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Welcome

Welcome to the November issue of About This Particular Macintosh! That is, if you can find a new Mac! What is it about human nature and short supply? If someone announces you can't have something, everybody wants one. We've seen a lot of red-faced computer sales people explaining to customers why $100 off on a discontinued open box Mac is a better value that the none-to-be-found model that's replacing it. Trying to find a new Mac at a computer store is becoming the hi-tech version of "Where's Waldo?" First you think you see it, but then you don't.

Our sources tell us supply problems should be resolved in time for the American celebration of Thanksgiving and the start of the Christmas shopping season. Pass the sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie. We're ready to "talk turkey." Our latest edition of **A**udacious **T**idbits and **P**uckish **M**usings will keep you merry until the holiday season begins.

Flip, Flop, Flip!

No. It's not the first line of a new Dr. Seuss rhyme, but something equally colorful: Apple's recent policy changes and re-changes of the pricing on the original and new G4s. In the wake of the Taiwan quake (Hey, this Dr. Seuss stuff is contagious!), RAM prices have gone through the roof. Apple intended to make up the lost margin by replacing the original G4s (in very short supply) with slightly slower models (in much greater supply) without so much as a penny's reduction in price. A few days later Apple reversed its decision to cancel unfilled orders for the original G4s and then "clarified" its revised policy by stating that the original G4s will only ship to a limited number of buyers. Confused? You betcha! It's the first major PR snafu for Steve & Co.

In fairness to Apple, it can't control natural disasters. Motorola's tardiness in ramping up production of the original G4 chips is also partially to blame. The margin on PCs is not what it was a few years ago. To remain competitive, Apple has had to reduce the cost of its product's components by switching to less expensive PC parts and lowering prices. In today's market, there is little room for manufacturers to "absorb" increases in the cost of components. Looking on the bright side of things, Macs have never cost so little. A slight reduction in clock speed from that originally desired is a small price to pay for a stellar product.

Free At Last! Free At Last!

How long has it been since you escaped the dark world of PC hegemony? Low prices on new Macs (if you can find one) are giving computer buyers a much-needed freedom of choice. We asked our readers how long they've owned a Mac. The results of last month's survey (with 393 participants) are as follows:

Less than two months	10%
Half a year less	9%
A year or less	18%
Two years or less	22%
Four years or less	22%
More than four years	17%
I don't have a Mac	1.5%
"I don't recall"	0.5%

It's Less Than You Thought, But More Than We Promised!

That is how Robert Paul Leitao describes Apple's fourth fiscal quarter performance. As of this writing, Apple's stock has recovered from almost all of the pounding it took after the company announced that the delay in shipment of G4s until October would depress the company's results for the three-month period that ended in September. After reducing Wall Street's expectations, Apple handily outperformed its own revised estimates.

Apple has already announced that the current quarter will have higher costs due to the number of days added to the length of an otherwise normal quarter in order to adjust the calendar. But the increased sales during the period should lead to exceptionally high profits.

Read more about it in this issue's *Apples, Kids & Attitude*.

It's The Interface, Stupid

Some people can make things seem so complicated. The Mac is the platform of choice for musicians and other creative artists who make a living working with sound. Why is the Mac so popular with music's creative types? Read David Ozab's column to find out. This month David also offers readers part two of his insights into *MIDI and the Mac*, in which he reviews hardware and software that are compatible with USB Macs.

Don't Font With Me, Bud!

Fonts. Fonts. They're digitally cute. The more you use, the more you…Forget it! None of that sissy stuff for this staff! Fonts are big business. They're macho. They're also something to talk about while we await the delivery of our new G4s. Believe us, staring at now-empty workstation spaces will get you thinking about a lot of stuff. It beats getting out a rag and cleaning that nasty black outline on the wall behind where the old computer and monitor used to sit.

Fonts. Fonts. They're macho and cool. They're first and foremost a designer's tool…That's better! In acknowledgement of the role fonts play in our computing life, we have made them the theme of this month's issue! We just hope the G4s arrive before we have to pick a theme for next month's issue.

David Spencer has found a way to make font finding fun. We don't recommend that you repeat that line three times fast, but we do suggest that you read his column at least once. Come back to his column each month for other fascinating finds on the World Wide Web!

This month's *Personal Computing Paradigm* is a comprehensive overview of fonts on the Mac. Michael also reviews Font Agent, a utility for organizing fonts on your hard drive.

Shareware is Fontware. Well, sometimes. Bill Lovett's fondness for shareware knows no bounds. This month's Shareware Roundup features font aids.

Other Reviews in this month's issue include:

• Auction Action Tracker 2.7
• Cruise Control 1.1
• Font Agent 8.0.1
• iBook G3/300

• SPY Fox 2

Nice Fonts on A Cool T!

We're so fond of our new AT**P**M t-shirts that we'd like everyone to have one. Only the t-shirt costs money; the font impressions are free. Visit our <u>shirt's page</u>[1] to find out how you can publicly join the coolest group of Mac fanatics around. Each t-shirt features the funky-fonted AT**P**M logo emblazoned on a prestigious all-white, high-quality Hanes Beefy-T. Order yours today!

Please enjoy our latest issue!

The ATPM Staff

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1. http://www.atpm.com/5.09/shirts.shtml

Hello from Toronto

I subscribe to ATPM and I enjoy it, and I promote it to anyone who uses Mac! Now, let me say one thing. I want you to write an editorial, and discuss a topic which interests many Mac users! The ever-evolving Mac OS, and the fact that a lot of us don't need another OS. Please demonstrate some intelligent, multi-sided dissection of the topic.

I don't need another mindless overly emotional gush about the gooey goodness of Sherlock improvements, etc. I have been running Photoshop and Painter for two years on OS 8. My Netscape browser is great, and I've been around the old www in 80 weeks! My neighbour recently bought a G3 and OS 8.1 to conduct his architectural graphic exploits. He mentioned that the OS evolution is a scam. I bought the last OS, give me the next one for $25! I agree. The retailing on Mac OS is a joke, a scam, and a lot of users are sick and tired of it!

Can you guys tackle this topic? I would truly like to read some discussion on this! I am a true Mac lover, and I honestly feel ripped off with this OS escalation.

Regards,

Jim Brunswick
jimages@INTERLOG.COM

Copy Editor Paul Fatula is preparing an article somewhat along these lines for ATPM 5.12. Stay tuned.

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eDOC URLs

I have a suggestion for future ATPMs. I am currently using the eDOC version as I love to be able to click on links within the newsletter to directly access Web sites. However, I sometimes find myself wanting to also access the links in the footnotes scattered throughout the newsletter. Many of them are long and complicated, yet the eDOC format does not allow you to click on them. Could these links be made available to us?

Scott Williams
smw230@email.psu.edu

URLs in the footnotes of the eDOC edition are supposed to be clickable. If they're not working for you, email us at editor@atpm.com, and we'll work it out.

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Dear Mr. Ozab

I wish you welcome to the ATPM staff! They say, you will deal with musical issues.

I am a man from Sweden, formerly a teacher, now retired. I have an iMAC, OS 8.6, with Internet and e-mail. And a regularly get the ATPM news.

I wish to try to connect my computer to some musical instrument, e.g key-board or synthesizer, in order to make and play music, but I am totally a beginner on this item. I love jazz and blues, gospels and negro spiritual, happy jazz, New Orleans, Dixieland, and Folk music (traditional), and I hope to be able to compose some of that sort.

I play the piano a little. I am not clever at the keys, but I play without keys. I may be helped by the pre-made accords and rhythms on the keyboard.

My questions to you are:

- Which instrument (type and make) should I buy for this purpose?
- Which other components do I need?
- Could you possibly send me (e.g. by e-mail) any instructions how to connect and use this apparatus?

- Any other hints you can give me?
- Any books (instructions) that can be helpful to me?
- Where can I get further information?
- I would be very grateful, if you would kindly answer my questions!

Many Thanks!

Yours, sincerely,

Rolf Bergling
rolf.bergling@beta.telenordia.se

Please see MIDI and the Mac: Part II in this issue.

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Sign Me Up

Hi, just a quick email to say thanks for a great e-zine. I only have email access at work (we can't browse the Web), so any morsels of Apple-related info I can get, come from people like you, who will email their e-zines to me directly. Thanks again. I don't suppose you know of any other e-zines out there that I could subscribe to, that email straight to the desktop? I already have DotMac.

Anyway, to my problem. The studio I work for has 3 G3's, and a couple of older Macs (9600's), and we're planning to expand next year (G4—can't wait!). We're going to upgrade the G3's to OS 8.6 (we're holding off OS 9 for a couple of months, to see if they're any incompatibilities), and I need to know whether there are any major conflicts with any other software. We use all the standard programs, Photoshop, Quark, Illustrator, FreeHand, Norton Utilities, Anti-Virus and we're running OS 8.5.1. Do you know of any conflicts?

Thanks again for a great service.

Colin Darby
Colin_Darby@visionexpress.com

TidBITS[1], while more of a newsletter than an e-zine, also emails issues directly to its readers. Another (not really an e-zine) option is the excellent Mac Weekly Journal[2], which emails setext and PDF editions to readers. We're not aware of any conflicts among the software you mention.

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Corrupt Stuffit Archives

None of the Stuffit files of the recent issue are decodable. I get "archive corrupt" errors. I had to go to the Web page and download the unstuffed PDF. I routinely download and unstuff files from other sources. What gives?

Mike Friese
Mike-Friese.com@mf.mailbank.com

If you experience this problem, chances are you need an Internet client that can decode MacBinary III files. All the latest versions of the popular browsers and FTP clients support MacBinary III. If you prefer to use an older client, you'll need to make sure that a recent version of StuffIt Expander handles the MacBinary III decoding.

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Download Problems

I have been unable to open the downloaded version of ATPM 5.10, no matter how I try and get around it. The "incomplete file" warning, this time, cannot be bypassed. (Yes, I do have the latest commercial version of Stuffit, which has, so far, been perfect with your ATPM issues.

And the eDOC refuses to open, on account of an "incomplete download" too.

Is this only me? After a 100% success rate with all the other ATPM's?

Please let me know. I truly value your e-zine, it's a joy for me to read it every month.

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1. http://www.tidbits.com
2. http://www.gcsf.com/pages/mwj/index.html

Thank you!

With kindest regards,

Catherine von Dennefeld
artiste@napanet.net

Due to human error when we switched Web servers, ATPM back issues were not available for a few days near the middle of October. They're now <u>available</u>[3] again.

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iMate Review

I read your article on the iMate from Griffin Technologies, and I decided to try it out. Just to let you know, the site was real easy to order from, and I got overnight delivery. I downloaded the driver, and successfully connected my Wacom ArtZ tablet with ABD connector to my iMac for the first time. Looks like a good product. Thanks for the article.

Rich Anderson
rcahome@mailhost.dundee.net

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We'd love to hear your thoughts about our publication. We always welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, and praise at <u>editor@atpm.com</u>. Or, if you have an opinion or announcement about the Macintosh platform in general, that's ok too.

Send your e-mail to <u>editor@atpm.com</u>. *All mail becomes the property of* ATPM.

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3. http://www.atpm.com/Back

How?

How could Apple Computer, a once beleaguered, but newly successful manufacturer of PCs, introduce a stellar new product only to induce anger in its loyal customers, have its stock nose-dive, and cause almost all its inventory on store shelves to be depleted only to rebound in one month's time?

Folks, it's a story for the record books! With about a month remaining in its fiscal year, Apple's iCEO, Steve Jobs, introduced a new line of high-performance PCs to an enthusiastic audience of publishing professionals. A few weeks later, Apple announced that it could not deliver many of the new PCs to eager customers until after the new fiscal year began. This caused Apple to revise its earnings estimates for the quarter and the fiscal year. As a result, Apple's stock lost about 25% of its total value.

Soon after the new fiscal year began, Apple announced it wouldn't be able to meet demand for its new computers as they were originally configured. The only recourse Apple had was to offer slightly slower computers at the same prices as the original ones. This action infuriated long-term customers who wanted what Apple offered, but was unable to deliver. Wall Street responded favorably to the news that Apple had found a way to solve its product shortage problems and at press time the stock had recovered almost all of its recent losses.

Timing the release of the new computers so close to the end of the calendar quarter and Apple's fiscal year may have been the company's biggest mistake. Releasing new products at the end of calendar quarters has helped Apple's end-of-quarter inventory levels because supplies on new products are initially constrained. It has also benefited earnings because there are higher margins on new models than older ones. This time events didn't work in Apple's favor. The quarterly period that ended in September was also the end of Apple's fiscal year, which only compounded the problem. What's recorded for financial posterity are only cold, hard numbers, not several pages of explanations. Apple's earnings for the fiscal fourth quarter and fiscal year fell below analysts' expectations because of the delays in shipping G4s.

It has taken Wall Street several weeks to realize that the G4s that weren't sold in the last fiscal year will be sold in the new fiscal year. Apple Computer finished the fiscal year with $500 million more in unfilled orders than normal. The orders haven't gone away; the sales will be booked in October rather than September. Many of the orders will be filled with computers that have a slightly lower clock speed than originally planned. All in all it has been much ado about nothing.

Apple finished the fiscal year with more than $3 billion in cash and cash equivalents and has one of the strongest balance sheets in the PC industry. With $500 million in additional unfilled orders, the first quarter of the new fiscal year should set company records for unit shipments and profit growth.

If you think the recent G4 snafu means that Steve & Co. have lost their marketing edge, please remember that this team recently changed the name of Motorola's chip sub-architecture from AltiVec to Velocity Engine. Which name do you think will sell more computers to the masses?

In ATPM 5.01 I provided[1] readers with a list of predictions for 1999. In ATPM 6.02 I will list my new predictions for the year 2000. I'd like to close this column by reviewing a few of my favorite 1999 predictions.

> Apple's soon-to-be-released consumer portable will be positioned as an entry-level consumer machine. While attractive to students and others who would like the convenience of mobile computing, many of the features desired by PowerBook users will be absent. However, it will compete very well with low-priced notebooks and contribute to Apple's renewed presence in the consumer marketplace.

No one can argue with me on this one!

> Gaming will be an important part of Apple's focus in the consumer market. Apple's hardware will continue to receive game-friendly enhancements. High-end G3 chips and other hardware enhancements, along with the forthcoming release of the G4 processor and Mac OS X, will entice developers to write games specifically for the Mac platform. By the end of 1999, the Mac platform will have the best gaming machines available to the general consumer.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/5.01/page5.shtml

Game developers have been embracing the Mac platform in droves. While the platform lags behind Windows in terms of total titles available, the better games are being ported to (or written for) the Mac. Watch for a renewed focus on games at the upcoming Macworld Expo.

> The Imatec suit will either be dismissed by the courts or settled out of court with little or no impact on Apple's financials. Imatec's PR machine is far more impressive than its legal claims.

I continue to believe this suit will either be settled out of court for a nominal sum or be adjudicated in Apple's favor. I've heard nothing about Imatec outside of its case against Apple. Imatec appears to me to be nothing more than a little company with too few clients and too much time to waste on what I consider to be frivolous litigation. The question might be how much Apple is willing to pay them for the patents they claim Apple has infringed. So far it doesn't look like much.

> No matter the formal outcome of the Justice Department's case against Microsoft, the trial will change the way that company does business. Its hold on the OS market will begin to loosen and PC manufacturers will be emboldened to negotiate better licensing terms and rates. Java, Linux, and Mac OS X (among other technologies) will begin to erode Microsoft's OS clout. Fears of a "Pandora's Box" being opened by the decline of Microsoft's influence on the OS market will prove to be unfounded. The fallout from the Justice Department's suit will force Microsoft to "play ball" with other software and technology companies or run the risk of being "side-stepped" by the institutional customers that it covets. The days of Microsoft's stranglehold on its customers will come to an unceremonious end.

In my view Microsoft is moving fast to break its own dependence on Windows revenue. Either by court decree or market forces, Microsoft will morph itself into a much different company.

> Now that Apple has stabilized its revenue base and simplified its product line, the company will begin using its substantial cash resources to acquire needed technology. Apple's R&D efforts will focus on Mac OS X, QuickTime, and revolutionary hardware designs. Other technologies needed to bring new products to market will either be licensed from other sources or gained through acquisition.

Apple acquired much of the technology needed to produce Final Cut Pro, and recently made a large investment in the company that manufacturers its TFT screens. Watch for more acquisitions and investments in 2000.

> The first quarter of 1999 will see a significant slow down in consumer spending. By the end of 1999, U.S. economic growth will come to a halt. The change in economic times will precipitate a dramatic restructuring of the PC retail market. Manufacturers of brand name PC products will move aggressively to establish direct-to-consumer relationships. With the exception of its consumer line of products that will be available through a variety of retail chains, Apple will market most of its products through "value added" re-sellers, as well as over the Internet. The Apple Web site and Apple Store will become primary sources for product sales and consumer information. The added margin from direct-to-consumer sales will be an important part of Apple's future earning growth.

I was off by 365 days on the economy. The rest of this prediction is already coming true.

> For the current fiscal year (period ending September 1999), Apple will achieve $8 billion in gross sales. Net profits for the fiscal year will meet or exceed $600 million. The company will continue to increase its consumer PC market share and regain sales and sales momentum in the higher education market.

