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Macintosh
The new shape of Intel.

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

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Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the February issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* We start the second month of our twelfth calendar year of publication with the Macintosh community in an envious spot: a growing network of users; new Macintosh products in the stores; and increasing opportunities for users to enjoy and exploit new technologies that help us inspire the mind, express, the heart, and sometimes stir the soul.

January was a spectacular month for the Macintosh community. Were it not for winter's cold and our desires for the calendar to advance toward spring, January was a month many of us wouldn't have minded to let linger.

Intel Core Duo

For years Intel chips seemed everywhere except inside a Mac. In January, Steve Jobs introduced the first Macintosh computers with Intel Core Duo chips inside. The new Macs were introduced with a top Intel executive dressed in a company "bunny" or clean-room suit alongside. The clean-room suit was similar to the attire Apple spoofed in the G3 v. Pentium advertisement eight years ago.

iMacs with Intel chips have already begun to ship and are available in stock configurations at Apple retail stores. The new MacBook Pro (which replaces the legendary Macintosh PowerBook) will begin to ship this month.

Apple v. Dell

In January, for a brief moment, Apple surpassed Dell. No. Not in market share but in "market cap" or market capitalization. In other words, Apple Company as a company had a higher market value than industry volume leader Dell.

During the first part of January, Apple Computer's share price hit an all-time high of $86.40. At that lofty share price the total value of the company eclipsed Dell's value, prompting an internally distributed e-mail from Steve Jobs to the staff noting the event. The event had symbolic significance because in October 1997 Michael Dell responded to a reporter's question about what he would do if he were the head of Apple Computer. Mr. Dell suggested he would sell off the company's assets and distribute the cash to shareholders, essentially liquidating the company and putting it out of business.

A bit over eight years later, Apple Computer's popular products and record earnings contrast with Dell's struggles to maintain its earnings per share growth. A quick look at Dell's balance sheet indicates that the world's number one PC maker has had to buy back billions of dollars of its own stock in order to keep its share price at current levels. In short, Apple has achieved through organic sales growth (gains in earnings per share) what Dell has only been able to achieve lately by using up its own cash to reduce the number of its shares outstanding.

Following the release of Apple's fourth calendar quarter (first fiscal quarter) financial reports, the rise in Apple's share price subsided. At press time the shares were trading in the range of $73 per share.

As Steve Jobs suggested in his e-mail to staff, we don't know what tomorrow brings. But for a brief time in January Apple's bright shine caused a financial eclipse of Dell on Wall Street.

1st Fiscal Quarter Results

Buoyed by rising iPod sales, Apple Computer reported record sales and earnings for the three-month period ended December 31, 2005. During the quarter Apple shipped just over 1.25 million Macs and over 14 million iPods. This lead to record revenue of $5.75 billion and record earnings of $565 million or $.65 per diluted share.

During the quarterly webcast with analysts, Apple executives offered subdued guidance for this fiscal quarter. Apple's performance for the period ending in March will depend on Intel's ability to deliver sufficient Core Duo chips to meet demand for the new iMac and MacBook Pro and will also depend on whether or not consumers in the market for a new Mac will buy iBooks and G5 mini-towers this quarter or wait to buy their Intel-based successors soon after they arrive.

The subdued forecast from management caused Wall Street analysts to take pause and review their recommendations for the quarter as Apple works to complete the chip transition in the Macintosh line. Management's cautious outlook for the quarter is what caused the stock price to retreat from its January new highs.

Rosetta

While it didn't take a Rosetta Stone to decipher Apple's record breaking revenue and earnings report, it will take Rosetta to dynamically translate instructions for PowerPC-based applications on Intel-based Macs. A new icon symbolizing what Apple calls Universal applications will now appear on software boxes. The Universal designation indicates software that will run natively on Intel- and PowerPC-based Macs. Watch for new versions of popular Macintosh software products to appear with the Universal icon as Apple continues to release new Intel-based Macs.

iLife '06

Apple's latest version of its popular digital content creation product suite was released simultaneously with the new iMac Core Duo. iLife '06 introduces a new product called iWeb for the easy crafting of Web sites. The product suite carries the Universal icon on its box.

Our Latest issue

ATPM has become an icon of its own. Our universal readership looks to our staff each month to consistently deliver the best Macintosh-related news and views in our friendly

and easy-to-read monthly format. Our iconic stature isn't revealed so much by a symbol on our cover page, but through the thoughtful content that fills every page.

Our February issue includes:

The Candy Apple: Google Tells Big Brother to Take a Hike

Some questions about the flap between Google and the US government.

Bloggable: Double Your Pleasure, Double Your Fun

Macworld only comes once a year, but it's worth the wait. This year, Steve Jobs unveiled the Intel-based MacBook Pro and iMac, unleashing a full-scale Reality Distortion Field around them. But Wes Meltzer penetrated the Field for this month's *Bloggable*, plus a variety of other Web chatter.

Pod People: Proud to be a Pod Person

Traditional radio broadcasts tired old content to its hapless listeners. Find out how to break free of the straitjacket with podcasts.

About This Particular Outliner: Two New Outliners: Mori and iKnow & Manage

This month's *ATPO* outliner column examines two new outliners, Mori and iKnow & Manage.

Segments: Thanks For All the Fish

After years of speculation and false starts, the Mac OS finally ships on Intel architecture. Angus Wong goes beyond the technical analysis to explore the cultural ramifications of this monumental milestone.

Desktop Pictures: From ATPM Readers

Readers contribute this month's photos: Mt. Baker, St. Louis, Snowy Sunrise, Dominican Republic, and Thailand.

Cortland

In this month's *Cortland*, Lisa makes peace with her maker, the *other* Steve steps in to foil plans of world dominance, Chad returns to the throne at Weiser Graphics, and Cortland decides the fringe benefits are worth going in-house again.

Review: Bubblomania X 2.1.2

Bubblomania makes you a bubble-popping fool.

Review: Cult of iPod

Leander Kahney is obsessed with people obsessed with Apple, and his latest coffee table book has everything to do with everyone's favorite music player, the iPod. It's just a shame he can't string together a good narrative.

Review: CyTV 0.5.3

If you have an EyeTV receiver and two computers, you need CyTV. This is the best free TV transmitter your money can't buy.

Review: Lapvantage Loft

The acrylic specialists at the Plasticsmith update the Lapvantage to match Apple's current designs.

Review: Mac OS X Tiger in a Nutshell

With Tiger out for almost 9 months now, you may think you have it completely in hand. As always, O'Reilly is out to show you what you're missing, this time in the form of a book full of advanced command-line features.

E-Mail

Mapwing Creator Pro Review

You're spot on with your review. I tried out the demo for a real estate agent friend and couldn't recommend it to her for the price. I told her it was worth maybe $50, but you are closer with $30.

That's unfortunate because there is a shortage of easy-to-use Flash-based tools on the Mac. My friend is now using Swish on Windows to do her work. It costs what Mapwing should.

—*Michael McKee*

Curing That Newbie Feeling

I found this article very helpful. One of the most difficult problems for newbies is intimidation. No one likes to feel stupid, and if the helper uses terminology that is incomprehensible, it can be discouraging to have to ask for definitions. Your comments about attitude and your admonition to keep asking, once you have searched FAQs and some of the resources you give, is very heartening for a newbie.

—*David Kilpatrick*

> Thanks for the positive feedback David. During the coming year I hope to do more articles geared toward new users or long-time Mac users trying a new task for the first time.
>
> —*Sylvester Roque*

• • •

I too found this article helpful and informative. Having purchased my first Mac only two weeks ago (iMac G5 20″), after spending the past 18 years using solely MS-DOS and Windows machines, it has been an interesting experience.

What does surprise me, and this article reminded me, is where Sylvester says to "read the manual." Well I don't know about previous Apple computers, but I have to say that the so-called manuals supplied with my iMac G5 were abysmal and, in effect, were only a few pages long. It only told you how to connect the computer to the power supply and switch it on, connect mouse and keyboards etc, and that was about it.

I was very surprised as I would have thought that Apple would have included something more substantial to enlighten those of us who have moved across from Windows, which is a market they are hoping to entice. So I ended up spending about £40 to purchase a couple of good books that explained the ins and outs of Tiger.

I also used the Apple discussion rooms, but, as Sylvester says, it can be hard to track down the information you are seeking. So I will definitely be seeking out some of the forums and sites mentioned here.

Other than that, the iMac G5 itself is excellent.

—Andrew Parkhouse

• • •

I share your pain Andrew. Maybe I wouldn't go as far as abysmal, but the current Apple manual system is much different from those i got with my first Mac (LCII). I think the manuals weighed more than the computer. We seem to be in a curious time where the system manuals are skimpier than I would like but the manuals for Apple programs are usually at least decent.

—anonymous

• • •

Apple does provide quite a comprehensive electronic help manual in the system. All you need to do is choose Help from the menu bar. The topics covered are very wide ranging that teach you everything from the basics to sharing and collaborating with others. Do check it out. I am sure that you will agree with me that Apple does try its best to make it easy for new users.

—Andrew Wong

> Andrew, you are right about Apple having a comprehensive electronic help system. It works much better than the initial attempts at electronic manuals did. There are lots of nice things about electronic help systems but I do find that there are times when having a paper manual would be helpful. Then again, that could just be the way my brain works.
>
> *—Sylvester Roque*

iMac G5 Review

Like Tom Bridge, I was helpless in front of this beauty, stammering and drooling, just like I do around gorgeous women. However, unlike my experience with women, I actually took this one home with me and found it to be sleek and responsive. 'nuff said!

—Thomas Kaye

• • •

How's the fan noise?

—*Poster*

> Very tolerable indeed. Certainly quieter than its predecessors.
> —*Tom Bridge*

• • •

I wonder why they didn't make the black camera bezel white, so as not to interrupt the beauty of the iMac's facade? Probably some technical reason having to do with reflectivity and such, but yes, it is a shame that the camera looks like such an afterthought.

—*Bruce M.*

Coping With Mac OS X's Font Rendering

Great stuff!

I have used Verdana on my blog for a while, and it is a great basic font for on-screen readability.

Keep up the good work.

—*Paul Merrill*

• • •

A good alternative to Verdana for places where you need to squeeze lots of information into a small space is Tahoma, again by Microsoft. It's basically Verdana with the letter spacing tidied up a bit. It's the default interface font for Windows 95 and up, so it's well hinted for screen display. I'm not sure how I got it (I never installed it) but it's installed on my OS X. If you don't have it, but own Windows, you can just copy it out of Windows' fonts folder and open and install it on your Mac.

—*Alex Reid*

> Installing certain Microsoft products for Mac is how Mac users gain Tahoma. Mine came with Office v.X. I wasn't previously aware that Truetype fonts were now interchangeable between Mac OS and Windows. I always used to have to run them through a converter I had purchased back in my OS 8 and 9 days. Perhaps that's changed for OS X.
> —*Lee Bennett*

• • •

Sigh I long for the day when truly high-res screens make such silly ideas as anti-aliasing obsolete. Until then, I wish developers would design at the proper resolution instead of treating the screen like a print medium. Apple used to know what they were doing. Bah.

—*Brian C*

• • •

I have been working with type since we set it by hand in advertising agencies. My old eyes are less than perfect at this point.

I use Verdana and Tahoma in OS 9 and prefer Lucida Grande in my newer OS X browsers. This is the opposite of what folk here are doing. I find the smoothed fonts generally are more readable even at 9pt. Lucida Grande 9 in Apple Mail is more readable for me than anything in OS 9. For me, it hurts to see the font rendering in OS 9.

I think there is a good case from the diversity right here, for making font rendering more flexible in OS X. I didn't realize there were people who preferred OS 9 fonts and rendering until reading this.

—*Roger Harris*

Wikipedia Is Not the Lovefest We Thought

The British journal, *Nature*, recently compared science articles in Wikipedia to Encyclopedia Britannica.

Wikipedia did pretty well, and *Nature* seemed to be very positive on the concept and urged scientists to be active in contributing to it. Although I personally have used Wikipedia very little, the science articles are generally right on and very defendable.

—*John Fechner*

• • •

It is indeed easier to be more accurate, and more objective when writing about science (bearing in mind that even science can get bogged down in subjective interpretations of specific data, which can and does—in turn—become personal).

But clearly, things relating to political and personal histories almost require a personal analysis and subsequent drawing of conclusions, and therefore lend themselves, almost naturally, to a myriad different interpretations.

—Ralph

REALbasic 2005, Release 4 Review

I think Charles Ross is right; REALbasic has two targets, professionals and beginners. And I think the developers do a good job of balancing the needs of these disparate groups.

I've worked with both AppleScript and REALbasic. I think AppleScript is a terrible language for beginners. Although it reads well, it writes terribly—it has a picky syntax; it's easy to make mistakes and hard to figure out what your mistakes are. Furthermore, you don't get a GUI until you go to AppleScript Studio. With REALbasic in minutes you can instruct a complete novice to write a program that has a user interface and a button that does something. There are other good instructional languages, but AppleScript isn't one of them.

A second comment is that I've been working with REALbasic for about two years and haven't had any interaction with a database. Writing a general article about REALbasic when the author's experience is only with database development gives an extremely limited view of the breadth of the language. I realize that Mr. Ross qualifies the scope of the review early on, but the title and context give a different impression.

Another comment. Twice Mr. Ross says that a limitation of a feature "defeats the whole purpose" of the feature. In neither case is he correct. He says, for example, the fact that you can't subclass all classes "defeats the purpose of subclassing." Huh? Does that mean that the ones that can be subclassed are useless? Not in my experience.

One point he makes is a very good one: the blurred distinction between datatypes and classes. I stumbled here when learning the language. A much clearer distinction, at least in the documentation, would be very helpful. Mr. Ross only touched on some of the differences between the two that a programmer should be aware of.

—John Kubie

> Thanks very much for your comments. I hope that readers will be able to add your insight when deciding whether to purchase REALbasic.
>
> However, I have to disagree with some of your comments. I think that most of the trouble with AppleScript has less to do with the language than to do with the implementation of scriptability given by application developers. If AppleScript is used only as a programming language rather than a scripting tool, as it may be in the context of AppleScript Studio, I think it's just as easy to learn as REALbasic, and for the beginning programmer has the benefit of being free.
>
> Also, saying that AppleScript doesn't include a GUI until one moves to Studio is, I think, ingenuous. You may as well say that BASIC doesn't include a GUI until you move to REALbasic. Given that a beginning programmer could start with AppleScript Studio as their introduction to AppleScript, the GUI is available right away. As far as an introductory programming language, I see no advantage to REALbasic over AppleScript Studio.

I never said that my only experience with programming is with databases. However, about 75% of my income is currently generated from database development of some sort. I do build other software as well, and even though I did qualify my review, everything I wrote applies regardless of one's anticipation of using the software for database development. The only two points I specifically made regarding my database experience were the inability to easily edit lengthy string constants and the lack of good documentation for this feature of REALbasic. A reader could mentally edit out these portions, and I think everything else will stand on its own. Regardless, I find it difficult to conceive of a large program that couldn't make use of an easy database interface of some sort.

I should not have used "defeats the whole purpose" so freely, however. You're correct that some ability to subclass is better than none, but the ability to subclass any "class" would be much better. I don't think I'm far off that a lack of allowing any datatype, including objects, to be stored in a constant is nearly a defeat of the purpose of constants. I would have immense use for constants that could store anything, much more so than for constants that can only be a number, string, boolean, or color.

Finally, ATPM has a different style for reviews than many other publications. Our reviews aren't meant to be all inclusive, feature-driven reports, but to give a personal account of the author's experience with the software. This is part of the reason I spend so much time at the beginning to describe my background and what I'm hoping to find by trying the software. Since your background might be so different from mine, having never used the database features of REALbasic, you might consider submitting your own review with your experience written into it. Overall, I'm positive about REALbasic, and have already begun to use it to create a commercial application (database-driven, of course), rather than use FileMaker, for the reasons I discussed at the beginning of the article.

—Charles Ross

• • •

Thanks for this review. I have just started using REALbasic about a month ago (standard edition). I have found it significantly easier to use than Xcode with Objective-C. I should mention my interest is in recreational programming after not doing any programming for five or ten years.

—Patrick

You're welcome. I agree, the REALbasic IDE is easier to use than Xcode, and the language is easier than Objective-C, but it does come at a cost of power. Xcode with Interface Builder offers, I think, better interface feedback and control, and a wider range of widgets (barring using plugins with REALbasic). Not to dissuade you from REALbasic, which I think is a good environment, you may want to check out AppleScript Studio (see my comments earlier today regarding AppleScript). If you're only building software for the Mac, it may be a viable option.

—Charles Ross

Tactile Pro Review

Some keyboards will always feel "hard" to use. The Fujitsu Siemens keyboards with the round indentations for each key, and the completely absent click, they are really hard to use.

Apple has some not so bad keyboards; I liked the old iMac keyboards, and my old Apple II Saratoga Extended keyboard. But the Tactile Pro really convinced me; it is nice to type, much nicer than anything Apple sells with their machines.

