ATPM

About This Particular Macintosh: About the **personal** computing experience.™

Cover Art

Copyright © 2009 [Catherine von Dennefeld](1). [Click](2) to enlarge. We need new cover art each month. [Write](3) to us!

The ATPM Staff

Publisher/Editor	[Michael Tsai](4)
Managing Editor	[Christopher Turner](5)
Reviews Editor	[Paul Fatula](6)
Web Editor	[Lee Bennett](7)
Copy Editors	[Chris Lawson](8)
	[Linus Ly](9)
	[Ellyn Ritterskamp](10)
	[Brooke Smith](11)
	Vacant
Webmaster	[Michael Tsai](12)
Beta Testers	[The Staff](13)
Contributing Editors	[Eric Blair](14)
	[Mike Chamberlain](15)
	[Ed Eubanks Jr.](16)
	[Matthew Glidden](17)
	[Ted Goranson](18)
	[Andrew Kator](19)
	[Robert Paul Leitao](20)
	[Wes Meltzer](21)
	[Sylvester Roque](22)
	[Charles Ross](23)
	[Mark Tennent](24)

---

[1] http://www.eternalrings.com
[2] http://www.atpm.com/15.12/images/cover-large.jpg
[3] mailto:cover-art@atpm.com
[4] http://mjtsai.com
[5] http://www.retrophisch.com
[6] mailto:pfatula@atpm.com
[7] http://www.secondinitial.com
[8] http://chrislawson.net
[9] http://qaptainqwerty.blogspot.com
[10] http://www.ritterskoop.org
[11] http://twitter.com/oharabrooks
[12] http://mjtsai.com
[13] mailto:editor@atpm.com
[14] http://www.raoli.com
[15] mailto:mchamberlain@atpm.com
[16] http://www.eubanksconsulting.net
[17] mailto:mglidden@atpm.com
[18] http://www.sirius-beta.com
[19] http://andrew.katorlegaz.com
[20] https://twitter.com/NuevoSobriquet
[21] http://www.wesmeltzer.com
[22] mailto:sroque@atpm.com
[23] http://www.chivalrysoftware.com
[24] http://www.tennent.co.uk

Evan Trent[25]
Vacant

Artwork & Design

Layout and Design	Michael Tsai[26]
Web Design	Simon Griffee[27]
Cartoonists	Matt Johnson[28], Linus Ly[29]
Blue Apple Icons	Mark Robinson
Other Art	RD Novo
Graphics Director	*Vacant*

Emeritus

RD Novo, Robert Madill, Belinda Wagner, Jamal Ghandour, Edward Goss, Tom Iovino, Daniel Chvatik, Mike Shields, Grant Osborne, Gregory Tetrault, Raena Armitage, Johann Campbell, David Ozab.

Contributors

Seth Dillingham, Ed Eubanks Jr., Matt Johnson, Chris Lawson, Robert Paul Leitao, Linus Ly, Mark Tennent, *Macintosh users like you.*

Subscriptions

Sign up for **free** subscriptions using the Web form[30].

Where to Find ATPM

Online and downloadable issues are available at the ATPM Web Site[31]. ATPM is a product of ATPM, Inc. © 1995–2009. All Rights Reserved. ISSN: 1093-2909.

Production Tools

Acorn, Apache, AppleScript, BBEdit, Docutils, DropDMG, FileMaker Pro, Git, GraphicConverter, LaTeX, make, Mailman, MySQL, Name Mangler, optipng, PyMesh, PyObjC, Python, rsync, Snapz Pro X, ssh, TextMate.

Reprints

Articles, original art, and desktop pictures may not be reproduced without the express permission of the author or artist, unless otherwise noted. You may, however, print or distribute copies of this issue of ATPM as a whole, provided that it is not modified in any way. Authors may be contacted through ATPM's editorial staff, or at their e-mail addresses, when provided.

Legal Stuff

About This Particular Macintosh may be uploaded to any online area or included on a CD-ROM compilation, so long as the file remains intact and unaltered, but all other rights are reserved. All information contained in this issue is correct to the best of our knowledge. The opinions expressed in ATPM are not necessarily those of the entire ATPM staff. Product and company names and logos may be registered trademarks of their respective companies. Thank you for reading this far, and we hope that the rest of the magazine is more interesting than this.

• • •

Thanks for reading ATPM.

Sponsors

About This Particular Macintosh has been free since 1995, and we intend to keep it that way. Our editors and staff are volunteers with *real* jobs who believe in the Macintosh way of computing. We don't make a profit, nor do we plan to. Our aim is to produce a fiercely independent magazine, with multiple formats designed for easy reading rather than showing ads. The views expressed in these pages have always been our own, and to help prove it we do not accept direct sponsorships or advertising. We do, however, need to pay for our Web site and other expenses, so we rely on minimal advertising, sold indirectly via Google and Yahoo, as well as the support of ATPM readers who shop using our links[1].

---

[1]http://www.atpm.com/about/support.shtml

Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the December issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* The editors of ATPM wish you a happy holiday season, and we look forward to providing you with our unique mix of news, views, and reviews throughout the coming year.

PC Market Share? Who Cares?

In a recent report by market research group NPD, it was estimated Macintosh computer sales now represent close to 50% of domestic revenue for PCs sold at retail. The report is based on October sales activity and suggests that Apple's revenue take in the PC industry continues to rise.

Netbook unit sales have shrouded problems in the Windows PC market. While netbooks are popular with consumers, they sell at comparatively lower prices and foreshadow a continuing consumer migration to lower-cost personal digital devices. Though Apple has been reducing the prices of its consumer PCs, Macs have been increasing the percentage of revenue Apple realizes in the domestic market relative to Windows PCs.

All market share is not created equal, and Apple's disproportionate take of PC retail revenue indicates that the company's economic influence on the PC market is greater than market stats alone will indicate.

Developers, Developers, Developers

The now infamous chant of Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer while addressing a gathering of Windows developers has been memorialized on video, parodied in skits, and replayed on the Web countless times. While his innate sense of rhythm may be called into question, his passion for the company he heads and appreciation for those who support the Windows ecosystem through software development is beyond question.

Microsoft achieved a global monopoly in desktop operating systems largely through the support of developers who expanded the uses of the OS into virtually all areas of commerce and personal productivity.

An argument can be made that the PC market has reached maturity, with slowing rates of growth in aggregate as consumers embrace smaller, hand-held device that offer specific-use functionality in a move away from the PC-centric product paradigm.

Emerging as a clear winner in the consumer migration to handheld devices is Apple through its iPhone OS product line. Encompassing both the iPhone and iPod touch, iPhone OS offers over 100,000 applications via the iTunes App Store and has been intriguing developers with its easy sales process and in-application sales opportunities.

There's no disputing the fact that commercial content (software, games, music, movies, etc.) makes hardware devices more attractive to consumers. In all of the discussions about the success of the iPhone and the iPod touch, one cannot overstate the importance of developers in creating a profitable OS platform. Just ask Steve Ballmer about the importance of developers to a platform's success, or just watch as iPhone and iPod touch sales continue to grow as more and more commercial content becomes available for iPhone OS devices.

Verizon's iPhone Envy

For those of us who do watch TV these days, the sparring ads between Verizon and AT&T cannot be avoided. AT&T's success with the iPhone also cannot be disputed. AT&T has invested heavily in iPhone subsidies and has been racing to add infrastructure to meet the unprecedented demand of iPhone users. Much of the iPhone's market growth has come at Verizon's expense.

Verizon, seizing on discontent with AT&T's reported service issues, is playing to its strength in exploiting the public's perception of its superior cell service in efforts to battle migration from Verizon to AT&T and the iPhone. Verizon now offers a Motorola smartphone branded as the "Droid" and running the Android 2.0 OS as an alternative to the iPhone for its customers.

Despite Verizon's efforts and its expensive advertising campaigns touting the Droid and exploiting AT&T's high-profile iPhone traffic service issues, the company has no real answer to the iPhone's success. Android 2.0 phones will be released by multiple handset makers and will be offered on multiple cellular service networks. There's no replacing the iPhone in the contest for wireless customers.

Verizon desperately needs an Apple wireless device to combat defections from its service. Whether that device or devices (the iPhone and/or the much-rumored Apple tablet) come to the Verizon network will be determined in time.

Verizon Wireless is a co-venture between Verizon and Europe's Vodafone Group. While Vodafone is among the authorized iPhone service providers in various European territories, the iPhone's conspicuous absence from the Verizon Wireless portfolio of handsets is a competitive disadvantage for the nation's number one provider of cellular services.

AT&T's exclusive agreement for the iPhone is expected to end in 2010. Watch for Verizon to push hard for versions of the iPhone—and Apple's future wireless devices such as the much-rumored tablet—to work on the Verizon Wireless network. Until then, there's no solution for Verizon's iPhone envy, and AT&T's wireless growth has a hefty cost to Verizon as both companies compete heavily for customers.

Holiday Season Sales

By most accounts Apple is expected to have an impressive holiday season for product sales. The recently refreshed iMac line will bolster Apple's Mac sales in the December quarter, and the iPod will once again serve as a holiday season favorite among shoppers. Apple continues to open new retail stores around the globe. These stores serve as sales and service centers, as well as effective marketing tools to introduce Apple-branded products and accessories to shoppers worldwide.

Apple will most likely report record revenue and earnings for the three-month period ending in December, and many expect record sales of the iPhone and its non-phone companion, the iPod touch.

Apple's continuing growth and the attractiveness of the company's consumer products makes Apple not only a success story for investors, but it also creates a highly functional set of products that complement each other in enhancing the user's digital lifestyle. Increasingly, consumers are buying multiple Apple products and taking advantage of the sum functionality they provide. Each Apple product purchase sets the stage for the purchase of complementary Apple products.

Watch for new Apple product announcements after the holiday season as the company prepares for a second decade of success in the second decade of this millennium.

Our December Issue

ATPM continues its monthly chronicle of what we call the "personal computing experience" as new products come to market and as our readers demand the most from their personal computing devices. We wish all of our readers a happy holiday season, and we look forward to a new year of new opportunities and a return to normalcy in the world's economies.

Our December issue includes:

MacMuser: Regional Rip-offs[1]

"The same companies who sell the contracts to use their cellphone network in the UK will charge you an arm and a leg to use their network 50 miles away across the English Channel."

MacMuser: Relevant Eloquent Pleading[2]

In case you were ever unclear that Mark Tennent likes the Mac platform, this plea to his IT department should set the record straight.

Next Actions: Getting Back on the GTD Wagon[3]

Ed Eubanks Jr. updates his GTD Master List and talks about how to get back on track if you, as most people inevitably do, get a little behind.

