.

The main reason I have kept my .Mac subscription, apart from stopping my namesakes from grabbing my name, is so I can upload large files. My son lives in Chicago, I have friends around the world, and we like to swap photographs, movies, and so on. As a designer, I need to make huge files available to printers, repro-houses, and other professionals. So an iDisk with a gigabyte of storage space seems ideal. It means we should not need to connect computer-to-computer to exchange files, especially when our local time zones may be 12 hours apart.

I have never been able to upload a file of more than a few tens of megabytes to my iDisk. Everything seems to be working correctly, and then the lights on my ADSL-router stop blinking. On screen, the little beachball is still spinning but nothing happens. I've even left things like that for hours before canceling the whole transfer. Usually this leaves an incomplete file that until recently I had to send a begging e-mail to the Apple technicians asking them to delete it for me. There is a free WebDAV application called [Goliath](#) that should be more reliable at sending files to iDisk but it suffers the same fate—terminal ennui. At least Goliath lets me delete the failures, but I cannot recommend it after suffering more than a crash or two.

To send files of up to 100 MB and more there are various free services such as [Dropload](#) and [SendThisFile](#) (also search Google for "related: www.dropload.com"). They all work in a similar way—you send the file to them via a Web browser, and they send an e-mail to the intended recipients with a link to download the file. In my experience these free services are one hundred percent better than iDisk because they actually achieve the transfer, where iDisk has refused to accept the file in the first place.

Dropload
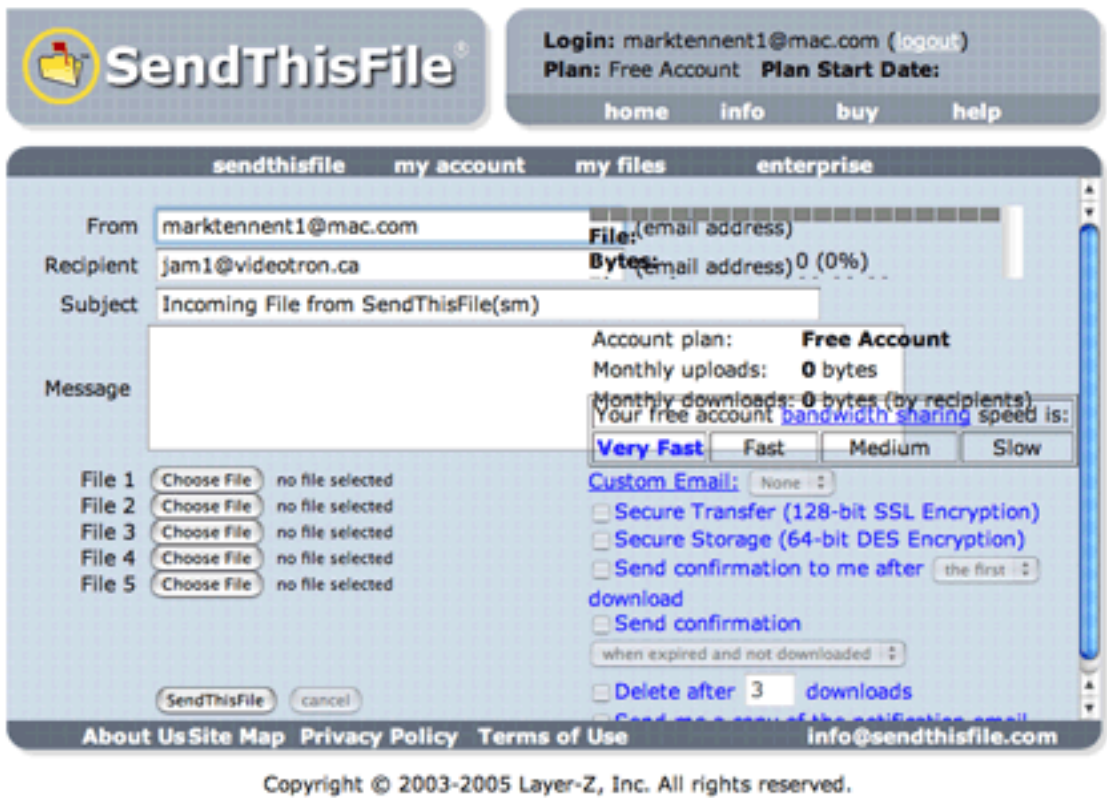
SendThisFile

The remaining parts of .Mac work reasonably well. There have been times when I made simple Web sites as a fast and dirty way to get information across, using the templates Apple provide for HomePage. As the site is generated, HomePage is able to automatically announce the location by sending an eCard to the people you want to know about it. Often the link on the eCard refuses to work for some unknown reason. The site is exactly where the link says it is, but it only generates an error message.

On the other hand, HomePage and its close integration with iPhoto enabled me to take on a builder with whom I was in dispute. I simply took photos of the bad materials and workmanship the builder expected me to pay for, let iPhoto generate the Web site for me, and announced it to his e-mail address. No matter that all the Web site's hits measured by the on-screen counter were actually generated by my friends and family. When the builder saw a Web site saying "Look at what this cowboy did to my house" with indisputable photos, he immediately caved in.

Nowadays, there are many alternatives to the tools offered by .Mac and as easily integrated with the other Mac applications such as iPhoto. RapidWeaver, for example, can create and upload photo slide shows, movies, and file transfer sites as easily as HomePage. Backup and syncing software, another part of the .Mac experience, is freely available, such as LaCie's SilverKeeper. ClamXav is a free anti-virus application. As for the remainder of

.Mac, it seems over-priced and for a UK user. It may be that distance is the cause of file transfers not working or that lengthy transfers get "forgotten" by .Mac and are left to fester incomplete.

For no-brainer, point-and-click Web site creation, e-mail and file storage, .Mac could be the answer for you, but I'm less than happy with it and wonder whether to keep my subscription.

Hmmmmmm.

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Make Mine Black

It has come as a great relief that one of those life-changing decisions has been settled. This was one that I'd avoided, put aside as "more important" things got in the way. And now it's finally decided that part of my life is behind me, allowing me to move on. The next car for me just has to be a Mercedes Benz 320CLK. It has to be in black so it looks like the one Agents J and K drove in Men in Black 2. A black suit and shades will complete the ensemble, but not a hat, as that would be too Blues Brotherish.

The Merc was in the supermarket car park the other day. And just like a sad bozo, I had to drive round again to get a second look and see what model it was. There is one little problem. Online road tests—frantically scoured on reaching home—showed quite clearly it's a car beyond the limits of my pocket money. Plus, my wife says it looks very similar to my black Honda Accord, so what's the point of swapping? She just doesn't understand. Sigh!

Never mind, at least my next car is decided. And a new laptop. I Need both desperately, and that is Need with a capital N. My old laptop was bought as the last of the late, great G3 Pismo PowerBooks—even though the white iBooks were in the shops. The G3 PowerBooks were the first laptops able to run Mac OS X—which conveniently arrived the day after my PowerBook. So it ran OS 9 for only a single day. It has never crashed or caused problems, and it has been running non-stop since March 2001.

At the time I bought it, my legs had fresh, meter-long scars running down each, courtesy of England's superb National Health Service, which probably saved my life. Walking was near impossible, and a desktop Mac completely out of reach. The PowerBook became a window on the world for nearly a year, along with 50 meters of Ethernet cable and a half-megabit ADSL connection to help it along. Since then, it has doubled as a DVD player, a TV set (with CyTV and EyeTV), a cookbook, and a general-purpose second computer. It gets lugged from room to room and spends most summer weekends in the garden showing Michael Schumacher demonstrating his driving prowess each Grand Prix. Thankfully, it now has a wireless connection. Dragging a mess of 50 meters of Cat 5 wrapped around an old cable drum was definitely uncool and a hassle to deal with.

I Need a new laptop just like I will Need a new desktop Mac when the Intel ones arrive sometime later this year. What matters, in all this needfulness, is there is no use for any extra speed. In the case of my PowerBook, it already does everything asked of it and more besides, seldom showing the spinning beach ball. The desktop Mac was ordered the minute after Steve Jobs announced the first of the twin processor G5s. Then he made me wait

while "my" Mac was diverted to make the world's third fastest supercomputer. That was OK because the bragging rights were worth every day extra it took to arrive.

My wife has an even faster G5. Hers is liquid-cooled. So when it arrived, I stoked it up with lots of hard-to-do tasks and sat with ear pressed to its case, trying to hear if it gurgled. It doesn't, just like it doesn't do anything different from my old, slow dual 2 GHz G5 that I Need to upgrade. About the only time it shows a turn of speed is when iTunes rips MP3 tracks from CDs. My wife's does it at a gazillion times playback speed, while mine is a mere million, give or take a complete overestimation or two.

Then the new black MacBooks arrived in Apple's shops. One would go very nicely with a new Mercedes and, come to think of it, my iPod is a bit long in the tooth, being of the first generation. It weighs so much that if someone tried to mug me I could swing the iPod like a shot put and hit him on the head. Except that a mugger probably wouldn't want it and might even leave a better one behind out of sympathy. However, a black iPod would make a matching set.

Is black Apple's new white? Will it make desktop Macs available in black? It all seems a bit retro and away from the company's more modernist pure whites. Is it coincidence that Apple's head of industrial design, Jonathan Ive, who was made a Commander of the British Empire by the Queen of England, started out as a ceramic bathroom suite designer and now only appears to wear black T-shirts?

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FileMaking

**by Charles Ross, cross@atpm.com**

# "Real" Programming with FileMaker

Welcome back to *FileMaking*, where this month we'll take a look at scripting in FileMaker, which allows you to turn a FileMaker database into a FileMaker application.

FileMaker can be used on two levels: first, it's a simple database management system. You define tables, fields, and relationships, and FileMaker provides a structured way to store and retrieve data. Even though I've created some very large and complex systems with FileMaker, I have often used it in this manner to create simple databases that are basically glorified list managers, such as the Serial Numbers database we've worked on in past columns. Used in this mode, manipulating data in the database is a matter of using FileMaker's built-in interface elements, such as Command-N to create a new record, View ▷ Find Mode to search for records, etc. FileMaker is very useful at this level. Anyone can create a simple database with a couple of tables and a few fields and begin storing data in it within minutes. Here is an example of a simple database like this:
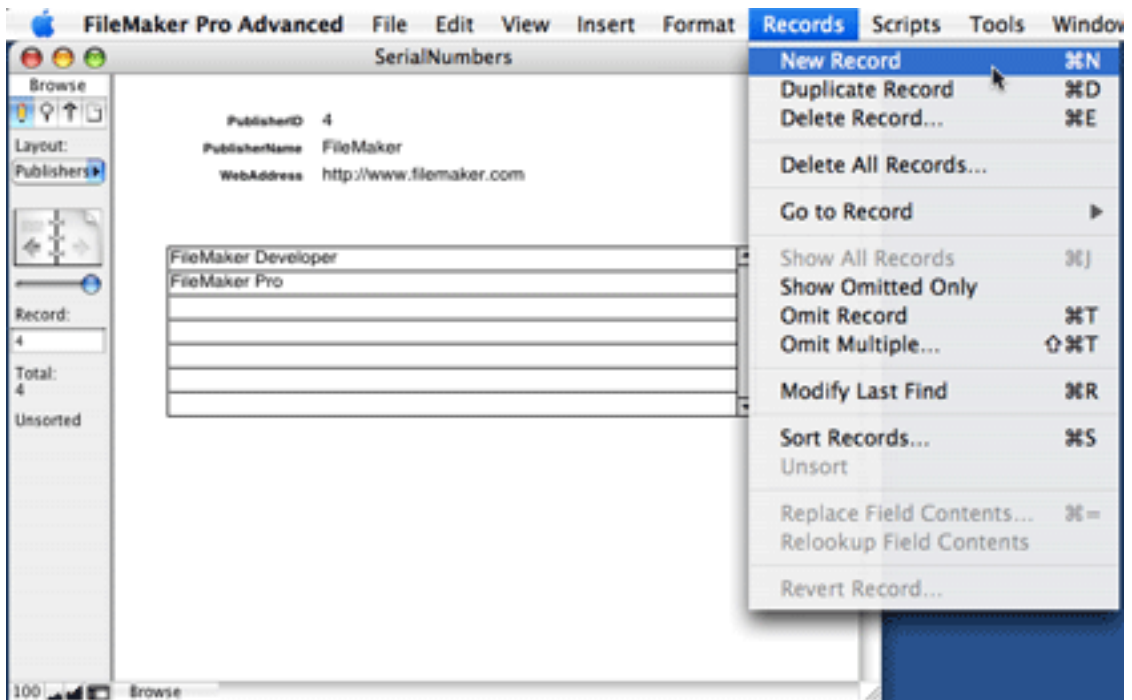
The other level that FileMaker can be used at is as a cross-platform application development environment, which basically means that you create a complete application within FileMaker that will run on either Mac OS X or Windows. In such applications, the built-in