And I almost would have bought another Tactile Pro, if it were not for articles such as these. . .that make you doubt. Why use a copy when you can get the original?

So, I got myself the real thing together with a PS2-to-USB converter. And you know, there is really no going back. After editing text and working out things using IBM M keyboard technology, there is simply no going back. It is a quantum leap, a big step, a huge improvement. I didn't think this was for real. Why doesn't Apple ship with such keyboards?

—*Wolf*

EarThumps Review

Earthumps? I call them wallet thumps! While the bass response is good, even great by knuckhead standards, there is almost *no* mid-range and treble response compared to say, a pair of Sony fontopia earbuds. I was so hopeful when I saw the review in ATPM that finally, someone had produced a decent pair of earbuds in the $20–30 range. No such luck. You've got to spend at least $50 to find a decent pair of earbud headphones. This is an extremely average set of earbuds. Stick with Sony and give up the extra $25. You won't regret it. I lost my fontopia earbuds. that's why I was shopping around. I still miss them. I wasted major $$$ trying to find a cheaper product. Dummy me! This is the 5th pair of earbuds I've bought and they *suck*. I also did not appreciate having to repay an extra $12 to have this garbage delivered to my house!

—*Grover Watson*

> Oh, this is interesting—Grover, your comments made me remember that I turn down the treble on every system when I have that chance, and turn the bass up. So I did not miss the treble on these like you did.
>
> Thanks for the input.
>
> —*Ellyn Ritterskamp*

• • •

I'd have to disagree on comments about the Sonys. I had the 51 and the 71s and both had severe cord disintegration issues. They were useless after three months—no sound out

of either ear. Read the reviews of people who've had them long. There are a significant amount of comments about poor Sony workmanship. I'd keep looking because they are poorly made. They sound good but they will die on you quickly.

—DW Wizzle

• • •

Yes, I had the Sonys for awhile, too, and they sounded great. But the rubber on the cords disintegrated, and I have the feeling that I accelerated the process by trying to fix them. But for a few months, they were great.

—Alex

• • •

Very true about the Sonys. The original phontopes were great, the cord material was "normal" when I finally replaced them after three years with the new phontopes, and they lasted two months before the cord disintegrated. I replaced them three times, taking them back to the store, and the same thing happened on each occasion—not what I was expecting from a Sony product. I'm gonna give these Griffins a go methinks.

—Bud

• • •

I have tried several pairs of earphones to replace the lackluster ones that came with my iPod, including: Sony 818, Skull Candy Earbuds, JVC Gummis, Apple in-ear, Koss "the plug," and Maxell Digital Ear Buds P9. No, I did not want to spend more than $60 CAD—all these earphones were either horribly fitting and uncomfortable *or* terrible sounding.

Then I found the EarThumps. . .not much $$, fit, feel, and sound great. Sure, there are better for twice the price, but I'm not paying it.

Happy with the EarThumps.

—Jveek

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The Candy Apple

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

Google Tells Big Brother to Take a Hike

Last month we heard that Google had declined to provide some information to the United States Justice Department. The company had declined several months earlier but the news came to light when the Justice Department asked for a court order to force Google to comply.

First, let's look at some facts. The Justice Department is trying to back up a 1998 anti-pornography law, the Child Online Protection Act. As part of that effort, they asked several online companies for search information for a one-week period last June. The data was not tagged to individual users, and the Justice Department said it would help them understand who is searching for what. Three of the companies agreed to provide the data, one after hesitating. Google did not comply. Google's Privacy Policy states that Google "may share aggregated non-personal information with third parties outside of Google."

Those are some of the relevant facts, as uncluttered by opinion as I can make them.

Now I will pose some questions that came to me as I pondered this issue, and last, I will propose some answers. I have consulted several acquaintances on this, but all the conclusions are my own unless I say otherwise.

Questions

1. Why is the Justice Department bothering Google and the others when it could be chasing the people who put pornographic content on the Web? Why waste energy looking at stuff that says what we already know? Why take Google to court when all they do is report what's out there? Why not chase down the people who are breaking the Child Online Protection Act, and leave the search engines alone?

   OK, that was more than one question. But it is all sort of the same question.

2. Why does the Justice Department believe it can ask a private company for information? Do they ask Coca-Cola for their "secret ingredient," "merchandise 7X"? What if Coke really still has cocaine in it? Ooh, we need to get right on that. My question asked why the Justice Department believes it can ask a private company for information, but it sounds to me like they are not only asking, but *compelling* a private company to do what they say. I know Google is publicly-traded; I don't mean "private" in that way. It all sounds rather

heavy-handed. It might not sound that way if we could see any benefit to it, but the first question applies: What does the Justice Department think it will do with a week's worth of searches on cat dandruff?

3. Given that Google's privacy policy allows it to provide aggregated data to third parties, why didn't it comply? I am mostly impressed they didn't, but on another level I wonder what was the point. More on that in the Answers section.

Possible Answers

1. *Why pester Google and the others?* I could not figure this one out, but a lawyer friend provides this guess:

> As I understand it, The Justice Department is attempting to lay the groundwork for a renewed attempt to sustain anti-cyberporn laws. These laws have been successfully attacked in the past on First Amendment grounds by arguing that the government, which bears the burden in a First Amendment context, cannot show it has selected the least restrictive means of accomplishing an important governmental objective, because filtering is less restrictive and would keep porn away from minors. I imagine the Justice Department is attempting to show that filtering would not work.
>
> —Robert Shore, Liner Yankelevitz Sunshine & Regenstreif

   If he is correct, I think the Justice Department is taking a shortcut. It is not the problem of the search engines to prosecute or regulate online porn. I appreciate that some of them try to screen it, but they are not the bad guys—if indeed pornographers are bad guys, which I am not addressing. They are breaking the COPA law if their content is available to children, which is all that is in question here.

2. *Why pester companies that are not affiliated with the government?* I can't get a good answer to this one. If Google had a contract with the US Army, and the Army needed some information from Google, I might see how that could be construed as a relationship where you would expect some cooperation. But there is no such relationship between Google and the United States Justice Department, or none that I know of. It sounds like another shortcut to me.

3. *Why did Google decline?* My initial reaction was, "Good for Google!" I was pleased they didn't turn over a bunch of probably worthless data to a government agency too lazy to do its own homework. Then I wondered, if it is just aggregated data, and none of the information is tied to me or any one user, what would be the harm?

Here's one harm: Google's search results come from a specific algorithm or technique that scores a hit higher the longer you stay on that site. It allows them to see which sites give you the information you asked for, and which ones don't. That's why the first few hits are often the most useful, because other users have validated that they work. If Google provides a week's worth of searches and results, someone might figure out how they do that. It's called proprietary information, and they have a right to keep it secret, like the possibly mythical Coke secret ingredient Merchandise 7X. Thanks to UNC-Charlotte's Drew Arrowood for pointing me in this direction.

I'm not buying the second harm argument. This argument uses the slippery slope, to say, well, if we give you this information now, it makes it easier or "more right" next time to give you more specific information. That makes all the users cringe, because we don't want the government reading our searches about cat dandruff. The flaw in this one is the slippery slope itself. As James Rachels shows in at least one of his introductory moral philosophy textbooks, the slippery slope argument relies on us to predict the future, and to say that something will be worse if we go this route. We can't predict the future. Anytime you hear an argument that cites the slippery slope, discount it. We can all make up such arguments, but since we don't know where a path will lead, we shouldn't make them up or give them weight.

Conclusion

I feel better having read Google's privacy policy and knowing they intend to comply with legal requirements at the appropriate time. But this is not the appropriate time. The Justice Department should leave the search engines alone, and use its energy to track down and prosecute online pornographers if they are breaking the law.

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Bloggable

by Wes Meltzer, wmeltzer@atpm.com

Double Your Pleasure, Double Your Fun

This month was Macworld Expo San Francisco. It was predictably exciting, so I have lots of material this month. Not surprisingly, the big topic of the month was the announcement of the new MacBook Pro, the Intel Core Duo replacement for the PowerBook, and the new iMac with an Intel chip.

They're beautiful machines. And there's plenty to say on the topic.

But first, I want to make a public service announcement. If you want to read ATPM unfettered, without any ISP-imposed latency or connection problems, and if you support the idea that all traffic on the Internet should be treated equally, then it's time to take action. It affects all of us, Mac users and PC users alike, and changes in national policy could change the Internet from an egalitarian phenomenon to a very expensive and rigidly controlled medium. I want your help to make sure that doesn't happen.

What's going on is that the US Congress is working on updating the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and they're talking about adding "network neutrality" as a provision. In practice, that would mean that ISPs can't interfere with traffic carried on their networks. It's currently the status quo, but some ISPs, notably AT&T, BellSouth, and Verizon, have talked about how they want content providers to chip in toward bandwidth costs.

Remember, you and I are already paying for our bandwidth. Even if it's your landlord paying, or you're using free WiFi at a café, you're certainly not freeloading from the ISP's perspective. But they have the audacity to insist that we pay twice: once for our connection and once for our content. It's not like this is cable television, with a complex network of middlemen; this is the Internet, where anyone can be a provider and anyone can be a recipient.

So, if you value reading ATPM as-is, or even just using Skype or iChat without your ISP making it difficult or expensive, please call your congressman and insist that he or she include "network neutrality" provisions in the revisions to the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

And now, to Macworld.

A Silver Ghost

So how about that new MacBook Pro? It's got a new name, and, it looks like, no "Intel Inside" (or whatever they are) stickers on it, either. On the other hand, it looks identical to the aluminum G4 PowerBooks, except for a couple of neat new features and a new name.

It's also, obviously, one of the first two Intel-based Macs available for purchase. The other is the iMac. This is the big shift, folks, maybe even bigger than switching from 68K to PowerPC, and Apple is trying to do it seamlessly. Or at least that's my impression: Why else leave the cases identical?

The big question on everybody's minds is, now that we can compare apples to apples, what are the benchmark and pricing comparisons between the MacBook Pro, the iMac Core Duo, and their PC counterparts? CNet did some parts research and concluded that the MacBook is as much as $475 to $850 more expensive than a Gateway S-7510, with the same parts. But Khan Mark Klatt uses a different Gateway model, the M465-EB, and finds that the price premium is just $86 (another number with numerological significance). To confuse you *further*, Mike McHargue uses the Dell Inspiron E1705 and finds that they're only $58 apart, and that if you upgrade to the largest hard drive available, your Mac becomes $224 cheaper. The CNet writer, Michael Kanellos, responded with a follow-up article in which he defends his methods, and I think I see why there's a problem: Gateway has two models with Core Duo chips (the S-7510 and the M465-EB), but only the M465 is a top-of-line model. Sounds to me like someone at Gateway suggested a particular model to CNet, perhaps...that wouldn't be all that surprising for the world of journalism.

So are these computers faster than their PowerPC brethren? Can we expect Intel-class performance from these computers? The answer appears to be yes, although Steve's hyperbole is just that. Craig Wood ran benchmarks on the MacBooks at Macworld and found that a dual 2 GHz G5 tower is faster than the new MacBook, but that otherwise it's much faster than its siblings. Similarly, *Macworld* found that the iMac is not *double* the speed of the iMac G5, but that it *is* an upgrade of 10 to 25 percent. Why the gap between hyperbole and truth? Tom Yager at Enterprise Mac says that it's because Apple is using tests specifically designed for dual-core or dual-CPU machines.

Based on these numbers, most reviewers are encouraging Mac users to switch sooner or later. Even with Rosetta, for instance, the *Wall Street Journal*'s Walt Mossberg found that the iMac Core Duo performed every bit as fast as the iMac G5, and that gap should grow greater as the need for emulation decreases. (He calls it a "successful brain transplant.") *PC Magazine* suggests more caution for anyone using non-Apple software, and *Ars Technica* likes it *because* it's basically identical. (One interesting thing to note from the *Ars* posting is that, probably for the first time in Apple's history, essentially the entire computer is built from commodity PC parts. Have a look-see in Japanese.) Based on this, Julio Ojeda-Zapata is cautioning his readers to sit on buying an iBook until the new Intel model is announced.

The only question that remains is whether Intel Macs will boot Windows. On the one hand, the Intel Macs use the Extensible Firmware Interface rather than the BIOS that Windows is expecting, and there's no obvious way to make the XP installer boot—but, on the other hand, Intel says the motherboards the iMacs are based on already support legacy booting. At any rate, it seems a sure thing that they'll boot Windows Vista, since Vista will support EFI natively.

On the day of the product announcement, curiously, Apple's stock closed at $80.86. Isn't that awesome numerology? During the course of the week, their stock went up 12 percent, which means that Apple passed Dell's market capitalization. Steve Jobs called Michael Dell out: In 1997, Dell had said that if he were CEO of Apple, he'd just shut the company down and sell it off. Steve wrote, in a company e-mail, "Team, it turned out that Michael Dell wasn't perfect at predicting the future. Based on today's stock market close, Apple is worth more than Dell." Savor those words. And thank the media, if *Business Week* is right.

Speaking of Steve, I thought you might enjoy *The Guardian*'s hilarious first-person narrative on preparing his keynote addresses for Mac conventions. Apparently, he is at least as details-oriented as we all thought, and then some. And as secretive. It's a great read.

Now, after every Macworld, the parlor game is to guess about what Steve didn't announce but might in the future. There are two guesses that I see floating around after this Macworld: the something much cooler unsubstantiated claim, and, apparently, the Apple-going-MVNO rumor, this time in the *Chicago Tribune*. Can we please lay that one to rest? Haven't we been over the MVNO problem before? There's no way Apple is ever going to compromise its customer experience to the disastrous level of American cell providers, just so it can nearly lose money on every customer.

And that, as far as I can tell, is Macworld 2006. Hello Intel, we love you, let us jump in your game...

Burnt Ends

- Would you believe that Karelia got struck by lightning *twice*? First, they release Watson, which is shut out by Sherlock 3 after much controversy; then, they come up with a new product, Sandvox, and Apple includes an application that does *exactly* the same thing before they ship—iWeb. Poor guys. The experience led to a really great corporate logo, at least.

- Is the iTunes Mini Store, included in iTunes 6, malware or spyware? For about 48 hours, there was an endless brouhaha—begun by our very own Kirk McElhearn—over whether the Mini Store was sending data about your iTunes library to Apple, what caused it, and whether Apple was keeping it. The answers are, in order: yes, clicking on songs, and no. An update to the iTunes update leaves the Mini Store disabled by default, in response. John Gruber (who I have not mentioned yet!) thinks this is the best course of action anyway; why not be opt-in?

- John Siracusa still wants a Finder that makes sense. I concur. Pity Path Finder isn't the way to go, either, after I tried using it and gave up on its complexity, but I think he's right. The Finder is a train wreck. Will Leopard fix it? Maybe...Apple is hiring a Finder Software Engineer!

- Leander Kahney writes for *Wired News* that it's disorienting that Steve Jobs, rather than Bill Gates, commands star power. Much head-scratching ensues: Why does philanthropy have to be the only guide? Jobs is a star because of his mystique and aura; Gates is a star because he gives away huge sums of money. They're just very different stars. Nothing to see here.

- Apparently iWork is now outselling every office suite other than Microsoft Office. Caveats: This does not include AbiWord and OpenOffice.org. iWork is nice enough, I guess, but reading statistics like these really makes me miss WordPerfect.

- Yes, Pixar, Steve Jobs' other company, is now owned by Disney. It's not Steve's anymore. I'm not sure what to make of this, but it's news.

- Jason Kottke's open letter to Apple Support will ring true for many of you. Why must this be so difficult with every new product announcement?

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Pod People

by Miraz Jordan, http://mactips.info

Proud to be a Pod Person

I hate commercial radio; inane chat, repetitive pop music, and endless advertisements just aren't my thing. On the other hand, commercial-free public radio seems to spend its time on political controversy, death and destruction, cooking shows, gardening, and a whole lot of other topics I just don't want to listen to.

The science and technology shows and other gems I'd really enjoy all seem to be buried at times when I don't, can't, or would prefer not to be listening to the radio. And when does any mainstream medium get around to exploring the huge diversity of our human existence? They don't; they all broadcast the same tired old safe and "normal" content.

Passion to Share

In the old days, people with divergent interests or points of view could set up their own radio or TV station—if they had thousands of dollars to spare and a lot of knowhow. But now, thanks to the Internet and some very clever software, anyone can share her point of view, her music, her passion, with a worldwide audience of one, one hundred, or one hundred million with ease and at a very low cost.

Change a Life

Podcasts have changed my life. My iTunes library now includes content from overseas radio stations and other providers I would otherwise have no chance of hearing. At last I can listen to content that interests me, when and where I want and as often as I want. My passions have been engaged, childhood interests revived, and my personal community extended far beyond its previous boundaries.

Science to Go

My life has been in the humanities, but I'm a closet scientist at heart. I don't know much—my all-time lowest school grade was for chemistry (or was it Latin?)—but I'm interested in science and technology. Luckily for me there are some excellent podcasts on just those topics. NetNewsWire downloads them to iTunes for me, I plug in my iPod, grab the dog, and head out for our daily walk. Sometimes I play podcasts straight from my PowerBook while I'm working or doing household chores. Thank goodness for AirTunes and a cheap set of external speakers.