How To: Five Ways to Make Any Photo Better[4]

You don't have to be a Photoshop expert to improve a photo. Ed Eubanks Jr. has five simple ways that should improve virtually any photo.

Segments: My First Mac[5]

By 2009 standards it does not do much, but it was Linus Ly's first lovely possession in the Mac universe.

Desktop Pictures: Apple Picking[6]

Seth Dillingham shared this month's photos from an orchard in Connecticut.

Out at Five[7]

Matt Johnson's new series, *Out at Five* looks at the workplace and its boundaries from all angles, revolving around many of the same characters from his former series, *Cortland.*

---

[1] http://www.atpm.com/15.12/macmuser-regional.shtml
[2] http://www.atpm.com/15.12/macmuser-pleading.shtml
[3] http://www.atpm.com/15.12/next-actions.shtml
[4] http://www.atpm.com/15.12/make-any-photo-better.mesh
[5] http://www.atpm.com/15.12/my-first-mac.shtml
[6] http://www.atpm.com/15.12/desktop-pictures.shtml
[7] http://www.atpm.com/15.12/out-at-five.shtml

Qaptain Qwerty[8]
When I was your age. . .

Review: PDFClerk Pro 3.9.3[9]
PDFClerk Pro is a good replacement for Preview and can do great impositions.

Review: U-Suit Premium[10]
A classic black suit for your iPhone to go along with the classic black suit you already own.

---

[8]http://www.atpm.com/15.12/qaptain-qwerty.shtml
[9]http://www.atpm.com/15.12/pdfclerk.shtml
[10]http://www.atpm.com/15.12/u-suit-premium.shtml

E-Mail

ShareTool 1.3.1[1]

I agree it is a great tool, especially for someone traveling constantly.

One caveat or shortcoming you didn't mention is that the host computer has to be running, not sleeping, all the time. I hate to leave mine on when out of town for a week and I may only need to connect a couple times.

They have implemented a new feature to put the host computer to sleep, but only for up to four hours before it wakes again and would require you to connect again to put it back to sleep. Obviously, this is not practical when away for several days. . .so it ends up running the entire time anyway.

—*Bob Johnson*

> I realize I didn't mention that the host computer has to be running. I suppose I assumed that was kind of a given. I think it's fair to assume that, even on a local network, a host computer has to be running before you can do file sharing, screen sharing, or other forms of Bonjour connections. All ShareTool does is extend that capability beyond your LAN. Your mileage may vary, but I leave my Mac Pro running 24/7 because it holds a Gallery-powered photo album Web site as well. It also hosts my iTunes library for access, not only on a remote computer via ShareTool, but also to my Apple TV. I know there are those who would question whether I want to suck up that much electricity. I can give two answers to that:
>
> 1. The cost of the extra electricity each month is less than what I'd have to pay to keep the photos on most standard hosting services considering it's approaching 30 GB.
>
> 2. Earlier this year, I moved the server off an old 450 MHz G4 to this year's Nehalem Mac Pro, which uses *far* less power than that G4 did!
>
> —*Lee Bennett*

Voyager Q[2]

I bought one after getting a cheaper USB-only "toaster" and finding it to be far too slow.

I use it with FireWire to connect to my MacBook Pro. The coolest thing to do is to boot from it. I can have any size drive running my MacBook Pro when I'm at home.

Very easy to use. Trouble free for a couple of months.

—*George Entenman*

• • •

I have a similar need (too many hard drives!) but really liked the much more sturdy WiebeTech RTX100H-Q[3] solution.

(not an advertisement—just a very satisfied customer)

I prefer to have the internal fan cooling the drives. . .sometimes they get quite warm as they just sit on the "toaster" style connectors.

Hope this is useful.

—*Jeff*

iPhoniness[4]

Did I detect a bit of British Sarcasm in this missive?

I always enjoy Mr. Tennent's forays as the *MacMuser*. Thanks for the morning laugh.

—*David Thompson*

• • •

Thanks for the smile—my work life mirrors yours, and I can truly identify! I have a first-generation iPhone (thanks to a grandbaby and her slobber), and I can only suggest that you will be most happy with your decision. You might even wonder why you waited until it became a necessity. :-)

—*Lori Smith*

Blender 2.31a[5]

For years I wanted to get into 3D work. My two sons and daughter are in college and still live at home. We have started working on a project together, and my wife wants in on it too. We are making an educational game that works like an MMO.

We have narrowed what we will use down to a few things. Blender, Multiverse, and 3Dvia because they are all free. For video, audio, sound, and music

---

[1] http://www.atpm.com/15.11/sharetool.shtml
[2] http://www.atpm.com/15.11/voyager-q.shtml

[3] http://www.wiebetech.com/products/RTX100.php
[4] http://www.atpm.com/15.11/macmuser-iphoniness.shtml
[5] http://www.atpm.com/10.01/blender.shtml

score we went with Sony Video Platinum Pro Pack because for just over $100 we get a full set bundled for production.

I used to work for a production company as a programmer, and while I was there I learned image, video, and audio digital editing and some illustration design. My programing was limited to Web design and Director 8 Lingo, but with God's help I can learn Python and Java for the game development.

I really like the new Blender because it affords us the ability to use the same content for the game to make animated videos to play in-game. The Blender community is extremely generous with tutorials and royalty-free 3D content. I have done a lot of research on Blender and can not understand why there is not an AS Degree in community colleges based on the Blender application.

—*Dannyjax*

Chasing the Dragons[6]

It is pretty scandalous. I have a friend who lives just outside Sevenoaks—hardly the middle of nowhere. Quoted broadband speeds vary from 0.5 megabits per second to "not more than 0 megabits per second."

We can only compete internationally if we have good infrastructure, and that includes high-speed broadband.

—*Peter Danckwerts*

• • •

At least 98% of Britain has broadband access (or so I've heard). Where I live in the US, the town 16 miles away is looking forward to FiOS, while there is no cable, a weak cell signal, nor can the phone company be bothered to upgrade the phone office in my neighborhood with a "mere" population of 10,000. I pay three times what my neighbors pay just to get 1.5 mbps download speeds with satellite. A good deal of America is languishing with not quite broadband speed in a world where access to high-speed broadband is becoming as necessary as access to electricity and gasoline.

—*Anonymous*

• • •

I will join with Anonymous and note that America is in a sad state also. I live in Austin, Texas—supposedly one of the most connected cities in this

country—and I can tell stories of friends who have purchased homes in well-established areas of town that were floored when they discovered that broadband was not available to them. This is a problem that is not limited to the rural areas here.

—*Lori Smith*

• • •

Gee, it's almost as if the USA is one of the largest nations on earth, with one of the lowest population densities, and very evenly balanced quality of life between urban and rural areas. Why, as a matter of fact, it seems like many of these "dragon nations" are in fact tiny little third-world countries with all of their infrastructural development (including *any* electrical utilities) concentrated solely around their largest high-density cities. Funny, that.

—*Eric Van Hoose*

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 *and may be edited for publication.*

---

[6]http://www.atpm.com/15.11/macmuser-chasing.shtml

Regional Rip-offs

It was a dark and stormy afternoon in the Languedoc's Black Mountain last week, as we made our way further up the narrow and twisting road. At each hairpin bend, the drop on my side of the car grew more precipitous, with only a few of the local marble off-cuts to stop us going over the edge. As we drove higher, it got darker, and rain clouds swirled around the Peugeot. We had no choice but to follow the signs to the peak because there was nowhere to turn around.

The Michelin map indicated two side roads, but they must have been the size of goat tracks because we couldn't find them. My Garmin was back in England, and our driver hadn't put her TomTom in the car. In any case, the top-of-the-range TomTom kept telling us we were still in a Parisian suburb rather than up a mountain north of Carcassonne. If only my iPhone had one of the new sat-nav packages installed, or I could have used Google Maps to navigate a route back down.

Even in the wilds of southwest rural France, you get a better signal than we receive at home in England's south coast conurbation. Data roaming in France is incredibly expensive, although the reason why is completely beyond any rational explanation. Current iPhone contracts in the UK are only available from France Telecom's Orange and O2, owned by Spain's Telefonica.

We could *see* the Pyrenees and Spain in the distance, and France Telecom has a base in Carcassonne, less than 25 miles away and 4,000 feet below. Both charge 35 pounds a month for more telephone calls and texts than I'll use in a lifetime, plus free data downloads in the UK. If I stand next to their transmitters in France or Spain and want to check my e-mail or a Web page, I'll have to sell my soul to pay off the charges. It is so expensive they warn customers in large and very unfriendly lettering in case they accidentally leave data roaming switched on.

This seems completely ridiculous in a united Europe. The same companies who sell the contracts to use their cellphone network in the UK will charge you an arm and a leg to use their network 50 miles away across the English Channel.

Or am I missing the point? No, I don't think so. Even if we became a Euro economy as many think we ought to have done years ago, we will still be controlled by pan-European companies charging regional rip-offs. Unless the European rip-off minister decides to do something about it.

Copyright © 2009 Mark Tennent[1].

---

[1] http://www.tennent.co.uk

Relevant Eloquent Pleading

A few weeks ago, I took over the control of an ancient Dell running Windows XP. For a Mac user from the days when PCs were still using the command line, this was a severe shock. Learning that 63%[1] of the world's computers are running XP made me almost cry in despair.

Nevertheless, after a month the Dell is more to my liking, or more correctly, less to my disliking. Just updating the operating system and software took days because everything was stuck in 2004. The ugly user interface has been tweaked until its appearance doesn't offend as much, dark blue has been banished, along with Times New Roman, a particularly unappealing typeface. It is all far less in-your-face except for adjusting the point size of lettering in folder names and such like. It is either too small or enormously too large.

I've reversed the mouse buttons so that right-clicking means left-clicking, but how can I swap the Control key with the third one along (whatever it's called)? My right hand's fingers can stretch to type Command-P to set things printing on a Mac, but a PC's Control-P needs the reach of an orangutang. So that's where Steve Ballmer got his famous monkey dance from.

Even though it is only a tiny 15-inch monitor, the essential programs now open in windows small enough to fit a couple on screen but large enough to be usable. Control panels have been scoured for ways to make things more user-friendly, more efficient. Dare I say it, more Mac-like, or does that describe Windows 7?

But the final and most painful thing is be recognised as the office computer nerd even though I know nothing about computers running Windows. Aren't British kids taught elementary computer skills at school? Yet they still ask me how to create a folder, how to drag and drop, how to automatically check for new mail every ten minutes, how to get the printer to duplex.

Don't get me started on some of the end results. When I am asked whether the latest Microsoft Publisher–produced newsletter is any good, what am I expected to say?

> I see you used 15 typefaces, and it looks like the Times Extra Bold centred headlines have been stretched (to gross distortion). How original to see subheads run as semicircles in outlined fonts with a drop shadow. And pink clip-art fairies are such a good idea.

