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

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Welcome

'Twas the weeks before Christmas and all through the house, not an iMac was stirring, not even the mouse. Then along came a reprieve from national despair and consumers flocked to the Apple Store with the winter fresh air. The TiBooks looked nice on their well-lit display; the iBooks and iPods hearkened all ages to play. It was a holiday season that rivaled those from before, with hardware and software befitting legend and lore.

With the holiday merriment that rekindles love in our heart, the ATPM staff is doing its part to spread holiday cheer throughout our great land with another cool issue that's always well planned. Happy Chanukah and Merry Christmas from our families to yours, may your nicely wrapped gifts be filled with all kinds of Mac toys. This is the end of the bad prose that may seem awful to some, but please accept our best wishes for the New Year to come.

Sugar Plum Fairy Tale

Wrapped in sugar and spice but containing nothing that's nice, the wealthy folks in Redmond have offered the courts an anti-competitive and singularly self-serving anti-trust settlement plan under the guise of helping America's poorest schools. In our view, the plan is so insidiously selfish it gives the Grinch Who Stole Christmas reason to pause and take notes.

On the one hand we believe Microsoft is attempting to use their proposed settlement offer to gain monopoly control of the education market. On the other hand we can't help but believe that this self-serving offer is a *de facto* admission on the part of Microsoft that unless they give their products away for free they can not adequately compete with Apple in the education market. Steve Jobs has been uncharacteristically vocal in his opposition to the Microsoft settlement plan.

Whether or not the courts approve the plan is anyone's guess. But even if Microsoft is allowed to proceed with its plan, too many schools and school administrators understand the benefits of having Apple technology in the classroom for the Microsoft settlement offer to make a real difference in Apple's education market share. Anyone who believes

differently, even the folks in Redmond, are better off reading fairy tales. That's the only place where this kind of self-styled and self-serving offer might find a happy ending for the children possibly affected by this misguided plan.

Five Alive?

Word has it that the G5 chip has entered volume production. Some expect to see G5 Macs at Macworld Expo in January. As a general rule the ATPM staff does not publicly comment on rumor or speculation. We do know that the G5 chip has been under long-term development and that the technology advancements slated for the G5 will delight Mac users when the processor comes to market. Whether or not the G5 appears in Mac products in January, we look forward to exciting product announcements soon after New Year's Day. Until we meet again in 2002, please enjoy our latest issue. Our December issue includes the following columns, commentaries and product reviews:

Apple Cider: The Year of Big Changes

Tom Iovino reviews the happenings in 2001, from hardware like the Cube, the new iBook, and the iPod, to Mac OS X and the Microsoft settlement.

My Apple Wedge: Interview With A New User

Dierk Seeburg interviews a user new to Macs and computing. She found herself in the position where the reasons to finally get her own computer outweighed the hassles of having to deal with having another piece of equipment to maintain, upgrade, and, if necessary, repair or get repaired. So, when a friend offered her a computer for dirt cheap she bought it without knowing anything about it or having seen it. To her surprise, it turned out to be a Macintosh. This interview describes her experience of working with what we have come to appreciate as the best computing platform out there.

About This Particular Web Site

This month's *ATPW* takes you to a Web site with extensive information about securing OS X, and a pictorial warning of what happens if you don't secure your Mac before shipping. There's also Fun with Spammers and fun with Legos. Finally, in support of our reviews of the iPod and iTunes, there's a site devoted to the iPod.

How To: About Two-Mac Networks

Whether you're making a temporary connection to move files from an old Mac to a new one or setting up a more permanent situation, it's important to know what your network options are. Most Macs will use their built-in Ethernet to make an easy one-cable hookup, but you can also use AirPort wireless connections for AirPort-enabled Macs or connect older, LocalTalk-only Macs with a printer cable to move files around or perform other network tasks.

How To: Sharing USB Printers on a Network

The USB Printer Sharing control panel, included with Mac OS 9 and later, greatly simplifies the task of sharing a USB printer to your home network. Connect your printer to a networked Mac, install the printing software on the Macs that will use it, do a little control panel configuration to get it going, and you're ready to print from anywhere.

Desktop Pictures: Sewickley, PA

Dan Klein contributes his summer photographs of Sewickley, PA, a suburb of Pittsburgh.

Reviews: Shareware Roundup

Want to enjoy some cool Aqua graphics when you're playing your games? This month's *Shareware Roundup* looks at a few "quick" games for Mac OS X.

Review: Bosco's Foto Trimmer

Paul Fatula reviews a brand new photo editing program featuring great simplicity and ease of use. While Bosco's Foto Trimmer is still a little rough around the edges, that's not unusual for a version 1.0 program, and it has a lot of promise for future versions. As it stands, it's a quick and friendly program for trimming, rotating, and stretching images.

Review: Wildform Flix

Mike Shields reviews Wildform Flix, a utility for converting video files into Macromedia's nearly ubiquitous Shockwave format.

Review: iPod

Daniel Chvatik reviews Apple's new iPod. Although the iPod is not for everyone, he finds that it hits its particular market segment dead-on, although it's a bit pricey.

Review: iTunes 2

Apple released this new version in conjunction with the iPod. Gregory Tetrault lacks an iPod to check out the synergy (Please, Apple, how about sending "evaluation" units to us hardworking ATPM volunteers?), but otherwise puts iTunes 2 through its paces. Is it easier to "Rip Mix Burn" with iTunes 2? Read and learn.

Review: Microsoft Outlook 2001

Outlook 2001 for Macintosh—does it finally give Macintosh users parity with their Windows-using counterparts? Gregory Tetrault reviews this multipurpose workgroup mail, scheduling, and personal information management program. The best news: Outlook 2001 is free. Of course, to use Outlook your workgroup needs to be using Microsoft Exchange Server, which isn't.

Review: Portraits & Prints

Eric Blair review Portraits & Prints, a program that simplifies the process of getting your digital photos out of your camera and into the hands of the people you care about.



E-Mail

Extending an AirPort Network

I just got a cable installed and AirPort, but it does not reach to either the middle or lower levels of the house, and that was the only place we could put a cable in (on the upper level). How do we get it to work on the lower levels?

—*Diane Thaler*

It sounds like you will need to buy a range-extending antenna for your wireless network. Take a look at something like [this](#). That may do the trick. —*Evan Trent*

Routers and Hubs

I was reading your site about sharing a cable Internet connection with a router. I'm slightly confused about one thing I'm hoping you can clear up for me.

Here's my situation: I will be living in an apartment with four of my friends. We each have a computer (five computers). We want to share a cable Internet connection. Do I need to get a 5-port router *or* can I get a 2-port router and plug the router into an Ethernet hub? I already have an 8-port hub and I don't understand if I can just plug the router into the hub and go from there, or do I need to get a router with enough ports on it for each computer?

—*Brett Wilson*

You can buy a two-port router and plug it into your existing hub. What you need to do is connect your cable/DSL model to the WAN port on the router. Then connect your existing hub to the LAN port on the router. If your router has two identical ports that are numbered and not labelled LAN or WAN, what you probably need to do is connect the uplink port on your hub to one of the jacks on the router. If your hub has no uplink port, you can buy a crossover cable and connect any of the numbered ports on the hub to one of the ports on the router. —*Evan Trent*

Networking a Cable Modem and Two Macs

First I want to say thank you for putting the most informative Web site up for [Mac networking](#)! Even though I think I know it all, a situation comes up and I need to turn to expert advice, and there is your site!

Anyway, I have pretty much gone over your site and am a little confused on the best way to hook up a network between two Macs.

I recently bought a G4 because my 7200/120 was just getting too slow.

The G4 right now has a cable modem connected to it, and it also has an Epson color printer connected to it. I was going to scrap the old 7200, but then thought about keeping it, as it has some usefulness to me and my kids.

I would like to have the cable modem used on both Macs, and have the file sharing and printing options too. The G4 is on the second floor of my home, and the 7200 is in the basement family room.

I am not sure if I need bridge software/hardware for the two Macs if the G4 has the printer and modem connected to it.

Could you suggest my networking options with these two macs? Price is not really an issue (unless it gets to be as expensive as a new G4!).

—Chris Kantner

My suggestion would be for you to purchase a hardware Ethernet router and plug that into your cable modem. Then plug both computers into the router. That will take care of sharing your Internet connection without running any software or worrying about which machine is turned on when, if it crashed, etc. Hardware routers are cheap and reliable and fast. It will also trivialize the file and printer sharing issue because both machines will be connected to the same LAN through the router, or through a hub which comes before the router. —Evan Trent

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The Year of Big Changes

There's an old expression that goes "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

Never has that sentiment been more true than in the year 2001.

As we find ourselves in December, we turn to centuries-old traditions to mark the end of one year and the beginning of the next. We take out the same holiday ornaments, crank up the same holiday CDs, and load the same holiday screen savers on our Macs. We buy our new "365 Reasons to Hate Bill Gates" page-a-day calendars for our desks and try to figure out where Aunt Martha and Uncle Jed will sleep when they visit for a week.

But 2001 has been one of those years where we know we have changed from how we were back in January.

For me, the changes have been profound. I became a dad for the second time this past April. Yes, it's true, that when you have two children the amount of work you have to do increases exponentially. It takes me four times as long to get out of the house than it did with only one child in tow.

And, I know each of us has changed after the events of September 11th. Never again will we take safe air travel, routine delivery of our mail, or even a peaceful walk on the beach or in the woods for granted. In so many ways, we are so fundamentally different than back in the early days of this year.

The high-tech world, including Apple Computer, has changed drastically as well. From products that hit the scene in a blaze of glory to those that fizzled out, Apple's hardware and software lineups have been shuffled and remolded several times, creating a new landscape for computer buyers to navigate. And, the high-tech industry has seen some interesting twists and turns through the year as well. Looking back over the year, here are some notable highlights:

- *Cube Down the Tube*—Sometimes, things are released way ahead of their time. For instance, *Blade Runner*, one of my favorite Harrison Ford movies, broke ground in 1982 with its atmospheric feel and gritty sci-fi story line. Unfortunately, when it was released, movie goers didn't really cotton to it. That's a similar fate that the Cube experienced earlier this year. This slick, modernistic computer attracted enough attention, but it never really found its niche in the Apple marketing scheme. It's a real shame, too, because it really did break some new ground in design that I'm sure will be adapted into some future computer designs.
- *Super iBook*—The iBook's new shell with its sleek design gives just a hint of what's to come when the up-to 600 Mhz system boots up. Yeah, customers can get a lot with this laptop, and good sales figures are showing that the iBook will continue to be part of the backbone of Apple's powerful lineup.
- *iPod: Powerful Portable Tunes*—It's the proverbial jukebox in your pocket. The iPod, the latest and greatest in MP3 players, promises that you will be able to cart around 1,000 songs and hear them with digital clarity. Now, that's what I call a good use of technology! Sure, the iPod has its critics 'cause this thing has its share of warts, but the technology is where all of the competitors will be heading. Kudos to Apple for getting out in front again!
- *OS X Marks the Spot*—It's here! It's here! And it's got its fair share of bugs! Apple's foray into the modern world of operating systems has won some converts, but slow production of OS X-compatible software and a strong reliance on the NeXT operating system's architecture have made its adoption a little slower than expected. New versions which have fixed several bugs have made OS X easier to work with and far more reliable, but it may take until the middle of next year for this newest direction for Macintosh to truly take hold.
- *Forget the cat, Bill Gates has nine lives!*—OK, so let me get this straight. The proposed settlement deal with Microsoft is that it can donate a cool half billion dollars to underprivileged schools around the country to allow technology into the poorest classrooms. Microsoft will let the schools have one million licenses to use the Windows operating system, and all of the associated software that goes along with it. So, in effect, this settlement is going to allow Microsoft *more* access to *more* potential consumers, locking out *more* competitors in the market. And this is supposed to make the market playing field more level? More level for whom?

You know what—I'm giving up on hating Microsoft. That's it. No more. I give up. If Microsoft can be found guilty in a court of law of using monopolistic tactics, and other companies which have held monopolies have been broken up (AT&T, Standard Oil, etc.), but Microsoft is allowed to flood *more* product into a marketplace and further erode one of Apple's strongest market segments, then I surrender. Microsoft should just be socialized, making it the state-run software company, and all others should be burned at the stake—Apple included. There's absolutely no way anyone else can win.

- *Apple Stores Showing Off*—Consider them showrooms for the Macintosh—Apple Stores have sprung up in several high-end malls around the country, and, so far, people are flocking to them. The holiday season will be telling for this new direction in marketing the world's easiest-to-use computer. Can the on-the-spot retail sales boost Apple's market share, or are the folks in Cupertino about to realize that foot traffic in stores doesn't necessarily equate to instant sales? Tune in for this one—2002 promises to be a year full of surprises!



Well, OK, I do have to admit that some things in the year 2001 fell short of expectations. After all, in Stanley Kubrick's 1968 masterpiece *2001: A Space Odyssey*, we were supposed to be able to travel to the moon and beyond with a minimum of fuss. I guess that didn't happen. Another issue I have with this year is that *2001* wasn't released on the big screen as I had hoped.

Oh, well, Hollywood does continue to disappoint me. I guess that's one thing that hasn't really changed.

Here's wishing nothing but happiness, peace, and prosperity for you in the upcoming year.

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Interview With a New User

I've wanted to include an interview in my column for a while now, but not the typical Mac celebrity interview with a famed programmer or software chieftain. Rather, I wanted to interview a user—a beginner at that. I thought it important to make sure Mac users, Mac professionals, and executives realize that not everyone has an innate understanding of how computers in general (and Macs in particular) work. There are a number of people who would greatly benefit from a tool that sports as good a user interface as the Apple Macintosh. This is the group of users Apple needs to tap into in order to turn one of its latest marketing concepts into reality: 5 down, 95 to go, referring to the current percentage of marketshare for personal computers.

By asking beginners about their interactive experience we can all learn a great deal about how people interact with their computers. (Incidentally, that used to be one of Apple's strengths.) In recent years, that pursuit of excellence in improving the user interface and experience has fallen somewhat by the wayside. The addition of the NeXT computing paradigm into the Apple fold after Apple's acquisition of NeXT, the computer company headed by Steve Jobs after being ousted from Apple, has not helped to improve this situation as it brought about the greatest change in operating system architecture in Apple's history, and with it a new user experience. Let's hope that Apple keeps improving on what appears to be evolving as the stable underpinnings that is the Unix kernel, together with the most advanced operating system ever designed, OS X.

Now, off from my little soap box and on to the interview with a new user.

How Do You Like Them Apples? "Oh, It's an Apple?"

D.S. Welcome to *My Apple Wedge*! Today we're taking a look at the beginner user experience. With us is A.H. who recently purchased a Macintosh computer. How did you come to buy a Mac? What kind of Mac is it?

A.H. Well, you could almost call it an accident! A neighbor offered his old machine to me when he upgraded to a new one. He works for a software company that produces software titles for Macintosh. The machine is a Performa 5200 [with a PowerPC 603 CPU running at 75 Mhz].

Unpacking and Setup

D.S. Many people saw how easy it is to set up a new iMac when they watched Jeff Goldblum in the Apple commercials they used to play on US TV—how easy was it for you to set up an older Power Mac?

A.H. If my neighbor hadn't helped me, I wouldn't have been able to do it. He was instrumental in setting up everything.

Getting to Know You: The Moment of Truth—Turning It On

D.S. After you had everything in place you turned it on—what was your first impression? Did it boot up as expected?

A.H. My first impression was very positive. It was more clear to me how each building block depends on one another and what level I'm at. It booted as expected the first time around, but using the Internet is a little slow [the 5200 has a memory limit of 64 MB which limits multi-tasking, and her connection is via a 56K modem].

To Boldly Go Where You Have Not Gone Before: The Mac OS

D.S. How do you like working with the system? Have you installed or uninstalled applications, and what did you experience?

A.H. I like it! I'm running Mac OS 8.6, and it's very clear and organized, and the menus are easier to use than on PCs. Whenever I need to do something, but I'm unclear how to do it, I look for assistance in the menus and I usually find what I'm looking for. I have not found the Help system very useful. It's too complicated for me as my computer knowledge is only rudimentary. Previously, I've only done word processing and nothing else. And I don't play computer games either—only my kids do that. I wish there were some kind of introduction for the computer literacy-challenged so I could install programs myself

without having to consult my neighbor. I have installed a couple of games for my kids using the installation CDs, that was easy enough, but nothing else. The icons used in the process were quite helpful.

Mastering the Mac OS GUI

D.S. As a user who had only used PCs in the past, how do you like the graphical user interface?

A.H. I like that, too! Again, I find working with CDs very easy. I find it very useful how CDs or diskettes are ejected from my machine upon restart. Sometimes I forget to take it out before shutdown, but the machine remembers it for me so I can take care of it. Also, I like how interactivity with the trash can is handled: you can trash something by just dragging it to the trash can, but it is still retrievable very easily. On PCs, I have always had trouble because the way PC programs require you to delete something is very cumbersome. Also, I can proudly report I found out how to listen to an audio CD all by myself, whereas I had to be shown how to do it on a PC I used some other time.

Day-to-Day Applications

D.S. What applications do you use from day to day? Did you find that there are some applications you need or used to use that are not available for the Mac?

A.H. So far, I've only been using Netscape for surfing the Internet and doing my e-mail. For writing letters I use Microsoft Word 98, and my kids have a bunch of games loaded on the computer.

Customizing

D.S. How do you like customizing your Mac?

A.H. Well, I haven't done any yet, I just haven't had a good chunk of time to really explore the operating system. I'm planning on doing that eventually, though. I'm going to have to do that as soon as my job transfer comes through in a few months, though. The only thing I have done so far is a little bit of customizing the Apple Launcher. Rather, my kids did that.

Surfing

D.S. Have you been using the Internet? How easy was it to set up?

A.H. Yes, like I said, I'm using Netscape for the Internet, i.e. e-mail and surfing. For example, I have used it to look up train connections and more. My neighbor set it up for me, so that part was easy. :-> Still, I wish I had a better connection than via my Acer 56K modem. Friends of mine have ISDN and I know that's faster. But since I'm not spending that much time on the computer yet, it's not worthwhile for me to get ISDN or something like that at this point. That's the reason I do most of my Internet browsing at my parents' house when I visit them. They have ISDN, as well, and surfing is much faster, of course :-> Nevertheless, the problem remains that I don't have much experience surfing the Web, so a lot of time is spent on searching for stuff which I have not found a shortcut for just yet.

Maintenance: Virus Protection, Backup, etc.

D.S. What have you done for regular maintenance? How do you back up? How do you protect your computer from viruses?

A.H. Well, nothing actually. I wouldn't know how to. I'll ask my neighbor when I talk to him next. I haven't done any backups, either, but I don't have anything crucial on my computer, so it wouldn't be tragic, if I couldn't use it for some reason. My neighbor did install an anti-virus program, and I'm grateful he did, although I have not had any virus problems that I know of.

General Impressions

D.S. What parts of the Mac are easy or hard to learn? How did you find answers to your questions?

A.H. If you have many different programs open you don't lose track of what is open like you do on a PC, so that's easier to work with. As I mentioned before, I find how the trash works very convenient. It's a real time saver. I had very little difficulty switching from PCs to Macs since I understood pretty well how their building blocks depend on one another and on which level I am. It helps me to think of my computer as a tree to understand its structure [it shows that her husband is a tree doctor]. I had some difficulty learning some

of the Finder terminology, in particular aliases for which I couldn't find an equivalent real-world concept. I only gathered that it simplified the number of clicks I had to go through before being able to start a particular application, sort of like a shortcut.