I was off by $1 million on profits (pretty cool, huh!) and $1.9 billion on sales. Apple's gross margins were higher than I expected, and product prices were lower than I ever dared dream. Apple also moved aggressively to eliminate ancillary products that contributed to sales, but nothing to the company's bottom line. A spectacular year despite the company's September difficulties.

> Based on my sales and earnings projections, I predict that Apple's share price will end the fiscal year above $70 per share.

Immediately prior to the mid-September profit warning Apple shares closed just above $80 per share—an excellent performance for the fiscal year.

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I'll be back in February. Until then, Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy Cha-
nukah from my family to yours!

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About This
Opinion

Apple Cider
Random Squeezings from a Mac User
By Tom Iovino

tiovino@atpm.com

Ahhh, Thanksgiving!

For those of you who don't celebrate with us here in the US, or a month earlier in Canada, here's the lowdown on that most favorite of holidays (yes, believe it or not, a recent poll of Americans shows that Thanksgiving is now a more popular holiday than Christmas—they feel Thanksgiving is family-centered while Christmas has been overly commercialized).

First—well I guess this is only if you are the cook in the family as I am—you spend about three months worrying what you are going to prepare for the big Thanksgiving dinner. However, in recent years, I have discovered that you can help yourself a great deal by using the Internet. For instance, you can check out my favorite Thanksgiving food site here[1].

Then, only if you are the cook, you spend the days before the holiday slaving in the kitchen like one of those poor kids who makes Kathie Lee Gifford's duds in Central America. Apple pies, cranberry sauce, Stuffing, fixins' are prepared, and that rock-hard frozen turkey needs to begin thawing.

On the big day, you wake at the crack of dawn and continue the preparations, cursing the turkey for taking so long to defrost. Oh, and you also get to enjoy the tradition of pulling the "giblets" out of the turkey.

Let it hereby be decreed today: When I am King, no one shall be forced to put their hands inside a cold, dead bird carcass at 6:00 AM on a holiday morning.

That is all.

Meanwhile, during all this hectic running around, everyone else who does not need to be cooking wonders why the chef is pulling his/her hair out and weeping openly during Butter-

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1. http://www.butterball.com

ball commercials. That is, of course, when they are still sleeping until 10 AM, while you peel about three tons of potatoes.

Finally, all of this activity culminates with the traditional dinner. Ahh, the dinner, a time to be thankful for all of the blessings we have. And if you don't particularly hate the relatives you are eating with, the day can be downright enjoyable.

And, I won't even mention the joy of the food coma you will experience after being sated with the holiday goodies.

Well, as we come to this season of reflection and bounty, it's time for me to make my list of things I am thankful for. So, bear with me.

- **The iMac**—Ya know, here we are in the second year of the iMac's ascendancy, and the design shows no sign of slowing down. The reason for this, of course, is that Apple's engineers have been hard at work making the iMac a leaner, meaner machine with every revision.

  Gone are the metal baffles. Now, you can stare directly into the inner workings of your iMac. I haven't had so much fun staring through plastic since I had that ant farm back when I was in fourth grade. And, unlike the ant farm, you don't get bites when you open the plastic shell.

  Actually, you can add megabytes of memory quickly and easily with the newly designed iMacs. Quite a change from the company which absolutely forbade owners from cracking open their computer cases to get a peek at the innards.

- **The iMac's Competitors**—Oh, take a great idea and copy it, why don't you? It is often said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

  When the iMac hit the scene last year, many people (ooh, I did too!) said that the iMac was doomed to failure. The all-in-one information appliance approach to computers was weak at best, and no one would go for the bubbly look and USB based connections.

  Oh, really? Well, when you are the lead sled dog, the view is better. It's also a lot of fun to look back at the other dogs in line and see what they are up to as well. A quick look at Gateway's Astro[2] will show you that the Johnny-Come-Latelies are finally getting the mes-

sage that computer users want friendly, easy-to-connect machines. In fact, the TV commercials say you can get online in less time than it takes to eat a donut.

Too bad the Astro doesn't run the Mac OS…

- **Air Port**—Oh, the Buck Rogers technology of the year. Apple's really going to have a winner here. The whole concept of being able to hook a computer to a network by merely turning it on is the fulfillment of a lot of dreams.

  Drag your iBook anywhere. Wake it up from sleep. Surf your brains out. Make PC users jealous.

  Show once again that Apple is leading the dog sled.

- **The G4**—The supercomputer for the rest of us. At my office, we have three graphics professionals who are just licking their chops at these bad boys.

  For years, I have tried to convince people that using Photoshop is akin to using imaging software developed by NASA. I mean, come on, if imaging Olympus Mons on the surface of Mars eats up a lot of system resources, imagine what putting Hillary Clinton's face on Cindy Crawford's body can do?

  Not that I do anything like that on my computer.

  Apple's inclusion of the velocity engine will, once again, steer the industry. Once software developers get a handle on this new technology, you can bet that it is going to make the PC crowd sit up and take notice.

  Also, it's not that the G3 was a bad machine, but—**wow**—they sure got the color scheme right with the G4s, didn't they? That graphite is one sharp color.

- **OS 9**—No, it's not Sherlock2, Multiple Users, or that nifty voiceprint password feature that wows me about this latest software update.

  It's the fact that after two years of promising to update the system software to take advan-

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2. http://www.gateway.com/prod/hm_astro_ProdInfo.shtml

tage of the latest advances in programming and hardware development, the days of languishing in OS 7.x, waiting for the brand new, built from scratch Copland to be unveiled, have long since faded into memory.

Many Kudos to the folks in Cupertino for keeping us up-to-date.

• The end to all of this Y2K B.S. and the Millennium Hype is in sight. 'nuff said.

• Oh, yeah, and as I sit here in front of my computer after an evening of taking out the trash, chasing my son around the house, and discovering the true meaning of the phrase projectile vomiting, I also have to be thankful for my wife and my son. No matter how bad things get, I can be sure that they will always be there for me.

Except, of course, at 6:00 AM when I'm up to my elbow in a cold turkey carcass.

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About This
Opinion

On a Clear Day
You Can See The Hollywood Sign…

By Mike Shields

mshields@atpm.com

I have a box of cereal that expired today. French Toast Crunch. Now you may wonder what this has to do with the Mac, and Hollywood's relationship to it, and frankly, at this point, so do I. But I'll get to it somewhere in the following.

The fine folks at Stickbus.com have switched to daily updates of their site, and the fifteen minute version of *The Blair Witch Project* is available for download. Runs great on my desktop G3 here at work. At home, it skips some on my 8500/180.

I would've been able to tell you all this last month; however, the cereal has expired. Ok, my deadline passed, but I'm trying to stay on theme. I found out that the film would be available right after I'd turned in last month's masterpiece, but before we went to press, so, I figured, "No problem, I'll add a sentence in the edits." Which didn't make it in. So, now I've got content lying around like a box of stale cereal. No one wants to eat it, however, no one wants to throw it away. And furthermore, I came home today and found an announcement in my email that they have set up Web based mail at their domain. I immediately signed up. You guessed it. I'm Batman.

That's the nature of the net in general, especially where my beat is concerned. With content changing literally by the hour, it's hard to keep up. Now I realize that we have a monthly periodical, but at the same time, I like to keep you, my seven readers, up to date on the latest and greatest. Even with only a ten-day lead time, things get out of date quickly. I figure most of you know by now I received the above information by some other means. Except for the stale cereal part. I didn't even know about that until my daughter asked for the wrong cereal this morning.

Product Placement

DSellers@maccentral.com writes almost daily about Macs appearing in the movies and TV, and the famous people that use them. Now, how these things come about, in most instances,

is product placement. Without boring you with the ins and outs of what makes Hollywood great, think James Bond, and the BMW, at least, in the last two films. BMW paid big money to make their Z3 the new Bond car for *Goldeneye*, and then for *Tomorrow Never Dies*, they put up their latest four door model. Bond drives around in what amounts to a seven-minute commercial.

Apple is guilty of this as well. Remember *Mission Impossible*? Tom Cruise saves the day with an Apple Powerbook 5300. And Jeff Goldblum saves the entire planet with a laptop as well.

Some of you may be watching the show *Work With Me* on CBS, Wednesday nights at 8:30/7:30 Central. The secretary has on her desk, a brand spankin' new 21" Studio Display.

With a star on the side slapped over the Apple logo.

Why does this happen? Simple. The monitor is too cool looking not to be used, but Apple didn't want to pay for the privilege. Part of the new corporate policy thing. Or maybe they didn't want to pay for exposure on a program that no one watches. I mean, the show could be cancelled by the time you read this.

Again, stale cereal.

Other Stuff

Discovered, of course, as my deadline edges ever closer. But I want to get this stuff in this month, because by next month, all of it will be last month's stale cereal.

How many of you remember the fine folks at SuperMac? If I recall, UMAX bought them after their clone business failed to catch on, and then sold them again to someone else. In any case, they've rechristened themselves as Digital Origin, and they've got a [great site](http://www.digitalorigin.com)[1].

But that's not what I want to talk about. Ok, it is, but indirectly. They've got a product called EditDV, for you guessed it, editing digital video. According to the benchmark graphic they have on their site, it smokes Final Cut Pro by a factor of two. Worth checking out. If I had the G3 they used for the comparison at home, I'd ask for a review copy to see for myself.

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1. http://www.digitalorigin.com

Now a word about this. They state that since rendering is what takes the most time, and since their product renders faster, EditDV is better than Final Cut Pro. I haven't seen this type of product comparison anywhere else, and it would be wise to seek out independent verification of the above. On the site, they don't talk about anything else relative to EditDV, just the render time.

The really cool part about their site, and why I feel they're for real, is they've got a tutorial on digital video with a recommended reading list. I checked the list out, and I even own a few of the books. Even if you ultimately decide not to buy EditDV, or any other product from Digital Origin, they're worth checking out.

For those of you that are first time readers of this column, I'd like to commend the both of you. For the rest, you'll remember previous discussions in this space about the viability of DV on the big screen. I've mentioned that I've gotten into several heated discussions on the various relevant newsgroups, and maybe even the not so relevant ones as well. If you haven't seen them already, a deja news search will turn up the various discussions. Now I don't know, I've talked about this stuff before, so this may taste a little like stale cereal, but I have to say for the record, film is dead. Although not as dead as the French Toast Crunch I threw away this morning.

72 and sunny in Redondo.

e you next time.

Disclaimer: Mike is about to shoot a movie, so, if you wanna jump on the bandwagon and show your financial support <g>, he can be reached at mshields@atpm.com.

About This
Opinion

The Personal
Computing Paradigm
BY MICHAEL TSAI

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Macintosh Font Basics

The Mac's support for different fonts is one of the things that has made it special from the beginning. Mac fonts were simple then. All fonts were of the same type (bitmapped), and there was only one way to install them (Font/DA Mover). You didn't have to worry about installing more fonts than the system could handle because there **weren't** that many fonts available. Even if there were, you wouldn't have been able to fit them onto a single-sided single-density floppy drive, anyway. The Mac has changed a lot since those days, and fonts have too. Ironically, Mac OS 8.x probably makes the Internet easier to use than fonts! This article attempts to demystify the basics of using fonts on the Macintosh.

Where They Go

A long time ago, when System 7 was new, fonts were stored inside the System file. This needlessly bloated the most important file in your System Folder. It also meant that, unlike most Mac applications of the time, fonts couldn't be installed by simple drag-and-drop. Instead, Apple provided the Font/DA Mover, a special program for installing fonts into your System file. ("DA" stands for Desk Accessory. DAs were a special kind of mini application activated from the Apple menu that allowed a limited kind of multi-tasking on Macs that didn't have MultiFinder or System 7. DAs were also stored in the System file, prior to System 7, and so also required the Font/DA Mover for installation.)

System 7 eliminated the need for the Font/DA Mover. It let users directly manipulate suitcase files—repositories for fonts and desk accessories, as well as the System file itself. Although suitcases are actually stored as single files on disk, with System 7 or later they appeared to behave like folders that could only hold certain kinds of files: fonts, sounds, keyboard layouts, and the like.

System 7.1, a significant upgrade in its own right, introduced the now-familiar Fonts folder. To install a font you could simply drag its suitcase into the Fonts folder or—better yet—drag
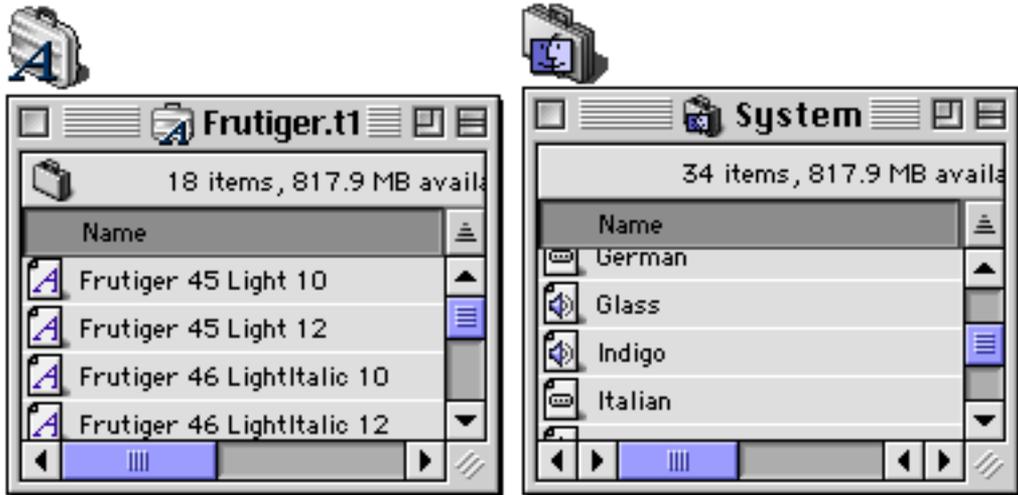
it onto the System Folder and let let the Mac OS auto-route it. This is how font installation works to this day. Deep down, however, the OS was pretending that the contents of the Fonts folder were actually part of the System file. That's why you can put FKEY resources in font suitcases and make them available to the system by <u>placing them in the Fonts folder</u>[1]. There's no need to operate on your System file with ResEdit.

Bitmap, TrueType, and PostScript

Bitmap fonts are like images created in a painting program. Fontographers work on a grid with 72 pixels per inch and decide which pixels should be blackened, and which left white. Since they specify, in pixels, exactly how large each letter will be, each bitmap font stores only enough information to output the font at a single point size. If you want to use a font in a size for which there is no bitmap, the Mac OS must use the available bitmaps to synthesize one in the size you request. This usually produces poor quality results.

Looking at the Size menu of your word processor, you can tell which size bitmaps are installed. Sizes for which a bitmap exists are drawn in outlined text. You might think that by sticking to such fonts you'd be assured high-quality output. Unfortunately, this is not the case. If you set your text in 12-point, then 12-point text will look fine on your monitor. However, your printer has a higher resolution. Even the ancient ImageWriter II's resolution is 144 dpi, twice the logical resolution of your monitor. To take advantage of this resolution when printing a 12-point font, your Mac would need a 24-point bitmap.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/4.11/page7.shtml

Adobe came to the rescue with Post-Script fonts, which can be scaled to any resolution without loss of quality. Instead of specifying a pattern of pixels for each letter, PostScript fonts define characters in terms of curves. If you've ever used the pen tool in Illustrator or Photoshop, it produces something simi-lar. These curves are mathematical objects defined in terms of equations, not pixels on a grid. The curves define the outline of each character, which is then filled with a solid color. Because of this, PostScript fonts are often called outline fonts. Macintosh PostScript fonts are usually in what Adobe calls "Type 1 format," so they are sometimes called Type 1 fonts.

Because of the way the Mac's original font architecture was designed, each PostScript font must have at least one corresponding bitmap font in order for the system to know the font is available. Like other bitmap fonts, the bitmaps for PostScript fonts are stored in font suitcases. However, the PostScript fonts themselves must be stored separately, and are typically placed in the Fonts folder.

In fact, the Mac OS doesn't know how to draw PostScript fonts. Instead, it relies on a control panel called Adobe Type Manager to draw PostScript fonts on the screen. To complicate mat-ters, some of Adobe's high-end graphics programs include built-in PostScript engines, so they can display PostScript fonts at any size, without ATM. Without one of these PostScript ren-derers, the Mac OS will scale whatever bitmaps you have installed, as in the case without Post-Script, producing the same horrifying results.

For this reason, and also because it was worried about Adobe's PostScript monopoly, Apple developed TrueType fonts. TrueType fonts are conceptually very similar to PostScript ones. They also use mathematical outlines to specify characters, so they can be scaled to any size. In addition, Mac OS 7.0 and later contain a built-in TrueType rasterer—an Adobe Type Man-ager for TrueType fonts. Thus, you can use any size TrueType font on screen or in print, and

get the same high quality. With TrueType fonts, your word processor's Size menu will show every size in outline type, to indicate that it can produce each size at a high quality.

The icon with the triple "A" is the TrueType version of Geneva.
Following it are bitmap fonts, including the hand-tuned bitmap for Geneva 9 italic.

