

# ATPM

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

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# Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, [rleitao@atpm.com](mailto:rleitao@atpm.com)

We welcome you to the latest issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* We welcome summer and all the splendor of this fun-loving season. Summer means baseball, the sport known as America's pastime. It's the sport that gives us team names such as the Chicago White Sox and the Boston Red Sox. But it's the sport of corporate accounting that brought us new ground rules such as Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX), and it's the proliferation of social networking sites that have brought us this month's favorite writing sport called SOCS or Stream of Consciousness Statements. We'll explore this new literary sport in this month's *Welcome*.

## What's a Psystar?

Much of the world may never know. Psystar, the controversial Mac clone maker, has filed for bankruptcy. A visit to the company's [Web site](#) reveals neither information about who really owns the company nor information about the financial backers who have thrust it into a legal dogfight with Apple over the shipment of unauthorized Mac OS X-equipped computers. This may be a legal game that ends before it really got started.

## Twick or Tweet?

The question is one a person might expect uttered from the likes of Elmer J. Fudd. Elmer is known to successive generations of animation fans as an onscreen antagonist of the mischievous and hugely popular Bugs Bunny. Elmer's distinctive speech sound disorder coined such well-known phrases as "We're hunting wabbits!"

But this is all beside the point. In today's online vernacular, there's a new term for quick digital messages between friends. It's called a [Twitter](#) "tweet." Is Twitter a cultural twick or is it really a new-culture tweet? Follow the members of the ATPM staff as we explore this new means of personal messaging in 140 characters or less. Links to [ATPM staff blogs and Twitter pages](#) can be found on our site.

## What's a Retrophisch?

I asked Chris Turner, our managing editor, to explain the meaning of his oft-used Internet moniker. I figured it was an off-beat form of personal branding. There's only one claiming the name [Retrophisch](#) on the Net, and the name shows up in a surprising number of places. With over 900 Twitter followers and a prolific blogging habit, Chris is one of the more interesting personalities one will find exploring the uses of social networking services. Besides, he's a big baseball fan. But he follows the Rangers, not the Beantown BoSox. I tell him it's an issue of the right pew but the wrong church. When you find him on the Web, tell him [NuevoSobriquet](#) was asking about his handle.

## NuevoSobriquet

Like the way it sounds? I think it's easier to pronounce than something like Retrophisch. Besides, I follow a winning team. The name was borne out of frustration because the Twitter system apparently rejects any single word or combinations of words found in common language dictionaries. It was intended as a joke and a means to save time forging an online nom de plume. Follow me as I follow Chris and we all follow each other, sharing tips, twicks and tweets.

## Apple Twicks

In less than a week's time, the curtain will open on Apple's worldwide conference for developers. Following Apple's decision to move away from IDG's Macworld Expo as a marquee event in favor of this conference for developers, this year's WWDC carries far more weight for the company in terms of public attention than ever before.

We await news of the release date for Snow Leopard, the next iteration of Mac OS X, along with news of the planned release of a new version of the iPhone. Few expect big surprises at this month's conference, and we expect Apple to continue on a determined path to foster innovative and unique uses for its handheld hardware products.

But here's the twick: Apple is deliberately changing the personal communications paradigm from PCs to handheld devices. The PC market is maturing, and the days of the PC as the center of the personal computing experience have passed. Watch for news from Apple about iPhone 3.0 and the increasing independence of the iPhone and iPod touch from the PC for purchasing music, movies, and apps.

## Apple Tweets

The iPhone is emerging as the premiere digital device for personal communications. The mobile social networking apps allow users to keep in contact with friends and family anywhere and at anytime. The thousands of available iPhone apps to assist in pursuing all interests and pastimes will be highlighted again at this year's WWDC. For example, whether it's listening to the Red Sox win or the Rangers lose, the iPhone sports apps keep fans in constant contact with news and information about their favorite teams. The evolving handheld device paradigm will change the way the world communicates even more profoundly than what the PC achieved starting more than twenty-five years ago.

## What's an mjtsai?

An [mjtsai](#) is its own kind of brilliance. It's not just the fact that he's smart enough to follow the BoSox, he's brought us such useful Mac products as [SpamSieve](#), a highly rated spam solution for the Mac. mjtsai, or Michael as the staff calls him, is the publisher of ATPM. You can follow his tweets on Twitter. The ATPM staff works around the clock and from places around the world to bring you the best reviews and the most interesting views about the evolving state of personal computing.

## **Follow Me, Follow You, Follow Each Other**

Through the use of constantly connected digital devices such as the iPhone and iPod touch, interpersonal communications is being changed forever. For example, I follow Chris, Chris follows me, and we both follow Michael. Join us online and follow us as we follow you. New twicks and tweets are available daily from the staff on our respective [Twitter and blog pages](#).

## **SOCS**

Stream of Consciousness Statements have been the hallmark of ATPM since its first issue. Irreverent, insightful, and informative content in a free-flowing form is our favorite format. No matter the means of distribution, the staff of ATPM continues to perfect the art of celebrating the personal computing experience. Join us online each month for each new issue of ATPM, and join the staff each day as we explore the digital world around us.

Our June issue includes:

### **MacMuser: Sitting on the Font Fence**

Mark Tennent has plenty to say on the topic of font management.

### **MacMuser: Switching to ADSL2+**

Mark Tennent talks about a recent upgrade to ADSL2+.

### **Next Actions: Master List, June 2009**

Ed Eubanks Jr. updates his GTD Master List.

### **How To: Controlling Your Mac: Multiple Computers and Monitors, One Keyboard, No Switches**

It may be hard to believe you can control more than one Mac with only one keyboard and no KVM switches, but Sylvester Roque is here to tell you how.

### **Desktop Pictures: Tanzania Safari, Part 2**

Reader David Siebecker returns with a second batch of photos from a 2006 Tanzania safari.

### **Qaptain Qwerty**

Apple inside news from the highly reliable rumor mill of *Qaptain Qwerty*.

### **Review: iBloodTracker 2.0**

This app keeps your blood pressure readings and makes a chart, but is it worth the fee?

### **Review: Posterino 1.5.1**

Posterino is great for composing themed posters. Just be ready to pay for printing or to supply your own poster printing software and lots of time.



## **Review: Smashing Tennis**

A simplistic tennis game that may be fine for kids, but Ellyn Ritterskamp found it a bit lacking.

## **Review: ZoFunk Cases**

Three different types of cases from ZoFunk elicit decidedly distinctive opinions.



## Transcriva 2.0

I just finished a massive editorial project in which I'd conducted something like 30 lengthy taped interviews. Some I sent off to a professional transcription service, but most I transcribed myself with Transcriva. You're right that it isn't perfect, but it comes about as close as anything else I've seen and for me, anyway, it's better than some of the free options I tried first. (I don't recall the names because I'd deleted them after trying Transcriva.)

Anyway, for a pretty low-priced program intended for very tedious work, no complaints here. And updates are reasonably frequent to fix oddball bugs and incorporate improvements.

—*Laura Belgrave*

## Spending Time in the Front Row

One unofficial way of configuring Front Row 2.0 to show on the second display is adding the `FrontRowUsePreferredDisplayID` entry to the `com.apple.frontrow` preferences.

Before doing that you need to know the ID of your external display. You can determine the ID of the second display using the [displaysInfo](#) utility.

Run the `displaysInfo` utility from the command line and look for the number labelled `d2_ID` in `displayInfos` output. Add this number (69681665 in the example below) as parameter to the `defaults write` command as shown below:

```
defaults write com.apple.frontrow FrontRowUsePreferredDisplayID 69681665
```

—*Tom Wyrick*



Try [TV Row 2.0.1](#). It allows you to select any screen.

—*Jantje Beton*

## On the Road Again

When I am away from home and wish to access my stuff on my Mac from my friends' computer, how can I get there?

I did it so many years ago, and now I've forgotten. Please remind me.

—*Sylvan Bluestein*

The quickest free way of doing so is:

1. Go to the Sharing section of System Preferences on your Mac and enable file sharing.
2. If you are using a network router in your home, be sure to open port 548 and direct it to the local/internal IP address of the Mac you wish to reach while away.
3. Make note of your public IP address (the one assigned to you by your Internet provider) or, even better, utilize a dynamic DNS service (I'm personally fond of no-ip.com) to assign a named address to which you can connect. Many even have a small application you can run which will check your public IP at regular intervals and update the dynamic DNS name to point to the correct IP.
4. Connect to your IP address or the dynamic DNS name using the "Connect to Server" command in the Finder's Go menu.

—Lee Bennett

## **Time Travel: Introduction to Time Machine**

I just lost a 500 GB backup drive from a power surge of lightning. It is a lot of work getting your documents off the second backup, a pile of CDs and DVDs. I'm glad I did that. I invested in one of those battery backups that give you time to shut down when the power goes out instead of the Power Bar I've been using for years. Now I'm recreating some documents with iWork '09 and backing up regularly with Time Machine. Time Machine is the best backup program yet. I learned a lot from this great article. Thanks.

—Heather Isaacson

## **Pogo Sketch for iPhone 3G**

I purchased a Pogo stylus specifically made for the iPod touch 2G that came with a clip that snaps right onto the Touch. I use a rubberized case, however, and always put my iPod into a small cloth bag (the one from my Flip camera, actually) and just pop the stylus in there.

It works great, keeps the unit so much cleaner than fingers, and cuts way down on the amount of buffing I was doing with a cloth. Even with multiple hand washes a day, the Touch still gets easily dirty without the stylus.

Another neat thing about the stylus is that it works *fantastic* for many games. A great example is Flight Control. The stylus (what I've come to call a pogo stick) makes the flight lines very precise and allows much closer control. I've found many times that work better with a stylus.

Alas, with or without the stylus, I'm amazed that my Touch (a.k.a. miTouch) has replaced about 85% or more of my need for a laptop. Pretty amazing for a \$229 device to have such incredible utility.

Last but not least, I was able to buy the stylus, with shipping, for \$12.88 from Amazon, and I thought that was a bargain because it would have been about \$22 to get direct from TenOne Design's Web site.

—*Stephen Taylor*

## **iWeb '09: Review From the Edge**

Interesting. One big miss I don't think you mentioned is the inability to change text size on the fly. I use OmniWeb for most browsing, and I'm accustomed to bumping up text on Web pages with the standard Command-+. Nada. No change. That means, for instance, that on my MacBook Pro with its 1440 by 900 resolution, I have to squint at the iWeb text. Not worth it for me. I have MobileMe, but I believe I'll stick to [Freeway](#) for any Web work I do.

—*Laura Belgrave*



Greetings from El Paso.

I have been using iWeb for some time on my Educational Technology Site: [Intended Consequences](#)

Although I think the blogging feature is lacking on some of the things you mention, it has forced me to become a much more careful writer. My blog entries, for the most part, are pretty long, and I have now passed over 200 entries.

I think you also failed to mention the ability to embed podcasts into your site. I now have over 150 podcasts as well, and iWeb automatically sends them to iTunes as well.

—*Tim Holt*

## **MacMuser: Hedging and Ditching**

Yeah (sigh)...get used to it. As an HP sales rep. once told someone I knew, "HP isn't in the business of selling printers. We're in the business of selling ink and toner! The printers are just expensive ink-delivery mechanisms."

I suspect many of the inkjet printers on the market are actually sold at a small *loss*, simply because their supplies are expensive enough that they know they'll make the money back with just one ink cartridge purchase.

By the same token, I've often suspected that some manufacturers maximize their profits by designing the printers to fail just outside of a basic one-year warranty. Most people "stock up" on supplies, buying several color and several black cartridges for a given printer. When it fails, they usually throw away unused supplies when they discover they don't fit any of

the currently produced replacement models of printers. (Even if they try to give them to someone else who can use them—they're faced with an "expiration date" on the ink, too.)

Any time this happens, and said customer buys another printer from the same manufacturer, they just accelerated that manufacturer's sales. (Think how long they'd go without making another ink purchase if their printer kept working, and they actually waited to use up all those spare cartridges they bought.)

—*Tom Wyrick*



I nurture a similar suspicion—that consumer printers (in particular) are sold at or below cost as efficient ink-delivery systems intended solely to serve the purveyors of said ink with significant profits on supplies. For that reason I bought one of the small Brother laser printers which operates on the network (my network) and appears to be plenty reliable. Both of my printers are still working well after about four years of service (and only a couple of toner cartridges).

I despise inkjet printers, although if you must have color they're the only (affordable) game in town. I don't really want many photo-prints and send those of to be processed on "real" photographic paper rather than that slick stuff that sells for 5× what it's worth.

My oh my the cynic in me is running hard this morning.

—*Dave Thompson*

### **Core Case for iPhone 3G**

I've used a Core Case for my iPod classic for several years and love it. I've bought several for myself, and for my sons' iPods. My iPod's survived several drops without a scratch. Corey, the guy who owns the company, has always been very receptive to my queries, too.

—*Matt Perl*

### **MacMuser: Cisco Kids (Us)**

Four days is nothing. Try being stuck in the purgatory known as satellite Internet. Not as agonizing as dialup, yet not quite fast enough to keep up with modern broadband. Secure sites, particularly banks, often time out, Flash-based sites, which are nearly all of them these days, never quite finish loading, and video is only a stalling, jerky, buffering tease. Forget saving money with Internet phone service. All that for a mere \$80 a month.