D.S. Exactly (only better)!

Macintosh Community

D.S. Have you had the chance to check out a Macintosh user group near you? What is your overall impression of the Mac community?

A.H. I have not checked out a user group. My neighbor is my support for now, and I make frequent use of that offer, but yes, he mentioned that there are user groups in the area. Maybe I'll join one at some later point. As far as the community is concerned I know that it's smaller than the PC community. Maybe I'll learn more as I surf the Internet more which my colleagues at work say I will once I sit down and really start, but for now I have little time and it takes a long time to load pages with my modem connection.

The Next Few Weeks

D.S. What applications, either those you are using now or some you would like to use, do you see yourself acquiring in the next few weeks and months?

A.H. On my machine I have several applications loaded: Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop, Casady & Greene's SoundJam, and Netscape Communicator. In our neighborhood we have the Mediathek; that's where my kids rent their games. Maybe I will buy a few more after my job transfer when I may need other applications to exchange work-related documents. We'll see.

Final Comments

D.S. Can you describe your overall impression of being a Mac user?

A.H. Well, the average user is even dumber than Apple thought! :-> I have found the learning programs that I used on the PCs I worked with very useful, so I wish that was available to me somehow.

D.S. Thanks for this interview. It has been a pleasure talking with you! We hope you thoroughly enjoy your Mac and come back to read ATPM for this and other columns in the future. Maybe we'll even do a follow-up interview to see how you're doing in a few months after you've had some time to get used to your Mac.

A.H. Thanks for having me, and greetings to your readers!

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About This Particular Web Site

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

Mac OS X Security Essentials

Due in large part to its Unix roots, there are a lot more security vulnerabilities to worry about in Mac OS X than there were in Classic versions of the operating system. Though not updated for OS X 10.1, this page offers considerable discussion of X's security weaknesses, with suggestions for fixes where available. The site also links to relevant software products and provides an extensive list of references. It's long, technical, and decidedly not "fun" reading, but certainly worth checking out if you want to make sure your system is as secure as it can be.

The Damage Done

This site isn't much fun either, in fact it can be downright painful. But it's some food for thought if you're thinking of shipping your Mac with UPS—or, to be fair, anyone else. The pictures show the result of insufficient padding combined with what appears to be some serious mishandling by a shipping company.

iPod Hacks

This site, whose user poll reveals that about half its readers either have an iPod or are definitely going to get one, is a one-stop source for all sorts of information about the iPod. While there's little news here that I haven't seen on more generalized Mac news sites, it offers everything from the famous Breakout "easter egg" to links to pictures of a disassembled iPod, to a review of a PDA case that is a nice fit for an iPod.

The Brick Testament

This site offers a very nicely done, sometimes comical, always cute, rendition of a number of Bible stories in Lego. That's right, scenes are recreated on Lego-built stages and parts are acted by little Lego men, sometimes with speech bubbles over their heads, and always with a short caption below.

[Fun With Spammers](#)

This lucky fellow, by his own admission, only gets about one piece of spam per piece of legitimate e-mail; for me the ratio is somewhere around three or four to one. Anyway, this page, and its follow-up, [More Fun With Spammers](#), make for an amusing read: the author picks a few spammers and informs them that they will be invoiced for his trouble if they continue to spam him. One did, and he posted this page about it. Being contacted later by the spammer's lawyer led to more fun. Reader comments on each page also make for an interesting read.

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FireWire on a Beige G3 Mac

My beige G3 Macintosh contains an OrangeLink PCI card (from OrangeMicro) that adds two FireWire and two USB 1 ports. I purchased an external FireWire drive for backups and storage. I chose an 80 GB drive from Maxtor. The drive came with Maxtor Utilities 3.2 and Maxtor FireWire drivers on a CD-ROM. I installed the software, restarted, connected the drive, and waited. Nothing happened. I launched the Maxtor FireWire Utility and got a message stating “No supported device installed! Please install the Maxtor FireWire Support...”

I looked in Conflict Catcher and discovered numerous FireWire-related files: FireWire Enabler, FireWire Lynx Enabler, and FireWire Support from Apple; FireWire OrangeLink Enabler and FireWire OrangeLink PC Card; and Maxtor FireWire Support. Thinking I might have an extension conflict, I restarted with only FireWire extensions active. The drive still wouldn't mount.

I used the FireWire features of Hard Disk Toolkit 4.0 (from FWB). HDT installed FWB FireWire Support Lib and FWB>SCMFw-SCSIBridgeP-Disk driver. I restarted but still could not mount the drive. I concluded that the FireWire extensions were conflicting with one another. Through trial and error I found a combination that allowed me to mount the drive!

Unfortunately, Maxtor formats its FireWire drives as PC drives. I used HDT to reformat the drive. I then needed to initialize the drive. Initialization proceeded briefly, and then the cursor spun merrily while the progress bar froze. Twenty minutes later I forced HDT to quit, which resulted in a frozen Mac. I restarted again and the drive did not mount. I unplugged and replugged the FireWire cable, and the Finder saw the drive, but with an unrecognized format. My options were to “eject” it or format it as a Mac drive. I chose the latter option, and the Finder started building the disk directory. The watch cursor displayed for many minutes with no progress. I forced the Finder to quit and restarted. Same scenario as

before. I let the Finder work on disk overnight without success. I restarted and went back to HDT 4. Format and initialization seemed to work this time. I went back to the Finder, and it mounted the drive!

I tested the drive by copying a folder containing 21 MB of font files. My Mac locked up when 11.1 MB had been copied. I restarted and relaunched HDT 4. I ran drive tests. The write test locked-up HDT 4. I restarted again. The drive would not mount. I called technical support at Maxtor. After wending my way through multiple menus I got disconnected. I tried again and reached a support tech. We tried numerous things without success. He asked if there was a FireWire-capable PC I could use to see if the drive worked. (No, our PCs at work are too old.) The support tech said he would e-mail version 3.4 of Maxtor utilities which might work better than 3.2. He also said that Maxtor may put out a disclaimer that its drives are only assured to work on Macs with native FireWire connections.

I went to FWB's Web site to check on HDT upgrades. HDT 4.5 was available with better FireWire support. I bought, downloaded, and installed the upgrade including its FireWire Loader files. This time, HDT also installed "FWB > Maxtor Disk Driver." I restarted, launched HDT 4.5, and plugged-in my Maxtor drive. HDT saw the drive. I formatted and initialized the drive in just moments. The drive mounted on my desktop. I tested the drive with complete success. I then went to the Finder and began copying files. The new drive worked and was very fast. I breathed a sigh of relief after having spent over five hours troubleshooting my "plug and play" FireWire drive. I thought this only happened to Windows users.

The morals of the story:

1. When a manufacturer claims a FireWire or USB device is PC and Mac compatible, find out if the device has been tested while connected via add-in cards (including your specific model).

2. Before installing a new drive (hard drive, CD-R/RW, or DVD), get the latest version of the best utility: Hard Disk Toolkit for fixed and removable drives and Toast Titanium for CD and DVD burners.

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How to Become a Network Guru

by Matthew Glidden, mglidden@atpm.com

About Two-Mac Networks

Networking two Macs together is both useful and relatively straightforward. Whether a two-Mac network is your final goal or you want to leave the option for expansion open, you'll learn how to set up everything and minimize your costs at the same time.

People often set up a two-Mac network as a one-time connection to move files from an old Mac to a new one. If your network is going to be temporary, the emphasis will probably be on cost rather than performance. Most Mac users can set up a network using only a single cable, so the cost will be minimal.

Note for Owners of New, Colored Macs

Every colored G3, G4, and iMac comes with a 10/100BaseT Ethernet port (some also support 1000BaseT), which means that it can connect to any Ethernet network and automatically match the network's speed.

Since these models lack serial (modem and printer) ports, they don't support LocalTalk networks. If you need to connect one of these Macs to LocalTalk computers or printers, you'll need to use an appropriate adapter. See the [Mix LocalTalk & Ethernet page](#) for more info.

What You Need for a Two-Mac Ethernet

The cheapest Ethernet connection, good for two (and only two) computers, is a crossover cable connection. A crossover cable eliminates the need for a hub by switching the cable's send and receive wires internally. Because these wires are swapped, a crossover cable cannot be used as part of a hub-based network. For more information, see the [New Network: Crossover Ethernet Overview page](#).

What You Need for a Two-Mac LocalTalk

The least expensive LocalTalk network consists of a single serial cable connecting the printer port of both Macs. Serial cables are typically used to connect Macs to printers, modems, and other peripherals, and are extremely common. Since most Mac owners have such a cable in their possession, the cost of this network is practically nothing. For more information, see the [New Network: LocalTalk Serial Overview page](#).

Wireless Networking (AirPort)

Many Mac models released in the last few years can use Apple's method of wireless networking, known as AirPort. AirPort works like a radio station, with a central broadcasting station (the Base Station) transmitting signals to receivers (AirPort cards) in the nearby Macs. The AirPort Base Station also performs NAT (Network Address Translation), so you can automatically share a modem or high-speed Internet connection across the wireless network.

Technically, you can have up to 255 Macs using a single Base Station at once, although the bandwidth is limited enough (it maxes out at about 1 MB/sec) that network performance would bog down before you got anywhere close to that number.

For more information about AirPort and setting it up, see the [New Network: AirPort page](#).

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How to Become a Network Guru

by Matthew Glidden, mglidden@atpm.com

Sharing USB Printers on a Network

As the impetus behind many a network setup, using one printer for multiple Macs is a convenience of both cost and space, and isn't necessarily hard to do. With the Mac OS USB Printer Sharing control panel, your printer can grow to serve as many Macs as your house will hold.

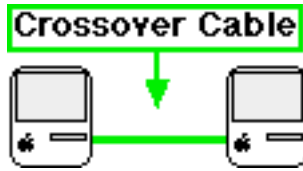
There are some system requirements for the USB Printer Sharing control panel: you must use Mac OS 9 or higher, use TCP/IP as your network protocol (not AppleTalk), and the printer must be connected to your Mac's built-in USB port, not to a USB expansion card. For AirPort network use, you need AirPort software 1.1 or higher. You also need to install the printer software on each Mac using the shared printer, and USB Printer Sharing may not work over systems with NAT (Network Address Translation, typically used to share Internet access across a network). For additional information, see the USB Printer Sharing documentation. To verify that your printer model is compatible with USB Printer Sharing, see [Apple's USB Printer Sharing page](#).

Note: This article addresses USB-enabled printers only. For information on non-USB models, see the [Threemacs.com Share a Printer page](#). With new USB printers supported by the aforementioned control panel, now may be the time to go for a printer upgrade if you're having trouble sharing a non-USB printer.

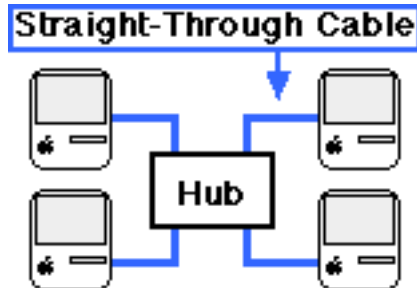
Network Setup

In order to share a printer among your Macs, first connect your Macs to an existing network or create a new network for them. (If you've already done this, skip ahead to the Share your USB Printer section.)

USB-ready Mac models (iMac, G4, iBook, etc.) also include built-in support for Ethernet, and connecting two Ethernet-ready Macs is as easy as using a single crossover cable. Crossover Ethernet cables are available at most computer stores for \$20 or under.



If you need to connect more than two Macs, you'll need an Ethernet hub or switch to do the job, plus one normal (not crossover) Ethernet cable for each Mac. Any hub or switch should work—just make sure it has enough ports to handle all your Macs. Most computer stores carry multiple models, and you can check Dealmac.com if you're looking for a good mail-order deal.



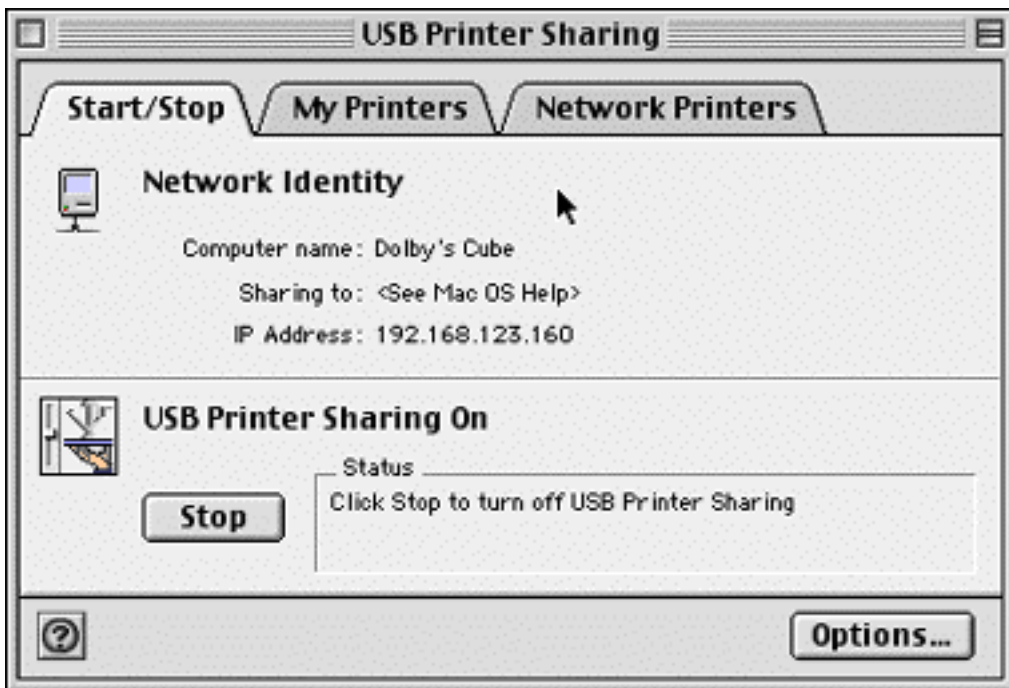
To verify that your network connection is working, open the AppleTalk control panel on each Mac and make sure it's set to Ethernet. For a more detailed version of the setup process, see the [Threemac.com New Network page](http://Threemac.com).

The network connection is all you should need to share your USB printer, but there are many other things you can do with your network. See the [network articles](#) from previous ATPM issues or the [Threemac.com Web site](http://Threemac.com) for more info.

Share Your USB Printer

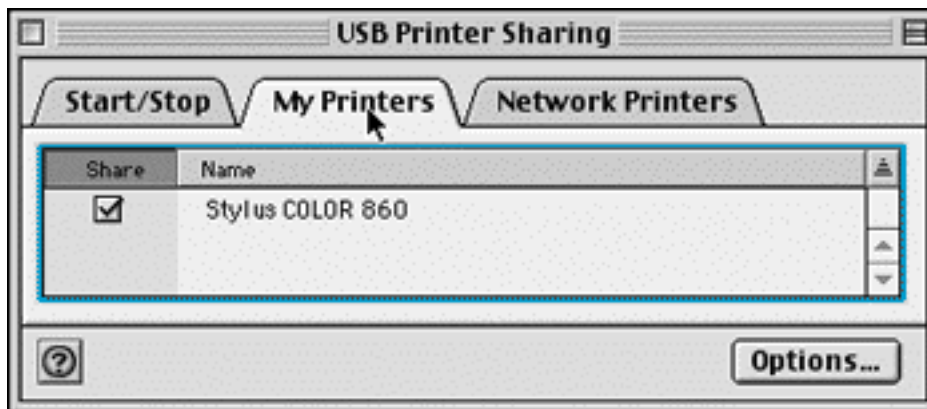
Most consumer printers produced in the last few years connect using a USB cable, which means you can use the Mac OS USB Printer Sharing software to share the printer with other Macs on the same network. Check the Control Panels folder in the Apple menu to see if you have the control panel already. If not, you can download it from the [Apple Software Updates Web site](#) or through your Mac's Software Update control panel.

To share your printer, first turn its power on, then open the USB Printer Sharing control panel.



USB Printer Sharing Control Panel

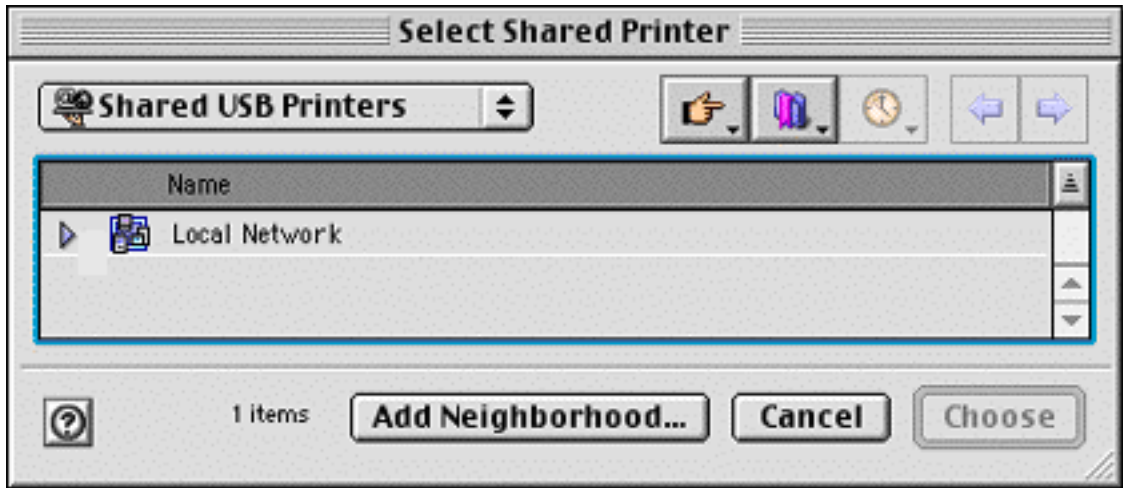
Press the Start button to share the printer, then select the My Printers tab to confirm that your printer appears there. Check your printer and close the control panel.



Selecting a USB Printer

Connect to a Shared USB Printer

Any network computer that prints to your shared printer also needs the USB Printer Sharing control panel. To use another Mac's shared printer, open the control panel and expand the Local Network list to show the available printers. Pick the one you want to use, close the window, and print away. The control panel should handle the communication with the host Mac and print your documents on the remote printer.



USB Printer List

Summary

The USB Printer Sharing control panel greatly eases the difficulty of sharing home printers among multiple Macs, which previously could be both problematic and expensive. And hey, it's free!

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Extras: Cartoon

by Mike Flanagan, sensible@sensible.screaming.net



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Extras: Desktop Pictures

Sewickley, PA

These pictures were taken this April and August in Sewickley, PA (a suburb of Pittsburgh). The photographer is [Dan Klein](#), a high school student at Quaker Valley High School. It is amazing how the park is so tranquil and quiet.

The pictures were taken with a Nikon Coolpix 800 and post-processed with Photoshop 6.0 on a "Pismo" PowerBook G3.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

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

Downloading all the Pictures at Once

iCab and Interarchy (formerly Anarchie) can download an entire set of desktop pictures at once. In iCab, use the Download command to download "Get all files in same path." In Interarchy, use HTTP Mirror feature.

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

If you have a picture, whether a small series or just one fabulous or funny shot, feel free to send it to editor@atpm.com and we'll publish 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

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.

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 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 8.5–9.x

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

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

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

Mac OS 8.0 and 8.1

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

Random Desktop Pictures

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

DeskPicture

An alternative to Mac OS's Appearance control panel is Pierce Software's DeskPicture, [reviewed](#) in issue 5.10 and available for [download](#).