Quality Wins

My favorite podcasts include both professional and amateur contributions. What I've found from experience though is that sound quality needs to be high. I quickly unsubscribed from a few podcasts whose content is worthwhile but whose audio quality just hurt my ears.

Podcast Favorites

Podictionary, 2-minute explorations of the history of words in our vocabulary.

One Minute Tip, 3-minute videos (audio-only is also available) three times a week of "technology tips, interviews, quickstarts, and videos for people who don't have time to read manuals cover-to-cover."

Future Tense is a daily 5 minutes from American Public Media that "keeps you up to date on the rapidly changing world of technology."

Slacker Astronomy, 5–10 minutes long, comes from three US astronomers each week, with occasional extra shows of up to an hour.

Quirks and Quarks is a Canadian show covering the "latest in science, technology, medicine and the environment." Each week's one hour show is split into half a dozen segments so you can listen to them individually.

BBC Go Digital from the UK is a "weekly BBC World Service programme that looks at how technology is changing our lives." These are generally about 25 minutes.

Screencasts Online, provides free hints, tips, and video tutorials for Mac users. Most are between 10 and 30 minutes.

Manager Tools, 30–60 minutes each week about how to be a great manager. If I were in management this would be an essential podcast, but I'm not, so it's just one of my favorites, chock full of really useful information about business relationships.

TWIT (This Week in Tech) brings former *TechTV* host Leo Laporte together with colleagues such as Patrick Norton and John C. Dvorak to chat about current issues and events in the world of technology, especially computing. The weekly shows are commonly an hour or more. They are available as audio-only or video.

Unfortunately I've had to unsubscribe from podcasts teaching Chinese, Russian, and Japanese as I just didn't have time to keep up, but as a former teacher of German I can only say: I wish podcasts had been around when I was learning and teaching other languages!

Bandwidth Alert

If you're using a dial-up connection to the Internet you'll want to choose short podcasts or they'll just take too long to download. If you have broadband then check your bandwidth allowance—although the podcasts will download quickly you may well exceed your monthly limit if you choose too many.

The shortest podcast I know of is the daily Podictionary at about two minutes. That's a couple of megabytes. Over the course of a month that could add up to between 50 and 75 MB.

Manage the Podcasts

In the last month I've downloaded about 1 GB of podcasts, adding up to a massive 36 hours of listening. That's a lot of content and if you just keep downloading and adding podcasts to iTunes you may soon fill up your hard drive. It also becomes hard to find the content you haven't yet listened to.

I handle these problems with a few smart playlists and some rating techniques.

Give It a Star

Although iTunes and my iPod both add a play count and a date for when a track was last played I find that information sometimes just mysteriously disappears. I like to rate each track I've finished listening to with a single star. If I have to stop listening in the middle of a track I rate it two stars. I reserve three stars and above for rating music.

Use a Smart Playlist

I generally choose my podcast listening by duration. A 30-minute walk needs a 30-minute podcast; while listening in bed just before I go to sleep is ideal for a podcast less than five minutes. Cleaning windows and other household tasks suit longer podcasts or a series of shorter ones.

I have several smart playlists set up so I can go directly to podcasts within certain time bands: 0 to 5 minutes, 5 to 15 minutes, 15 to 30 minutes, 30 to 45 minutes, and more than 45 minutes. The playlist pulls up podcasts whose rating is not one star. Other criteria filter out music and otherwise restrict the results to the genres I want to include. After all, podcasting isn't a genre; it's a delivery mechanism.

Keepers

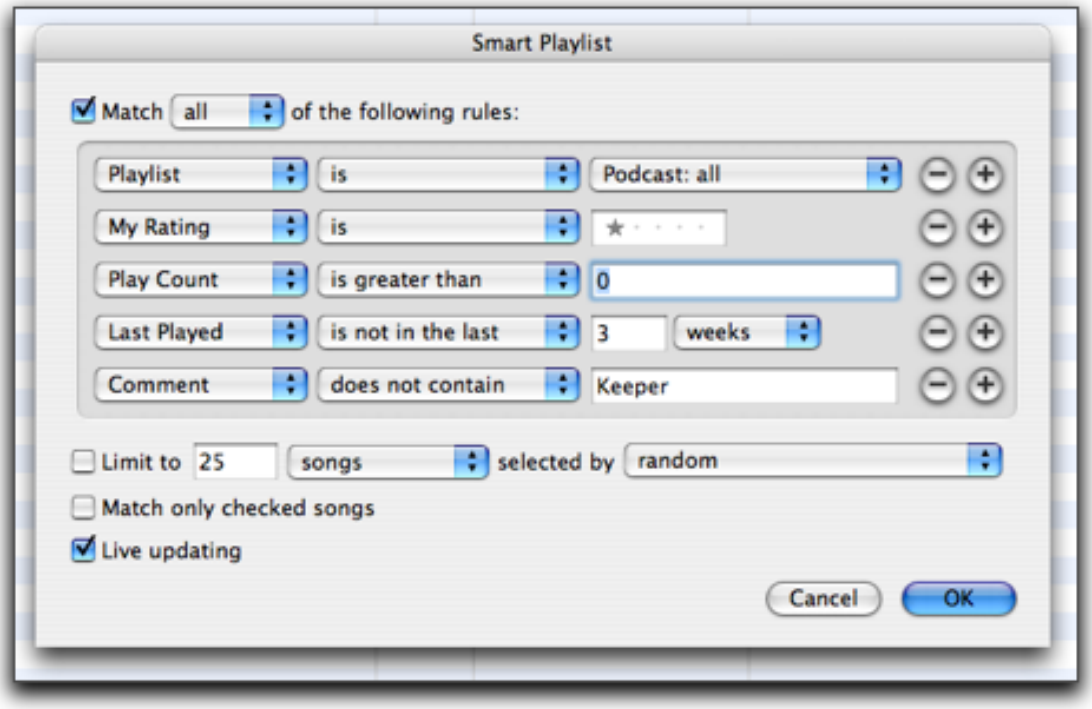
Most of the podcasts I listen to are transitory; once I've listened to them I'm extremely unlikely to listen again. Others, like language learning podcasts, may need repeated listening. Some tracks may be good to keep as a reference or perhaps to burn to CD and pass to friends. I like to keep the Manager Tools podcasts, the videos showing tips and techniques for using my Mac, and some 1950s sci-fi radio shows (Spaceship Radio).

The ones I want to keep I mark with the word Keeper at the start of the Comments. See Doug's Applescripts for iTunes for an AppleScript to speed that up.

Sometimes the RSS feeds providing the podcasts have a glitch and I end up with a second copy of one or more iTunes tracks. For this reason I like to keep tracks I've listened to around for a few weeks so I can more easily identify when this duplication has occurred.

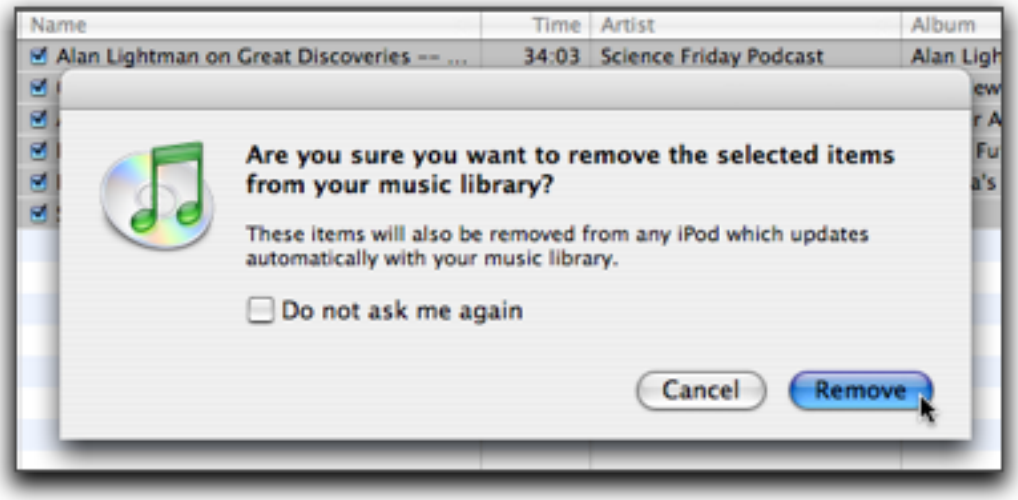
Deleters

I set up a smart playlist to pull up all podcasts that have a rating of one star, a play count greater than 0, which were last played more than 3 weeks ago, and whose comment does not contain the word Keeper.



Podcast cleaner smart playlist.

Every couple of days I look at that smart playlist, select all the tracks and choose Command-Option-Delete to remove both the track listing and the original sound file.



Remove tracks from iTunes library.

Move tracks to the Trash.

Out of the Straitjacket

Podcasts have transformed my listening and learning. While I could just watch and listen to them on my computer, my iPod (or any MP3 player) has provided immense flexibility. I listen to podcasts while walking, before I go to sleep, while lounging on the deck in the sun, in the car via my car stereo, while doing housework, and at many other times.

Instead of despairingly hearing some chat about wine or gardening just because it's on, or missing the radio lecture on the development of New Zealand English because I'm walking the dog, I can now choose what I'm interested in and when to listen to it.

Pod Liberation

I have access to a vast diversity of amateur and professional content in whatever languages I speak. There seem to be podcasts to cover every interest. In January 2006 Podcast Alley listed almost 13,000 separate podcasts.

Provided the audio quality is good, I'm thrilled to listen to genuine passionate content even if it is a bit raw. Radio program controllers seem to think we should be exposed to endless world conflict interspersed with numbing pap.

Thanks to podcasts I have liberated my listening.

Copyright © 2005 Miraz Jordan. Miraz is a writer and web designer in Wellington, New Zealand. Want to write about your iPod experiences in a Pod People *column? Contact us at editor@atpm.com.*

About This Particular Outliner

by Ted Goranson, tgoranson@atpm.com

Two New Outliners: Mori and iKnow & Manage

Your *ATPO* correspondent is embarrassed this month. There is so, so very much going on the outlining world, and all I can manage this month is to introduce you to the two newest entries in our domain.

(I'm still hoping that someone can help me put together the monthly "tracker" feature that advises on updates, changes, and news in the Mac outliner area.)

Even though we'll be talking about two outliners only, it opens interesting territory. That's because both of these use a database under the user interface. This is a non-trivial development.

You see, outlining started life in the "document" model of files, where the entire document was in one file, just as if it were a word processing document. In other words, it had one beginning and an end, and all the outlining did was work with the structure of the document, initially just folding it.

Since then, *ATPO*-type users have demanded clones, links, re-ordering, sorting, and gathering functions. These things get harder and harder when you think of each note as a section in a large document. Still, many outline users work with outlines with the intent of producing a final document for printing. And that means they'll end up in a document-centered application anyway.

But hey, today "publishing" is as likely to mean publishing for the Web as for print. And at the other end of the process, the note-taking and gathering phase, you're likely to vacuum up all sorts of things: images, PDFs, Word documents, URLs, Web pages, even RSS feeds.

So some of the outline-savvy applications we've been tracking use a database under the hood. That's true of DEVONthink Pro and StickyBrain. Devon uses a proprietary database, and StickyBrain uses OpenBase, as does DayLite.

If you are new to *ATPO*, DayLite is one of the outline-savvy task and contact managers we've been tracking. Some of the others of these use databases internally too. But here, we're talking about outlining as the tool you'll use to collect information, massage and work with that information, and eventually use some of it in a publication of some kind.

Mori

Mori Icon

The first of our two new outliners is Mori, which comes from the developers of the unfortunately named Hog Bay Notebook. *ATPO* regulars will recall that outliner fondly. Of all our power outliners, it gave the biggest bang for the buck. It was the cheapest, and yet had clones, links, and AppleScript, the three biggies which no other power outliner seems to have yet accomplished simultaneously. And it had other interface goodies, some unique.

But Hog Bay Software has retired it and replaced it with Mori, a completely new and somewhat different product.

Perhaps no other event so clearly illustrates the vitality of the Mac user base than that such a thing makes sense. We are in the midst of an escalation of power in the domains that outliners touch, and all the innovation is here, on the Mac.

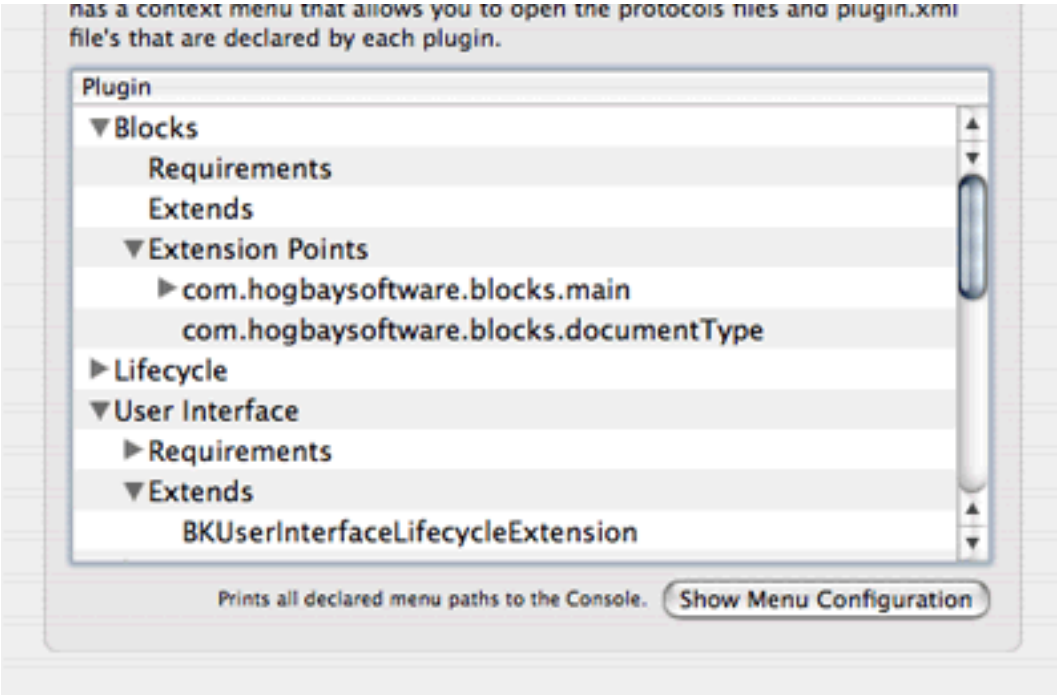
Basically what Hog Bay has done is re-engineer the product to leverage the Core Data functionality introduced with Tiger. It is the first product I know to do so. Core Data is a huge advantage for Mac developers that can start anew. It unifies several cool things including a clean factoring of the interface from the "control" code and the database. It uses an open-source database called SQLite. It's almost a textbook case study of how proprietary and commercial software can be creatively blended.

This Core Data methodology makes it easy to define boundaries of functionality so that third-party plugins can be written. Hog Bay is banking on this. Old-time Mac users will recall that Adobe had two so-so products in Photoshop and Illustrator that they couldn't improve fast enough to best the competition. So they opened up a plug-in market. A typical user might spend more on plug-ins than on the basic application. This push effectively killed the competition for Adobe.

NoteTaker has a somewhat different plug-in strategy. It relies on familiarity with Java and plugs in at the header level (which it calls cells) to derive and display cool content. (NoteTaker also has strong AppleScript support.) Mori's plug-ins, if I understand it properly, can extend the functionality of the application itself. Want a supertwiddle that will wrangle

headers in a peculiar way according to your own search and gather requirements? Write a plug-in!