interface elements of FileMaker will often be disabled, and all interaction with the database happens through scripts. Layout tools are used to build a custom interface, and the user clicks buttons or chooses custom menus that execute these scripts. The application can then be hosted on a server, to be accessed by multiple users, or possibly bound as a double-clickable file that doesn't even need the FileMaker application in order to run. An example of such a database application is shown here:
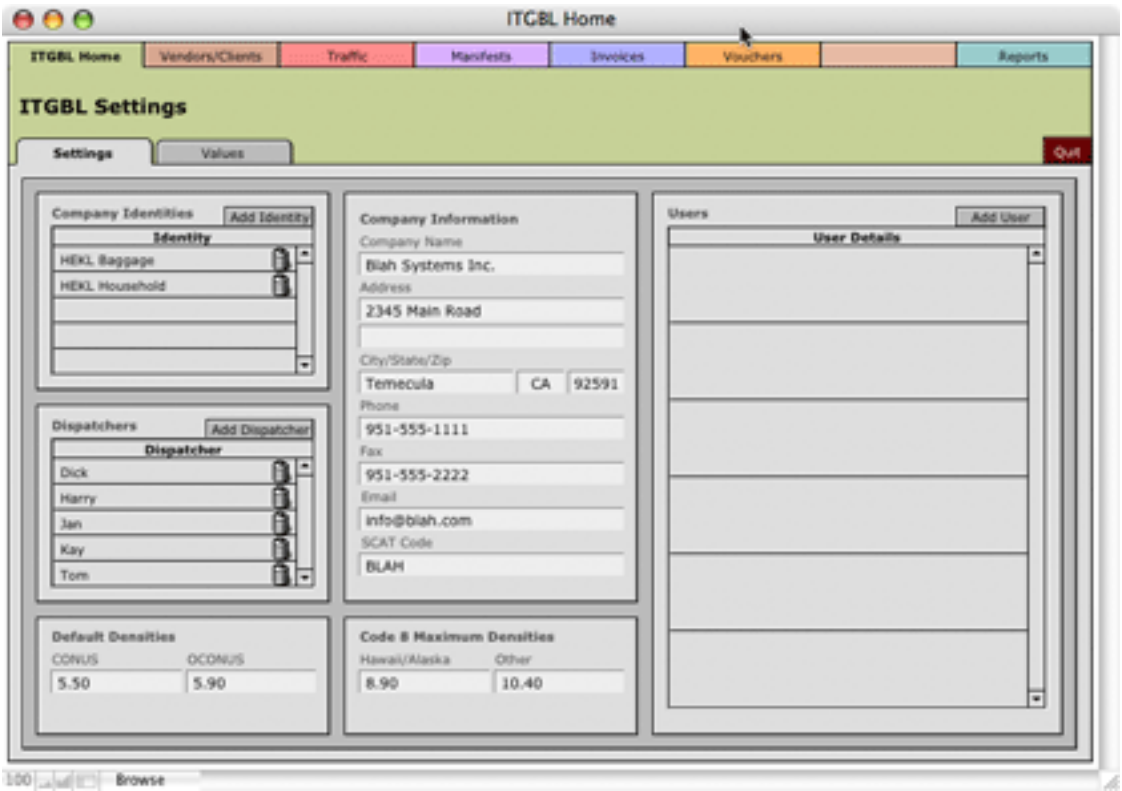
The interface you see above was drawn completely with FileMaker's layout tools (which we will cover in a future column). The functionality of the system is provided via buttons that are linked to scripts.

What Are Scripts?

Scripts are small programs within FileMaker. If you've ever done any programming in AppleScript or another programming language, you'll be right at home with FileMaker scripts. They are simply named sets of instructions that FileMaker can execute in response to a button being clicked, a menu item being chosen, or a call from another script.

Pretty much anything you can do manually in FileMaker can be done with a script. If there's an operation that you perform repeatedly in FileMaker, it's a good candidate for automation with a script.

For example, let's say that you often perform the following manual steps in FileMaker (using our Serial Number database as an example):

1. Go to the SerialNumbers layout.

2. Switch to Table view.

3. Sort the records by publisher name and product name.

4. Print the layout.

If you perform this action on a regular basis, doing so manually will get tedious, so you create a script to perform the actions for you.

Creating Your First Script

First navigate to the Products layout of our <u>SerialNumbers database</u>. The layout you are on when editing scripts has a bearing on which options are set by default for some script steps, so if you're going to be scripting with regards to a particular layout, it's usually a good idea to manually navigate to that layout before you begin writing your script. Then, open ScriptMaker by choosing Scripts ▷ ScriptMaker or pressing Command-Shift-S. You'll see the following window.
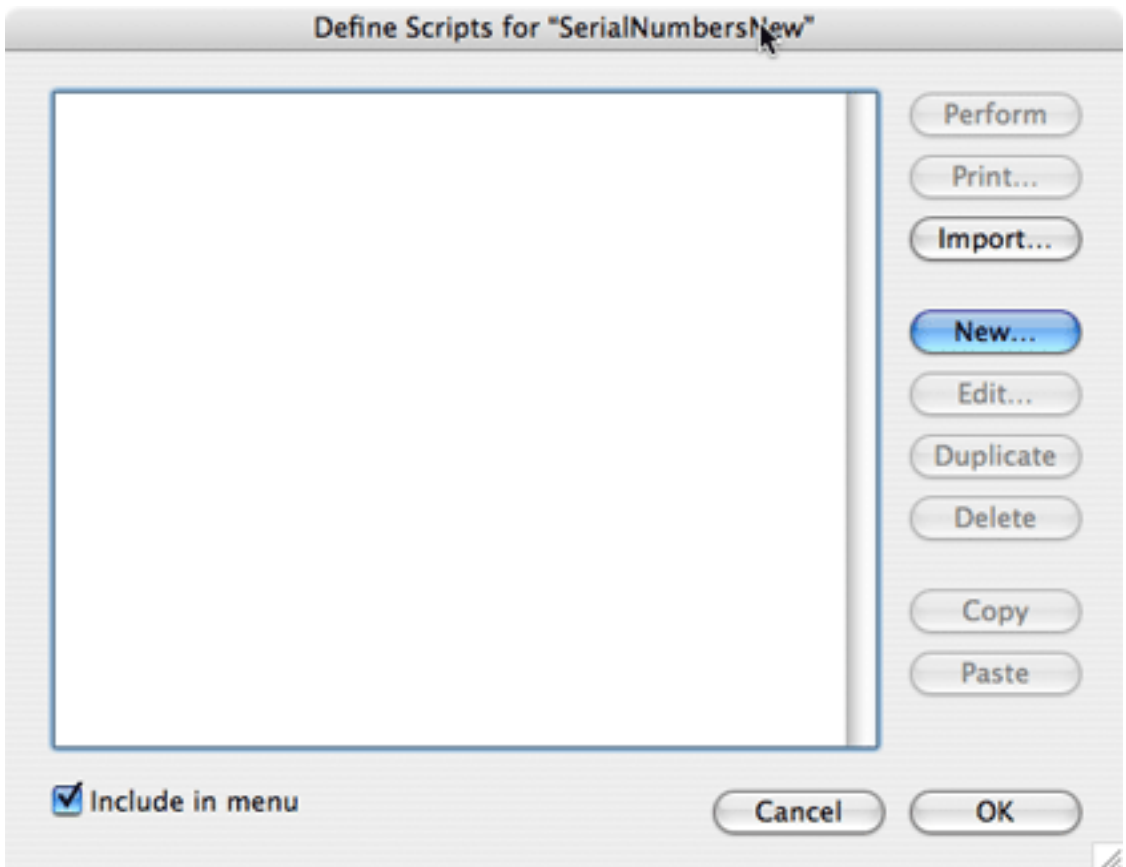
The Define Scripts window is where you edit the scripts available in your file, as well as which appear in the Scripts menu. Go ahead and click the New button to create a new script, and you'll be presented with the Edit Script window.
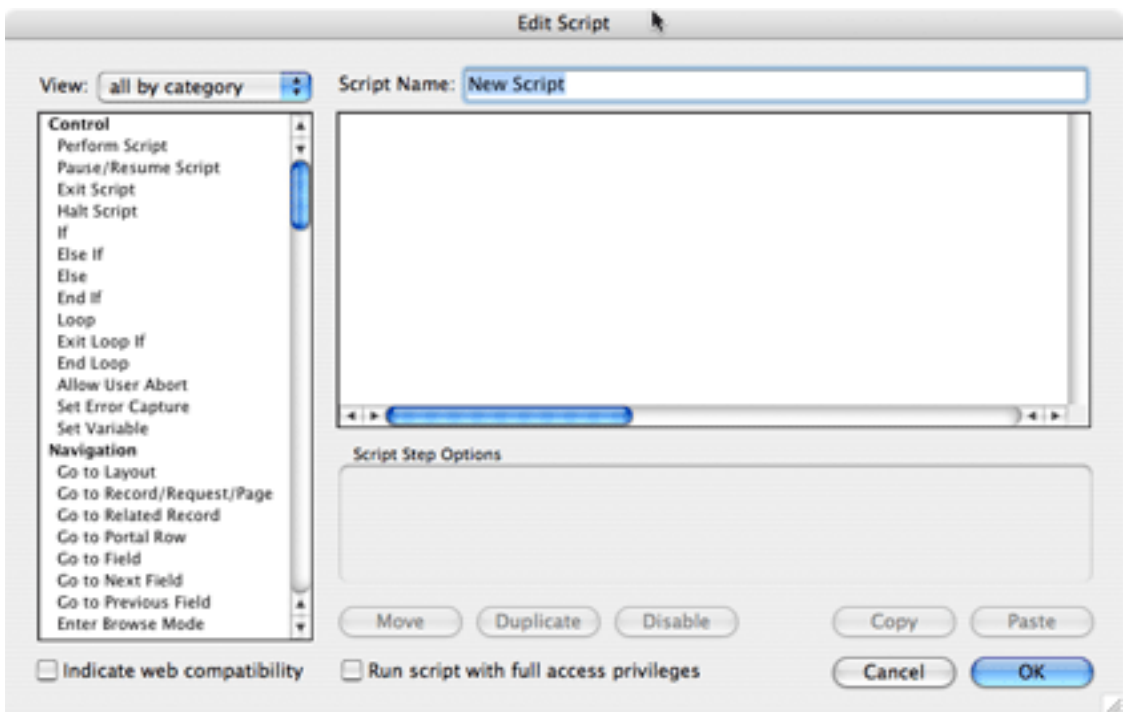
Here is where you add the steps to your script. The list box on the left displays available script steps (individual instructions to FileMaker). The larger area to the right shows the steps that are included in your script. Above this is where you give your script a name. Go ahead and enter "Print All Products" for the Script Name.

You add steps to your script by double-clicking on a step listed in the available steps section. Find the script step named `Go to Layout` (under the Navigation sub-heading) and double-click it. It will be added to the list of steps that will be executed and will have a default option of `original layout` (the original layout is the layout that was active when the script began execution). In the box labeled "Script Step Options," choose Products from the menu. The script step changes to read `Go to Layout["Products" (Products)]`. The parenthetical `Products` is to indicate that the "Products" layout is linked to the "Products" table occurrence (created in our first column in the series).

If you're using FileMaker Pro (rather than FileMaker Pro Advanced 8 or FileMaker Developer 7), your window may look slightly different from the screen shots you will see below. In my screen shots, there is a grey bar to the left of the script steps in my script. This is where breakpoints are defined when debugging scripts. The Pro versions of FileMaker don't have this debugging capabilities, but everything should work identically.

Let's use a different method to add the second step. From the View menu, select Windows. The list of available script steps now shows only those script steps dealing with the control of windows. Find the script step `View As` and double-click it. From the Specify menu select "View as List."
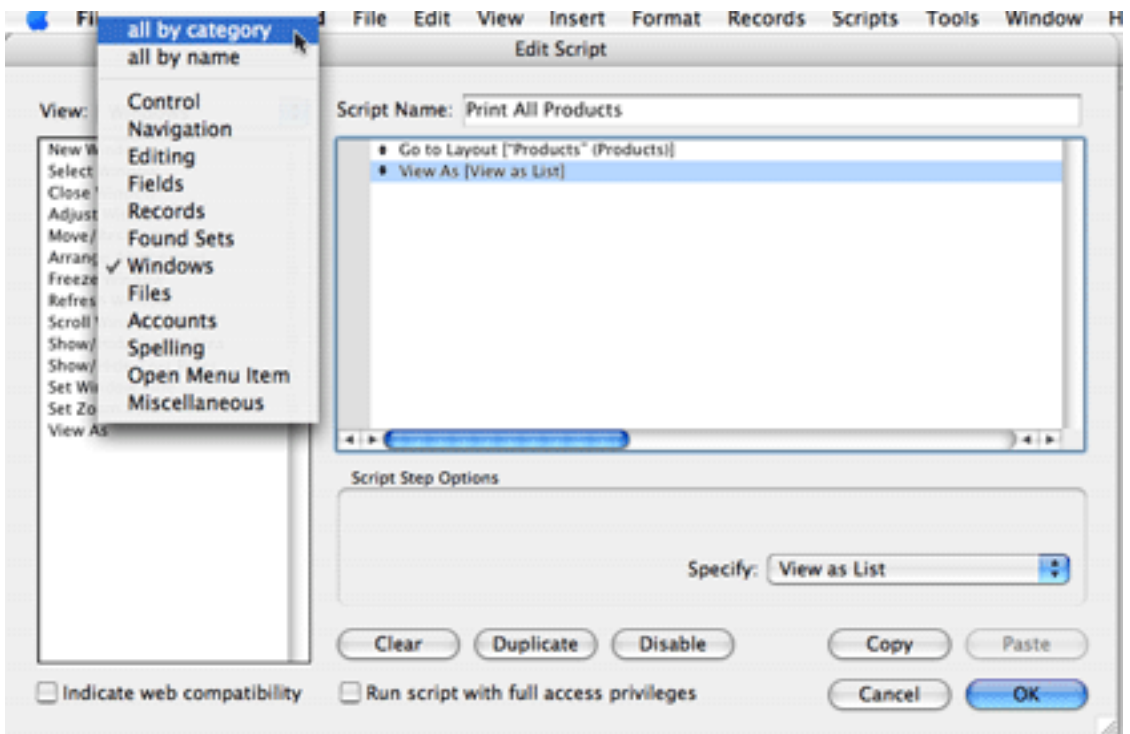
Now that I've shown you two ways to find the script step you want, I'll show you how I actually tend to select script steps. Go back to the View menu and select "all by category." Press the Tab key until the available script steps highlights. If you are performing the exact steps I've outlined and had just added the `View As` script step, pressing Tab once will take you to the Script Name field, and pressing it again will take you to the script step list. The list box should have a blue outline. Type the word "Sort" and the `Sort Records` script step should highlight. Wait about half a second (so that FileMaker knows you're no longer typing to highlight a script step, since some script steps have spaces in their names) and press the space bar. The `Sort Records` step should be added to your script, and the focus ring (that blue outline) should now be around the script definition box with the added script step highlighted.

