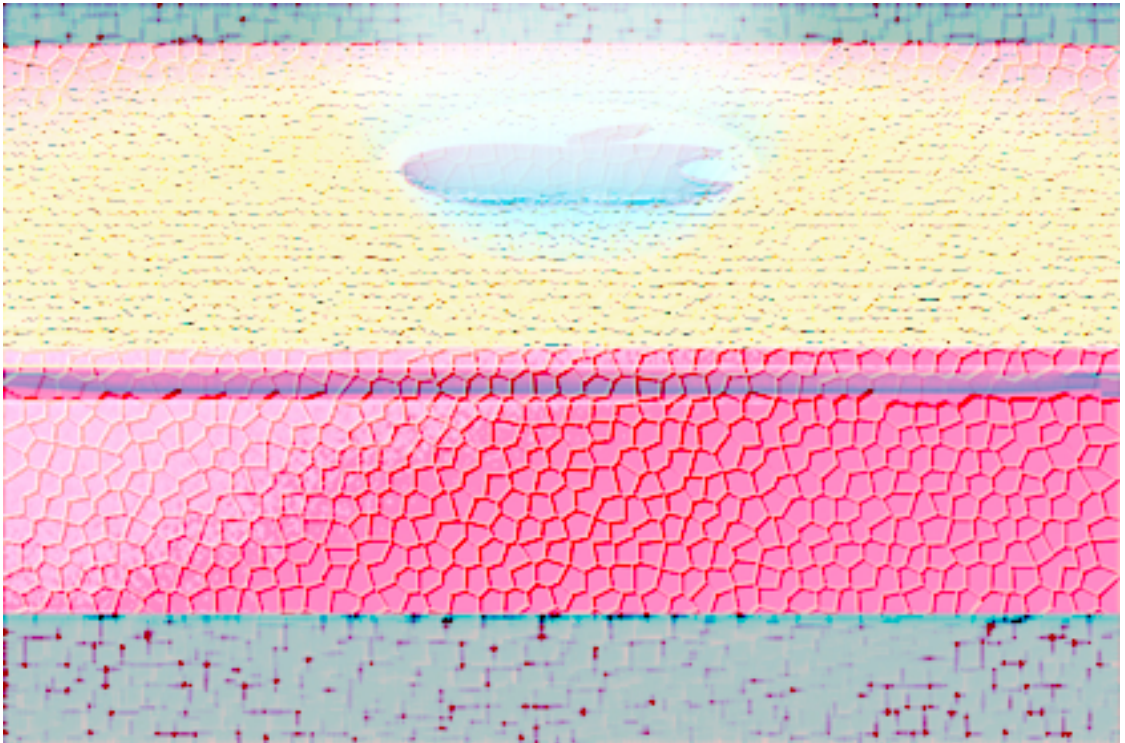


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*About This Particular Macintosh: About the **personal** computing experience.™*

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Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the July issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* We invite you to join us this month and every month as we explore what we call “the personal computing experience.” June was a busy month for Apple product introductions. We take a quick look at a few of the product announcements in the *Welcome* to this month’s issue.

iOS

At Apple’s World Wide Developers Conference in June, Apple CEO Steve Jobs announced a change in the company’s nomenclature for its mobile device operating system. What was once known as the iPhone OS has been renamed iOS upon the release of its latest version.

The iOS powers a number of devices including the iPhone, iPod touch, and the popular iPad. The change in nomenclature reflects the variety of devices using the mobile device operating system. [iOS 4](#) became available for iPhone owners in June and will be made available for the Apple iPad by fall.

iPad

In late June, Apple reported that the popular [iPad](#), which debuted in the United States on April 3rd and is now in limited international release, has achieved unit sales of over 3 million units. It’s an astounding level of success for a product that’s been available for sale for less than 90 days. The Apple iPad’s early success has Wall Street analysts revising their earning projections for Apple and raising their share price targets.

iPhone 4

Released for sale on June 24th, the [fourth iteration](#) of Apple’s iPhone achieved sales of 1.7 million units in four days, eclipsing the iPad in setting a unit sales record. With its front-facing camera for video, the Apple A4 processor to power the device, and iOS 4, iPhone 4 has realized a level of mass adoption previously unknown for any Apple product. iPhone 4 is expected to maintain a torrid sales pace throughout its anticipated twelve-month cycle as Apple’s flagship smartphone product.

Mac mini

In a less heralded product refresh, the diminutive [Mac mini](#) now sports a more robust graphics sub-system. Available in both desktop and server configurations, the lower cost, smaller sized Mac mini is proving to be a versatile and cost-effective solution for a variety of home and small business needs.

Our July Issue

July is a time for fun in the sun at home and while on vacation. Each month our editors prepare a unique blend of news and reviews for your enjoyment and enrichment. Please

take along a copy of ATPM to share with friends and family as your summer adventures begin and our chronicle of the “personal computing experience” continues.

Our July issue includes:

The Candy Apple: On Temptation

For those of us who don't have long commutes, a lot of Apple's newer products are luxuries and not necessities.

MacMuser: Earl Grey, Computing's Future?

Mark Tennent shares his view on how the iPad (and devices like it) is the future of computing.

MacMuser: What a Waste

Mark Tennent has acquired—and disposed of—a considerable amount of electronic equipment in the past few years.

Desktop Pictures: Charleston

Julie Ritterskamp offers this month's desktop photos from Charleston, South Carolina.

Out at Five

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

Review: BearExtender n3

A useful means of adding Wi-Fi range to most Macs, but with poor Mac software.

Review: BookArc

One company takes a stand against desk clutter for external monitor users.

Review: Inner Quest 1.0

A puzzle game for shiny happy people.

Review: PDF2Office Professional 5.0.4

Though there's plenty of room for improvement, using PDF2Office to import PDF files into Microsoft Word or Excel is superior to simply copying and pasting.



The iPad Goes to School

That's an amazing story, one that will be repeated everywhere as this device goes mainstream. I'm headed back to Thailand in October, and I've already loaded all my pictures from my nine previous trips onto the device. My Thai friends will be even more impressed with this device than they were with my iPhone and iPod touch. I see Apple just hit the official 2 millionth iPad sold. Imagine seeing these things product "placed" in movies and TV shows.

That will blow the lid off the sale figures! I was hesitant to be an early adopter, but I think things will be just fine.

—*Grover Watson*



I, too, have used my iPad in my third-grade classroom. The kids *love* it. They are so enamored of it that some of the students made paper drawings of an iPad with several pages for the different screens. They take them out at recess and play with them like the real thing.

—*Robin N.*



OK, this is the silver bullet we have all dreamed about and waited for since the very first episode of Star Trek. . . . Our school has ordered 40 to be used with one group of students and two teachers (as an experiment). However, this is going to be tough. We have to ensure that the students don't abuse them, but we don't want to shut everything down. We have got to figure out how to set them up for our students and maximize the possibilities without making it a glorified netbook. Any suggestions?

—*Randy Farmer*

Thanks to everyone who has responded so far. It seems that your experiences with the iPad have mirrored mine.

Randy, I am asking similar questions about the iPad in the classroom. I would love to try a project like yours at my school. I plan to spend some time looking for solutions to these questions.

I think I have seen something in the App Store that would allow setting up something similar to user accounts. That might be a partial solution if I can find it again. I'll keep you posted.

—*Sylvester Roque*

To iPad or Not to iPad?

I got my very first Apple Bluetooth Keyboard yesterday. After a few minutes, I was able to mate it to my iPad. Too cool! I'm getting the bug to travel badly now!

—*Grover Watson*

Opening DiskDoubler Archives

Regarding Mark Tennent's [Stuffed, Compacted and Doubled](#) *MacMuser* column for ATPM 16.06, where he cites his difficulty in opening DiskDoubler archives, a recent upgrade to [The Unarchiver](#) brought compatibility with all but the oldest DD compression formats. With some luck, he may be able to retrieve those QuarkXPress files after all.

—*Daniel Gotilla*

Data Rescue II

Version 3 of this application was a lifesaver! Recovered all the data I wanted (about 30 GB) off a failed external drive! 5/5 from me!