Our new President promised that he would get the US caught up with the rest of the first-world countries when it comes to broadband service. I just hope he can hold to that.

—*Emma*

## Hard Drives as Floppies

We bought one of the [NewerTech Voyager](#) units from Other World Computing in December. It has been completely reliable so far. We are using it with two different SATA drives (one of them partitioned) to back up three computers.

—*Doug Hogg*

I have had mixed results with the Voyager Q. On the plus side, it is very fast. However, there are [problems](#) with connecting multiple Voyagers at once via FireWire, and several times it has caused my Mac to freeze.

—*Michael Tsai*

## AlphaSmart Dana

I'm a teacher and a student. I have a crippled right hand and can't take notes. The Dana sounds wonderful. However, I have to hand in class assignments within 10 minutes after they are assigned. If I type them on the Dana, how would I turn them in? The professor has a computer at his desk. Will this unit ever have e-mail?

—*Steve Corry*

There's a version of the Dana that has built-in wireless; I haven't tried it, but if your school is equipped with WiFi, I imagine you could e-mail from that kind of Dana.

Or you could get a regular Dana and print a hard copy for your professor as needed. (If there's a printer in the classroom you could use? Or you could buy a portable printer.) Dana's Printer Compatibility page looks pretty out-of-date though; you might want to check with AlphaSmart to make sure the printer's compatible with the Dana before making a purchase.

—*Paul Fatula*

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## Sitting on the Font Fence

There are times when we could gladly throttle Steve Jobs and whoever makes decisions about the contents of Mac OS X. Currently it's the old chestnut of font handling, for which we would like to string-up someone at Apple from an infinite loop. Along with a representative from Linotype.

Like many designers who've been in the business for some years, we have an eclectic mix of fonts dating back well into the last century. Many are complete libraries we've picked up, usually as an added extra with other software or equipment. First was the Bitstream library circa 1990. In those days, a few thousand quid's worth and the fonts all "nearly" types. Bitstream versions of famous fonts come with a book of cross-referenced names. Gill Sans in Bitstream parlance, is Humanist 521; Méridien becomes Latin 725, and so on. All looking almost the same as their more famous versions, but not quite. Letter-spacing differences between the different cuts can ruin documents.

The arrival of our Adobe library a year or so later was followed by URW's, Monotype's, ITC's, Linotype's... plus all the smaller foundries. Other typefaces have come from clients with their own bespoke fonts such as John Lewis, the Tate Gallery, and Superdrug. We have a heavy investment in typefaces and have always used a manager to control them: MasterJuggler was followed by Suitcase, then Font Reserve (the all-time best), before Suitcase Fusion 12 took control of our typeface library.

Apple, the chosen system for all discerning creative types, has never built its own font manager. Font Book, its latest attempt at a font organiser, is lightweight at best and does not automatically open typefaces when software calls for them. The only previous Apple attempt dates to 1985-ish, called Font/DA Mover.

After much agonising and largely because of an excellent review in *Macworld* accompanied by a half-price offer, we shifted recently from Suitcase Fusion to Linotype FontExplorer Pro, and then our problems began. The move being because the latest version of Suitcase Fusion will not open fonts for earlier versions of Adobe's CS suite or QuarkXPress 6, only the most recent. On the other hand, FontExplorer has plug-ins for them all, as far back as QuarkXPress 6 and Adobe CS1. It seemed the best direction to go since we still have to work in legacy software as well as the most current.

Despite all attempts to clean our typefaces, running FontDoctor over them umpteen times to correct any glitches and creating new, organised libraries, FontExplorer tells us many thousands of our typefaces will not work. It thinks their printer font is separated from the outline font, despite the two obviously being together in the same folder. We even converted

our entire library to D-Fonts without success—this combines all the font’s attributes into one unified file. FontExplorer still insists the fonts are broken. The same fonts which Suitcase and Font Reserve, et. al., have had zero problems with for more than 10 years.

Then there are the plug-ins. FontExplorer should install a range of plug-ins for Adobe and Quark’s software. It scans your hard disks and finds the relevant applications, but in our case not all of them. Instead it found parts of the Adobe CS2 suite, but not all, even though they are in the same folder, automatically created by Adobe’s installer. This is easy to fix by manually “finding” the relevant plug-ins folders, but we shouldn’t have to do this. In addition, it told us that InDesign CS2 had version 5 of a plug-in, but we should downgrade it to version 3. Why?

Finally, FontExplorer crashes our system so that it needs a total reboot. Clicking on any option in FontExplorer that opens a dialogue box needing name and password freezes the whole Mac. Not any wimpy restart, either, but a rigid digit on the start button, followed by a jolly good fscking afterwards to correct disk errors. According to customer support at Linotype, this is a known problem which will be fixed in the next version due to be released “soon.”

It took FontDoctor a few hours to extract our 10,000+ fonts, check them out, and create a new combined library with alphabetical folders inside, one for each foundry. We reinstalled FontExplorer and stopped it from managing its own font folder, via the setting in its preferences. The foundry folders have been copied to FontExplorer one-by-one as a new set, which have been filed into a folder under the Set tab.

This has been mostly successful, but some fonts are double-listed with printer fonts listed as missing in one and not the other. Deleting the “broken” versions also deletes the good.

The moral of this being, don’t let FontExplorer manage its own library. Instead, do it manually or better still use the excellent FontDoctor and consider whether Suitcase Fusion might still be the better bet. However, now that it is up and running, FontExplorer isn’t all bad and seems much faster at opening fonts than Suitcase Fusion for documents containing a lot of typefaces in such as magazines or books. It also intercepts calls for typefaces from a whole bunch of programs such as Mail and Safari, ensuring we can see spam in all its glory, exactly as it was meant to be seen.



Why is it that when you are walking home from a night out, all the buses seem to have disappeared, especially if it’s pouring with rain and you can’t find a cab? Get within 100 yards of home, three double-deckers will drive past, bonded together like an Aussie road train.

Years gone by as a student, driving double-deckers was a part-time job. Just such a night saw me at the wheel of a fully-laden Daimler on the 5 route going north along the A23.



Turning right at the mini roundabout into Carden Avenue, the power-steering packed-up. The only option was to stand up and heave on the steering wheel to get the 10 tons of bus round. Otherwise, we would have crashed through the garden wall, which anyone who knows the area will tell you is high and robust. Installing Suitcase Fusion 2 has left us with exactly the opposite feeling.

As long-term Suitcase users we couldn't wait to uninstall FontExplorer and get back into a comfort zone even though Tobias Meyerhoff, Linotype's project manager, called from Germany to help sort out our problems with FontExplorer Pro. Both he and Jim Kidwell from Extensis are vying to be the most helpful on a [forum at Macworld](#).

## Packing Your Suitcase

Installation was a little awkward, involving the entry of a long serial number (which thankfully, copied and pasted), but then the installer asks for name and password three times in rapid succession. Dial them in...click, dial them in...click, dial them in...click. All in the space of a nanosecond or two.

FontExplorer's installation uses a registration document: select the file from within FontExplorer instead of typing in 16 digit serial numbers. Quark and Adobe could learn a thing or two from this.

Suitcase Fusion 2 found and imported the font vault that had been generated by Suitcase Fusion 1. It had no concerns about the fonts FontExplorer rejected. Similarly, Suitcase installed plug-ins for the applications for which it can open fonts automatically, as well as making a list of other programs it can work with such as Mail, Safari, Dictionary, and TextEdit. There are pros and cons to this, and FontExplorer has a few more options in its similar Font Request preferences. It is odd getting messages from Mail that it wants to open Warnock or some such font.

When installing FontExplorer Pro a few days earlier, it could only find one copy of QuarkX-Press 8 and InDesign CS2. Tobias explained that it looks for the disk with the most up-to-date system. At that time, we had six active hard drives containing various copies of Mac OS X 10.5.6, 10.5.7, and 10.6, the latter being the only one FontExplorer recognised. FontExplorer's Preferences will let you choose other copies of programs to install plug-ins for whereas Suitcase Fusion 2 seems to bung them in everywhere.

Suitcase Fusion runs as a daemon, which means that although the program itself does not need to be active all the time, fonts will still auto-activate. Along with the daemon is a control panel in System Preferences.

We find Suitcase's interface a little cartoonish but friendly enough. A bit like Mac OS X beta with its large blobby buttons, and slightly confusing as tools are scattered around the main window. The user interface in FontExplorer Pro may be less colourful, but it is easier to understand and use.

As for features, both FontExplorer Pro and Suitcase Fusion 2 match each other, with Suitcase possibly winning with its much-vaunted, tear-off font sample windows, which can

hover on-screen over document pages. This is to demonstrate what the chosen typeface will look like, in-situ. A bit of a gimmick which might suit some.

Alternatively, FontExplorer has better search functions and more information about each typeface. For example: NewJohnston can be found in FontExplorer by searching for the name, whereas Suitcase only knows it as NJ—nowhere is it listed as NewJohnston. This is quite a serious omission in our opinion.

## **Which Is Best?**

We have problems with both. FontExplorer's are limited to its rejection of some fonts that Suitcase and FontDoctor are happy to accept. This is arguably a good thing so that FontExplorer doesn't activate damaged fonts.

Suitcase, on the other hand, can run incredibly slowly, which we thought may be a problem with our typefaces. We would love to get a whole new library fresh from the foundry so that we could abandon our decades-old fonts, but that is as unlikely to happen as MPs are to repay all the expenses they have fiddled...err...claimed over the years. Unless Adobe, Linotype, or Extensis suddenly becomes extremely generous towards us—with typefaces that is, not MPs repayments.

To test Suitcase Fusion against Linotype FontExplorer, we opened the same documents using both programs in succession. All the files had been made while running Suitcase Fusion 1 and saved with the Extensis Font Sense identification details built-in, which Suitcase Fusion 2 is supposed to recognise. Except that it didn't.

These are mainly illustrated books containing a maximum of three or four typefaces and half a dozen fonts, using the same typeface library as Suitcase Fusion 1. When they opened while running Suitcase Fusion 2, many fonts were missing or only the cyrillic versions activated, which are not in the documents. FontExplorer, on the other hand, opened them immediately with all the correct typefaces.

Current work, saved last week with Suitcase Fusion 1, opened incredibly slowly when running Suitcase Fusion 2 and even hung QuarkXPress 8. Activity Monitor shows QuarkXPress using 100% CPU as it opens the documents. Even saving them is a very slow process, and reopening equally as slow. Switch back to FontExplorer Pro and the documents opened immediately.

This is on a quad-core, dual-processor Mac with 6 GB RAM, so it's not a horsepower problem. We checked the drives, repaired permissions, emptied caches, rebooted, looked for clashes. All the usual maintenance tasks. Even importing FontExplorer's library into Suitcase had no effect.

Then we Googled for a solution. It took about two hours to find the right question to ask. Tucked away in a Quark forum is a recent post about documents opening slowly when Suitcase Fusion 2 is running because Suitcase checks every object in the document for fonts. The solution is to turn off the plug-in preference to activate fonts in embedded

objects. Once done, documents open as fast as an MP changes their designated second home.

Until we found the plug-in “bug” we had given up with Suitcase Fusion 2 and ran gratefully back to FontExplorer. Suitcase has a huge problem yet we could find nothing about it in the manual, just a paragraph explaining about scanning graphics and how only Adobe Illustrator EPS files are saved with Font Sense metadata.

Taking this “bug” into account, and that Suitcase Fusion 2 cannot open fonts in early versions of QuarkXPress and Adobe’s CS suites, it is almost the clincher for us because we have to work in them from time to time. We are running with Suitcase Fusion 2 for the time being because it would be churlish not to.

FontExplorer Pro gives us an enormous feeling of security that we can always fall back to it, and will have to the next time we need InDesign 2 or QuarkXPress 6.

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## Switching to ADSL2+

We uploaded a gigabyte of files last night, something which has certainly become easier under ADSL2+ 21CN, with an uploading speed almost double that which we had under Broadband Max 20CN. What had been a chore to upload so much became much easier under ADSL2+. Better even than burning a DVD and walking round to the post office to send it Special Delivery. Cheaper, faster, and more reliable as well.

This has not come without some cost to us, both financially and in terms of time wasted. First, our router did not work even though it claims to be suitable. If we had [checked](#) and downloaded the [Excel file](#) linked to the “Equipment that has been tested” link, we could have checked the list to make sure our kit would work.

It has routers, modems, telephones, faxes, burglar alarms, PoS terminals, plus umpteen other things that connect to the telephone, and states whether they are compatible or not. They haven't tested every device on the market, but the list shows over a thousand. Unfortunately our Linksys/Cisco router did not make it. Another useful list is of [IPV6-ready devices](#).

The Netgear DG834G replacement router, as recommended by our ISP, is nowhere near as good as the Linksys, with a dodgy wireless LAN, slow file transmission, and the Quality of Service settings seem ineffectual. Even though we have set FTP to have the lowest QoS, it hogs bandwidth, preventing any other WAN activity. In addition, Netgear's filter didn't work. Picking up the telephone on the same line as DSL dropped the data connection.

This kept our router in a cycle of ever-decreasing connection speeds because BT's equipment saw the dropped connection as unreliability and re-synched us at a lower speed. After a month, we are currently connected at 7530/110kbps, both figures slowly climbing towards the 24 megabits theoretical maximum. ADSL2+ has much smaller steps in its profiles (the speed BT's equipment automatically sets for the line), so it is taking longer to climb the ladder. Sending and receiving large files seems to help move us onto the next rung.