Review: Shareware Roundup

by Brooke Smith, bsmith@atpm.com

Games for Mac OS X

By now you should be finding your way around Mac OS X with ease. And, if you're a visual person like me, you're probably obsessed with those great Aqua graphics. They look good enough to eat, don't they? Similarly, the OS X games have just as much eye candy. For December's Shareware Roundup, I've looked at what I call "quick" games (as in no building armies, or searching for treasure, etc.) for OS X. And I must say, they look and play fine.

MarbleX 1.0.1

Developer: [IllumineX, Inc.](#)

Price: \$9.95

Requirements: Mac OS X

Trial: Feature-limited (first three levels only)



Although MarbleX has similarities to Tetris, it certainly looks amazing. As a cluster of three marbles drops, the object of the game is to put marbles of the same color next to each other, so they disappear. This makes more room for more marbles. To make the marbles disappear, get three marbles of the same color next to each other in a straight line or a triangular shape. It's lots of fun and of course as you advance to higher levels, the balls drop faster. I only got to Level 3, since the demo only allows you to play the first three levels. Then you need to register.

The game looks good, and the sound effects are awesome—the marbles make a clacking sound when they hit or fall on top of other marbles. If you don't want the sound effects, you can turn them off under the Preferences menu.



In this screenshot, the falling marbles head toward the two blue marbles at the bottom to create a line of three blue marbles. These marbles will then disappear.

iTarget 3.0

Developer: [Vizspring Software](#)

Price: free

Requirements: Mac OS X



iTarget was the only disappointment in this group, simply because, well, it's boring. The object of the game is to hit five targets by clicking on them with your mouse. The targets will then disappear from the screen. For each level you have 60 seconds to click on all five targets.



Level 12 with two targets remaining and 52 seconds left in this level.

It's fun to try to get that hand-eye coordination by clicking the targets, but you'll tire of this after the first few levels. The levels are really easy until about Level 10. After this level, the targets begin to appear faster. By that time, you'll be truly bored or end up frustrated by the speed and quit the game.

Although the graphics are good, and there are cool sound effects and a puff of smoke when you hit the target, these things were not enough to sustain interest for me. Plus, when you end the game there's this annoying little laugh...

BabelBloX 1.7.42

Developer: [IllumineX, Inc.](#)

Price: \$19.95

Requirements: G3-based Mac, Mac OS 8.6

Trial: Feature-limited (play limited to the X Free world)



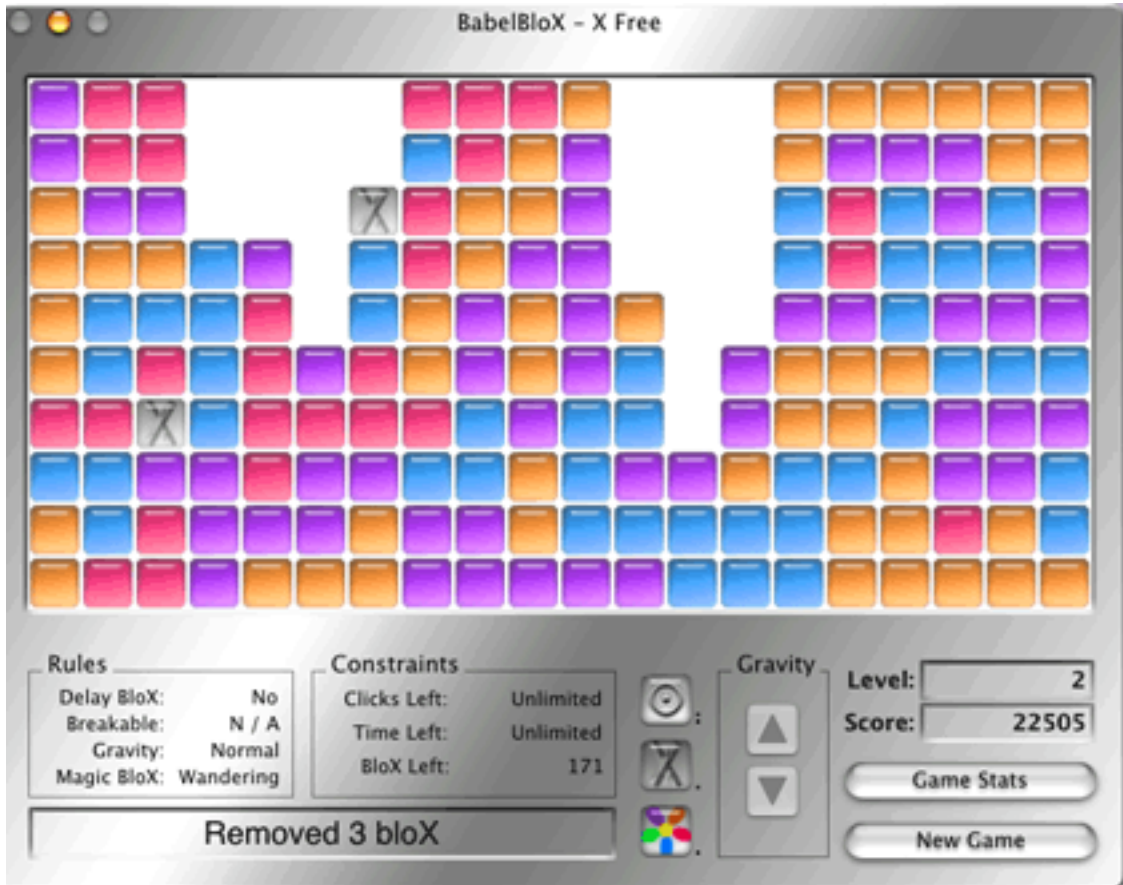
In BabelBloX, hear great shattering glass sound effects as you attempt to remove all the squares, or BloX, from the screen. When all the BloX have been removed from one level, you move on to the next level.

To remove BloX, simply click your mouse on a removable group of BloX to get rid of it. When you move your mouse over the screen, any removable BloX under your mouse will be highlighted. BloX can be removed if one's touching a block of the same color—for example if it's touching the BloX directly to the left and right of it, as well as above and below the BloX. BloX which are on the diagonal from each other are not considered to be touching.

As BloX are removed, the remaining BloX will fall into place, forming new groups of touching blocks. Be careful that you don't create situations where you can't remove any more blocks. If you get stuck, the game is over.

Under Preferences, turn off the sound effects if you don't want to hear the shattering glass! Also, there are eight other games that you can play. These games will be enabled in the Preferences menu once you register.

This was by far the most addictive game simply because you want to keep going to get a high score. It's fun and, of course, it looks great.



The name of this particular game is X Free.

Lines 1.0.b2

Developer: [Konstantin Anoshkin: Software](#)

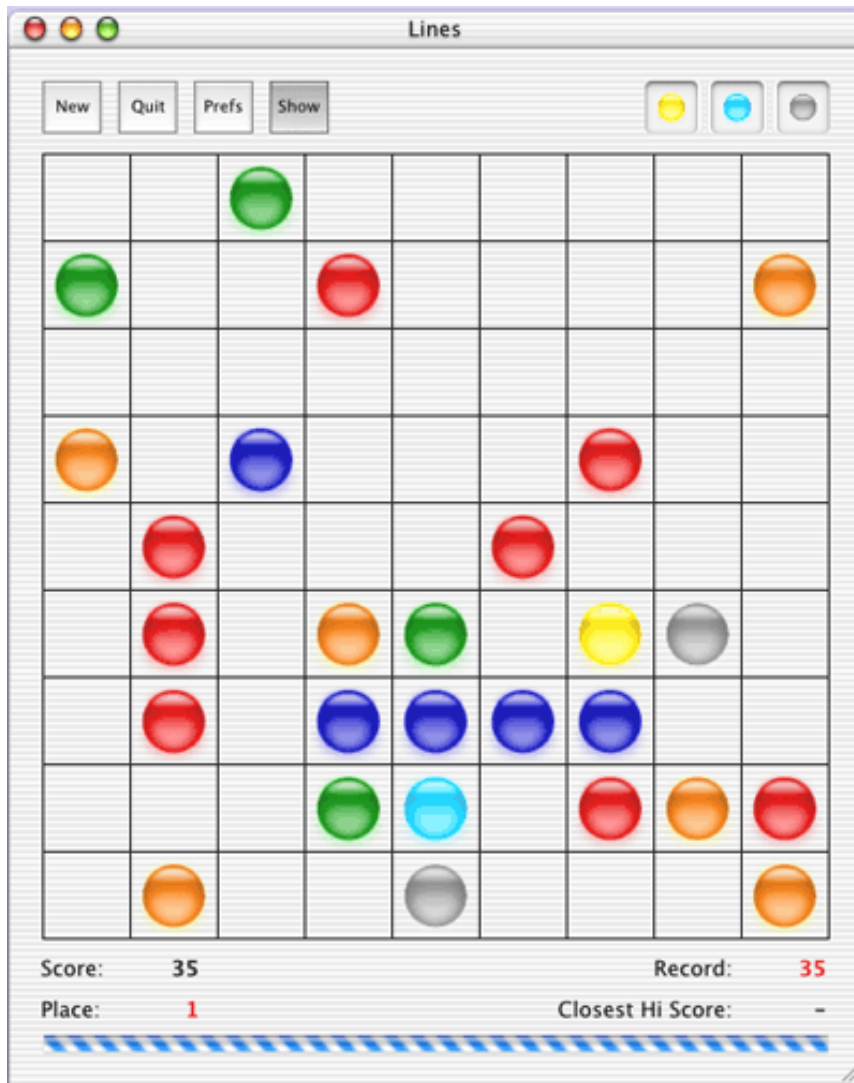
Price: free

Requirements: Mac OS X

The object of Lines is to arrange five or more balls of one color in a continuous line (horizontal, diagonal, or vertical). When you've got a line, the balls then disappear. However, each time you move a ball, three more balls of random



colors fall onto the board. To play, simply click on a ball that you want to move. The ball then begins to pulse. Click your mouse on the square you want to move the ball to. The ball will then slide over to the new square.



Here, I have to move the one dark blue ball to the side of the four dark blue balls to create five in a row. The row will then disappear.

Under the Preferences, choose the speed of the balls when they slide or change the field size, or the grid that the balls are on (select 7, 9, 11, 13, or 15 squares) or choose from five to nine colors of balls.

This game is fun, but very difficult. You may feel frustration, but it's still okay.

Note: Sometimes Lines will unexpectedly quit before you even get the program open. If this happens, the developer says to delete the file 'com.brakesoff.lines.plist' from your ~/Library/Preferences folder.

Maclago 3.0

Developer: [Miguel Marcos](#)

Price: \$19.99

Requirements: Mac OS X

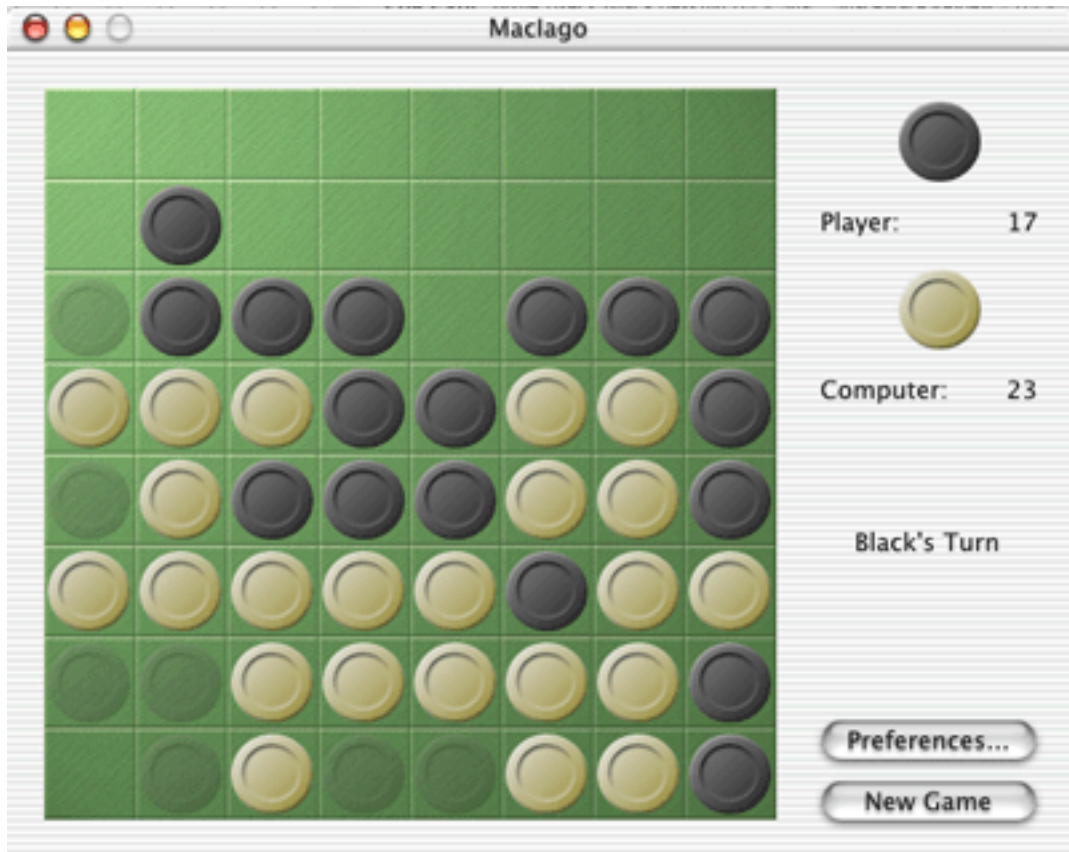


Maclago is based on the board game Othello/Reversi and is also inspired by the 1984 Mac game "Iago" by David Reed. Maclago looks very cool in OS X—nice graphics! (In case you're still running OS 9, you can download version 2.5).

Maclago is played on a board on which you have to enclose your opponent's pieces among your own. All these enclosed pieces will be changed to your own in the eight possible directions. Each move must result in at least one conversion. When such a move is not possible the turn is forfeited. When none of the players can make a move, the game ends. The player with the most pieces at the end of the game wins. Under the Preferences, you have a choice of play: Human vs. Computer or Human vs. Human. Also, increase or decrease the level of difficulty (I had it on Easy, and still haven't won!), turn off the sound effects, or turn off Show Available Moves.

According to the developer, Maclago 3.0 was completely rewritten for Mac OS X using the Cocoa frameworks. Compared to the previous version, Maclago has better graphics and a new user interface, as well as the ability to show available moves.

For me, I didn't find this game as addictive as some of the others. The reason, I think, is that it is much more complicated and certainly takes more strategy than the others. However, it's worth downloading: it's free. And well, practice does make perfect, right?



As you can see, I wasn't doing too well.

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Review: Bosco's Foto Trimmer

by Paul Fatula, pfatula@atpm.com

Developer: [Component X](#)

Price: \$39.34

Requirements: G3-based Mac

Recommended: 128 MB of RAM

Trial: Fully-featured (7 days)



Most of the time, when I'm editing an image taken by my digital camera, I just want to do something basic. Crop, resize, maybe rotate. Firing up Photoshop, even the antiquated 3.0 version I've got on my laptop, seems like overkill. Bosco's Foto Trimmer is designed to make those few basic adjustments simple and easy.



The images in this review were taken full-screen and cropped using Bosco's Foto Trimmer.

When you start the program, you're invited to choose a picture to edit. The editing tools (yep, all of em!) are at the top of the screen. It's a simple point-and-click sort of deal from there, though even with the program's suggested 80 MB of RAM, many of the operations

are slow on my G3/466 PowerBook: scaling down by clicking on the appropriate button takes 3–4 seconds. On the other hand, rotating 90 degrees takes about half that time, and trims are pretty much instantaneous.

Using the Controls

Trimming with Bosco is, unfortunately, rather awkward and limited. You set a “trim size,” in pixels. (You can set the display to show the size of your image in inches or centimeters if you prefer that to pixels, but trim size remains in pixels.) Then you click on a button corresponding to one of the image’s four sides. Voila, that amount of image is trimmed off the side. Yes, it works, but every other imaging program I’ve trimmed with allows you to select a portion of the image with your mouse and trim off the unselected portion. That takes fuller advantage of the presence of a GUI and allows you to see exactly what you’re going to get before performing the trim. It also lets you trim any amount you like, and from several sides at once; Bosco lets you trim only in amounts of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50, or 100 pixels. An easy but welcome improvement for the next version might let you manually specify the number of pixels you want to trim.

Squishing and stretching work well, and are handled by percentages. The default amount of change if you use a button is 4%, and there’s no way to change that. However, you can type the amount into the box, hit Enter, and watch it scale. Zooming in or out of your image works the same way.

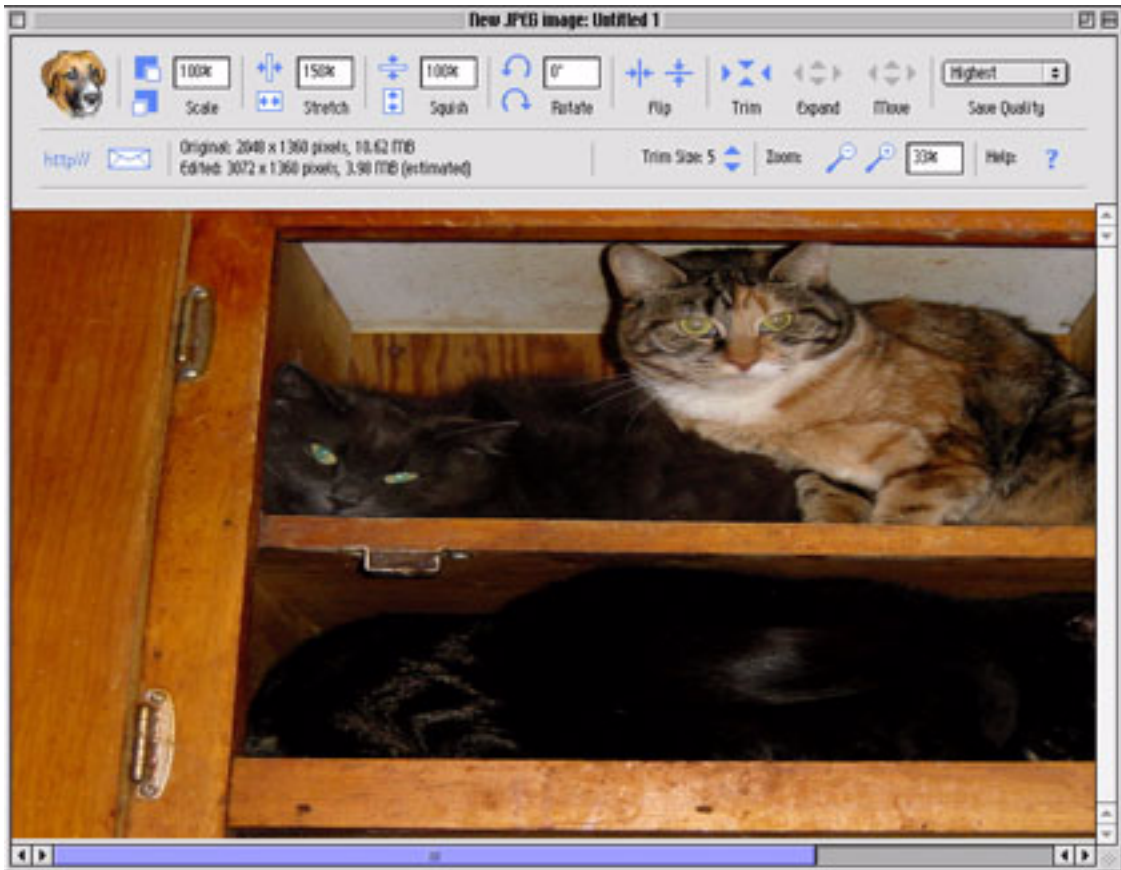
The Move feature is really quite interesting, and at least in my experience, unique to Bosco. Once you have your image trimmed to your desired size, think of that final size like a picture frame, with the parts of the image you trimmed before sticking out off the sides. The move feature lets you change what part of the picture shows inside that frame. This is

extremely handy if you know in advance what you want your final size to be: trim the image, pretty much at random, down to your desired size, and then move the image around so the desired portion is visible.