Meanwhile, I send pleading e-mails to the IT department asking for a Mac. I'll support it myself, supply all the software I need, and never ask them for anything, ever again.

I'll even pay for it.

Copyright © 2009 Mark Tennent[2].

---

[1] http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_os.asp

[2] http://www.tennent.co.uk

Getting Back on the GTD Wagon

Even the most faithful GTD devotees sometimes let things slide for a few days. (David Allen himself admits that he gets behind on occasion.) This is nothing out of the ordinary.

But what about when it all effectively collapses? What about when the slipping of maintenance of your GTD system isn't measured in hours or days, but in weeks or months? Has this happened to you?

It's happened to me—a number of times. Last fall when our twins were born. Two years ago when everything was in boxes—even my computer—for more than a week, during an interstate move. And last summer, when I had a three-week season of upside-down schedules: traveling for work for a week, enjoying vacation for a week, then speaking at a week-long event.

Maybe you've been through such a season. Three or four weeks go by, and you haven't done a review. Your inbox is full, and your tickler file still has the folders from six weeks ago. The weeks add up, and suddenly it's been month, then two, then three.

Why It's a Problem

The reason such slippage is a problem goes beyond the fact that your efficiency drops off. Yes, that's a problem. So is the setback of some things not getting done. But these aren't the *big* reasons that falling off the wagon creates great difficulty for you.

One big reason why it's a problem is that you've worked hard to build a *trusted* system. One of the most basic fundamentals of GTD is the concept of the "trusted system," where everything can be safely put out of mind, allowing singular focus without distraction. Now, that system is no longer trustworthy: you know, instinctively, that you might not actually get back to that thought when it needs to be addressed. After all, you've fallen off the wagon. So one big problem is that you must not only restart your GTD system, but you must also learn to trust it again.

Another big reason—the other side of the coin, if you will—is that things are piling up. Not just the occasional task slipping through, but projects, goals, big-picture things. Your planning is stalled. You don't know whether you have time to commit to things you're being asked to undertake. In short, you are disorganized about what you can and cannot do, and how you will get done what you must.

Why It's *Not* a Problem

On the other hand, there are some senses in which falling off the wagon is not really such a big problem.

For one thing, things are still getting done. Maybe not as efficiently, and maybe you don't have "mind like water"—but it isn't as if all has utterly ceased. You're probably still fairly productive, even if you are working at less-than-peak efficiency.

For another, you may not have *needed* GTD for a season. Let's face it: if you're in the midst of an event or even a season when GTD is stalled, you might not need the kind of structure that GTD offers. When I was speaking at that week-long event last summer, for example, my tasks were clear and singular. I didn't need a tickler file or task-list management application to remind me that I was going to speak that day. These times are not when "falling off the wagon" matters; it's *after* these times that you need to restart your system fervently.

And the last reason that it's not a big problem is that you can restart your system. And we'll talk about that in a minute.

Understanding the Obstacles

There are several reasons why you may be where you are. Each of these has different degrees of severity; some of you (us?) may be outright pathological about them. Know this, too: there are entire books devoted to these, and many people go through counseling about them. Obviously, I won't be able to address them adequately in a few bullet points—but I can at least point them out. You must do the hard work of figuring out how to deal with them, if they are present in your life.

Procrastination: you struggle, or have begun to struggle, with not being willing to approach some tasks until the last minute.

Perfectionism: you find that you cannot be satisfied with less-than-perfect results. (Note: ironically, this often leads to procrastination.)

Black-and-White Thinking: you see everything in all-or-nothing terms and miss the nuances of degree.

Catastrophizing: minor problems and obstacles easily become catastrophes for you; you tend to make mountains out of molehills.

You might not struggle with any of these. But if you do, facing them will be a huge step toward getting back on track with GTD. More importantly, it will mean freedom in all areas of your life, not simply in how you manage tasks and projects.

But if you do wrestle with one or more of these pathologies, know this: GTD will not be the answer to overcoming them. It can help, and it may eventually be a part of the process, but it won't be the satisfaction for these that you need. Get help if you need it—through a book, a counselor, or even a medical doctor.

Getting Back On

One way to get started again is simply to restart, just as if you were starting from the beginning for the first time. Set aside as much time as you need— a day, or even two—and do it all over again. Regather everything into your inbox (which might need to be your whole desk for the day) and then begin to process everything, starting with what is on top of the pile, working until you have cleared your inbox to zero. Then return to the old familiar pattern: a few minutes each day for daily review and a commitment to process your inbox(es) daily; weekly reviews, monthly reviews, annual reviews; building the "trusted system" that allows you to empty your mind of everything but the task at hand; always having some ubiquitous capture tool on hand as a part of that system; etc.

But that might not be possible for all of us. Maybe you simply can't afford to take an entire day to devote to restarting GTD, no matter how productive it will eventually make you. Perhaps you'd simply rather deal with it incrementally.

It's possible to do so. I would offer this caveat if this is the route you choose to go: you won't begin to regain your trust in the system until after *all* of it has been done. But it's far better to start back in stages than not at all.

Begin With Reviews

This might seem counter-intuitive; what do you have to review, anyway? But if you restart your reviews now, three things will happen.

First, you will find it productive even without an updated tickler file. Like I said above, you are still doing things. Deciding which of those things needs to be done today is necessary. Thinking ahead for the next week will suggest ideas that need to be added to one of your inboxes. It helps.

Second, as you begin to process your work, the reviews will help you maintain it. Don't worry (too much) about the fact that you don't have everything processed; what you do have will go more smoothly due to daily and weekly reviews.

Finally, beginning reviews right away will expedite the trust factor in rebuilding your system. It will still take awhile—but the sooner you resume reviews, the closer the day comes to "mind like water." As David Allen says, if you're not doing daily and weekly reviews, you're not doing GTD.

Reset

Take all of the tools for your system and reset them.

Get your tickler file back in order. This means shuffling the folders so that they are up to date and ready to receive processed data. But it *also* means checking through the folders you shuffle to make sure nothing is left in them. Whatever is in there should go back into the inbox.

Do a similar reset with your productivity application(s). For me, that meant doing a Select All command and setting everything as due "today" until I had processed every task that was entered. (Since I decided to start with my task apps, this wasn't very long.)

I also took advantage of the reset and changed the way I handled many of my recurring projects. I had shifted some of them from my straight-up task list application to Sciral Consistency[1], which handles "fuzzy" deadlines much better. However, I had a lot of recurring projects that I was moving over to Consistency as they recurred. I went ahead and moved the rest (most of which had popped up during my stall, anyway), which cleaned up both systems and further freed my mind not to worry about those tasks until need be.

You may have more or fewer tools than I do. If you have lists on a mobile device, make sure it is brought in. If you use a Moleskine or other paper notebook, start carrying it again. Whatever your tools are, reset them.

---

[1] http://sciral.com/consistency/

Divide It Up

Starting back incrementally means you have to begin with dividing up everything. Chances are good that where you're stalled is in having a bunch of "buckets" that are full and in desperate need of processing. How many buckets are there? Do they contain multiple types of processing actions?

In my system, for example, my most recent stall meant that I had a full e-mail inbox; a backlog of RSS feeds and open tabs in my feed reader; lots of files in the global inbox of DEVONthink; a full paper inbox; and a full inbox of things that needed to be scanned via document scanner. Mine also meant that my task-management applications were woefully out of date in just about every way.

But yours might well include other things: photos that need to be imported from memory cards, tagged, and sorted into albums or collections; blog posts that need to be composed, edited, and/or posted; expense reports (or other reports) that must be completed and submitted; article ideas to develop, write, edit, and/or sell; Twitter tweets to read and/or post. Who knows? The list could be endless.

The point is, begin by dividing up your "buckets" into digestible chunks. Then determine which ones have the highest priority. This might be a bit more complicated than it seems, because when it comes to tasks then every priority seems high. (OK, maybe not the Twitter tweets.) But when prioritizing, keep this in mind: start with the ones that you will most easily be able to keep maintained and managed even while working through the rest.

One Bite at a Time

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time, the old saw says. So it is with getting back to the GTD habits.

Get to the processing of those buckets based on your priorities. I suggest that if you can't get them processed all at once, then you probably need to spread them out in such a way that focusing on them occasionally won't derail your other work. In other words, if you truly have too many deadlines and active projects to spend a day jump-starting GTD, then spending several hours each day for the next week probably won't fit your schedule either. Be realistic.

As I began to get back on the wagon, I found that two buckets a week was an approachable pace—though one week, I only got to one. It took me basically a month to get things really going again—and only then did my trust in the system really begin to re-establish itself.

About the List

Note that there are a fair number of updates this time, in part because I haven't updated the list since June! Also, if you're looking for a task-management application for iPhone, there is no shortage. I've added three more this month: Matalot, To-Do List, and To-Do Lists (yes, the latter two are different, despite their similarly clever names).

As usual, I welcome any feedback on my list or suggestions for additions. I won't always add every suggestion, but I'll look at them and evaluate whether they fit with what I'm trying to cover.

Locally Installed GTD Applications

EasyTask Manager[2]

Developer: Orionbelt.com
Current Version: 2.1
Price: $20
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes
Web-app Sync: Yes
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: App (free); Web App (free)
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: Windows version available; automatic advance of uncompleted due tasks to today.
News: None

---

[2]http://www.orionbelt.com/

Frictionless[3]

Developer: Twin Forces
Current Version: 2.0d18
Price: Free, open-source
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: Quick-entry box; fuzzy repeated actions.
News: None

Ghost Action[4]

Developer: Ghost Park Software
Current Version: 1.3.1
Price: $20
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: Sort of—a non-syncing application ($10)
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 only[5]
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: .Mac syncing (without iCal running); PDA/iPod syncing; two-way iCal syncing.