—*TG*

Merriam-Webster Spell-Jam

Thank you, Linus Ly! Your review of this game was both thorough and concise. I found it to be extremely helpful.

—*JayCee*

Axio Swift Backpack

Five years later...thanks for the excellent review.

—*Anand*

Coping With Mac OS X's Font Rendering

I have this problem with OS X (including the new iPad). All of the text just looks really fuzzy to me in comparison to my Windows XP computer. I believe it is not anti-aliasing per se, but the sub-pixel anti-aliasing that is used by OS X and also Windows when ClearType is on. When you turn ClearType off in Windows, I believe that you still have anti-aliasing on fonts; it is just the normal anti-aliasing, not sub-pixel anti-aliasing.

Sub-pixel anti-aliasing involves using the colours of the sub-pixels to trick the eyes into thinking corners are smooth. I am red-green colourblind, so maybe that has something to

do with it, but the trick doesn't work for me. I just see fuzziness (on OS X) or some kind of 3D effect (ClearType on Windows).

So basically, I have no choice but to use old Windows as I literally cannot stand reading the text in OS X.

—*Bob Turbo*



I have a MacBook Pro 15" with 1680×1050 resolution. The font rendering is OK except for the terminal, for which I couldn't find an easy-to-read fixed-width font. When the font size is increased, all the fixed-width fonts become too bold.

Now that I plugged in an external 24" display with 1920×1200 resolution, the terminal fonts are OK but everything else looks just downright horrible. It's too fuzzy for this larger screen.

Of course, Windows does not have any issues in either case. ClearType font smoothing can be adjusted to whatever level you like. I'm seriously considering switching back to Windows because of this.

—*Heikki*

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



The Candy Apple

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

On Temptation

There is all this awesome Apple stuff out there right now, and I am not tempted to buy any of it. I have a little bit of guilt about this, as we are supposed to be big early adopters if we love Apple, but I am holding steady. It's like buying a great car—if it's so great, maybe we can keep it for several years before needing a new one.

I bought a newish iPod nano recently enough that I debated between it and the iPod touch. The deciding factor? The Nano has a radio. That, and it weighs nothing and is a better companion on walks. But mostly I liked the radio.

Seriously. I do not want a device that will put me online all the time. (The iPod touch has WiFi Internet access, and the Nanos don't.) I'm online at home and at work, and the rest of the time I would rather not know everything. It is too much information. It is too much connectedness for me. It makes me queasy after a while. I think it should be OK to turn stuff off.

I see where this is different for folks with longish commutes, but in that situation I still prefer a book to any sort of wired temptation.

Turning stuff off includes the cell phone. If I am talking to you in person, and I stop to answer a call, how does that make you feel? Like you are less important than the caller? That's rude.

There is voice mail. There are messaging systems. There is time. We can wait ten minutes to call someone back, rather than treat someone in person in a dismissive way.

I won't get started on people who think they must speak louder when they are on a cell phone. That's why somebody invented texting.

Isn't it?

It should be.

I love my one-year-old Mac mini just fine. I have resisted going to the Apple store to handle an iPad, because I know I will lust after it. But I think I can hold out for quite a while. It won't replace my desktop Mac or my phone, and I don't need an additional device for anything. Someday I will investigate reading books on those things. But, for now, there are still plenty of paperbacks stacking up waiting for me.

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Earl Grey, Computing's Future?

My bank holiday was spent mostly supporting an elderly relative whose mind slips between one reality and the next. Meanwhile his partner and main carer was admitted to hospital. The nights were passed in a banana shape, making my 6-foot frame fit a 4-foot sofa. When we got home, abstinence slipped from our minds as one or two glasses of wine were followed by a third. Do we really want to live until we can't remember where we live?

While in our roles as carers, we also moved into a world lacking many of the services we take for granted. Even our next holiday cottage, in the middle-of-nowhere France, has broadband connection and a pool. But in the Ashdown Forest we had to live a life not too far removed from a Ray Mears survival course. Which is a coincidence because he also lives in the Ashdown Forest.

Our iPhones could pick up a one-bar signal and were much faster than dial-up broadband. We looked into getting ADSL fitted in the house because we are likely to be spending a lot more time there. BT's availability checker told us we would struggle to get a 1Mb link over ADSL2+, but only if we were lucky and spoke nicely to the engineers. On the other hand, TV reception in the Ashdown Forest is superb with crystal clear digital signal from an ancient analogue aerial.

Earl Grey Tea Proof

This is exactly the sort of location where an iPad 3G will be in its element and in a much better form factor for our elderly relatives. They could not get to grips with the Windows Vista laptop they bought, which now sits unused because it was too difficult for them to be bothered to learn. They want to order groceries online and write the occasional e-mail. Pointing at icons and tapping the screen with an arthritic index finger is the sort of interface they can use and understand. Plus, the iPad is drip-proof and more robust than a clamshell laptop. Monthly data contracts might also be a lot cheaper than ADSL for the amount they will use.

iPads also bode well for people with disabilities who currently use point and touch screens. (Why has the most brilliant man in the universe, Stephen Hawking, kept using such a mechanical "voice" when he could have one far more clear and natural?)

Free Software

It is no wonder Apple has sold so many iPads. Computing is moving away from the usual desktop/laptop formats and onto small and powerful hand-held devices, which do most of the tasks people use a computer for. The iPhone proved to be far more capable than just

being a smartphone, as its software replaces expensive, dedicated devices. The iTunes App Store has a solution for problems you didn't know you had, software often supplied free of charge. Check out [Dealmac](#) every day for their heads-up on which apps are currently free. Then regret not buying the 32 GB version of the iPhone as you keep stuffing more freebies into it.

Apple is in the right place at the right time to take advantage of this switch in computing paradigms. It's not just the traditional Apple fans who have bought iPods/iPhones/iPads but millions of others around the world. At the same time, even though other manufacturers are jumping onboard to make their own tablets, it looks as though Windows could be facing a shaky future.

Microsoft has what is basically a software business, which has earned them big profits over the last two decades. But, apart from business applications, the future looks increasingly likely to be in the hands of innovative gadgets where one word processor, Web browser, or e-mail client is as good as any other, as long as it is easy to connect wirelessly to networks, the Internet, and other devices. Ease of use is Apple's forte.

Google Dumping Windows

Google's announcement that it is dumping Windows in favour of Chrome OS, Mac OS X, and Linux will also be interesting to watch. In years gone by, Mac users were sidelined by Microsoft who, having diverted from Web standards to suit itself and its own browser, told Mac users it was their own fault they couldn't read Web sites because they weren't running Windows.

Will we see the day when Google says the same to Windows users, that they cannot read standard Web pages because they use Windows?

Adobe had better watch out as well because Google is more likely to support the [H.264](#) video standard than Flash.

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What a Waste

In the past seven years we have been through: six new desktop Macs, three laptops, two scanners, four printers, eight operating system upgrades, twenty hard disks, and seven cell phones. All of which, when shared between two of us, is at least fifteen grand each.

Then there are the six iPods (only two of which are mine), six monitors (CRT and LCD), a menagerie of mice, three routers, one switching hub, six TV capture devices, and four colour TVs. Plus upgrades to various pieces of software such as Creative Suite (which always hurts the most), QuarkXPress, and FileMaker Pro. In addition, there have been quite a few FTP clients and servers, as they gain our favour over the previous favourite. If only Fetch, the grand-daddy of them all, would handle WebDAV, we would stick with it. We still keep buying the updates in hope.

This profligacy is not something we are proud of, but at least we have recycled as much as possible by selling or giving kit away—the computers themselves being most easily sold. Macs at three or four years old may be obsolete compared with the latest computers, but they are still capable machines with a high resale value. We have a drawer full of old cell phones, along with SCSI leads, terminators, FireWire 400 cables, wireless routers, and a pretty decent Canon SLR 35mm camera complete with film. But it is completely the opposite for inkjet printers.

The dustmen have collected one Canon and two Epson A3 inkjet printers from the front of our studio. The only problem with them has been blocked print heads, which are more expensive to repair than buying a new printer. With our latest printer, we have vowed to use manufacturer's OEM cartridges to see if it makes any difference.