However, actual download speed is still not as good as it should be and often slows to a dribble. It is trying to find the cause of this that has wasted the most time. It appears to be the [interconnects](#) through which our Entanet broadband passes. When Faraday is near maximum, our line speed is near minimum, unlike with 20CN, which did not use interconnects and stayed around the same download figure.

Prior to the switch to 21CN, we had sent and received data with [Transmit](#), mainly because it also handles WebDAV connections such as to our iDisks. However, the venerable [Fetch](#)

looks to be the faster of the two programs and even snatches bandwidth from Transmit if the two are running concurrently.

Whether moving to ADSL2+ is a good thing or not is getting to be a moot point, as BT slowly switches everyone to their 21CN. For us, the upload speeds are a definite plus.

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# Next Actions

by Ed Eubanks Jr.

## Master List, June 2009

There are no new additions this month. On the other hand, as I promised last month, I have *removed* Action Tracker and ActionTastic. Neither was even available on the Web sites any longer, let alone showing any sign of development. (With iGTD as my witness, I'll leave even a defunct application on my list if it remains available and useful to some.) I'm still planning to add [The Hit List](#) to the list in the near future.

### About the List

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

### Locally Installed GTD Applications

#### [EasyTask Manager](#)



**Developer:** Orionbelt.com

**Current Version:** 2.1

**Price:** \$20

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** Yes

**Web-app Sync:** Yes

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** App (free); Web App (free)

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4

**Required Applications:** None

**Distinguishing Features:** Windows version available; automatic advance of uncompleted due tasks to today.

**News:** None

## Frictionless



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

## Ghost Action



**Developer:** Ghost Park Software  
**Current Version:** 1.3  
**Price:** \$20  
**Development Status:** Release  
**iCal Sync:** Yes  
**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No  
**Web-app Sync:** No  
**Print Lists:** Yes  
**iPhone Presence:** Sort of—a non-syncing application (\$10)  
**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4 [only](#)  
**Required Applications:** None  
**Distinguishing Features:** .Mac syncing (without iCal running); PDA/iPod syncing, two-way iCal syncing.

**News:** Ghost Park Software recently released their iPhone application, Actions, which now takes the prominent place of the front page of their Web site. Ghost Action users will find Ghost Action [here](#), though with no changes in the status of the application. We might assume that Actions has been the distraction that has kept Ghost Action from seeing some much-needed updates. While Actions currently has no direct interaction (syncing, etc.) with Ghost Action, it is probably safe to assume that it eventually will.

## iGTD



**Developer:** Bartek

**Current Version:** 1.4.5.6

**Price:** Free

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** Yes

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4

**Required Applications:** None

**Distinguishing Features:** Compatible with Address Book, Mail, iSync, and MailTags, as well as Web browser support, Path Finder, Yojimbo, MacJournal, and others; quick-entry feature; simple yet powerful interface.

**News:** None

## iCog



**Developer:** HensPace

**Current Version:** 1.90



**Price:** Free

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** No

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Unknown

**Required Applications:** Python 2.4 or later

**Distinguishing Features:** Compatible with any OS running Python (including Windows); very simple text-only utility.

**News:** None

## [mGTD](#)



**Developer:** Jeff Fisher

**Current Version:** 1.3

**Price:** Free

**Development Status:** Pre-final

**iCal Sync:** No

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** None (Mori template)

**Required Applications:** Mori 1.6.11

**Distinguishing Features:** Expands Mori (digital notebook) functions to include GTD principles.

**News:** None

## [Midnight Inbox](#)



**Developer:** Midnight Beep Softworks

**Current Version:** 1.3.1

**Price:** \$35

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** App coming soon

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4

**Required Applications:** None

**Distinguishing Features:** Action timer; quick-note and quick-action hot keys; Mail compatible; automatic data collection.

**News:** Version 1.4 beta is available for download. Version 2.0 (a ground-up rebuild for Leopard, which will include an iPhone/iPod touch app) is promised for spring 2009, according to the Web site.

## *OmniFocus*



**Developer:** Omni Group

**Current Version:** 1.6.1

**Price:** \$80

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** Yes

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** App (\$20)

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4.8

**Required Applications:** None

**Distinguishing Features:** Mail- and Spotlight-compatible; simple interface with powerful view features.

**News:** None

## *Pluto menubar*



**Developer:** MOApp Software Manufactory

**Current Version:** 4.1

**Price:** €12.00 (about \$16.40)

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** Yes

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

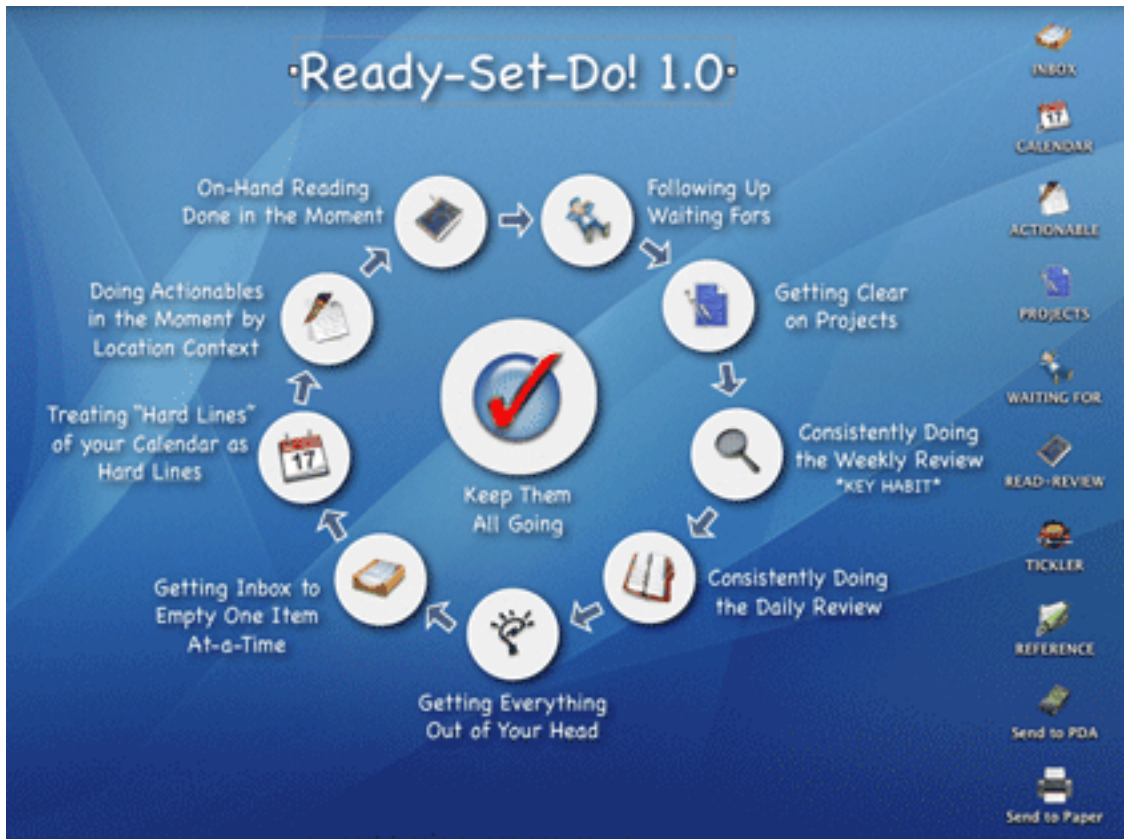
**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.5

**Required Applications:** None

**Distinguishing Features:** This is a menu-bar application, but don't be fooled—it is a very fully featured GTD tool. There is a lot to see here, and you won't find any of the standard features you're looking for missing. Note the full-screen editing, searching, tags, contacts, and priorities.

**News:** None

## Ready, Set, Do!



**Developer:** Todd Vasquez

**Current Version:** 1.4

**Price:** \$20

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** Yes

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4

**Required Applications:** None

**Distinguishing Features:** A very different approach using a set of AppleScript routines to impose organization and communication across a computer's entire file system; multiple language support.

**News:** Version 1.4 was released in May, including performance improvements, additional customization, a handful of feature additions, and a few "toys" as well—see [the list here](#).

## TaskPaper



**Developer:** Hog Bay Software

**Current Version:** 2.0

**Price:** \$19

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** No

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.5

**Required Applications:** None

**Distinguishing Features:** Simple text-based system; no-frills; intentionally designed as an alternative to more fully featured systems.

**News:** None

## Things



**Developer:** Cultured Code

**Current Version:** 1.1.2

**Price:** \$50

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** App (\$10)

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4.11

**Required Applications:** None

**Distinguishing Features:** iCal sync; repeating tasks; Mail compatibility; tags; network and multi-computer operation; and import/export options.

**News:** Version 1.1 brings a boost in AppleScript support, improved delegation of tasks, speed and performance improvements, and a small host of other features.

## Thinking Rock



**Developer:** Avente Pty Ltd

**Current Version:** 2.2.1

**Price:** Free, open-source

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** No

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4

**Required Applications:** None

**Distinguishing Features:** Cross-platform compatibility through Java; interactive collection and processing; can be run off of a flash drive.

**News:** April brought version 2.2.1, with improved layout and interface, some better ways to gather, and some modules.

## What To Do



**Developer:** Objective Satisfaction

**Current Version:** 1.3.2

**Price:** \$29

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** No  
**QuickSilver Plug-in:** Yes  
**Web-app Sync:** No  
**Print Lists:** Yes  
**iPhone Presence:** None  
**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4.9  
**Required Applications:** None  
**Distinguishing Features:** Drag-and-drop intensive for easy reorganization; .Mac syncing for multiple computers; XML export.  
**News:** None

## Locally Installed General Task Managers

### Anxiety

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

### Chandler

**Developer:** The Chandler Project  
**Current Version:** 1.0.3  
**Price:** Open Source  
**Development Status:** Release  
**iCal Sync:** Yes  
**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No  
**Web-app Sync:** Yes  
**Print Lists:** Yes (through iCal)

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.3

**Distinguishing Features:** A good integrated calendar makes this one a fairly full-orbed PIM.

**News:** None

### **Check Off**

**Developer:** Second Gear

**Current Version:** 3.8

**Price:** Free/Donationware

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** No

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.5.2

**Distinguishing Features:** A menu-bar utility that manages basic task lists; syncs with iPods; a .Mac Backup QuickPick is provided.

**News:** None

### **Dejumble**

**Developer:** Thinking Code Software, Inc.

**Current Version:** 1.2.1

**Price:** \$19

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes (through iCal)

**iPhone Presence:** App (\$8)

**OS Requirements:** Unknown (would assume 10.4 or later, due to presence of Spotlight functions)

**Distinguishing Features:** A simple yet powerful menu bar-style task list manager, with tags, groups, notes, and a handful of other options.

**News:** Version 1.2.1 returns iCal syncing to the mix, plus a few bug fixes.



## *Docket*

**Developer:** Surprise Software

**Current Version:** 1.3

**Price:** \$20

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** No

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.1

**Distinguishing Features:** A neat basic list management application. A Windows version is also available.

**News:** None

## *Dolt*

**Developer:** Jim McGowan

**Current Version:** 2.6

**Price:** Donationware

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** Yes

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** No

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4

**Distinguishing Features:** .Mac support and AppleScriptability. Also supports file attachments and categories for lists.

**News:** None

## *FlexCal*

**Developer:** flexgames

**Current Version:** 1.10

**Price:** Free/Donationware

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes  
**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No  
**Web-app Sync:** No  
**Print Lists:** Yes (through iCal)  
**iPhone Presence:** None  
**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.5  
**Distinguishing Features:** A task and event creator for iCal—something of a collection bucket for GTD users.  
**News:** None

### High Priority

**Developer:** Aram Kudurshian  
**Current Version:** 1.11 (Mac OS X 10.4 *only*)  
**Price:** \$6 (personal); \$12 (family); \$60 (business)  
**Development Status:** Release  
**iCal Sync:** Yes  
**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No  
**Web-app Sync:** No  
**Print Lists:** Yes (through iCal)  
**iPhone Presence:** None  
**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4 only  
**Distinguishing Features:** A system preference pane, creates a menu in the menu bar that lets you create and update your iCal tasks.  
**News:** None

### Hot Plan

**Developer:** Intuiware  
**Current Version:** 1.4.1  
**Price:** \$20  
**Development Status:** Release  
**iCal Sync:** No  
**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No  
**Web-app Sync:** No  
**Print Lists:** No  
**iPhone Presence:** None  
**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4.9

**Distinguishing Features:** Tracks a substantial amount of information about a given task, including completion status, priority, and time remaining; supports tagging, color coding, and locking of tasks. Also allows collection of URLs and files.

**News:** None

### [iClock Pro](#)

**Developer:** Script Software

**Current Version:** 1.0b14

**Price:** \$20

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** No

**OS Requirements:** Unknown

**Distinguishing Features:** Offers a menu bar-based method of managing task lists; includes .Mac syncing.

**News:** Script Software has stopped offering the older version of iClock (version 3.0.5—though you can still find it here<<http://www.scriptsoftware.com/iclock/old/iclockmac.ph> but now offers only iClock Pro, which is in beta for version 1.x.