Even though the Mac OS can generate any size it wants from a TrueType font, most font suitcases that contain TrueType fonts also contain bitmaps. There are two reasons for this. First, it takes less time to draw a bitmap font than to rasterize a TrueType outline into a set of pixels and then draw them. Second, outline fonts do not always scale well to low resolutions. Serifs and other aspects of character shapes can become exaggerated, and the font may become hard to read.

To overcome his problem, fontographers often create a few hand-tuned bitmap fonts that are designed to look good on-screen, to make every pixel count. The best example of this is Geneva 9 italic. The Finder once used Geneva 9 for file names and its italic variant for aliases. Since italic text is especially hard to read at low resolutions, Apple created a special bitmap for Geneva 9 italic. As you can see below, it is actually easier to read than TrueType's rendition of Geneva 10 italic, which has more pixels to work with.

TrueType's Geneva 10 Italic   *Hand-Tuned Geneva 9 Italic*

Which Kind Should I Use?

You probably want to avoid bitmap-only fonts, unless you know you will only be using them on-screen in sizes for which you have pre-drawn bitmaps. In addition, you can safely remove bitmap fonts if you have a corresponding TrueType font. You can remove all but one bitmap if

you have a corresponding PostScript font. However, it's often better to keep these bitmaps, unless you're short on disk space, because they sometimes look better on-screen than their synthesized versions.

Many font vendors let you choose between TrueType and PostScript versions of their fonts. The formats produce output of comparable quality, and they look about the similar on-screen if ATM is installed (though I prefer TrueType). TrueType fonts are a bit easier to manage, since they're completely contained in one suitcase and require no extra software (e.g. ATM). PostScript fonts on the other hand, are more reliable for embedding in Acrobat PDF files, and are better supported in drawing applications like Adobe Illustrator. Unless you really know what you're doing, it's best to install only one format (TrueType or PostScript) of a given font. Character sizes and spacings may not be identical between the two versions, so installing only one will ensure that you get consistent results.

If you have a PostScript printer, it may have some fonts built-in. If a TrueType font you are printing is available in the printer (as PostScript), by default the printer's version will be used. You can override this setting in the LaserWriter print options. Forcing the printer to use the font on your Mac instead of its built-in copy results in slower printing but output that is closer to what's displayed on your screen.

Anti-Aliasing

Adobe Type Manager and Mac OS 8.5 and later know how to anti-alias PostScript and True-Type fonts, respectively. Anti-aliasing smooths type's edges by blurring them with shades of gray. The resulting letters are not as sharp, but they appear to be of higher resolution than they actually are.

Times Anti-Aliased Times
Sand Anti-Aliased Sand

Some people love anti-aliased fonts on screen, and others hate them. I configure the Mac OS to only anti-alias fonts of size 18 point or higher, since the blurring can obscure character shapes at smaller sizes. Also, character spacing and size may change slightly when anti-aliasing is used, but this has no effect on printed output.

Font Utilities

One irritating limitation of the Mac's font architecture is that fonts can't be loaded or unloaded dynamically. The Finder won't let you move items out of the Fonts folder while an application is running, and newly installed fonts aren't available to running applications until they quit.

Utilities like Adobe's ATM Deluxe, Extensis' Suitcase, Diamond Soft's Font Reserve, and Alsoft's Master Juggler help get around this problem. They let you load and unload fonts from anywhere on your hard disk, at any time. You can create sets of fonts for each project and load them as a unit, as needed. This conserves memory and prevents your font menu from becoming overloaded. Some font activators can even load fonts transparently, as they're needed.

Another class of utilities helps tame your font menu. Adobe Type Reunion Deluxe, Menu Fonts, and ACTION WYSIWYG Menus make it easier to identify fonts by drawing each font's name in its own font. Type Reunion lets you create custom groups of fonts and display them as submenus to reduce clutter. It also provides a "recent fonts list" at the top of the Font menu, to save scrolling for commonly used fonts. Menu Fonts lets you navigate long font menus by typing the first letter of a font's name. It also shows you previews of what fonts look like in several sizes and indicates whether each font is PostScript or TrueType. Finally, ACTION WYSIWYG Menus can display a long fonts menu as several columns, so that you can see more fonts on screen at once.

Additional font utilities are discussed in this month's Shareware Roundup, and Font Agent, a utility for organizing fonts in the Finder, is also reviewed in this issue. Please enjoy the rest of our font-related coverage.

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Buyer Types

Computers suck.

I mean it. In spite of all the advancements made in technology, they're still just not easy enough for many people to use effectively. Granted, the Macintosh is the best of the bunch in this regard, but we all know perfectly intelligent people who still manage to make a mess of Macs on a regular basis. I hope the future will bring computers that are a lot simpler to use, perhaps by doing fewer things than today's computers do. Perhaps they won't even be called computers.

But before a person even gets the privilege of being baffled by his computer he has to travel an even darker journey—actually selecting a new machine. All that mumbo jumbo—"gig-a-megs" and "hertz-a-flops"—I mean, forget it! Ever try explaining these things to your mother? Heck, I know people who make a good living in the computer industry who still don't understand the specifications on a new computer box.

What's a would-be computer buyer to do?

I'll tell you. Forget the specifications. Just forget them. The computer itself is not important. What's important is the user. How many computer salespeople ask you what your "specifications" are? Not many I'll bet. Down with computers, I say! Up with users!

Bearing that battle cry in mind, let's talk more about selecting and buying a computer. Without paying the slightest bit of attention to the arcane numbers and mysterious techno-babble on the sides of the box, let's figure out how to buy a computer based on the user alone. That's all we need to know.

The way I figure it, there are only four types of computer buyers. If you can determine which buyer type you are, then the computer that's right for you becomes almost instantly apparent.

The first type of buyer is a very common one today. In fact, I predict that more and more people will be of this type in the future. It's simply the fastest growing type out there. Long-time computer users and really geeky people have a hard time understanding this type, but that's of little consequence. Nerds the world over may shake their heads in disapproval, but despite this the "**short-term**" buyer types are changing the face of the industry.

So what is the "short-term" buyer type? This is the buyer whose needs are modest and who only wants to spend a little bit of money on a computer. She realizes, of course, that there are drawbacks to this strategy. She knows, for example, that in a few short years the computer she bought will no longer be able to run the latest and greatest software at rocket speed. A couple of inexpensive upgrades may help a bit, but the machine is past its prime. "But what the heck," says the short-term buyer. "I only paid a little for the machine to begin with. I think I'll just let the kids have it and go buy a new one."

And so, looking back on her purchase with high satisfaction and no resentment, she does just that. I mentioned before that "techies" often don't understand this type of buyer. This is evidenced by the unexpectedly large number of technically savvy Mac users who declare the iMac unfit for human consumption. They just don't understand that "short-term" is a perfectly sound buying strategy for a growing number of people. And this growing multitude wants iMac and iBook!

The second type, the "**long-term**" buyer, is a more complex beast but one that technically inclined users are likely to understand right away. He doesn't balk at $2,000 or even higher price tags. Why is he willing to put up this kind of green for a new computer? Almost always it's for one of the following two reasons, if not both.

The first reason is longevity. He spends big to stave off obsolescence for as long as possible. He realizes that one of the benefits of spending a great deal of money on a computer is that it'll perform adequately for years to come. To be sure, upgrading the machine at certain intervals sometimes helps this along—a video card here, a processor upgrade there. He knows that while he paid a premium price for the machine, it'll age gracefully and live a long, useful life if properly cared for.

The other reason that the "long-term" type is willing to part with all that money may be that he simply requires state-of-the-art performance the day he opens the box. Thus, what I'm calling the "long-term" type of buyer could just as easily be called the "Photoshop freak." Put simply, he needs the maximum number of horses under the hood, either because he's a professional who uses Photoshop and other demanding applications or because he's a rabid gamer who simply cannot continue living unless he has the best gaming experience money can buy. And as I said previously, sometimes the "long-term" buyer has both of these reasons in mind. He will almost surely spurn the modest specs of the iMac and lust instead for the Power Mac G4.

On the sad day when the "long-term" buyer realizes his machine isn't cutting it anymore, a sentiment like, "I spent a lot of money on ol' Bessie back then, but she just isn't what she used to be," will enter his mind. "Still," he'll muse fondly, "I got a lot of good years out of her." Thus when he finally puts "ol' Bessie" out to pasture, he does so without regret.

This brings us to the third type of computer buyer. While the first two types have perfectly valid strategies for buying a new computer, this type does not.

This buyer, whom I dub "**the mis-matched**," is far less likely to be pleased with her purchase. Put simply, she is a "long-term" buyer or "short-term" buyer who purchases as if she were the opposite type. Consider a buyer who purchases an iMac, yet expects that in five years the machine will still pick up Photoshop 9.8 and shake it like a rag doll. It's not gonna happen folks. Similarly, a person whose needs were modest and yet purchased a 500 MHz Power Mac G4, may not be very pleased later about having spent all that money.

"The mis-matched" is a sad buyer, really. Had she only known what type of buyer she was to begin with she might have made a more personally satisfying choice. Don't let this happen to you or yours. User, know thyself!

Some of you wise ATPM readers may be pounding your fists right about now and insisting that things aren't as simple as I've made them out to be. Buying a computer can be a significant investment, after all, and would-be buyers should have more in their arsenal than a working knowledge of my silly "types."

And I won't argue. You're right. The more knowledge a buyer has, the more likely she will be happy with herpurchase. Technical knowledge about the computers themselves is certainly not valueless, and the "mumbo jumbo" in the pamphlets next to the in-store demo may be very

helpful information. But even the deepest understanding of these things is no substitute for knowing what you want from your computer. Knowing specs up and down won't guarantee a satisfied owner. It's high time buyers and retailers alike acknowledge this fact.

Still other sharp readers may be pounding their fists for a different reason—the fact that I still haven't told you what the fourth buyer type is. Have you guessed already? This type of buyer causes me perhaps the most personal regret. I call him "**the lost one**."

This is the buyer who bought a PC when he might have been so much happier with a Macintosh.

"User Preference" is copyright © 1999 Scott D. Feldstein, sfeldstein@atpm.com*. Scott D. Feldstein is a full-time techie at Marquette University where he also a graduate student in educational psychology.*

BY DAVID OZAB, DOZAB@ATPM.COM

The Interface is the Instrument

As a computer musician, I think of my computer as my instrument. That may seem strange to some of you, but ask yourself, "What exactly is an instrument?" I could answer by describing a complex mechanism consisting of eighty-eight switches, each of which transfers energy through a separate series of levers to a hammer, which in turn strikes a suspended string, or set of strings. This action produces a complex collection of vibrations which resonate through a large acoustical chamber and interact with complex signals produced by other strings. Or I could just respond "a piano."

My point is that all instruments are mechanisms. Some are simple—a membrane stretched across a circular frame (a drum) or a hollow tube with holes at regular intervals (a recorder); others are complex, like the piano, or an even more complex instrument where the switches activate bellows that push air through long metal tubes (a pipe organ). What makes a successful instrument? The sound it produces? A piano would sound the same if you struck the strings directly with hammers, and an organ would sound the same if you blew really hard through the pipes, but they would be incredibly difficult to play in this fashion. No, the success of an instrument depends on the ease with which one can play it, and ultimately become fluent, perhaps even a virtuoso. The success of an instrument depends on its interface.

Why are piano keys the size that they are? Because of the length of our fingers and the size of our hands. Why do some wind and brass instruments have tubes that bend in on themselves, sometimes in elaborate coils? Because of how long our arms are and how far we can reach. Why don't we make guitars with eighty-eight strings or pianos with six keys? It's all about the interface.

The same is true for computers. Different manufactures use different hardware, some chips are faster than others, and some hard drives are bigger. When we talk about computers, though, and specifically when we brag about the ease of use of a Mac, we're talking interfaces.

Software design is the key to a successful interface. When the OS and the applications are awkward, getting in the way of what we want to accomplish, the interface needs improvement.

This is what originally drew me to the Macintosh interface when I began working in computer music. My first class in 1987 used a Mac, as has every class I have taken or taught ever since. It was, and still is, the simplest, most elegant, and most transparent operating system in production. This is the reason for both the incomparable loyalty of Mac users and the strong connection Macintosh has with creative artists. We know a good interface. This is also why Apple survived through the mid-1990s despite itself. The interface was too good to give up, and the alternative was, and still is, unacceptable.

In summary, not everyone wants a Steinway. Most will be happy with a Baldwin. You get what you pay for.

Update: Floppy Authorization and Opcode Rumors

Since completing last month's article on the topic, I ordered a Newer Technology uDrive. The item in question was on back order, and it took over three weeks to arrive, but I'm happy to report that it works as advertised. If you decide to buy one, just be careful of extension conflicts. It took some juggling to get my computer to boot up with the drive connected. At least it didn't clash with any of my other USB devices (an Aiwa tape backup drive and a Zoom Cam USB).

The situation at Opcode, meanwhile, shows no signs of improvement. Since they were bought by Gibson earlier this year, they have seemed too busy controlling rumors of layoffs, restructuring, and outright collapse to deal with the authorization issue. The latest word is as follows: Gibson and Digidesign (who make Pro Tools) have talked about making Vision the integrated sequencer in an upcoming version of Pro Tools. This move would shift development to Digidesign.

Some Opcode developers have left as a result and others have either left on their own account or were fired. None of the parties involved have said anything about this situation, and the Opcode Web site continues on as if nothing unusual has happened. This may put the future of Vision DSP as an independent product in jeopardy. Certainly, this is something to consider in either purchasing or upgrading software. Regarding Max, however, I did recently discover

that if you purchase the Max/MSP package from Cycling '74 (I recommend this, as you get substantial discount on both.) you can get a "Challenge—Response" authorization for both.

Next Month: A Musician's life on the Web, more on Opcode, and whatever else I think of by then.

Part II: What is MIDI?

Background

"This has been going on since the eighties?!" I love that quote (it's from *L.A. Story* by the way). It could also apply to the close relationship between MIDI and the Mac. The MIDI specification was in development at the same time as the Mac, and the two were publicly unveiled within months of each other (during the 1983 NAMM show and the 1984 Superbowl telecast respectively). Since then, they have maintained a close, if sometimes strained, relationship, and Apple still counts musicians, along with artists and educators, among the loyal Mac following.

Then Came the iMac

No floppy drive, no SCSI port, and no serial ports. Just this newfangled USB. For anyone who had set up a MIDI studio up to this point, the future was now, but it was also incompatible with the present. Then came the Blue and White G3, and after that, the G4. More flexibility and more power, but compatibility with old hardware and software is still an issue. As such, I will focus my overview on these newer systems. I've only listed prices posted on the net. Contact the manufacturers for prices I haven't listed here, download demos when available, and always comparison shop.

Software—The Sequencer

The heart of any MIDI studio is a good sequencing application (for a discussion of sequencers and other basic terms, please see Part I[1] of the series). Three professional quality software packages are available, each with a long history on the Mac. Most of these programs incorpo-

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1. http://www.atpm.com/5.10/music.shtml

rate multi-track digital audio as well, and I'll return to them in a future series on that topic. Opcode offers two programs—essentially identical in their MIDI implementation—Studio Vision Pro ($399.95) and Vision DSP. Of these, Vision DSP is the better deal (and the best deal overall) at $199.95 for the packaged version (with additional software, and paper manuals) and $59.95 for a download version (with online documentation). Opcode also offers Musicshop ($99.95), a stripped down sequencer formerly known as EZ-Vision. Mark of the Unicorn offers Performer and Digital Performer, both with multi-track digital audio, and FreeStyle, a stripped down sequencer with an excellent notation window. Steinberg rounds out the market with Cubase VST ($399.95), an increasingly popular cross-platform sequencer and digital audio recorder.

Software—The Sound Modules

The simplest software synthesizer is also free and included on every Mac. The Quicktime Music Synthesizer is a feature in Quicktime 4. It is about as general (and generic) as General MIDI gets, but for online MIDI files and rough playback, it's marginally acceptable. If you want to get more sophisticated, but still stay in the software realm, Bitheadz Inc. offers two reasonably priced modules. The Retro AS-1 is an "analog style" digital synthesizer that sells for $259, while the Unity DS–1 is a multi-timbral sampler that sells for $449 and accepts a variety of sample formats. Both use onboard RAM and hard disk space, so you can exploit the full power of your Mac at no extra cost. Going up to the next level, Digidesign's Sample Cell II Plus ($1295) is a 32 voice sampler residing on a PCI card (sorry, iMac owners) with 32 MB of dedicated RAM. The software interfaces with the card, and accesses samples from the hard drive.

Software—Notation Programs

Though only marginally related to a MIDI studio, a notation program is handy addition to any musician's computer. Coda Music Technology's Finale 2000 ($545) is still the best notation application on the Mac. Despite its high learning curve and rickety sequencer, it is the most sophisticated notation program by far. Other options exist, though. Mark of the Unicorn's Mosaic is worth a try (the demo is available online). Finale Allegro ($199) includes the basics of Finale in a simpler package. Another option is Opcode's Fermata, an inexpensive ($59.95 online) and user-friendly notation program that fills the void left by Passport's Encore.