Oops!

The nature of Bosco's Foto Trimmer definitely urges you to play with your images: the controls are sitting there out in the open rather than hiding in menus waiting for you to search them out. However, Bosco is a pretty fierce dog: there's no undo feature! The best Bosco has to offer along that line is a Revert feature that takes you back to the last saved version of your image.



Having said that, nothing you do with the Foto Trimmer controls cannot be undone manually. If you trimmed too much, you can use the "Expand" control right next to it to reverse this action. The Scale and Stretch/Squish controls work by percentage of the original image size, so if you dropped it down to 90% and decide you want to go back to 100%, just type in the number and you're all set. Still, this program, intended to let you do things simply, is simply desperate for a Command-Z.

The Future

For a 1.0 release, Bosco's Foto Trimmer isn't bad. Version 2, which will be a free upgrade for owners of the first version, promises a number of new features, such as increased speed, lessened memory requirements, the ability to save in any QuickTime supported format (1.0 only supports JPEG), and a "Size Lock" feature, which sounds like it sort of expands on the "Move" feature discussed above.

Conclusion

As it stands, Bosco's Foto Trimmer is really a bit too short on features to justify the expense: while a simple-to-use interface is definitely something I feel is worth paying for, the program needs some beefing up before it's ready for prime time. ([GraphicConverter](#), by contrast, is faster, far more powerful, and slightly lower priced.) However, Bosco's Foto Trimmer is well worth keeping an eye on for future versions, as it increases speed and adds to its key set of features.

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Review: Wildform Flix

by Mike Shields, mshields@atpm.com

Developer: [Wildform Software](#)

Price: \$99

Requirements: PowerPC-based Mac with System 8.6, 64 MB of RAM.

Trial: none



Wildform, creators of Internet media software, announces the release of Flix for Mac, the first Macintosh application that encodes video into Macromedia's FlashA format. Now Mac users can easily convert video files into the most popular media format on the Web. In making the announcement, Jonathan Blank, Wildform CEO, noted, "Flix for PC has already begun to revolutionize streaming video on the Web, and we're very pleased to now offer the software to the media savvy Mac audience."

In January, Wildform released Flix for PC, which quickly became a must-have program for Flash developers, Web designers, and Web video enthusiasts. Now Wildform has provided the same functionality for the Mac, a popular platform for media and graphics applications.

Flash is an open standard used extensively on the Internet. According to a September 2000 NPD Research study, 96.4% of all Web users can view Flash content without a download. Flix-encoded video also streams to all platforms, all browsers and through firewalls, making for a truly hassle-free experience. Until now, Flash was primarily an animation tool, rarely utilized for video because it took hours or days to create even short clips. With Flix, video production time is slashed to minutes, and users can easily insert links, create video banner ads and e-mails, and deploy customized media players.

So much for the press release. It always amazes me how every application is a must-have, at least according to their own company's marketing department. In this case, it may be no exaggeration, as I came across a recent statistic:

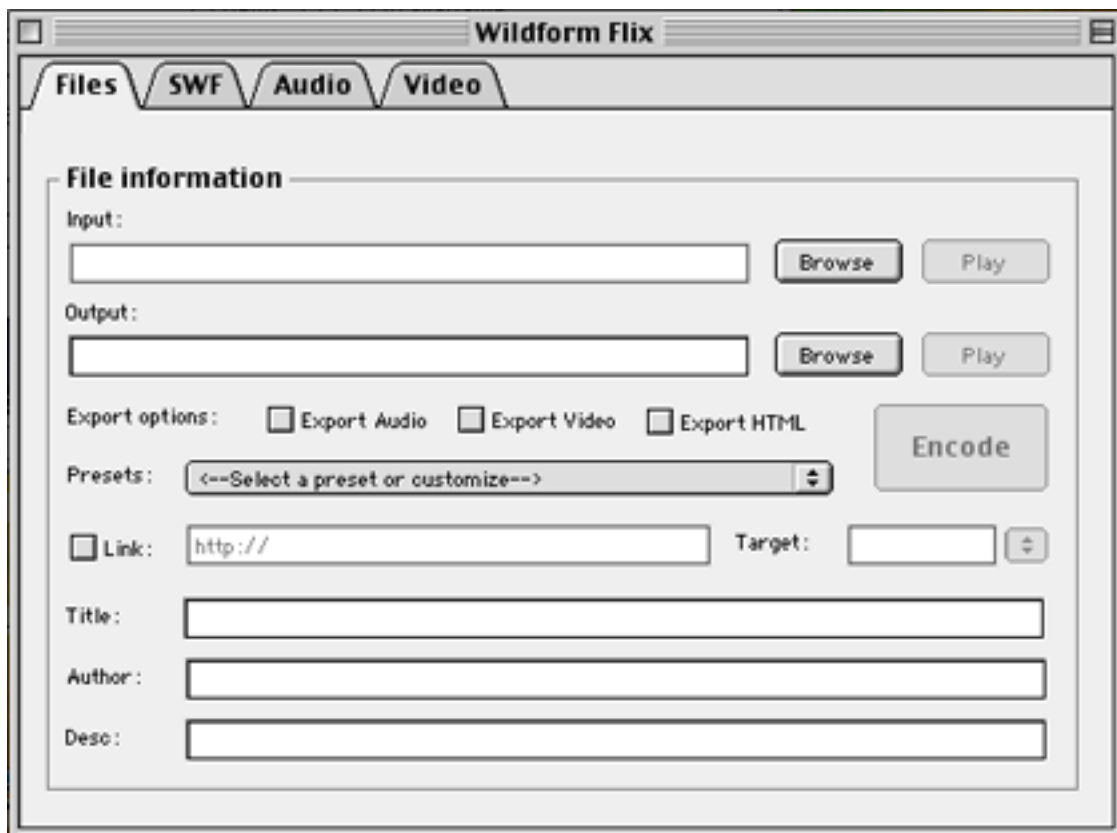
Over 386 million Web users can now use Macromedia Flash Player to seamlessly view content created with Macromedia Flash, the professional standard for producing high-impact, vector-based Web experiences.

Of course, this stat came from Macromedia's own Web page, which in this case doesn't make it any less valid. Ubiquity is a funny thing. If you were to ask 100 computer users (PC or Mac) if they have Flash, most would say they don't know what you're talking about; however, Flash comes with the latest downloads of both Netscape and Internet Explorer. So for once, the marketing department doesn't lie.

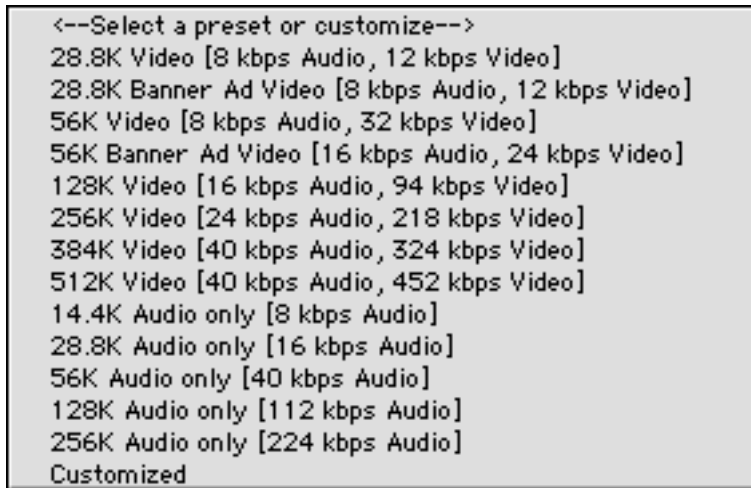
But is the software any good? It was actually released in July, but I wanted to give it a thorough workout. At it's simplest, Flix is a simple converter program, as advertised. It will convert all your favorite formats, including MPEG, AVI, MOV, and even MP3s to Flash. The resulting extension is .swf, to maintain compatibility with our PC-loving friends.

I had some trouble with the install, as my home Mac is ancient. It's only because of my own stubbornness, as I didn't want to start up with extensions off. After climbing this hurdle, the install went relatively quickly, and I've had no further problems with the software since.

Starting up the program produces this screen:



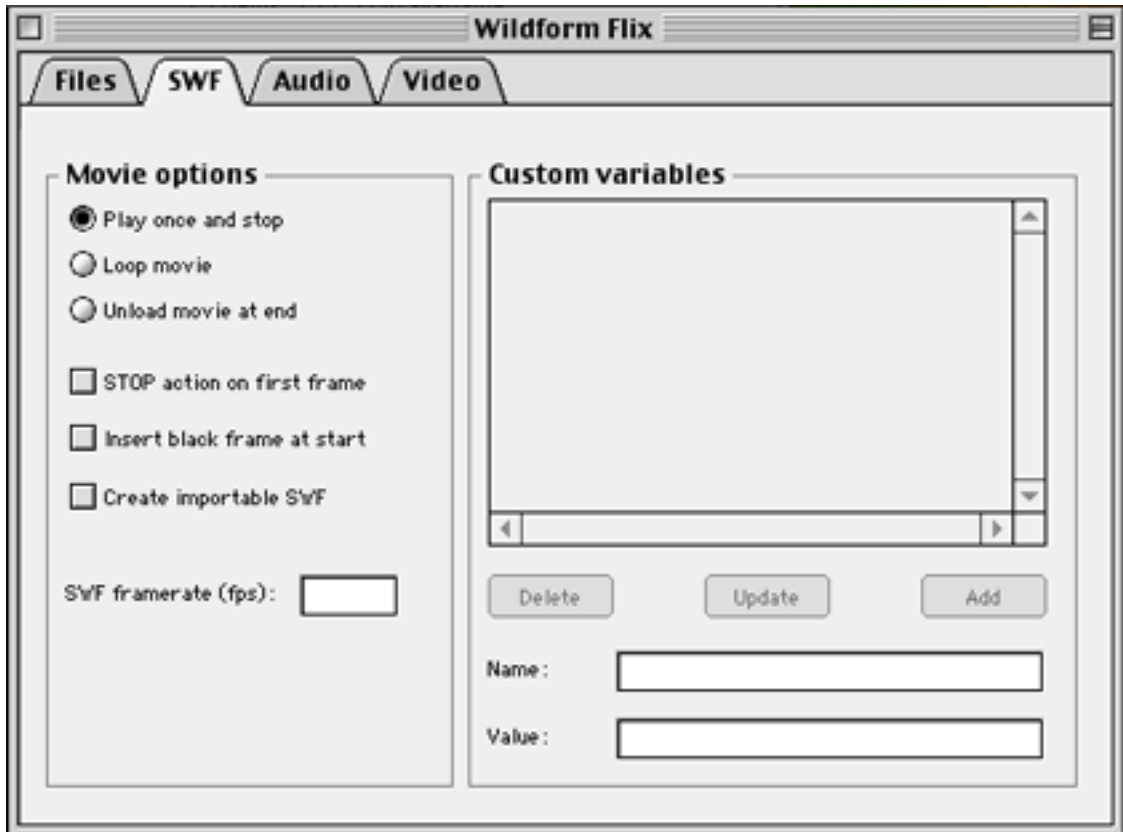
There's a popup menu, to determine the type and ultimately the size of the resulting flash file:

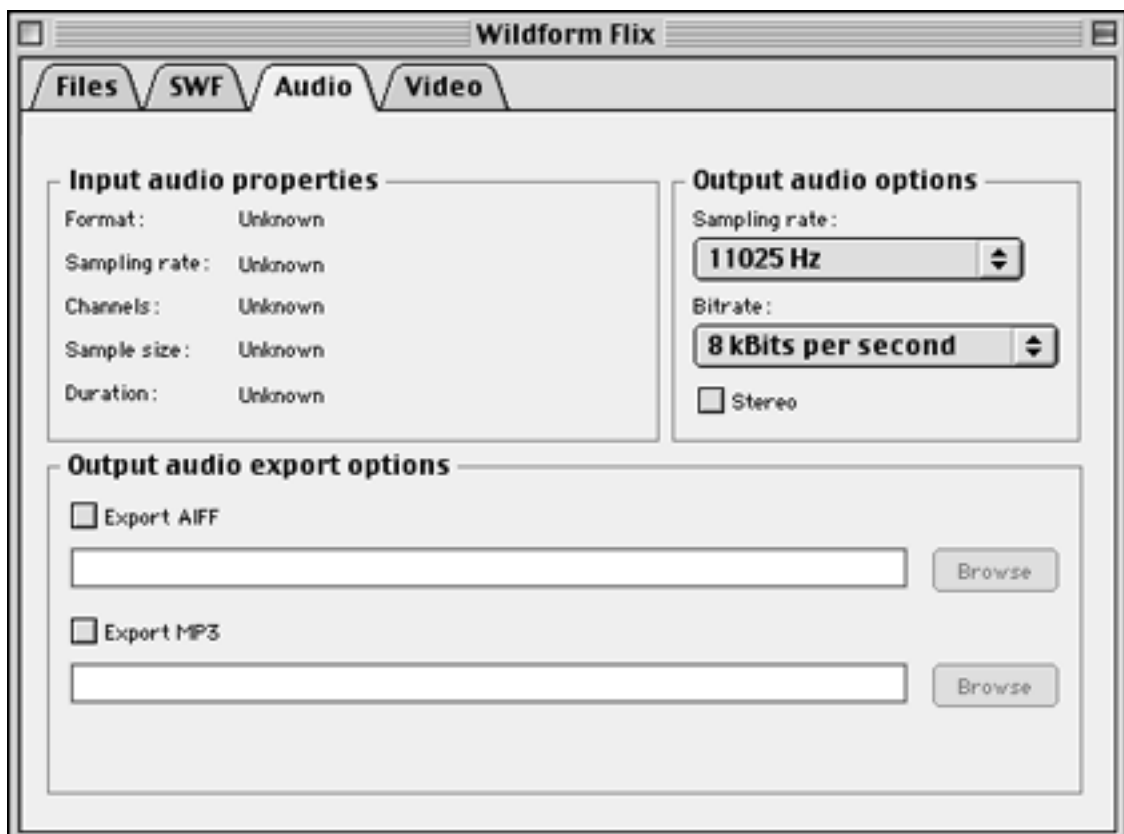


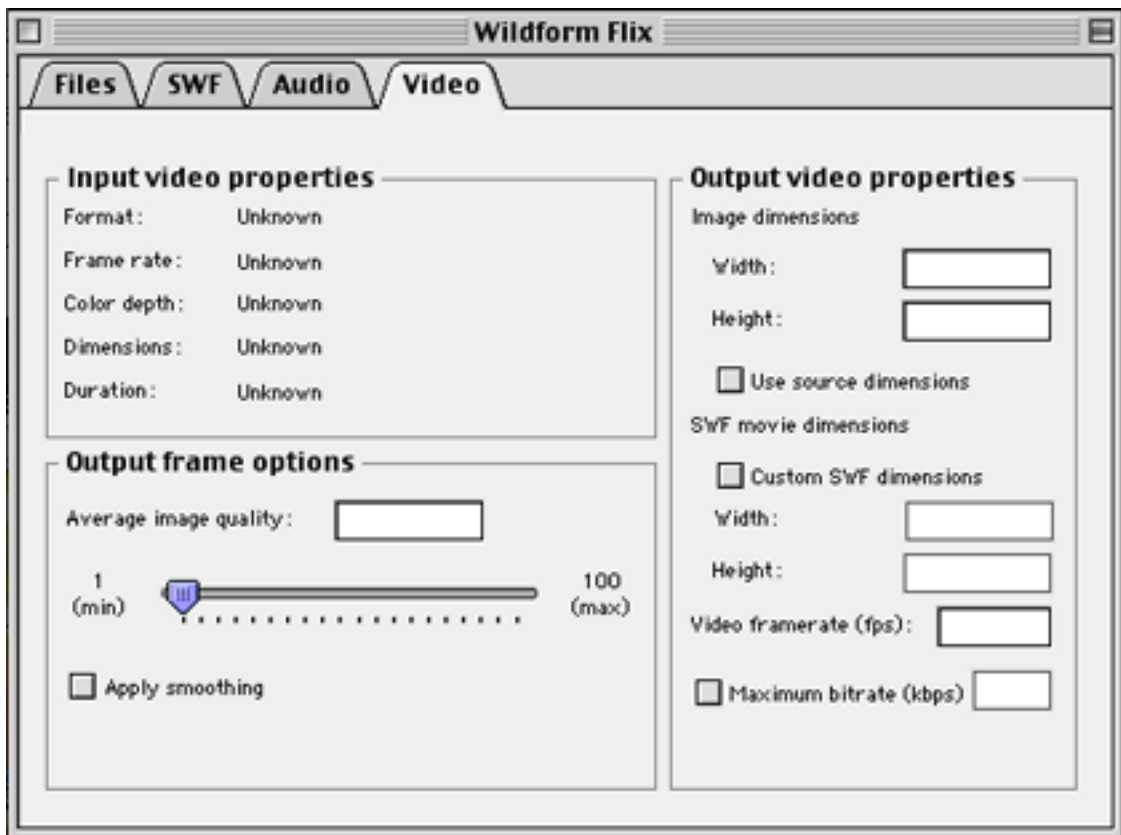
A screenshot of a popup menu with a light gray background and a black border. The menu lists various video and audio presets. Each item is followed by its respective audio and video bitrates in square brackets. The items are: <--Select a preset or customize-->, 28.8K Video [8 kbps Audio, 12 kbps Video], 28.8K Banner Ad Video [8 kbps Audio, 12 kbps Video], 56K Video [8 kbps Audio, 32 kbps Video], 56K Banner Ad Video [16 kbps Audio, 24 kbps Video], 128K Video [16 kbps Audio, 94 kbps Video], 256K Video [24 kbps Audio, 218 kbps Video], 384K Video [40 kbps Audio, 324 kbps Video], 512K Video [40 kbps Audio, 452 kbps Video], 14.4K Audio only [8 kbps Audio], 28.8K Audio only [16 kbps Audio], 56K Audio only [40 kbps Audio], 128K Audio only [112 kbps Audio], 256K Audio only [224 kbps Audio], and Customized.

```
<--Select a preset or customize-->
28.8K Video [8 kbps Audio, 12 kbps Video]
28.8K Banner Ad Video [8 kbps Audio, 12 kbps Video]
56K Video [8 kbps Audio, 32 kbps Video]
56K Banner Ad Video [16 kbps Audio, 24 kbps Video]
128K Video [16 kbps Audio, 94 kbps Video]
256K Video [24 kbps Audio, 218 kbps Video]
384K Video [40 kbps Audio, 324 kbps Video]
512K Video [40 kbps Audio, 452 kbps Video]
14.4K Audio only [8 kbps Audio]
28.8K Audio only [16 kbps Audio]
56K Audio only [40 kbps Audio]
128K Audio only [112 kbps Audio]
256K Audio only [224 kbps Audio]
Customized
```

For the average user, this is all you'll ever need, but additional tabs allow tweaking of the output file, audio, and video.