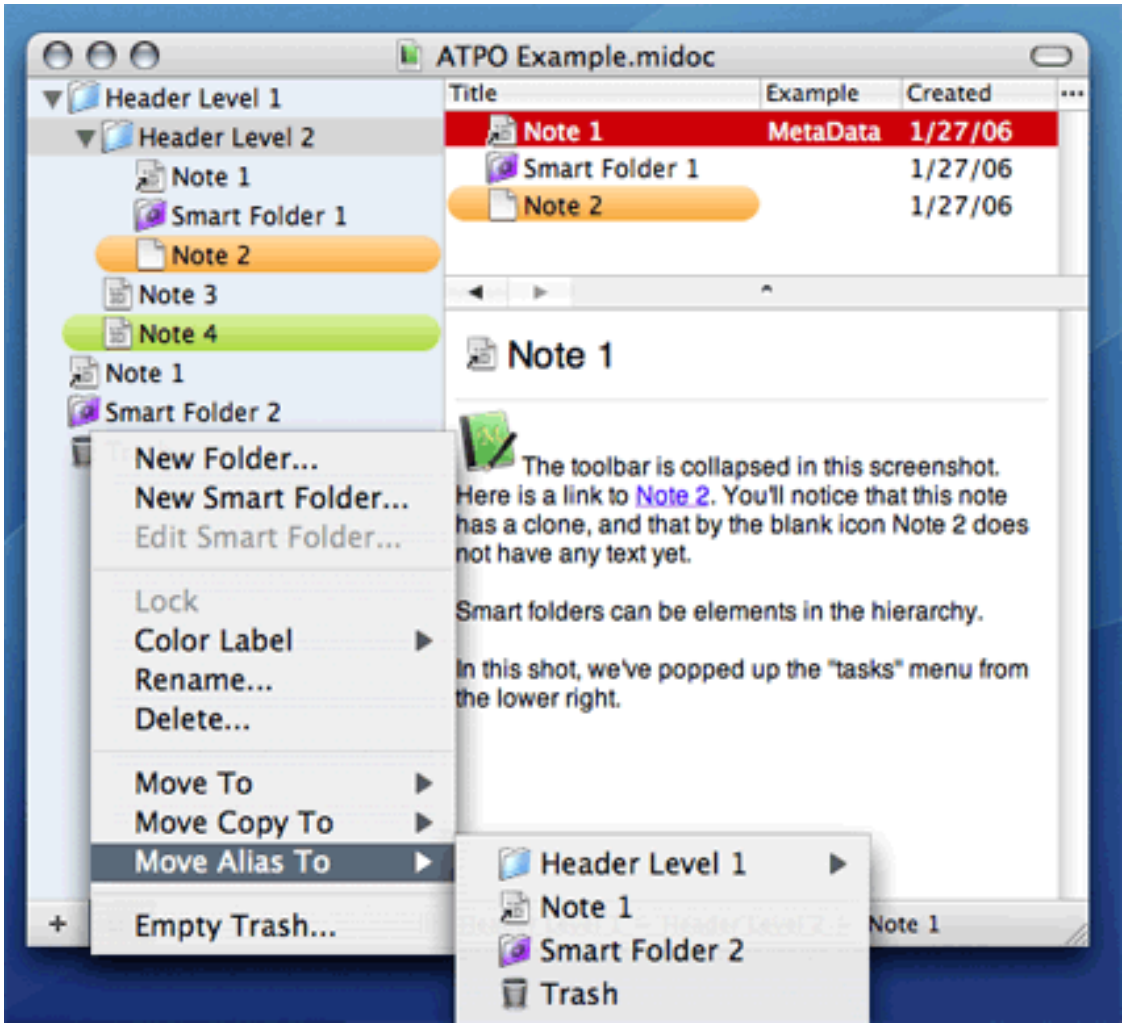
The plug-in architecture is open and based on the increasingly popular Eclipse framework. Installing and managing plug-ins is easy and done the way outliners should, through an outline in the preferences! You'll see that most of the functionality that is provided already is by plug-in-like modules: blocks.



Mori Plug-in Outline

OK, enough about architecture and possibilities. That's where the news is and why we'll want to follow it. But what can you get if you buy it today (at $28)?

Opening Mori gives you a three-paned window. On the left is an adaptation of the library and source list that iTunes brought us. In several other power outliners this exists as a drawer and serves as a sort of Finder view and a way to readily navigate through large outlines, or if you prefer, many outlines.



Mori User Interface

This pane was a drawer in Hog Bay Notebook and—as I say—others. Changing it to a regular pane is appreciated because you'll want it open all the time and this way gives us a full toolbar across the whole window.

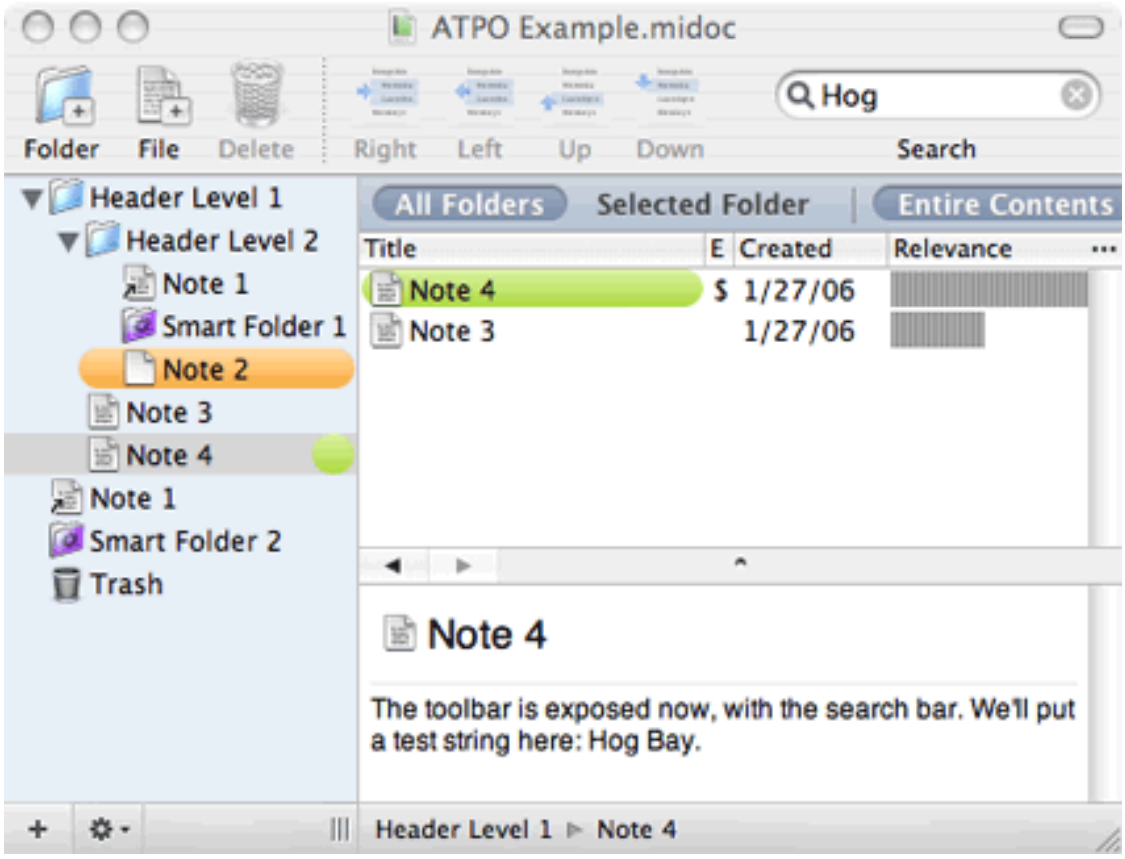
It also contains "smart folders" that can be set up much like those of iTunes. They aren't quite the multipurpose "agents" of Tinderbox. With those, you can search by all sorts of attributes and collect clones that even change behavior or content according to your scripts.

These smart folders are like those of iTunes or Tiger's Finder in that you set one or more criteria and items are collected without hierarchy. In those cases, as here, you can nest smart playlists or folders in regular ones. The hierarchy in Mori is a little different, though. Files can be nested under other files, following its outlining tradition. At present, Mori's smart folders don't allow as many criteria as the Finder. But since this is controllable by plug-ins, we can soon expect the ability to create smart folders based on hierarchy or linkage relationships (like Tinderbox's).

Mori has ordinary clones as well. It calls them aliases, but deleting one preserves the other.

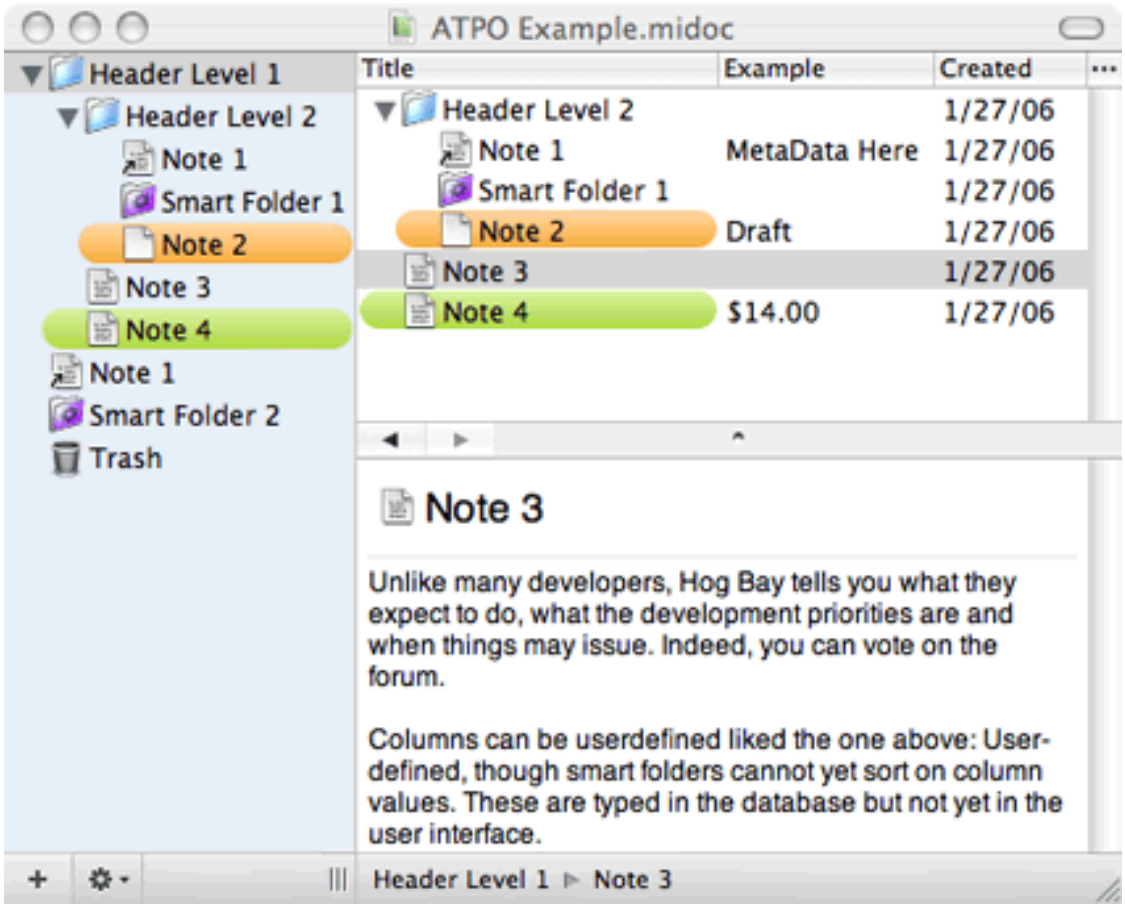
Mori supports links. These are links of the Web kind where a marked text block is highlighted and jumps to a new note.

So far, the search among notes is rather simple.



Mori Search Results

Mori supports columns, too. These also are rudimentary at present: user-created columns can only contain text. However, the underlying database supports all the usual types (dates, numbers) and I'm told that support for different types and calculated values such as sums are close. At this point, you cannot use user-defined columns as attribute markers that are used by smart folders. In other words, you cannot make a column that has a pop-up between "draft" and "finished" and make a smart folder that collects all the drafts.



Mori Columns

Clipping is supported by a Mori service with a few choices, and Quicksilver if you use it. Many writers do, because it leverages the keyboard. The notes in Mori are traditional RTF notes, which can include QuickTime objects. In other words, they aren't "grabbed" items like Web pages and PDFs like you'd store with DEVONthink.

I've been giving talks recently as part of my professional activities. In these, I've started mentioning different sorts of ideals for Mac outliners. One in particular is of interest here.

(Maybe we should have an *ATPO* on these archetypes?)

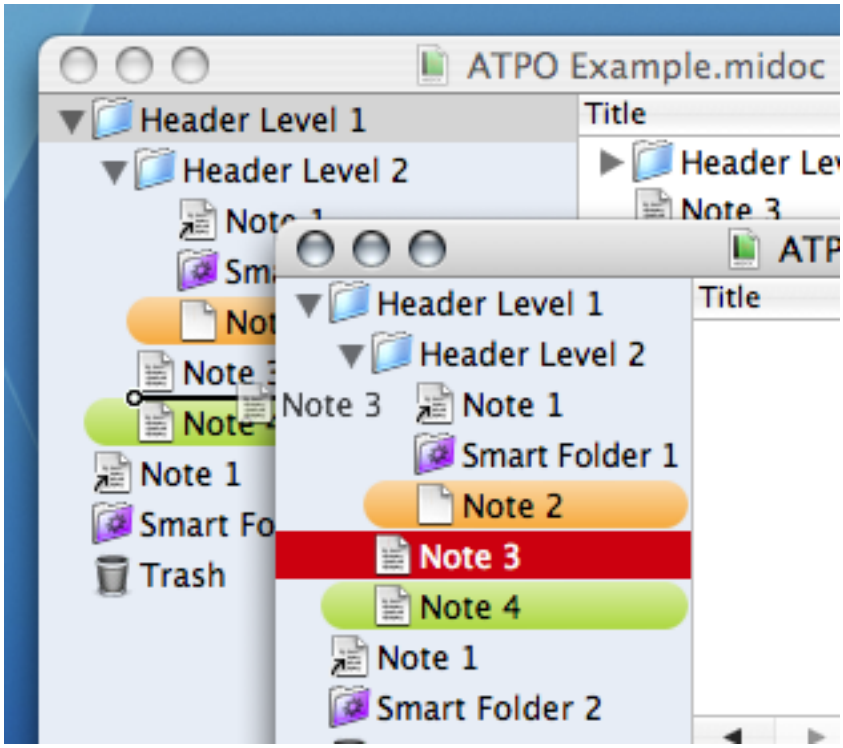
Anyway, that one type would be a sort of super-Finder that would replace the Finder for many tasks if you were a writer. It would have outline navigation beyond the current Finder, which is the worst thing on my Mac. And it would have built-in gather, navigation, editing, and linking. It would be infinitely extensible and tailorable.

It would be something between this great start at a new power outliner and Path Finder, which has a new version out. At this cost, you should pay attention to Mori as it matures.

One of our basic *ATPO* values is the ability to add and change structure, and to leverage the graphical display of text. Along those lines is the ability to drag elements around. TAO allows you to drag among different sections of a big outline by splitting the editing pane.

But I find it handier to drag from one window to the other. OmniOutliner has terrific window-to-window dragging, but the windows have to be of different outlines. Tinderbox is great in that it allows as many views of the same outline as you wish. You can drag a structure from one view to another location in the same outline in another view's window.

Mori allows different views of the same outline as well, so you can do the same thing. (All the views are the same three-pane window where Tinderbox allows different types of simultaneous views.)



Dragging From Different Views

iKnow & Manage

iKnow & Manage Icon

And here's the other new outliner this period. It too uses SQLite, though it appears to bypass Core Data.

(I expect as Apple builds more and more useful services into the operating system, we'll see more outliner-savvy applications that exploit them. At this point, we have WebCore, allowing any application to render Web pages; Core Data, a modular, integrated database; Core Image, providing Photoshop-like image manipulation; Spotlight, a system-wide search architecture (whose real impact will be global indexing for metadata); and, of course, the familiar QuickTime, which supports all sorts of media.)

What we have in iKnow (I'll use the nickname) is a simple outlining front end to a data base.

Imagine an ordinary outliner with a header list on the left and a pane on the right that shows the "note" associated with that outline. You'd be able to manipulate the outline on the left in clever ways and edit the note on the right. Many of our power outliners look like this, though some display the notes below or inline.

But the key concept is that you have an outline of text notes. In some of our *ATPO* outliners you can associate elements with the basic note: comments, due date, a label, or whatever. Sometimes, you'll see these associated attributes as columns. But the idea is nearly always that you have at the basis of the note a rich text note or some media object like a PDF, an image, or a displayed Web page.

Suppose you wanted more. Suppose with any header, you wanted *two* text fields. Suppose you wanted to build your own contact manager, and you wanted fields for numbers, text, dates, and so on. And you wanted these handled in the outline as if they were notes. And suppose you wanted to search on any value in any field using regular expressions.

And suppose that you wanted to merely reference many of your text and image files and Web pages instead of importing them into the database, yet you wanted the search to include those items. iKnow would be something to consider.

Here's why we are excited about it: what we're interested in here at *ATPO* is how the notion of graphic interface and folded text can be leveraged. I suppose iKnow will be competing with StickyBrain and iData2, both of which are also databases. (iData was formerly known as InfoGenie and, before that, as a System 6 desk accessory, QuickDEX. But it doesn't leverage outlining.)

For contrast, consider the already mentioned DEVONthink. It is a database, but it contains only one sort of element, the "file." It has means to display and look in those files (whether imported or referenced), but the only thing it understands is words.

As a database, iKnow understands all sorts of things other than words. But first I'll tell you some bad things about iKnow. The developer is a database geek so he doesn't appreciate that instead of using terms like "stditem" and "refitem" he could simply use "Item" and "Alias" for the notes that are now data records. And concerning values, an "ItemValue" is really just a value or a subitem if you wish, and a "ValueRef" is an alias of a value or subitem.