It also shames us to think that in the same period we have been through twelve garden shredders. They always seem to last about a year, and we return them just before their guarantee expires. On the other hand, we have only had three vehicles, two Hondas and a beaten-up, sixteen-year-old Toyota pick-up, which I still shed a tear over selling.

Cars are supposed to be the most complicated consumer products and the easiest to use. In our experience they are the most long-lasting, too.

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Desktop Pictures

by Julie Ritterskamp

Charleston

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

This Month's Desktop Pictures

These pictures were taken by Julie Ritterskamp in early June 2010, on and at the new Ravenal (Cooper River) Bridge in Charleston, SC. Some photos were taken on the schooner Pride, which sails from Charleston Harbor.



[View Pictures](#)

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

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

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.

Safari Use [this Automator workflow](#).

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.

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.3.x Through 10.6.x

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

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

Mac OS X 10.1.x and 10.2.x

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

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

Mac OS X 10.0.x

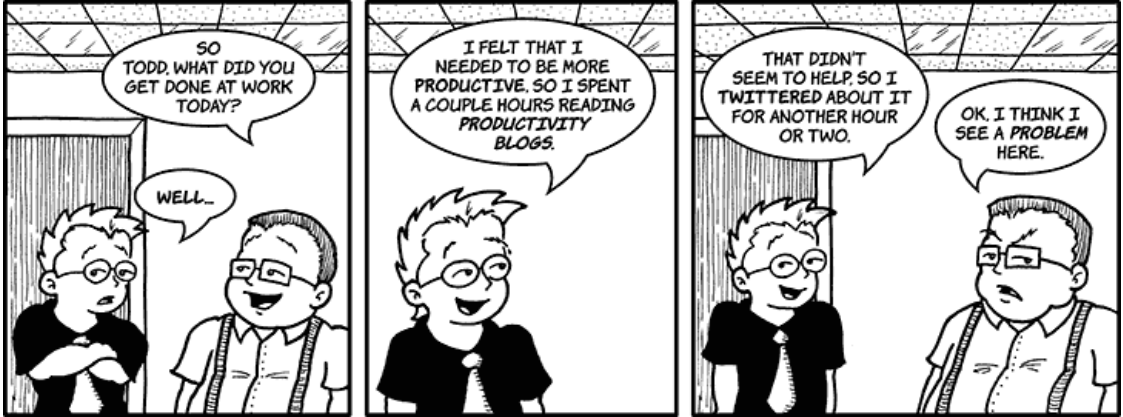
Switch to the Finder. Choose “Preferences...” from the “Finder” menu. Click on the “Select Picture...” button on the right. In the Open Panel, select the desktop picture you want to use. The panel defaults to your ~/Library/Desktop Pictures folder. Close the “Finder Preferences” window when you are done.