News: Version 1.3.1 introduced Snow Leopard compatibility.

iGTD[6]

Developer: Bartek
Current Version: DISCONTINUED
Price: N/A
Development Status: N/A
iCal Sync: N/A
QuickSilver Plug-in: N/A
Web-app Sync: N/A
Print Lists: N/A
iPhone Presence: N/A
OS Requirements: N/A
Required Applications: N/A
Distinguishing Features: N/A
News: The best-possible end scenario has come to pass for the iGTD faithful: Bartek, the developer, has joined the Things[7] team, and Cultured Code (the developer of Things) has offered a free license[8] for Things to all iGTD users who donated to Bartek's work. Bartek has also developed a data importer[9] for transferring from iGTD to Things. (Users who, for whatever reason, wish to continue to use the legacy iGTD release may download it from here[10].) Therefore, starting in the next list, iGTD will officially be removed.

iCog[11]

[3]http://www.twinforces.com/frictionless/
[4]http://ghostparksoftware.com/
[5]http://ghostparksoftware.com/front/support#leopard
[6]http://igtd.pl/iGTD/
[7]http://culturedcode.com
[8]http://culturedcode.com/things/blog/2009/08/welcome-bartek-welcome-igtd-users.html
[9]http://culturedcode.com/things/wiki/index.php/Importing_Data_from_iGTD
[10]http://www.igtd.pl/iGTD/download/
[11]http://www.henspace.co.uk/ikog/index.html

Developer: HensPace
Current Version: 1.90
Price: Free
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Unknown
Required Applications: Python 2.4 or later
Distinguishing Features: Compatible with any OS running Python (including Windows); very simple text-only utility.
News: None

mGTD[12]

Developer: Jeff Fisher
Current Version: 1.3
Price: Free
Development Status: Pre-final
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: None (Mori template)
Required Applications: Mori 1.6.11
Distinguishing Features: Expands Mori (digital notebook) functions to include GTD principles.
News: None

Midnight Inbox[13]

---

[12]http://apokalypsesoftware.com/products/node/2664
[13]http://www.midnightbeep.com/

Developer: Midnight Beep Softworks
Current Version: 1.4.3
Price: $35
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: App coming soon
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: Action timer; quick-note and quick-action hot keys; Mail compatible; automatic data collection.
News: Version 1.4 is well out of beta and now up to release version 1.4.3—which brings copious bug fixes, some interface refreshing and improvements, and some core improvements: tracking of processed items, better automated collecting, iCal syncing re-implementation, and some other tricks. The developers are now promoting version 2.0 for release in Winter 2009 (which I guess means sometime between December 21 and 31?) and Inbox Touch for release next spring for iPhone.

OmniFocus[14]

Developer: Omni Group
Current Version: 1.7.5
Price: $80
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: App ($20)
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.8
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: Mail compatible and Spotlight compatible; simple interface with powerful view features.

---

[14]http://www.omnigroup.com/applications/omnifocus/

News: This workhorse continues to improve, with lots of under-the-hood updates and fixes, as well as an overhaul of the Perspectives options, improved use of attachments, interface improvements, better and faster syncing, and a small host of other fixes and upgrades.

Pluto menubar[15]

Developer: MOApp Software Manufactory
Current Version: 5.1.1
Price: €12.00 (about $16.40)
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: This is a menu-bar application, but don't be fooled—it is a very fully featured GTD tool. There is a lot to see here, and you won't find any of the standard features you're looking for missing. Note the full-screen editing, searching, tags, contacts, and priorities.
News: Snow Leopard compatibility, iDisk and Dropbox syncing, and some interface upgrades and fixes are part of version 5.1.1.

---

[15]http://createlivelove.com/applications/pluto/pluto .html

Ready, Set, Do![16]
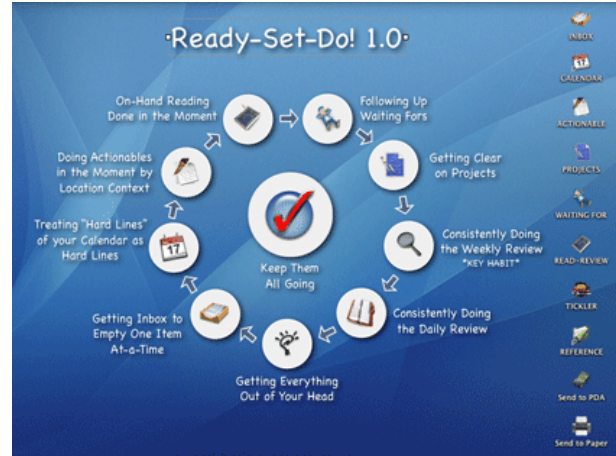
Developer: Todd Vasquez
Current Version: 1.4.4
Price: $20
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: A very different approach using a set of AppleScript routines to impose organization and communication across a computer's entire file system; multiple language support.
News: More continued (if minor) improvements to version 1.4, including Snow Leopard compatibility and a few others.

TaskPaper[17]

Developer: Hog Bay Software
Current Version: 2.1

---

[16]http://homepage.mac.com/toddvasquez/Ready-Set-Do!/ Personal93.html
[17]http://www.hogbaysoftware.com/products/taskpaper

Price: $19
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: Simple text-based system; no-frills; intentionally designed as an alternative to more fully featured systems.
News: Lots of updates in version 2.1, including a bunch of fixes and a couple of new AppleScripting features. See the list here[18].

Things[19]

Developer: Cultured Code
Current Version: 1.2.5
Price: $50
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: App ($10)
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.11
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: iCal sync; repeating tasks; Mail compatibility; tags; network and multi-computer operation; and import/export options.
News: A bunch of fixes, performance improvements, Snow Leopard compatibility, plus a lot of new keyboard shortcuts, autofill in quick entry, some drag-and-drop options, and other new features.

---

[18]http://blog.hogbaysoftware.com/post/65211633/taskpaper-2-1
[19]http://culturedcode.com/things/

Thinking Rock[20]
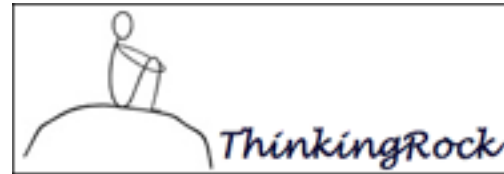
Developer: Avente Pty Ltd
Current Version: 2.2.1
Price: Free, open-source
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: Cross-platform compatibility through Java; interactive collection and processing; can be run off of a flash drive.
News: Beta version 3.0.1 is now available for "members."

What To Do[21]

Developer: Objective Satisfaction
Current Version: 1.3.2
Price: $29
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.9
Required Applications: None
Distinguishing Features: Drag-and-drop intensive for easy reorganization; .Mac syncing for multiple computers; XML export.
News: None

---

[20]http://www.thinkingrock.com.au/
[21]http://www.objectivesatisfaction.com/what_todo/

Locally Installed General Task Managers

Anxiety[22]

Developer: Tom Stoelwinder, Model Concept
Current Version: 1.0
Price: Free/Donationware
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Distinguishing Features: A menu-bar utility that gives a HUD-like interface to iCal tasks; sorts by calendar; Mac OS X 10.5 only.
News: None

Chandler[23]

Developer: The Chandler Project
Current Version: 1.0.3
Price: Open Source
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: Yes
Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3
Distinguishing Features: A good integrated calendar makes this one a fairly full-orbed PIM.
News: None

Check Off[24]

Developer: Second Gear
Current Version: 4.0.3
Price: Free/Donationware
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5.2
Distinguishing Features: A menu-bar utility that manages basic task lists; syncs with iPods; a .Mac Backup QuickPick is provided.
News: Improved interface, Snow Leopard compatibility, 64-bit compatibility, and many fixes are in version 4.0.3.

Dejumble[25]

Developer: Thinking Code Software, Inc.
Current Version: 1.3
Price: $19
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)
iPhone Presence: App ($8)
OS Requirements: Unknown (would assume 10.4 or later, due to presence of Spotlight functions)
Distinguishing Features: A simple yet powerful menu bar–style task list manager, with tags, groups, notes, and a handful of other options.
News: A redesigned interface, improved sync, and performance issues are all addressed in version 1.3.

Docket[26]

Developer: Surprise Software
Current Version: 1.3
Price: $20
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1
Distinguishing Features: A neat basic list-management application. A Windows version is also available.
News: None

DoIt[27]

---

[22]http://www.anxietyapp.com/
[23]http://chandlerproject.org/
[24]http://www.checkoffapp.com/

[25]http://www.dejumble.com/
[26]http://www.surprisesoftware.com/docket/
[27]http://www.jimmcgowan.net/Site/DoIt.html

Developer: Jim McGowan
Current Version: 2.6
Price: Donationware
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: No
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4
Distinguishing Features: .Mac support and AppleScriptability. Also supports file attachments and categories for lists. Skins are available for customization.
News: None

FlexCal[28]

Developer: flexgames
Current Version: 1.13
Price: Free/Donationware
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Distinguishing Features: A task and event creator for iCal—something of a collection bucket for GTD users.
News: Some minor fixes and improvements, including a feature to change the default time of new events (requires a Terminal command).

High Priority[29]

Developer: Aram Kudurshian
Current Version: 1.11 (Mac OS X 10.4 *only*)
Price: $6 (personal); $12 (family); $60 (business)
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 only

Distinguishing Features: A system preference pane, creates a menu in the menu bar that lets you create and update your iCal tasks.
News: Web site has vanished; has this software gone away, too?

Hot Plan[30]

Developer: Intuiware
Current Version: 1.4.2
Price: $20
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: No
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.9
Distinguishing Features: Tracks a substantial amount of information about a given task, including completion status, priority, and time remaining; supports tagging, color coding, and locking of tasks. Also allows collection of URLs and files.
News: None

iClock Pro[31]

Developer: Script Software
Current Version: 1.0rc4
Price: $20
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: No
OS Requirements: Unknown
Distinguishing Features: Offers a menu bar–based method of managing task lists; includes .Mac syncing.
News: Script Software has stopped offering the older version of iClock (version 3.0.5—though you can still find it here[32]), but now offers only iClock Pro, which is in beta for version 1.x.

---

[28]http://flexgames.com/flexcal/?p=1
[29]http://www.kudurshian.net/highpriority/

[30]http://www.intuiware.com/Products/MacOSX/HotPlan/
[31]http://www.scriptsoftware.com/iclock/
[32]http://www.scriptsoftware.com/iclock/old/iclockmac
.php

[Life Balance](http://www.llamagraphics.com/LB/index.php)[33]

Developer: Llamagraphics
Current Version: 5.1.1
Price: $65 ($80 bundled with Palm version)
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4
Distinguishing Features: Gives "meta-feedback" about tasks: how much time are you spending in different areas of your life (i.e., work, family, hobbies, etc.), and are you keeping it balanced? Palm and Windows versions available.
News: None

[NoteBook](http://www.circusponies.com/)[34]

Developer: Circus Ponies
Current Version: 3.0
Price: $50 (academic and family pack pricing available)
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.11
Distinguishing Features: Highly customizable system with project management built-in; also works well for heavy day-to-day GTD use.
News: Snow Leopard-compatible update (still version 3.0) is available from the Web site.

[Organized](http://islayer.com/index.php?op=item&id=64)[35]

Developer: iSlayer
Current Version: 1.11
Price: Donationware
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: No

iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Distinguishing Features: Dashboard widget with calendar events, tasks, notes, and world clock.
News: None

[Qu-s](http://www.qu-s.eu/flash/index.html)[36]

Developer: Urban Design Limited
Current Version: 1.5
Price: $17
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: No
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Distinguishing Features: Allows lists (and other things) to be created as an editable part of the desktop. Good for simple lists.
News: Version 1.5 is Snow Leopard–compatible and 64-bit compatible; it also offers more flexibility with notes.