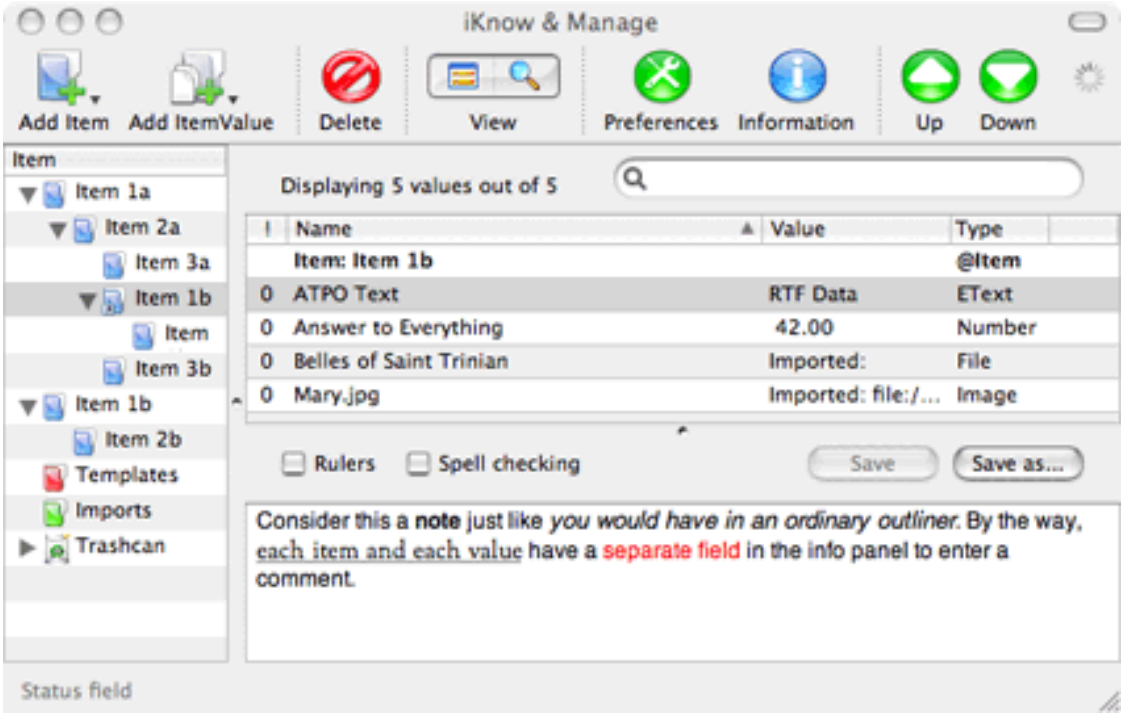
The searches can be over all the values in the database, but you cannot do what we have come to expect with familiar "more search" fields. For instance, you cannot say "find me the item with the text 'boo' in the comment field, and 'Ted' in the Note1 field or if that field doesn't exist 'Mary' in the Note2 field, and in either case only if the record was created less than six days ago."

And though you can add structure hierarchically, obviously you cannot yet form searches that look for structure. For the external files, you cannot use Spotlight metadata in searches. And you cannot save searches as something like smart folders.

Also, its pretty strict and limited about the kinds of data it will accept. When it says "extended text," it means styled text only, not the sort of rich text-and-media notes we've come to expect. And it handles images well when by themselves, but not PDFs or HTML. You have to reference them externally and open them in their ordinary applications to view them.

But I suppose those things will all come to several of the outliners we track and a few database front ends we don't.

OK. Let me show you the thing now.



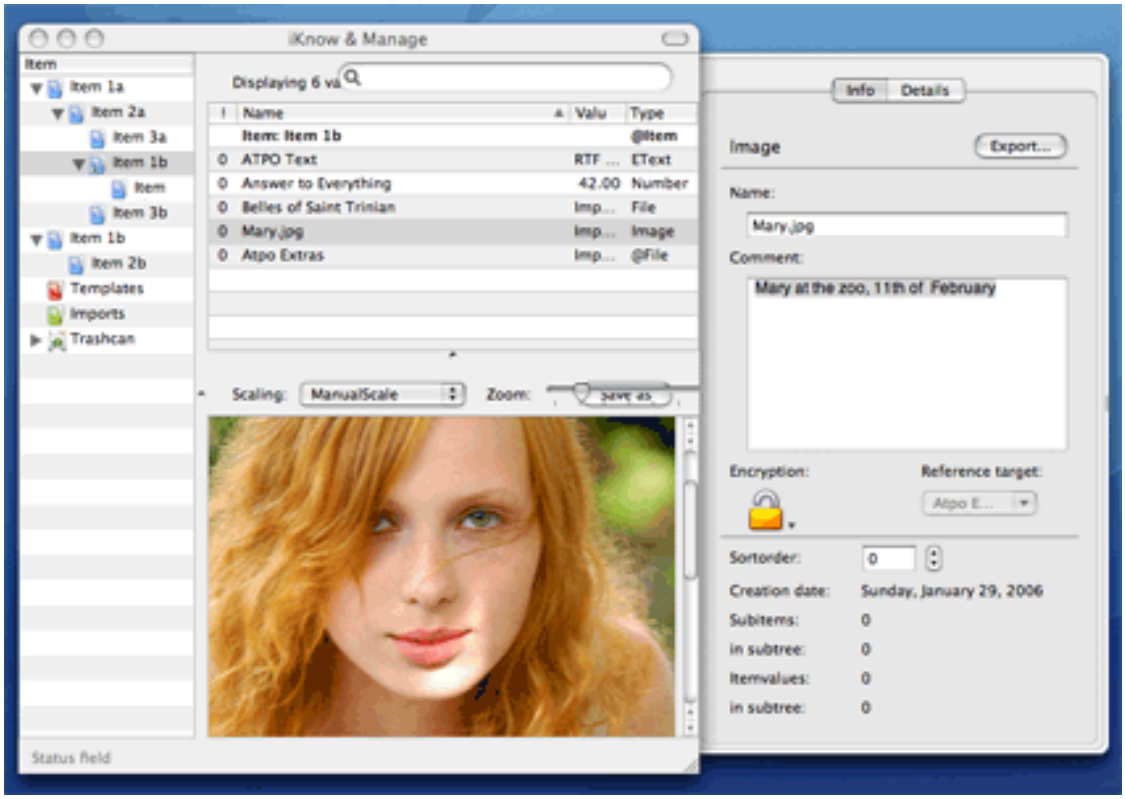
iKnow Basic View

The screenshot shows an example hierarchy on the left using our traditional *ATPO* nomenclature. In this outline, you cannot create folder-like containers. Everything is a data record. So every "header" on the left has a list of values associated with it, as many notes and other elements as you wish. Again, you can think of each item as a note with typed columns (type meaning date and number and so on) but with many notes if you wish.

Notice the first instance of Item 1b. That's an alias that is carried over with its children. If you've been comparing outliners, you'll know that concept is rare. Usually only a header can be cloned, not the header and the structure of everything beneath. This is significant.

In this screenshot, we've included the toolbar and excluded the info panel. You'll note that what you see is very much like a three-paned outliner, because in this case we've selected in the top a rich text value. Because we have, the contents of that note appear in the simple (very simple) editor below. You may also note that values of other, simpler elements are displayed directly in the top pane.

Here's another view below. This time we've collapsed the tool bar. I don't like those things usually anyway. And this time I've selected an image value. There's a simple image viewer. We've also displayed the info panel as a drawer where you can see the comment field, encryption controls, hierarchy report, and sort order.

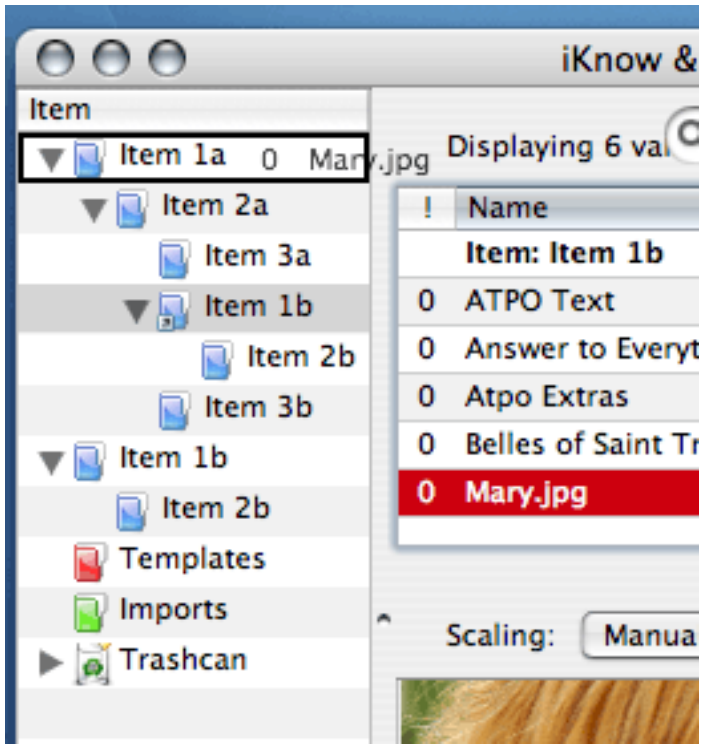


iKnow Info Panel and Value Alias

Oh, and notice that last value in the value list ("ATPO Extras," a referenced file)? I added that as an alias. It points to a value in another item at a different level in the hierarchy. So we have two kinds of clones, at the item or header level and at the value level. Cool, huh?

There's a search view that I won't show you because it is so far the least impressive thing in iKnow.

Here's what really turns me on. As with any outliner, you can drag and drop the elements of the outline on the left around, making clones and structure to your heart's delight. Now watch this. I'm going to grab a value, say our picture of Mary, and move it to another item. You already know I could have created a clone of that value elsewhere, but here I'm actually going to move it:



iKnow Dragging Values to Another Item

See that I dragged it from Item 1b (which itself was a clone) to item 1a? I dropped it there, and there it now lives. This is why I want you to play with this, and if you think this kind of ready reorganization valuable, encourage this developer to go further or others to do something similar.

Since *ATPO* doesn't do reviews, I don't have to go over the import and export capabilities which are fine if you are dealing with well formed files, or if you are content with external references. And there's a nice item template feature. iKnow is not scriptable. It is $20.

Yojimbo

Just before going to press, ATPM sponsor Bare Bones Software announced a new snippet/note manager, Yojimbo. We won't track it in *ATPO* because it doesn't allow any sort of user-induced structure—no subgroups or anything outlinerish. It is a lot like KIT with some easier input paths.

Its use is as a sort of static sock drawer that you toss things into and recover by search, or persistent searches in the form of smart folders. It isn't intended for you to actually work with the contents by structuring and maturing them. The purported target user is the mother of one of the developers, so unlike other Bare Bones applications it is unscriptable.

We mention it because it is from a respected Mac developer, and all these sudden entries in an already crowded market validate this outliner use pattern. Oh, and like Mori and iKnow it uses SQLite.

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by Angus Wong, atkw@anguswong.net

Thanks For All the Fish

The revolution is over and we, the people, have won.

In two dramatic decades, the computer that was created for the rest of us has become the best computer for the best of us.

It may take some time for the significance of the Mac OS, now unleashed on x86 for the world market, to permeate through the consciousness of mainstream pundits, but for those of us in the Mac community who have stuck through thick and thin over the years, riding the roller-coaster that is Apple Computer, the bells are already pealing.

Many will say it is too early to sound the trumpets of victory, but I don't think so. The Macintosh megashift will happen sooner than most people realize. This is it, folks. Like the fairy tale that Silicon Valley really is, the company and the personalities who truly sparked the personal computer revolution for the masses have poetically and valiantly emerged triumphant in the end, despite attempts by some other companies and people to rewrite history.

A number of massively significant things have come about in the past couple of years, culminating in the watershed moment that was Steve Jobs's keynote of January 10, 2006. We are now at the edge of a chapter in history. As the page turns, in the next few years we will see an incredible transformation take place all over the world. The Macintosh platform will begin to replace, on a massive scale, the dinosaur operating systems that have been holding back humanity. Nobody knew it back in 1984, but the sledgehammer had a name: "Tiger."

Hollywood often partitions its feature films in three-act structures: the beginning, middle, and end. Popular culture also associates grand epics in trilogies: Star Wars, The Lord of the Rings. In my mind's eye, I see the Apple II and the earliest days of Macintosh set the stage. The dramatic middle comes with Steve Jobs being kicked out of the company and John Sculley giving carte blanche to Bill Gates to reproduce the GUI "look and feel." There is this "interim" period of uncertainty, as the audience wonders what Jobs will do with NeXT, even when he returns to the Apple fold, caught in the midst of a worldwide Windows market share explosion. The subplot of an antitrust case and a global phenomenon called "The Internet Boom" momentarily distract us with misdirection, but we're soon abruptly jarred back into the main story, with Jobs returning to the helm, launching the iMac, the iBook, OS X. The iPod. The climatic ending just finished up this month. Mac OS on x86 is no longer vaporware. It's shipping, on real iron.

Boys and girls, it's time to take down your pirate flags.

I don't know the exact manner in which the Mac will conquer the world. It could be through the study room, with more people buying Macs as home computers. It could be through the living room, with a Mac Mini–based digital home entertainment station. It could be via the office, as CIOs finally decide to bring the platform they're using at home to work just because it's a heck of a lot cheaper in the long run, and because it's actually politically safer to buy Mac and have the option to run any major desktop operating system in the world, than to be caught speechless when the CEO and board of directors ask why the Macintosh option isn't being explored.

But, like in *Star Trek*, all good things must come to an end. The subversive subculture that has been the Macintosh community might be in for a reluctant transformation. I envision it to be akin to the rude introduction of the commercial Internet. Previously idyllic havens of thought, the public newsgroups were suddenly flooded by newbie posts and blatant commercial advertising. E-mail, hitherto a bastion of privacy, suffered the onslaught of spam, a new kind of electronic abuse that the fundamental technology was unprepared to deal with. Likewise, I surmise the old guard in the Mac world will soon encounter a vast army of newcomers to whom Clarus, BHA, and even Woz mean nothing.

On the other hand, like *Star Trek*, the user community, both new and old, could undergo a transformation, morphing into something else entirely, something even better and more wonderful. After all, Apple has given new tools to the masses. The powerful combo-punch of iLife should not be underestimated. To consider iLife anything less than a potent mixture of electronic wizardry is to think of the new-new Internet as nothing more than just better snail mail. iLife is fully a political platform. The ease with which people can communicate *ideas* and leverage emerging, cutting-edge vehicles of expression—such as the blog and the podcast—will be a megacatalyst. After all, it's only just the entire world that will be watching. Any day now, we will see high-definition video of the next über-news event imported, edited, and beamed to the world by Mac. Subversion has never had it so good. (Sure, you can also do these things on Windows, just as when the printing press became available you could also scrawl carefully on pages of papyrus.)

I remember an early *Business 2.0* ad that said "Yahoo gets it" and "Amazon gets it." Those two companies are still in business, post–Dot Com. I submit that the Mac community has always "gotten it" and that even Apple management dropped the ball for a couple of years, but not the community. We never wrote to NASA to get space shuttles named after our favorite machines, but don't let anyone ever say we didn't carry Apple when all the naysayers on Wall Street and the popular computing publications were writing it off.

Sure, the mainstream analysts are talking about Apple again (even though if we were in the middle of a doughnut revolution they would be writing about Krispy Kreme) but I say for the Mac fans: don't wait for them to start the music. It's been a long road, getting from there to here. The 30th anniversary of Apple Computer is coming up, and I can think of no better date than April 1, 2006, for our long-awaited worldwide party.

What a ride, baby!

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From ATPM Readers

From ATPM Readers

This month's desktop pictures were contributed by a variety of ATPM readers.

Torben Buchardt contributed photos of Mt. Baker and of some flowers.

Bill Chenault contributed photos from St. Louis. The Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis was built after the turn of the 20th century. It combines a Romanesque exterior with a brilliant Byzantine interior and boasts the largest collection of mosaics in the world—four million pieces of glass used in 83,000 square feet of mosaic art, created by 20 artists over a span of 75 years. The glass tiles in the mosaics are about the size of finger nails.

Forest Park 1 shows the World's Fair Pavilion, built in 1909 with proceeds from the 1904 World's Fair. It can seat approximately 500 people.

Forest Park 2 shows the St. Louis Art Museum. The museum's Richardson Memorial Library is the largest public center for the history and documentation of art in the central Midwest. Its research collections include 71,000 volumes, 425 periodical titles, rare documents, auction catalogues since 1825, and the Museum Archives.

All of the photos were taken using a Canon S50 in Auto mode. Alterations were made with Photoshop CS. None of the pictures are copyrighted.

Jerry Foster contributed photos from a recent snowy sunrise. They were taken in rural New Hampshire with a Canon Rebel DSLR.

Steven Romero contributed photos from the Dominican Republic.