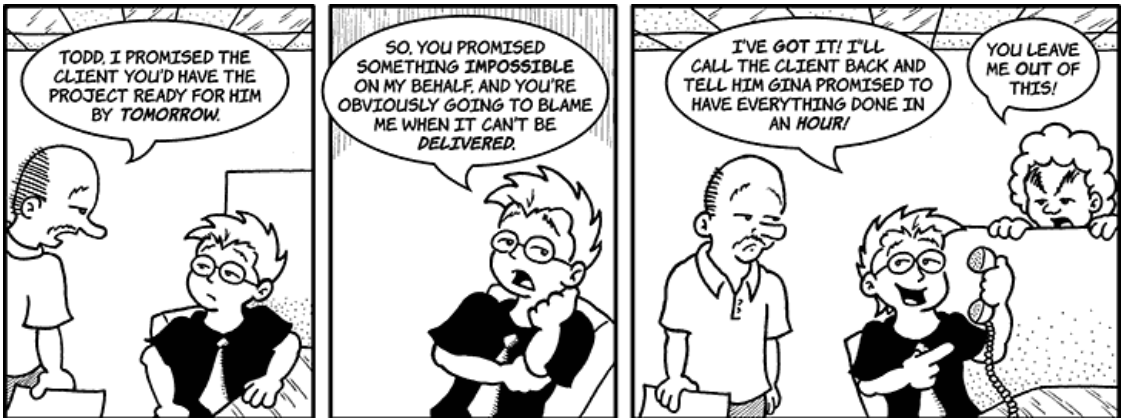
Out at Five

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

Productivity



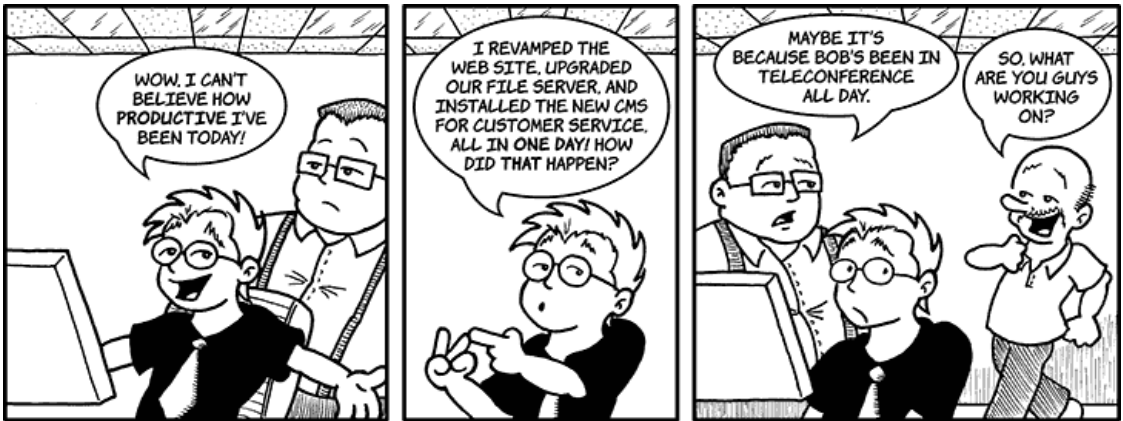
Promises, Promises



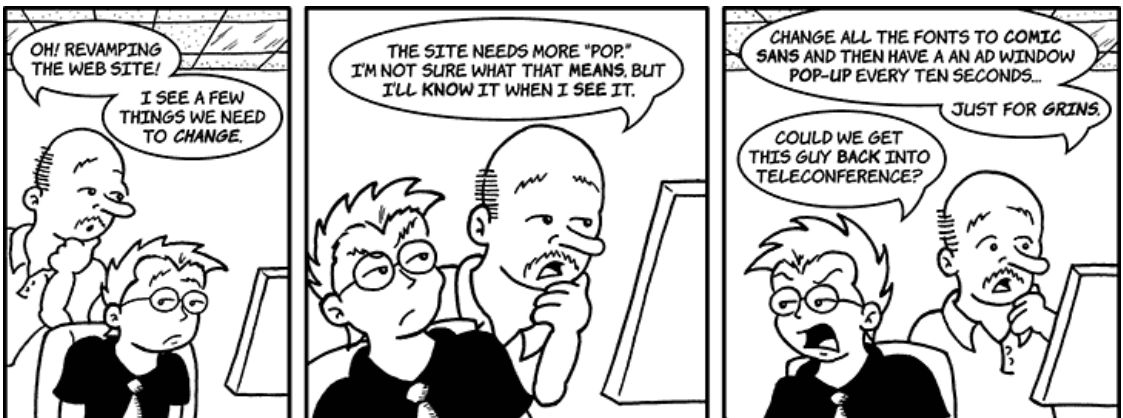
Stolen iPhone



A Productive Day



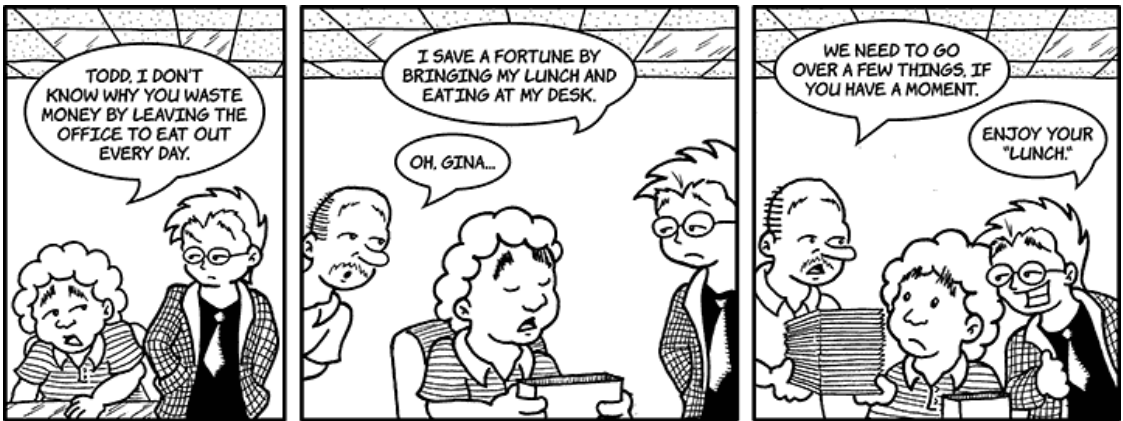
Creative Input



Keeping the Boss Busy



Out to Lunch



Company Loyalty





Hardware Review

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

BearExtender n3

Function: USB 802.11b/g/n network card and range extender.

Developer: [BearExtender](#)

Price: \$45

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3; (not compatible with first-generation iBook and some Xserve/Mac Pro models).

Trial: None



Weak wireless reception has been a complaint for almost as long as Mac laptops have had AirPort cards, especially among PowerBook and MacBook Pro users. A number of companies have designed solutions to this problem, almost all of them involving an external 802.11 interface of some sort. [Last time](#) I looked at one of these things, I came away thoroughly unimpressed. Is the BearExtender n3 any better?

In a word, yes. The BearExtender actually works where the Wi-Fi didn't. However, I don't think anyone is going to let me get away with calling that a review.

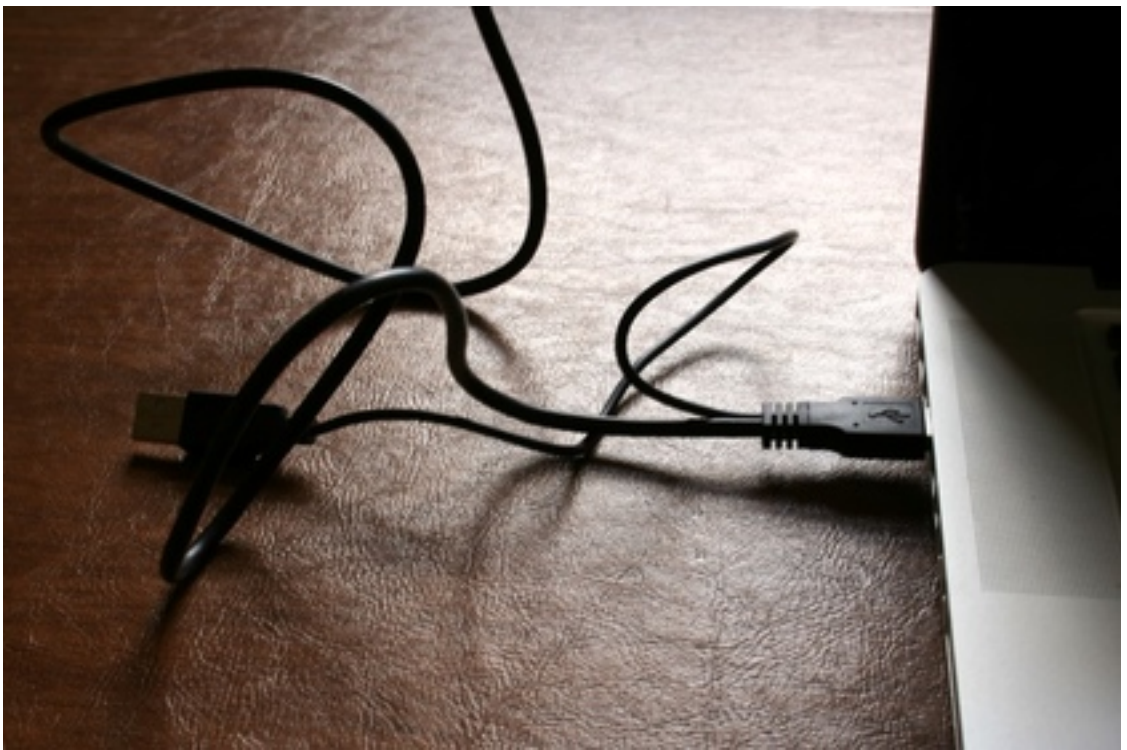
Installation and setup of the BearExtender is fairly simple. It comes with two USB cables: one is a short (8") metal flex cable that's mostly stiff enough to support the BearExtender at a right angle out the side of a laptop, and the other is a more normal USB cable that pairs nicely with the removable padded LCD clip on the back of the BearExtender. That cable has two standard USB ports on one end and a mini-USB port on the other; BearExtender says that an earlier version of the device required more power than a single USB port could supply but the "vampire tap" of the second port is no longer required with the current hardware. I say they need to get new USB cable inventory.



You can use the BearExtender's gooseneck USB cable and let it stick out the side of your laptop...



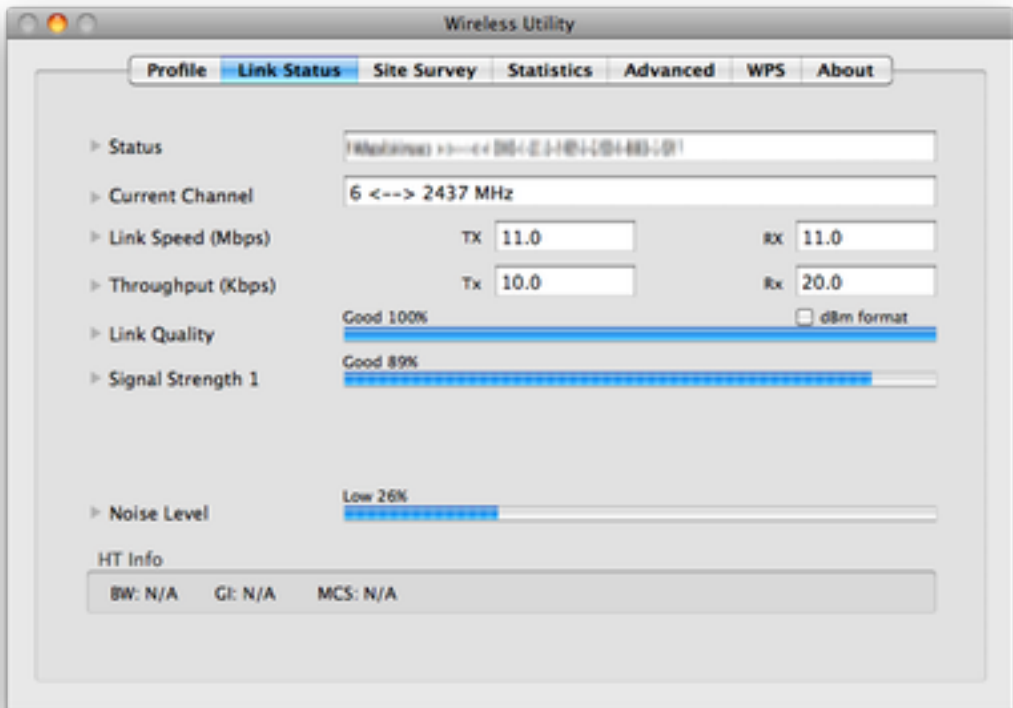
...or you can clip it to the top of your screen. If you choose to clip it on your screen, though...



...you get to use the monstrosity of a USB cable that was designed for an earlier version that drew too much power for a single USB port. Economical for BearExtender, annoying for the end user.