[Stapler](http://www.blue-tec.com/stapler/)[37]

Developer: The Blue Technologies Group
Current Version: 1.1
Price: €7.50 (about $10)
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4
Distinguishing Features: A combination notepad and to-do list manager, with creation date, notes, and a check box for completed items. Tasks can be color-coded based on a low-level preference set-up.
News: None

[TaskMate](http://gettaskmate.com/)[38]

---

[33]http://www.llamagraphics.com/LB/index.php
[34]http://www.circusponies.com/
[35]http://islayer.com/index.php?op=item&id=64

[36]http://www.qu-s.eu/flash/index.html
[37]http://www.blue-tec.com/stapler/
[38]http://gettaskmate.com/

Developer: Ryan Conway
Current Version: 1.2.1
Price: Free
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: No
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Distinguishing Features: Ultra-simple task list: remaining tasks in a simple list; completed tasks in a drawer (which can be hidden). Tasks are just single-line descriptions with a check box. Could be right for the super-simplified life.
News: A new version is up (a 0.1 increase), but I cannot discern what the changes are. TaskMate remains über-simple.

ToDo X[39]

Developer: Omicron Software Systems, Inc.
Current Version: 2.3
Price: $15
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Import from iCal only
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: No
iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2
Distinguishing Features: Offers categories, priorities, and attached notes.
News: New version has Snow Leopard compatibility, a better interface, and some bug fixes.

ZooDo[40]

Developer: InterfaceThis
Current Version: 1.0
Price: Free
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)

---

[39] http://www.nomicro.com/Products/ToDo/
[40] http://interfacethis.com/zoodo/

iPhone Presence: None
OS Requirements: Unknown
Distinguishing Features: A basic task creator for iCal, serving as a collection bucket.
News: None

Browser and Web-based GTD Applications

30 Boxes[41]

Price: Free
Description: Lean and fast, including a calendar, task list, and limited Gmail interaction. Also RSS and iCal feeds, SMS, and sharing. Nice interface, too.

43 Actions[42]

Price: Free (donations get extra features)
Description: Specifically designed as an iPhone Web app, it's light and lean for EDGE network optimization. Submit inbox items via e-mail, Twitter (with donation), Jott (with donation), and the usual features.

GTDAgenda[43]

Price: Free
Description: Another Web version of a GTD tool, with the standard features. Plus, addition of Goals, checklists for recurring tasks, schedule management, and an iCal-compatible calendar. A mobile version is also available.

GTDInbox[44]

Price: Free
Description: A Firefox extension for GTD integration with Gmail. Prepackaged labels, a Review process, specialized searches within Gmail, quick-entry for tasks, and printable. Works well in conjunction with RememberTheMilk. Current version, 2.0.8.4, is open source; requires Firefox.

---

[41] http://www.30boxes.com/welcome.php
[42] http://43actions.com/
[43] http://www.gtdagenda.com/
[44] http://gtdgmail.com/

GTD-PHP[45]

Price: Free

Description: A PHP solution designed to be locally installed. A simple tabbed interface for the capture and process stages; weekly review. Currently at version 0.8.

Neptune[46]

Price: $10/year

Description: Includes a collection inbox and context or project task viewing panes, as well as inactive projects and tasks. Daily e-mail reminders of tasks; new tasks can be added by e-mail; data export.

Next Action[47]

Price: Free

Description: Uses Google Gears and Firefox; has a lean, basic interface with multiple-list management capability. Works with or without a network connection.

Nexty[48]

Price: Free

Description: PHP-based, so it installs locally and runs in your browser; supports contexts and reminders.

Nozbe[49]

Price: Free

Description: Has markers for which action will be next and a time estimation for tasks. Contexts are visible and identifiable; easy to collect and process quickly; iPhone-ready.

SimpleGTD[50]

Price: Free

Description: Tabs for next actions, contexts, projects, and done actions; drag-and-drop organization; easy undoing of tasks.

Task Writer[51]

Price: Free

Description: Easy keyboard navigation, good use of calendaring for tasks, and a useful set of attributes for tasks, as well as the ability to auto-hide unneeded list views, help Task Writer to stand out a bit.

Toodledo[52]

Price: Free

Description: Has a Firefox plug-in and a Google gadget for easy collection; also supports e-mail, voice mail, and traditional entry for collection. Includes a good overview of GTD in co-operation with its tools, as well. iPhone-optimized.

Tracks[53]

Price: Free

Description: A Web server that runs locally or hosted through tracks.tra.in. Fast, lean, and pretty, it offers calendaring and a multi-user component. Currently at version 1.6.

Vitalist[54]

Price: $5/month (premium)

Description: Is a wide-scale GTD system: collection, project management, recurring actions, and tickler files. Includes a mobile edition, iCal and RSS feeds, and e-mail and SMS reminders. An iPhone-specific version is available. A premium (paid) version also includes security encryption, collaboration, file attachments, and calendaring.

---

[45]http://www.gtd-php.com/Main/HomePage
[46]http://www.neptunehq.com/
[47]http://code.google.com/p/trimpath/wiki/NextAction
[48]http://nexty.sourceforge.net/
[49]http://www.nozbe.com/page/index
[50]http://www.simplegtd.com/

[51]http://www.taskwriter.com/
[52]http://www.toodledo.com/info/gtd.php
[53]http://www.rousette.org.uk/projects/
[54]http://www.vitalist.com/

Other Browser/Web-based Task Managers

- Backpack[55]
- Basecamp[56]
- CoMindWork[57]
- HiTask[58]
- Hiveminder[59]
- Joe's Goals[60]
- Mojonote[61]
- Remember the Milk[62]
- Scrybe[63]
- Sproutliner[64]
- Task Freak![65]
- Tasks[66]
- Tasktoy[67]
- Todoist[68]
- Tweeto[69]
- Zenlists[70]
- ZenPages[71]

GTD and Task Management Wikis

- D3[72]
- GTDTiddlyWiki[73]

- MonkeyGTD[74]
- Pimki[75]

iPhone Applications (not Web Apps)

- Actions[76]
- Chores[77]
- Dejumble[78]
- DoBot ToDos[79]
- EasyTask Manager[80]
- Firetask[81]
- Life Balance[82]
- Lists by MobilityWare[83]
- Lists by Tynsoe.org[84]
- Matalot by dPompa[85]
- My Lists[86]
- OmniFocus[87]
- Outliner by CarbonFin[88]
- Tanjas Checklist[89]
- Tasks[90]
- Things[91]
- ToDo by Appigo[92]

---

[55] http://www.backpackit.com/
[56] http://www.basecamphq.com/
[57] http://www.comindwork.com/
[58] http://hitask.com/
[59] http://hiveminder.com/splash/
[60] http://www.joesgoals.com/
[61] http://mojonote.com/
[62] http://www.rememberthemilk.com/
[63] http://iscrybe.com/main/index.php
[64] http://sproutliner.com/
[65] http://www.taskfreak.com/
[66] http://crowdfavorite.com/tasks/
[67] http://www.tasktoy.com/
[68] http://todoist.com/
[69] http://www.tweeto.com/
[70] http://zenlists.com/
[71] http://www.zenbe.com/welcome
[72] http://www.dcubed.ca/
[73] http://nathanbowers.com/gtdtw/index.html

[74] http://monkeygtd.tiddlyspot.com/#MonkeyGTD
[75] http://pimki.rubyforge.org/
[76] http://ghostparksoftware.com/
[77] http://www.tapeshow.com/chores/
[78] http://www.dejumble.com/#iphone
[79] http://dobot.us/
[80] http://www.orionbelt.com/productMac.php
[81] http://www.firetask.com/
[82] http://www.llamagraphics.com/LB/iphone/walkthrough/index.php
[83] http://www.mobilityware.com/iphone/Default.htm
[84] http://projects.tynsoe.org/en/lists/
[85] http://dpompa.com/
[86] http://pazeinteractive.com/iphoneapps/mylists
[87] http://www.omnigroup.com/applications/omnifocus/iphone/
[88] http://carbonfin.com/
[89] http://web.me.com/tapp1/tapp/Tanjas_Checklist.html
[90] http://web.mac.com/philipp.brendel/Software/Tasks.html
[91] http://culturedcode.com/things/iphone/
[92] http://www.appigo.com/todo/

- [To Do by Erica Sadun](#)[93]

- [To-Do List by Concrete Software](#)[94]

- [To-Do Lists by Tapku](#)[95]

- [ToodleDo](#)[96]

- [Zenbe Lists](#)[97]

Copyright © 2009 Ed Eubanks Jr.

---

[93] http://ericasadun.com/AppStore/ToDo/
[94] http://www.concretesoftware.com/iphone/tdl.shtml
[95] http://tapku.com/to-do_lists.html
[96] http://www.toodledo.com/info/iphone.php
[97] http://lists.zenbe.com/

Five Ways to Make Any Photo Better

Thanks to the rapid (and continuing) improvements in digital photography over the past 15 years, plus the almost omnipresent availability of digital cameras, the average computer user has hundreds or thousands of digital photos on the computer's hard drive. Whether taken with a digital SLR, a compact digital point-and-shoot, or with the simple camera included on a mobile phone, these photos all represent memories and archives of the lives of those who shoot them.

What you do with those photos is up to you; you might have a phenomenal system for sorting, tagging, and organizing your photos—or they might simply be dumped into a folder (or even multiple folders!) and forgotten. Apple provides a solution for managing photo collections with iPhoto, and there are others that also assist with this task. Chances are good that you've given some thought and attention to how you organize your photos.

But while many (most?) of us have attended to organization, many also neglect to do anything with them once they are in our computers. I would assume that you have intentions of actually *looking* at your photos, and that means that *how* they look will matter. Whether you plan to print them in conventional prints (like 4×6, 5×7, or 8×10 sizes), include them in a custom-made scrapbook or photo book, add them to a newsletter, insert them in a slideshow or presentation, or post them to a Web site, how your photos look will matter to those who view them—and it should matter to you, too.

What can you do about how your photos look? A lot of people I know simply drop all of their photos into iPhoto, add keywords, and consider them ready. Some will bother to remove the red-eye, and others will even occasionally hit the Enhance button in the Edit mode of iPhoto, but a lot of people are simply afraid to do much beyond that.

I want to offer you five things you can do to improve *any* photo. These are easy, quick, and effective. They don't require special knowledge (though they all represent areas where someone who wants to learn can gain a lot of ground). And they are available in just about every editor around, including iPhoto,

Photoshop Elements, and even Preview and within applications like the iWork suite (Pages, Keynote).