Grover Watson contributed photos from his 2003 trip to Pattaya, Thailand.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

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

Downloading All the Pictures at Once

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

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

If you have a picture, whether a small series or just one fabulous or funny shot, feel free to send it to editor@atpm.com and we'll consider publishing it in next month's issue. Have a

regular print but no scanner? Don't worry. E-mail us, and we tell you where to send it so we can scan it for you. Note that we cannot return the original print, so send us a copy.

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.3.x and 10.4.x

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

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

Mac OS X 10.1.x and 10.2.x

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

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

Mac OS X 10.0.x

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

Cortland

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

1917
LISA, MY DEAR, THINGS ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT FROM NOW ON.
WE ARE A FAMILY ONCE AGAIN, AND WE'RE GOING TO ACT LIKE IT.
LET'S START BY ELIMINATING A MUTUAL PROBLEM.

GPA
WITH OUR POWERS COMBINED, NO ONE IN THE WORLD CAN STOP US, CORTLAND LEAST OF ALL!
NOT SO FAST!
STEVE IS HERE!

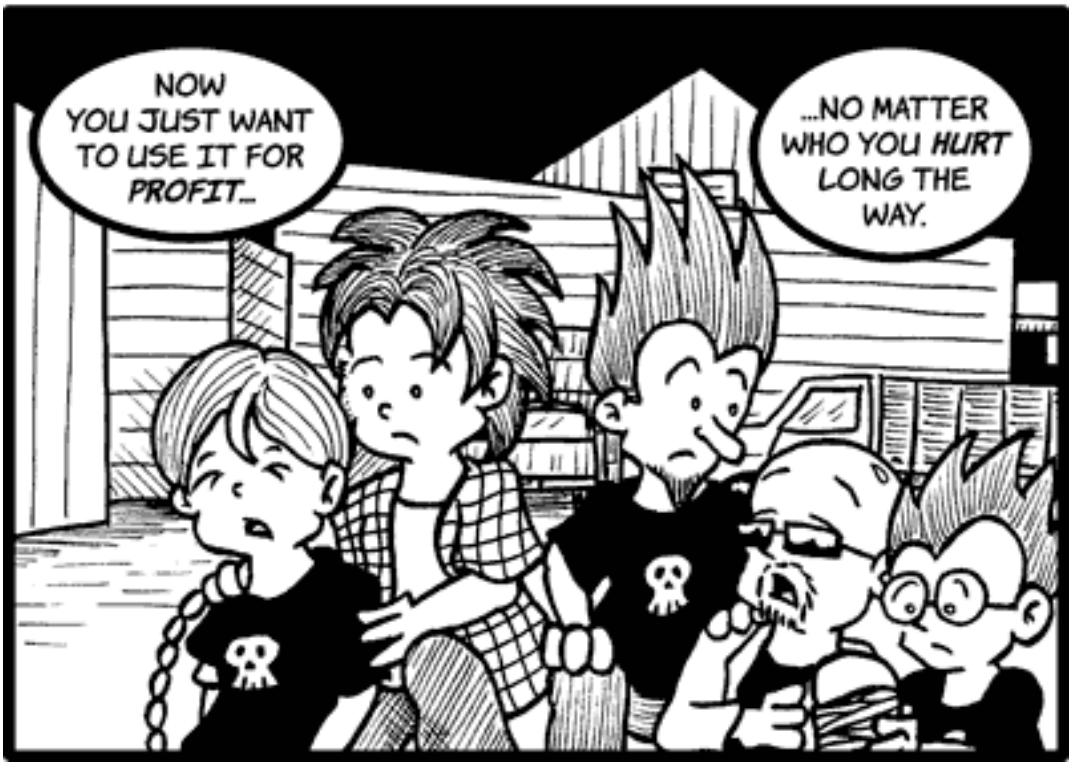
YES, OF COURSE I'M HERE, YOU IDIOT! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
NO, NOT YOU, STEVE.
HI, STEVE.
HELLO, LISA.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
APPLE IC

WOZ, GET OUT OF HERE! THIS DOESN'T CONCERN YOU!
NO, FATHER, LET HIM STAY!
WE CAN HAVE FUN, JUST LIKE LAST TIME!
WHAT WAS IT WE MADE YOU BELIEVE HAPPENED WHEN YOU FIRST MET ME?
OH YES, IT WAS A PLANE CRASH!
APPLE][

THIS TIME YOU WON'T ESCAPE SO EASILY.
I'M GOING TO FINISH YOU, AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO STOP ME!
2600
APPLE][

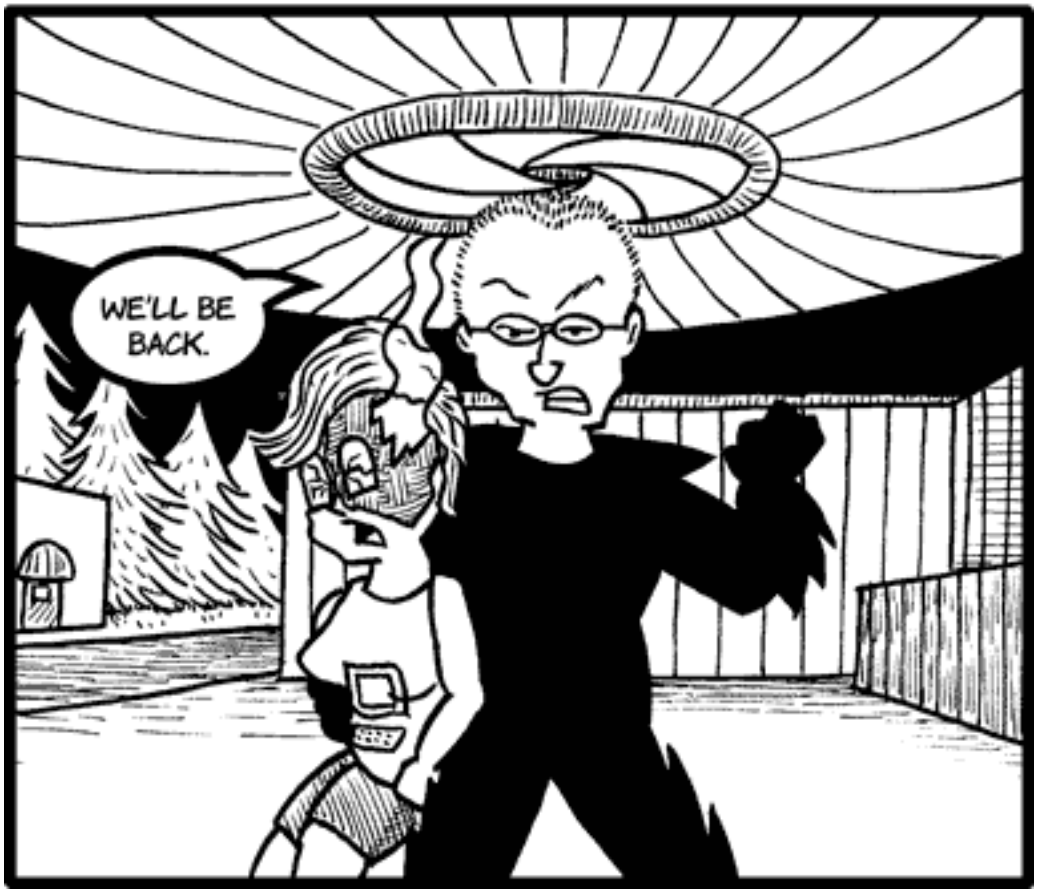
YOU DIDN'T THINK I'D KNOW ABOUT YOUR FAILSAFE. DID YOU? I'LL HAVE TO THANK CAPTAIN CRUNCH FOR THE WHISTLE.
APPLE][
THAT'S THE KIND OF TRICK THAT WILL ONLY WORK ONCE. WOZ.
NEXT TIME WE MEET. YOU WON'T BE SO LUCKY.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, STEVE?
TECHNOLOGY USED TO BE SOMETHING WE USED FOR *FUN*, AND FOR *LEARNING*...


NOW YOU JUST WANT TO USE IT FOR *PROFIT*...
...NO MATTER WHO YOU *HURT* LONG THE WAY.

YOU NEVER HAD VISION, WOZ! TECHNOLOGY WAS A TOY TO YOU!
YOU WERE CONTENT TO HOST ROCK CONCERTS AND TEACH SCHOOL CHILDREN.
BUT I COULD USE IT TO CHANGE THE WORLD!
TO MOLD IT IN MY IMAGE! TO MAKE IT MY BITCH!

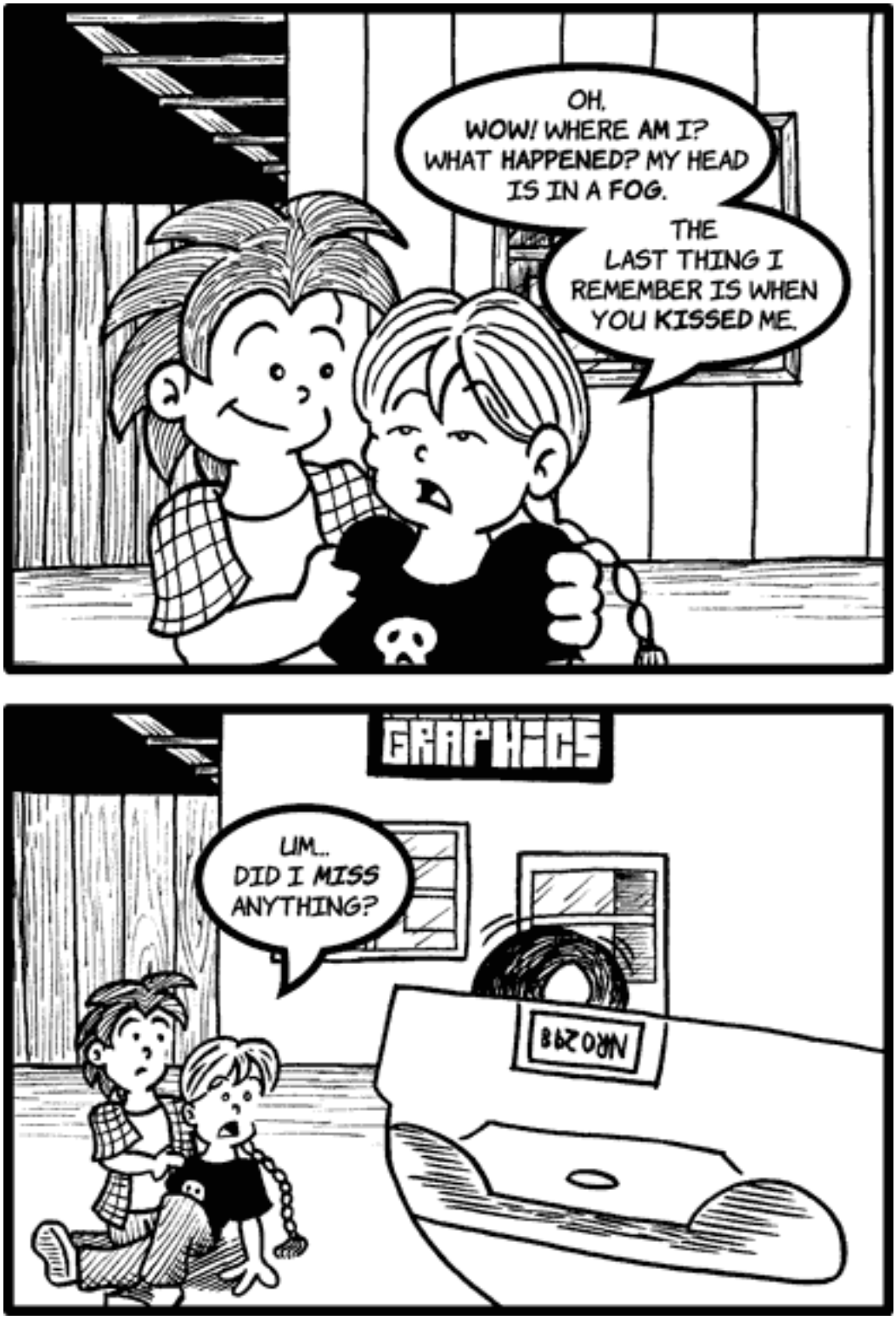
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE MY RIDE IS HERE...
...BUT THIS ISN'T OVER.


WE'LL BE BACK.

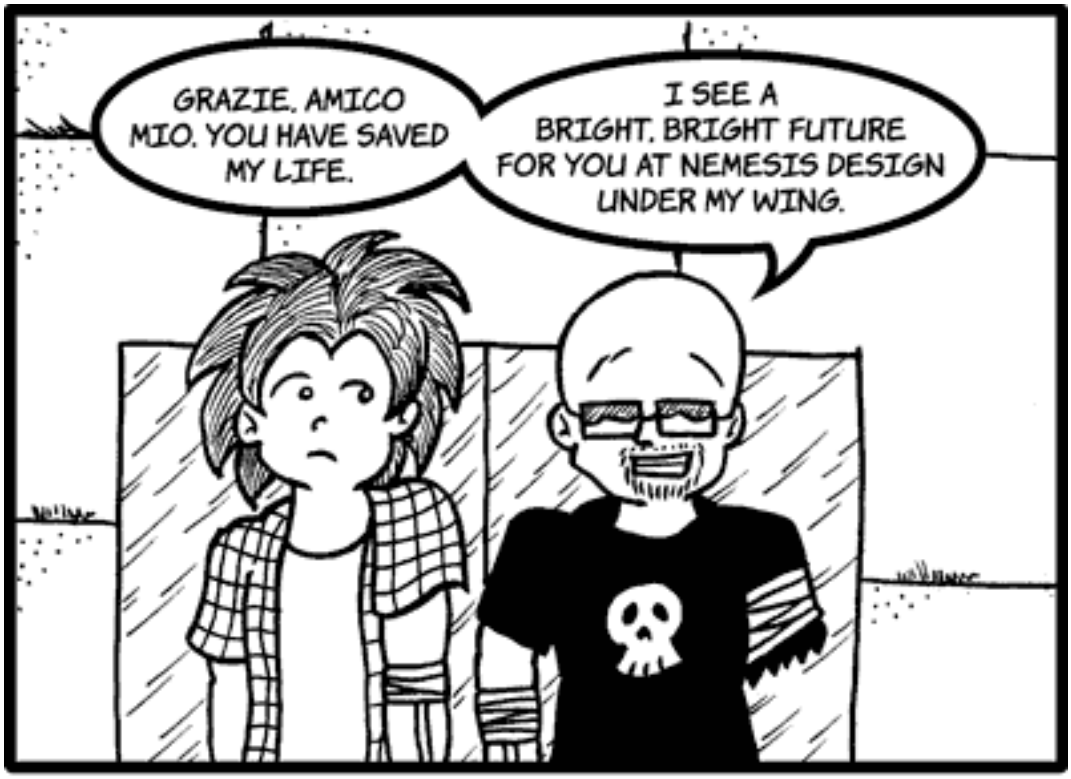
I JUST CALLED 911. HELP IS ON ITS WAY.
HEY, GUYS! WHAT ABOUT ANGIE?

SHE'S NOT BREATHING!

CHIPS


OH.
WOW! WHERE AM I?
WHAT HAPPENED? MY HEAD
IS IN A FOG.
THE
LAST THING I
REMEMBER IS WHEN
YOU KISSED ME.
GRAPHICS
UM...
DID I MISS
ANYTHING?

PULSE IS WEAK. HE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD.
IF WE DON'T GET HIM A TRANSFUSION SOON, HE MAY NOT MAKE IT.
NEMESIS GRAPHICS
LANCE
COULD WE GIVE HIM ONE HERE?
SURE. IF SOMEONE HERE IS TYPE O.


GRAZIE, AMICO MIO. YOU HAVE SAVED MY LIFE.
I SEE A BRIGHT, BRIGHT FUTURE FOR YOU AT NEMESIS DESIGN UNDER MY WING.

AS SOON AS YOU'RE READY, MR. BRUSCA, WE'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT A CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT ARSON.
MERDA!