Once it's connected, run the installer on the included USB drive and restart. On restart, a USBWirelessUtility application (written by [Ralink](#), a wireless OEM whose RT3070 chipset is used in the BearExtender and the real culprit behind the marginal software) launches and brings you to the "Site Survey" tab, where you just choose a network and click the "CONNECT" button. Detailed and clear instructions—something of a rarity these days—for Mac OS X 10.3 through 10.6, written in HTML format for viewing in any Web browser software, are included on the USB drive and are also available on the [Web site](#).

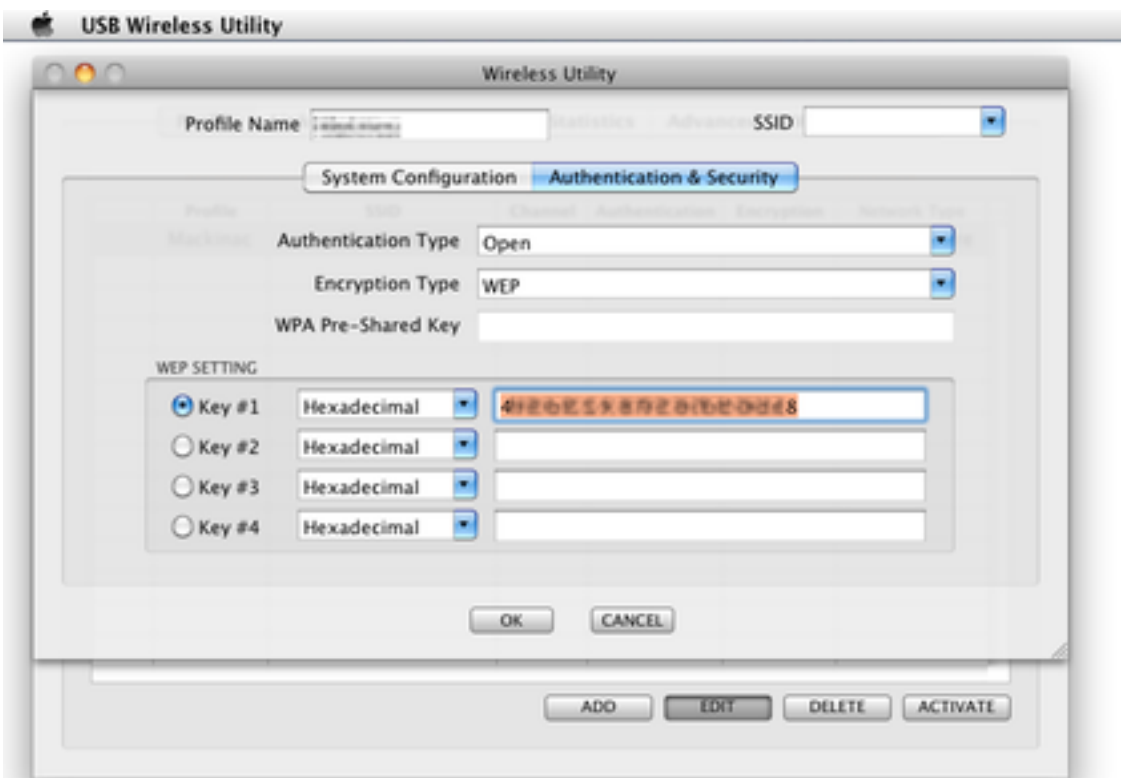
Despite the good instructions, the software isn't the most Mac-like software I've ever seen, and that's putting it kindly. This is a disappointment considering how Mac-centric BearExtender otherwise tries to be. At least the configuration application is a native Cocoa application. I could write a small book on its visual and functional shortcomings, but given the atrocity that was the Wi-Fire software, my bar is set pretty low here. "Working" is certainly better than "not working."



What are those non-functional disclosure triangles doing there?

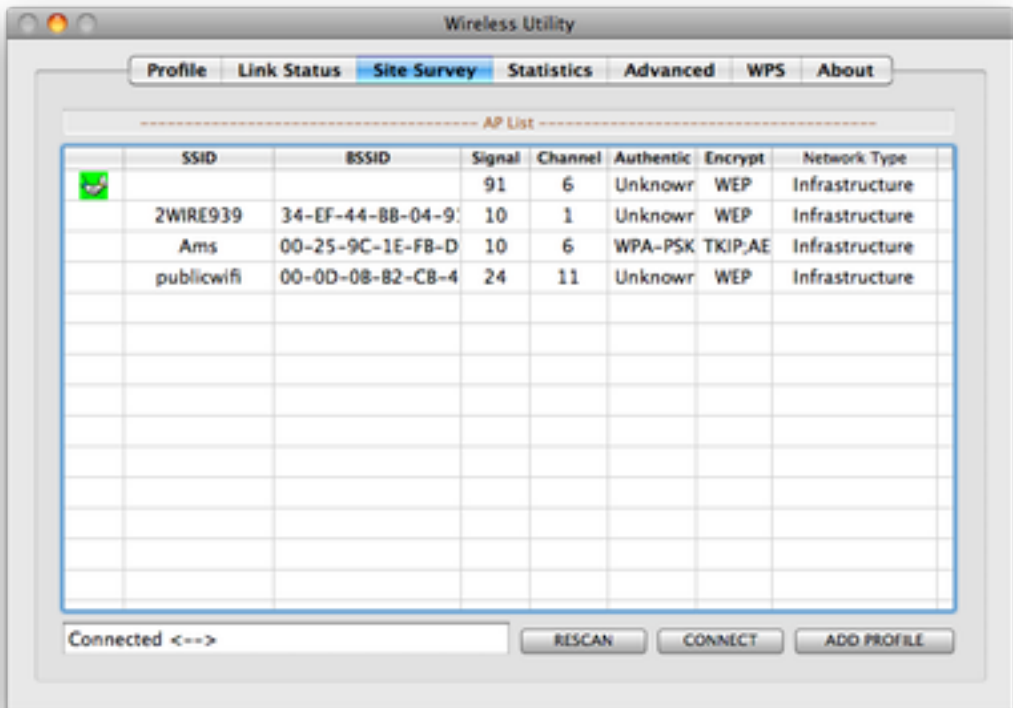
The biggest annoyance is that until you've added your home network (or any other network that you use on a regular basis) as a "favorite"—a process that is rather more complicated than Mac OS X's own network configuration—the software won't automatically re-join that network unless it happens to be the strongest open (public) network at the time you launch the software. BearExtender also says that you shouldn't quit the USBWirelessUtility application while you're using the device, though they don't explain why. At least on 10.6, nothing bad seems to happen if you do, but re-launching the application will cause a brief interruption in your network connection while a new network scan is performed.

In terms of network speed, the BearExtender is largely indistinguishable from the AirPort Extreme card built into my 15" MacBook Pro when I'm sitting around the house. That's exactly what I would expect, since the BearExtender supports all the various 802.11 specs except for 802.11a, which I don't use anyway.



Wouldn't it be nice if you could paste here? The software doesn't support copy and paste...anywhere. And what the heck are those non-standard buttons with their blurry, all-caps text?

Range is greatly improved, however, which *can* affect speed at the outer limits of wireless reception. BearExtender's claim of double the range of an AirPort Extreme card seems quite believable. The built-in AirPort card sees only my own 802.11b network, with its wireless router in the basement of a wood-framed ranch house, and has only three "bars" of reception throughout the upstairs. The BearExtender not only sees my own network at "100%" signal strength, but as many as three other networks I had never seen before. At least one of those is across the street and through a stand of trees with a large carport in the way, at a distance of 200 feet or so.



The BearExtender sees four networks—my own is at the top—where my built-in AirPort card sees only one.

If you're really desperate for range, the BearExtender's antenna attaches with a standard threaded RP-SMA connection, so you could theoretically remove the included 2-dBi omnidirectional antenna and screw on something even beefier. That wasn't even an option with the Wi-Fire, although adding a larger antenna to what is already a moderately large external device starts to chip away at the whole "portability" concept of a laptop.

The BearExtender seems to drain my laptop's battery about 20% faster than the built-in AirPort card does, though I didn't test it rigorously. Then again, you're getting two to four times the wireless range, so the tradeoff seems well worth it if you need something like this in the first place, especially if you can leave the laptop plugged in.