You can now specify the sort options in one of three ways: either double-click the newly added script step, click the "Specify" button, or press the space bar. We want to sort by the publisher's name and then by the product name. Click the menu above the field list and select Publishers and then double-click "::PublisherName" (the field name begins with two colons to indicate that it's a related field). Choose "Current Table" to return to the original field list, and double-click "Product Name." Then click OK.
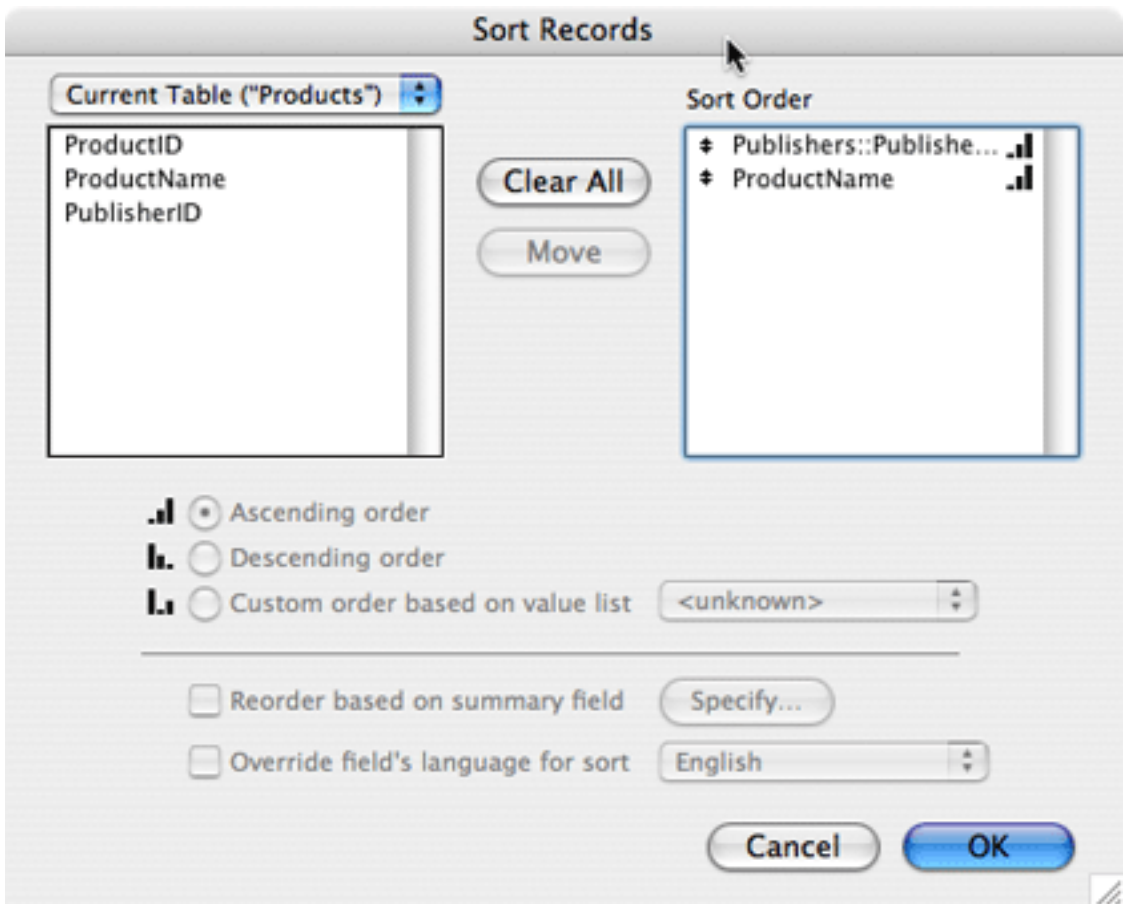
In your script listing, the Sort Records step now says Sort Records [Restore] (you are restoring a sort order that you just specified). So that this happens automatically without any input from you when the script executes, click the checkbox for "Perform without dialog."

Using whichever method works for you, add the Print Setup script to the script and specify the options to print to any printer on US Letter paper in portrait mode at 100% scale (the default options, in all likelihood). Also specify that the step should be performed without a dialog.

Add the Print script step and set the specified options to their default. This time, don't suppress the dialog box so that you can change these options when the script is run.

You may have noticed that there's an operation that we listed as being manually performed which isn't yet performed by our script. The script doesn't yet find all records in the table. I'll show you two ways to insert a script step in the middle of a script.

First, find the Show All Records script step and add it to your script. It should be added to the end of the script, just as the previous additions were. To the left of the added script step is an icon showing up and down arrows. Click this and drag the script step so that it is third in the list, just above Sort Records.
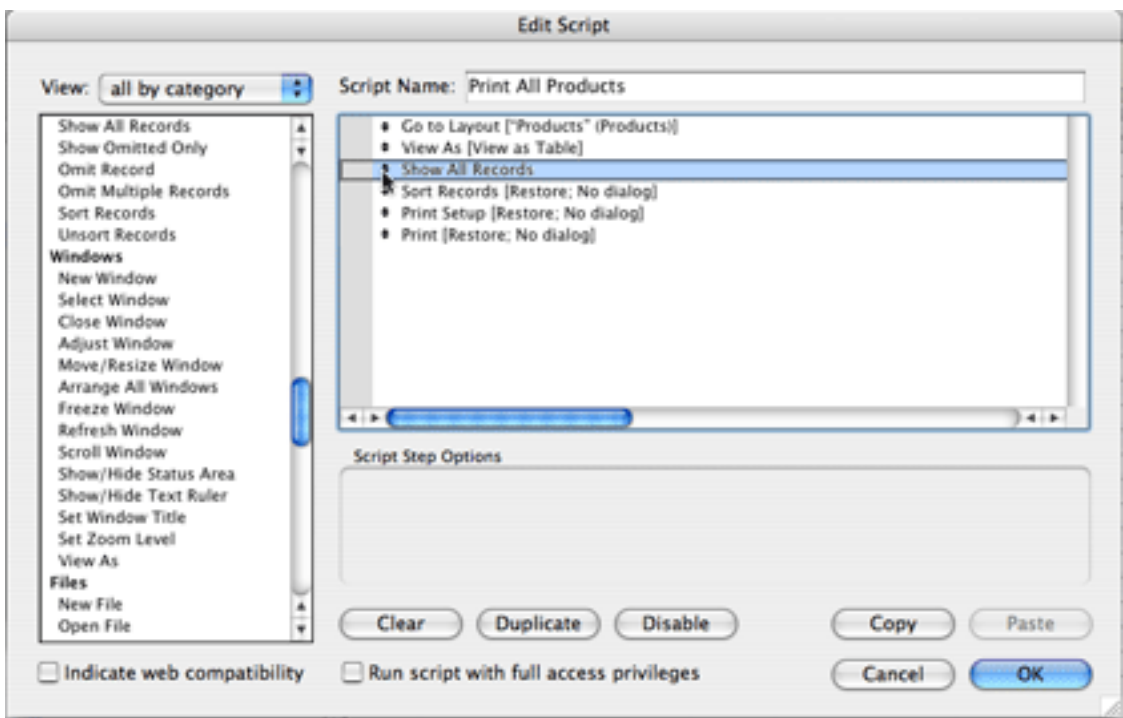
To see the other method for inserting a script step into the middle of a script (and to see how to remove a script step), click the added `Show All Records` step and press the Delete key on your keyboard. `Sort Records` should now be highlighted. Press the up arrow key to select `View As` and again add the `Show All Records` step. It should be added below `View As`. If no step is selected, a new script step is added to the end of the script. If a step is selected, a new step is added after the selected step.

Click OK to save the script and you should see it listed in the Define Scripts window. Click OK here also to actually save the script to your file.

If you now click the Scripts menu, you'll see a new addition to it, "Print All Products." You can execute the script by selecting it from this menu or by pressing Command-1. When you do so, you should see the layout change to table view, and a print dialog box should appear. Click Preview to view the printout in the Preview application.
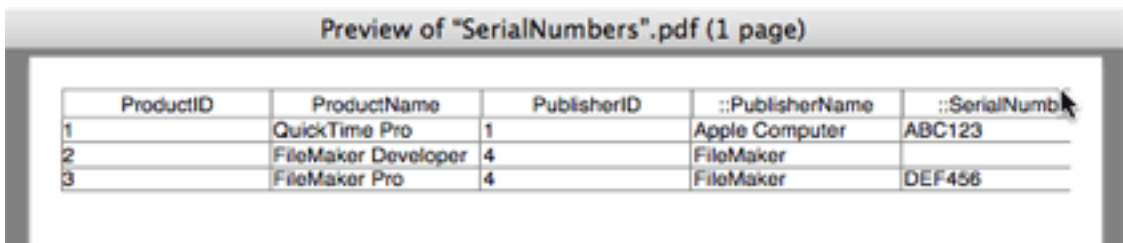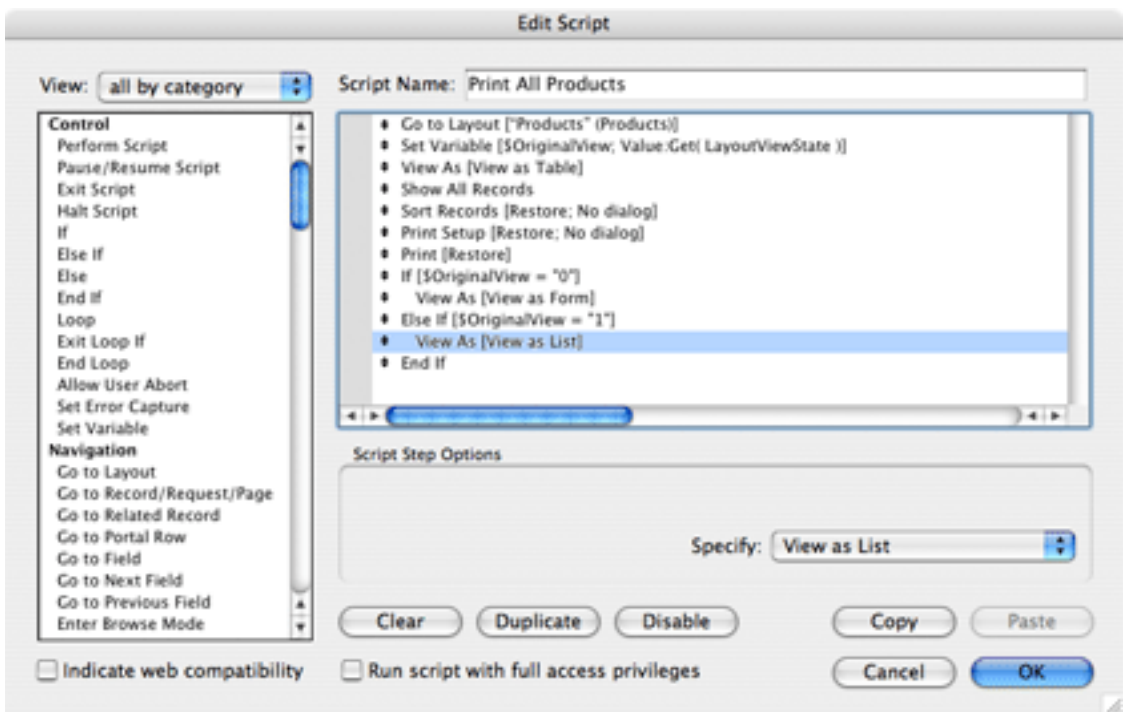
Editing the Script

There is at least one problem with the script. The user may not have been viewing the layout in table view. Let's edit the script to correct this. Return to ScriptMaker by pressing Command-Shift-S.

Like most programming languages, ScriptMaker includes the ability to store temporary information in variables. Add the `Set Variable` script step just after the `Go to Layout` step in your script. For the specify options, set the name of the variable to `$OriginalView` (the dollar sign specifies that you're referring to a variable in later calculations, rather than a field) and the value to `Get( LayoutViewState )`. This will store the view state the user already has for later use. The `Get( LayoutViewState )` function will return 0 if the view state is in form view, 1 if it's in list view, and 2 if it's in table view.

Also like most programming languages, ScriptMaker has flow control steps. Normally a script simply executes from top to bottom, but there may be cases where you wish some steps to only execute conditionally or repeatedly. For this, we want to return the view state to the original state. Unfortunately, the `View As` script step doesn't work with the values returned by `Get( LayoutViewState )` so we need to use `If` and `Else If` steps to return the state to the original state.