Software—The Advanced Stuff

For those inclined to programming, Opcode offers MAX ($495), an object-oriented environment for MIDI and multimedia. I have used MAX since the beta version in 1990, building interactive music systems, algorithmic music generators, and other fun widgets. For those looking for interactivity with a simpler learning curve, Cycling '74 offers M ($74), a classic program described as an "intelligent composition and performing system," as well as a package deal for both MAX and its digital signal processing twin MSP. I'll talk more about MSP in upcoming issues.

The Authorization Issue

In last month's issue of ATℙM, I wrote a <u>segments piece</u>[2] about authorization by floppy disk key. Companies that have used this method in the past have been slow to catch up to the new floppyless world of Macintosh. Therefore, at this time, a USB floppy drive is essential. Two options are available to run key disks: the Imation Super Disk ($170), and Newer Technology's uDrive ($99). Unfortunately, other USB drives are presently incompatible with authorization disks.

Hardware—The Computer

I assume that most of you have already made your choice in this area. For those of you looking to upgrade, though, some important differences exist between models. If you own a serial MIDI interface and want to continue using it, you need to either buy a Revision A or B iMac (the original Bondi Blue models) and the Griffin iPort serial adaptor, or a G4 **without** an internal modem. In its place, you can install a third party serial port. The Stealthport serial adapter (available through Opcode) and Griffin's gPort serial adaptor are both MIDI compatible. If, on the other hand, you own or plan on buying a more recent iMac, or have already bought a G3 or a G4 with an internal modem, you will need to purchase a USB MIDI interface.

Hardware—USB MIDI Interfaces

Unless you plan to go the software route exclusively (And who wants to play instrument with **that** kind of keyboard?), a MIDI interface is the other essential component of the MIDI studio. Earlier this year, iMac and G3 owners were frustrated by the lack of available devices. For-

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2. http://www.atpm.com/5.10/segments.shtml

tunately, the demand is now being met, and several USB to MIDI interfaces are on the market. Opcode presently offers two models, the MIDIport 32 with two MIDI ins and outs, and the MIDIport 96 with six MIDI ins and outs. Roland offers the Super MPU 64 with four ins and outs (it is also OMS and Free MIDI compatible). Mark of the Unicorn has released USB versions of its MIDI Time Piece and MIDI express, each with eight ins and outs, as well as several smaller interfaces.

Hardware—Controllers and Sound Modules

Once you have a computer and a MIDI interface, the world of synthesizers and samplers is wide open. Listing them all is beyond the scope of this article. Remember that hardware costs money. An instrument with a keyboard costs more than a rackmount module, which, in turn, costs more than a software-only module. Get one keyboard you really like (or another controller if you prefer—guitarists, wind players, and percussionists have options too), and use it to control all your other modules. The days of Rick Wakeman acrobatically playing multiple keyboards while stomping frantically on organ pedals are over, as evidenced by those of you asking "Who's Rick Wakeman?"

In Conclusion

Though it's been rough in the early going, the iMac, G3, and G4 are all good hubs for a MIDI studio. The iMac should be sufficient for MIDI alone, but if you are interested in incorporating digital audio, the G3 (if you already own one) or G4 are better choices (**Note:** As I write this, Steve Jobs has just unveiled the new line of iMacs. The addition of FireWire, though geared toward video, may also offer potential for audio applications.)

Manufacturers' Web sites

- Opcode (http://www.opcode.com)
- Mark of the Unicorn (http://www.motu.com)
- Steinberg (http://www.steinberg.net)
- Bitheadz (http://www.bitheadz.com)
- Digidesign (http://www.digidesign.com)
- Coda (http://www.codamusic.com)
- Cycling 74 (http://www.cycling74.com)
- Imation (http://www.imation.com)
- Newer Technology (http://www.newertechnology.com)

- Griffin Technology (http://www.griffintechnology.com)
- Roland (http://www.rolandcorp.com)

Sources for USB Interfaces

- Macintouch USB Guide (http://www.macintouch.com/imacusb.html)
- USB Stuff (http://www.usbstuff.com)

Addendum

An example of comparison shopping: in the latest Mac Mall catalog, I found a couple of great deals. The Unity DS-1 Digital Sampler is listed for $322.99 and the Retro AS-1 Analog Synthesizer is $189.99. I would still recommend downloading the demos first, but if you decide to buy, these prices are substantially below those quoted from Bitheadz's Web site.

Correction to MIDI Part I

Apparently, I found this mistake before any of our readers did. In last month's article covering the basics of MIDI, I identified the Status Byte 10010001 as a Note On message on MIDI channel one. Well, I forgot that binary counts from zero and that, therefore, the last four bits of a Status Byte on MIDI channel one are 0000, not 0001.

Next Month: MIDI and the Mac—Part III: The limitations of MIDI, and what could replace it.
Coming soon: Digital Audio and the Mac—another multi-part series.

Copyright © 1999 David Ozab. David Ozab is a Ph.D student at the University of Oregon, where he teaches electronic music courses and assists in the day to day operation of The Future Music Oregon Studios. You can visit his Web page at http://darkwing.uoregon.edu.

Step IV: Dealing With Your Network's Insecurities

Live Life to the Fullest, Not the Foolest

Bungee jumpers. Mountain climbers. Parachuters. Road lugers. Modern thrill seekers, they all share a taste for high-adrenaline activities. One place where few people want to live on the edge, however, is network security. For many, computers have become repositories of almost all their essential information, from financial to recreational. The thought of an unscrupulous snooper peeking in on that info gives one an adrenaline rush of the wrong kind. Networks, by their very nature, give visitors a certain amount of access to the information on one or more computers. This article addresses how to keep the boundaries between shared and unshared information secure and thus preserve your peace of mind.

Some Notes About Macintosh File Sharing

Just as your Mac comes with the built-in ability to share files, applications, and printers, it also comes with a number of safeguards that allow you to control exactly who has access to what. Make sure to use those safeguards to make your network nigh-impervious to unwanted access; at the very least, you'll keep Grandma's secret pecan pie recipe safe for another generation to enjoy.

The first safeguard lies in your Mac's File Sharing control panel (Sharing Setup in system versions earlier than Mac OS 8). Here, you'll find the two most important network controls: the Owner Name and Password and the File Sharing button. One important thing to note is that you don't need to start File Sharing unless you want to share files from your Mac. You can

access files on other Macs whether or not File Sharing is active on your own Mac. That's safeguard numero uno, since a Mac without active File Sharing is a Mac no one can access.

If you plan to share files from your Mac, the owner name and password become particularly significant. By default, anyone logging in to your Mac with the owner name and password gains complete read-and-write access to your Mac, regardless of what files are actually shared. Therefore, it's extremely important that you keep the name and password secure and hard to guess.

When it comes to creating shared folders for others to use, it's important to make sure the settings in the Users & Groups control panel are correct. Frequently, people will share a large folder of items (or even an entire drive) and give the Guest account access to all of them. It takes extra setup time, but for safety's sake I recommend creating a folder of specific items for a specific user ("Bob's Files") or group of users ("Marketing's Files"). Use the Users & Groups control panel to create users and groups of users and set access privileges accordingly. You can also create different permissions for different users (for example, Bob in Accounting can only see the financial databases, but his manager, Melissa, can also see the payroll files). For added security, disable Guest access entirely and prohibit your users from changing their passwords remotely. That way, passwords can only be changed through you (the owner), so you can ensure they are hard to guess. All of these steps will build stronger network fences, theoretically making better network neighbors.

Special Note on Mac OS 9

With the release of Mac OS 9, Apple changed the basis of AppleTalk, the basis of their file and print sharing, to TCP/IP, which is how the Internet handles information. With a switch to TCP/IP-based AppleTalk, some people are concerned that network security will suffer, since we hear stories about TCP/IP-based Internet sites getting broken into with some frequency. The good news is that a change to TCP/IP should mean no reduction in AppleTalk security. The primary reason Internet sites are at risk is not their TCP/IP basis, but vulnerabilities in the hosting platform (typically Windows or UNIX) or the server program itself.

Is Your Internet Connection Secure?

A common concern of Internet users (especially those who are simultaneously connected to a network) is not knowing whether or not the files on their Mac can be viewed by others on the Internet. The short story is that the average Internet-connected Mac is in no danger of acci-

dentally making its files available to anonymous snoopers. When you send data over the Internet, it goes directly through the modem. When you send data to your network, it passes through the Ethernet or LocalTalk port. Since the modem port and network port are separate, you won't end up passing network data out to the Internet or vice versa. One area where you can leave yourself open to danger is if you run a Web, telnet, or FTP server from the Internet-connected Mac. If you choose to run one of these servers from your Internet connection, keep them secure by disabling write and upload access by visitors.

High-speed Internet Connections and Security

"But what," you ask, "about using a fast Internet connection? Doesn't that also go through my Ethernet (i.e. network) port?" Good question. If you have a fast Internet connection using a DSL or cable modem, the information comes and goes through your Mac's Ethernet port. Many people want to share their fast Internet connection, to avoid paying an extra connection charge for a second or third computer to get the same high-speed data. If you use a single Ethernet port for both internal network and external Internet access (requiring the addition of an Ethernet hub or switch), however, you make it possible for other people using the same high-speed service to see shared files from your network, since all the network traffic, both Internet and "internal," travels through the same Ethernet port.

Some Words About Sharing Your Internet Connection

This article talks about shared Internet connections, but not in a step-one-you-do-this kind of way. This article addresses network security for those who already have a shared Internet connection. I'll address the setup process for sharing an Internet connection in a future article. If you want to know more about it right now, you can find information on sharing your Internet connection on the "How to: Share cable/DSL/modem" page of my Web site[1].

Back to the Problem at Hand

Since a shared fast Internet connection uses the same hub as the rest of your computers, it receives the same network data (along with the Internet data). Even though other people may be able to see this data, this doesn't necessarily mean they can do anything with it. If you take the aforementioned steps to keep your network secure (disabling Guest access, for example), the other high-speed users may be able to tell that you're sharing something, but they won't be able to access it.

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1. http://threemacs.com/network/how_to/share_internet.html

If you plan to share your high-speed Internet connection, the best way to maintain complete security is to add a second Ethernet port to your Mac and use it as the primary "gateway" for the Internet connection, then run your internal network off the other Ethernet port. This way, the internal network data stay completely separate from the Internet data, which can only come and go through the direct connection. Even the Mac directly connected remains secure, because it only sends network data to the Ethernet port you designate.

So What's all this I Hear about Network "Firewalls"?

When you deal with networks, especially those connected to the Internet, it's common to hear people also talk about "firewalls" as a method of beefing up the network's security. In basic terms, a firewall is like the border patrol. When data wants to enter your network, the firewall checks to make sure the data comes from an approved source before letting it in or out. Simply put, firewalls keep your network data in and outside data (except the stuff you want) out. These days, a "firewall" is usually a product feature, rather than the product itself. If you're using a software or hardware router (a device or program that transfers data between different networks) to share an Internet connection, for example, the router will also act as a firewall to help keep the network data separate.

That's a lot of Info to Swallow. Can You Summarize?

Yup, can do. Here are ten steps to making your network more secure.

1. Only enable File Sharing if you are going to share files.

2. Protect the Mac's owner name and password.

3. Create an account for everyone who will use your Mac's shared files.

4. Don't let users change their account passwords.

5. Disable Guest access to your shared files.

6. Tailor your shared files to the individual user.

7. Don't use a Web, Telnet, or FTP server on your Internet connected Mac.

8. If you use one of these servers, disable upload access.

9. If you share a high-speed Internet connection, do it through a second Ethernet port to keep internal and external network data separate.

10. Make sure your router includes firewall protection.

Copyright © 1999 Matthew Glidden. Matthew Glidden is the webmaster of Three Macs & a Printer[2], *a guide to constructing and maintaining home and small-office Macintosh networks. He can also tango and juggle, not necessarily at the same time.*

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2. http://www.threemacs.com

About This Particular
Website

BY DAVID SPENCER

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Font Web sites

The Web sites mentioned here are not endorsed by ATPM, they are simply suggestions for your own browsing endeavors.

Macfonts.com

Web: http://www.macfonts.com/
Audience: All users

This is an excellent starting point for all things font. Macfonts.com doesn't have fonts to download, but it provides a very complete list of Web sites that will satisfy all your typographic cravings. If the word "free" is critical in your font search, then this is the place to go. Most sites listed offer free (or shareware) font downloads. There is also a selection of books that tell you anything and everything you can imagine about type styles. They are conveniently linked to Amazon.com for immediate purchase.

Adobe.com—Type Library

Web: http://www.adobe.com/type/main.html
Audience: All users

What list of font related Web sites would be complete without mentioning Adobe? Offering world class fonts through an excellent interface, Adobe is still the leader in typography. You can search its font archive by keyword, by classification, or alphabetically. You can view the

complete type set of everything it offers and then purchase it, if you choose, right from the Web site. After your credit card is approved, you can download the package immediately.

Builder.com

Web: http://builder.com/Graphics/Type/ss01c.html
Audience: Beginners

I've never been a big fan of CENT's advice, but Builder.com deserves mention here. Terrific type tips are a collection of general typographic rules and suggestions for aspiring Web designers. If only more designers would follow some of these rules, there wouldn't be so many hideous Web disasters out there.

Font Garden

Web: http://www.fontgarden.com/
Audience: All users

One of the reasons I like this Web site is because of its personal feel. Font Garden is a collection of unique fonts that you'll probably not find anywhere else. They are free (or shareware) and new ones are added every couple of days. While there are no Macintosh fonts available, you can easily convert these beautiful PC fonts to work on your Mac. Speaking of conversion software…

Pyrus.com

Web: http://www.pyrus.com/
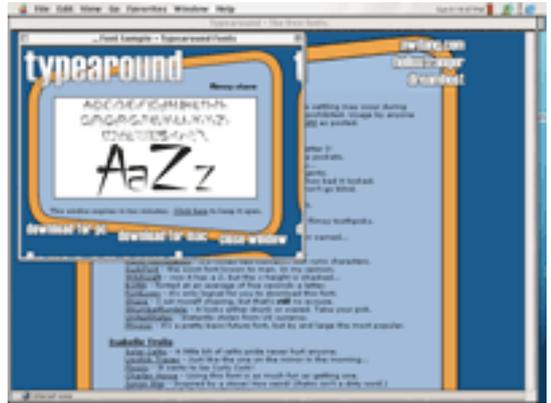**Audience:** Intermediate and Expert

If you've ever found that perfect font and downloaded it, only to find that the compressed file ends with .zip, you're not alone. At Pyrus.com you can download software that will convert that PC font into a Macintosh compatible typeface. Also on this site is FontLab 3.0, a valuable tool for creating your own typefaces.

Typearound.com

Web: http://www.typearound.com/
Audience: All users

This is the techno version of the previously mentioned Font Garden. There is a good, if somewhat small, selection of fonts here. The interface is very good, allowing you to see the font before you bother downloading it in a new window. You'll appreciate this feature because a few of these fonts are real monsters!

Will-Harris.com

Web: http://www.will-harris.com/
Audience: Intermediate and Expert

Here you have access to professional tips on designing Web sites with an emphasis on typography. There's also a great section catering to people who are having trouble choosing a font. Personally, I found this site somewhat odd. The information here is truly professional, but the site itself is not attractive. It seems as though the Web designer didn't follow his own rules! I just ignored the presentation here and paid attention to the information available.