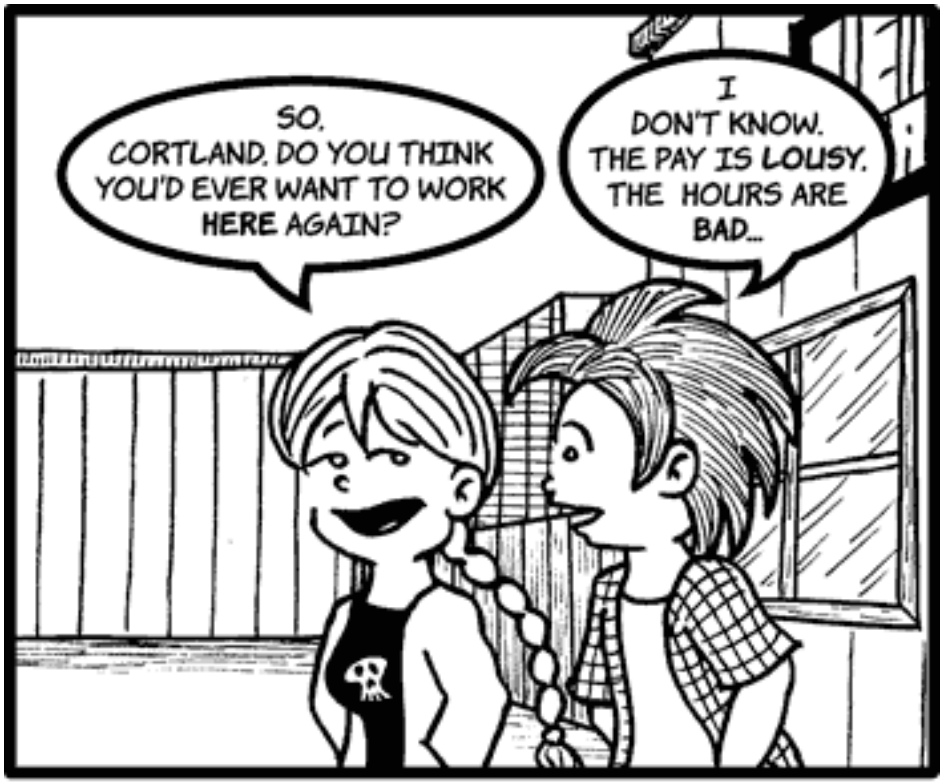
WELL. WITH SILVIO OUT OF THE PICTURE. I WONDER WHO WILL RUN THIS PLACE.
GOOD QUESTION.
LOVE MACHINE

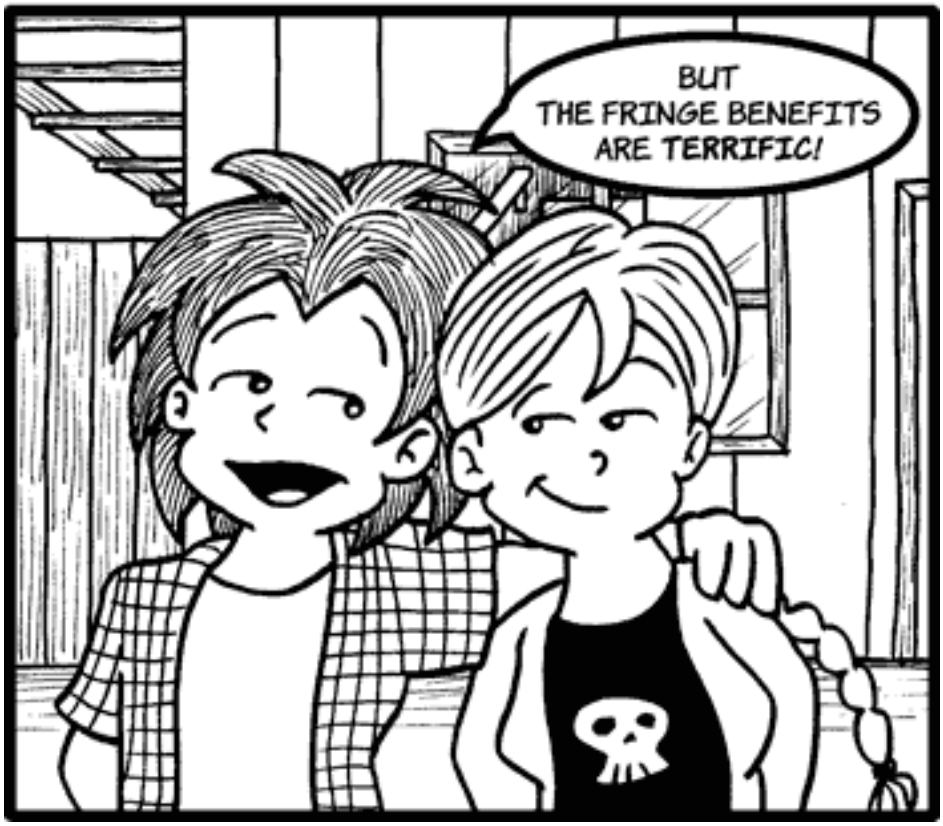
REST NOW, MY CHILD.
SOON, YOUR WOUNDS WILL HEAL. YOUR HARDWARE WILL BE UPGRADED.

THEN WE SHALL RETURN TO FINISH WHAT WE STARTED.
JEDI

FOR NOW. WE WILL REGROUP...
...BUT IN TIME WE WILL EMERGE FROM THE SHADOWS AND SHOW OUR TRUE POWER!
OF COURSE.
JEDI
JUST DON'T FORGET WHO'S IN CHARGE NOW.

...AND BECAUSE OF CORTLAND HERE AND HIS HIDDEN WEB CAMERAS...
...WE WERE ABLE TO STOP SILVIO FROM BURNING THIS PLACE DOWN TO COLLECT ON THE INSURANCE.
YOU DON'T SAY?
WELL, WHAT CAN I DO TO *THANK* YOU?
YOU'RE IN LUCK. I JUST HAPPEN TO HAVE AN *INVOICE*.


SO, CORTLAND, DO YOU THINK YOU'D EVER WANT TO WORK HERE AGAIN?
I DON'T KNOW. THE PAY IS LOUSY. THE HOURS ARE BAD...


BUT THE FRINGE BENEFITS ARE TERRIFIC!

EVERYTHING SEEMS SO *DIFFERENT* NOW.
THE WORLD IS WIDER NOW. AND I CAN SEE COLOR THAT WASN'T THERE BEFORE.
IT'S FUNNY HOW *LOVE* DOES THAT.
CHAD, I KNOW YOU'RE IN CHARGE NOW. BUT WE HAVE THINGS UNDER CONTROL.
SINCE YOU GET PAID EITHER WAY, MAYBE YOU COULD JUST **STAY HOME** FOR FOR A WEEK OR TWO?
PLEASE?
PRINT ON A **T-SHIRT? SURE!** OUR PRESS CAN DO THAT!

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Software Review

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

Bubblomania X 2.1.2

Developer: Dark Moon Software
Price: $15
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1
Recommended: 500 MHz G4
Trial: Fully-featured (either 30 minutes of gameplay, or each game mode is limited to five plays)

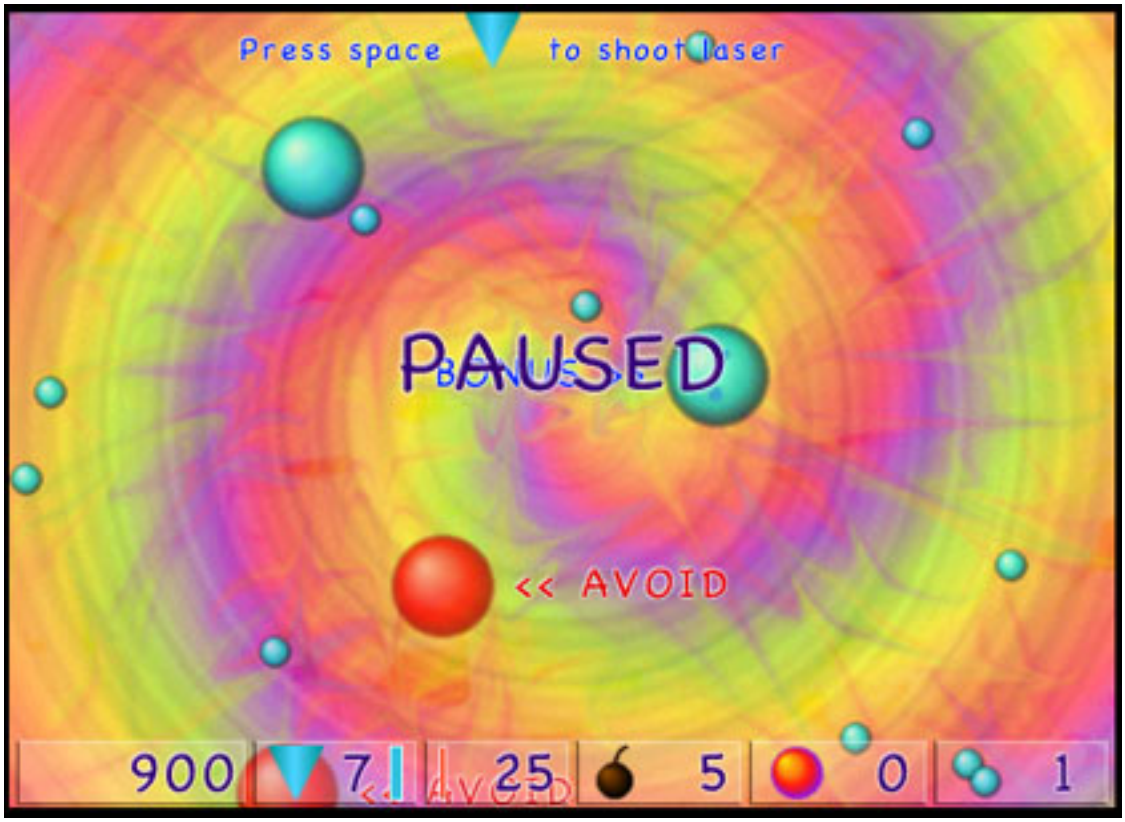
This game is cute. At first. Then it gets crazy.

I like simple games: Tetris, Snood, like that. I can't keep up with too much shoot-em-up, and in fact the last game I tried to review—some kind of 3-D thing where I had to keep track of side-to-side *and* up-and-down—I had to send it back because it made me nauseated. Ew. So when Bubblomania came up, it looked like my kind of game. At first, it was.

On the Easy level, the bubbles float gently toward your pointy Pin, which you use to pop them. You only move side-to-side, like in Galaga except you are at the top of the screen instead of the bottom. Because bubbles float up, dontcha know. Yes, I remember that in Galaga you could move up and down sometimes, but I rarely got that far. Remember, these are product reviews by normal people.

There are lasers and bombs, and some of the bubbles have bonuses and extra pins in them. You'll need these if one of the bubbles you're supposed to pop gets past you. There are also bubbles with magic in them, and you never know if the magic will be good or bad.

After the initial levels, Bubblomania gets snappy-fast, which I'm sure will please most gamers. The good news is this one has several levels to choose among, so if you like it slow you can get it that way. If you want to jack up your blood pressure trying to keep up with a bunch of bubbles moving faster than they do in nature, you can do that, too. You can make the bubbles shake and shimmy, though what that gets you I have no idea. You enjoy it while I rest.



Funkadelic Colors

The visuals are fun, with several sets of backgrounds and different colored bubbles. I couldn't get the music to play because the game complained my music folder was in the wrong place, or some such. I was not inspired enough to do what it said to correct the problem, fearing I would also somehow move all my iTunes music. Hey! Stop rolling your eyes. I would have done it if I were going to keep the game. Thing is, after playing for a little while, I knew I would not keep the game. It is nice enough but did not capture my imagination. You might love it, though. You might love it a lot if you do what it says about moving the music folder. I bet the music is coolness itself, and goes with the funky backgrounds. The developer, Jochen De Schepper, is a musician.

Basic Instructions

The controls are preset to the keyboard, but you can change some of them. Read the instructions first, because if you don't, you might have the same problem I did, and try to pop all the little bitty bubbles. Turns out they are just for decoration. There are couple more screens of instructions after that, for those of you who play upper levels and want to get your high scores on the Internet. Yes, you too can gain fame and notoriety by playing Bubblomania, and getting your user name posted on the high score table. My first game I got on the Easy table. Whoo-hoo.

Bubblomania is a cute little game that might very well grab you. Pop away!

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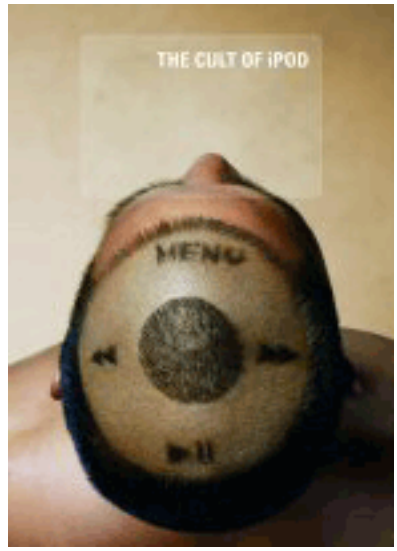
Book Review

by Tom Bridge, tbridge@atpm.com

Cult of iPod

Author: Leander Kahney
Publisher: No Starch Press
Price: $25
Trial: Chapter 5

Leander Kahney is famous in the Mac community for following the "Cult of Mac," which he defines in the book of the same name as the devoted following of the Mac itself. He follows people who name their children after Mac models, who stage weddings at Macworld Expo, and the ever expanding Newton museum. He turned his discoveries into two books, one based on the *Cult of the Mac*, and now this new effort on the Cult of the iPod.



There's a lot to discuss with the iPod; it's one of the seminal inventions of the early 21st century, with wide-reaching market impact. Instead of talking about the history and the development of the iPod or the fervor associated with the adoption of the iPod, though, the book is almost entirely focused on disconnected vignettes about people who have iPods and do somewhat interesting things with them.

If you were expecting a book with narrative voice, or a consistent approach to examining the effect of the iPod on culture, you're going to be sorely disappointed, I'm afraid. Kahney's rambling collection of odd vignettes serves only to profit off the idea that the group of iPod owners are a nigh-religious cult who focus all their lives on the iPod itself.

The only true benefit to the book is its beautiful layout. The pages are strikingly well rendered, featuring some very unique graphics, representations of iPods in strange surroundings, and photos of many of the iPod users in the book. It's good coffee table reading, but I certainly wouldn't recommend buying this book.

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Software Review

by Mark Tennent, mark@tennent.co.uk

CyTV 0.5.3

Developer: Andreas Junghans
Price: free (GPL)
Requirements: EyeTV USB/200/300/400/410, VLC 0.5.3, Mac OS X 10.2.5, network connection.

Here in the UK live approximately 60 million people. Coincidentally, the area of the UK is roughly 60 million acres. Some of the land is uninhabited islands; other parts are left as wildlife sanctuaries or for military use only. Nevertheless, there should still be enough land to spread around us Brits so we have nearly an acre each.

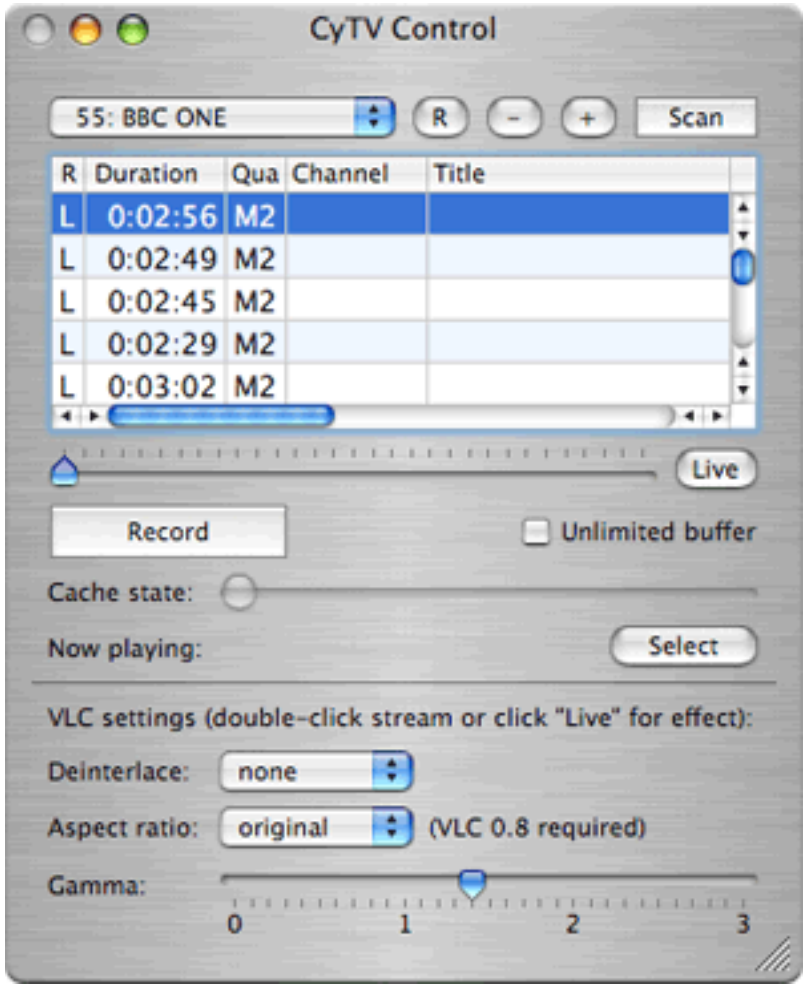
Luckily, an acre is about the maximum my wireless network can reach with the excellent CyTV streaming software devised by Andreas Junghans. With it, I can stride around my patch of Britain, carrying my laptop and watching live TV. This is ideal for catching Formula One Grand Prix races while stoking up the barbecue.

Andreas designed CyTV to send TV signals over a wired or wireless network from ElGato's EyeTV devices and compatible TV tuners. CyTV can stream live TV and record it at the same time. It lets the receiving computer change channels; pause TV; and configure volume, picture aspect, and quality.