This is what took me the most time with this software. Either I didn't download the help file, or it doesn't exist. Having almost no experience with Flash, learning the software is what took the most time. I did pick up some tidbits. Flix's encoding capabilities can be used to create video and audio for users connecting to the Internet at any bit rate, and Flix includes presets for 14.4K–512K streams, which are listed in the popup menu above. Your Flix-encoded video and audio is limited only by the maximum allowed number of frames in the SWF format, which is 16000 frames. For example, at a SWF frame rate of 8 FPS, your movie can be over 33 minutes long. The Flash player will stop playing your video after 16,000 SWF frames, and Flix will warn you if your output video will exceed 16,000 frames. You shouldn't create SWF video output that exceeds 50–60 MB of Flash player RAM usage, which is determined by adding the file size to the overhead of the Flash player itself. Flix will let you know how much RAM your video and audio will use when it is loaded into the Flash player, and it will warn you when you exceed 50 MB.

As with all PC-based video encoding, the faster your processor and the more RAM you have, the better your encoding experience will be. You'll also need plenty of hard drive space for your video files. Hard drive space is at a premium here at home, but if you have a current Mac, you should do ok. Your encoding results are also largely dependent on the quality of your source material. As I didn't have any video of my own to work with, I went to Apple's iMac Web site and grabbed a few that I liked, with varying results. The Kite boy video didn't do too well when I tried the slowest speed, but when I bumped it up to the highest speed, the software performed like a champ. Render time varied, and as I have the minimum system that they require, I got caught up on my reading while it performed. Your mileage may vary.

Conclusion

If you have a Web site that has video clips, I suggest you run right over to the Wildform Web site, and download yourself a copy of Flix. I couldn't tell the difference between the original videos and the resulting Flash files, and that's what we're going for, isn't it?

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Review: iPod

by Daniel Chvatik, dchvatik@atpm.com

Developer: [Apple Computer](#)

Price: \$399

Requirements: Mac with built-in FireWire port, Mac OS X 10.1 or Mac OS 9.2.1

Trial: none



Overview

For a long time, Apple has been focused on the consumer business. In years long past, Apple had a complex line-up of computer models and the accompanying peripherals such as displays, printers, speakers, and a digital camera. Then came the big cut and Apple's product offerings were limited to a 2 x 2 matrix of computers, plus a mouse, a keyboard, and three display types. Now, led by its "[digital hub](#)" strategy, Apple is ready to expand once again into the realm of consumer accessories.



iPod in all its glory

Apple chose an MP3 player for its first step as a creator of digital hub solutions. An MP3 player is a little device, not unlike a Discman, that plays digitally stored music files (MP3 files) that can be created (“ripped”) from CDs or downloaded (sometimes illegally) from the Internet. In typical Apple-style, the secret product launch was heavily hyped, and when the public finally laid its eyes on this supposedly “revolutionary” new digital device, many were understandably disappointed. Statements such as “everybody will want one” had led people to expect the impossible. However, unreasonably high expectations do not mean that the iPod is actually bad.

To make sure that there are no misunderstandings: the iPod is not for everyone. Instead, it is geared at a particular segment of the consumer market. But in my opinion, the iPod hits that segment dead on. There are many people who disagree with me, and ultimately it is you, the consumers, who will be casting the final vote.

Installation

I just installed a wireless PC card on a Windows NT machine for a friend this weekend. Now, I can say without hesitation that installing the iPod is a *pleasure*. It starts by opening the packaging. The iPod is so well packaged, it is delightful to unwrap. Once you remove the outer cardboard, the main box opens up into two halves. One of which contains the

iPod, and the other contains the accessories: FireWire cable, power adapter, software CD, headphones, and a quick getting started guide. Everything is done in great taste. My iPod even came pre-charged, so I could jump right in.



iPod packaging

There are three ways to install the required iTunes 2 software: you can download it over the Internet (which I had done before buying the iPod, so I was all set). You can install it from the included CD. Or you can install it directly off the iPod when you connect it to your Mac (more on that later). Apple had a little debacle with the online version of the iTunes 2.0.0 installer—under certain circumstances it could delete some of your disks. Luckily, this problem has been fixed in the iTunes 2.0.1 and 2.0.2 installers and does not affect the installers that come with the iPod CD or on the iPod. I won't be covering the parts of iTunes 2 that do not pertain to the iPod. If you want to know more about iTunes 2, please take a look at our [iTunes 2 review](#)

The only disappointing part about the installation process lies with the system requirements. Apple requires you to have the newest version of your OS (either 9.2.1. or X 10.1) running, so getting the iPod to work may force you to update your operating system.

After you are done installing all the software (which may take a bit of time under OS X), you are ready to connect the iPod to your Mac. Whenever you connect the iPod, iTunes will automatically launch. The first time, iTunes will prompt you to name your iPod. From then on, your iPod will recognize this Mac as its home base. Every time you connect the iPod to your computer, it will attempt to synchronize its music collection with your Mac. If you connect your iPod to another Mac, you have a choice of changing your iPod over to that machine. You cannot transfer music this way between two Macs. But don't worry, I will tell you later about another way to do that.

Operation

I said iTunes will synchronize the music collection between your Mac and the iPod. What that means is that iTunes will try to copy all the songs in your iTunes library to the iPod's 5 GB hard drive. The next time you connect your iPod, iTunes will update your iPod to reflect the changes made to the iTunes library. What if you don't want that or if your iTunes library is larger than 5 GB? iTunes offers two alternatives: you can either transfer the songs manually, dragging songs or playlists to the iPod. Or, you can tell it to just synchronize selected playlists. Synchronization is lightning fast, thanks to FireWire. It takes less than a second per song, and about 10 seconds per CD.

The iPod comes with little documentation, just a sheet that explains the most common functions and buttons on the iPod. iTunes has some limited help functionality in its Help menu both for itself and the iPod. It explains how to do some of the things that I mentioned so far. But to save you the trip to the Help menu, here's how to access some of the important features: In iTunes, select your iPod from the Source list on the left side. A new icon will appear on the bottom right, representing an iPod. That icon opens up the iPod preferences window. Here, you can set the update mode (everything, just selected playlists, or manually), choose whether iTunes should open every time you connect the iPod, and enable/disable FireWire disk use (more on that later).

All the hoopla I described so far of course only has one function: to make sure the iPod can play the music you want, how you want it. After all, that's what you'd want an MP3 player to do. The iPod works well in that regard. I am no audiophile, so I am not the best judge of the sound quality. All I can say is that it sounds good to me. The headphones seem to be of high quality, if a bit too large for my ears.

In terms of playback, iPod has most things you would want. There are three play modes: by playlist (lists taken from iTunes), by artist name, and by song. I'd like to see an album mode as well in the future. Of course, you can skip back and forth between song and fast-forward both ways within songs. You can repeat one or all songs and enable a random (shuffle) play mode within the three main modes above. Further settings let you turn on backlighting for the LCD for a few seconds after you press a button, set an automatic power off after a few minutes, change the operating language, change contrast, turn off the clicker, set a startup volume, or reset all settings back to factory defaults.

Startup volume sets the iPod's default volume. Backlighting is bright, almost too bright for my taste. You can use it as a primitive flashlight in very dark environments. Backlighting can be manually toggled by holding the menu button down for a few seconds. Finally, the Clicker refers to a little speaker on the iPod that gives optional acoustic feedback when you press a button.

Controlling the iPod is easy. Except for the Hold switch, which is located on top, all the controls are on the front below the big and easily readable 2" LCD. As a matter of fact, it is easily one of the best displays I have seen in any digital device. The buttons are well placed and feel solid. The thumb wheel in the middle (used to scroll through the list and change the volume) triggers a bit too easily, but other than that the controls are great.

Apple engineers even squeezed in an Easter Egg. Go to the About screen from the main menu and hold the middle (enter) button down for about five seconds. A little game of breakout will pop up that you control via the iPod buttons. Besides triggering the Easter Egg, the About screen also shows you available hard disk space and the number of songs on your iPod.

Reading the comments and other reviews on the Web, it seems some people have trouble finding the power button—because there is none. They probably didn't have time to read that single documentation sheet. To turn off your iPod, just hold the play button for about

five seconds. Press any button (other than Hold) to turn the iPod back on. If you have trouble with your iPod and nothing seems to work, you can try resetting it by holding Menu and Play down simultaneously for 10 seconds to reset the iPod. Resetting shouldn't affect the data or music on your iPod.

On a sadder note, my iPod broke after a week. It simply wouldn't turn on, no matter what. Apple's repair service was excellent, and I had a brand new iPod on my doorstep three days later.

FireWire Disk Use & Battery

One of the coolest features of the iPod, in my opinion, and one I have hinted at before, is the so-called FireWire disk use. Basically, once you connect the iPod to a FireWire-enabled computer with the proper drivers (all FireWire Macs with newer system software), the iPod will show up on the desktop as a hard drive. That way the iPod doubles as a portable Zip disk if the target computer has FireWire as well. Actually, it doubles as almost 50 Zip disks because of the 5 GB hard drive, provided you have no songs on the iPod.

The iPod stores the songs separately from the data, so you don't have to worry about erasing one when you use the other function. There are some third-party programs available that make the song folder available in the Finder if you want to mess around with the iPod. One reason you may want to do that is so you can play MP3s on your computer directly off the iPod with something other than iTunes. A list of three currently available programs can be found at the end of this article.

Apple itself uses the disk mode by including the iTunes 2 installer on the iPod hard disk (in addition to the install CD). Erasing the installers frees a mere 7.8 MB on the iPod HD—good enough for 1–2 songs. Not really worth it since your iPod can store 1000 songs (4 minutes long on average, at 160 kbps—or about 1300 songs at 128 kbps according to Apple).

The second coolest feature is the iPod's battery. Now I know, since when are batteries cool? The iPod battery is built into the housing and cannot be exchanged by the user. However it is rechargeable, so you don't really need to exchange it, ever. According to Apple, a full charge is good enough for about 10 hours of use. I usually had to recharge a bit sooner than that, however I was playing around a lot with the backlight. Apple includes a battery charger with the iPod, but I only tried it once so far because—here it

comes—the iPod charges through the FireWire port when it is connected to a computer! That way, loading songs onto the iPod turns into a charging session as well. This feature really saves you a good bit of time and hassle.

How Does It Stack Up?

When Apple released the iPod specifications, some people were immediately skeptical because the iPod uses a hard drive instead of the more common solid-state memory chips used by the majority of MP3 players. Using a hard drive allows you to have much greater memory (5 GB in the iPod) but at the expense of size and HD-related problems. Most of the problems come from the moving parts that make the hard disk work. These parts really don't take shaking well, so it is risky to jog with a running hard disk in your device.

Apple's solution to the problem: a huge RAM buffer. A 32 MB memory chip in the player buffers the songs from the hard disk, so the disk can be safely turned off in the mean time. According to Apple, the buffer lasts about 20 minutes. The iPod pre-fetches music for the next 20 minutes and then shuts the hard disk down again. This sounds great in theory, and works well in practice as long as you don't change songs a lot. I tend to switch songs a lot, which causes a little bit of trouble with the iPod since I usually switch to songs it didn't cache in the buffer yet. So the iPod needs to spin up the little disk drive, find the song, and load it into memory. That causes a noticeable break for about two seconds, during which the iPod is just silent. I wish it would just continue the old song until it is ready to play the next one. Overall, this is a minor problem though.

I mentioned earlier that the iPod hits its particular market segment dead on. What exactly is that segment? It's the people who want to have a small MP3 player that they can carry in their pockets that will hold a lot of music. Now, since I am part of that segment, it is hard for me to see why anybody would want to be in any of the other segments—like the people who want to have a big and clunky MP3 player that can hold a lot of music, or those who want to have a small MP3 player that can hold little music. But to be fair, there are reasons not to have an iPod.

The players using other memory standards such as SmartMedia, CompactFlash, and MemoryStick can get a good bit smaller than the iPod. If you compare the iPod to the first few generations of MP3 players in the picture below, it is not much bigger. But it is much bigger than today's smallest MP3 players. However, their drawback is that they hold very little music (usually 64 to 128 MB, or two to four times the iPod's buffer alone!). Also,

while these players tend to be cheap initially, storage memory prices are still quite steep, so unless you only want to listen to a few songs or like to update them a lot via a slow USB connection, they have little advantage.



iPod compared to a credit card, the Rio 500 and 600, and the Pontis SP 600

At the other end of the spectrum are the big MP3 players that hold 20–30 GB. Now that's massive storage that few people can fill up easily. Also, most of them have USB, so you'll be sitting there for a few hours uploading music to a large drive. Many cannot double as a portable hard disk, although some can.

At 2.43 by 4.02 by 0.78 inches and 6.5 ounces, I think Apple's iPod hits the sweetspot between small players and high capacity. Some people think it misses both because it's too big to be small and 5 GB is not that much compared to the 20 GB players available today for much less than \$400.

I think the iPod is small enough to fit in a pocket, and 5 GB is enough to hold all the music I want for a good period of time. Once you have more than 1300 files in a player, they become hard to manage without a keyboard or a more advanced user interface than what's available in a small digital device.

Apple's player is a bit expensive, but it is priced similarly to portable FireWire hard drives its size without an MP3 player function! Beyond that, it has an excellent LCD and comes in a well-done package with some really smart features. The design is excellent, although it tends to scratch easily if you are not careful and it catches your finger prints on its shiny surface.

Some people complain about the lack of a recording feature, radio function, or built-in equalizer. These features would certainly be nice, but I don't really miss them that much in day-to-day use. Instead, Apple decided to built just an MP3 player, but an excellent one. Windows users are out of luck for now since the iPod only works on a Mac. However, software company Mediafour is working on a [Windows client for iPod](#) to be released early next year.

The iPod may not be for everyone, but I think a lot of people will find one under their Christmas tree this year.

Quick Feature Summary

Small (2.43 by 4.02 by 0.78 inches; 6.5 ounces) MP3 player and portable FireWire hard drive with high capacity (5 GB). Stores up to 1,000 songs. Rechargeable battery lasts up to 10 hours. Offers playlists (via iTunes), shuffle and repeat modes. Supports multiple languages (English, French, German, and Japanese, with support for native ID3 tags). 20-minute skip protection thanks to 32 MB RAM buffer. 2" back-lit LCD (160 x 128 pixel resolution).

Strengths

- Relatively small
- Large capacity
- Includes rechargeable battery
- Fast FireWire connection and auto-update
- Large, back-lit high-quality LCD

Weaknesses

- Somewhat pricey
- Lacks a few marginal features
- Requires newest system software to be installed
- Switching songs sometimes causes delays

Related Links

About iPod

- [Apple iPod Web site](#)
- [iPod technical specifications](#)
- [iPod 3D view](#)
- [Buy iPod and accessories at Apple Store](#)

Third party iPod software

- [PodMaster 1000](#)
- [iPod Free File Access](#)
- [Podestal \(OS X only\)](#)

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Review: iTunes 2.0.2

by Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com

Developer: [Apple Computer, Inc.](#) ([support](#))

Price: free

Requirements: Mac with built-in USB ports (officially—ATPM staffers have successfully used it on beige G3s and Wallstreets), Mac OS 9.0.4 or Mac OS X 10.1.

Recommended: Mac OS 9.2.1 or OS X 10.1.1



Overview

Apple Computer released iTunes 2 in November, in conjunction with the arrival of the new [iPod](#) portable FireWire music player. The iTunes application can perform a variety of audio-related tasks: play Internet radio stations, play MP3 files over the Internet (static and streaming), play stored MP3 files, convert among digital audio formats (MP3, AIFF, WAV), extract audio tracks from CDs, look up information about audio CDs using CDDb on the Internet, burn audio CDs in AIFF or MP3 format, organize audio files into playlists, and export audio files to an iPod.

Installation

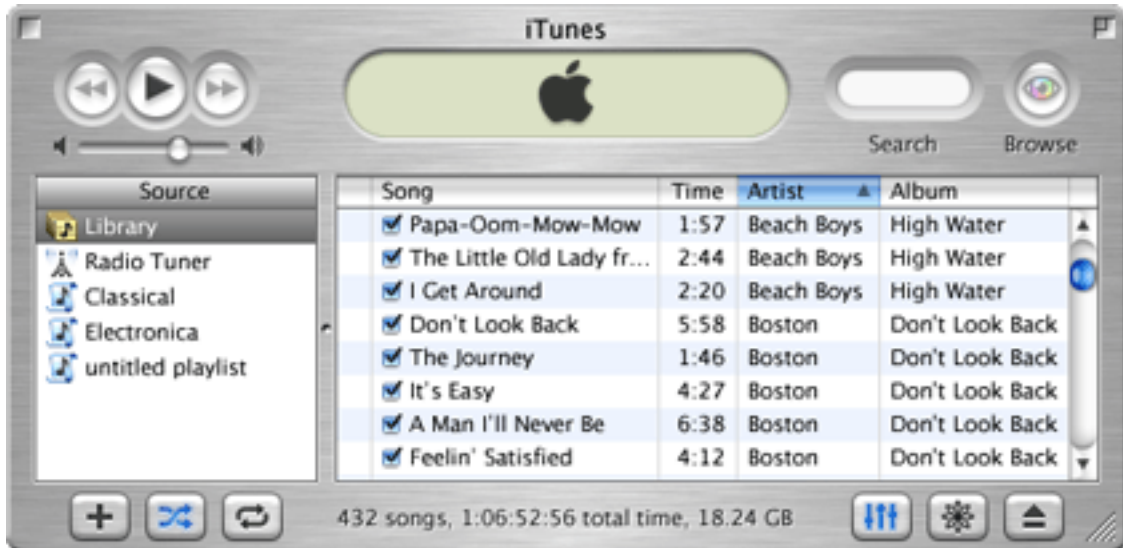
The iTunes 2 installer for OS 9.x is in a 3.5 MB SMI file that you download from Apple's iTunes Web site. The installer gives you no options; it installs iTunes into an "iTunes" folder created in the "Applications (Mac OS 9)" folder. (Yes, both the enclosing folder and the application are named iTunes, which is not a desirable way to organize files.) When you launch iTunes, it creates another "iTunes" folder in your "Documents" folder. This folder contains your music library and another folder, "iTunes Music," that holds extracted or downloaded audio files. Do not rename the iTunes document folder, because iTunes will ignore the renamed folder and create a new one named "iTunes."

New in iTunes 2

As others have observed, iTunes 2 should probably just be called iTunes 1.5. Very little has changed except for the incorporation of Disc Burner functionality (no separate application needed), the addition of an equalizer, and support for iPod. The equalizer makes a slight but noticeable difference when playing music on my Altec Lansing dual speaker plus subwoofer sound system.

Using iTunes 2

The full-size iTunes window has four areas. The top area has playback controls; an information window; a window for entering search text; a round button that changes among Browse, Refresh, Import, and Burn depending on what is viewed or selected; and close and minimize buttons.