Graphion's Online Type Museum

Web: http://www.slip.net/%7Egraphion/museum.html
Audience: All users

Ever wonder how typography started? At Graphion's Online Type Museum, there is a complete history of typesetting. There are also plenty of pictures and old typesetting stories.

dsiegel.com

Web: http://www.dsiegel.com/type/type_home.html

Audience: Intermediate and Expert

Familiar with the typeface Tekton? The designer is David Siegel and this is his personal Web site. Here you can find tips and suggestions from one of the best typeface designers around. The focus of this site is Tekton and its history. There are also links to other sections of David's site, as well as one of the best collection of tips for Web designers—Web Wonk.
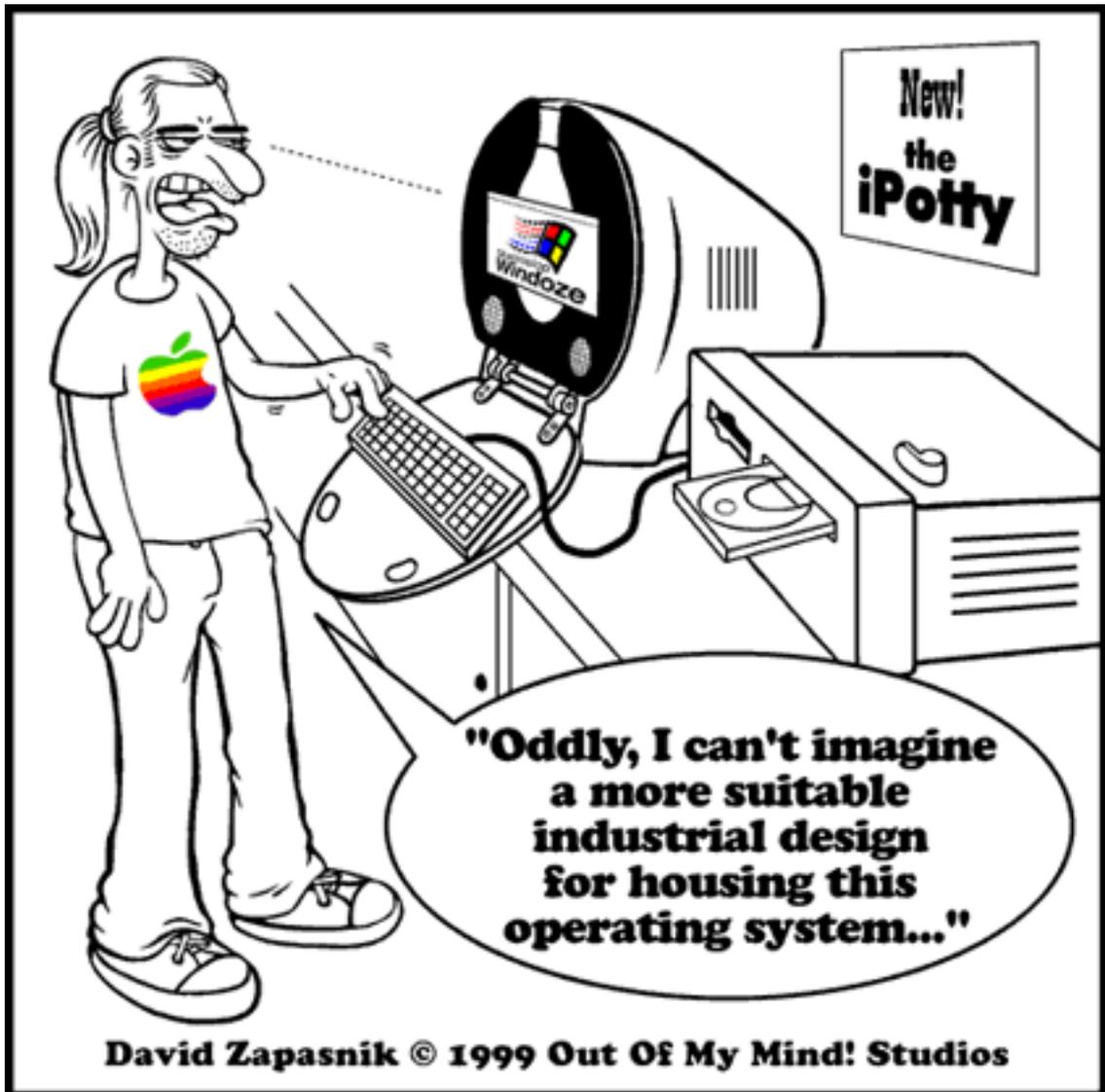
Desktop Pictures VII: Bahamas

As the millennium comes to an end and winter approaches quickly, it's time to remember the spoils of summer and drool over our sweet memories of warm weather. I hope that these pictures from the Bahamas (before it was hit by the hurricane) will stimulate your fantasy. As desktop backgrounds they will support your survival instincts while you are waiting for those blizzards to pass. Go to the [download page](#)[1]! If you haven't seen the older parts of the series, they can be found here:

1. [Yellowstone National Park](#)[2]

2. [Drops](#)[3]

3. [Toronto](#)[4]

4. [Niagara Falls](#)[5]

5. [Monaco](#)[6]

6. [Montréal](#)[7]

7. [Bahamas](#)[8] (new)

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1. http://www.atpm.com/5.11/bahamas/
2. http://www.atpm.com/5.03/yellowstone.shtml
3. http://www.atpm.com/5.05/drops/
4. http://www.atpm.com/5.07/toronto/
5. http://www.atpm.com/5.08/niagara/
6. http://www.atpm.com/5.09/monaco/
7. http://www.atpm.com/5.10/montreal/

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS 8.5 and Newer Go to the "Appearance" control panel. Click on the "Desktop" tab at the top of the window. Press the "Place Picture..." button in the bottom right corner, then select the desired image. By default, it will show you the images in the "Desktop Pictures" sub-folder of your "Appearance" folder in the System Folder, however you can select images from anywhere on your hard disk.

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

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

Mac OS 8.0 and 8.1 Go to the "Desktop Patterns" control panel. Click on "Desktop Pictures" in the list on the left of the window, and follow steps similar to the ones above.

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

DeskPicture An alternative to Mac OS's Appearance control panel is Pierce Software's DeskPicture, available [here](9). You can also find a review of DeskPicture on [this page](10).

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8. http://www.atpm.com/5.11/bahamas/
9. http://www.peircesw.com/DeskPicture.html
10. http://www.atpm.com/5.10/roundup.shtml

Font Utilities

Picking the perfect font isn't always easy, especially if you have a lot of fonts to choose from. Here are five programs from the world of shareware that will help you keep track of what you have, what it looks like, and what you can do with it.

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PopChar Pro 1.1.3

Company: UNI Software Plus
Web: http://www.unisoft.co.at/products/popchar.html
**Price:** $39 (see the company's Web site for multi-user pricing)
File Size: 1.1 MB
Requirements: System 7 up to Mac OS 8.6 and a 68K processor or better

PopChar is one of those programs that enhances the Mac OS with a feature so helpful you wonder why Apple didn't include it in the first place. Whether it's an accented vowel like é or ö that belongs to a word or name from another language, or even a common symbol like ® or © or ™, infrequently used characters don't appear on your keyboard. But just because you can't see them doesn't mean you'll never need them.

PopChar is a control panel that installs a drop-down, detachable menu on the right side of the menubar displaying every character inside the current font. One click copies the highlighted character into your current document. PopChar will also tell you the character's keyboard

combination, so that if you need to type é several times in one sitting you can do so by pressing option-e followed by e.
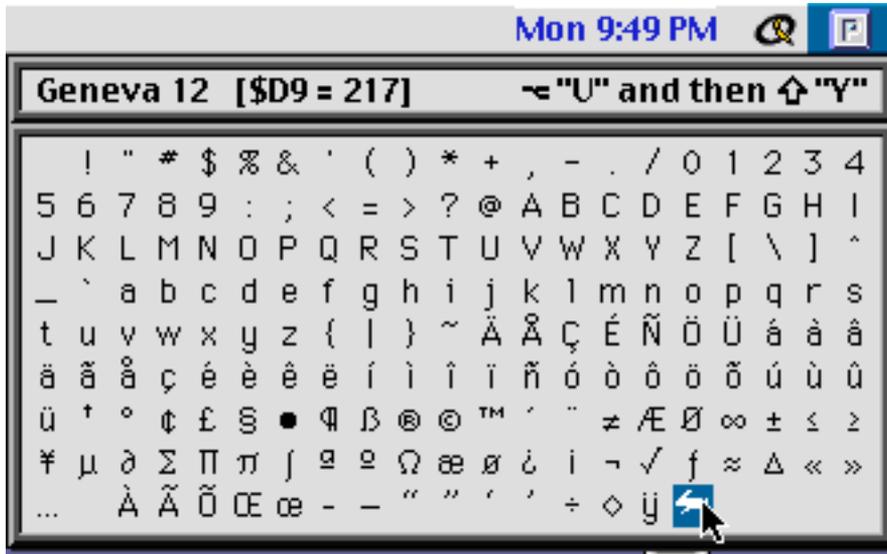
Microsoft Word offers basically the same feature when you click on "Symbol" under the insert menu. The same can't be said of other word processing programs like AppleWorks, which expect you to figure out the keyboard combinations on your own. PopChar is always available, and is smart enough to update its menu whenever you select a new font. It's also much more intuitive than Apple's Key Caps, making it the kind of program you install, and then wonder how you ever survived without it. Especially when it comes to symbol-based fonts—how else could you know that pressing option-u and then shift-u gives you a weight lifter under Webdings?

FontBuddy 1.3

Author: Vincent Jalby
Web: http://members.aol.com/FontBuddy/home.html
Price: $10
File Size: 530K
**Requirements:** FontBuddy should run on any Power Macintosh under Mac OS 7.5 or later

Font Buddy is another place to turn if you're trying to see all the characters in a particular font. It's also a quick way to see how different fonts look at different sizes, and to print out catalogs of the fonts in your Fonts folder.

The program consists of a single window with four tabs. The first one displays all the characters for the current font and allows you to view them from any point size. The second tab, "Char Selector," does basically the same thing, but in a more complicated way. This is the place to go if you want to do more than just copy and paste a particular character. You can find ASCII, Octal, Hex, and Unicode codes here, should you need them, as well as keyboard shortcuts for characters that have them. Whatever character you select in the "Font Char" tab will be displayed automatically.

The remaining two tabs are useful mainly to fervid fontographers—"Font Info" tells you where the font came from, and "Font Sample" lets you apply various fonts and font sizes to a block of text, but won't let you control variables like leading, kerning, and line height the way your word processor will.

FontBuddy really lives up to its name when you start poking around the options in the menubar. This is where you'll find the program's two best features. As its name implies, Duplicate Scanning will look for identical files inside font suitcases and tally a report of which ones can be safely deleted. Font cataloging allows you to print out summaries of any or all the fonts in your system, laid out either in a grid (perfect for symbol-based fonts like Zapf Dingbats) or in blocks of sample text. Once you pay your shareware fee, the unsightly watermark will no longer appear on your printouts.
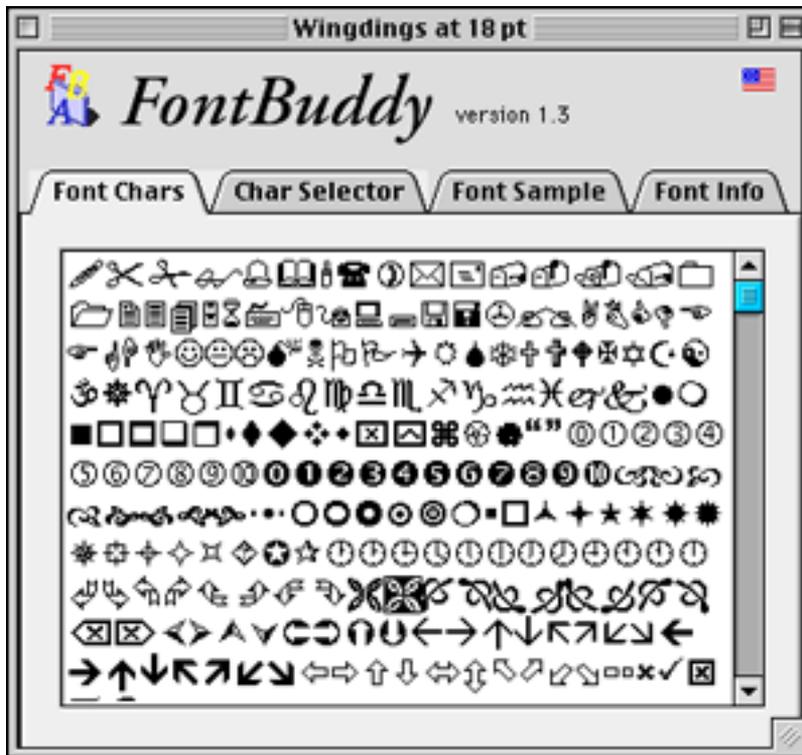
Font Gander Pro 1.6

Published by: Semplice Software
Web: http://www.semplicesoft.com
**Price:** $30 (see the company's web site for multi-user pricing)
File Size: 728K
Requirements: System 7.0 and up, any Power Mac or Macintosh of Mac II class or higher. Adobe Type Manager version 3.0 or higher is also helpful.

If you don't care for FontBuddy's font samples, there are many other catalog programs to choose from. One of these is Font Gander, which allows you to create customized layouts for printing font samples. You can also take the easy route and use one of the twenty-four preinstalled layouts.

Font Gander is very similar to FontBuddy in terms of features and function. The biggest difference between the two is Font Gander's ability to display fonts that are outside of your Fonts folder. Just drag and drop a suitcase into the Font Gander window. The resulting text can be
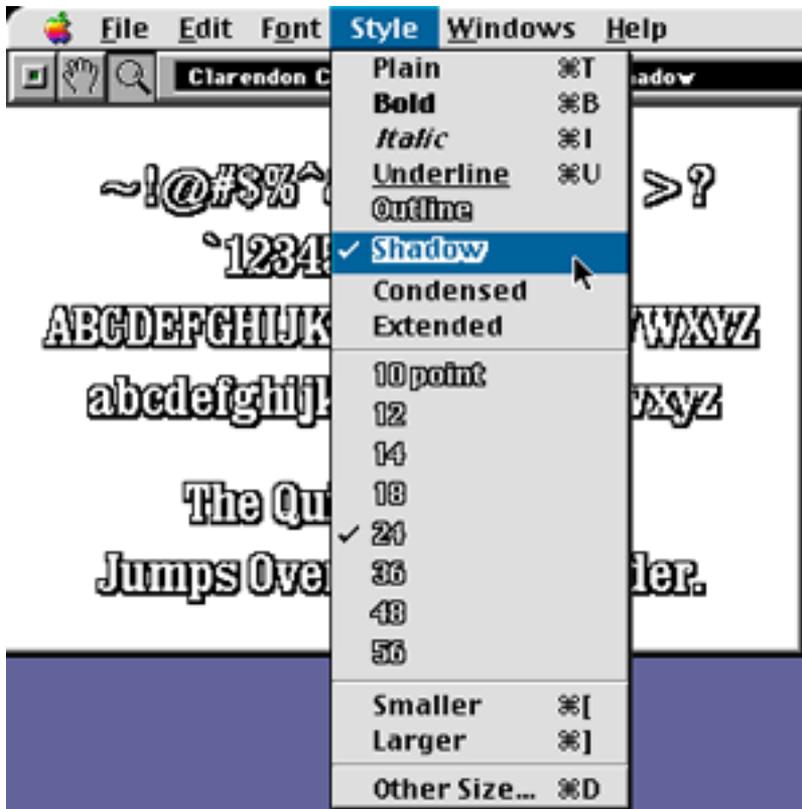
viewed at any size from 4 pt. to 72 pt., along with stylized formatting like bold, italic, and more. If you'd rather keep the window at a reasonable size, a handy magnification tool will pop up an enlarged window with a click of the mouse. A grid-based display option is also available.

If your font library is relatively small, FontBuddy is a good choice because it's simple and straightforward. Current and aspiring font maniacs will be better served by the more powerful Font Gander, whose well-written documentation makes it incredibly easy to keep an eye on a large number of fonts outside the System Folder.

TT Converter 1.5

Author: Chris Reed
Web: ftp://ftp.visi.com/users/thornley/TTConverter1.5.sit.hqx
Price: $10
File Size: 37K
Requirements: TT Converter is an old program from the days of System 7 and System 6 that should still work on today's Macs.

Under normal circumstances, Mac fonts and Windows fonts don't like to play with each other. Even though both systems recognize TrueType, a Windows font with a .TFF extension will be largely ignored if you drop it into your Mac's Fonts folder. Using TT Converter, you can rearrange the information stored inside a Windows font and change its life forever by turning it into a Mac font.

Conversions are as easy as dragging a Windows font onto the TT Converter application and picking a place to save the new file. Some fonts may need a little extra attention, but many problems can be solved by reading TT Converter's documentation. If you convert a font and drop it into your Fonts folder, but don't see it in your word processor's font menu, this is the place to find out why. The fix is easy—just retype the font's name in the "Customize FOND" window. There are plenty of options to fiddle with here, assuming you're familiar with all the numbers that go into making a font display itself properly, but these are just as easy to ignore. You can even go in the opposite direction and convert Mac fonts into Windows format, although they probably wouldn't appreciate that very much. Be advised: TT Converter won't convert a folder full of fonts on its own—you must specify a name and destination for each one. Naturally, some Windows fonts will convert more readily than others.

Fonts Manager 3.9.2

Published by: Ed Hopkins
Web: The HyperArchive[1]
Price: $10
File Size: 340K
Requirements: Any Macintosh which will run System 7.1 or later.

Now for the moment of truth. We've looked at several ways to get a good look at your fonts both in print and on screen, but just how badly do you need them? The freedom to choose is certainly nice, but is it really necessary for your Mac to load all those fonts every time you turn it on? Maybe it's time for a bit of font management.

What the Extensions Manager does for extensions, Fonts Manager does for fonts. Just as you can create different sets of extensions to load at startup depending on what you're going to be doing, Fonts Manager allows you to move all those fonts you've been collecting into a safe place until you actually need them.

It doesn't make much sense to have a huge Fonts folder unless you routinely use a lot of them in the course of work or play. Weeding out the unessential will help decrease your overall startup time and make your applications happier, since small menus are easier and faster to draw than monstrously long ones.

Fonts Manager lets you create as many sets as you want. Although its icon makes it look like a control panel, Fonts Manager is a regular application that simply moves fonts into and out of the Fonts folder. The main disadvantage here, the same one that plagues the Extensions Manager, is that you must restart in order for your changes to take effect. In some cases you can just as easily manage

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1. http://hyperarchive.lcs.mit.edu/HyperArchive/Archive/font/util/fonts-manager-392.hqx

your fonts manually, but creating font sets in advance will save you time and aggravation as your try to remember which fonts belong where.