CyTV can even stream pre-recorded TV or films stored on the server computer, with far fewer problems than trying to use QuickTime and the Finder. It is also possible, although I have never tried, to send TV over the Internet with complete security for the serving computer.

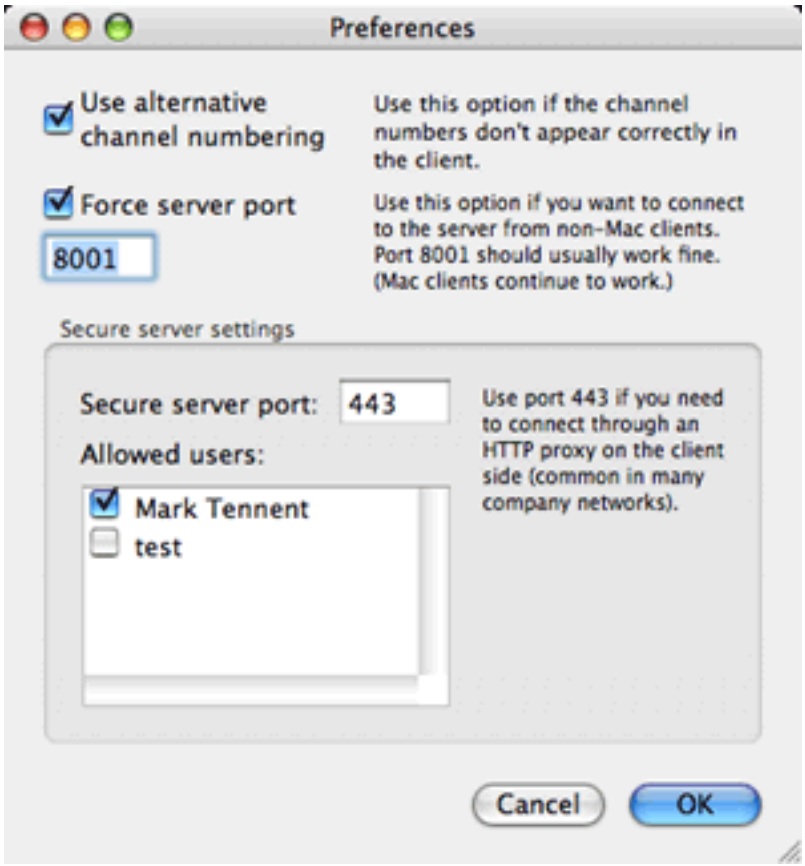
On its own, CyTV does nothing, it must have the TV signal from the EyeTV receiver and VLC (Videolan Client software). The serving computer, the one connected to the EyeTV unit, needs Mac OSX 10.2.5 or later, the BSD sub-system, Safari 1.0, and EyeTV 1.2, plus the CyTV server software. The client computer at the other end of the network *can be non-Mac* (CyTV is available for Windows and Linux) and runs the VLC and the CyTV client applications.

The advantage of using a Mac is that all the stop/start, recording, and channel-changing facilities are easily available through a point and click interface. Otherwise these have to be done via a Java-enabled Web browser.



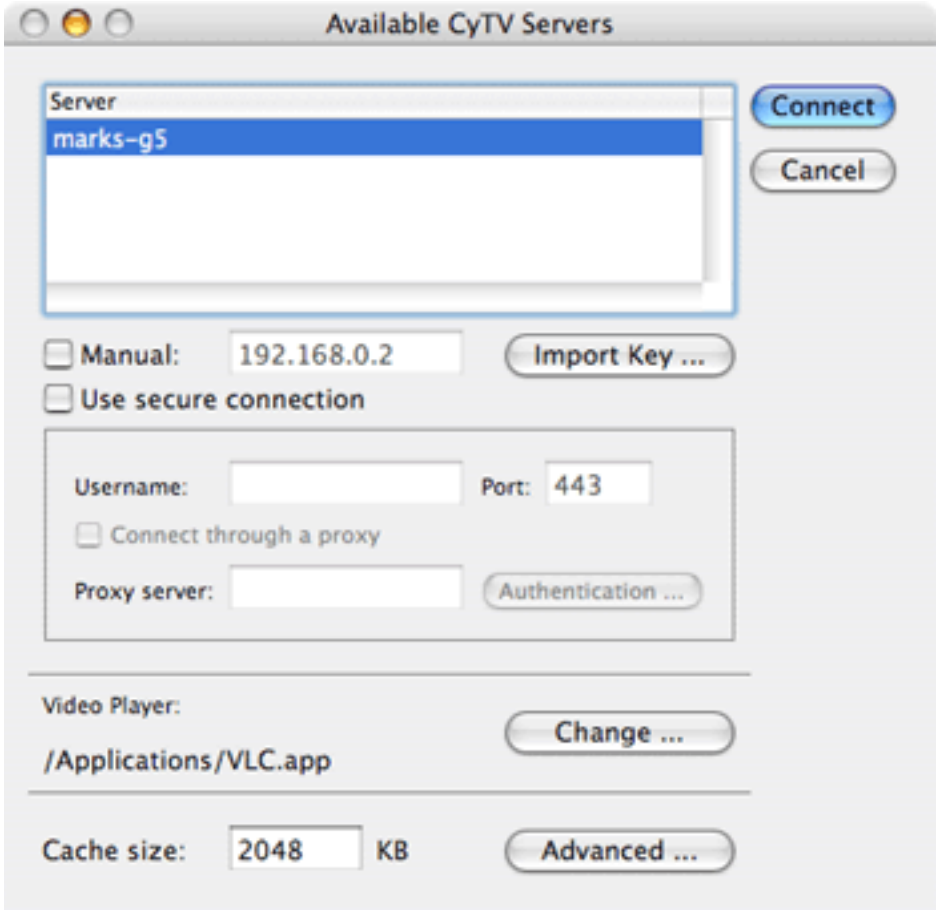
CyTV Client Controller

Security aspects are well covered. CyTV server has the option to force a specific port to be used (usually 8001), which makes it easy to open the right port in Mac OSX built-in Firewall. For a secure server, port 443 can be set if the client computer has to connect through an HTTP proxy, which apparently is common in company networks. For extra security, CyTV users can be listed individually as well.



CyTV Server Setup

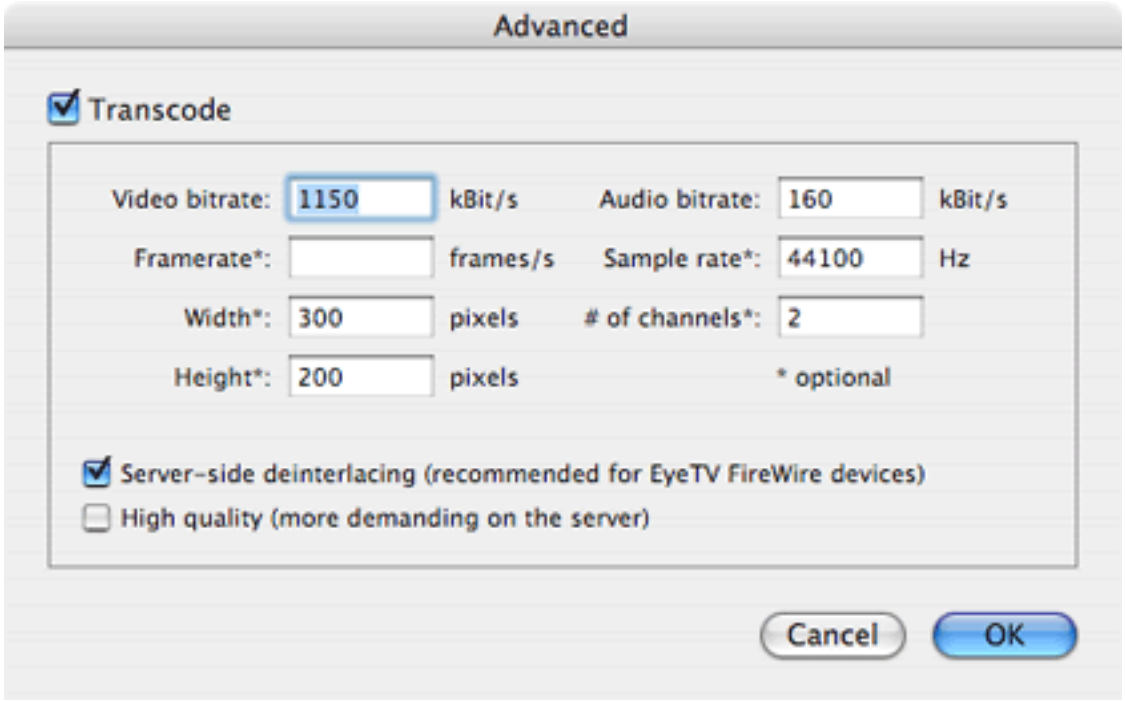
Installing CyTV is simply a matter of downloading the disk image and dragging the component applications to the server and client computers. VLC is similarly a one-part application. All three run straight out the disc image with a minimum of tweaking. If the client computer dates from within the last three years, the only configuration necessary is to point CyTV's client application preferences at the hard disk location of VLC, open the stream, and start watching.



Starting CyTV Client

I have found that the actual requirements of the client and server computers are low. My original EyeTV USB unit needed both to be G3s with an 802.11b wireless network. More recent versions of EyeTV tuners have higher resolution and FireWire connections, putting far more load on the server. This takes correspondingly more power from at least a 500 MHz G4, but as I discovered, even with an EyeTV 410, the client and network can remain at 400 MHz G3 and 802.11b.

If, like mine, the client computer is an elderly G3 400 MHz PowerBook with only 384 MB of RAM and a slow 802.11b network, a little more set- up is required. For slow computers, CyTV is able to transcode the stream by re-compressing video and audio data with slower rates than those EyeTV normally uses. Playback quality is lower, but at normal TV viewing distance picture quality is better than from a standard cathode ray tube TV. In addition, the EyeTV unit can record the TV program in high quality and stream it in lower quality over the network at the same time. CyTV's Read Me file gives good advice on configuring transcoding settings.



Transcoding Settings

VLC software is powerful and capable of doing far more than watching streaming TV; for example, I use it to play Windows Media files. Only two controls are needed to use VLC with CyTV; one to set the TV picture to full screen, and the other to adjust volume in addition to the Mac's normal sound setting. Both are keyboard- or menu-operated.

The CyTV, VLC, and EyeTV trio are easy to live with and have given a completely new lease on life to my elderly laptop. I can watch TV at the limit of the wireless network, although more usually, the laptop lives in my kitchen acting as TV, cookbook, and Internet radio receiver. Once I discovered the best transcoding settings, I had few problems apart from an occasional reluctance of the client Mac to receive both the audio and video streams. Restarting CyTV client or refreshing the stream by clicking the Live button solves this.

Sometimes I have to place my laptop physically next to my wireless router to start the TV stream correctly, and I have never been entirely successful at changing channels from the client Mac. The channels change but not to the one selected unless they are switched incrementally, one-by-one. With 70+ channels available, this becomes unacceptably slow. I have also noted that excessive noise in the TV show can make the audio become out of sync with the video, such as from racing car engines, seaside surf, or complex music. I think these problems are due to my old PowerBook being below the recommended minimum specifications. A recent upgrade of my wireless network to 802.11g solved other little annoyances and slowness logging into the streaming TV signal.

Support from CyTV author Andreas Junghans is fast and effective. He responds to e-mails within 24 hours if not sooner. When Apple released Mac OSX 10.4, CyTV broke. Andreas

rewrote the whole application within a couple of weeks and in the process added extra features and stability. He is currently rewriting CyTV to be compatible with the latest version of EyeTV released only days ago.

For a free piece of software, CyTV cannot be beaten for value. It has never crashed on my Macs, is very easy to set up and use, and its hardware requirements are low. The few glitches I have had are all due, I am pretty sure, to my receiving Mac being so lowly and slow, but even that old laptop makes a good TV. When I was going to buy a new TV recently I hesitated and decided to cancel my order and keep using my old laptop instead.

I am so pleased with CyTV I happily donated to Andreas' retirement fund via the PayPal donation screen at his Web site.

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by Chris Lawson, clawson@atpm.com

Lapvantage Loft

Developer: The Plasticsmith
Price: $80
Trial: None

Ergonomics. It's a word that gets bandied about very often, perhaps too often, in the world of laptop computers. Let's face it—laptops are inherently inferior, from an ergonomic standpoint, to their desktop counterparts.

Laptops enforce a certain inflexibility on their users. You can't place the screen at eye level without making the keyboard unusable; the keyboards generally have compromises in their key size, key travel, or both; built-in pointing devices range from the mildly irritating (Apple's latest trackpads) to CIA Euro-torture Specials (eraser-nub pointing devices, thankfully no longer the only pointing device on the vast majority of laptops).

The latter two issues can be easily addressed by using external keyboards and mice while at a desk. This leaves the problem of elevating the screen sufficiently, which is where stands such as the Contour NoteRiser, Griffin iCurve, RoadTools Podium CoolPad (to an extent), and The Plasticsmith's own Lapvantage Dome come in. (The awkwardly named Laptop Stand on Wheels from Keynamics addresses the problem in its own unique—but comfortable—way.)

Since the "lamp" design of the Lapvantage Dome is beginning to look somewhat dated, The Plasticsmith redesigned and renamed it to the Lapvantage Loft to better match Apple's aluminum PowerBook line. (A black version is also available, and the Dome is still offered.)

Gone is the domed base, with a simple metal disc in its place. The Loft retains the Deluxe Dome's ability to swivel 360 degrees, a nice feature if you use your laptop for watching movies or need to show the screen to someone else. The flatness of the base, unlike the iCurve and previous Dome, allows for a keyboard to be tucked farther under the laptop, allowing the Loft to be used on smaller desks than before.

The Loft has the same large acrylic plate that the Dome did, although it lacks the height adjustment of the former Deluxe Dome model. Perhaps to make up for the lack of height adjustment, The Plasticsmith now offers various edge colors (blue, clear, and white) for the acrylic plate. Strangely, only a metallic-colored base is available; an option for white would better match the white-edged acrylic and Apple's iBook line.

Unlike its competition, the Loft does not incline the laptop at all. This may or may not be an advantage, depending on your specific needs, but it certainly dispenses with the perceived issue of a $2,000 piece of hardware sliding off its perch and receiving a fatal introduction to the floor.

For ventilation purposes, two self-adhesive rubber feet are provided, with the intention that the user will stick them on the acrylic, underneath the back corners of the laptop. Unless you're using a laptop with inadequate feet to begin with, you can ignore this step. The 1.5 GHz PowerBook G4 15″ used for this review behaved no differently without the feet in place.

Why, then, does the Loft only warrant a "Good" rating? Quite simply, its price is too high. We reviewed the Deluxe Dome here three years ago, and since then, The Plasticsmith has removed the height adjustment while keeping the price at $80. Griffin's iCurve comes in at less than half that price, and lacks only the swivel feature.

If the manufacturer would knock off $30, there would be a serious decision to make, but at current prices, it's a no-brainer. The Loft looks nice, and works fine, but it just doesn't offer sufficient advantage over the competition to justify its premium price.

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Book Review

by Tom Bridge, tbridge@atpm.com

Mac OS X Tiger in a Nutshell

Authors: Andy Lester, Chris Stone, Chuck Toporek, and Jason McIntosh
Publisher: O'Reilly
Price: $40
Trial: None

If you've been thinking recently that you might want to do some major improvements and personal development in the Unix command-line portion of Mac OS X, but you just didn't know where to start, this might be a good reference volume to keep handy. *Mac OS X Tiger in a Nutshell* features the entire directory of Unix commands available to your Mac running OS X 10.4, as well as shell primers, a good guide to the defaults system in OS X, and several other major power user tools.

Mac users by default miss a lot of the detail beneath the hood of the operating system, and this book seeks to give more confidence to users who want to poke around with the Unix underpinnings. Let's face it: Venturing into Unixland without a good understanding of what's happening is a fairly scary prospect for Mac users. The command line was what we wanted to avoid initially, and now we're faced with the prospect of using it? Have no fear.

The book is divided into several sections, the bulk of which is a full command-line reference for OS X. If you want an alternative to bulky `man` pages, this is a great volume to keep handy for reference when mucking about on the command line. In addition to the commands

reference, there's a full `bash` reference for use with the shell, as well as guides for `vi` and `emacs`, and a tutorial on the X Window system.

If you're trying to be a bit more geeky with your Mac use, this is a great volume to keep around when you have questions. It's intended as a desktop reference book for use in getting more experience and familiarity with the back-end system behind the pretty front end we're used to. If you're looking for a book more focused on the front end, the Missing Manuals series may be more to your liking. The book is, in my mind, not complete without a guide for `tcsh` which many users who have upgraded over the past years may still have as their shell, however complete the `bash` guide is.

I look forward to hearing about more Mac users who are both unafraid of the command line, and willing, in fact, to work from the command line on a week-to-week, if not every day basis. This book is for you; be sure to keep a copy handy when venturing into Unixland.

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