These are simple adjustments. They will be very familiar to some readers, though they will be new ground to others. If you already know these, congratulations! But I hope to open up some new improvements for those who are usually daunted by this sort of thing.

Here's my original. My sister's boyfriend took this shot of my daughter Abbey and me in my living room with his Nikon digital SLR—so you can see that even the big, expensive cameras still leave plenty of room for tweaks.

Crop

Let's start with the most basic: cropping. While basic, cropping is nevertheless a commonly-overlooked option that can improve a photo substantially. I'll mention three ways that cropping will improve just about every photo:

1. Remove visual noise. Even in the best photos, there's often something in it that shouldn't be: the elbow of someone standing just too close, a light fixture that is hanging low enough to draw attention, a soiled spot on the knee of the pants you're wearing. Cropping allows you to cut these offenses out of the frame.

2. Re-frame the image. Perhaps the image is just right, except it feels out of

balance. Maybe there's too much room about the head of the subject, or too much leg. It might be that the doorframe the person was standing in got cut off on one side, and the rest seems incomplete. When your picture feels out of balance, cropping can allow you to adjust how it is framed. It might be worth considering the [rule of thirds](1), which is a basic principle of visual design that achieves a proportional sense of balance by dividing the image into a grid of thirds (thus, nine quadrants) and placing the portion of the image that you wish to emphasize at one of the intersections. This is best done when framing the shot before shooting, but cropping can allow for errors in this way.

3. Change the size. Once upon a time, nearly every photo was printed to a conventional size; for example, you might get a set of prints from your negatives (remember those?) in 3.5×5, 4×6, or sometimes 5×7 prints, and you might have them enlarged to 8×10 or even 11×14. These days, most photos are not printed in conventional ways, and therefore don't need to fit those constraints. This gives you room to play around with your pictures. You may notice that an image "feels" right in a square, rather than a rectangle. You may even prefer it in a shape such as a circle or even a star. If you *do* need to constrain to a certain size or shape for printing, both iPhoto and Photoshop Elements make it easy to crop quickly while constraining.

Use the cropping tools available in your photo editing software to improve any image by tweaking its size, removing extraneous elements, or adjusting the framing.

---

[1]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_thirds

I like the photo, but I don't like my big foot in it! So I cropped it down, and used the rule of thirds to put my big body in balance, while centering Abbey exactly.

Straighten

Just as cropping is basic but essential, so too the idea of straightening is a great way to make subtle improvements on many photos.

It's possible, of course, to use a tripod with a level to ensure that your camera is perfectly straight. Likewise, some cameras allow you to superimpose a grid in the viewfinder to better align the photo before shooting. Even then, however, it's possible for your shots to be skewed. I've noticed, for example, that when I'm shooting a heavier camera, like an SLR, with a flash mounted on it, my hand tends to pull the camera ever-so-slightly to the right, resulting in a barely-tilted shot nearly every time. Particularly with shots taken hastily, or with the tiny cameras in mobile phones, I've noticed that many an otherwise-good photo is rendered simply average by the skew of a tilted camera.

The good news is that image editing software includes tools for straightening/de-skewing images. Here's a tip for straightening photos: find a piece of the image that should be vertically or horizontally straight and use that to make the adjustment. It might be a horizon-line, the row of buttons down a shirt or jacket, or the side of a door or other shape. Be careful, though: sometimes a slight perspective-

shift can give the *lines* a skew within an otherwise straight scene.

The original was pretty straight, but I straightened it just a little further. I used the little strip of the carpet threshold (just above my thigh) as a reference. Note this, though: I might just as well have left it UNstraightened, to achieve the affect of making me look less slumped. It's totally up to you.

Here's another tip: depending on how much de-skewing is required, straightening can affect the way a photo is cropped—so either double-check the cropping *after* straightening, or simply do the straightening first.

Adjust Exposure

When most people took photos using print film, they had an advantage that most didn't realize they had: what is known in the photography world as "latitude." That means that, if the available light for the photo was too dark or too bright, there was still a good chance of the photo being captured and printed with reasonable quality. Print film was very forgiving of different lighting conditions.

Anyone who switched from print film to slide film would quickly learn that slide film isn't as forgiving; it had much less latitude. And digital photography is much more like slide film than print film in terms of latitude.

As a result of this and a small handful of other reasons, many digital photos are too dark. But there is a way to adjust this, too: the exposure adjustment.

In iPhoto, Preview, and the iWork applications, this adjustment is found in an inspector window; iPhoto's is called "Adjust," Preview's is in Tools ▷ Adjust Color..., and in iWork it's in View ▷ Show Adjust Image.... In Photoshop Elements you will find a similar adjustment under Enhance ▷ Adjust Lighting ▷ Brightness/Contrast...; use the Brightness adjustment in the same way I describe for exposure.

The exposure adjustment is a simple slider control; moving it to the right makes the whole exposure lighter, while moving it left makes the image darker. Try it out, a little bit at a time; don't make drastic changes, because the latitude of the digital image normally cannot take it without serious degrading.

I've found that many photos improve substantially with a simple bump in exposure. This can be a great fix for a dark photo that you might otherwise overlook, but the exposure adjustment looks just intimidating enough to keep many from trying it. I'm giving you permission: go ahead and take a chance.

The exposure was already pretty good; I bumped it up slightly, just to see how I liked it, and decided to keep it there.

Reduce Saturation

Except in digital cameras closer to the higher-end in quality (and price!), most digital cameras tend to exaggerate color drastically. Maybe you've noticed this, too: a photo you've taken looks great, except the more vivid colors (especially the primary and sec-

ondary colors) are so over-bright as to seem cartoonish.

While this can sometimes be a nice effect, most of the time a little *less* color is welcome. You accomplish this with the saturation adjustment. Saturation is found in the same inspector window as the exposure adjustment in iPhoto, Preview, and the iWork applications; in Photoshop Elements, you'll find it in Enhance ▷ Adjust Color ▷ Hue/Saturation....

Just as with the exposure adjustment, saturation is a simple slider. Only this time, you want to move to the left—reducing the saturation. Here again, a little goes a long way, and you should move in small increments until you get the results you want. Be aware, too, that removing *all* saturation results in a black-and-white photo, which can be a nice effect—but there are better ways to accomplish this than simply through the saturation adjustment.

Camera companies love to advertise that their cameras capture "vivid color," but this normally translates into over-saturated color. Pulling some of that saturation back out can give your photos a more realistic and natural look.

Even those high-end Nikon SLRs over-saturate, especially in lighting like this one (incandescent). Pulling down the saturation helped a lot, I think—even if it does make my leg look a little pasty.

Change Color Temperature

Back in the day, even the most novice amateur photographer probably had a separate flash unit to attach to his camera. Before the advent of the point-and-shoot compact camera (I remember when the first ones were coming out; we had a Canon SureShot), there was no such thing as a built-in flash. Thus, any photo taken in lower-light situations would require the flash, and control of lighting conditions remained, at least to a degree, in the hands of the photographer.

These days, it is exceptional to see a separate flash unit in use except for by professionals and serious amateurs. One of the results of depending heavily on the built-in flash that most digital cameras have is that we end up with a lot less control of the lighting conditions, and we rely much more on the available natural light.

But not all light is the same. Mid-day sunlight casts a very clean, white light, while early morning and late afternoon sunlight is a lot warmer, with a more yellow-orange color cast to it. Similarly, fluorescent light bulbs (including many CFLs) have a cool, slightly bluish or even greenish color cast, while incandescent bulbs (the old style with filaments inside) give off a warmer color, again slightly yellowish in shade.

These variations are technically called a color's "temperature" because they can be measured on a scale, much like the air temperature is graded into Fahrenheit or Celsius. (Color temperature is measured in degrees of Kelvin; thus, natural sunlight is about 5500°K or Kelvin.) You'll find that the color temperature adjustment can help you give your photos a more natural and realistic appearance.

Once again, you'll find the color temperature adjustment in the inspector window. In iPhoto, Preview, and the iWork applications, it's the same as above; in Photoshop Elements, there isn't a single simple color temperature adjustment—instead, you will find a handful of tools that will allow you to make similar adjustments. And, once again, it is a simple slider.

In this case, however, there isn't a normal fix (as in, move the slider left or move it right). Instead, you'll see that there is a pinkish/reddish "sun" icon on the right, and a greenish "sun" icon on the left. If the image was shot under fluorescent lights—and therefore has a cooler cast to it—then move the slider slowly toward the reddish sun. If the image is warmer because of incandescent lighting, or because it was

shot early or late in the day, then move it slightly to the right, toward the greenish sun.

You might also see that there is a Hue adjustment immediately below the Color Temperature adjustment. While you're noticing this, note that the colors at the two spectrum ends of the Hue adjustment are different from the Color Temperature adjustment (they are reversed, with pink on the left and green on the right). Hue is different from Color Temperature, and adjusting one is not the same as adjusting the other. Rather, once your Color Temperature is fixed, you might use the Hue control to further tweak the accuracy of the colors in the photo.

Our eyes naturally adjust to changes in color temperature, and most of the time we never notice these subtleties in a "live" circumstance. But in photos, color temperature can make a big difference. Making this adjustment will give your photo life-like color that is absent when color temperature is off.

Reducing the saturation helped the strong orange cast coming from the light over my shoulder—but adjusting the color temperature helped it even more. The side of my face is still more orange than normal, but I'm also using other things in the photo as a reference: the brown of the chair is more accurate, the tile and wall in the background still look right, and Abbey is still a sweet pink. Adjust color temperature too much here, and poor Abbey turns a disturbing shade of grey!

My First Mac

A few months ago I became a proud owner of a MacBook Pro running Snow Leopard. Before that I was getting by with a PowerBook G4 running Tiger, bought some four years ago. Being frugal and not always chasing the latest and greatest saves money and the frustration of owning machines that become outdated quickly. On the down side, my computing life got less pleasant as the hardware started to break down. Certain keys on the keyboard became unresponsive, the AC adapter was frayed, and the battery no longer charged to 100%. On the software side, certain software was released for the Leopard family only, and Web videos crawled painfully, like a slideshow.

After a short time with the new MacBook Pro, I wondered how I ever got anything done with the PowerBook G4. On its own, my mind wandered back to my first Mac, a PowerBook G3 "Wall Street." Heavy, with a small hard drive, fueled by Mac OS 9, and lacking many of today's amenities, how did I ever get anything done back then?