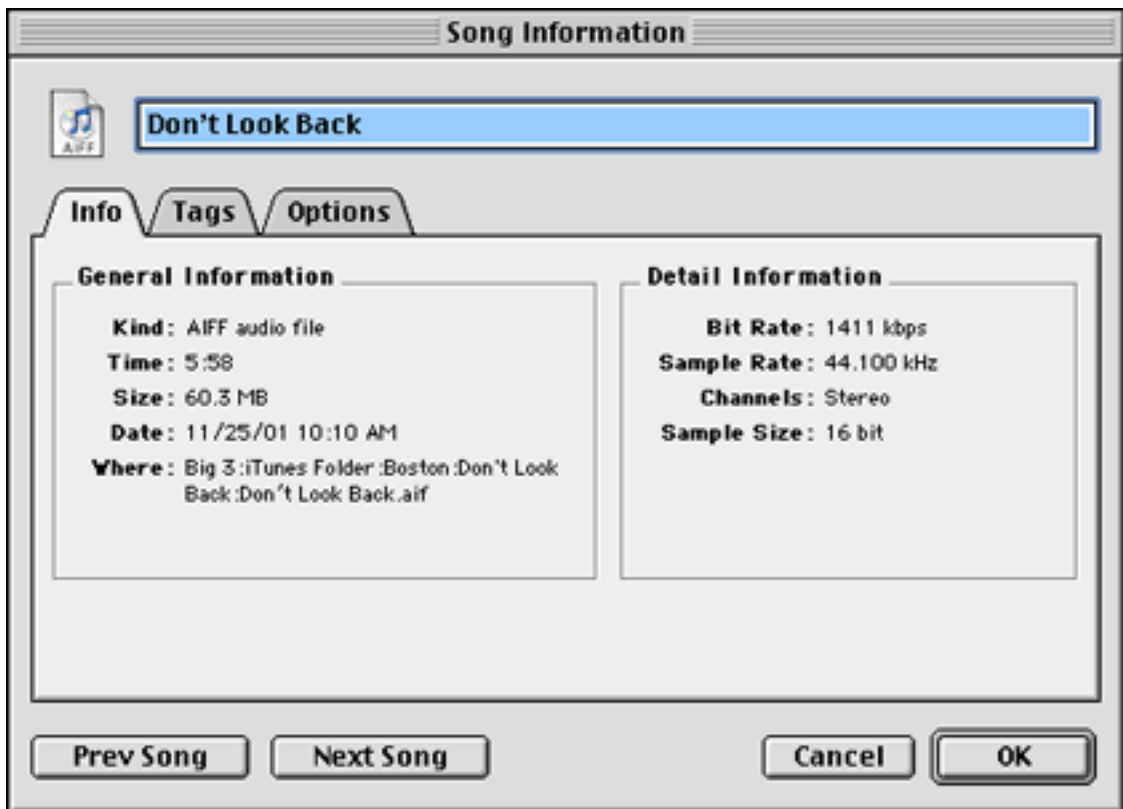
iTunes 2 Full-Sized Window

Clicking the latter reduces iTunes to a small rounded rectangle. The Source window is on the left. Sources are Library, Radio Tuner (Internet radio), accessible media (such as CDs), and your playlists. The main window lists the contents of the selected Source. If the source is Library, then the main window lists the songs in your library. You use the View Options... preferences (Command-J) to pick which information columns to display. You can rearrange columns by dragging their titles left or right. The bottom area has two sets of three buttons separated by an area that can contain summary information about your library, playlists, or CDs. The three buttons at the left are for adding a new playlist or

adding a song to an existing playlist, playing songs randomly from the active library or playlist, and putting a library, playlist, or CD in repeat mode. The three buttons at the right open the equalizer window, activate or deactivate the Visualizer, and eject CDs.



Minimized iTunes Window



Information Window for One Song

The Library lists all MP3, AIFF, and WAV audio tracks that your iTunes application knows about. You can sort the library by any of the visible columns by clicking on the column title. You can toggle the sort order by clicking the triangle to the right of the column title. You can display information about any song by selecting it and typing Command-I.

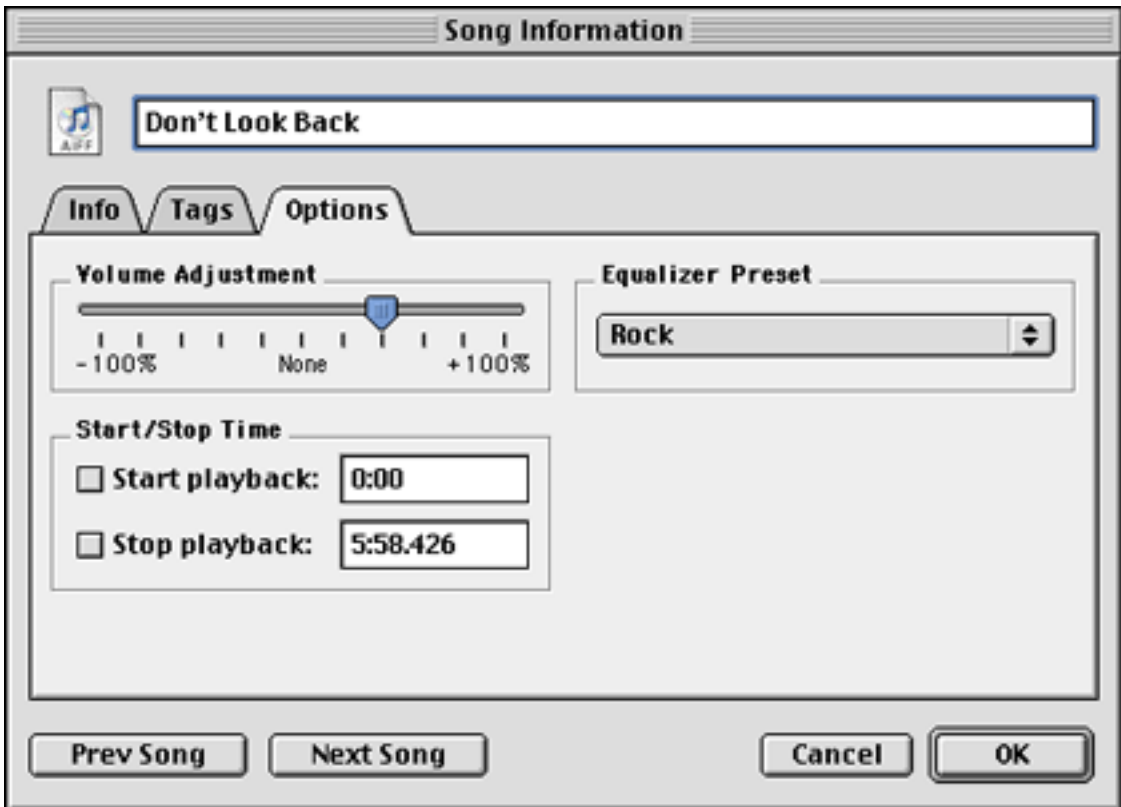
The Radio Tuner groups Internet radio stations by category. If you click once on the Radio Tuner source, the main window switches to this list of station categories. If you double-click the Radio Tuner source, a second iTunes window opens. You click on the triangle beside each category name to see the individual stations. iTunes can display station name, bit rate, status (active or inactive), and a descriptive comment. To play a station, just double-click its row in the main window, or highlight the station and click the play button. You can display (but not edit) information on a selected station by typing Command-I.



Radio Tuner Window

Playlists are customizable lists that can contain any combination of Library songs, Internet radio stations, and removable media (such as audio CDs). Command-N (or File>New Playlist) creates a new, untitled playlist. Double-clicking a playlist opens it in a new iTunes window. You can add songs to a selected playlist by pressing the "+" button, by dragging songs or folders of songs or an audio CD onto the main window when the playlist is active, or by dragging items such as radio stations from another iTunes window. As usual, you can sort playlists by any displayed column. Unlike the Library, you can reorder your

playlists by dragging rows up or down. Information related to playlist items is fully editable, even for Internet radio stations. In a playlist you can link equalizer settings to songs or to radio stations.



Equalizer and Other Option Settings

You can give a group of items the same info and equalizer settings by selecting them (shift-click to extend a contiguous group, command-click to add discontinuous items) and typing Command-I.

The Visualizer displays an impressive repertoire of effects in the iTunes window or on your entire screen. When music has an easily identified beat, the Visualizer's effects synchronize perfectly. Most of the Visualizer effects are interesting and attractive, although sometimes it displays a limited color palette.



iTunes Visualizer Medium-Size Window

AppleScript & iTunes

iTunes is fully scriptable, although Script Editor cannot load the iTunes AppleScript dictionary (use the freeware editor Smile to see the dictionary). You can completely control iTunes with scripts. You can create, edit, and organize playlists. You can also play radio stations or go to URLs specified in the script. Unfortunately, Apple provides no information on scripting iTunes in its documentation (see below).

Testing iTunes in the Real World

Ripping or Extracting with iTunes:



Ripping a CD with iTunes

You can set iTunes' preferences to automatically extract or encode audio CD tracks as soon as the CD loads. iTunes places the songs into the iTunes Music folder by default, but you can tell it to use a different folder. The speed of extraction depends on your processor's power and speed, and on the reading speed of your CD drive. With my system, average AIFF extraction speed was 4.4x when using the DVD/CD internal drive and nearly 13x when using the external CD-R/RW drive. I cannot explain the large difference, since the CD reading speeds differed only by 20% (20x for the DVD/CD and 24x for the CD-R/RW).

Burning CDs with iTunes

You can select one or more songs from your library or a playlist and burn them to a CD. iTunes 2 supports all Apple CD-R drives and most third-party internal and external CD burners, including those with USB and FireWire connections. I did not test this feature directly, since I prefer to use Toast 5 Titanium to burn CDs. You can drag songs from an

iTunes window to the Toast window, and Toast will burn them in the track order you choose. Be warned that iTunes cannot burn a CD with absolutely no gaps between tracks. If you need continuous audio tracks, you will need to use Toast or some other software.

The Spirit of the Radio

I tested iTunes' Radio Tuner features after updating the Internet radio stations in all 25 categories assigned by iTunes. There were 358 active streams. I attempted to play 75 streams (the 1st, 3rd, and last stream within each of the 25 categories). I was unable to connect to 33 active streams. Two streams connected but played only a few seconds of music before going silent. Only 40 of 75 "active" streams yielded successful Internet radio play. In about half of the connection failures, iTunes attempted to retrieve a playlist after failing to find a live stream. None of the playlists worked. I am not sure why iTunes cannot distinguish "active" streams from inactive ones. I suspect that Internet radio stations list hours of activity that they do not fulfill. Apple needs to get reliable information about Internet radio stations. They need to use or establish a service that verifies that stations listing themselves as active truly are broadcasting. (Note: These tests were conducted on Saturday, 11/10/01 at 9:30 AM and 2:05 PM EDT.)

Is iTunes 2 a CPU Hog?

Some users report that iTunes 2 uses a much higher percentage (20–35%) of CPU time than iTunes 1.1. However, I did not see this. On my system, iTunes 2 used only 5–15% of CPU time while playing in the background (equalizer setting did not seem to affect this). However, if the iTunes Visualizer was active, iTunes used 50–90% of available CPU time. Of course, it makes little sense to run the Visualizer unless iTunes is the foreground application, so the CPU-hogging isn't much of a problem. I did test iTunes on a large monitor with about half the screen area devoted to iTunes' Visualizer (medium setting). I used the remaining screen area to display foreground applications. In this situation, iTunes used only available CPU cycles. I experienced no delays or problems while iTunes played an Internet radio station. However, the frame rate of the Visualizer fell to 4–12 frames per second, depending on the foreground tasks. I did not experience the skips or delays reported by some users.

iTunes does hog available CPU resources while encoding sound files, but it encodes fairly rapidly. I achieved good results with both fixed and variable bit rate encoding using highest quality settings (320 kbps or 64–320 kpbs). I had read claims that encoding with

LAME (an open license encoder) yielded better quality MP3 files than iTunes. However, the LAME encoder I used (DropMP3 1.0.6) encoded more slowly than iTunes even though it totally monopolized the CPU, and its MP3 files did not have better sound quality.

I experienced two types of foreground interruptions with iTunes. The first type of interruption occurred shortly after inserting a CD that had not previously been catalogued by iTunes. A brief interruption (1–2 seconds) occurs when iTunes connects with the CDDB online music database. The second type of interruption occurs when iTunes is set-up to automatically eject a CD after extracting tracks. This interruption lasts 3–5 seconds.

Bugs

iTunes 2 doesn't properly handle music CD lookups when the CD previously was catalogued by a different application. iTunes fails to display the Artist or the Album information with each track. This is strange, because iTunes *has* that information and uses it to create and name folders when extracting files from the CD. You can work around this problem by forcing iTunes to update the information (choose Get CD Track Names from the Advanced menu).

iTunes 2.0 and 2.0.1 incorrectly handle ID3 tags for MP3 files when double-byte Unicode characters are present. This problem was fixed in iTunes 2.0.2.

iTunes provides no way to correct errors in your local CDDB file (the CD Info.cidb file in your Preferences folder). For example, the Phil Collins "No Jacket Required" album had artist and album title switched. I corrected the artist and album information for all tracks, resubmitted the corrected information to the CDDB site, and then ejected and reloaded the CD. When iTunes extracted information from the CD, it still used "Phil Collins" as the album name and "No Jacket Required" as the artist.

Note: I did find a shareware program that lets you view and edit your "CD info.cidb" file. The program is [iCDc 2.1](#) written by Anders Wählby. I was able to correct errors in my CD database using this \$10 program.

I crashed iTunes 2 by doing the following: while iTunes 2 was encoding one AIFF file and playing another, I opened Preferences and clicked on the CD Burner tab. The music stopped playing, and the ball cursor spun for a long time without identifying my CD

burner. When I closed the Preferences window, iTunes didn't refresh the screen, even after closing and reopening the main window. iTunes also wouldn't quit normally, and I had to issue a force quit command.

Another bug (carried over from iTunes 1) relates to MP3 files with variable bit rate (VBR) encoding created by an application other than iTunes. When iTunes loads the VBR MP3 file, the time information is completely wrong. Apparently, iTunes looks at the size of the MP3 file and at the lowest variable encoding bit rate speed to calculate the duration of the music. For example, a 7.6 minute song was listed as 42.6 minutes long by iTunes. This problem does not occur if iTunes does the VBR MP3 encoding.

Documentation

iTunes comes with a brief Read Me text file and some Help Viewer information. Additional information is available at Apple's iTunes Web site. There is no electronic or printed user manual for iTunes. There is no information at all on scripting iTunes. Apple should develop a comprehensive iTunes manual in HTML or PDF format.

Technical Support

With iTunes, you get technical support commensurate with what iTunes costs. Since it costs nothing, that's how much support you can expect. Apple will probably provide some live telephone support if you recently purchased a Macintosh with iTunes preinstalled.

Summary

iTunes has a few bugs and omissions that Apple should rectify, and the lack of documentation is annoying. I also dislike the non-standard appearance and behavior of the iTunes window. However, I still give iTunes a "Very Nice" rating, and the latest version (2.0.2 at press time) is a significant improvement over iTunes 1.0. iTunes now lives up to Apple's "Rip. Mix. Burn." advertising campaign.

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Review: Microsoft Outlook 2001 (version 9.00)

by Gregory Tetrault, gtetrault@atpm.com

Developer: [Microsoft Corporation](#) ([support](#))

Price: free, but personal phone support is \$35 per incident

Requirements: PowerPC-based Mac with Mac OS 8.6, Connection to a computer running Microsoft Exchange Server.



Overview of Outlook 2001

This free application from Microsoft works only on networks running Microsoft Exchange Server and replaces the aging Microsoft Exchange Server Client for Macintosh. Outlook 2001 sports an improved interface, new features, and better compatibility with Outlook for Windows. Outlook 2001 primarily functions as an intranet e-mail and scheduling application. It also adds personal information manager functionality by letting you create contact databases, task lists, and groups of notes.

Installation and Set-Up

Outlook 2001 can be downloaded as a 10 MB MacBinary file or a 13.3 MB BinHex file. There are English, French, German, and Japanese versions. The downloaded self-mounting image file contains the Microsoft Outlook 2001 folder that you simply drag to your hard drive. When you launch Outlook 2001 for the first time it installs fonts and help files in the System Folder, and then asks you to personalize it with your name and company. Here is where the fun begins. If your local Exchange Server has a standard Internet Protocol-type

name (such as MYSERVER.com), then you can connect to the server and to your mailbox. If your server has just a local name (such as MYSERVER), then you will be unable to connect to it initially.



You don't want to see this window.

Unfortunately, neither the Outlook 2001 help files nor the Microsoft online support documents can tell you how to resolve this problem. After much Internet searching and some trial and error efforts, I learned how to fix the server name problem. (See sidebar below.)

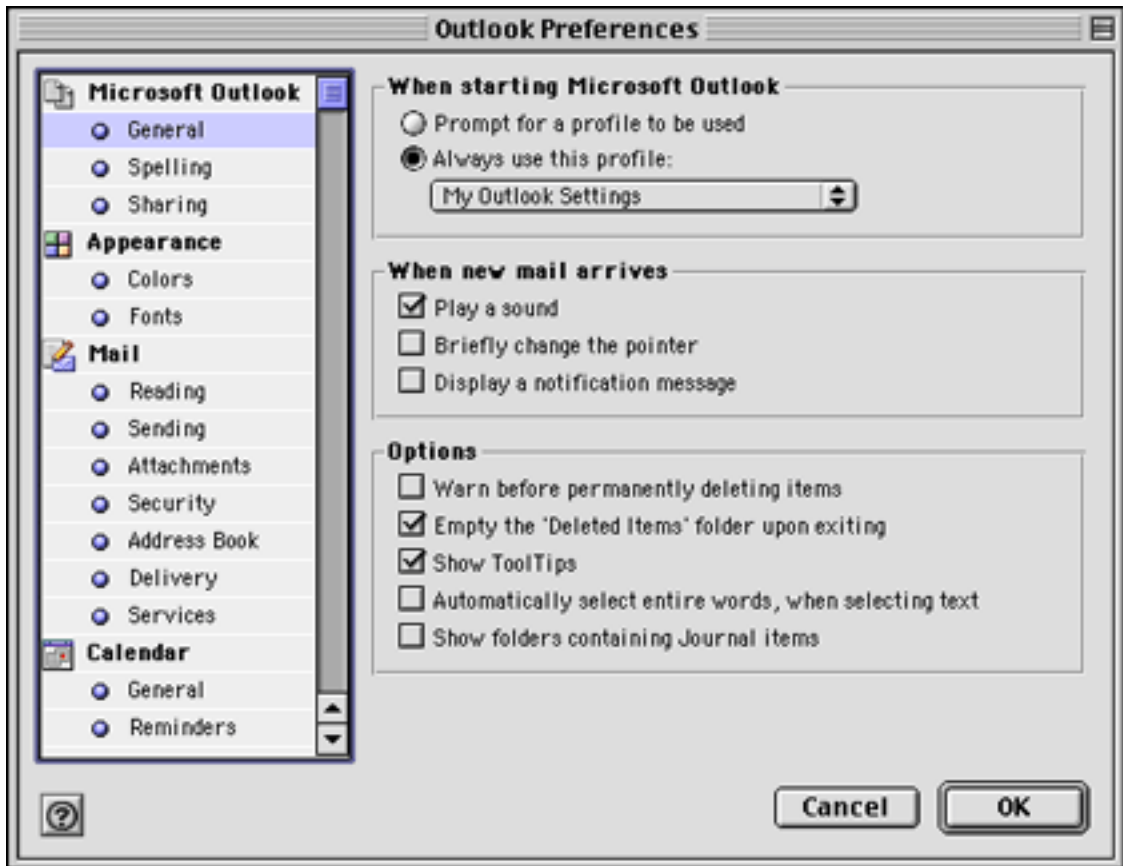
What about importing existing e-mail, calendar, contact, and note information into Outlook 2001? Outlook 2001 can import e-mail messages only from other Outlook (or Exchange Server Client) mailbox (.pab) files.