Fonts Manager also has character display and cataloging features, but the other programs discussed in this roundup are better choices for those tasks. The main flaw with Fonts Manager is that it always reminds you to restart when you quit, even if you haven't changed anything. The unnecessary scanning and checking this involves wastes time, but overall this is a small price to pay for cheap font management.

Extension Overload 4.6

The 'Extension Overload Development Team' has just released Extension Overload 4.6. New features in this version include coverage of the Mac OS 9 control panels and extensions (for a total of 2267 extensions and control panels covered), more detailed descriptions, and better support for non-English versions of Mac OS. You can find the newest version at <u>this site</u>[1]. For more information read our previous review of Extension Overload 4.5.1 <u>here</u>[2].

PhotoGenetics

Back in June, ATPM <u>looked at</u>[3] this image-editing program and found a few bugs but a huge amount of potential. If you missed the original review, here's the low-down: PhotoGenetics reduces the voodoo magic of color correction and image enhancement to a series of comparisons. Nevermind Photoshop—this program can give you near-professional results with a little patience and almost no learning curve.

Version 1.1 fixes a few minor problems with the way windows automatically resize themselves when zooming in or out. Overall, the program feels a bit peppier than the previous version. But the best new feature is the addition of three add-on modules (referred to as "Evolutions"), which give you more power to make an image look its best.

The Dewarp Evolution corrects spatial distortions that sometimes appear in wide-angle images taken with a digital camera. You no longer have to download a special file for your particular camera to get this functionality. The Isocolor and Artistic Evolutions, meanwhile, let you distort the colors in an image either individually or all at once.

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1. http://www.chicoweb.com/%7Ecmteng/
2. http://www.atpm.com/5.10/extensionoverload.shtml
3. http://www.atpm.com/5.06/photogenetics.shtml

All three Evolutions cost $29.95, or you can buy them individually. For more information visit http://www.photogenetics.com.

Kaleidoscope

Last month's Shareware Roundup paid a visit[4] to the interface-overhauling control panel Kaleidoscope. The current version is 2.2.1, which fixes several minor glitches. Drawing popup windows under Mac OS 8.0 or 8.1 should now be crash-free. Kaleidoscope is available at http://www.kaleidoscope.net.

Chess Works

Tons of new features have been added to this network-gameplay chess program mentioned in September's Shareware Roundup[5]. In addition to more interface options (different game boards, different piece sets), the ChessWorks server has been heavily tweaked. New features include the option to post messages for other users to read, a checkbox that indicates whether you're looking for an opponent, and more. The latest version of ChessWorks is 2.0.6, and is available at http://www.nearside.com/EkimSW/ChessWorks.

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There are far too many Mac products these days for us to review each one, or even keep up with all the ones we have reviewed. Indeed, many shareware authors are revving their products more than once a month! The Update section, new in this issue, is where we acknowledge significant new versions of products that we have previously reviewed. If new features, bug fixes, or other revisions are substantial enough to change our assessment of a piece of software, we will generally publish a full review of the new version.

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4. http://www.atpm.com/5.10/roundup.shtml
5. http://www.atpm.com/5.09/roundup.shtml

BY ERIC BLAIR, EBLAIR@ATPM.COM

Auction Action Tracker 2.7

Company: Winter Novelty
Email: aat@winternovelty.com
Web:http://www.winternovelty.com
Shareware Fee: $10

The way I see it, there are two kinds of people in the world today—those who are on the Internet and those who are not. Furthermore, that latter group seems to be split into two parties—those who pull their hair out when eBay runs into service problems and those who say "So what?" Those who pull their hair out are usually the people who do a serious amount of buying and selling using eBay's service. eBay makes it easy to do business with people all over the globe and, (I hope) to find that extremely rare item for which you are searching. The only problem with eBay is that it can be difficult to keep track of which auctions interest you.

First, you need to find the item, record the item number, remember when the auction closes, and figure out how much you are willing to spend. For a while, I kept track of my auctions on paper. I know one ATPM staffer who had a system set up using Touchbase Pro. There are any number of ways to do this. The only problem with doing it by hand is that you have to open a Web browser and bring up each auction to find out how you are doing. Yes, eBay will send you an email when you are outbid, along with a status report about your auctions, but that only conveys so much information. To really know how your auctions are doing, you need an application that can download the information about any auctions you want and display this information in an easy-to-read manner—a program like Auction Action Tracker.

In its simplest form, Auction Action Tracker (AAT), will tell you the status of any auction in which you are involved. All you need to do is click the Auto Load button and provide AAT with your eBay user ID.

Number	End Date	Bid	High Bidder	Title
#160891701	09/12/99 09:37:44 PT	[$108.50]	jrcl@fidnet.com	Power Mac 6100/60 16/250/2nd Cache
#180780741	10/19/99 20:26:11 PT	$38.87	sales@bettyscollectibles...	GORGEOUS ORNATE NECKLACE & EARRINGS
#180780784	10/19/99 20:26:36 PT	$476.00	ka-crunch!	PowerMac 7500/180, 80/1 dualvideo, G3 uppable
#180926282	10/20/99 07:51:25 PT	$81.00	daybyday4u	AUTOGRAPHED PEDRO MARTINEZ 99 A.S. LMT. BALL
#182034005	10/21/99 21:32:49 PT	$5.50	tonezone12	Mac IIci Workhorse 5/80—Great starter system
#182036240	10/21/99 21:36:48 PT	$1.00	inetshopper@yahoo.com	Apple ADB Ext. keyboard w/mouse — One Price!
#182037352	10/19/99 21:38:19 PT	$11.61	tmrice	Apple ADB Ext. keyboard w/mouse — One Price!
#182042756	10/19/99 21:49:31 PT	$5.01	kactuswren	NEW! Apple Plaintalk Microphone(half-moon)NEW
#182042921	10/21/99 21:49:50 PT	$1.00	bobics	NEW! Apple Plaintalk Microphone(half-moon)NEW
#183029688	10/19/99 20:36:52 PT	$222.50	m3rciful@aol.com	3Com PALM IIIX PDA (Brand New in Box)
#184351877	10/25/99 23:55:33 PT	$70.00	--	Seagate 2.0GB Internal SCSI hdd - DUTCH
#184798660	10/26/99 18:48:40 PT	[$6.00]	esjablair	Mac IIci Workhorse 8/80 -- No Reserve!

The main screen displays the item number, end date, high bid, high bidder, and item description. AAT does not limit you to tracking auctions you are involved with, however. Suppose you are interested in a G3 blue and white that opened 20 minutes ago at $5. You know that the price will jump before the auction closes in five days. Why waste your time bidding $5 when it will close nearer to $2,000? Just copy the item number or URL into AAT and it will be added to the list of items to track.

For those who are put off by moving between AAT and the Web browser, it is possible to add an auction without leaving the browser window with Browser Pal. Browser Pal is an unobtrusive floating window that hovers in front of all the other windows. It contains only a text field and an Add button.
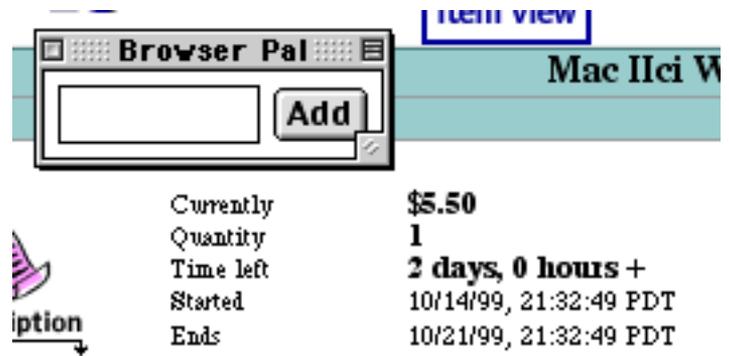
When you come to an auction that intrigues you, you simply type the auction number into the text field and click Add. While this is an attractive feature, I find it lacking at times. First, if you click in the text field, but then change your mind, you have to click inside the Browser Pal window, but outside the text field to deactivate the text field. If you forget to do this, you may accidentally type your next URL in the Browser Pal window as opposed to the Web browser.

To somewhat negate this, there is a focus ring around the text field whenever it is active. Still, it is a little annoying. Second, you cannot paste item numbers into the Browser Pal text field. I know it is only a nine digit number, but the ability to paste would cut down on typos. This leads into my third complaint. If you type an invalid item number into Browser Pal, you do not get any kind of warning message. I do not know if it is possible to fix either of my first two complaints because I do not now how floating windows are implemented, but I would think it would be possible to alert users when an invalid item number is entered.

AAT's main view offers enough for somebody in need of casual information. If you want to know more, AAT provides a more in depth single item view. In this view, you can see bidding information, time information, and item information. It also provides a comments field where you can type whatever you want.

Bidding information includes the high bid, the first bid, the number of bids, the high bidder, and the high bidder's feedback rating. Time information contains a countdown of the time remaining, the time that eBay reports remaining, the starting time, and the ending time. Finally, the item information contains the item number, the quantity available, the seller, the seller's feedback rating, the location, and the item's category.

Offering item information is not the only thing that AAT does. Once you are no longer interested in an auction, you can delete it from the database. If you feel that an item's price had exceeded what you are willing to pay, you can ban it from your list so it will not show up if you use Auto Load. If you are connected to the Internet, you can update the information for one or all items. Also, should you feel the need to do so, AAT can open your Web browser to the page for a specific item. Unless you feel like reading the full item description though, there are very few reasons to open an item's Web page. This is because AAT allows you to bid from within the application.

Bidding from within AAT is fairly simple. You select the item on which you want to bid and click the bid button. You are then presented with a screen that asks for your user ID, your password, the quantity desired, and your maximum bid on the item. If you are the only person using your system, you can elect to have AAT save your password so you do not have to retype it. After entering the information, you click Get Key. This contacts eBay and gets the necessary information to place the bid. Once AAT has acquired the key, you click Place Bid. This may sound a bit confusing, but AAT takes every precaution to help you along. Until you have acquired the key, the Place Bid button is disabled. Once the key is acquired, the Get Key button is disabled and the bid information is locked. The only options you have at this point are to close the bid window and cancel the bid, or to place the bid.

As I ranted about earlier, one of the keys to buying and selling on eBay is keeping your item information up-to-date. AAT gives you several options for doing this. First, if you are only online sporadically, you can manually update the item information with the Update Item List button. If you are only interested in a single item, you can either use the Update Selected option or get the expanded information about the auction—this will get the updated price information. If you are consistently online, you can keep AAT in the background and have it update automatically every X seconds, minutes, or hours. You can also have it update continuously. Finally, if it is getting down to crunch time and you need the best possible information about that G3 blue and white system, you can have that single item update continuously.

Overall, AAT is an indispensable tool if you do a lot of buying and selling on eBay. It is not, however, without its shortcomings. First, and I seem to complain about this quite often, when nothing is selected in the main window, all of the interaction and management buttons remain active. In these two areas, there are six buttons, two of which can be modified with the option key. Of the eight options, seven of them require an item to be selected. Only one of the options, Update Selected, displays an error message if no item is selected. The other six options do nothing.

When I discussed the Browser Pal, I lamented that there was no warning message if an invalid item number is entered. The New Item option is worse. If an invalid item number is entered, it creates a new listing in the main window that contains gibberish. Third, the Ban List window blocks access to the main window. Personally, there are times when I would like to be able to switch back and forth between my item list and my ban list. Finally, I wish there was some sort of indication that an auction has closed—perhaps change the text color from black to red for that item. As it is, there is no quick and easy way to tell if an auction has closed in the main window. These complaints, along with my previous statements concerning the Browser Pal,

keep Auction Action Tracker from getting an Excellent rating, but it is still an essential utility for anybody who spends a lot of time buying and selling on eBay.

BY EVAN TRENT, ETRENT@ATPM.COM

Cruise Control 1.1

Company: Walnut Systems
Web: http://www.walnutsys.com
Email: info@walnutsys.com
List Price: $99 (Voice Agents sold separately: $29)
Requirements: 68020 or greater, plug-ins require PowerPC)

Macros and Your Mac

Cruise Control is an application which automates processes on your Macintosh. The concept of automating tasks is not new to the world of computing. Yet Cruise Control offers a unique approach to the world of macro makers, and by doing so, it presents an unprecedented level of user-friendliness and simplicity. The interface is intuitive, and the application is well designed. However, despite its appeal and promise, Cruise Control is limited by a rather small command set. This limitation aside, Cruise Control is a great piece of software.

Getting Started

Cruise Control consists of an extension and an application, as well as some other goodies included to get you started. The application itself is used to configure macros, which Cruise Control calls agents. The application defines their actions, activation times, etc. The extension is responsible for executing them. Thus, the application need not be left open. The one exception to this rule concerns the use of Voice Agents, which I will discuss later in this review.

Upon launching Cruise Control, the user is presented with a calendar displaying the current month. Here begins my first, albeit petty, complaint. Cruise Control provides several different view modes for the calendar display: Yearly, Quarterly, Monthly, Weekly and Daily. The user

may choose from among these modes as often as he likes while using the program. But Cruise Control obnoxiously reverts to the monthly view every time you launch it.

Moving on…The calendar helpfully displays light gray boxes for elapsed days (reminding you that you cannot set a macro to execute yesterday, for example) and white boxes for remaining days. "Zooming in" works nicely, which is to say that double clicking on a day in the monthly or weekly views will switch the display to the daily view for that date. Similarly, double clicking on a month in quarterly or yearly view will bring up that month in the monthly view mode. I wouldn't mind having command key equivalents for each of the view modes (Command-1, 2, 3, etc. would be logical) so I wouldn't have to keep going up to the menu bar (I'm lazy).

Activating Agents

Cruise Control's agents may be activated in several different manners. They may be scheduled to execute once on a certain date at a certain time, say Saturday November 6th, 1999 at 7:30 PM. Or they may be recurring events which execute every X minutes, hours, days, weeks, months or years. Schedule agents may be further qualified by a date, day, or time range. In other words, an agent may be set up to execute daily Monday through Wednesday, or to execute every three days from 11/9/99 to 12/9/99, or to execute every ten minutes from 3 AM to 7 AM.

Contrarily, an agent may execute based on an elapsed period of idle activity: after X seconds, minutes, or hours. Idle activity may be qualified as: No user activity, No network activity, No disk activity, or All of the above. Idle time agents may be single-execution or recurring (i.e. they will always execute after a specified idle time from now until eternity).

Additionally, an agent may be defined to execute: Never. Such an agent will only execute when Now is selected from the Execute menu from within the Cruise Control application. This type of agent might be useful for an on-demand automated process.

There is one other way to activate an agent: by voice command. The Voice Agents plug-in, available separately for an additional $29, enables the user to harness the voice recognition engine provided by the Mac OS using the Speech Manager, Speakable Items, and Speech Recognition extensions. Voice Agents provides a way to activate Agents by speaking their names. This is useful, as the Mac OS' speakable items functionality is quite limited. However, in order for voice based agents to activate, the Cruise Control application must remain open. To address this limitation, Cruise Control has a "Hide Cruise Control" command under the Windows menu. Alternatively, one might simply use the Application menu to hide the Cruise Control app itself.

Agent Actions

Once an agent's basis for execution has been defined, it is time to define its actions. An agent may execute one or more actions, in a particular order. Cruise Control has a deceivingly small action set. At a glance, it appears that the user can only accomplish a handful of tasks with agents. An agent may launch or quit an application, perform a variety of tasks on a file (rename, copy, move, print, make alias, etc.), make a new folder, empty the trash, set a location using the Location Manager, startup or shut down the computer, sleep or restart the computer, or wake the computer from sleep.

There is one other action, which requires greater focus: Make Recording. Cruise Control will record a users' actions while in "record" mode, and then play them back as an action for an agent. The possibilities for this capability are obviously immense. I did, however, discover two bugs in the recording feature. First of all, the status windoid which displays the Stop and Record buttons disappears during the recording process if a menu item is selected or an application other than Cruise Control is brought to the foreground. The windoid never reappears,

hence the only way to stop the recording process is to bring Cruise Control to the front and press Command-Period. The second bug is an incompatibility with my Kensington mouse. When I made a recording in which I depressed either of my mouse buttons anywhere but on a menu, Cruise Control replayed the action but instead of clicking the mouse it did a click-hold indefinitely, which resulted in halting the playback of the recording. I realize that Walnut Systems cannot possibly insure compatibility with all input devices, but this bug does prevent me, and many other users of multi-button mice, from using the recording feature in any practical way!

Aside from the recording feature, Cruise Control's command set may be extended by way of AppleScript. If a user generates an AppleScript and saves it as an application, Cruise Control can, of course, execute that script by launching the application. For power users, this is very useful.

However, in general I found Cruise Control's command set to be limited. There are a number of commands from other macro programs which I miss. One significant example is the simple Pause command. But there are obviously other more complex and useful commands as well. Similarly, if Cruise Control provided for keyboard activated macros I would be more enthusiastic about its usefulness. It would also be able to compete with CE's QuicKeys more effectively.