Pop quiz: Is the BearExtender's radio currently turned on or off? The button says one thing and the icon indicates the opposite.



Pop quiz #2: If I click the “Radio Off” button, what is going to happen? It’s completely unclear whether the button text represents *state* or *action*.

A cursory search for comparable products at Amazon reveals the BearExtender’s \$45 price tag to be about 50–100% higher than most others’. However, \$10–20 might be a small price to pay for excellent setup instructions and Mac-friendly tech support. There’s certainly very little to complain about once everything is set up, so if you need better Wi-Fi reception or want to add faster Wi-Fi reception to an older Mac, the BearExtender is definitely worth a look.

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Accessory Review

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

BookArc

Function: Vertical stand for laptops to be used with external display.

Developer: [Twelve South](#)

Price: \$50

Requirements: MacBook, MacBook Pro, or MacBook Air.

Trial: None



Mac users have been able to use laptops as a desktop replacement ever since the Duo Dock shipped, and they've actually been practical substitutes for a desktop Mac since the "Wall Street" [PowerBook G3 series](#) of the late 1990s. Apple hasn't made a laptop docking station since the Duo Dock II, though.

Monitors, meanwhile, have gotten ever larger, and even the real estate on a 17" MacBook Pro screen pales in comparison to that of a 24" monitor. As a result, many people now use their laptops to drive an external screen, either in place of or alongside the internal display, when they're desk-bound.

That leads to clutter, though. Where, after all, is a good place to put your MacBook if it's driving a large display, especially on a small desk? Under the monitor isn't an ideal solution, because it forces the monitor higher, and that's hard on your neck. Laying a laptop flat on the desk takes up a lot of space and leaves it vulnerable to damage. Twelve South's solution is the BookArc, an aluminum stand that holds a Mac laptop vertically to minimize lost desk space.



The BookArc holds any recent Mac laptop vertically on the desk to minimize wasted space.

The BookArc is an extremely simple idea—take a sheet of reasonably thick aluminum, put rubber feet on it, cut a slot out of the middle, and bend it into an arc. It's elegant and attractive, matching any of Apple's pro-level laptops all the way back to the [TiBook](#). The BookArc doesn't look out of place with a white or black MacBook on it, either.

Not all of Apple's laptops are the same thickness, so the BookArc ships with three interchangeable rubber inserts for the center slot. The medium-sized insert fits most MacBooks and MacBook Pros, the large one fits older MacBooks, and the smallest is intended for the MacBook Air. My 15" MacBook Pro fits somewhat loosely in the medium-sized insert but is too large for the smallest insert, one of the few drawbacks I noticed in several weeks of use. It never feels unstable, like it could fall over, but it just doesn't fit as snugly as it seems it should.



This closeup shows the poor fit between a 15" MacBook Pro and the BookArc. It's not a big deal, but it does allow the laptop to flop around a bit.

Running any laptop in “closed clamshell” mode (as [Apple calls it](#)) makes the laptop run hotter than it otherwise would, which is why Apple only re-enabled this ability relatively recently, as heat dissipation in laptops has improved. (No iBook can do it, for example.) Putting the laptop in a vertical position, as the BookArc does, exposes the maximum surface area for cooling, which is certainly better than simply setting it on the desk. However, there's still a noticeable temperature rise (as measured by Marcel Bresink's excellent [Temperature Monitor](#) utility) when using my MacBook Pro in closed clamshell mode compared to open on a more traditional stand like the [Griffin Elevator](#).



Even with a fairly roomy desk, the BookArc helps to clear up a chunk of space next to my mouse.

Of course, by running your laptop with the lid closed, you're also giving up whatever screen real estate you have on the internal display. That tradeoff may or may not be worth it, depending on the type of work you're doing. Twelve South claims an additional speed increase (versus two-display operations) in graphics-heavy programs like Photoshop and Aperture, since the graphics card is only driving one display, but for everyday tasks in my workflow, there's no noticeable difference. I prefer using both displays simultaneously, although simply having the extra space of my external monitor (1920×1080) is a dramatic improvement over the 15" MacBook Pro screen (1440×900).

The simplistic design of the BookArc means it's never going to compete with full-on docking solutions, of which there are a handful for Mac laptops. You still have to plug and unplug all your peripherals manually, which can become a chore after a while. But it does a fine job of getting the laptop out of the way on a desk and looks great doing it.

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Software Review

by Ellyn Ritterskamp, eritterskamp@atpm.com

Inner Quest 1.0

Function: Puzzle game.

Developer: [South Winds Games](#)

Price: \$6

Requirements: Mac with 1 GHz processor. Mac OS X 10.4.

Trial: Fully-featured (1 hour)



Let me just get this out of the way now: if you have an addictive personality, or you are compelled to finish things you start, don't buy this game. It is way simple but gets trickier as you go, and it got me hooked pretty quickly.

So, yeah, Inner Quest is pretty much another one of those games where you have to get clumps of like-colored/shaped things together. If you don't like those kinds of games, you probably won't like this one.

But if you do like those games, this one's pretty good. The colors and shapes are simple, the backgrounds are relaxing, and the music is not annoying.

Charming is what they were going for, and it worked.

South Winds Games' Web site has a pretty good embedded video showing the game, except that the video is a good bit faster than you play. You can choose a timed or tranquil version, though I never ran out of time in several levels. But start on the peaceful setting and then switch, once you get the hang of it.

Hint 1: You only have to match up icons on squares with shaded thingies on the back of them. Many of the earlier game boards only have the shaded blocks on some of the squares, not all. So don't waste your time on matching things you don't need to.



You don't need to match up the icons unless they have shaded areas behind them. So those areas at the top won't need to be cleared.

Hint 2: Some icons must be matched up multiple times before they'll go away. At first you get a visual reminder of this, but later on you just notice that squares don't clear right away.



See those eight squares in the middle? You must match them up one time, and then the little hash marks will go away and you'll match them again like all the others.

Hint 3: Stop often. Pace yourself. The game will save your progress, and you can pick up where you left off.

For \$6, I think this is an easy purchase. The developers say it's good for anyone from 7 to 77, and I'd guess that's about right for the lower end of the age range.

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Software Review

by Linus Ly, lly@atpm.com

PDF2Office Professional 5.0.4

Function: Convert PDF files to Microsoft Office.

Developer: [RecoSoft Corporation](#)

Price: \$129

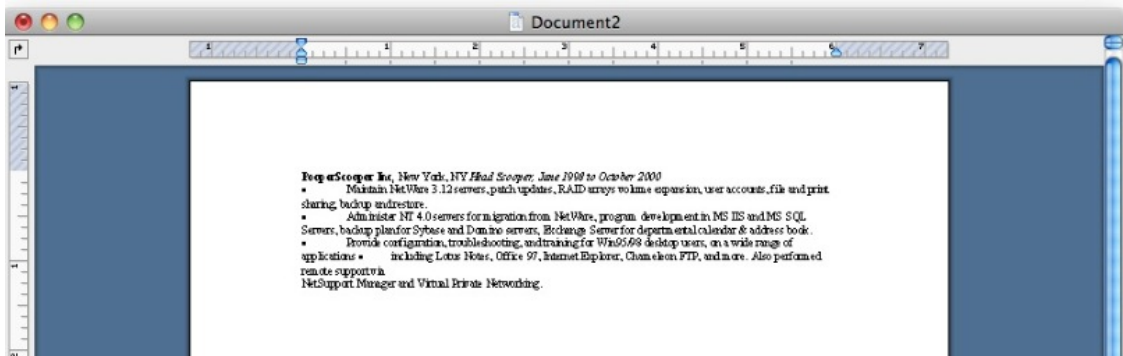
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.11. [Universal](#).

Trial: Feature-limited and time-limited (see below).



From the time Mac OS X first came out, the ability to create PDF documents from any printable files was available to all Mac users. PDF files are indeed portable in that you can distribute them to your audience and not have to worry about them not being able to read it—the Adobe Reader is freely available. On some occasions, however, you may need to convert the PDF files back to some other format that you can edit.