Outlook 2001's Import and Export Choices

Outlook 2001 can import contacts from an Outlook .pab file or from a comma separated value (CSV) text file. However, the CSV text file must use field names that exactly correspond with Outlook's contact fields and requires the use of quotation marks around each field entry. You cannot map fields on the fly. Outlook 2001 cannot import or export the notes field in the Contacts database.

After connecting to your server, identifying your mailbox, and importing all appropriate files, I recommend that you set your preferences (Command-; or choose Preferences from the Edit menu).

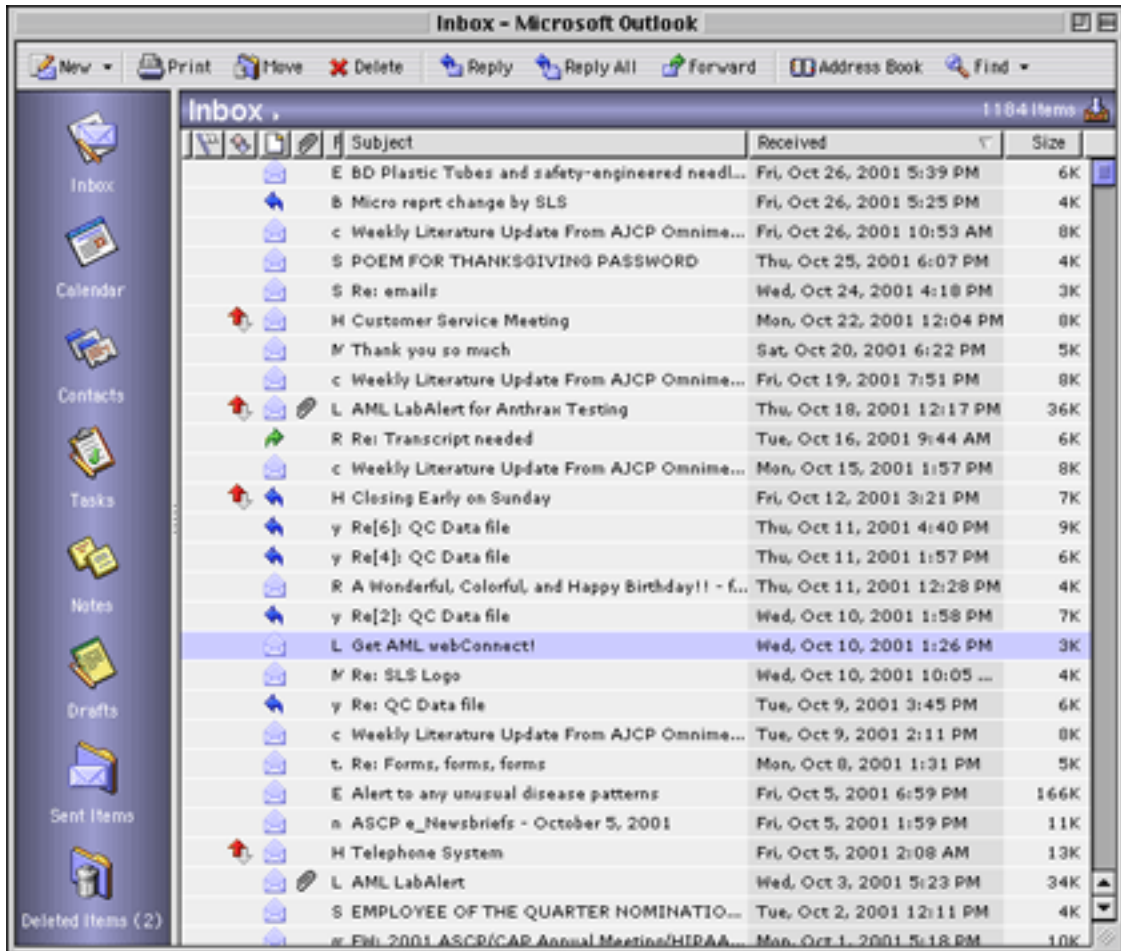


Outlook Preferences Window

Outlook 2001 has global preferences and module-specific preferences. Most settings are self-explanatory.

Using Outlook 2001

Outlook 2001 sports an attractive interface that closely resembles recent Windows versions of Outlook.



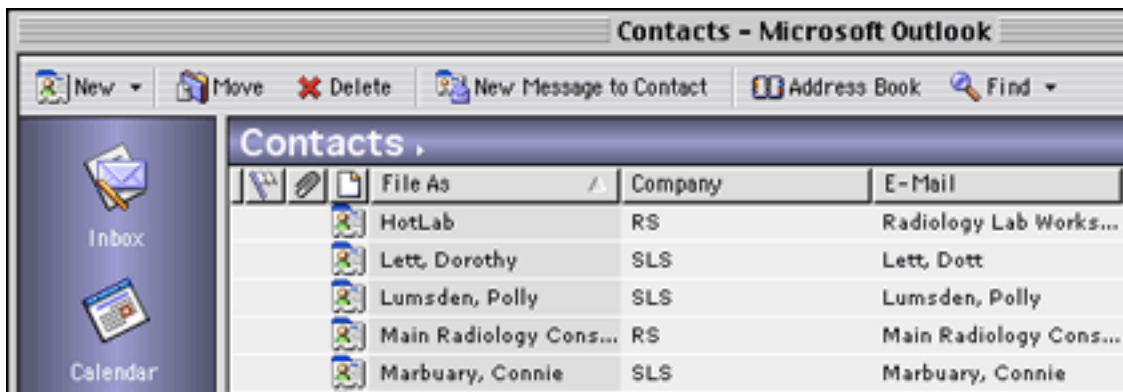
Outlook 2001 Inbox View

The left side of the window displays navigation icons for your e-mail Inbox, Drafts, Sent Items, and Deleted Items and for your Contacts, Calendar, Tasks, and Notes. Clicking an icon changes the main window. You can also display a folder list tree diagram of all your accounts and your network's Public Folders. The folder list is toggled by clicking the title of the active feature (in the blue-gray horizontal bar). Outlook 2001 does not allow you to simultaneously display multiple main windows (such as Inbox and Calendar). Outlook 2001 will let you have any number of individual contact, e-mail, note, task, or calendar

item windows open regardless of which main module you are using. These individual windows have labeled and unlabeled buttons, but all buttons reveal their names when the cursor hovers over them.

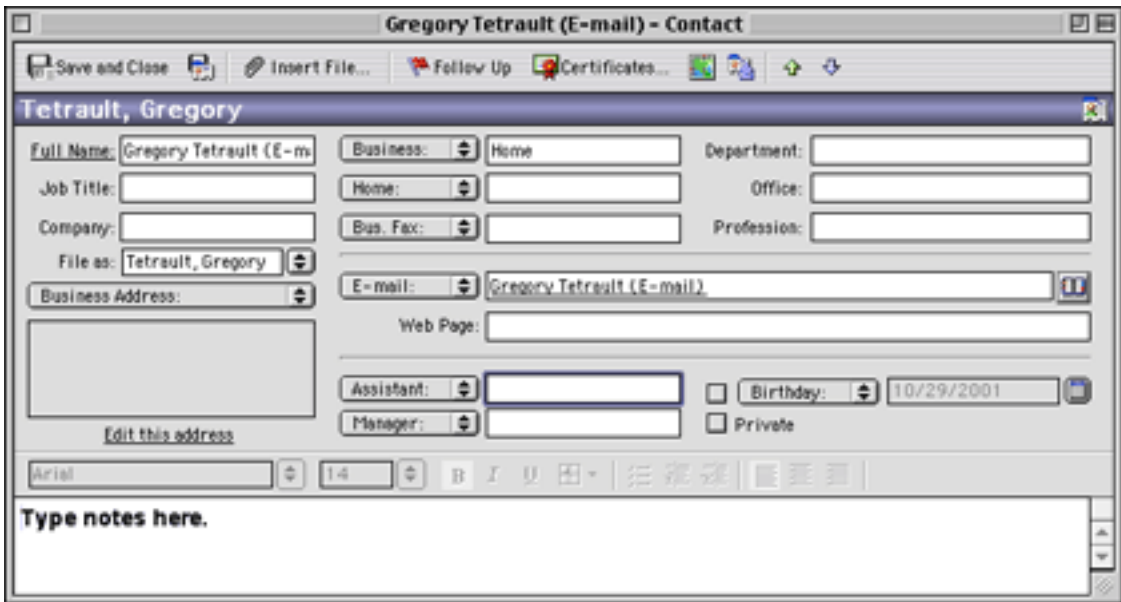
E-mail functions are straightforward. Command-N pops up a new e-mail window. You can type names or e-mail addresses directly into the To field, or you can click on the “To...” button to look at a list of potential recipients from your Contacts file, local address book, or server-based address book. The same features apply to the CC field. Outlook supports a blind “carbon” copy field, but you need to go to the View menu to display it. In Outlook for Windows, if a name or nickname is in an available address book or contact file, Outlook completes the name and underscores it. Outlook 2001 does not provide any immediate feedback on whether a recipient’s e-mail is in one of the available lists (unless you click on the Check Names button). Instead, you will get an error message when you try to send e-mail with an unknown recipient name. Spell checking can be interactive or manual, depending on your preference settings.

Outlook 2001, like its Windows counterpart, confuses users by having both Contacts and Address Books. Address Books are Microsoft Exchange Server files that contain information only for people or groups with e-mail addresses on your Microsoft Exchange Server. You cannot add outside persons to an Address Book. Your Contacts file can contain Address Book entries and entries for outside persons, groups, or companies.



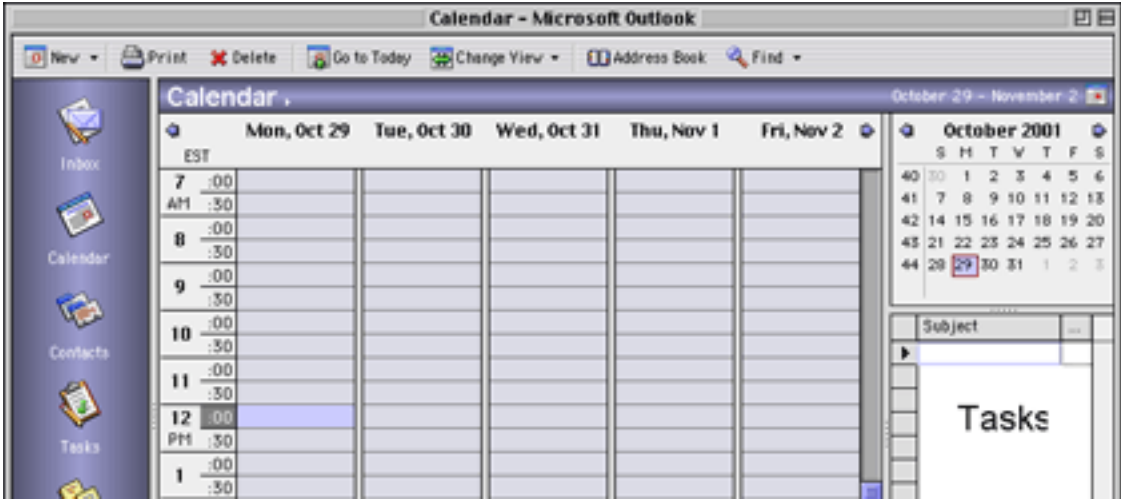
Contacts Window List View

The Contact database contains 63 fields, including three that I could not display (First name Yomi, Last name Yomi, and Company Yomi). However, none of the 63 fields is for category or keyword. The find button does not work with Contacts. You can search contacts only by name (Command-, or Find contact... in the Tools menu). Although you can sort your Contacts file by any displayed field, you cannot filter contacts by field. The individual contact entry and display window makes use of popup menus to select fields for entry or display. This is somewhat confusing, because it appears as if you are overwriting other information. You have to keep going to the popup menu to display different field entries. This can be quite annoying, since the three center text boxes can display 18 possible field entries. There is no view that can display all (or even most) fields simultaneously. To do this, you must export your contact file and open it with Excel or a database program.



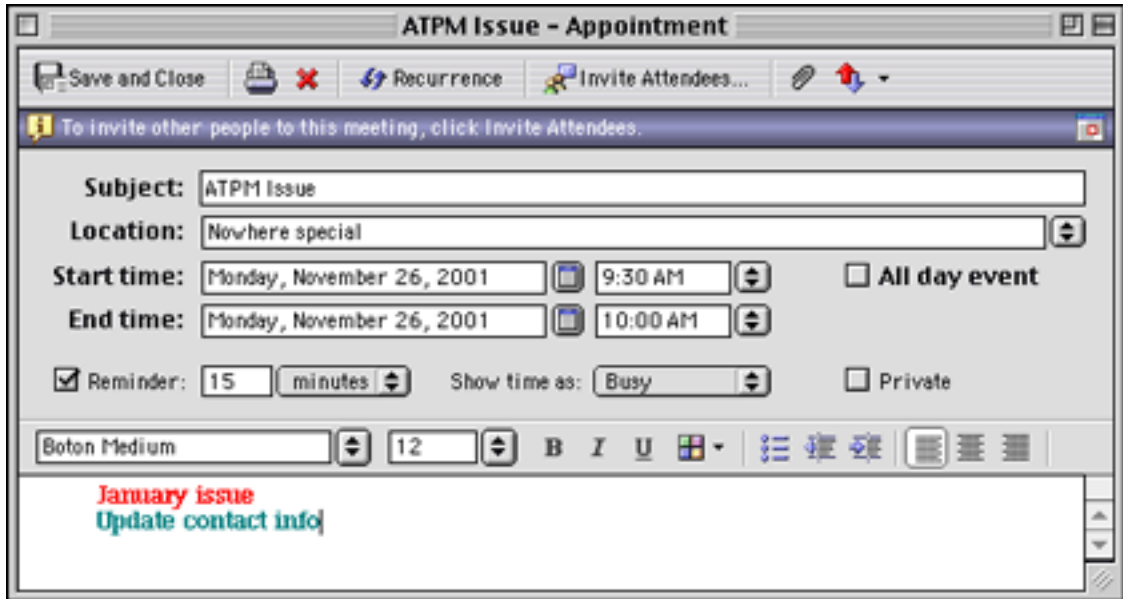
Individual Contact Window

The Outlook Calendar works across the network, allowing you to schedule meetings with coworkers and to publish your schedule. The Calendar window has seven different views ranging from single day to month.



Calendar Window in Work Week View

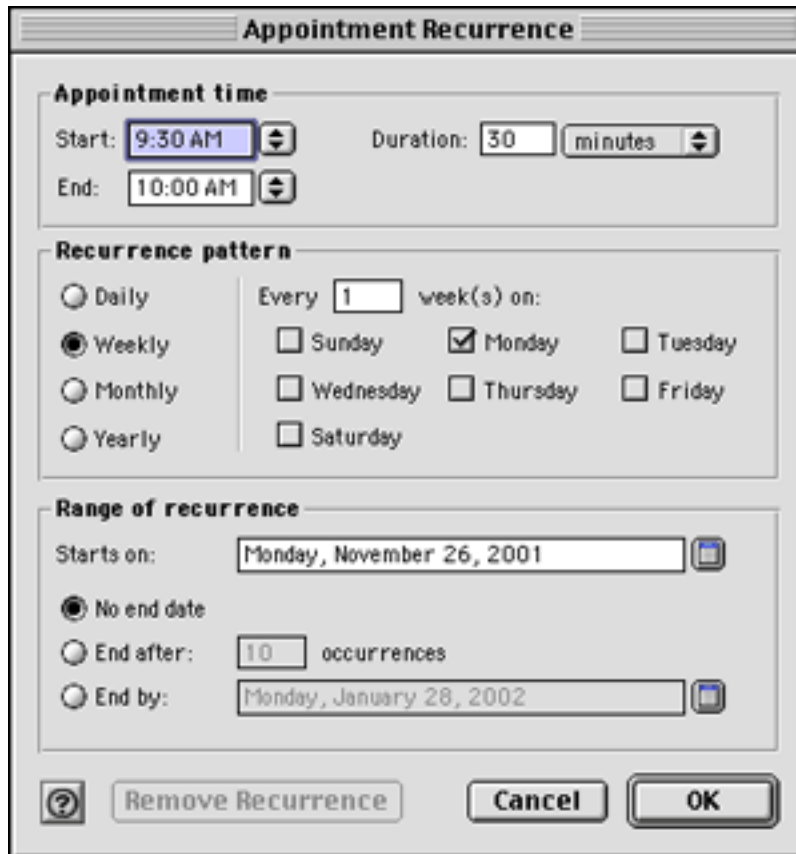
All views except month include the ability to display on the right side of the window your task list and 0–12 months. You can navigate to different days or months by clicking the arrows near the top of each calendar display. Clicking the New button lets you create a new appointment or schedule a new meeting. Appointments have all the usual features: subject, location, times, reminder settings, priority settings, and notes.



Appointment Window

Outlook allows you to set recurring events and has a fairly complete set of choices. For example, you can easily schedule a meeting that occurs the second Tuesday of every month. The only choice that is missing is for setting up quarterly recurrences. (You work around this lack by setting four annual recurrences.) Setting up a meeting works almost identically to creating an appointment. You also have a “To...” field for selecting three things: the people required to attend, the people whose attendance is optional, and the resources (rooms, audio-video equipment, etc.) needed for the meeting. These choices

may come from your contacts file or address book or from the Exchange Server or public address books. Unlike many other calendar applications, Outlook 2001 does not support banners, sticky notes, or graphics on the monthly view.



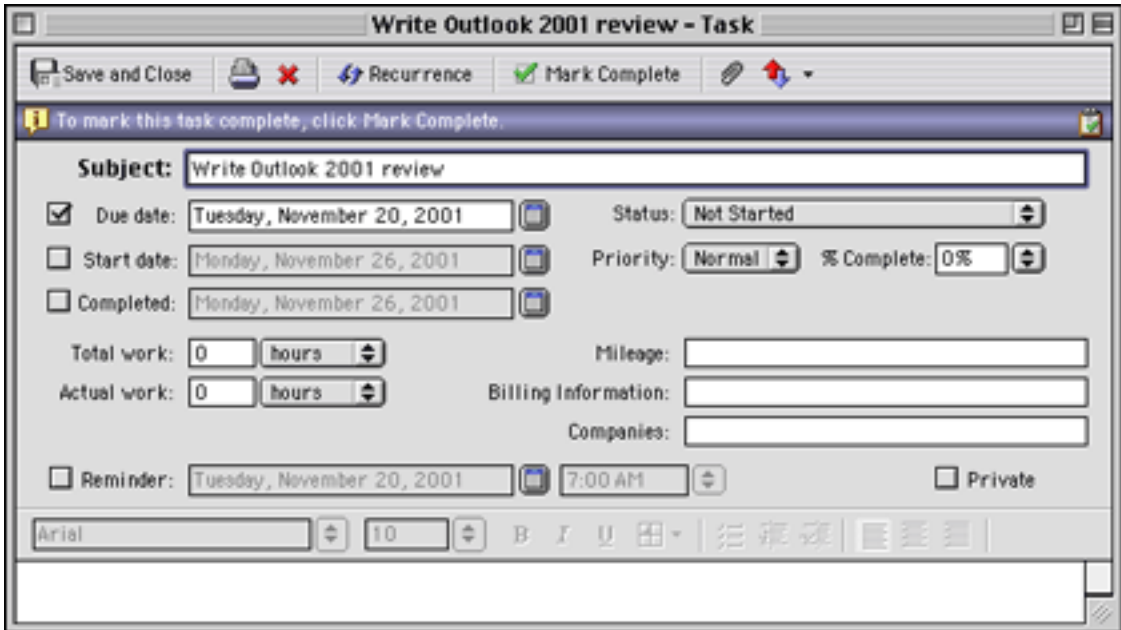
The image shows the "Appointment Recurrence" dialog box in Outlook 2001. It is divided into three main sections: "Appointment time", "Recurrence pattern", and "Range of recurrence".