Final Remarks

I like Cruise Control. It is clearly a well thought-out application with a good focus. The interface is intuitive, Appearance Manager compliant, and makes excellent use of the Drag Manager. My objections to the interface and functionality of the configuration application are few. The flexibility offered in defining how and when an agent should execute is awesome, and again represents how well thought-out the application is. While the recording feature opens numerous possibilities, without a working knowledge of AppleScript, many users will find Cruise Control limited in usefulness. In Walnut Systems' defense, Cruise Control does come with a handful of AppleScripts which execute useful tasks. However, more are needed.

Voice Agents gets major points on the coolness scale. It increases Cruise Control's usefulness and expands on the limited functionality of the Mac OS' speech recognition. The plug-in architecture of Cruise Control implies that more may be on the horizon from Walnut Systems. They have already provided a free plug-in which adds a new action to Cruise Control: logging onto AppleShare file servers.

There is no question in my mind that Cruise Control will develop further and blossom into an awesome piece of software. Few applications are so polished and well designed at an early age of Version 1.1. Once the command set is expanded and a few loose ends are tied up, Cruise Control will easily stand out as the logical choice for automating one's Mac.

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BY MICHAEL TSAI, MTSAI@ATPM.COM

Font Agent 8.0.1

As described elsewhere in this issue there are many font utilities for grouping fonts into sets that can be loaded as needed, for spiffing up font menus, and for printing samples of fonts. But none of these tools handle seemingly the most basic font management task—organizing the myriad of font files on your hard disk. Enter FontAgent, a nifty tool from Insider Software that can tame a growing font collection by repairing fonts and placing them in neat folder hierarchies.

Upon opening FontAgent you are presented with the window shown below. From here, you can tell FontAgent which disks or folders to search for fonts, how to process them, and where to put them when it's done. The interface is clean and easy to use. Each window contains a collapsible help section that explains the currently available options and lets you open the (excellent) user's guide, which is included as a PDF. This is important because although FontAgent is simple to work with, you must understand each option to get the results you want.

Processing Fonts

Fonts have annoying characteristics of several other file types. Like extensions they can conflict, like applications or directories they can become corrupted, and like documents they can
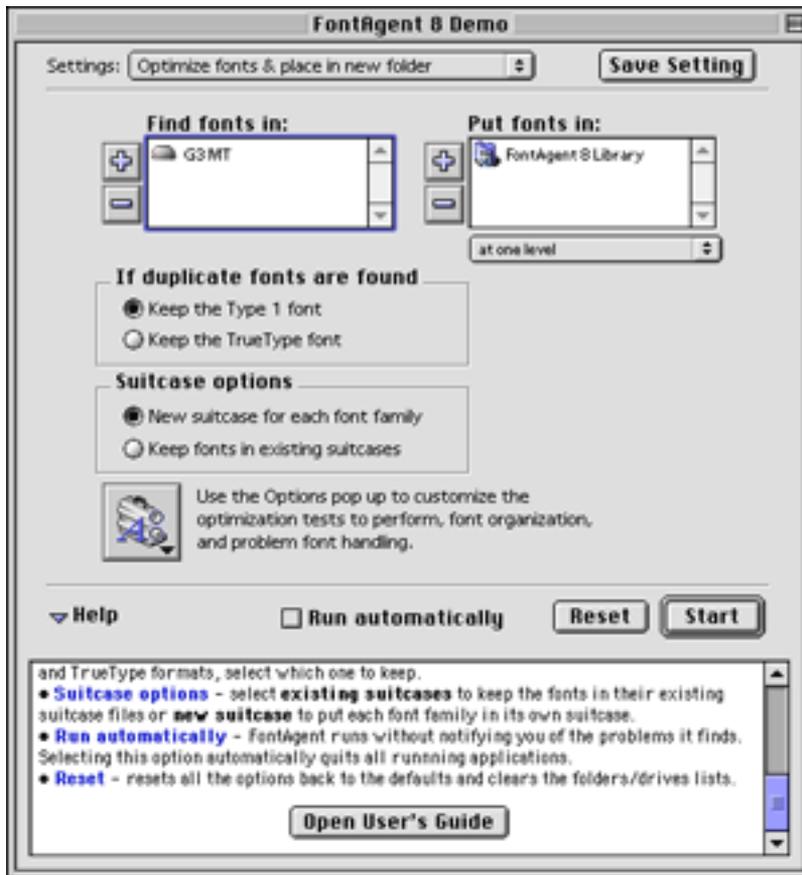
be present in multiple versions from multiple sources. FontAgent doesn't completely cure these problems, but it is a great help.

Each font has a name and an ID number. However, there are many more available fonts than IDs, so if you have a lot of fonts, chances are some of their IDs conflict. FontAgent fixes this by renumbering fonts so that all the fonts on your Mac have unique IDs. Although Insider Software claims that modern software doesn't care if fonts are re-numbered, I found that letting FontAgent re-number my system fonts caused problems. Here I recommend using its option to exclude system folder fonts from processing.

FontAgent identifies several kinds of corrupt fonts and can sometimes repair them. If it's unable to repair them, you'll at least know which fonts are bad so you can re-install them. In fact, the FontAgent demo will do this free. It can find bitmap fonts that lack corresponding outline fonts (and therefore are pretty much useless). These and other problem fonts can be isolated into a separate folder. From there, you can decide what to do with them.

If you have several copies of a font from different sources, FontAgent can remove all but one. You can choose whether to keep the TrueType or PostScript Type 1 version, as well as whether to keep identically named fonts from different foundries (such as Apple Garamond and Adobe Garamond). Again, this works well for most fonts, but I like to exclude my system folder fonts because for them I like to have both TrueType and PostScript versions. The PostScript version keeps Adobe Acrobat happy, while TrueType looks better for onscreen word processing.

Creating A Library

After FontAgent completes its run, it organizes your fonts into a library. It can optionally create font family suitcases and collect related bitmap and/or TrueType fonts into them. It can add suffixes to the suitcase names to indicate whether they hold TrueType or bitmap fonts that must be paired with PostScript outline fonts. Outline fonts and bitmaps, the two components of PostScript fonts, may be rounded up into folders named after the fonts they contain. This is nothing you couldn't do yourself, but FontAgent automates it and saves you the trouble of deciphering shortened PostScript font names like "BernhTanBTReg" and "GillSanBol-Ita" that sometimes prevent outline fonts from sorting next to their suitcases or bitmaps in a list view.
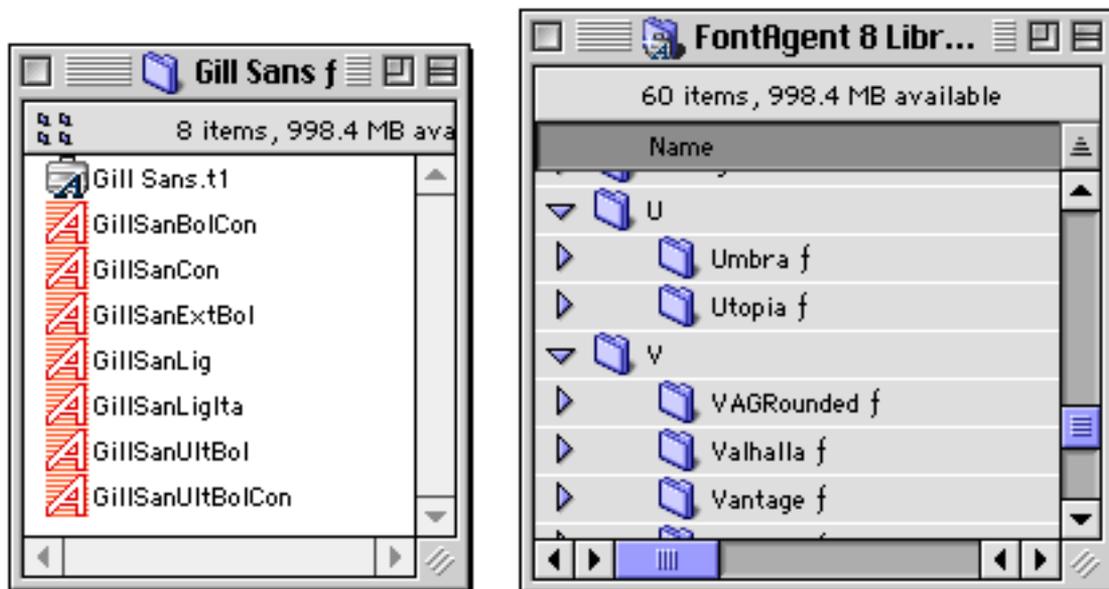
Then you get to choose how these font folders are organized. If your fonts are already arranged, perhaps by style, then you can have FontAgent process them without reorganizing. Otherwise, you have three choices. FontAgent can place the font folders (created above) into a

single folder, into alphabetical folders ("A," "B," etc.), or into folders corresponding to the font foundries that created them.

Criticisms

Although FontAgent's interface is simple and inviting it leaves something to be desired. The main display (shown above) provides simplistic options for controlling FontAgent's behavior, but most of the important preferences are hidden beneath the options popup menu. This wouldn't be a problem except for two things. First, the main display leads you to believe that certain things aren't possible. For instance, it shows a binary choice between keeping the Type 1 or TrueType font when duplicates are found. In the options, however, there is an almost identical group of radio buttons that also includes a checkbox for ignoring duplicate fonts.

Second, this practice of duplicating interface items with slight modifications continues for the other options dialogs. Thus, although Insider Software has made FontAgent simpler on the surface, its two-layer interface makes setting the Advanced options more difficult than need be. Thankfully, you can use its Settings feature to create a couple of sets of preferences that you frequently use, thereby minimizing trips to the options dialogs.

FontAgent takes a long time to process fonts. I can live with that, and the program does run in the background, however, it would be nice if it could run unattended as Norton Utilities does if you tell it to fix all problems without asking. Right now, I have to babysit FontAgent, acknowledging problems it finds in each step of its diagnosis. I'd rather tell it to run unattended and return to find a complete report of its activities.

In fact, FontAgent can create reports, just not as easily as you might like. The manual describes a procedure for creating reports without actually processing the fonts, but it's non-intuitive and confusing. You have to tell FontAgent to start processing, wait until it asks you whether you want to quit all running applications, then tell it to "start over." Finally, you have the option of creating a report. I'd like a simple command for creating a report of all my fonts that's available as soon as I launch FontAgent.

Finally, FontAgent does not support double-byte fonts, used by Asian and other languages with large character sets. Although the manual acknowledges this directly, it also states that FontAgent can damage double-byte fonts if you allow it to process them. Insider Software should never allow this to happen; FontAgent should either support double-byte fonts or ignore them.

Conclusion

FontAgent is a tightly focused tool that does a few things very well. It's indispensable for managing large font collections, and the $29.95 limited edition will likely appeal to those with more modest needs. Although few rough edges keep FontAgent a notch below Excellent, it is nonetheless a great tool that I'd be hard-pressed to deal without.

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ATPM RATINGS

VERY NICE

BY DAVID SPENCER, DSPENCER@ATPM.COM

iBook: A Laptop for the Home User

Company: Apple Computer, Inc.
Web: http://www.apple.com
Price: $1599

When Steve Jobs introduced the iBook, I knew I had to have one. At the time, I owned a Power-Book 2400c and was looking for a machine to replace it. I didn't need, nor could I afford, a machine that had all the bells and whistles. What I needed was a machine that could handle word processing, Internet access, and play games on the go. Most of all, I wanted a machine that would compliment my desktop machine. The iBook fit the bill almost perfectly: its price was decent (if a bit high), it had solid construction, and the 300 MHz G3 processor was exactly what I needed for the tasks I had in mind. Its good looks were just icing on the cake! I ordered my iBook just hours after it became available at The Apple Store.

The iBook fills a vacancy in the Macintosh lineup. Where the PowerBook is geared for higher end professionals, the iBook is geared for the average consumer—home or college users. With that in mind, the iBook is a truly great machine. Many reviewers giving the iBook low marks seem to forget that point. If you plan to do some non-linear video editing or some other highly intensive graphics work, don't be cheap and buy an iBook thinking it will do the job. An iBook customer is most interested in a machine that:

1. Is all-in-one, meaning everything you need comes with it.

2. Can access the Internet easily and quickly.

3. Can run many applications, particularly games and word processing programs.

4. Costs less than a PowerBook, but performs fast enough for an average user.

It's All in the Details

One of the first things I noticed when I opened up the box was the iBook's size. It's larger than I imagined, which disappointed me at first. But after using it a while, I grew to appreciate its size, which makes it damage-resistant. The computer itself has a thick, rubberized shell around it, making it somewhat large. While I don't know how much protection the casing really offers, it feels sturdy enough that I trust myself to carry it by the handle.

The iBook's oversized shell becomes especially noticeable when you open it. The LCD screen has the most protective plastic around it, making it look top heavy. Rumors of the display being so top heavy that it tips over the whole machine at sharp angles are untrue. I sat the iBook on a table and it wouldn't tip over at any angle.

The carrying handle is another excellent feature that men may be apprehensive about using. Yes, when carried by its handle, the iBook looks like a purse. Few people poke fun at my iBook, however, because they're always in awe of it!

Because the iBook doesn't have the traditional security slot, Apple states that you can run a security cable through the handle and it will do just fine. At first I found that to be of little comfort, but the handle actually appears to be very sturdy, with a metal bar running through the middle of it. When it comes to someone trying to steal your iBook, I figure if they really want it, they will find a way to take it no matter how attached to the desk it is. But a thief would probably either destroy the iBook in the process of disconnecting the handle or would need a very loud saw to cut through it. It's a very tempting target for thieves—I just make it a point to not leave my laptop unattended.
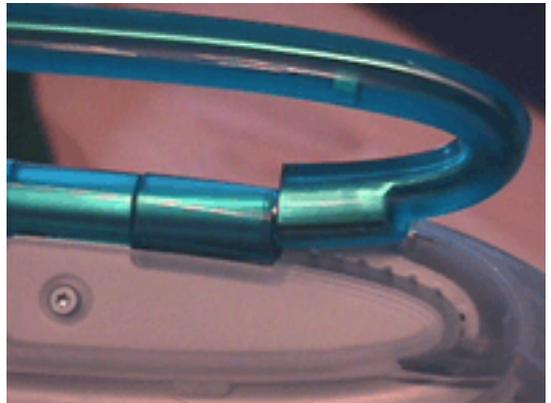
When I show off my iBook to colleagues, the first thing I do is let them try to open it up. Because of the clamshell design—and it **is** like a clamshell—virgin iBookers tend to have trouble opening it up. I enjoy watching people fiddle around with it for a while, unsuccessfully trying to open it. At first, people are very gentle with it, but soon they are pulling and tugging on it in the strangest ways! Just before they use a crowbar to pry it open, I stop them and show them how to open it. They are amazed at the elegant simplicity of it.

The keyboard is similar to that of the iMac. Personally, I love the feel of the keyboard and think it is very responsive. Several friends have given negative feedback about the keyboard, saying that it feels a little loose and that the top right part of the keyboard bends up a bit. This will happen if you don't reattach the keyboard correctly after making an installation. Speaking of installations…

Apple has made access to the internal components easier than ever. There are two small latches on the keyboard, located between the sets of function keys. When unlatched, the keyboard lifts up, revealing the hard drive, AirPort card, RAM, and CD drive. You can easily add RAM—there's even a diagram printed inside showing you how to do it! There really isn't access to anything else, and it would void your warranty anyway if you opened it up any more.

There are two problems with this easy access: first, it is **too** easy to open. A child could remove the keyboard in five seconds and wreak all sorts of havoc. Worse, a thief could steal your RAM or AirPort card in a matter of seconds. Given a few minutes, a thief could also remove your hard drive and CD drive. The only security device "locking" the keyboard down is a tiny

screw that, when given a 1/2 turn, is supposed to hold it down. Don't rely on it. All a thief would have to do is give the keyboard a hard yank and it will break off from its other (plastic) hinges.

The second problem becomes obvious when you lift the keyboard. You realize that the keyboard itself is fragile when not attached. Most alarming is the strip of cable connecting the keyboard to the computer. If you're not careful, you could rip the cable right out of the machine. The strip is just long enough to move the keyboard aside and make installations, no more. This needs to be redesigned.

As with PowerBooks, the iBook has a trackpad. There are three differences. The trackpad itself is silver, a nice cosmetic touch. The button is extra large and is wider than the trackpad itself. Also extra large is the wrist rest. You'll really appreciate these features when the laptop is on your lap for three or four hours on a plane.

Three or four hours may be all the time you'll get to use that iBook while on a plane. Apple claims the iBook's battery will last six hours—more than enough for a trans-atlantic flight. From my totally non-scientific tests, the iBook runs out of fuel somewhere over England. With a full charge, I can expect to get around four hours of usage. During my tests, I did a variety of things, like play Nanosaur, surf the Web, work in AppleWorks, and edit some images in Photoshop. I even left the machine idle for a good hour. I don't know how Apple figured the battery would last for six hours—with a full charge, the battery level indicator never topped 5 hours, 10 minutes of estimated life. The actual battery life, which is around three hours, is fairly typical for laptops, so my only problem is with the false advertising. The

typical iBook customer probably isn't going to be doing lots of work on long flights anyway. Again, if you're doing office or graphics work, the iBook wasn't intended for you.