Select the `Print` step in your script (the last one) and add the `If` step. Notice that in addition to `If`, the `End If` step was also added. Whenever you have an `If` step, you must have an `End If` step, so both are added at once (although if you ever accidentally delete an `End If` step, you can add it manually). Edit the options for the `If` step to read `$OriginalView = "0"`. Then add a `View As` step with the option set to `View as Form`. Add an `Else If` step with the options set to `$OriginalView = "1"`. Click the `View As` step above it and click Duplicate, moving the duplicated step below the `Else If` step and changing the option to `View as List`. We don't need to check for the original view being a table view, since if it is, we are already in that state. Click OK to save your changes.

Edit Script

View: all by category

Script Name: Print All Products

Control
Perform Script
Pause/Resume Script
Exit Script
Halt Script
If
Else If
Else
End If
Loop
Exit Loop If
End Loop
Allow User Abort
Set Error Capture
Set Variable
Navigation
Go to Layout
Go to Record/Request/Page
Go to Related Record
Go to Portal Row
Go to Field
Go to Next Field
Go to Previous Field
Enter Browse Mode

- Go to Layout ["Products" (Products)]
- Set Variable [$OriginalView; Value:Get(LayoutViewState)]
- View As [View as Table]
- Show All Records
- Sort Records [Restore; No dialog]
- Print Setup [Restore; No dialog]
- Print [Restore]
- If [$OriginalView = "0"]
-   View As [View as Form]
- Else If [$OriginalView = "1"]
-   View As [View as List]
- End If

Script Step Options

Specify: View as List

Clear   Duplicate   Disable   Copy   Paste

☐ Indicate web compatibility   ☐ Run script with full access privileges   Cancel   OK

Executing Scripts

You've already seen that you can execute a script by selecting it from the Scripts menu. Scripts only appear in this menu if they have the "Include in menu" checkbox checked in the Define Scripts window. The first ten scripts (as seen in Define Scripts) that have this checkbox checked will also have keyboard equivalents of Command-1 through Command-0. As you might imagine, in a file with dozens or even hundreds of scripts, including them all in the menu will not be very helpful. You may have noticed that the Define Scripts window has a Perform button, and scripts can also be executed by selecting them here and clicking that button, but that generally seem very useful (although it can be while you're creating and testing a script). The primary method for executing scripts is with buttons.

Uncheck the "Include in menu" checkbox for the "Print All Products" script and click OK to save your changes (note that the script no longer appears in the Scripts menu). Enter layout mode by pressing Command-L. In the toolbar on the left is a button tool, which looks like a small button with a hand pointer over it.

Click this and move your pointer over the body section of your layout. The pointer is now a set of crosshairs. Click and drag to draw a button on the layout. The Button Setup window will appear. You can assign any individual script step to a button, but the only one I ever use is Perform Script. Select this script step and click "Specify" to select the "Print All Products" script. Click OK for each of the two windows. You should see a blinking cursor in the button allowing you to name it. Type "Print" and press the Enter key. (Enter will end the editing of the script name, while Return will insert a carriage return into the name.)
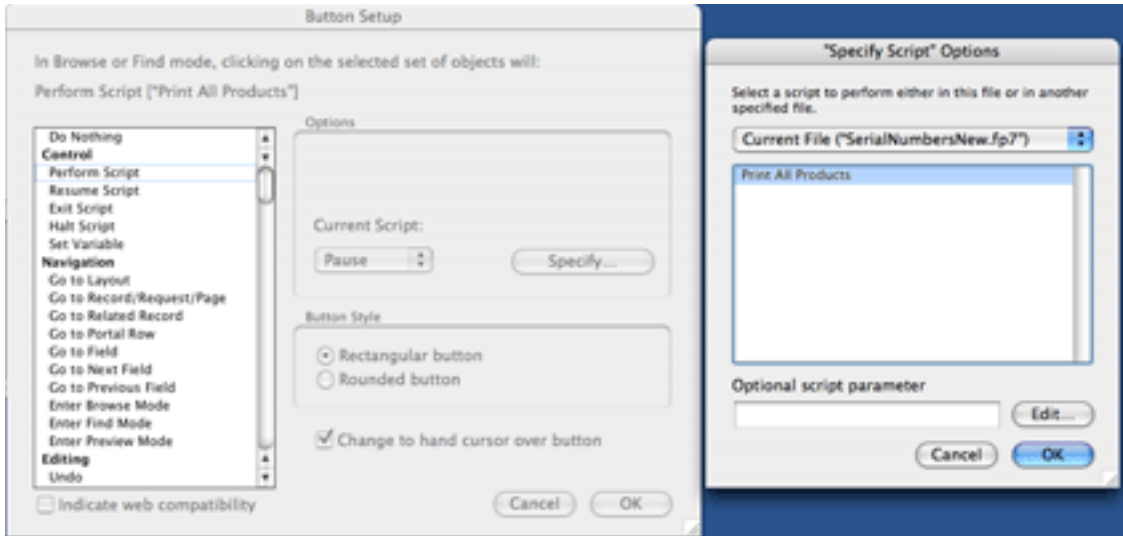
Enter Browse mode by pressing Command-B and try clicking your new button. If you'd like to view the finished file, you can <u>download</u> my copy of it.

Conclusion

Congratulations! You've learned quite a bit this month. Scripts are a source of much of the power of FileMaker, and since they are a deep topic, we'll be taking the next few columns to cover them. Try creating a few scripts of your own. For instance, see if you can edit the script to return the user to the original layout after the script finishes executing. (Hint: you don't need to store the original layout in a variable.) Then see if you can make it so that if there are no records in the table, rather than printing, a dialog box appears alerting the user (see the `Show Custom Dialog` script step). Until next month, happy *FileMaking*!

Copyright © 2006 Charles Ross, <u>cross@atpm.com</u>. Charles Ross is a Certified FileMaker 7 Developer and the Chief Technology Officer of <u>Chivalry Software, LLC</u>, a company specializing in custom database, web and automation software and publisher of <u>Function Helper</u>, a FileMaker calculation debugging tool. He was a contributing writer and the technical editor for <u>The Book of FileMaker 6</u> and has contributed to <u>ISO FileMaker Magazine</u> and <u>Macworld</u> in addition to his <u>series on AppleScript</u> for ATPM.

Promises and Pitfalls of the Digital Media Revolution

My Road to the Digital Lifestyle

I purchased an Apple IIGS in the late 1980s. There wasn't much of a learning curve since I had used other Apple IIs in high school. The quest to integrate this remarkable device into my daily life began almost immediately.

It quickly became apparent that some tasks were going to be easy and other tasks would prove more difficult. I purchased the computer primarily for its graphics capabilities and word processing. Graduate school saw to it that word processing got integrated into my digital life quickly. Balancing my checkbook never made that transition. It took longer to do that on the computer than it did on paper because I still had to take time entering the information into a paper check register. It wasn't long before I gave that task up.

A few years later, I talked my future wife into trying a Mac. She wanted to do some writing that required combining text and graphics. You could do that at the time on a PC but not very intuitively or very well. She settled on a Mac LC II for budget reasons. In short order we were word processing, drawing, and running spreadsheets with the best of them. The LC II was an integral part of our daily digital life and remained so for several years.

Fast-forward a few decades. Apple had replaced the LC II with numerous models, each faster and more powerful than its predecessor. Now people weren't just interested in word processing. The extra computing power and speed had given rise to the desire to "Rip, Mix Burn." I didn't realize it at the time, but we were witnessing the beginning of the digital media frenzy. In no time at all, MP3s weren't just for geeks, and every other computer manufacturer was following Apple's lead encouraging customers to let the computer become the centerpiece of their digital lifestyle.

Just as we have come to expect, Apple has often been leading the way in this digital transformation. Customers on all computing platforms were taking the "Rip, Mix, Burn" concept to heart. In what seems like the blink of an eye, the mix tape gave way to the mix CD, and home movies started giving way to the home DVD. Give someone a Mac, iLife, the occasional doodad or accessory, and amazing things start happening. You can also do this on a PC, but it's just not the same.

For me personally, the digital media lifestyle was spurred on almost two years ago when I purchased a dual 2 GHz G5. Since then I have ripped most of my music to MP3s,

[integrated the computer and stereo](), and experimented with one [method of video extraction](). Along the way, I have been paying attention to some things that work and some things that could work better.

The Digital Lifestyle at Its Best

Some things are being done better due to the digital media revolution. Turn on your television almost any day of the week, and you will see excellent examples of the digital lifestyle at work. Sports programs, for example, use digitally produced statistics to illustrate points being made by the announcers. Race fans can, in most cases, not only get statistical information but also in-car audio, race team communications, and a host of other information. There's often a fee involved for these services, but for some fans that's a small price to pay for the enhanced viewing experience.

If you're not a big race fan, maybe you're ready to "Play Ball." Barring blackout restrictions, you may be able to get your favorite team's out-of-market games. All it takes is a broadband connection, the right software—and a fee, of course. I haven't tried this one yet, but the key element here is the ability to get content that might not otherwise be available. No matter what you are interested in, someone is probably out there in the digital ether providing content that can enhance your listening and viewing experiences. Background information, participant interviews—you name it and it's probably out there. I'm sure each of us has a favorite example of the best aspects of the digital lifestyle.

We could probably spend several days arguing about what constitutes good digital integration. There have probably been thousands of lines of text written about achieving good usability and best practices in content creation and integration. What does good digital integration mean, and how do we know it when we see it?

For me, the the hallmark of good digital integration is that the primary content is enhanced and doesn't get relegated to secondary status. Additional information is there if and when you want it but doesn't get in the way otherwise. I think that's true for all types of media and all operating systems. In a perfect world, the content you want goes where you want with a minimum of fuss, bother, and user intervention.

The Digital Lifestyle at Its Worst

Just because some things are working well doesn't mean there aren't a few detours and dead ends along the way. Sometimes this digital media concept hasn't worked as well as it should. I haven't decided what's worse: having digital media integration *almost* work well or having it not work at all.

A few years ago, I got my first clue that maybe this digital media integration was going in a direction I wasn't going to like. Television networks started putting their logos in one corner of the screen. It seemed to me that some of them were huge. I find these things annoying but for the most part have learned to ignore them.

Having company logos on the screen was bad enough—then companies stopped making the logos transparent and started adding the URLs for their Web sites. These things have finally

gotten out of hand. Sometimes text that is relevant to the current program is obscured by graphics promoting upcoming programs. I think I have even seen some letterboxed programs recently that contain advertisements at the bottom of the screen during the main program. I know that advertising pays the development costs of these programs, but this is ridiculous.

Under the heading of "things that almost work well," we have the TiVo. My network-enabled TiVo almost works well with my Mac. It joined our AirPort-based network almost effortlessly. Since the unit is Bonjour-aware, it appears in my Safari bookmarks. That's the good news. The bad news is that unless I want to hack the TiVo, this feature won't be very useful until the Mac version of TiVoToGo is released. If I know the TiVo's IP address and Media Access Code, I can view a list of the recordings stored on the unit. I can even download these recordings to the Mac's hard drive, but that's about the best you can do without hacking the unit.

If you are a TiVo owner, you have probably heard about the TiVo Desktop software. It allows you to play your iTunes Music Library or iPhoto picture library on your TiVo. Sounds like a great idea, right? Well I can tell you from experience it works—almost. Until recently, the TiVo software couldn't play AAC files. Now it can play AAC files as long as they are not protected files. For me, that means that almost 750 of the songs in my iTunes music library can't be played back through my TiVo unit.

Some of you may comment on this article, telling me that the TiVo-related issues are partly the results of digital rights management schemes and the problems they present. I'll concede in advance that you are right about that. All that does is demonstrate that things are not being handled well. The understandable effort to ensure that content isn't distributed illegally creates a situation where legitimate users are sometimes unable to put purchased content on the device they want to use. For me, this means that the NCAA basketball game between Northwestern State University of Louisiana and Iowa that I purchased from the iTunes Music Store can't be played back on my TV. I have to resort to watching the game on my computer or connecting a multimedia projector into my computer. For me, that's not that difficult a hurdle, but it is more of a hurdle than many users want to put up with on a regular basis.

I know this article doesn't present any answers to the issues raised, but perhaps it will spur you to think a bit about some of them. As users, we are going to be paying the costs. When the content providers, digital rights software manufacturers, lawyers, lawmakers, and others sit down to settle these issues, users should be right there with them participating in the decision-making process.

EAA AirVenture

This Month's Desktop Pictures

Like last month, these photos were taken by Chris Lawson at the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture 2005 event held in Oshkosh, WI. He used a Canon Digital Rebel XT and Canon 100-300mm zoom lens. A couple of the nose art photos may have been taken with a Canon 18-55mm lens.

- Goulian—Mike Goulian does a knife-edge fly-by in his CAP 232.

- Gunfighter (P-51D) Profile—perhaps the best-known of all the WWII-era fighters, the North American P-51 (in this case, a D model) was very well represented at Oshkosh.

- Gunfighter (P-51D) Static—another shot of "Gunfighter" on display.

- Gunfighter (P-51D) Taxiing—"Gunfighter" taxiing past show center after the Heritage Flight.

- Hiperbipe—a very nicely finished Hiperbipe kit plane.

- Junkers Ju-52—a common bomber and troop carrier of World War II, the German Ju-52 was easy prey for opposing fighters because of its slow speed.