### [Life Balance](#)

**Developer:** Llamagraphics

**Current Version:** 5.0.5

**Price:** \$65 (\$80 bundled with Palm version)

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes (through iCal)

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4

**Distinguishing Features:** Gives “meta-feedback” about tasks: how much time are you spending in different areas of your life (i.e., work, family, hobbies, etc.), and are you keeping it balanced? Palm and Windows versions available.

**News:** None

### [NoteBook](#)

**Developer:** Circus Ponies  
**Current Version:** 3.0  
**Price:** \$50 (academic and family pack pricing available)  
**Development Status:** Release  
**iCal Sync:** Yes  
**QuickSilver Plug-in:** Yes  
**Web-app Sync:** No  
**Print Lists:** Yes  
**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4.11  
**Distinguishing Features:** Highly-customizable system, with project management built-in; also works well for heavy day-to-day GTD use.  
**News:** None

### Organized

**Developer:** iSlayer  
**Current Version:** 1.11  
**Price:** Donationware  
**Development Status:** Release  
**iCal Sync:** Yes  
**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No  
**Web-app Sync:** No  
**Print Lists:** No  
**iPhone Presence:** None  
**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.5  
**Distinguishing Features:** Dashboard widget with calendar events, tasks, notes, and world clock.  
**News:** None

### Qu-s

**Developer:** Urban Design Limited  
**Current Version:** 1.2  
**Price:** \$17  
**Development Status:** Release  
**iCal Sync:** No  
**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No  
**Web-app Sync:** No  
**Print Lists:** No

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.5

**Distinguishing Features:** Allows lists (and other things) to be created as an editable part of the desktop. Good for simple lists.

**News:** None

## Stapler

**Developer:** The Blue Technologies Group

**Current Version:** 1.1

**Price:** €7.50 (about \$10)

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** No

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4

**Distinguishing Features:** A combination notepad and to-do list manager, with creation date, notes, and a check box for completed items. Tasks can be color-coded based on a low-level preference set-up.

**News:** None

## TaskMate

**Developer:** Ryan Conway

**Current Version:** 1.2.1

**Price:** Free

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** No

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** No

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.5

**Distinguishing Features:** Ultra-simple task list: remaining tasks in a simple list; completed tasks in a drawer (which can be hidden). Tasks are just single-line descriptions with a check box. Could be right for the super-simplified life.

**News:** A new version is up (a 0.1 increase), but I cannot discern what the changes are. TaskMate remains uber-simple...

## [ToDo X](#)

**Developer:** Omicron Software Systems, Inc.

**Current Version:** 2.2

**Price:** \$15

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Import from iCal only

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** No

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2

**Distinguishing Features:** Offers categories, priorities, and attached notes.

**News:** None

## [ZooDo](#)

**Developer:** InterfaceThis

**Current Version:** 1.0

**Price:** Free

**Development Status:** Release

**iCal Sync:** Yes

**QuickSilver Plug-in:** No

**Web-app Sync:** No

**Print Lists:** Yes (through iCal)

**iPhone Presence:** None

**OS Requirements:** Unknown

**Distinguishing Features:** A basic task creator for iCal, serving as a collection bucket.

**News:** None

## **Browser and Web-based GTD Applications**

### [30 Boxes](#)

**Price:** Free

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

## [43 Actions](#)

**Price:** Free (donations get extra features)

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

## [GTDAgenda](#)

**Price:** Free

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

## [GTDInbox](#)

**Price:** Free

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

## [GTD-PHP](#)

**Price:** Free

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

## [Neptune](#)

**Price:** \$10/year

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

## [Next Action](#)

**Price:** Free

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

## [Nexty](#)

**Price:** Free

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

## [Nozbe](#)

**Price:** Free

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

## [SimpleGTD](#)

**Price:** Free

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

## [Task Writer](#)

**Price:** Free

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

## [Toodledo](#)



**Price:** Free

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

### Tracks

**Price:** Free

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

### Vitalist

**Price:** \$5/month (premium)

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

## Other Browser/Web-based Task Managers

- [Backpack](#)
- [Basecamp](#)
- [CoMindWork](#)
- [HiTask](#)
- [Hiveminder](#)
- [Joe's Goals](#)
- [Mojonote](#)
- [Remember the Milk](#)
- [Scrybe](#)
- [Sproutliner](#)

- [Task Freak!](#)
- [Tasks](#)
- [Tasktoy](#)
- [Todoist](#)
- [Tweeto](#)
- [Zenlists](#)
- [ZenPages](#)

## **GTD and Task Management Wikis**

- [D3](#)
- [GTD TiddlyWiki](#)
- [MonkeyGTD](#)
- [Pimki](#)

## **iPhone Applications (not Web Apps)**

- [Actions](#)
- [Chores](#)
- [Dejumble](#)
- [DoBot ToDos](#)
- [EasyTask Manager](#)
- [Firetask](#)
- [Life Balance](#)
- [Lists by MobilityWare](#)
- [Lists by Tynsoe.org](#)
- [My Lists](#)
- [OmniFocus](#)
- [Outliner by CarbonFin](#)

- [Tanjas Checklist](#)
- [Tasks](#)
- [Things](#)
- [ToDo by Appigo](#)
- [To Do by Erica Sadun](#)
- [ToodleDo](#)
- [Zenbe Lists](#)

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# How To

by Sylvester Roque, [sroque@atpm.com](mailto:sroque@atpm.com)

## Controlling Your Mac: Multiple Computers and Monitors, One Keyboard, No Switches

In the beginning there were many computers and many monitors requiring many keyboards and many mice. Now there can be one keyboard and mouse to control them all.

In between my somewhat infrequent columns, I've been working on turning one of our Macs into a media center. That project has taken on a life of its own and resulted in several articles devoted to building an iTunes music server, use of dual monitors, and use of [Front Row](#) to control the system.

My original plan was to let my late 2007 Mac Pro do double duty as my primary computer and as a media server. With dual 2.66 GHz processors and 4 GB of memory, that shouldn't have been much of a strain. Besides, there wouldn't be many times where it was serving media while simultaneously doing processor-intensive tasks. If we ever turned that machine into a Boot Camp-based gamer, my trusty but aging G5 would become the media server. There have been a few false starts and detours along the way. This month, let's take a look at one of those detours and an interesting solution I discovered recently.

### The Initial Setup

My first attempt at a Mac-based media center was limited to being an iTunes music server. This turned out to be a rather simple process. All it required was making a few [physical connections](#) and using a few pieces of [software to make control easier](#). With that arrangement, my computer, keyboard, and monitor stayed on the desk, and a pair of audio cables ran around the periphery of the living room to the stereo. Everything worked, and life was good. Having a music-only media center meant I had to play back any iTunes video content [on the computer](#).. Since we were using an older TV that was in serious need of replacement, there was not much point in trying to connect it to the computer.

### Changing Needs Produce a New Challenge

Several months ago, we solved the TV problem and were finally able to connect a set to the computer. Since the Mac Pro already had a decent video card that supported dual monitors, connecting the Mac to the TV was about as simple as purchasing a DVI-to-HDMI cable and making the right connections. Now I had both the TV and a monitor connected to the Mac: [the Two-Headed Monster](#) roared to life. If I had left things well enough alone, everything would have remained right with the universe. But then, if I had done that, the detour wouldn't have occurred, and you wouldn't be reading this article.

A few weeks after I connected the TV, I decided to connect the computer to our set-top cable box and [use the computer as a DVR](#). The good news was that all I needed was a supported cable box, a FireWire cable, and some free software. The bad news was I had to move the computer across the room closer to the media cabinet. Now the computer was across the room from the desk and [too far away](#) for my USB keyboard to work reliably.

One solution to the problem might have been connecting a self-powered hub midway through the cable run. Unfortunately, that would place the hub in a location that's not only difficult to access for troubleshooting, but, more importantly, lacks easy access to an electrical outlet. I chose to go with the Apple [wireless keyboard](#) and [mouse](#).

My wireless keyboard and mouse combination usually worked fairly well, and battery life was better than I had expected. The only real problems were that if the system went to sleep I could not wake it from the keyboard. That was a minor issue that might be the result of using a USB dongle to add Bluetooth to that Mac.

The bigger problem was that sometimes my keyboard would lose its connection to the Mac. Since I had the Bluetooth status indicator turned on in the menu bar, reconnecting was pretty easy. Over time, this problem has gotten worse, and I seemed to be spending more time maintaining the connection than actually using the computer. Clearing a few physical objects out of the signal path helped a bit, but I still wasn't getting anything near acceptable performance. At one point there were only two things convincing me that the keyboard wasn't totally dead: the power light was still coming on, and it paired and worked perfectly with my unibody MacBook Pro. So what do you do when one project isn't going well? You guessed it: start a new project.

## **Start a New Project and Solve the Problem**

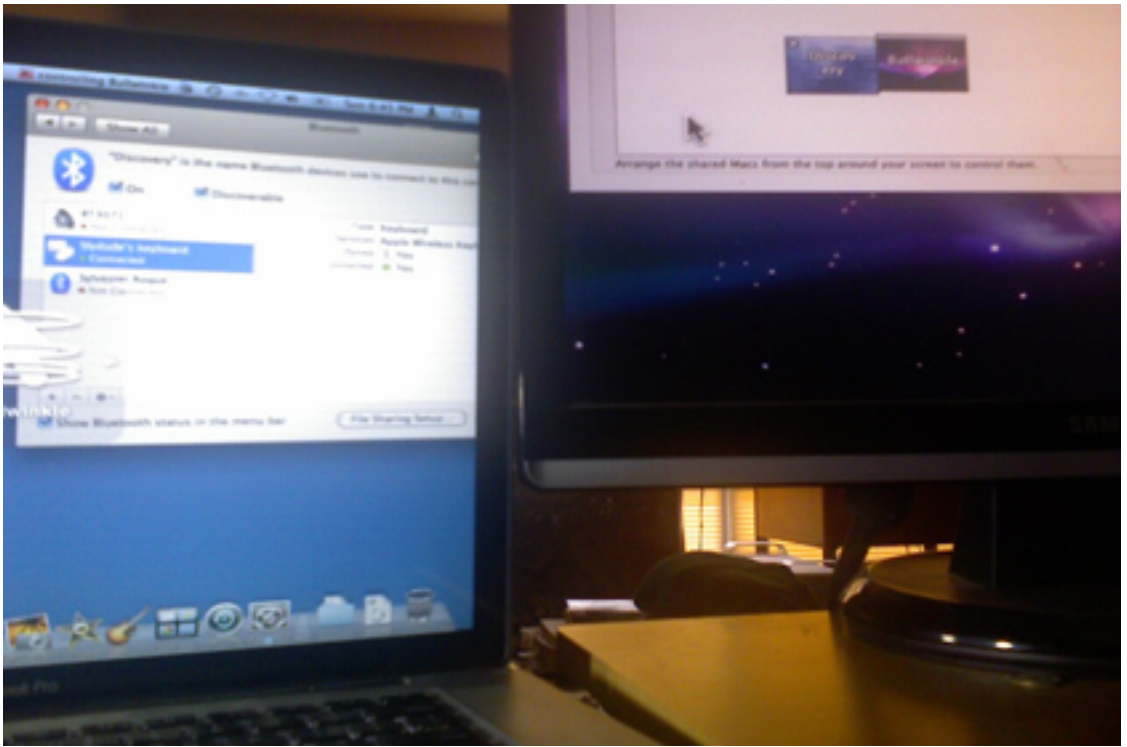
Since its arrival last November, my MacBook Pro has been sharing desk space with a 24-inch display that is connected to the media center. The MacBook Pro also has a hub and external keyboard attached. This makes for a very cluttered environment. Since the wireless keyboard works with the laptop, I might as well use it in place of the wired keyboard attached to the MacBook Pro. That gets rid of clutter but doesn't give me a way to control the media center. Everyone knows you can't use one Bluetooth keyboard with several Macs simultaneously, right? Well, not being someone who likes taking "no" for an answer, I stumbled upon a solution.

Somewhere on the Net I stumbled upon a description of a method for sharing a wireless keyboard with two Macs using a program called [teleport](#). I've been using this preference pane, which weighs in at less than 750K, for about a week now, and it works well.

Teleport behaves like a [KVM switch](#) without the need for additional hardware: its magic occurs entirely via software. I've used a KVM switch with two Macs before and didn't want the extra hardware and cables, so this sounded promising. Besides, teleport is donationware.