- Appointment time:** Start: 9:30 AM, Duration: 30 minutes, End: 10:00 AM.
- Recurrence pattern:** Radio buttons for Daily, Weekly (selected), Monthly, and Yearly. Under "Every 1 week(s) on:", checkboxes for Sunday, Monday (checked), Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
- Range of recurrence:** Starts on: Monday, November 26, 2001. Radio buttons for "No end date" (selected), "End after: 10 occurrences", and "End by: Monday, January 28, 2002".

At the bottom, there are buttons for "?", "Remove Recurrence", "Cancel", and "OK".

Setting-Up Recurrent Events

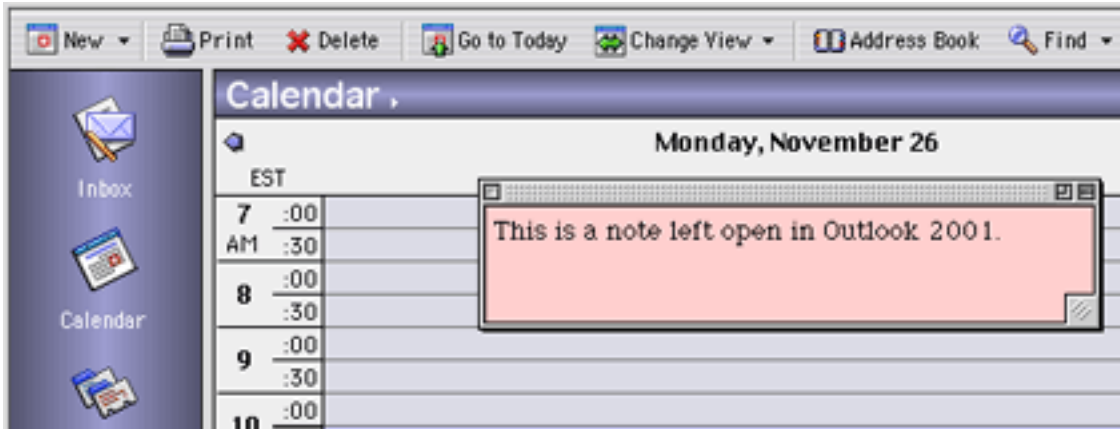
Tasks are similar to appointments, except that tasks do not appear on the Calendar. Tasks have some unique fields such as status, percent complete, hours worked, and billing information.



Task Window

Notes are a pathetic attempt at mimicking sticky notes. Note windows can appear in any view (e-mail, calendar, tasks), but they go to the background whenever you switch views. You cannot attach notes to a particular e-mail, appointment, date, or task. The notes are

visible only when Outlook is the foreground application. They disappear when you switch to any other application. Apple's free Stickies application is far more versatile. The only advantage of Outlook's Notes is that they can be forwarded to another Outlook user.



An Outlook 2001 Note

Documentation

Outlook 2001 has neither a written nor an electronic manual. Outlook 2001 uses Apple's Help Viewer system to provide context-sensitive or topic-based help.



Outlook's Help Topics

As usual, the amount of information provided by Microsoft in its help files is totally inadequate. For example, I could not get Outlook 2001 to function with my network at work. Outlook would not recognize my local server named "SLSERVER." Outlook requires an Internet Protocol-format name (such as "slserver.com"), and neither the Help file nor Microsoft's Web-based support had instructions on how to handle this common problem. (See sidebar for the fix.)

Technical Support

Microsoft provides a toll-free number for installation support. The only other free support is the information in the Microsoft support Web site. Microsoft charges \$35 per incident for telephone-based technical support.

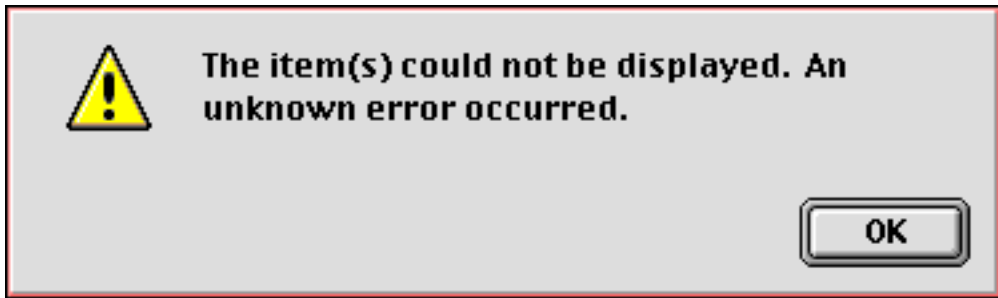
Omissions

The biggest omission is the ability to exchange contact files and e-mail files with common applications, including Microsoft's own Exchange and Outlook Express programs. That's right, Outlook cannot import your Microsoft Exchange contacts or e-mails or calendar information! The only calendar information Outlook can import is from the old Microsoft Schedule+ application for Windows. When Outlook exports contacts, the note field is ignored. Another significant omission is that Outlook 2001 for Macintosh cannot receive or handle SMTP e-mail. Only mail sent to your Microsoft Exchange Server address can appear in Outlook. (The Windows version can receive other types of e-mail.)

Another important omission is the inability to link tasks or appointments to non-Outlook documents. Outlook 2001 lets you insert files into appointments, tasks, and contacts, which seems to give the same functionality as linking. The problem with inserting files is that they actually get copied into your Outlook 2001 data file and waste space.

Bugs

I crashed frequently when I first used Outlook 2001. I saw this error box far too often. I nearly eliminated crashes and problems by copying my files to a Personal Folder on my Macintosh and working with the Personal folder instead of my Mailbox folder on the Exchange Server. Apparently, Outlook 2001 reacts poorly to network communications problems.



Commonly Seen Error Message

Summary

Outlook 2001 gives Macintosh users almost complete parity with Windows users of Outlook. This application is a large improvement over the Microsoft Exchange Server Client for Macintosh. However, Microsoft needs to heed the proverb: "Be not a Jack of all trades, but a master of one." Outlook tries to be too many things, and therefore is mediocre at most of them. Because of the limitations of Outlook, I still rely on old versions of two linked applications: Now Contact and Now Up-To-Date. I use Outlook 2001 only for corporate e-mail and for scheduling meetings. Unless your work environment uses Outlook extensively, I recommend using other applications.

Sidebar: Fixing the Server Name Problem

Even though your local Microsoft Exchange Server is properly named, Outlook 2001 may not recognize it. To resolve this problem you must create or modify the "Host" file in your Control Panels or Preferences folder. The Host file must map the Microsoft Exchange Server name to an IP-styled "canonical" name (CNAME). Then, the IP address of the server must be linked to the new name. So, in my example, the local Windows NT server name

of "MYSERVER" was mapped to "bogusdomain.com" using the CNAME command. Then, bogusdomain.com was assigned the IP address belonging to MYSERVER using the A command. This allows Outlook 2001 to recognize the server.

```
MYSERVER CNAME bogusdomain.com ;IP-type name assigned to local server  
bogusdomain.com A 155.55.55.55 ;address of local server
```

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Review: Portraits & Prints 1.0.1

by Eric Blair, eblair@atpm.com

Developer: [Econ Technologies](#)

Price: \$19.95 (list)

Requirements: Mac OS X

Trial: Feature-limited (no saving, only 4 photos per catalog, can only print once per session).



Last summer, I set my dad up with a digital camera. For the most part, everything went quite smoothly—he figured out how to work the camera, take pictures, and get the pictures onto the computer. Getting the pictures out of the computer proved slightly more problematic. The camera included some basic image editing software, but it was difficult to master and didn't really offer much in terms of printing options. We eventually broke down and bought Photoshop Elements. Although this program includes easy access to many useful tools, it is probably overkill for what my dad would like to do. I only wish that Portraits & Prints had been available when I was getting my dad started.

Just the Basics

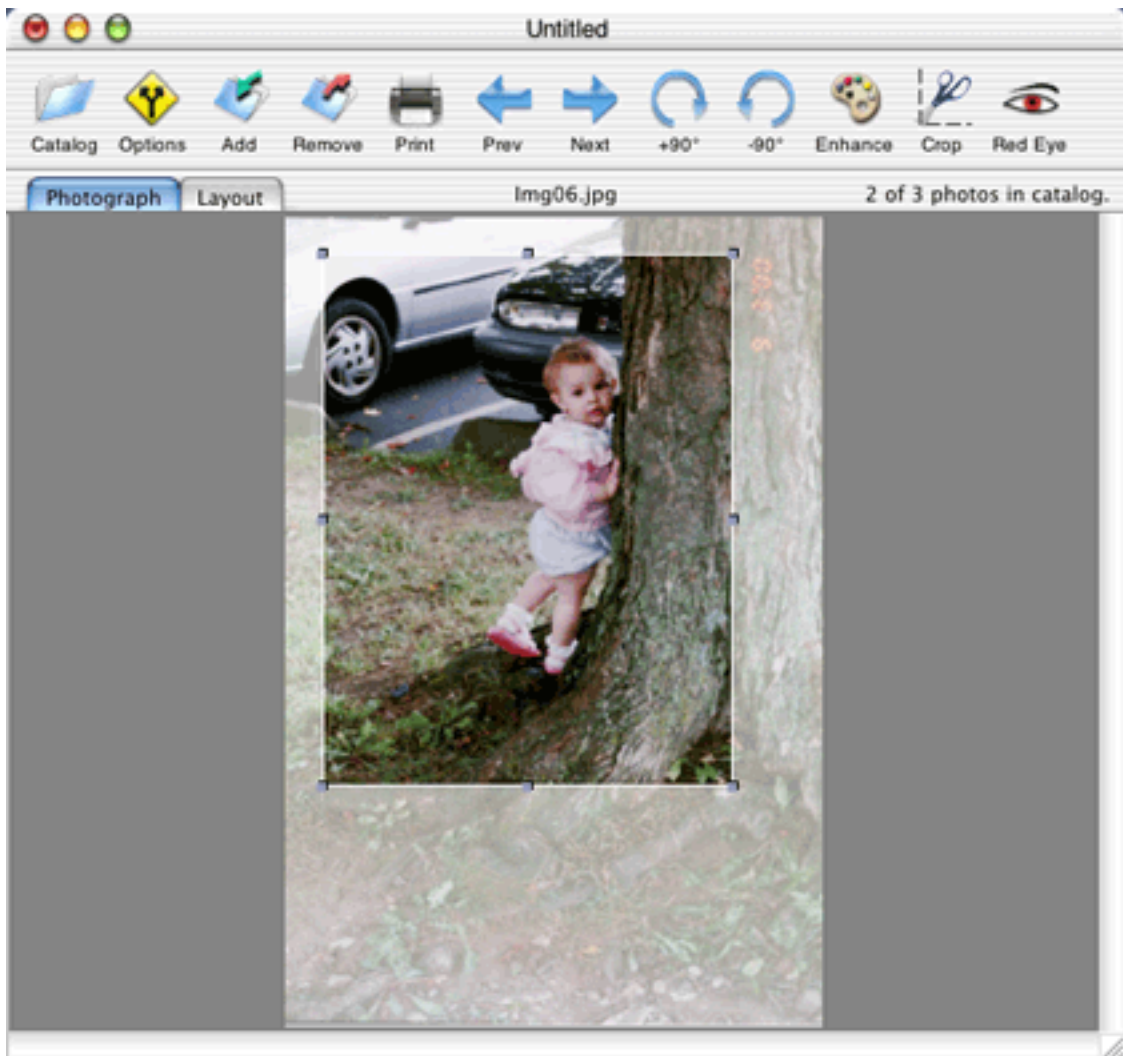
Portraits & Prints bills itself as “a photo printing solution.” This means two things. First, you won't find any tools for reducing file sizes, creating JavaScript rollovers, or anything like that—Portraits & Prints is solely for editing and printing digital images. Second, you will find everything you need to churn out quality digital images of various sizes.

Portraits & Prints uses a catalog model for keeping track of your images. The catalog is a pane attached to the main window, which shows thumbnails of the pictures you've added to the catalog. Clicking on a picture brings it into the main area.

Once the image is in the main area, you can perform some basic image manipulation on it. The first thing you're likely to do is rotate the picture, if necessary. Since Portraits & Prints is not an image editing application, it doesn't let you rotate the image freely. Instead, you can rotate clockwise or counter-clockwise, in 90° increments.



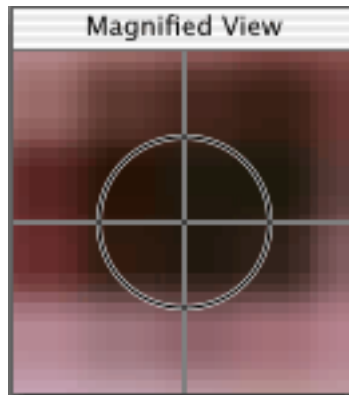
Portraits & Prints Catalog Pane



Touching up a Picture in Portraits & Prints' Main Window

Oftentimes, your picture can end up having too much information in it. For instance, you might have a wonderful picture of your family on vacation. Unfortunately, some idiot decided to join your family for the picture. Instead of throwing the picture away, you can just crop this guy out and forget he ever existed. Unlike some applications, like Photoshop, cropping is not destructive—the portions of the image you cropped are preserved and the cropping can be adjusted. So, when you realize the idiot in your picture is actually your cousin Carl, you can just adjust the crop area instead of starting over from scratch.

Another bane of the family photographer is red eye—you know, the effect of the flash bouncing off the retina and making the subject of your photo look possessed. Like other applications, Portraits & Prints has a red eye tool. It does an acceptable job of removing red eye, but it can be a little difficult to get just the effect you want. When you choose the red eye tool, you see a magnified view of where your cursor is. The magnified view contains a cross hair that indicates where the red eye correction will be applied. You change the magnification by using the up and down arrow keys. If you don't get the size of the magnification exactly correct, you will either leave some red eye or "fix" something you didn't want to change—for instance, I learned it can turn a baby's skin green. Fortunately, the red eye correction is undo-able, so you can just try again.



The Red Eye Remover Tool

Finally, you can adjust the sharpness, saturation, and brightness of the image. Sharpness lets you control how blurry the image appears, saturation controls the amount of color in the image, and brightness lets you brighten or darken your image. These three can be used to make up for image problems caused by the conditions where the picture was taken.

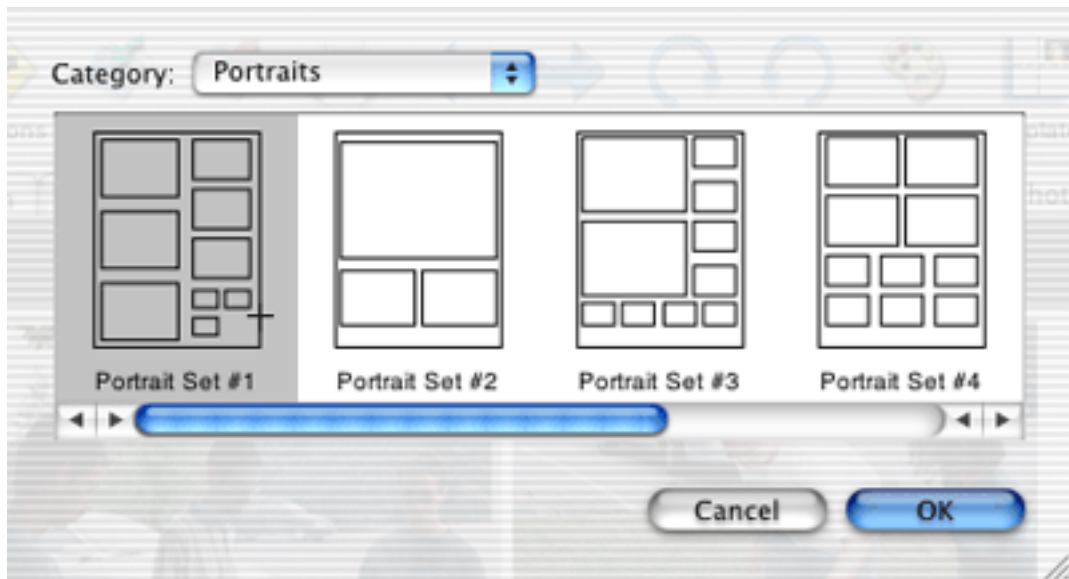
Along with grouping pictures together, the Portraits and Prints catalog feature provides another important piece of functionality: it stores all of the changes you make to the pictures. When you're cropping or removing red eye, you're not actually changing the original image. So, if you make a horrible mistake with the saturation setting and remove all the color from your photo, you don't need to worry that you've lost the original picture forever.

Another nice touch is that Portraits and Prints integrates with Image Capture. When Image Capture downloads the pictures from your digital camera, you can elect to have them added to a new catalog. To accomplish this, you just need to select "Open in Portraits & Prints" from the Automatic Task popup.

Printing Portraits and Prints

No photo printing solution would be complete if you couldn't actually print. Furthermore, if there were only a single printing option, there would be nothing to set Portraits & Prints apart from the pack. Fortunately, Portraits & Prints does not disappoint in this regard. In fact, Portraits and Prints' printing options are where the program got its name.

Portraits and Prints includes 12 templates for printing pictures. These templates are broken down into two categories of six templates. The first category is Portraits. Portraits are layouts that contain different-sized pictures on the same page, similar to school pictures from elementary school. The second category is prints. These are layouts where every picture on the page is the same size, one 8"x10", two 5"x7", eight wallets, and things like that.



Selecting a Portrait Layout for Printing

If you want to send the same print to several people, then you'll only want to include a single photo on the whole template. However, if you want to print out all your pictures, then you'll likely want to include multiple pictures on the template. Portraits & Prints gives you the option of how you want to fill the layout. Furthermore, you can choose which pictures to omit from the layout, by deselecting their checkboxes in the catalog pane.

Since the layouts are fixed size, it may not be possible for the whole picture to fit into the printable area. Although Portraits & Prints will resize an image to fit into a layout, some cropping will occur if the image's aspect ratio is different from that of the space in the layout. If this cropping is above 10% of the total image sign, a warning icon is displayed. At this point, you can move the image around inside the layout to decide which region will be printed.

Conclusion

If you own a digital camera and want a simple application to touch up and print your photographs, look no further than Portraits & Prints. This application provides a simple interface to most of the tools you will need, first to make your images presentable and then to present them.

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- You can zoom the PDF to full window width and scroll through articles simply by single-clicking anywhere in the article text (except underlined links).
- You can quickly navigate between articles using the bookmarks pane at the left of the main viewing window.
- For best results on small screens, be sure to hide the bookmarks pane; that way you'll be able to see the entire page width at 100%.
- Try turning Font Smoothing on and off in Acrobat Reader's preferences to see which setting you prefer.
- All blue-underlined links are clickable.
- You can hold down option while hovering over a link to see where it will lead.
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