- Mis-Stress Marie (T-28C)—North American's T-28 Trojan was introduced just after WWII and was an advanced trainer aircraft for a generation of Navy and Air Force pilots. This one is a C model, now in private hands.

- Navy SNJ—the Navy version of what most people know as a T-6 Texan or Harvard, the SNJ was the US military's most common advanced trainer during the World War II era.

- Oracle Challenger Engine—Sean Tucker's Oracle Challenger competition biplane has a monster Lycoming six-cylinder engine. Note the "Flux Capacitor" just ahead of the firewall.

- Oracle Challenger—the other side of Tucker's Challenger. This aircraft was destroyed in a crash in early April, 2006. Tucker bailed out safely.

- P-38 Shell Ejection—the shell ejection on the left side of the nose of "Glacier Girl," P-38 Lightning fighter. Though it looks like a close-up, this shot was actually taken from about 30 feet away at full zoom on a Canon Digital Rebel XT with a Canon 100–300mm zoom lens.

- P-40 Warhawk—the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk was made famous by Clare Chennault's "Flying Tigers" in early World War II. It also made an appearance as the main US fighter aircraft during the bombing of Pearl Harbor in the recent Jerry Bruckheimer movie.

- P-47 Thunderbolt—popularly known as the "Jug," P-47s were amazingly rugged and were produced in great numbers. Only a few are still flying, however.

- P-51 Cloud Dancer—another P-51, also a D model, takes the runway at Oshkosh for a demonstration flight.

- POW-MIA Parachuter—the opening to the airshow each afternoon included parachuters dropped from a DC-3.

- Priscilla (DC-3)—another DC-3.

- PT-17 Stearman Front—another major primary trainer (like the PT-23 and similar planes) was the classic Boeing Stearman Model 75, known as the PT-17 in military usage. Along with the Piper J-3 Cub, it epitomizes 1930s American aviation for most people.

- PT-17 Stearman—another shot of the above Stearman.

- Red Bull Edge 540—Kirby Chambliss's Edge 540 doing a bit of aerobatics (sorry, I forgot the maneuver he was doing) at Oshkosh.

- Red Stearman—a Stearman in red paint with a closely cowled engine, probably an upgrade from the original's 220-hp Continental W-670 radial. (Pratt and Whitney R-985 radials were a popular upgrade for the Stearman and are used on the aircraft of the Red Baron Squadron.)

- Scat VI (P-51D)—another P-51D.

- Senior Aero Sport PJ-260—a kit plane design loosely based on the Great Lakes aerobatic biplanes of the 1950s, this Senior Aero Sport PJ-260 is a beautiful piece of work.

- Sentimental Journey (B-17) Nose—a close-up shot of the nose of a B-17. Note the four .50-caliber machine guns in the nose; there's a reason the B-17 was nicknamed the "Flying Fortress"!

- Sentimental Journey Nose Art—nose art from the B-17 "Sentimental Journey."

- Stinson—not actually a Stinson.

- Supermarine Spitfire—Britain's classic World War II fighter, the Supermarine Spitfire, on static display at Oshkosh.

- T-28C Nose—the nose on another T-28C.

- T-6 Texan—a T-6 Texan, similar to the Navy SNJ mentioned earlier.

- USA Flag Parachuter—another parachuter in the airshow-opening drop.

- Warbird—if anyone knows what this is, give me a holler.

- Zorro's Mistress (T-28D)—a T-28D.

- Zorro's Mistress Nose Art—nose art from the above.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

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

Downloading All the Pictures at Once

iCab and Interarchy can download an entire set of desktop pictures at once. Use the "Web ▷ Download Entire Site" command in the File menu, giving it the URL to the pictures page above. In iCab, use the Download command to download "Get all files in same path."

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 and 10.4.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 pop-up 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.
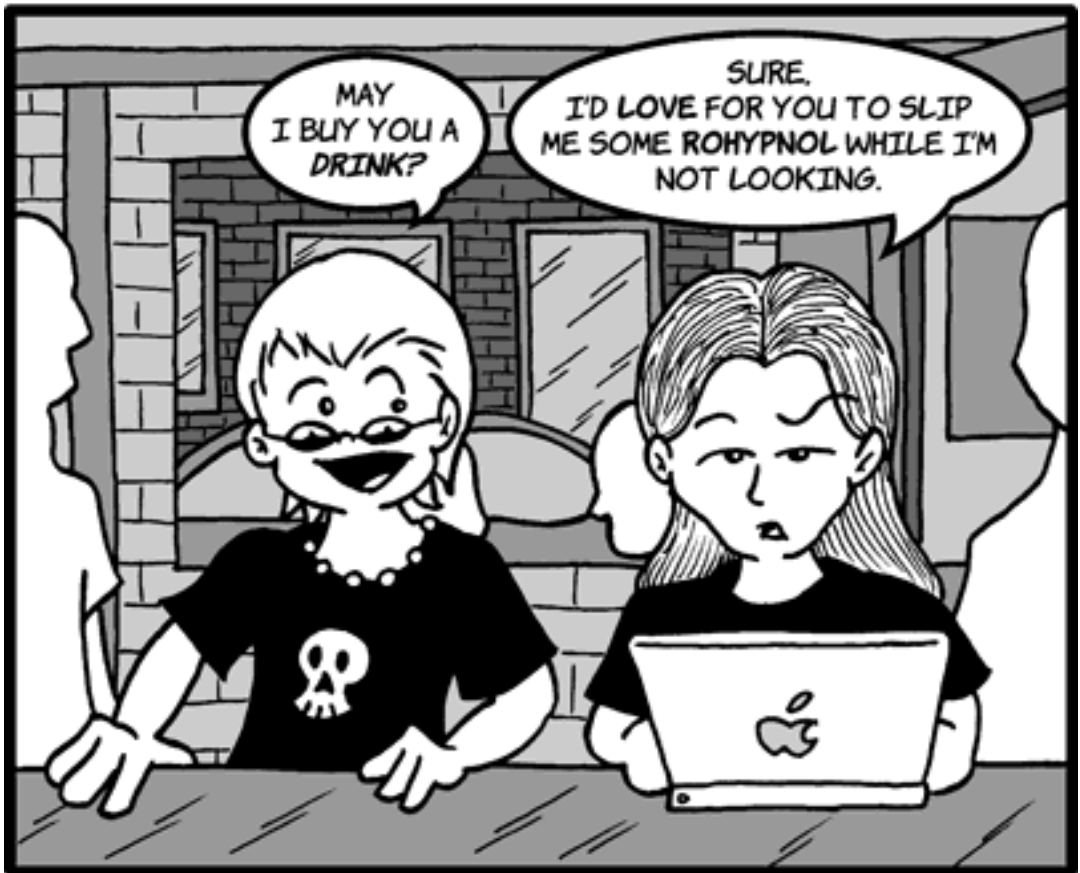
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Software Review

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

PhotoComplete 1.1

Developer: funkypixels software
Price: $39
**Requirements:** 10.3.9. Universal.
Trial: Fully-featured (30 days)

Photoshop. GraphicConverter. Bosco's Foto Trimmer. ImageWell. Image Tricks. Whatever came with your digital camera, and plenty more I haven't named. There's no lack of choices when looking for an image-editing application, and chances are you've already got something you either like or at least have decided you can live with.

PhotoComplete is a newcomer to an already crowded field, and the good news is it really does offer something new. You can make many of the same basic manipulations to your pictures with PhotoComplete that you can with the other choices: resize, crop, sharpen, and fiddle with brightness and contrast. What's different about PhotoComplete is its strange but clever interface, which makes it easy to experiment your way to the perfect image.

Interface

PhotoComplete doesn't have toolbars or floating palettes, but it doesn't just rely on the menu bar either. Images open in a two-paned window. The image is on the right, with information about the picture and a live color histogram unobtrusively overlaid. The pane on the left is a space for Actions.
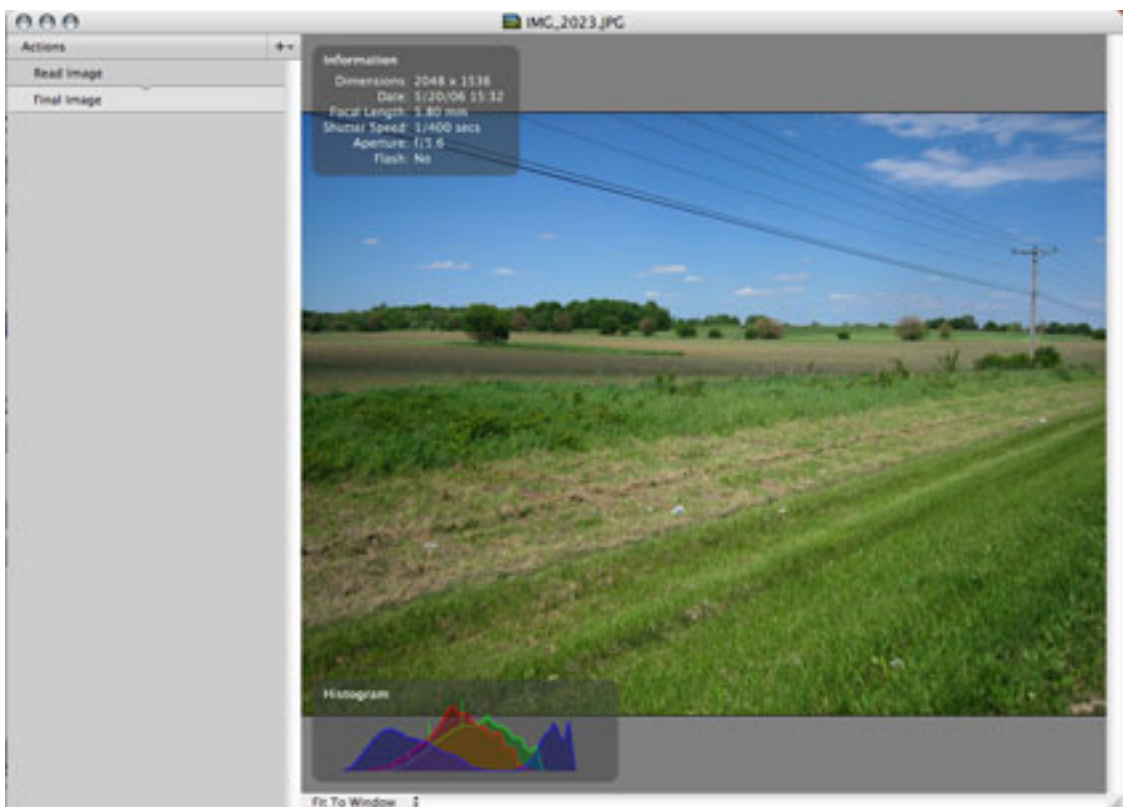
From the Actions menu or from the pop-up menu at the top right of the Actions pane, select what you want to do with your picture. The options for your selection, instead of being offered from a dialog box, appear sequentially in the Actions pane. When you drag a slider or type a number, the image changes. So you get a live response as you work instead of an icon-size preview of your changes.

Pick a second action, a third. Each one appears in the Actions pane, which becomes an ongoing list of all the changes you've made to your image. Want to know what the image looked like two steps ago? Click that action and the image is displayed at that stage instantly. Want to see how it looks with all the changes? Click on Final Image, at the bottom of the Actions pane. Wonder how it all began? Click Read Image to see how it looked unedited. It's simple to jump around to various stages of the image's editing. I find it very helpful to be able to flip back and forth to get an idea of what I'm doing to my picture.
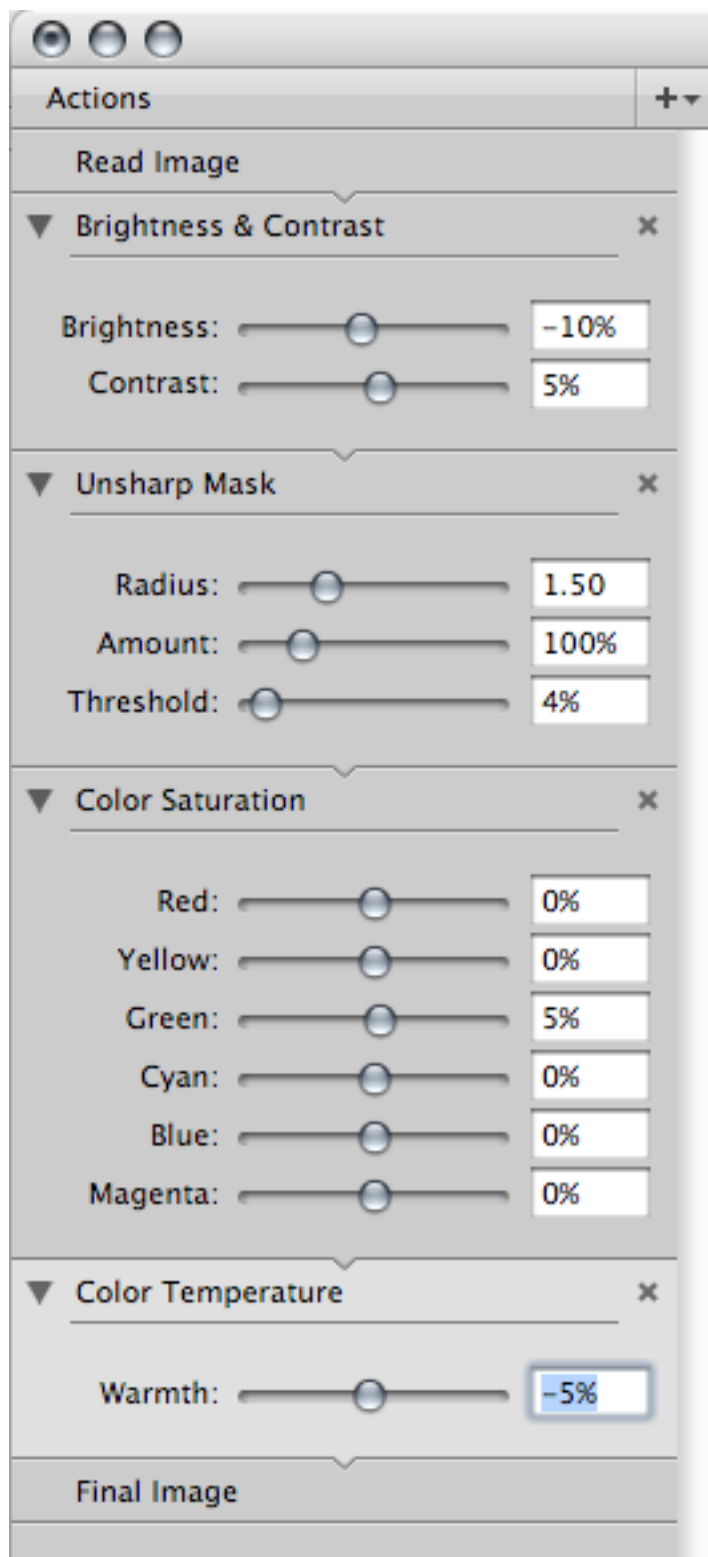
Better still: maybe your second action was sharpening the image, but after adjusting the saturation and color temperature, you decide you want to change, or even remove, the