Here's the best way I can think of to explain what teleport allows you to. Suppose you have two Macs, each with its own display. With teleport installed on both computers, sliding

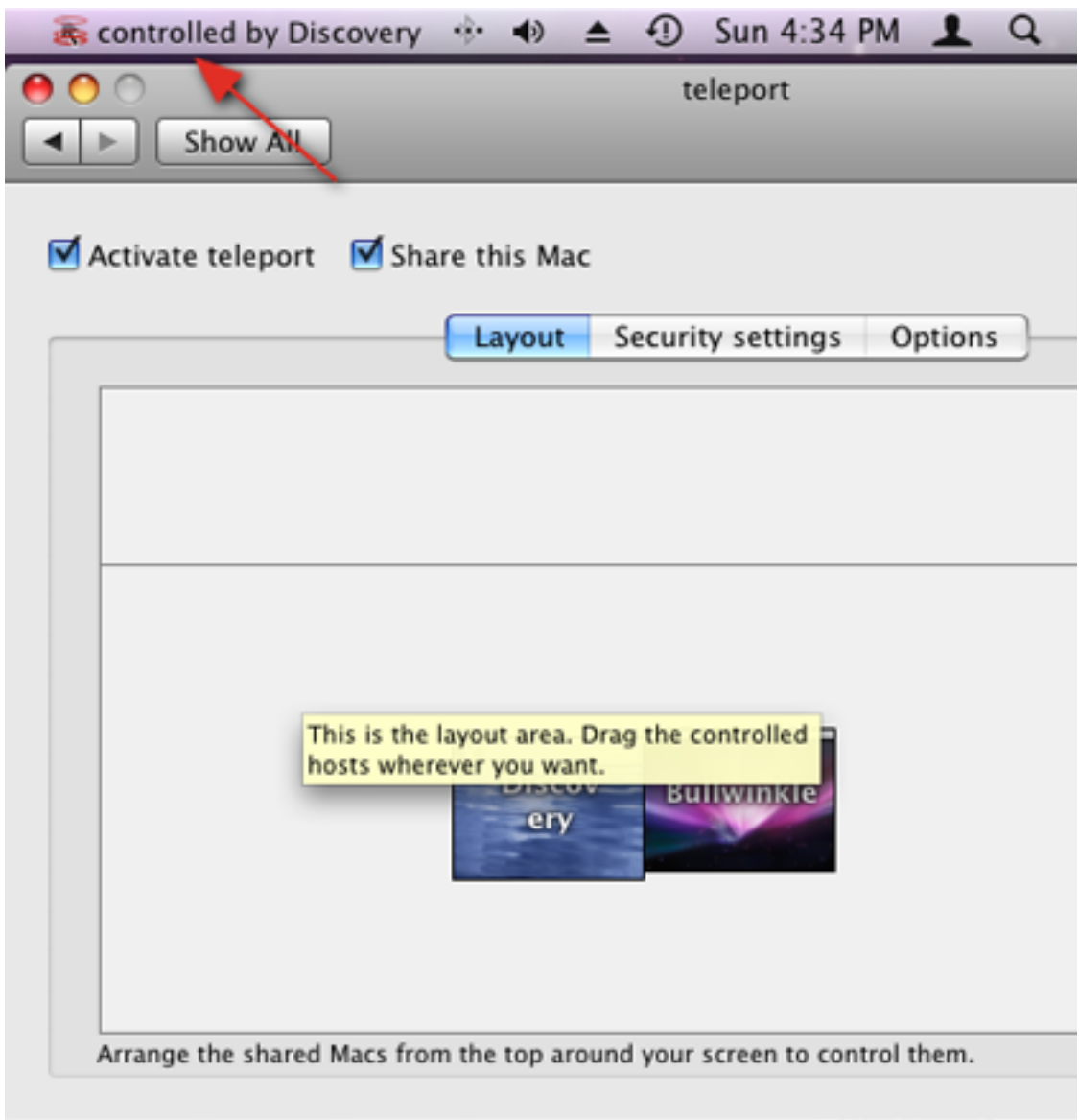
the mouse off the edge of one computer's screen causes the mouse to magically appear on the second computer's screen. The keyboard and mouse now control the second computer. Want to go back to the first computer for something? It's as simple as sliding the mouse back to the first screen. During the entire time, as you can see, from the Bluetooth preference panes on both computers, the keyboard and mouse are only paired with one computer.



## Installation and Setup

Installing teleport is simple. Unpack the Zip file, open the folder, and double-click the preference pane. During installation, you will be asked whether you want to install the preference pane only for the current user or for all users. When installed for a single user, teleport is confined to use from within that account. This is a nice touch and makes it possible to test the preference before installing it for the entire system. Personally, I'd like to see this option a bit more often.

Now click the “Activate teleport” and “Share this Mac” options. The Layout pane contains icons representing all Macs on your network with teleport installed. The controlling computer is in the center with systems that it might control at the top of the screen. Drag one of the “target” computers to the controlling computer in the center of the screen. If the “Share this Mac” option is not checked on a computer, that computer *cannot* be controlled by teleport but it *can* control other computers. If “Share this Mac” is checked on all Macs then any computer could act as the “controller.”



There are some security settings available within teleport to control who has access to your systems. Connections can be encrypted using security certificates from either iChat or MobileMe. You can also build a list of trusted hosts and accept or reject connections based upon that status.

When configuring teleport, be sure to take a look at the Options tab. From here, users can control such things as whether a hot key needs to be depressed for switching to take place. It's also possible to try to wake a sleeping Mac, drag and drop files between Macs, and synchronize the pasteboard (clipboard). I think I am going to find these last two options very useful. So far I have only passed small files and small snippets of text among the Macs, but it works as advertised.

## Why Not Just Use Screen Sharing?

For my purposes, I could use Leopard's built-in screen sharing. In fact, that's what I was doing before I discovered this method. My objection to screen sharing is that it places the second computer's screen in a window on the computer that is taking control. To get that window out of your way, you have to at best minimize it to the Dock and enlarge it when needed. With teleport, simply slide the mouse from one screen to the other. The only thing that appears on the controlling computer's screen is a somewhat translucent image of a mouse pointer with the name of the computer that is being controlled.

## A Few Caveats

I've only found a few minor issues with teleport, and the first may be due to my system. My wireless keyboard is paired with the MacBook Pro. If the other Mac is at the login window, teleport doesn't seem to be able to take control of that computer until the desktop is almost finished loading. Once teleport is active, I can wake the system from sleep, but any time before that it's not going to work. I can't currently wake or login to that system wirelessly with or without teleport. I am currently using Leopard's screen sharing to log in and closing that window once teleport is active. This is only a minor inconvenience since I've never been able to wake the Mac Pro wirelessly even when the keyboard was paired directly with that computer. I will probably create a new user and automatically login to that account. From there, with teleport active, I could switch accounts if necessary.

The second caveat is also not a big issue for me but might be for users who spend a good deal of time in [Boot Camp](#). As a Mac-only program, teleport isn't going to work with Boot Camp. If you want that level of control, you're going to have to look elsewhere. If I find myself in that situation, [Synergy](#) looks like an option, although its current Mac OS X implementation has a few drawbacks at the moment.

Third, teleport does not work well with programs that take over everything. If you cannot do things such as Command-Tab with a program open, that program probably won't work well with teleport. If you are running such a program on the control computer, teleport won't be able to operate the other computer. If you are running such a program on the computer being controlled, teleport assumes control normally but won't be able to switch back to the controlling Mac. The program doesn't crash, but it doesn't handle being controlled by teleport.

Finally, the media controls, screen brightness, and eject keys appear to only work on the system that has a keyboard associated with or connected to it. For me, this means that those keys work on my MacBook Pro but not on the Mac Pro. I went several days without realizing that this was an issue because I use [Sizzling Keys](#) to control iTunes.

## Final Thoughts

Although teleport may not be the perfect solution for my current setup, the drawbacks have been minor and the software has proven stable. In the last few days I've seen other suggestions for sharing one keyboard among multiple machines. Although I will keep investigating that issue, once we decide we don't need to turn the Mac Pro into an XP gaming



machine I'll probably just add an IR remote sensor. That would be the most convenient solution. On the other hand, since the G5 is dead, maybe I can convince my wife it's time to get a Mac mini and turn it into a media center.

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# Desktop Pictures

by David Siebecker, <http://www.sidekickr.com>

## Tanzania Safari, Part 2

We need new desktop pictures each month. [Write](#) to us!

### This Month's Desktop Pictures

This month's photos were taken by [David Siebecker](#) on a safari in Tanzania in 2006.



[View Pictures](#)

### Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

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

### Downloading All the Pictures at Once

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

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

**OmniWeb** Choose “Save Linked ▸ Images...” from the File menu.

**Safari** Use [this Automator workflow](#).

### 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](mailto:editor@atpm.com) and we'll consider publishing it in next month's issue. Have a regular print but no scanner? Don't worry. E-mail us, and we tell you where to send it so we can scan it for you. Note that we cannot return the original print, so send us a copy.

# Placing Desktop Pictures

## **Mac OS X 10.3.x Through 10.5.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.

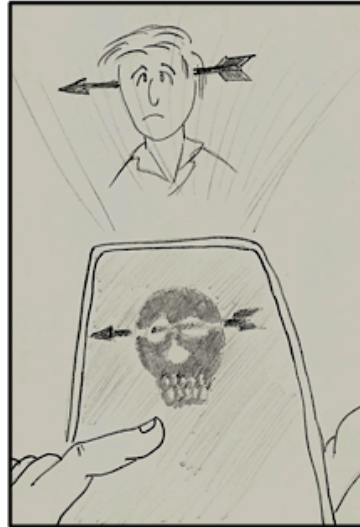


# Qaptain Qwerty

by Linus Ly, <http://qaptainqwerty.blogspot.com>

Forget Mac tablet and Mac netbook! The next insanely great product being announced at the Worldwide Developers Conference will be an infinitely hardware-adaptable iPhone-like device for the medical professionals. Ever heard how the medical field always have jobs regardless of how lousy the economy is? Apple knew years ago that some day Mac sales would be down so it has secretly developed the... iRealLife. Basically an iPhone with hardware plug-ins and 4.0 OS, the new device is a dream come true for doctors in the field. Instant diagnosis without appointments, waiting lists, etc. With the iRealLife, from anywhere, doctors will be able to perform...

**X-RAY!!!**



**FLU ANALYSIS!!!**



**SELF-DEFENSE!!!**

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# Software Review

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, [eritterskamp@atpm.com](mailto:eritterskamp@atpm.com)

## iBloodTracker 2.0

**Developer:** [Applications for Life](#)

**Price:** \$25

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4. [Universal](#).

**Trial:** Feature-limited (five entries).



I'd never used a medical-information tracking program and wanted to see if it would simplify things for me, my roommate, or our doctors. iBloodTracker looked as if it could be useful.

Was it? It all depends on what you want to track—and who will see the results.

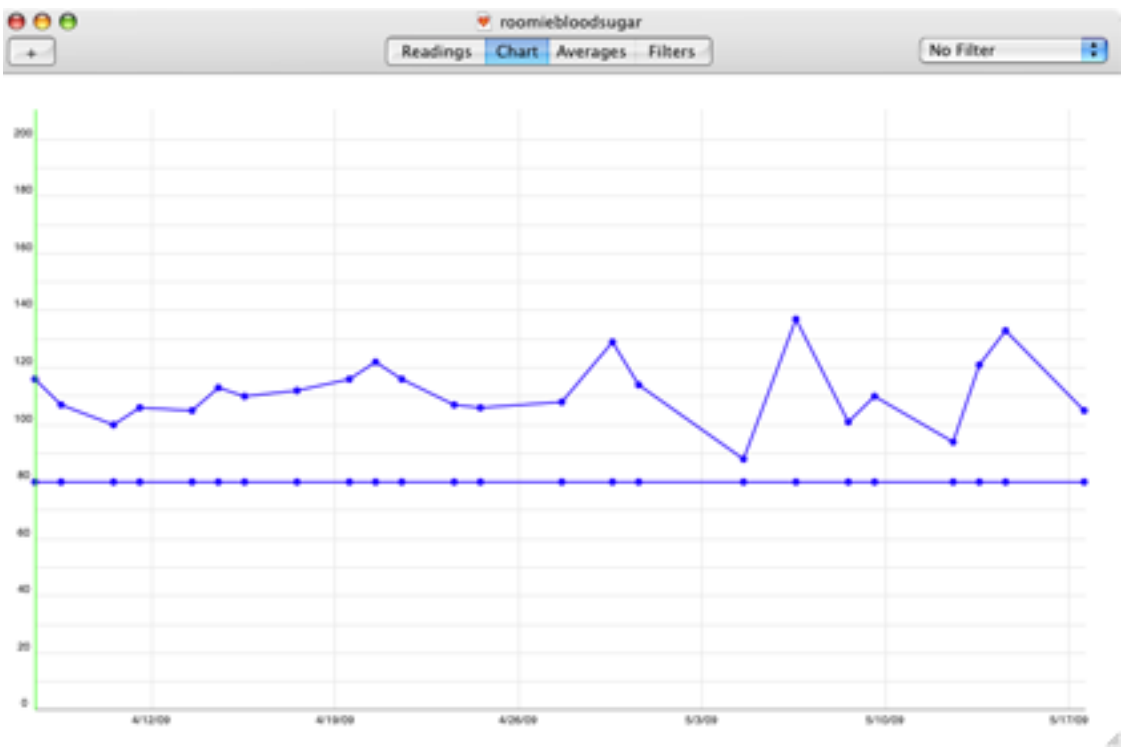
I failed to read the promotional material thoroughly and assumed it would help me track my blood sugar readings for my doctor. It turns out, iBloodTracker is intended (and advertised) to track blood pressure readings, heart rate, and weight. I don't need to track those, with a healthy blood pressure and a too-high but obvious weight. But I do need to check my blood sugar now and then and record it for my doctor.

I'd been recording it in a simple TextEdit file with one field for the date and another tabbed-over field for the sugar reading. Easy.

So what's the point of using software like iBloodTracker? It creates charts! My theory is that doctors like charts—some doctors, anyway—because they are visual learners. Graphical charts are even more accessible to some visual learners than text.