It has been so long that I cannot even remember the year I finally owned a Mac. It was some time after June 1997 and before October 1999. I was working as the sole tech support person for a small department at a Big Five accounting firm. Even though some of my client base were programmers—i.e., computer-literate people who required less hand-holding—having to deal with Windows 95 was still a daunting challenge. At home I had a Packard Bell PC, and it was no walk in the park using it either. So I would troubleshoot computers eight hours a day at work, then on my own time spend more time battling registry corruptions and overwritten DLL files.

I had already experienced the Mac platform from two previous jobs and especially enjoyed using FileMaker Pro. I was using the DOS-based dBASE and then graduated to Microsoft Access in Windows 95, but FileMaker Pro blew them both away. I did not care about Access' ability to connect to larger SQL databases or its SQL querying prowess. I was ready to switch to the Mac platform.

Back then, in the late 1990s, laptops were still a big deal. At the accounting firm, for example, there were only a few laptops floating about. People had to sign up to use them briefly. Everyone worked on desktop computers. I was living in a cramped place, so naturally I also leaned toward laptops. The teardrop iMac of the day took less space than the traditional desktop with CRT monitor, but the keyboard and puck mouse would require some additional space. A laptop was the natural choice.

My first love in the Mac universe.

Twelve years ago, I had no problem recalling the specs on the PowerBook G3. These days, I only remember that it is a Wall Street model. It still works, so I now know that it runs at 266 MHz. It has 320 MB of RAM, but I know that is not the original. I do remember dropping it off at Tekserv to have the memory upgraded. When the hard drive died, I got a 12 GB replacement drive from Other World Computing and did the change myself. I love how the keyboard comes off easily to grant access to the hard drive.

Hot-swapping was, and still is, a great feature on the PowerBook G3. The default hot-swappable items are the battery on the left and the CD-ROM drive on the right. The Removable Media War at the time in-

volved everyone trying to unseat Iomega's Zip drive. I sided with "everyone" and bought the hot-swappable 120 MB SuperDisk from Imation. (On the drive itself, the maker is identified as VST Technologies.) One major selling point for the SuperDisk was that it could do double duty as a floppy disk drive. It was a slooow drive, but it got the job done. Eventually, I ended up with a Zip 250 external USB drive.

Back in the late 1990s, ADB and SCSI ports were still the norm.

Compared to the trackpads found on 2009 MacBooks, the PowerBook G3's trackpad is tiny.

On the software front, I upgraded the OS once to 9.2.2 and ended at OS X 10.1.5. Eudora Light was my e-mail client, Roxio burnt backup CDs or CD-RWs for me, and I tried out many browsers, including Netscape Navigator and Camino[1].

Like a first child, the PowerBook G3 was showered with expansions like USB and FireWire.

Like having a first child, I bought lots of extra hardware for the PowerBook G3. In no particular order, they included: a PC Card USB adapter; a PC Card FireWire adapter; a FireWire CD-RW burner that was half the size of the PowerBook G3 itself; a $99 special cable to connect the PowerBook G3's ADB printer port to the parallel port on an HP LJ 4L; a $50 SCSI cable, bought from DataVision (Fifth Ave. and 39th Street) so I could use the 1 GB Jaz drive I originally bought for use with the 486 Packard Bell PC. The battery had to be replaced, and then even the second battery died.

Mac OS X 10.1.5 was the highest I got the PowerBook G3 upgraded to.

[1] http://caminobrowser.org

Sometime in 2001, possibly with great influence by Mac OS X's ever-greater demands, I got a domed iMac G4, and the PowerBook G3 finally got retired. Four years of life is a long duration in computer time.

Apple Picking

We need new desktop pictures each month. Write[1] to us!

This Month's Desktop Pictures[2]

These shots were taken at an apple and currant orchard, Maple Lane Farms, in Preston, Connecticut. A couple days before we went picking, a very windy storm blew most of the apples off of the trees, so most of our picking was really just "picking up."

View Pictures[a]

---

[a]http://www.atpm.com/15.12/apple-picking/

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

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

Downloading All the Pictures at Once

Some browsers can download an entire set of desktop pictures at once.

Safari Use this Automator workflow[4].

iCab Use the Download command to "Download all linked files in same folder" and configure the limits to download only the linked images.

OmniWeb Choose "Save Linked ▷ Images. . ." from the File menu.

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 Through 10.6.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.

---

[1]`mailto:editor@atpm.com`
[2]`http://www.atpm.com/15.12/apple-picking/`
[3]`http://www.atpm.com/Back/desktop-pictures.shtml`
[4]`http://automator.us/examples-02.html`

Out at Five

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

By the Skin of Your Mole

Budget Cuts

Logo Design

The Secretary's Computer
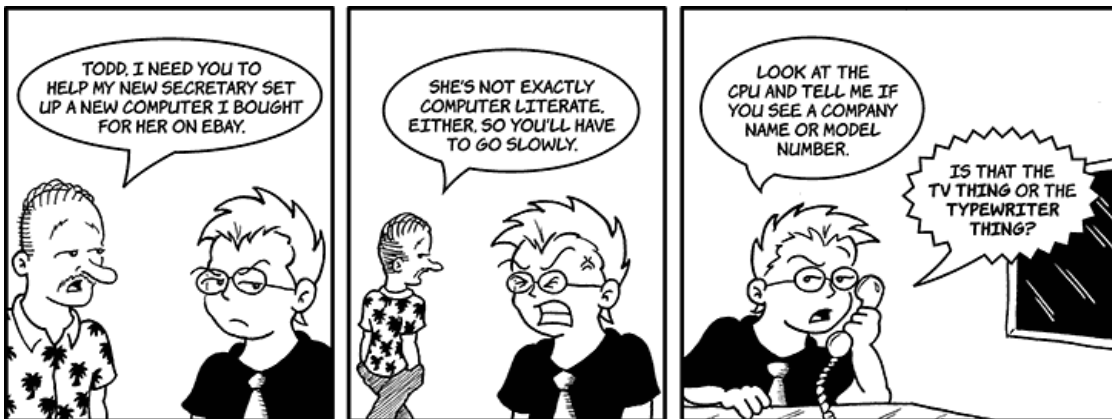
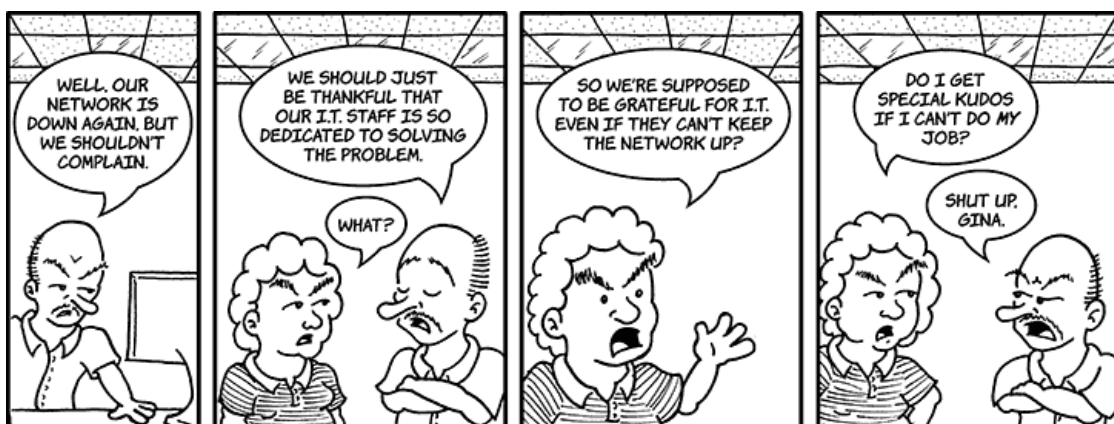## A Productive Meeting

Todd Gets Fired
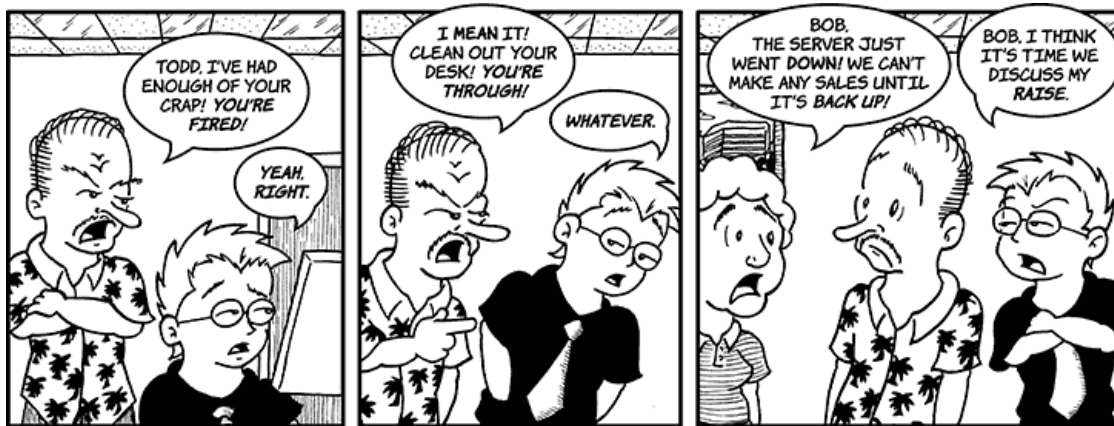
Friday Seltzer

Showing Appreciation

Elimination Process

When I Was Your Age

WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, I DID NOT GO TO SCHOOL BY BUS BUT HAD TO WALK TO SCHOOL, BAREFOOT, IN THE SNOW! NOT ONLY THAT, I HAD TO CARRY A 10-POUND LAPTOP WHICH DID NOT HAVE UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS!!!

---

[1] http://qaptainqwerty.blogspot.com/

PDFClerk Pro 3.9.3

Developer: SintraWorks[1]
Price: €35 (about $53[2])
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5. Universal[3]. Older version for Mac OS 10.4 available.
Trial: Feature-limited (watermarks).

One good thing about Mac OS X is its ability to make PDF files right out of the box. PDF files are portable in the sense that to read them you just need the free Acrobat Reader. To make things even easier, Mac OS X includes the Preview application, which does double duty as a very basic image processor and a PDF reader. Preview can even overlay annotations such as ovals, text, and arrows onto whatever it can read. As usual, included tools like Preview may not do enough, and other companies step in with alternative offerings. One such application is PDFClerk from SintraWorks.

Installation

Installing PDFClerk Pro involves dragging the downloaded program into the Applications folder. Unregistered, it is fully functional, although anything saved is watermarked. When you register, you receive a license file that you either just double-click in the Finder or drag onto the PDFClerk icon.

Usage

The name PDFClerk may make you think the program only handles PDF files. In reality, it can open many kinds of files, including images, text, and of course PDFs. You can even start from scratch and import text and graphics much as you would with a desktop publishing program. However, you cannot save the files back to their original formats as PDFClerk maintains its own format. Instead of saving, you would need to export them.