sharpening. Other image programs wouldn't make that easy: the best you could do is perform a second sharpen operation on the already-sharpened image. With multiple undos you could go back to before you sharpened the image, but you'd also lose the other changes you made that you want to keep. This is where PhotoComplete really shines. Click on the sharpen action and change it. The other actions on the list are then applied to the newly sharpened image in order. Don't want sharpening at all? Click the X to close that action: it's gone, and your other changes are still there.

My Favorite Action

I'm not going to write about each one of the actions PhotoComplete can perform: basic image manipulation pretty much covers it. There's certainly room for new actions to be added (blur and red-eye reduction top my wish list), but this is a pretty young program, so there's time for that. Of the existing actions, Crop deserves to be singled out.

My digital camera, like most digital cameras, takes pictures with a 3:4 aspect ratio. My photo printer prints 4×6 images; that's a 2:3 aspect ratio. If I don't crop my pictures just right, the printer will do it for me, which usually means chopping off somebody's forehead.
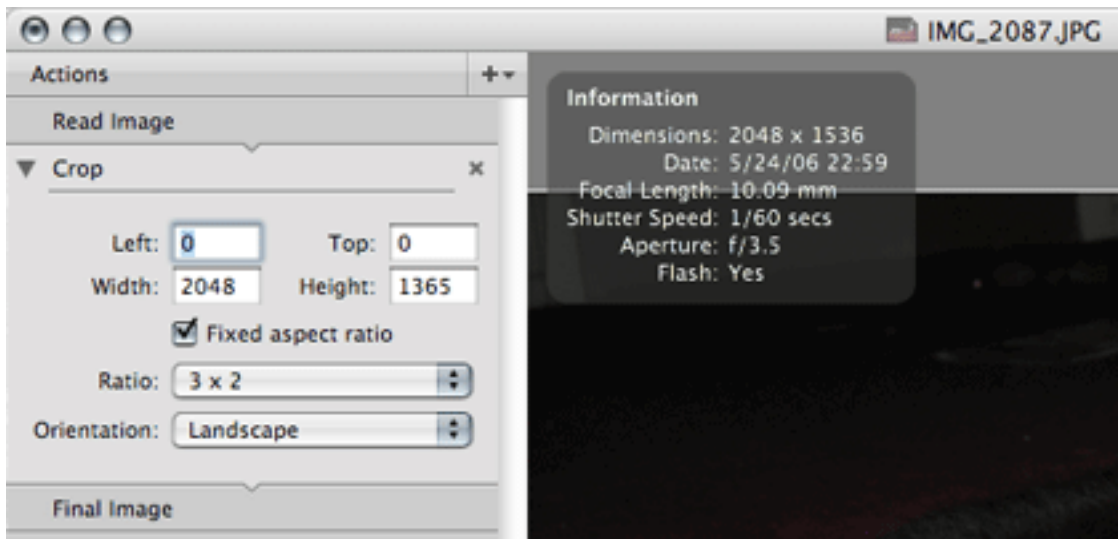
PhotoComplete's Crop Action lets you crop photos at a fixed aspect ratio. That is: check the box, select the aspect ratio you want, and the resizable box that appears on your image can be dragged about and resized only at that selected ratio. It's a simple feature I've been looking for in an image editor for a long time.

Flaws

New Macs ship with half a GB of RAM standard, but we don't all have new machines, so I have to mention PhotoComplete's RAM footprint. In order to show the image pictured in the Interface section of this review, with the actions displayed, PhotoComplete uses more

than 169 MB of RAM. If you're just editing images, that may not be a problem. But with a Web browser, e-mail client, FTP client, text editor, the Finder, and all the standard system processes running, PhotoComplete's gluttonous memory usage can make switching apps awfully slow.

There's a bug, albeit a pretty minor one, when saving files. I always use Save As rather than Save to preserve my original. I give the image a new name, leaving the extension intact, but the extension disappears when the image is saved. That means an extra trip to the Finder to properly name my saved image.

PhotoComplete also contains a feature that lets you upload images to Flickr. (Just Flickr, unfortunately; other sites aren't supported.) However, clicking on the radio button to make a picture upload as Private rather than Public only makes the radio button disappear, and the picture uploads as Public. Uploading to Flickr from within PhotoComplete doesn't save me any time if I still have to open Flickr in my Web browser to set my view permissions correctly.

Conclusion

There are a lot of image editors out there, each with its strengths and weaknesses. Curiously, most of them share one particular weakness: They're extremely linear. PhotoComplete isn't completely non-linear (you can't change the order of actions. . .and that would be *really* be cool), but it takes a few giant steps away from that way of doing things, letting you go back and retroactively change actions you've already taken without losing all you've done since. Imaging professionals will no doubt stick with more powerful tools, but everyday users looking to tweak their digital photos into shape will do well to check out PhotoComplete.

Racer-X

Developer: WaterField Designs
Price: $144 (for 15″); $139 (for 12″); $149 (for 17″)
Trial: None

Laptop bags come in a whole variety of formats for specific applications, but they don't always work for more general settings. I take my Titanium PowerBook with me almost everywhere I go, on campus and off. Which is why in the four years I've had it, I have bought five backpacks, messenger bags, briefcases and the like, plus two laptop sleeves to use with the bags that don't have laptop compartments.

Over the years, I've found that the best format is a kind of quasi-briefcase. It took me a long time to get over my squeamishness at carrying something that looks like a briefcase, but the value of having a strap that doesn't need to go over your head, doesn't mess up your clothing, and can dress up or down far outweighs the fact that, on some level, I am carrying a briefcase.

The previous champion was an InCase sleeve-on-a-strap, a bag just large enough to hold my PowerBook, AC adapter, iPod, and sunglasses. But sometimes I have to bring a textbook, or papers to turn in, and then I have to turn to a backpack. And then, like every other bag I've ever owned, there was a sizable compromise.

Until now. The Racer-X is the new heavyweight champion, and may it reign forever.

In the month that I have used this extraordinarily sturdy and American-manufactured bag— mine is the 15″ model—I have yet to find a significant trade-off, other than the fact that it looks briefcase-y. It has a special zippered computer pocket that holds my PowerBook snugly, and I'm comfortable lugging the bag on the El and in other potentially damaging situations, knowing that my computer is safe.

The Racer-X also has a second front pocket, which has five stretchy elastic pockets on one side and three somewhat looser-fitting pockets on the other. You can put anything you want in these pockets; I have carried my power adapter, my digital camera, my Moleskine and a pen, my sunglasses in and out of case, a lunch, and a small textbook, variously, in these pockets. These are surprisingly useful because they're so versatile. Sometimes, all I have is the power brick and a pen, but on one occasion I got in a full-sized textbook and spiral notebook, a digital camera, a PDA, the Moleskine, and lunch. It was heavy, but carry-able.

And that's the other wonderful thing about the Racer-X: carrying it is comfortable without being ridiculous, no matter how heavy it is. The padded shoulder strap seems to have more give in it than most of its ilk, so that a very heavy bag doesn't get uncomfortable for a few minutes. And if that's not enough, there's a bicycle-grip handle mounted on the top, which is great if you're wearing something you don't want to wrinkle with a shoulder strap.

Now, there are a couple of other useful features, like a small pouch on the back of the bag that doubles as a document pocket and a strap to harness the bag on top of a rollaboard. (I haven't had occasion to try this, but there ought not be any reason it wouldn't work out.) The bag has a very stiff front and back, so that it holds its shape almost no matter what you put in it. It will even stand upright on the ground or on a table, although I wouldn't count on this in a situation when something might get broken.

The Racer-X's aesthetics really aren't 100% briefcase, either, for all of the reasons I've mentioned above, plus certain minor details. It's made out of ballistic nylon, and has a a wide stripe and a small stripe of configurable color flourish. It's also got the bicycle grip, and some super-grabby zippers that stick out. Which I admittedly like because it makes it clear that it's not, well, my dad's briefcase.

As far as the color is concerned, I should be fair and note that to my eye it feels very late 1980s corporate chic, and I'd like the ability to make the entire front panel a different color, like a Timbuk2 bag. But, be that as it may, I wish I could lose the grey panel, at least. But it's a minor flaw, and it's aesthetic, too. If you are not concerned about aesthetics, this will hardly bother you.

One other thing: WaterField's customer service has been stellar. A friend of mine bought one of their bags and received a hand-written thank-you note with his bag; I received a note with mine as well, and I had assumed that it was just a way of being nice to a product reviewer, until my friend told me that he, too, had received such a note. And he was just an ordinary customer. So, thank you for lavishing such individual attention on your customers, WaterField.

I have to say, I have not been this happy with a bag…ever. As a recap, it will hold any number of things, it's comfortable and easy to carry, it's durable, and it's briefcase-y but not excessively so. And its slight aesthetic flaws will hardly outweigh all of those excellent benefits.

SleeveCase

Developer: WaterField Designs
Price: $38–$42 (depending on size)
Trial: None

There aren't a lot of things that a laptop sleeve has to do, so I want to apologize in advance for this not being much of a review. But that's really the crux of it: it has one task, to protect your laptop while it's in a bag that has no padded laptop compartment of its own, and if it doesn't do it well, it's not a good sleeve.

WaterField Designs' SleeveCase is a great laptop sleeve. It's pretty much 100% sans frills: a padded pouch to slide your computer into, with a velcro strap that covers the top and a small pouch on the back for a power adapter.

I was initially skeptical about the utility of any particular style of laptop sleeve over any other. You see, isn't one sleeve just like another?

The answer is, no. The first advantage of the SleeveCase over my workhorse sleeve, a really convenient Spire Boot, is that the Spire sleeve has a full-width enclosure, and, consequently, a full-width Velcro patch, and the SleeveCase has a two- or three-inch wide strap across the center. This did not make itself obvious as an advantage until I went to get my laptop *out* during class, for the first time, and I didn't have to hear the endless crackling of the sleeve opening. WaterField offers a flap as a $15 build-to-order option, but has a narrow enclosure—I have yet to figure out what the advantage to this option would be.

The other is that it is apparently quite durably padded, but it's somewhat less thick than any of the other sleeves that I've used. This means that it fits more comfortably in any of my other bags, and anything that reduces physical bulk is a good thing. Even if it's not necessarily lighter, cutting down on bulk always makes me happy. And a happy Wes is a Wes who is pleased with a product.

Now, in the beginning, I requested the SleeveCase to go along with the Racer-X, and was politely informed that one does not use the SleeveCase with said bag. It has its own padded compartment. I can see the advantages to this. However, I carry any number of bags, most of which don't have a padded compartment of their own, and this is an excellent sleeve. It's not necessarily the least expensive I've seen, but what you get in exchange, like a ballistic nylon exterior and excellent construction, which makes it worthwhile. And, as I note in my much longer review of the Racer-X, the customer service at WaterField Designs is excellent.

The SleeveCase comes in a whole range of sizes, depending on a very complex chart. My advice is just to ask, before you buy it, because I haven't ever figured out what the difference is between some of the numberings, in the time that I've spent preparing for this review. You can choose horizontal or vertical orientation, add a flap and a shoulder strap, and buy a "piggyback," a pack to hold other stuff dangling off the front of the SleeveCase with a shoulder strap.

My own experience with this sort of bag is that, if you intend to carry your laptop over your shoulder in a slim bag like this, the SleeveCase is not the right bag: the shoulder strap is a nice option, as is the piggyback, but I don't know if the case feels quite sturdy enough to stand alone, and I'd hate to have my power adapter and iPod rattling along. There are plenty of bags that are designed to be carried over your shoulder and have more storage space built-in, for less money.

On the other hand, if you're in the market for a case to stick inside another bag, this sleeve is probably right for you. It's not stylish, but it's durable, well-made, slimmer than most sleeves, and doesn't make as much of a loud crackling noise when you remove it.