Since Microsoft Office has such a stranglehold on the office suite market, the likely formats to convert back to would likely be Word, Excel, or other Microsoft Office-supported formats. While the default PDF viewer for Mac OS X, Preview, allows you to copy text out of PDF, even when you paste styled text the result is far from perfect. You may need dedicated software like PDF2Office. Or do you?



By simply copying and pasting from Preview into Word, you lose some formatting information.

Installation

Installation of PDF2Office takes a little more than your usual drag and drop of the application file to the hard drive. You first need to run the installer application, which then asks you to locate your copy of Microsoft Word. You are also prompted to select a folder to

install PDF2Office, but you cannot choose one on an external drive. Lastly, when installation is complete, you are supposed to log out and then log in again for the changes to take effect.

PDF2Office has a trial version, but it is both feature-limited and time-constrained. Only five conversions are allowed, all output is watermarked, and only up to five pages are converted. And the trial version works for only seven days.

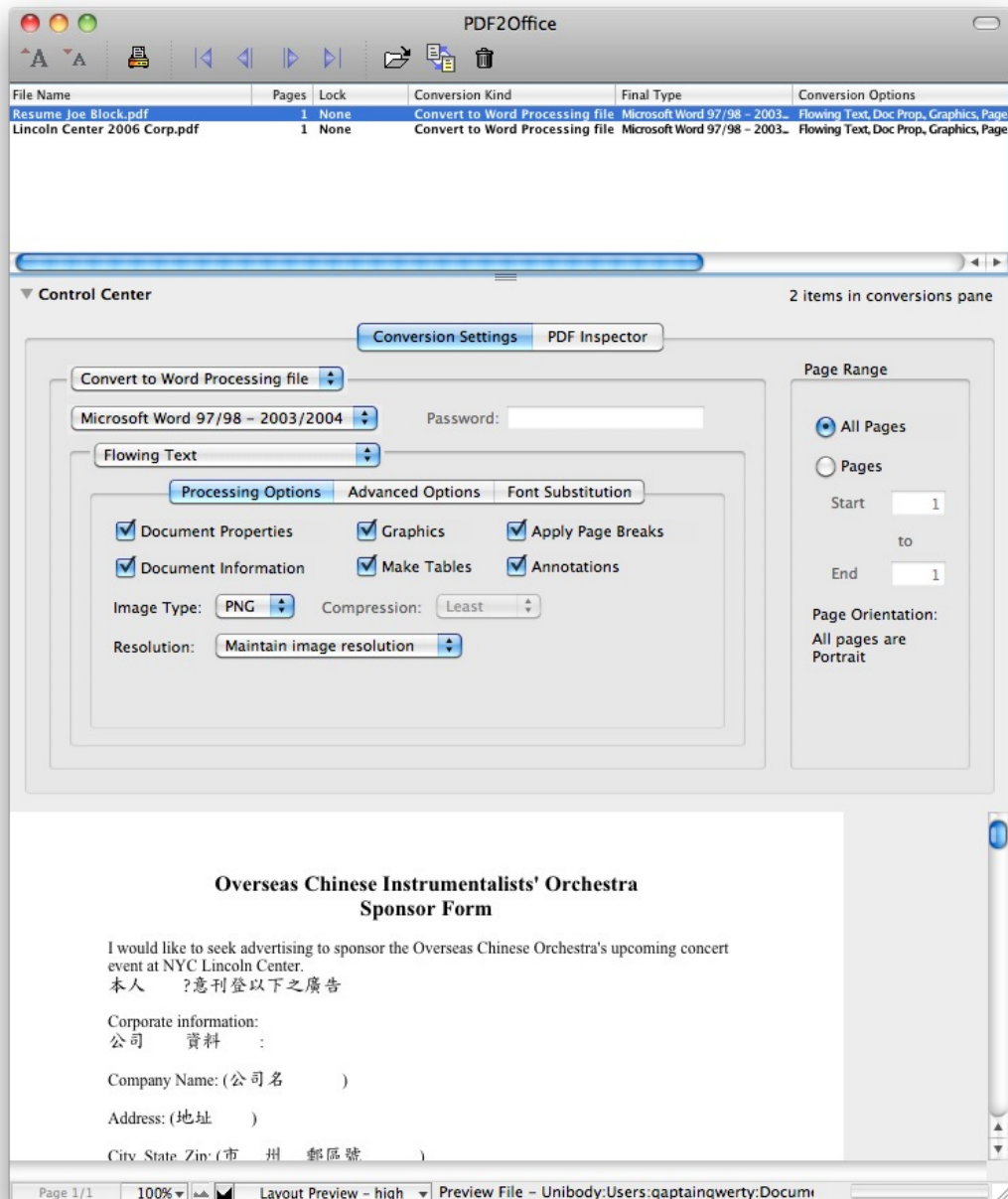
How I Worked PDF2Office

As you may have gathered, I do not create PDF files using Adobe Acrobat, the full software. Instead, I used Mac OS X's "Save as PDF" option to generate the PDF files needed for this review. I would create a document in Word or Excel, print it, and choose "Save as PDF" to capture the output in a PDF file, then feed the PDF file to PDF2Office. I only have Microsoft Office v.X, so to test PDF2Office's handling of the Office 2007 format I had to use a Dell Windows machine, which also has some sort of PDF printer driver.

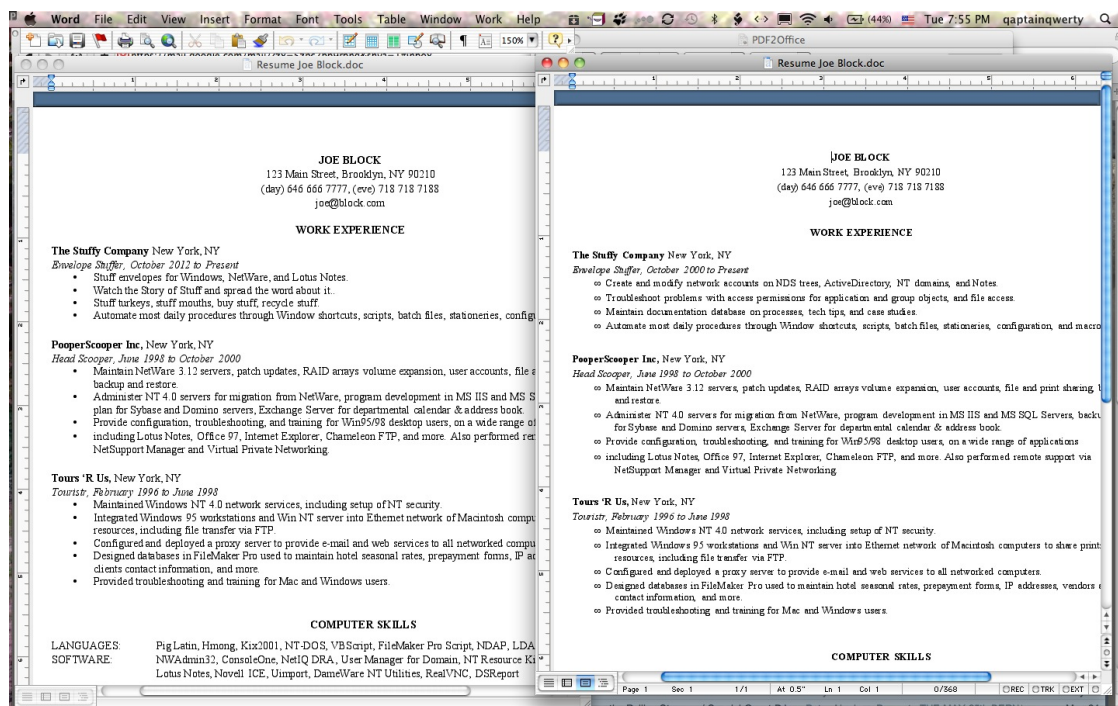
How PDF2Office Works

PDF2Office converts a file from PDF to Word, Excel, or PowerPoint. It can also output Web and graphics files, but my interest in PDF2Office is all about being able to edit the text in the documents after the conversion, so I only focus only on the Office formats. Even the lowly Preview can convert PDFs to graphic formats.