I haven't been able to check with the doctors involved in this review to see what they think, but I'll post something in the comments section after I do. I'm also interested in responses from doctors who read the review to see if they like these charts, or if a list of numbers is just as good.

So here's how I tricked the software into working out for us (I used my roommate's numbers, as the license is for one user only, and my roomie checks his sugar more often than I do). The ideal top number in your blood pressure reading is 120, or at least that's the average: 120 over 80. It so happens that the top end of the fasting blood sugar range is also 120; that is to say, when you get up in the morning and check your sugar level first thing, you want it to be no higher than 120 (some doctors set a lower number, but that's where my roomie and I both are). So I entered his sugar numbers into iBloodTracker as the systolic reading and left the diastolic at 80.



The top number is really a blood sugar reading.

As you can see, his blood sugar is mostly below the indicated 120 but above the recommended 80. His doctor should be pleased enough with this chart I mailed him.

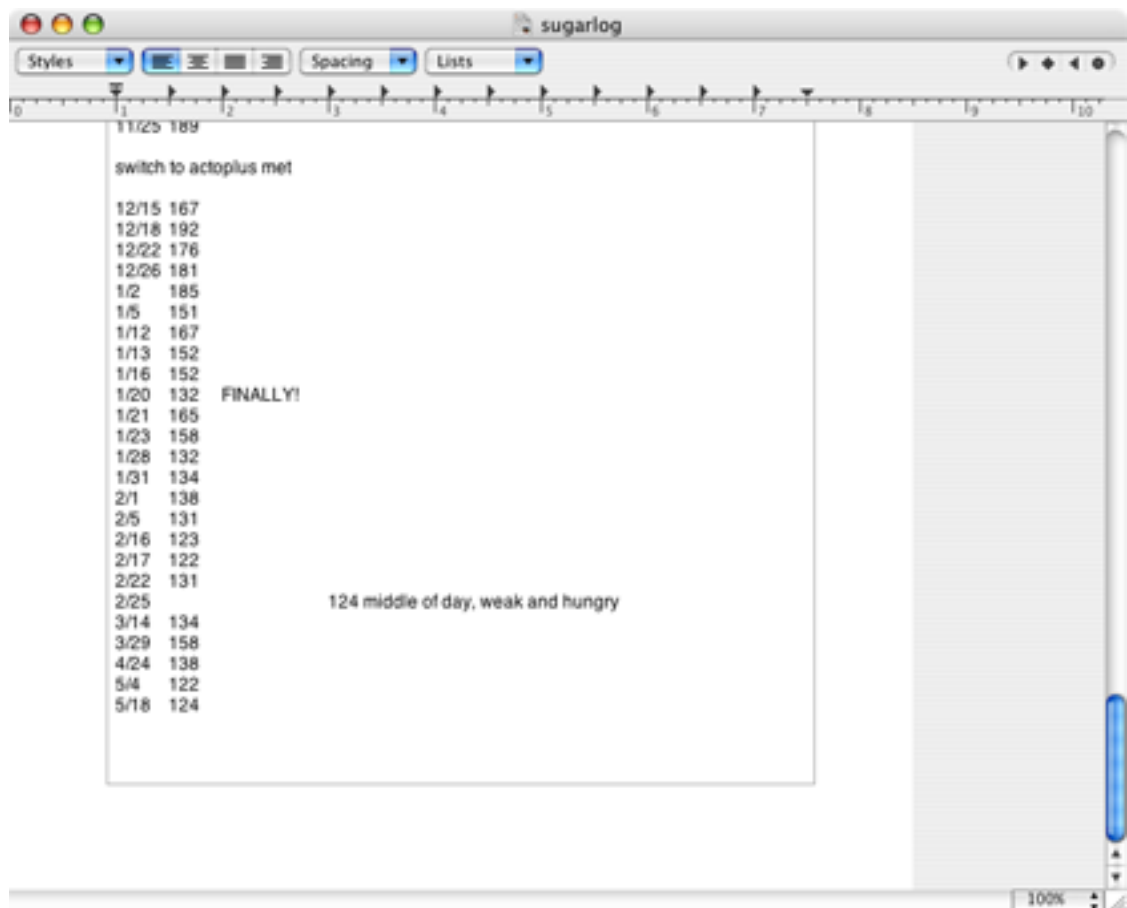
For those who are just as happy with a list, the numbers can look this way:

The screenshot shows the 'roomiebloodsugar' application window. At the top, there are window control buttons (red, yellow, green) and a '+' button. Below these are tabs for 'Readings', 'Chart', 'Averages', and 'Filters'. A 'No Filter' button is on the right. The main area contains a table with the following columns: Date, Time, Pressure, Pulse, Weight, Tags, and Comments. The table lists 20 readings from 4/7/09 to 5/17/09. The 4/7/09 entry is highlighted in blue.

Date	Time	Pressure	Pulse	Weight	Tags	Comments
5/17/09	1:59 PM	105 / 80				
5/14/09	1:59 PM	133 / 80				
5/13/09	1:59 PM	121 / 80				
5/12/09	1:59 PM	94 / 80				
5/9/09	1:59 PM	110 / 80				
5/8/09	1:59 PM	101 / 80				
5/6/09	1:58 PM	137 / 80				
5/4/09	1:58 PM	88 / 80				
4/30/09	1:58 PM	114 / 80				
4/29/09	1:58 PM	129 / 80				
4/27/09	3:34 PM	108 / 80				
4/24/09	12:59 PM	106 / 80				
4/23/09	12:59 PM	107 / 80				
4/21/09	12:59 PM	116 / 80				
4/20/09	12:59 PM	122 / 80				
4/19/09	12:58 PM	116 / 80				
4/17/09	12:58 PM	112 / 80				
4/15/09	12:58 PM	110 / 80				
4/14/09	12:58 PM	113 / 80				
4/13/09	12:57 PM	105 / 80				
4/11/09	12:57 PM	106 / 80				
4/10/09	12:57 PM	100 / 80				
4/8/09	12:56 PM	107 / 80				
4/7/09	12:55 PM	116 / 80				

Sometimes a list is just fine, too.

But this list is no better than the one we'd been keeping in TextEdit.



These are my numbers instead of my roomie's: a little higher and not as consistent.

So for \$25, you ought to have a doctor who will appreciate the “chartiness” factor. If your doctor doesn't care for that, there's not much point in the extra clicks and tabbing to a new field that you do in iBloodTracker as opposed to using a text document.

Even if you are tracking blood pressure numbers, as the software is designed to do, I'd still base the purchasing decision on the people who are going to use it most: the doctors involved. If it's up to you and me, we'll probably stick with the easier system—any word-processing program we like.

Will my roomie and I keep using it? Probably. It's up to my roomie, really—and his doctor. I'm not sure I think it's worth a few extra clicks to type in a couple of digits every day, especially when I can do them quicker the old way. But we'll see what he thinks.

Recommendations for future versions: add a blood sugar field and a whole new batch of people might be interested in this application. Unless they've also all figured out how to cheat, too, and put that reading in the systolic field.



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# Software Review

by Linus Ly, [lly@atpm.com](mailto:lly@atpm.com)

## Posterino 1.5.1

**Developer:** [Zykloid Software](#)

**Price:** \$25

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4. [Universal](#).

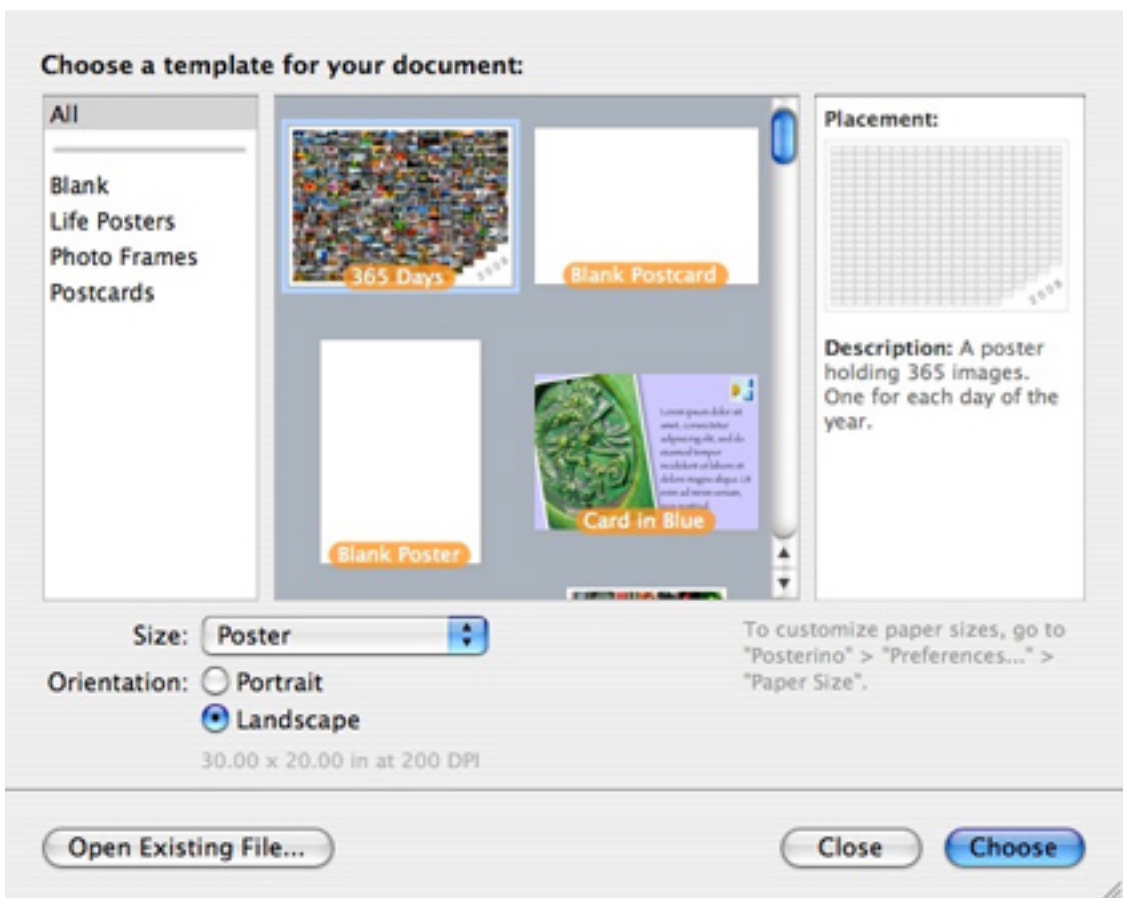
**Trial:** Feature-limited (watermarked).



I love to take pictures, and at gatherings am usually the one with the camera. With the many photos in my collection, I made monthly calendars, stitched panorama, photomosaics, and more. When I learned about Posterino's Life Poster feature, I knew I had to check it out.

### Posters and More

Although my primary interest with Posterino is poster-making, the software offers more than posters. At its heart, Posterino is simply a collection of templates that work nicely with iPhoto, Aperture, Photoshop Lightroom, or from folders in the Finder. Choose a template, then select a source of photos—be it an iPhoto album, the entire iPhoto library, the Pictures folder in Finder, etc.—then drag and drop photos into the templates. By default, Posterino only loads the photos in iPhoto library and a few standard locations in Finder, like the Pictures folder. You can add more folders of your own.



Posterino comes with templates for make photo frames, postcards, and posters.

The simplest templates are the Photo Frames, which involve just a few pictures. As the name suggests, the dimension of the picture is that of a picture frame, with slots for you to insert a few choice photos. You can resize the photos, move them within the frames, and rotate them. You can make use of the included text or add your own. If you don't find these templates impressive, then I agree wholeheartedly with you. You probably can even use the free office suite NeoOffice to make a little photo frame of your own. It may take a little extra time, but it is feasible.



## Random Photos

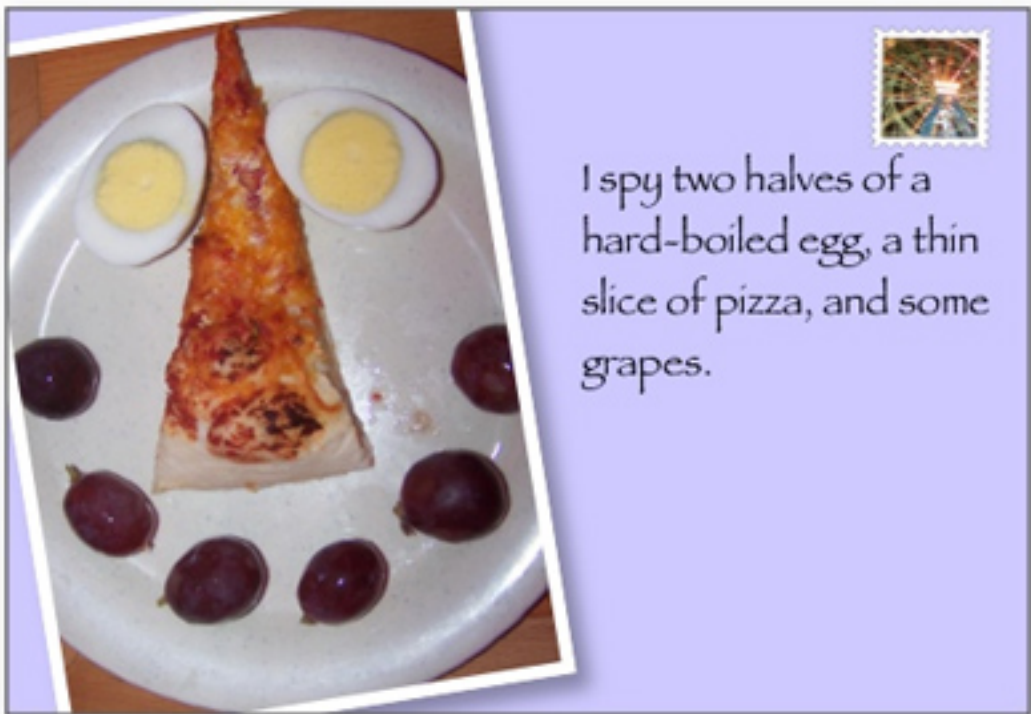
Photo frames are not too impressive.