Worms 3D

Developer: Feral Interactive
Price: $45 (from Feral Interactive)
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2, 600 MHz G3, 256 MB RAM, 32 MB VRAM, 1.3 GB disk space, QuickTime 6. Universal.
Recommended: Mac OS X 10.3, 867 MHz G4, 512 MB RAM, 1.5 GB disk space.

Trial: None

Usually, worms seem the most innocuous of creatures. They wriggle around, chewing through dirt and surfacing after rainstorms. Somewhere in school, a biology teacher told you a bisected worm would grow into two worms. Functional and interesting, if a little icky. Game developers Team 17, however, ask a slightly different question: "What if worms toted weapons and carried out military assaults? What then?"

Successor to a group of high-selling PC games released over the last score of years, Worms 3D combines turn-based strategic play with cute worms trying to knock the bejesus out of one another. The control takes a decent amount of practice, but the game is light enough and fun enough for most ages to spend quality time with.

Installation and Starting Play

Worms 3D comes on a DVD and installs into the Applications folder. If you're connected to the Internet, Worms 3D can check for updates automatically. My DVD had the current version, so it didn't need an update.

The basic game pits two teams of worms against each other, each armed with weapons (such as bazookas and grenades) and tools (such as ropes and jetpacks). Each round scatters the players around a three-dimensional island board with a constantly rising water level. (We assume it's not overtly commenting on global warming.) Some islands are military installations, while others are graveyards or jungles.

Bird's-eye view of a game board, with teams noted by color.

In most boards, the goal is to eliminate each of the other players by taking away all of their life points or knocking them into the water. Each weapon you have (there are about twenty) does a certain amount of damage and often knocks the target around, pushing it to a different area of the board (or into the water). Between turns, sometimes new weapon boxes drop from the sky. Pick up a box to add that weapon to your arsenal.

The tutorial mode runs you through each game type and gives you practice with the weapons. Some rounds challenge you to find a specific item; others pit you against a couple of enemy worms. This gives you needed practice with controlling the worms and learning how far some weapons travel when shot at different angles and power levels. The last tutorial mission, The Driving Range, gives you a group of targets and the full gamut of weapons—practicing there is highly recommended.

Graphics and Sound

Worms 3D originally came out a couple of years ago, so the graphics won't blow away any fans of current PC games or gaming consoles. However, they're clear, colorful, and appropriate to the cartoon-like action of the game. You're free to rotate and spin the perspective of each worm or look at the island from an overhead viewpoint (which helps for launching wide-area attacks such as the Air Strike).

An entertaining part of the game is the behavior of the worms themselves. They taunt one another with a variety of in-game comments, telling the enemy worms how bad their aim is or saying something pitiful just before they expire. Note: a dying worm explodes, taking out some nearby land with him.

Jeggett's last moments.

The game includes a large number of audio "themes," which determine what your worms say. Check out selections such as "Super Hero" and "US Wrestling" from the edit-team screen.

The music bleeps a little, but also works well within the game. As a whole, the game reminds you of a Mario Brothers title, with cute characters and a clean appearance.

Game Play

Nice graphics, good music, but how's the play control? Unfortunately, that's the game's main difficulty. You really have to run through the tutorial missions because the keyboard-and-mouse controls aren't easy to use. Any given movement for the worm itself always depends on the current camera angle, rather than the direction the worm faces (departing from most keyboard and mouse games).

Moving around the board, grenade at the ready.

Several rounds of hopping around the board and occasionally falling into the water will adapt you to the controls, but the time pressure of each turn still makes the controls frustrating. If the camera seems to "spin" too much, try lowering the mouse sensitivity for finer control. If the island moves around choppily, lower the resolution or color depth to reduce the load on your CPU. Most new systems should run Worms 3D well, but older systems will definitely need the 32 MB (or more) video card.

Each turn alternates between the teams and from worm to worm within the team itself. During a turn, the game gives you a few seconds to look around the board, and then counts down a movement timer in the lower-left corner. During that time, you can move and jump, use utilities like a parachute or rope, and select a weapon. Once you use the weapon (or an item), your turn is over and control switches to the other team.

Taking aim with the shotgun.

Make sure to position your worms strategically! In some levels, the water level rises quickly and will submerge any worms left on the lower levels. Use the Teleport item to reach higher ground.

Some bonus elements to the game lie hidden inside the game boards themselves. If you see an odd-looking spot in the ground, drop a grenade on it—you might find an Easter egg, such as a new sound theme. See the unlocked-items screen from the main menu to track your Easter-egg progress.

Stuff waiting to be unlocked.

Playing Against Others

The computer opponents offer challenge enough, but Worms 3D includes a multi-player option both for players on the same Mac (players alternate turns at the keyboard) and over the Internet using GameRanger. Game play doesn't change much—you just have human teams of worms rampaging across an island instead of the computer.

Bugs and Annoyances

Play control could really be better. The default mouse settings tend to "spin" the camera around the player's worm, which disorients you unnecessarily as the turn clock counts down. In my opinion, play control should never be a primary game challenge, unless you're in an arcade-style fighting game. For a game like Worms 3D that appeals to a wide audience, better control of the camera should be mandatory.

Sometimes, using an item such as the Teleport caused the worms' voices to speed up for the rest of the game round. It's obvious, but fortunately not crucial to the game.

Summary

The fun aspects of Worms 3D pretty much make up for the iffy play control. Dropping yourself into the water because of a poor camera angle still burns, but lobbing explosive sheep and homing pigeons at one another is the kind of fun most games can't offer. I'd love to see a Worms game include a way to lock the camera directly behind your worm and better evaluate weapon targeting. But until then, Worms 3D is good enough.

Yojimbo 1.1

Developer: Bare Bones Software
Price: $39 (individual); $69 (family); $29 (educational)
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.3. Universal.
Recommended: .Mac account (to sync multiple computers).
**Trial:** Fully-featured (30 days)

It has been said that information is power. In the past, the challenge was physically locating the information. Today, however, people have relatively easy access to more information than at any previous point in human history; thus, the challenge has shifted from finding to managing that information. This trend can be seen by looking at the evolution of the Find functionality built into various versions of the Mac OS—from System 7's basic Find command to Sherlock 1.0 to Tiger's Spotlight. Additionally, several other programs have appeared throughout the years to simplify this management task.

Yojimbo, from Bare Bones Software, is one of the latest entries into this field. It features a clean user interface with several niceties designed to simplify adding information to Yojimbo. This simplicity, however, leads to several shortcomings that keep the application from reaching its full potential.

Information Management

A quick glance is all it takes to notice Mail's influence on Yojimbo's interface—Yojimbo features the now-ubiquitous three-pane interface and is more likely to be confused with Apple's bundled e-mail application than with Mailsmith, the other Bare Bones product with a three-pane layout. The application looks like a new OS X application and makes use of colored buttons and icons where appropriate to increase usability.
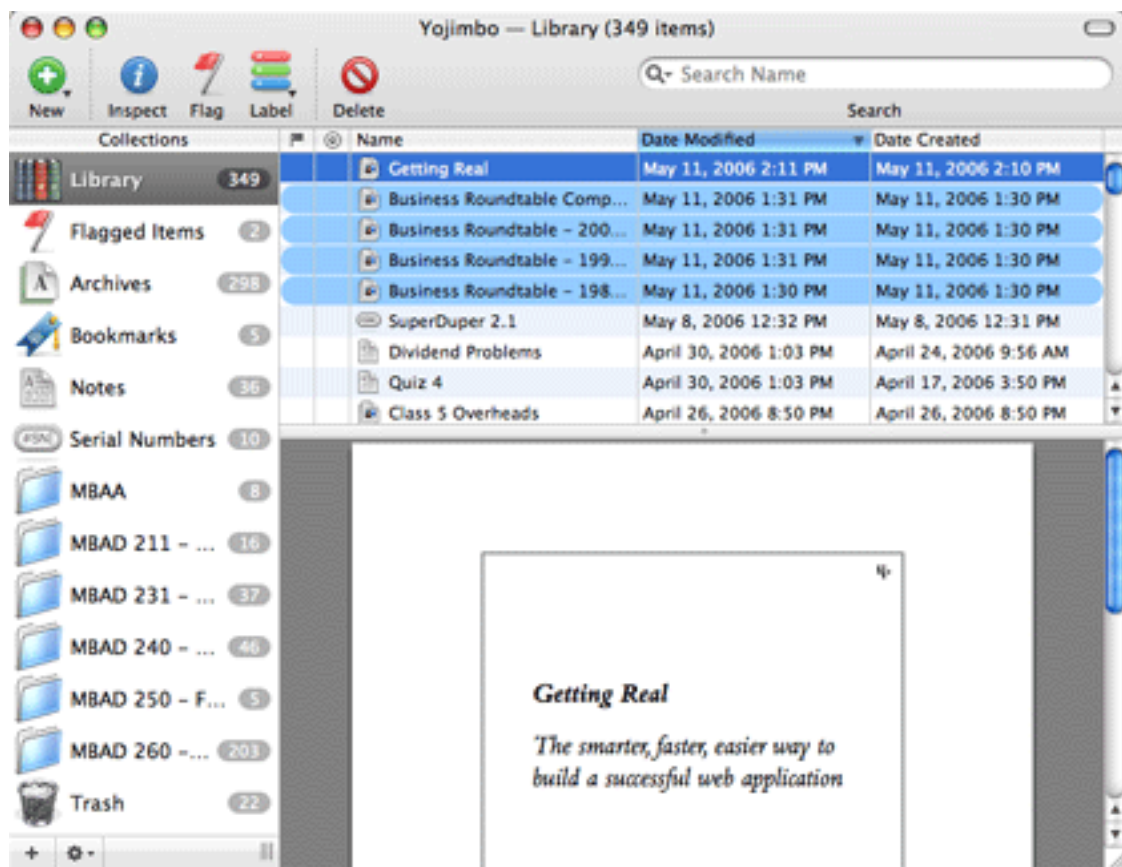
Main Interface

Yojimbo allows you to store several different types of information: Notes, Web Archives, PDF Archives, Bookmarks, Passwords, and Serial Numbers. The latter two are specific to Yojimbo, but the other data types are analogous to files you could store in the Finder. That being said, Yojimbo does not directly interface with actual files you have saved on your hard drive—if you add such a file to Yojimbo, a copy is created in Yojimbo's database. Changes to the file in Yojimbo do not get propagated back to the original file, or vice-versa. There is a workaround for linking to existing files: the Notes editor allows you to insert hyperlinks into your document. This feature is obviously intended for adding things like Web links or e-mail addresses, but you can opt for linking to files on your hard drive. Simply drag the desired file to the text field in the Edit Link... dialog and add "file://" to the beginning of the file path. Clicking the resulting link will open the file in the appropriate application.

One data type whose support seems to be strangely lacking is images. If you try to drag an image Yojimbo, nothing happens. It's not that you can't add images to Yojimbo, but it takes a few more steps. You either need to create a new Note and drag the image to the note's body, which allows you to add commentary to the picture, add it as Web Archive by opening the image in Safari, or add it as a PDF using OS X's PDF Services. While effective, these workarounds seem out of place when compared to how seamless it is to add other data types to Yojimbo.

Most data types behave as you would expect. Notes have essentially the same features as any TextEdit document, including basic outlining tools (Option-Tab activates the outliner). Some people were surprised that Yojimbo lacked an "Edit in BBEdit" command, but the omission makes sense since Yojimbo works with styled text and [BBEdit](#) is plain text–only.

Bookmarks also operate as you would expect. The only twist on standard bookmarking tools built-in to most Web browsers is the inclusion of a "Move to trash after opening" button. Thus, if you're only creating a bookmark as a reminder for a site you need to visit once, you don't need to manually remove the bookmark when you're done with it.

Yojimbo natively includes the ability to view all the data types it supports, though Safari and Preview offer features beyond those offered by Yojimbo. For instance, Yojimbo only offers basic page controls for navigating PDFs. You can jump to the next and previous pages or forward and backwards through the pages you've viewed, but you can't jump to a specific page, quickly tell how many pages are in a PDF, or view a PDF's table of contents.

Fortunately, Yojimbo includes the ability to pass these archives off to their native viewers, giving you access to a fuller set of features. This functionality is view-only, however. If you modify a PDF using Preview (perhaps by adding annotations), these modifications will not appear in Yojimbo.

Web Archives always open in Safari, even if you've selected a browser like Firefox, OmniWeb, or Camino as your default browser. This is because Web Archives are created using Apple's Web Kit and cannot be processed by non–Web Kit–based browsers. Instead of saying "Web Archives can be viewed in browsers A, B, and D but not C and E," the product designers decided to simplify matters by requiring Safari.

I've noticed several quirks when working with Web Archives over time, though the functionality is greatly improved over the original 1.0 release. One known issue is that certain banner ads appear twice. Another is that when I view certain Web Archives in Safari, they load incorrectly. This may be due to the archives originally referencing pages which were password protected; I suspect Safari may be trying to reload certain page components from the password-protected source instead of using the images stored within the Web Archive, but I could be wrong. These same Web Archives load fine within Yojimbo.

Depending on what you store in Yojimbo, you may want to keep prying eyes away from your data. Fortunately, Yojimbo allows you to encrypt most everything it stores, with the exception of serial numbers.

Organizational Skills

Yojimbo has several features designed to aid in organizing your data. The first is the use of Collections. Collections are essentially folders that exist within Yojimbo. There are two key differences between Collections and folders. First, an item can be added to several collections, whereas Finder objects can only appear in a single folder. The second difference is that Collections cannot be nested—you cannot create a Collection for projects, then create sub-Collections for the individual projects.