Apple redesigned the battery for the iBook. The battery is slim and long, located underneath the machine. To access it you need a penny to turn two large screws, which remove a cover plate, underneath which lies the battery. Unfortunately, you cannot swap the batteries with the machine asleep.

Preinstalled Software

The iBook comes preinstalled with enough software to get a beginner off on the right foot. Among the software included is: Mac OS 8.6, AppleWorks, Microsoft Internet Explorer & Outlook Express, Netscape Communicator, Acrobat Reader, Nanosaur, Bugdom, and Quick-Time 4.

The included OS 8.6 has some new features for the iBook. There is improved power management as well as two sleep modes. The first is the traditional sleep mode. The second sleep mode, when selected, will save the contents in memory to your machine. In the event that power is completely cut off from the iBook, whatever you were working on would be safe if this option were selected.

Shortcomings

The single biggest problem with the iBook is the lack of RAM. It comes with 32 megabytes, which doesn't allow the 300 MHz processor to perform very well. Almost all users will want to immediately install more RAM. I upgraded to the maximum of 160 MB and there was a noticeable and much needed speed boost. Playing Quake 2 or running Virtual PC is smooth (as smooth as Virtual PC gets, that is).

Another problem with the iBook is its display. Its maximum resolution is 800x600 with millions of colors. I constantly have windows stacked on top of each other. Forget doing touch-up work in Photoshop with the iBook—the palettes all but completely cover the actual image. To its credit, the display is extremely bright and colors are exceptionally vibrant for a LCD.

Graphics for game play is good, but not exceptional. The iMac does a better job, as expected, but if you've got to play Unreal while on that long flight, you won't be disappointed. I noticed that the CD drive was a bit slow at times when playing games. When a CD is in the drive, the iBook becomes rather loud.

The speaker sitting on the base of the laptop is barely acceptable. It can barely be heard at medium volume. With the volume at maximum, the speaker sounds awful. (Except for system beeps—they sound great!)

One of the features touted was an instant wake-up from sleep mode. While the waking up speed is faster, it's not instant. Sometimes the computer is ready after two or three seconds. Other times, it takes ten seconds or more. Most of the time it wakes up quickly, but sometimes I still see the pointer turn to a watch.
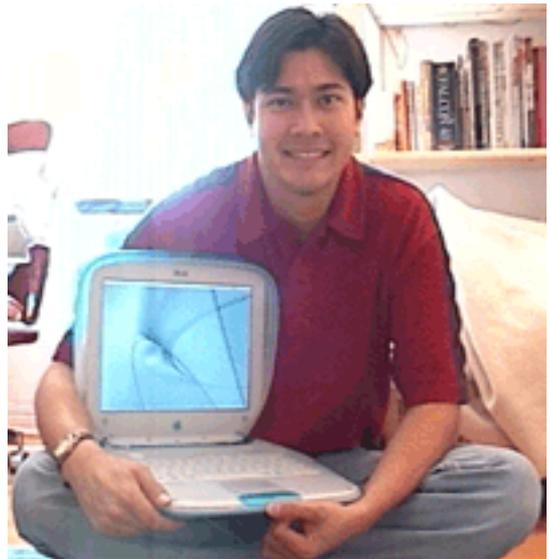
Is it for You?

What makes the iBook such an extraordinary machine are the small touches that went into the design. From a glowing sleep indicator to a sheet of stickers that let you label the function keys, a lot of thought went into this machine. It's not designed for high end work of any kind, so keep that in mind. If you love the iMac and are happy with its features, you'll love the iBook.

Technical Specifications	Bundled Software
• 300 MHz PowerPC G3 • 6 Hour Lithium-ion battery (3 or 4 hours are more realistic) • 4 MB SDRAM Video • Built-in 10/100BASE-T Ethernet • Built-in 56K modem • 12.1 inch Active Matrix display • Supports millions of colors at 800x600 pixel resolution • 3.2 GB hard disk drive • ATI Rage Mobility graphics accelerator • AirPort wireless networking (up to 11 megabits/second) • Built-in 24x speed CD-ROM • One 12-Mbps USB port • 16 bit stereo output • Full size keyboard w/76 keys (4 arrow keys with inverted T arrangement)	• Mac OS 8.6 • AppleWorks • Palm Desktop Organizer • Internet Explorer • Microsoft Outlook Express • Netscape Communicator • AOL 4.0 • EarthLink TotalAccess • EdView Internet Safety Kit Family Edition • The World Book Encyclopedia • Adobe Acrobat Reader • FAXstf • Nanosaur • Bugdom • QuickTime 4

BY MIKE SHIELDS, MSHIELDS@ATPM.COM

SPY Fox 2: Some Assembly Required

Company: Humongous Entertainment
Web: http://www.humongous.com/
Requirements: 80 MHz PowerPC, System 7.5.3 with 16 MB RAM
Shareware Fee: $24.99

The clever and cool secret agent SPY Fox™ is back in his second Junior Adventure™ which find him the unlikely recipient of a trash bag containing an empty box for a some-assembly-required Evil Robot model—made by the S.M.E.L.L.Y. toy division (Society for Meaningless Evil, Larceny, Lying and Yelling).

The World's Fair opens soon, and the monumental centerpiece happens to be an 1100-foot tall metal statue that looks amazingly like a canine robot. Donated by Napoleon LeRoach, SPY Fox's nefarious nemesis, the dogbot will activate when the 1 millionth person enters the World's Fair. This tin can canine will be set loose to assist LeRoach in his sinister plot to take over the world. LeRoach conveniently assembled the dogbot without the off switch and hid it somewhere on the grounds of the World's Fair. It's up to SPY Fox and his cast of cohorts to foil LeRoach by finding the hidden off switch and exterminating his perilous plan to turn the world into one giant roach motel!

Well, the one thing I have to say for this company is, they put together an impressive press kit. So much so, that I almost didn't have to play this game to write the review. However, I did. Now, I'm not the target audience for games like this, so my comments may be colored by that

fact, so, if appropriate, I'll bring in my guest reviewer. I'm of course speaking about my daughter Amanda, who turned five recently.

Spy Fox starts out impressively enough, with a secret meeting atop a skyway tram. He receives dehydrated skis, and a trash bag, as described above. For me, game play came slowly, waiting for the snappy dialogue and witty banter to finish. I would've liked a click of the mouse here to advance to the next decision point. Also, I was able to quit the game without a save dialogue box, which was mildly distressing. Now, I knew I was gonna play this more than once, however, I didn't know I'd have to start over. Also, restarting a saved game was a hassle, and you have to sit through the opening sequence to get to a point to restart a saved game. Amanda and I played this a couple of times together. My three year old son Scott sat on my lap for most of one of the games, and he was intrigued. Which tells you that the cartooning is excellent, in the tradition of the Freddie the Fish and Putt-Putt the Car series of adventures from the same company.

At this point, it's time to turn it over to my guest reviewer, and my extra special assistant. Amanda said, "I didn't like the part with the gears, it was too hard. I really liked when the doggy fell down at the end." Scott, my extra special assistant said, "I wanna play!" He likes the game on Spy Fox's watch, Things from Space. For me, almost more interesting than the game itself.

Ok, he's a bit too young, but he didn't really grab the mouse out of my hand when I was playing, well, at least more than once or twice. Amanda really only had to ask for help at the one spot mentioned above. At one point, it wasn't obvious what to do next, so, I just started clicking on all the players 'til I came up with the answer.

Hint: Find the Caped Cod's #1 fan. This was the last piece in the 'puzzle' before I was able to complete my mission. I was able to foil Napoleon LaRoach's plan, however, I let him escape. Making this a true James Bond like adventure. I'm expecting more hijinks, and a little less

witty reparte for Spy Fox 3. I mean, I can only take variations on the smelly vs. S.M.E.L.L.Y. joke for so long.

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?

We currently need several **Contributing Editors** and an **Assistant Webmaster**. Please contact us at editor@atpm.com if you're interested.

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Which Format Is Best For Me?

The Online Webzine edition is for people who want to view ATPM in their Web browser, while connected to the Internet. It provides sharp text, lots of navigation options, and live links to ATPM back issues and other Web pages. You can use Sherlock to search[1] all of the online issues at once.

The Acrobat PDF edition is optimized for printing, but it can also be viewed on-screen, and we've increased the font sizes to make this easier. It may be viewed online in a browser, or downloaded and viewed in Adobe's free Acrobat Reader[2] on Macintosh or Windows. PDFs may be magnified to any size and searched with ease.

The Offline Webzine is a HTML version of ATPM that is formatted for viewing offline and made available in a StuffIt archive to reduce file size. The graphics, content, and navigation elements are the same as with the Online Webzine, but you can view it without being connected to the Internet. It requires a Web browser.

The eDOC edition of ATPM is a self-reading document that, like our old DOC-Maker format, may be read on just about every Mac ever made, without any additional software. It features a table of contents, clickable URLs, high-quality printing, and easy magnification and searching. Oh, and it's **very** fast.

What Are Some Tips For Viewing PDFs?

- You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader[3] for free. If you have a Power Macintosh, Acrobat Reader 4 has better quality and performance. ATPM is also compatible with Acrobat Reader 3, for those with 680x0 Macs.

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

- You can quickly navigate between articles using the bookmarks pane at the left of the main viewing window.

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1. http://www.atpm.com/search
2. http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html
3. http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html

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

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

- All blue-underlined links are clickable. Links to external Websites are reproduced in footnotes at the bottoms of pages, in case you are reading from a printed copy.

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

Why Are Some Links Double-Underlined?

In the PDF edition of ATPM, links that are double-underlined lead to other pages in the same PDF. Links that are single-underlined will open in your Web browser.

Is The eDOC Edition Missing Graphics?

Yes. Because eDOC doesn't compress as well as PDF, we need to remove some of the less-important graphics to keep the file size down. Otherwise, the eDOC edition would be too large.

What If I Get Errors Decoding ATPM?

ATPM and MacFixIt readers have reported problems decoding MacBinary files using StuffIt Expander 5.x. If you encounter problems decoding ATPM, we recommend Mind Vision's MindExpander or StuffIt Expander 4.x. http://www.mindvision.com

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.

Do You Answer Technical Support Questions?

Of course. E-mail our Help Department at help@atpm.com.

How Can I Contribute To ATPM?

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

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

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

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

Wishful Thinking: Is the space for Mac enthusiasts who know exactly (if you do say so yourself) what Apple should do with its advertising campaigns and product introductions. Have

you come up with a great advertising tag line? What about that Mac campaign that has been stewing in the back of your mind? Send your big ideas (or your art) to editor@atpm.com.

Which Products Have You Reviewed?

Check our reviews index at http://www.atpm.com/reviews for the complete list.

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 editor@atpm.com for shipping information.

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Where Can I Find Back Issues of ATPM?

Back issues of ATPM, dating since April 1995, are available in DOCMaker stand-alone format from ftp://ftp.atpm.com and http://www.atpm.com/Back. In addition, all issues since ATPM 2.05 (May 1996) are available in HTML form at http://www.atpm.com/Back. You can search all of our back issues from http://www.atpm.com/search.

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.

This is the latest in ATPM's series of Trivia Challenges. Answers to this month's Trivia Challenge will be found in the next issue of ATPM. If you have any suggestions for future Trivia Challenges, or wish to comment about almost anything, please e-mail me at egoss@atpm.com.

I would like to congratulate Floridian **Adam B. Mark** and Frenchman **Jean-Michel Thodo** as winners of last month's ATPM Trivia Challenge. Your ATPM t-shirts are on the way!

This month's prize is a world-famous ATPM t-shirt! The ultra-cool, 100% cotton t-shirt emblazoned with the ATPM logo on the front and our logo and motto on the back goes to the first two correct entries I receive. Send your answers to egoss@atpm.com. All readers are eligible to win once every 12 months.

This month's Trivia Challenge is submitted by British reader John Precedo. As well as being a big Star Trek fan, John runs Draconis Trading at http://www.draconis.co.uk/. If you are interested in submitting a Trivia Challenge, contact me at egoss@atpm.com for details.

So strap on your phasers and warm up your tricorders as you take part in:

Trivia Challenge 5.11—The Next Generation

1. Which is the only TNG episode in which Captain Picard makes entries in a "Military Log" rather than his "Captain's Log"?

A. Best of Both Worlds Part I	B. Gambit Part II	C. Unification Part I	D. Yesterday's Enterprise

2. In the episode "The Offspring", Data creates a daughter named "Lal." What does her name mean?

A. Bajoran for "child"	B. Hindi for "beloved"	C. Sanskrit for "daughter"	D. Urdu for "love"

Trivia Challenge 5.11—The Next Generation

3. In the episode "Darmok," Picard and the captain of the Tamarian vessel are beamed onto a nearby planet to fight a monster together. What is the Tamarian captain's name?

A. Dathon   B. Darmok   C. Jalad   D. Tama

4. What is the name of the farming planet that Worf grew up on?

A. Altair III   B. Gault   C. Khitomer   D. Straleb

5. What was Keiko O'Brien's maiden name?

A. Ishikawa   B. Obachan   C. Ogawa   D. Onizuka

6. In the episode "Cause and Effect," the Enterprise meets another ship that has been caught in a time-loop in the Typhon Expanse for 80 years. What is its name?

A. USS Berlin   B. USS Bozeman   C. USS Brattain   D. USS Denver

7. In the episode "The Next Phase," two characters are thought to have died in a transporter accident. Who are they?

A. Geordi and Counsellor Troi   B. Riker and Doctor Selar   C. Doctor Crusher and Worf   D. Ro Laren and Geordi

8. What is the motto of Starfleet Academy?

A. Alea iacta est   B. Ex astra, scientia   C. Per ardua, ad astra   D. Semper cedentia retro

9. What is the name of the transport ship that Scotty is on when it crashes into the Dyson Sphere in "Relics"?

A. USS Akagi   B. USS Gage   C. USS Jenolan   D. USS Zapata

10. What is the name of Jean-Luc Picard's older brother?

A. Maurice   B. Paul   C. Rene   D. Robert

11. In the episode "Tapestry," we see how a young Jean-Luc Picard was stabbed through the heart while fighting…?

A. Four Anticans   B. Three Nausicaans   C. A pair of Yridians   D. A single Lyaaran

12. What does the name of the Klingon weapon "the bat'tleh" actually mean?

Trivia Challenge 5.11—The Next Generation

| A. "Deadly Weapon" | B. "Sword of Honor" | C. "Warrior's Blade" | D. "Killer of Tyrants" |

13. In the episode "The Defector," we find out what Riker's previous assignment was. Which ship was it?

| A. USS Gandhi | B. USS Hood | C. USS Kyushu | D.USS Melbourne |

14. What was the name of the Neutral Zone border-world where a Romulan ship crashed in "The Enemy"?

| A. Acamar III | B. El-Adrel | C. Galorndon Core | D. Nelvana III |

15. What is the name of the Klingon ship that Riker served aboard in "A Matter of Honor"?

| A. IKC Bortas | B. IKC Brak'lul | C. IKC Pagh | D. IKC T'Ong |

Last Month's Answers TC 5.10—The "ist" List

1. Numismatist	C. Coin Collector
2. Philatelist	E. Stamp Collector
3. Botanist	G. Plant Scientist
4. Pugilist	L. A Boxer
5. Entomologist	I. Studies Insects
6. Ornithologist	A. Studies Birds
7. Herbalist	J. Medicinal Healer
8. Ichthyologist	D. Studies Fish
9. Centrist	K. Social Moderate
10. Linguist	B. Studies Languages
11. Geologist	H. Earth Historian
12. Ecologist	F. Studies The Environment

The Rules

Each question has only one correct answer. The answers are stored in a hermetically sealed envelope guarded by a devoted Bengal cat named "Kira" who lives in our house.

This Month's CD Recommendation

"Brand New Day[1]" by Sting—another eclectic collection of intriguing forays into various musical genres from Sting. With Stevie Wonder, James Taylor, Branford Marsalis, and a veritable cast of thousands, this is an album that both demands and greatly rewards repeated playings. Stevie Wonder's harmonica work in the title track alone is worth the price of the CD!

Parting Pointer

The "Parting Pointer" is ATPM's "Tips and Tricks" section. If you have a pointer that you would like to share with other readers to make their Mac experience easier or more enjoyable, please send it to me at egoss@atpm.com. Here's this month's "Parting Pointer":

Anarchie lets you use pattern matching in its path boxes (the little browser-style text boxes at the tops of its windows). For instance, if you connect to ftp.atpm.com by typing **ftp://ftp.atpm.com/ATPM*07*** into the path box you will be shown a list of all ATPM back issues published in July.

Regular Expressions are a language for specifying patterns of text to match. For instance, **#** matches a number and **.*** matches zero or more non-return characters. BBEdit is probably the easiest way to try them out on the Mac. Its user manual and Apple Guide explain the basics well. Strictly speaking, Anarchie does not support regular expressions—they're actually just wildcards (which are not as powerful).

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1. http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B00001QGQI/aboutthisparticu