The postcard template is the next step up from the Photo Frames. You still really work with a simple mask that lets you insert photos, but now you can also have your own photo in

the shape of a postage stamp. Postcards can be sent as a picture attachment via e-mail. In this respect, Posterino postcards are not much different from what is offered in MobileMe.

You can print out postcards and have your local post office handle the delivery the old-fashioned way. However, there is a big problem with that. I am old enough to actually use real paper postcards myself. These postcards have a picture on one side, say, featuring some famous landmark of the place I vacationed in. On the other side, the right half is where the recipient address is written, and the upper right is where you affix a stamp. The left half of this back side is where you write a brief note about your trip.

With Posterino, you end up with a piece of paper with photo, message, and “stamp,” all on one side, and the other side is blank. I suppose you would write the addresses for sender and recipient on the blank side. For all the fun factor with the stamp, you still need to affix a real stamp where it is expected. Maybe I am just a purist, but a Posterino postcard just doesn't behave like a real postcard. There is a template with a photo taking up the entire page of the postcard, but then instead of using that template in Posterino, why don't you just print straight from your iPhoto onto a piece of paper of the proper size?




Not quite your typical real-world postcard, with a picture entirely taking up one side of the piece of paper.

One interesting feature of Posterino is the use of Swiss Post International to send real postcards. You first buy some credits somehow or use credit card at the time of using the

service. Design your postcard from within Posterino as usual, then choose Mail > Send As Postcard. In addition to the text you already entered, you can add another message. Posterino works with Address Book to pull in the name and address. I have not made use of the service, so I can only wonder if the postcard would be postmarked in Switzerland. Wouldn't it be odd if that were the case, and the sender went on vacation in some other part of the world, say, Peru? It does not matter much because Swiss Post International will discontinue the service in July 2009 for small businesses. Posterino is already patched to stop offering the service when the time rolls around. Zykloid is looking for other interesting services to integrate with Posterino.

Address Book Lookup:

**Preview:**



**Your message:**

**Recipient's address:**

First name and surname:

Street & house no.:

Postcode:

City:

Country:

**Payment:**

To pay your postcard, please choose a payment method below.  
Costs for the postcard, postage and delivery are paid by the coupon.

Coupon code:

Example: A81234567

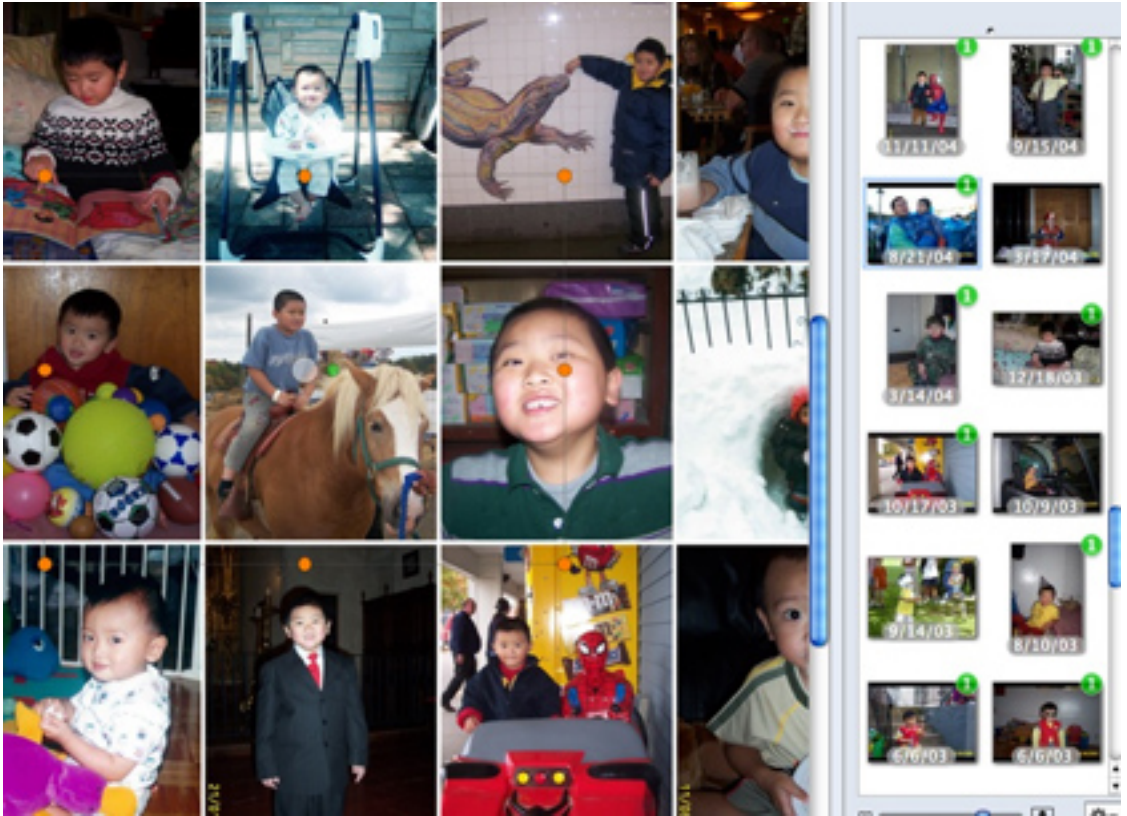
**?** The Swiss Post is discontinuing its postcard service for small businesses. Therefore this interface will stop working on July 1st, 2009! Please press the "?" button for detailed information.

Interesting integration with Swiss Post International, but alas service will be discontinued in a few months.

## Fun With Life Posters

The fun starts when you use the Life Poster templates. The routine is still the same—load pictures, adjust their sizes and positions, etc.—but now quantity makes all the difference. We are talking on average about 60 photos, so the Fill and Fill At Random features now come in handy. Also useful now is Posterino's zooming capability. Pretty much anyone

with a digital camera has a decent photo collection that Posterino would gladly grab from to fill in a Life Poster. You may be quick to point out that with some tweaking, iPhoto too can generate something akin to the Life Poster. However, recall that with Posterino you have the ability to rotate, enlarge or shrink, and shift the photos within their frames. You can also, on the fly, move photos already in the template around or replace them with other photos from the sources.



Zoom in to adjust the photos to your liking.

You can pick and choose from within Posterino, but its interface is not made for switching around, so jumping from albums and folders can get very tedious quickly. Just do your arrangement in iPhoto or the Finder, then pour the info into Posterino's templates. So far, I created a Life Poster featuring over 60 pictures of my son. I plan to make posters showing off Apple products or faces from the extended family tree I maintain, or perhaps one featuring my collection of obsolete hardware. The possibilities are endless.



Just Justin.

## Poster Print

A poster is made to be viewed on paper. Computer screens can be only so large. Zykloid Software decided not to get into the printing business and instead provides the option to export the poster to disk, Flickr, or iPhoto. From there, you are supposed to have the poster professionally printed and mailed back to you. In the case of disk, you can bring the file on a flash drive to a local print shop, like Staples, to get it printed.

I wish Zykloid would include in its documentation links to programs like the open-source [PosteRazor](#) or Axamblis' [Imprint Studio](#). Zykloid should at least suggest that the Posterino user search for “poster print” in his favorite search engine. It is true that assembling the pages printed via PosteRazor or Imprint Studio is tedious, but I think it is necessary to have a draft view of the poster before spending money on professional service. Chances are that out of the hundreds of photos used, one or two should be rotated, shifted, or re-sized in a better way.



At my local Staples, a 24" × 36" print would cost about \$40. Printing with Apple via iPhoto or with Flickr probably cost about the same, plus shipping. I am not financially rich enough to readily spend \$40 without first seeing a draft copy. What's more, not everyone lives near a print shop, so waiting a few days for the poster to arrive in the mail is not a satisfying experience. I am sure for an extra fee, the poster could be sent via some faster method, but again, the frugal person in me would never go with that option. Personally, I find the "posters" I made with Imprint Studio and my HP Color LaserJet CP1518ni very usable for non-business purposes.

## Conclusion

If you have a decent photo collection and want to make something out of it, Posterino is a Very Nice program to have. Posterino's Life Poster is most useful, but its postcard feature can be fun to use, also. Posterino provides convenient export for printing by professional services. However, you will fare better if you first generate a draft copy with poster printing software like PosteRazor or Imprint Studio, a suggestion I think Zykloid Software should include in the Posterino documentation.

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# Software Review

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, [eritterskamp@atpm.com](mailto:eritterskamp@atpm.com)

## Smashing Tennis

**Developer:** [MacGames.org](http://MacGames.org)

**Price:** \$10

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4. [Universal](#).

**Trial:** Feature-limited (no tournament mode).



I wanted to like this game. Years ago, I played loads of on-court tennis, and I've enjoyed the Wii Sports version in my living room. But I did not like Smashing Tennis, though I am allowing that other folks will.

I have not played a game in a long time that was about hitting the spacebar over and over. It feels funny and, with my clicky-loud keyboard, it is loud.

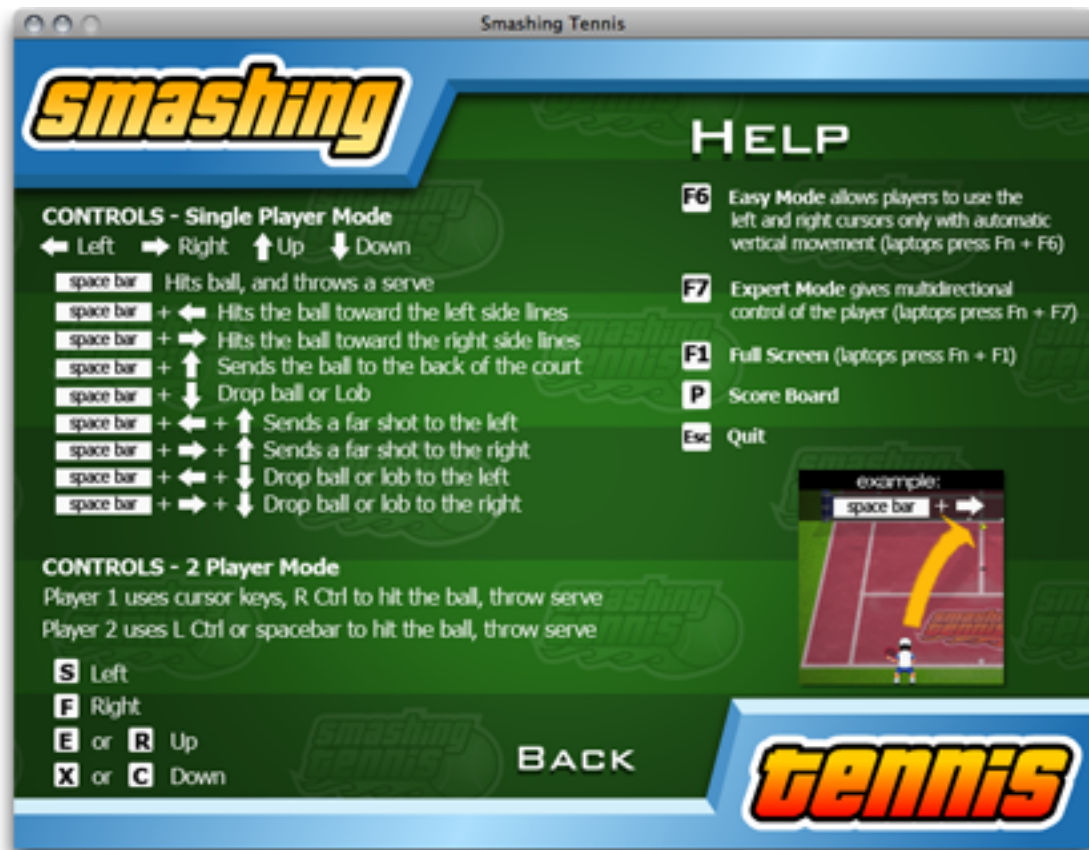


The visuals are OK, a little simplistic, but that's fine. I didn't want much clutter. The game took over my screen when I played it, and my attempts to get a screenshot were

unsuccessful. I couldn't tab among applications, and I couldn't use Grab. Points off for the game taking everything over like that. *Editor's Note:* we were able to get a few shots with [Snapz Pro X](#).

You type in your name and select a player. Though there were players of several ethnicities and clothing available, they are all male—unless the two players with hats are female, but I don't think so. I nearly turned off the game when I realized this. I want gender not to matter in a lot of ways, but to assume we are all male is inexcusable.