First you set the folder to store converted documents and whether to overwrite any output files or append a unique number. Then you can load documents into PDF2Office through one of many ways, set an output format, highlight the documents, and click the Convert button. PDF2Office does a good job reproducing the document after it has gone through a PDF conversion. Even with Word's Paste Special ▸ Styled Text, there is still some work left to do. PDF2Office's version is perfect, if you can overlook the "wrong" bullet style. (More on the bullets later.) Vertical spacing seems not to work perfectly as the lines are bunched together.



Load files into PDF2Office's list and click the Convert icon.



If you can overlook the change in bullet style, the conversion of the PDF of the document (left) back to Word (right) is almost perfect.

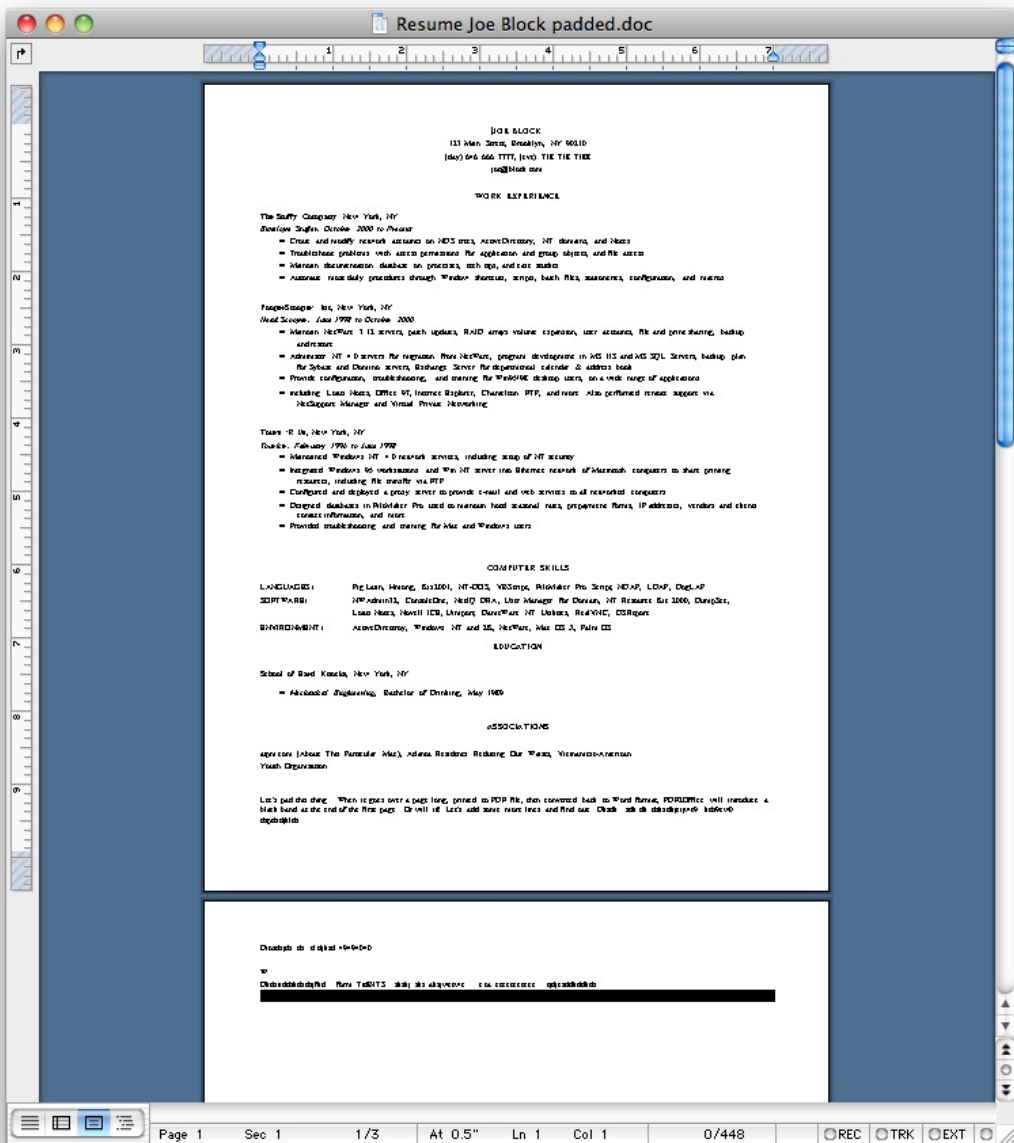
You have options, such as how to maintain the arrangement of styles and tables, as well as the treatment of hyphens, font substitutions, and more. My favorite option involves converting the PDF into an editable static form. The PDF becomes a background image of the Word document, and you can edit the file as if on a typewriter. You use space and return characters to get to where you want and check off boxes (perhaps with an X) or to fill out forms.

You can load multiple documents and select them together for mass conversion. You can also use the Batch Convert option to convert all files located in a particular folder. With mass conversion, the output format must be uniform (e.g. everything converted to Word X and not some converted to Excel while others converted to RTF). Some power users may bemoan the lack of a choice to convert different files to different formats. I think the way PDF2Office works is fine. Let's keep it simple!

Great Expectations

Even with my method of generating PDF files for PDF2Office to convert back, I unconsciously expected the conversion back to Word to be perfect, but it is not meant to be. Headers and footers become part of the page, not separate entities to be edited differently. Spreadsheets that span beyond one page become a series of pages, not a spread. PDF2Office can convert only what is in the PDF file. To PDF2Office's credit, with Excel conversion there is an option to turn pages into Excel sheets.

I also unconsciously expected my old copy of Word X to be bug-free and thought I had found a bug with PDF2Office. While single-page documents got converted by PDF2Office fine, multi-page documents showed a black bar at the bottom of every page, exactly where a soft page break should be. I exchanged e-mail with Recosoft and learned that the documents open fine in Word 2008. I was also able to open the same documents in Word 2007, on a Windows machine, without the black bars. It is a bug in how Word X displays soft page breaks. The workaround is to uncheck Apply Page Breaks prior to converting the PDF back to Word X format. Text flow may not be the same as in the original document, but that's the price you pay when you use outdated software.



The Curse of the Black Bar. With Apply Page Breaks enabled, documents longer than one page have black bars added to the end of the pages.

The PDF2Office documentation explicitly mentions that PDFs generated from page-layout programs will not translate well into Word, and this is true. I fed PDF2Office some old ATPM PDF files, and while the converted Word files are readable, they need much work to get things aligned and fonts replaced, etc. Word is not meant to be used as a page-layout program, so anyone trying to go from, say, InDesign to Word is traveling the wrong path.

Room for Improvements

One annoyance in using PDF2Office is its handling of bulleted lists. As seen earlier, black circles become infinity symbols when PDF documents are converted back to Word. I notice that the infinity symbol is the first choice for the different types of bullets. Perhaps, somehow when PDF2Office converts bulleted lists in PDF to Word, it just grabs the first type of symbol regardless of what is really in use.

To a certain degree, PDF2Office *can* regenerate headers and footers. As long as your header takes up just one line *and* does not vary from page to page, such as a page number, PDF2Office can handle it. A two-line header would have its second line become part of the page body. A header that shows page numbers such as “Page 1 of 10”, “Page 2 of 10”, etc. won’t be properly converted. PDF2Office would just turn such a header into “Page of 10” (i.e. it will take out the varying number). While the one-line limitation should work for most people, being able to correctly generate the page number in the header is necessary and should be supported.

Conclusion

If you have a business that involves editing PDF files in Word or Excel formats, you need PDF2Office. Copy and paste can only do so much. PDF2Office works hard to convert PDF files back to MS Office formats, such as turning pages into Excel sheets or regenerating one-line headers. It’s too bad that varying headers are not fully supported, though. PDF2Office works best if you have Office 2004 or 2008. Otherwise, you would have to deal with the unsightly black bars that Word v.X incorrectly shows in place of soft page breaks.

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FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

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How Can I Send a Letter to the Editor?

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How Can I Contribute to ATPM?

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

Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

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What If My Question Isn't Answered Above?

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