After you open a file that PDFClerk understands, you can overlay it with annotations. PDFClerk can add basic annotation types like those found in P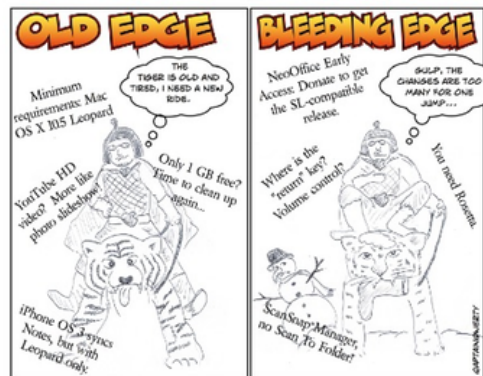review, such as ovals, Web links, text, and lines. On top of those, PDFClerk can also add freehand lines, polygons, and interactive annotations. You can add checkboxes, radio buttons, drop-down boxes, and more. Documents with interactive annotations can be exported to PDF, then used in Preview. In other words, Preview can open such PDF files and let you check the boxes or enter data into form fields. While most form-filling these days is done via a Web interface, if you still use pen-and-paper forms PDFClerk's form feature can be useful. However, you will still need to print the completed form from Preview as Preview usually cannot save all the changes.

A page from the October 2009 issue of ATPM with simple annotations on top and interactive ones at the bottom.

---

[1]http://sintraworks.com/index.php/sintraworks/pdfclerk_home/

[2]http://www.google.com/search?q=35+euros+in+USD

[3]http://www.apple.com/universal/

Beyond Annotations

One prominent feature that PDFClerk has which seems to be lacking in Preview is imposition. While the word "imposition" sounds imposing, it is really just the act of re-arranging the pages of a document prior to printing it. Within PDFClerk, for example, you can arrange a four-page document to print on one sheet. You basically create smaller versions of what you normally print out. While the ability is available in Preview and other Mac apps via the Print dialog, PDFClerk lets you see exactly what will be printed even before you issue the Print command. There are many built-in imposition templates, but you can also build your own or make copies of existing ones and tweak them to suit your needs.

I often think of spreading the word about ATPM by printing out the magazine and handing copies to people I know, or even Mac-using strangers, but the work associated with it is intimidating. I would have to print out on average 30 or so pages, and binding the pages would not be easy because I don't have an industrial stapler. Using PDFClerk impositions, combined with a duplex printer and a paper trimmer, I was able to reproduce a booklet of the October 2009 issue. The text is surprisingly readable, at least to my middle-aged eyes. All I need now is to overcome my fear of talking to strangers, even if they are Mac users.
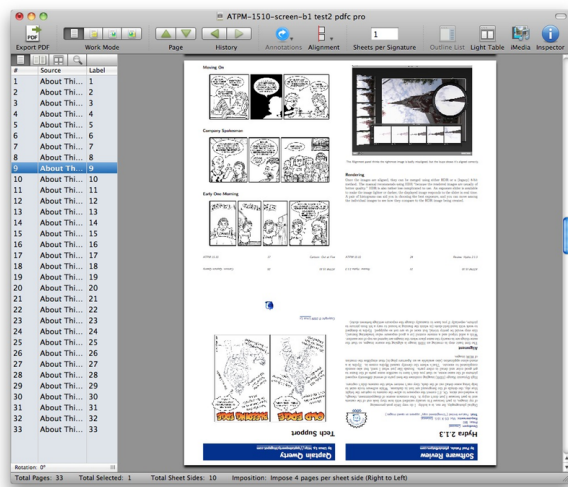

Four pages to a sheet, the October 2009 issue of ATPM can be cut down in size after printing and cutting.

The Import of Export

Whether you add annotations or squeeze pages onto sheets, as long as you save the document in PDFClerk format, you can return to it and make further adjustments. However, not everyone uses PDFClerk as a PDF reader, so when you need to share your handiwork with others, use the Export option. While you are limited to exporting to PDF, RTF, and bitmap formats (TIFF, PNG, BMP, JPEG, etc.), you do have many options in exporting to those formats.

You can export the PDFClerk document as a single PDF file, put odd pages in one file while putting even ones in another, convert the pages into bitmap images, an RTF file, or even as an AIFF audio file (using the OS's text-to-speech feature). RTF export preserves some of the settings but does well only for single-column text. Still, it is a better alternative than Preview's routine of highlight, copy, and paste.
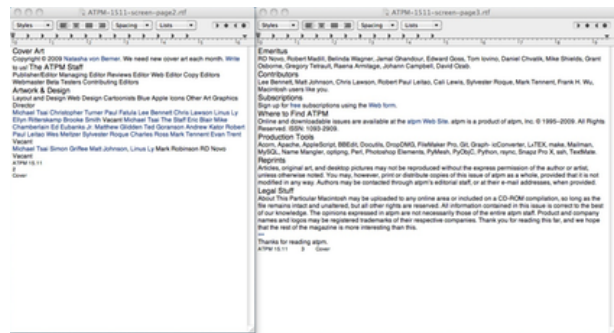
Exported to RTF, single-column PDFs fare better than others, with pages 2 and 3 of ATPM as examples.

Epilogue

PDFClerk is a good replacement for Preview. The extra annotations it offers are beyond my needs, but I am sure bigger production houses can make use of them. If you have the need to generate smaller versions of your documents, PDFClerk's imposition feature is useful. Export options include the usual image formats and RTF, but you can also slice and dice the PDFs in many ways. PDFClerk is a Very Nice tool to have in dealing with PDF files.

Copyright © 2009 Linus Ly[4]. Reviewing in ATPM is open to anyone. If you're interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.

---

[4] `mailto:lly@atpm.com`

U-Suit Premium

Developer: Uniea[1]
Price: $35
Requirements: iPhone 3G or 3GS
Trial: None

There are hundreds, maybe thousands, of different cases out there for your iPhone. I've personally used at least a dozen, and yet I still haven't found one I'm totally happy with. Can Uniea's U-Suit Premium leather hard case change that?

The U-Suit Premium has a fairly simple design. A thin but stiff molded plastic shell fits the iPhone. This shell, in turn, is encased in smooth leather. The plastic is just flexible enough to allow the iPhone to snap in and out of the case, but there's no danger of the phone popping out of the case when it's dropped.

Uniea follows the Henry Ford school of thinking: you can get a U-Suit Premium in any color you want so long as it's black[2]. That's not a bad thing; black leather is timeless, goes great with a black iPhone, and wouldn't look out of place with a white one. Overall fit and finish are excellent. Mold lines in the plastic are barely noticeable along the inside edges of the case, and you have to be looking for them to pick them out. The leather appears to be of high quality and uniform texture, although I could do without the Uniea logo stamped on the back.

These are the only mold lines you'll find on the U-Suit without looking very closely. Uniea took great care to ensure an excellent fit and finish.

[2]http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry_Ford

As you can see, the U-Suit Premium adds very little bulk to the phone and is almost unnoticeable from the front. Note also the obvious gaps in protection at the top and bottom.

[1]http://www.uniea.com/product/iphone-3g-3gs-u-suit-premium-signature-leather-hard-case.html

The leather looks great, but why did I just pay $35 to show off this big Uniea logo?

Inserting an iPhone into the U-Suit is simple: just angle the button side of the phone into the case, then squeeze the other side down with your thumb.

Protection for the sides and back of the iPhone is good, with a reasonably sized cutout for the volume and silent buttons on the left. The top and bottom of the phone are mostly exposed, but all four corners are protected well. The leather itself is just grippy enough not to fall out of a shirt pocket easily, but smooth enough that it doesn't turn the pocket inside out as you're extracting the phone from your jeans. (Both of these extremes have been a problem with other cases.)

Screen protection is provided via an included stick-on screen protector, which Uniea calls a U-Shield. It looks just like the protector included with the [Zoe Case](#)[3], right down to the instructional decals, and provides a reasonable level of scratch protection with minimal fuss. Applying these sorts of screen protectors so that the cutouts for the speaker and Home button are centered can be a bit tricky, but they're durable enough that you won't have to do it often. Unlike ZoFunk, Uniea doesn't sell the screen protectors separately, so you'll have to buy replacements somewhere else.

Stick-on screen protectors are tricky to align perfectly. This one is slightly offset, as you can see at the button.

Thus we come to the value equation. The afore-mentioned Zoe Case, while admittedly poorer in fit and finish, is comparable in design and materials (minus the leather), provides superior protection, and costs just $21. Adding leather to anything ups the

---

[3]`http://www.atpm.com/15.06/zofunk-cases.shtml`

price, but I'm not sure $14 more—a 67% increase—is justified.

If you're looking for an unobtrusive case that doesn't feel cheap and provides a modest level of protection against drops and scuffs, the U-Suit Premium is tough to beat. Its understated, elegant looks are a perfect match for the iPhone.

---

[4]http://chrislawson.net

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.

Are You Looking for New Staff Members?

ATPM is looking to add more regular reviewers to our staff. Though all positions with *About This Particular Macintosh* are volunteer, reviewing is a great way to share your product knowledge and experience with fellow members of the Macintosh community. If you're interested, contact ATPM's Reviews Editor, Paul Fatula[1].

How Can I Subscribe to *ATPM*?

Visit the subscriptions page[2].

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.

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.

How Can I Send a Letter to the Editor?

Got a comment about an article that you read in ATPM? Is there something you'd like us to write about in a future issue? We'd love to hear from you. Send your e-mail to editor@atpm.com. We often publish the e-mail that comes our way.

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-

---

[1] mailto:reviews@atpm.com
[2] http://www.atpm.com/subscribe

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 strongly we recommend it. Please contact our reviews editor[3], before you begin writing, if you have a piece of hardware or software that you'd like to review.

Which Products Have You Reviewed?
Check our reviews index[4] for the complete list.

What is Your Rating Scale?
ATPM uses the following ratings (in order from best to worst): Excellent, Very Nice, Good, Okay, Rotten. Products rated Good or better are ones that we recommend. Okay products get the job done. We recommend avoiding Rotten products.

Will You Review My Product?
If you or your company has a product that you'd like to see reviewed, send a copy our way. We're always looking for interesting pieces of software to try out. Contact reviews@atpm.com for shipping information. You can send press releases to news@atpm.com.

Where Can I Find Back Issues of *ATPM*?
Back issues[5] of ATPM, dating since April 1995, are available in DOCMaker stand-alone format and as PDF. In addition, all issues since ATPM 2.05 (May 1996) are available in HTML format.

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.

---

[3]mailto:reviews@atpm.com
[4]http://www.atpm.com/reviews/
[5]http://www.atpm.com/Back/