The default music is peppy enough, like what you hear on a workout program.



Game play consists of hitting the spacebar to toss the ball up, again to serve, and again to hit the ball. You use the left and right arrows to move along the baseline, and a red dot shows you where the ball is going to land so you can run to that side. But if you wait for that red dot, you'll be too late, just like in real tennis. You have to anticipate what the other player will do, and most of the time you are best off just returning to the center.

You can use the up and down arrow keys to go to the net and baseline, or just stay in the F6 mode and stay on the baseline. The game will send you to the net if it is necessary.

You can adjust your power, speed, and control, and those of your opponent. So start off really good and make your opponent weak. But that seems tacky.

The instructions and tips promise you will improve with time, and will learn to hit lobs and drop shots with combinations of keys. It just made me want to turn on the Wii, to be honest, and get moving for real rather than sitting at a monitor. Or heaven help us, go outside and serve a bucket of balls.

Recommendations: it's worth the download to try the free version, and the full version is only ten bucks if you like it. Even for free, I won't be playing it again.

I would say it's a good game for kids, but they are the ones who should be outside playing for real. Also, I would not recommend it until there are more players to choose from, because I would not want kids to think only boys can play sports. Grrr.

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# Accessory Reviews

by Chris Lawson, <http://chrislawson.net>

## ZoFunk Cases

### ZoFunk Grip Sleeve

**Developer:** [ZoFunk](#)

**Price:** \$15

**Requirements:** iPhone 3G

**Trial:** None



There are silicone sleeves galore for iPods and iPhones, and there are even silicone keyboard protectors for laptop and desktop Macs. Naturally, ZoFunk would have their own version of the ubiquitous “skin” case for the iPhone, available in red, white, black, or clear.



The Grip Sleeve is Yet Another Basic Silicone Case. With a giant hole in the back of it.

Most of the typical features of silicone cases apply to the ZoFunk Grip Sleeve. The sleeve is stretchy to easily fit over an iPhone, can be washed with mild detergent and water to keep it clean, and the surface of the case is tacky. The last feature comes in handy if you're the type who leaves your phone sitting on a flat surface in the car while driving. There's enough friction between the case and the cupholder cover in my Mazda to keep the phone in place even on a highway exit ramp at 45 MPH.



The power button is protected by a layer of silicone. The headphone jack cutout is a little small, though.

The only cutouts on the Grip Sleeve are for the camera, the headphone jack, the silent button, the Dock Connector, and, inexplicably, the Apple logo. The volume and power buttons are protected by a thin layer of silicone through which they're easily actuated.



The volume buttons are also protected by a layer of silicone.

The textured finish—the case is ridged like a bullseye centered on the phone’s Apple logo—is unappealing to my eye; I’d have preferred a uniformly smooth finish or perhaps something fine-grained like anodized aluminum. The ridges seem like their whole purpose, other than collecting dirt, is to focus attention on the Apple logo cutout.



Hey, look at me, I'm hip and trendy because I have all these waves radiating out from the Apple logo on the back of my phone. Yes, the logo you won't see because I'm *holding the phone in my hand*.

I'll readily admit that I don't understand the point of having a cutout for the Apple logo. Then again, I've been using Macs and Apple products since 1988 and never believed in showing off the logo merely as a status symbol. The whole purpose of a case is to protect the device inside it, and ZoFunk seems to have forgotten that important point.





Here's another shot of the back, sans phone.

By putting a penny-sized circular cutout in the back of the case, the iPhone is directly exposed to scratches and other damage. It's also one more place grit can sneak under the case to become trapped between the phone and the case. The good news, however, is that because of the flexibility of the silicone, it's easy to remove the case and wash it off, which you'll probably want to do on a regular basis, especially since the sticky material tends to attract dust and dirt.

The only other drawback to the extreme tackiness of the silicone material is that it makes an encased phone nearly impossible to retrieve from a jeans or shirt pocket. This is mildly annoying for us guys; ladies who carry their phone in a purse probably won't care one way or another.



At least it looks normal from the front. Not half-bad, actually, and better than some of the competition.

ZoFunk makes a hard plastic screen protector that is included with the Zoe Case (see below), but they don't include it with the Grip Sleeve. (You can buy it separately for an extra \$10.) They should, because the Grip Sleeve provides essentially zero screen protection. In fairness, though, neither do most other skin-style cases. You'll probably want to get a separate screen protector.

There are numerous silicone cases like the Grip Sleeve on the market. Most of them are around the same price and provide approximately the same features. It's really a question of how much you like the design and appearance of the case. The Grip Sleeve isn't bad, but it's not great, either. For \$15, you can probably do better, especially with that enormous cutout in the back of the case.

## Zoclear Case

**Developer:** [ZoFunk](#)

**Price:** \$27



**Requirements:** iPhone 3G

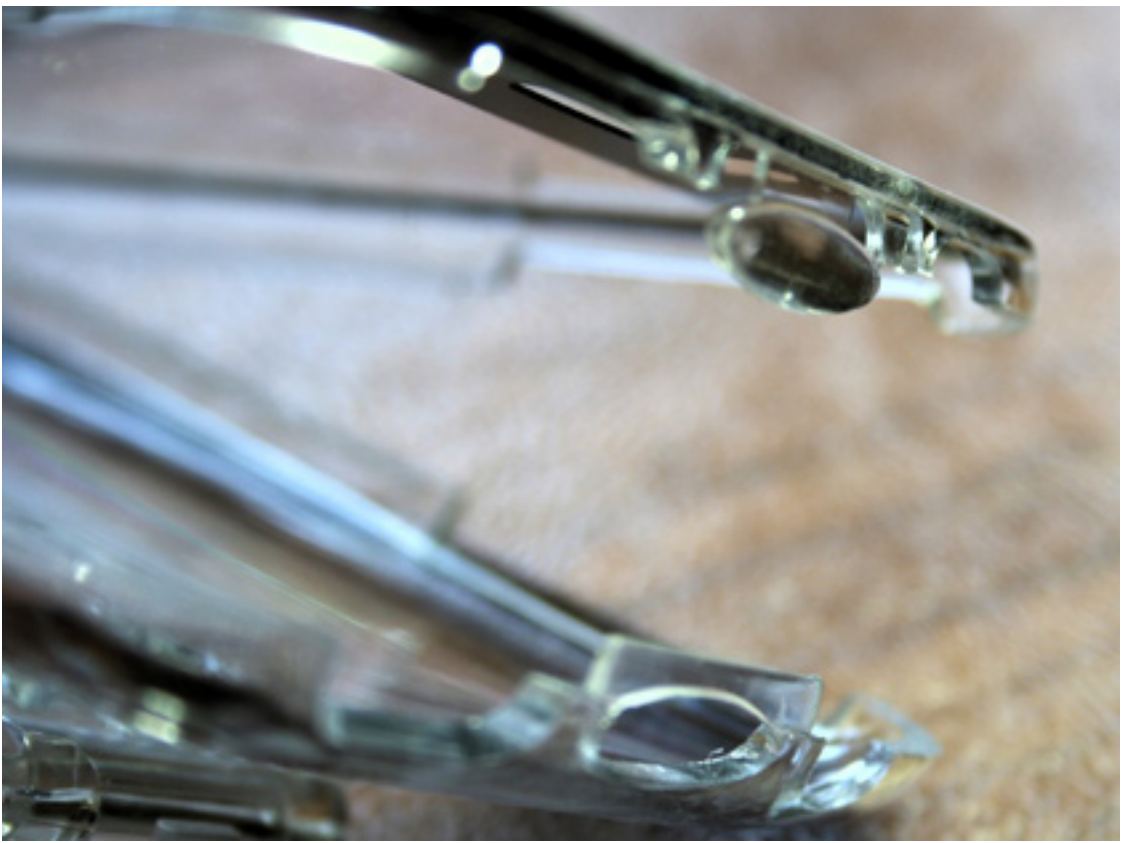
**Trial:** None

The Grip Sleeve is far from the only trick in ZoFunk's bag. They have traditional hard cases, too, and the flagship among these is the Zoclear, a hard-shell case with an integral screen protector and belt-clip-cum-stand.



It does a great job of protecting the phone, though, with its integral screen protector. After a day or two, you forget that it's there.

Design-wise, it's similar to cases like the [Contour Showcase](#), but to my eye, it's more attractive than the Showcase due to greater consistency in the construction. That's not to say it's perfect—there are mold lines and hard edges that would make Jonathan Ive weep—but the all-black face and all-clear cases look better than the mix that the Showcase has.



Too bad the clip holding the case closed is (a) flimsy *and* (b) nearly impossible to open without tools. I had to use a screwdriver to open the case to remove my phone. Fortunately, the case is designed so that you won't need to do that often.

The latch at the top of the case feels a little flimsy without a phone in the case, and the belt clip has its own latch that sounds like it's breaking every time I open it. ZoFunk did go the extra mile with the belt clip, though; it's the first belt clip I've seen that follows the advice I've been giving for years and folds out as a "kickstand" to let the case stand on its own. This is a really useful feature if you're sitting at a desk or on an airplane, since you don't need to prop the iPhone up against anything (or clip it on the seatback pocket) to watch videos.



The belt clip design on the Zoclear is great. You can stand the iPhone up in a horizontal position. . .



...or in a vertical position.

The clip also rotates 180 degrees, allowing you to put the phone in whatever orientation you want on your belt. You can stand the iPhone up either vertically or horizontally, and you can remove the clip entirely if you'd rather carry your phone in a pocket and don't want the added bulk.



The Zoclear's clip detaches if you don't want the added bulk in your pocket.

ZoFunk designed the Zoclear with an integrated thin plastic face that acts as a screen protector. There's a small cutout over the handset speaker and one for the power button, but the rest of the phone is entirely protected by a layer of plastic. Touching the screen through the plastic is marginally less accurate than touching the bare screen, but probably not noticeably so unless you're doing a great deal of typing or gaming. I didn't see any drop in typing accuracy (perhaps helped by the smart auto-correction features in the iPhone's spell-checker) or in pointing accuracy while using the Zoclear with the iPhone.



The Zoclear is somewhat happier propped up in its horizontal position than in its vertical position, as you can see here.

The headphone jack cutout is a little on the small side if you use third-party headphones with a larger plug, but it works fine with Apple's headphones. The volume and silent buttons are easily accessible, as is the power button on top of the phone. There's a cutout in the back of the case for the camera lens to peek through, allowing for unobstructed photos, and the dock connector cutout is plenty wide for a sync cable and the speaker/microphone setup while being deep enough to provide a good degree of protection.





The Zoclear is of a clamshell design, but doesn't fit together as nicely as one might like.

If it weren't for the forgettable build quality of the case and that flimsy-feeling belt clip, this case would be almost perfect. As it is, \$27 is a pretty good deal for this level of protection and style, especially with a built-in screen protector. I think this might be my favorite iPhone case yet.

## Zoe Case

**Developer:** [ZoFunk](#)

**Price:** \$21

**Requirements:** iPhone 3G

**Trial:** None



If you're just looking for basic, hard-shell protection for your iPhone, you'd be hard-pressed to find something more functional than ZoFunk's Zoe Case. It's a two-piece, rubberized plastic case that snaps together over your phone, available in either red or black. The inside is lined with some mouse-fur felt to reduce the risk of scratches to the back of the phone, and the rubberized plastic material provides just enough grip to make the phone easy to grab without sticking inside a pocket like the Grip Sleeve does.



Ah, such fine mouse-fur fabric. It does keep the iPhone scratch-free, though.

(As an aside, I assume that name is pronounced the same way that [Zoe McLellan's](#) name is, "ZO" instead of "ZO-ee.")

Another great feature of the Zoe Case is the included screen protector, which ZoFunk also sells separately for \$10. Using it with the case is highly recommended, because the edges of the case cause dust and dirt to accumulate along the sides of the screen. While using the Zoe Case, I found a weekly removal and cleaning with a soft cloth was in order, as wiping the screen down while in the case simply pushed all the dust to the sides of the screen. The screen protector minimizes the potential for grit to scratch the glass screen in these situations.



The case is fairly attractive if you can ignore the fit-and-finish issues, but it really needs a screen protector.

The various cutouts on the Zoe Case are well-designed, and the headphone jack is big enough to allow larger headphone plugs. Fit and finish aren't that great, though. There are little bits of "flashing," thin strips of extra material, around most of the cutouts.



More crying, this time by Uncle Steve, too.

The mold lines all around the perimeter of the case are ugly, and the latching mechanism that keeps the two halves of the case connected can be extremely difficult to release if you decide to remove the phone from the case. All in all, it would be a much more attractive case if the factory spent a little extra time cleaning up the production process a bit. Mold lines make Baby Ive cry, and Apple users are a notoriously demanding lot.



You can see that the cutout is plenty large even for headphones with huge plugs, like Grados. Note also the mold lines that are making Baby I've cry.



The latching mechanism here can be finicky, but it works pretty well. Like the Zoclear, it's not a case designed to be removed often, but unlike the Zoclear, it needs to be.

The Zoe Case provides a good level of protection, especially with its included screen protector, but the relatively poor finish of the case takes away a lot from an otherwise good

product. I think it's fair to say that, for \$21, customers are entitled to demand a higher degree of refinement, and other than that, ZoFunk really has a solid product here.

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