Yojimbo also includes several predefined Smart Collections. These Smart Collections fall into two categories: Smart Collections for each individual data type (though Web Archives and PDF Archives are combined into a single Archive Smart Collection) and Smart Collections based on item metadata. The latter type of Smart Collections include a collection of flagged items, recently added items, and unfiled items.

Oddly, Yojimbo does not include the ability to create user-defined Smart Collections. Though Bare Bones has promised to add this feature in a future release, the omission is quite glaring.

Two other organizational tools are Labels and Comments. Both of these features behave essentially the same as their counterparts in the Finder, though Yojimbo uses a more sensible UI for selecting an item's label.

To make up for the lack of nested Collections (and, to some degree, user-defined Smart Collections), Yojimbo includes search functionality. You can choose to search the entirety of your collected data against a single attribute. Searching is fairly instantaneous, unless you're searching against the content of a number of items. The search interface is the standard toolbar search field. There is no advanced search functionality built into Yojimbo; this means you cannot search for all documents that reference meeting notes and are labeled Urgent.

Yojimbo also supports Spotlight, so you can theoretically use that interface to build more complex searches. In my experience, though, Spotlight searches can be a bit unreliable. For instance, a search for "Yojimbo NetNewsWire" happily returns a reference to my Net-NewsWire serial number. Conversely, a search for "Yojimbo SuperDuper" doesn't find either of my Yojimbo items that contain SuperDuper in the name.

Interacting with Yojimbo

One of the goals in designing Yojimbo was to make it as easy as possible to get as much of your information into Yojimbo as possible (which is another reason why the methods for adding images seem strange). As such, Yojimbo includes several methods for accomplishing this.

The most obvious approaches involve the main Yojimbo interface. You can either use any of the five New... commands to create the appropriate item in Yojimbo. Additionally, you can drag and drop any valid source (a supported file type or URL) to the Yojimbo window. Dropping the item on a Collection will add that item to said Collection.

Yojimbo's Drop Dock is another option for adding items to Yojimbo. If you've enabled the Drop Dock, a Yojimbo tab appears in the specified location. Clicking or dragging a valid source onto the tab expands the drawer, allowing you to add the item to your Library or to a specific Collection. To remain unobtrusive, Yojimbo allows you to specify the size, location, and transparency of the Drop Dock. My only complaint about the Drop Dock is that it only responds to the mouse—I can't dismiss it by pressing the Escape key.
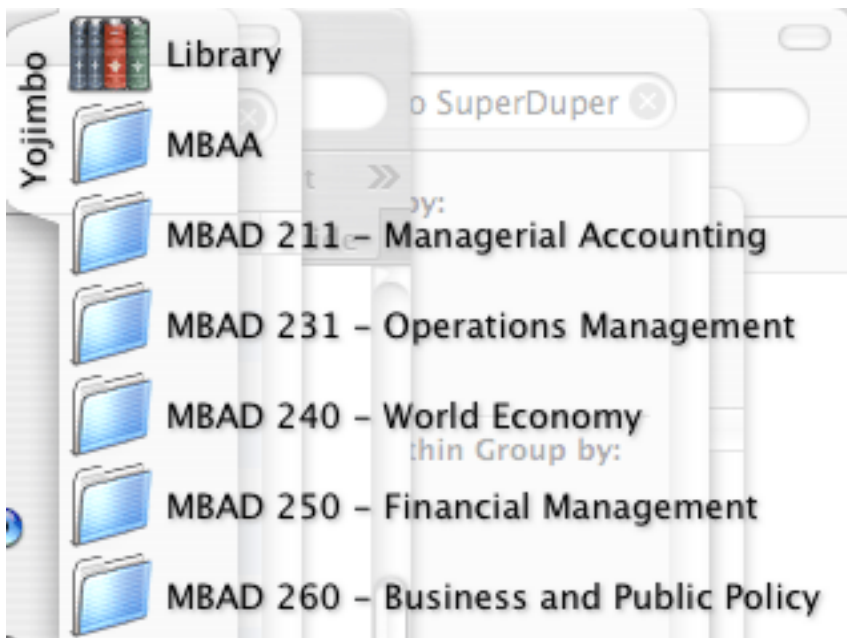
Drop Dock

Another method of adding items to Yojimbo is the Quick Input Panel. Essentially, the Quick Input Panel is the Drop Dock for items you can't drag. Triggered by a user-definable hot key, the Quick Input Panel allows you to quickly create Notes, Bookmarks, Passwords, Serial Numbers, and Web Archives. If you have text on your clipboard, the Quick Input Panel will attempt to use this data intelligently depending on the type of item you are creating. Unlike the Drop Dock, though, there is no way to automatically add the new item to a collection.
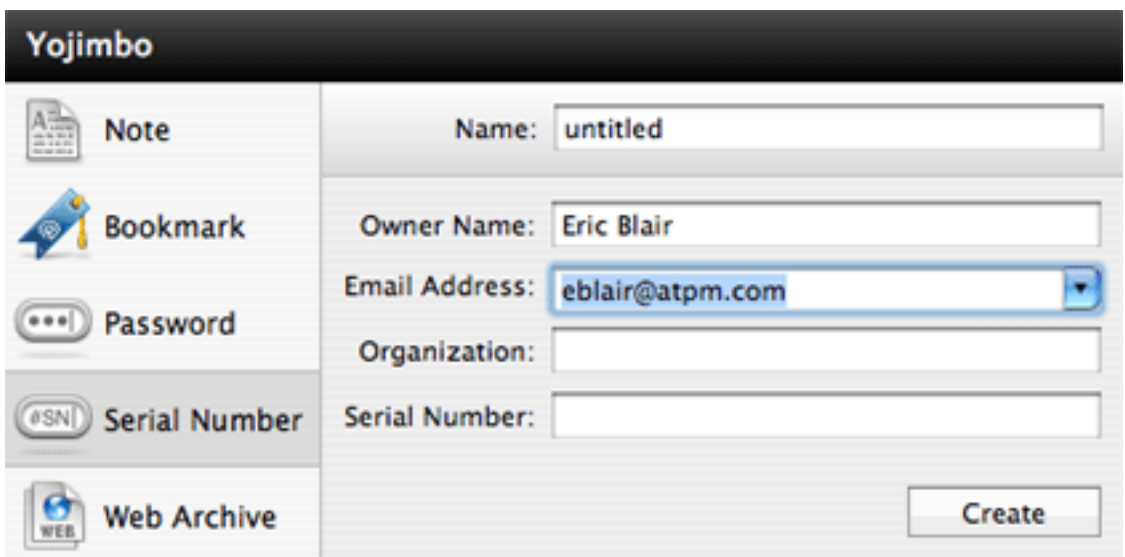
Quick Input Panel

If none of these methods meets your needs, Yojimbo's support for PDF Services may help. After installing Yojimbo, a "Save PDF in Yojimbo" item appears in the Print dialog's PDF pop-up menu. Selecting this option "prints" your document to a PDF and adds the PDF to Yojimbo. I often use this feature to add PowerPoint presentations to my Yojimbo library. Depending on the application and the Page Setup options for your printer, the resulting Yojimbo item may or may not be a perfect match for the source document.
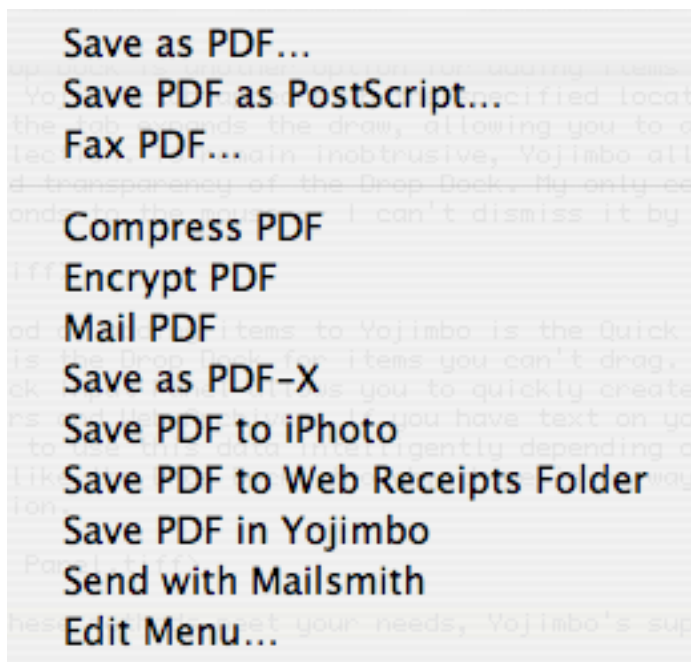
PDF Services

Finally, if your workflow has additional requirements which are not satisfied by any of the preceding methods, Yojimbo offers a limited AppleScript dictionary which allows you to create new Yojimbo items. I've made use of this functionality to add Web Archives for sites which require require passwords to view their content—simply passing the URL to Yojimbo created a Web Archive for the login screen instead of for the desired article.

Syncing

One of Yojimbo's main features is that it supports syncing via .Mac. Syncing allows you to keep the same content on multiple copies of Yojimbo. The emphasis on syncing is shown by Yojimbo's licensing terms: both the Individual User and Family Plan licenses allow you to install Yojimbo on multiple computers; only the low-cost Educational License limits you to one computer. Thus, you can access your Yojimbo data at home and at the office or share the same data among multiple users.

Since I only have a single Mac at this point, I haven't been able to experiment much with syncing multiple computers. However, I have been syncing my Yojimbo data to my .Mac

account. Although I'm not accessing the data for anything, my .Mac account acts as an offsite backup for my Yojimbo database in case disaster strikes.

One limitation of syncing is that data is shared at the .Mac account level. My understanding is that if you have one .Mac account for your family and you enable syncing, everybody using that .Mac account will share the same Yojimbo data.

Wrap Up

Over the years, I tried several approaches to organizing the information on my computer. I used complex folder hierarchies in the Finder. I tried several different pieces of software. The Finder approach relied on multiple programs and required a significant investment in setup time. I never found any software that I fell in love with over the long term.

That changed when I found Yojimbo. It does the job I need without getting in the way. Obviously, the application is still a work in progress, lacking the obvious user-defined Smart Collection and other smaller features, but there's nothing I consider show-stopping when weighed against the time and energy Yojimbo has saved me over the past several months.

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

What Is *ATPM*?

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

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Which Format Is Best for Me?

- The **Online Webzine** edition is for people who want to view ATPM in their Web browser, while connected to the Internet. It provides sharp text, lots of navigation options, and live links to ATPM back issues and other Web pages.

- The **Offline Webzine** is an HTML version of ATPM that is formatted for viewing offline and made available in a Mac OS X disk image. The graphics, content, and navigation elements are the same as with the Online Webzine, but you can view it without being connected to the Internet. It requires a Web browser.

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

- The **Screen PDF** edition is also saved in Adobe PDF format. It's a one-column layout with larger text that's optimized for reading on-screen.

What Are Some Tips for Viewing PDFs?

- For Mac OS X 10.3 and 10.4 users, we recommend Apple's Preview. You can download Adobe Reader for free. If you have a Power Macintosh, Acrobat Reader 5 has better quality and performance. ATPM is also compatible with Acrobat Reader 3, for those with 680x0 Macs.

- With Adobe Reader, you can zoom the PDF to full window width and scroll through articles simply by single-clicking anywhere in the article text (except underlined links).

- You can quickly navigate between articles using the drawer in Preview or the bookmarks pane at the left of Adobe Reader's main viewing window.

- For best results on small screens, be sure to hide the bookmarks; that way you'll be able to see the entire page width at 100%.

- Try turning Font Smoothing on and off in Acrobat Reader's preferences to see which setting you prefer.

- All blue-underlined links are clickable.

- You can hold down Option while hovering over a link to see where it will lead.

- For best results, turn off Acrobat's "Fit to Page" option before printing.

How Can I Submit Cover Art?

We enjoy the opportunity to display new, original cover art every month. We're also very proud of the people who have come forward to offer us cover art for each issue. If you're a Macintosh artist and interested in preparing a cover for ATPM, please e-mail us. The way the process works is pretty simple. As soon as we have a topic or theme for the upcoming issue we let you know about it. Then, it's up to you. We do not pay for cover art but we are an international publication with a broad readership and we give appropriate credit alongside your work. There's space for an e-mail address and a Web page URL, too. Write to editor@atpm.com for more information.

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How Can I Contribute to *ATPM*?

There are several sections of ATPM to which readers frequently contribute:

Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

This is one of our most successful spaces and one of our favorite places. We think of it as kind of the ATPM "guest room." This is where we will publish that sentimental Macintosh story that you promised yourself you would one day write. It's that special place

in ATPM that's specifically designated for your stories. We'd really like to hear from you. Several Segments contributors have gone on to become ATPM columnists. Send your stuff to editor@atpm.com.

Hardware and Software Reviews

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

Shareware Reviews

Most of us have been there; we find that special piece of shareware that significantly improves the quality our Macintosh life and we wonder why the entire world hasn't heard about it. Now here's the chance to tell them! Simply let us know by writing up a short review for our shareware section. Send your reviews to reviews@atpm.com.

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What is Your Rating Scale?

ATPM uses the following ratings (in order from best to worst): Excellent, Very Nice, Good, Okay, Rotten.

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What If My Question Isn't Answered Above?

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